Election campaigns and political mobilization in Africa

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Summary

Politicians mobilize people to vote by devising messages and imparting them to those people.

Many studies examine African electioneering through a framework that distinguishes between

programmatic, clientelist and charismatic appeals. Some, but not all, African politicians appeal

to people by adopting particular policy positions, the strict sense of 'programmatic appeals'.

However, almost all solicit peoples' support by stressing their sincere intentions and their

abilities to pursue uncontroversial aspects of public policy, otherwise known as 'valence

appeals'. Parties' historic records and their locations in government or opposition affect which

issues they can claim to own and which they stress in their campaigns.

While appeals over public policy are commonplace in African electoral politics, so too is

clientelism. Many politicians give voters gifts, in the form of favourable distributions of public

service delivery, in-kind goods, and cash. However, few of these gifts constitute contingent

exchanges of goods for votes. Instead, political largesse is used to flatter, to impress and to

convince voters of politicians' virtue. In this respect, public policy and clientelism frequently

appear in African elections side-by-side.

'Political appeals' is employed by many as an organising concept which orders the study of political messages. It sheds light on how electoral politics affects public policy. However, it also obscures. A separate canon of work studies political discourses in sub-Saharan Africa. One of the most-studied subjects in this strain of the literature is populism. African populisms have been conceived of by some as discourses that unite disparate groups against an elite, and as an electoral strategy that draws together particular constituencies by others. Whichever definition one takes, African populists are rare. Only a handful have been identified.

Nationalists are much more common in sub-Saharan Africa. Politicians and parties have constructed national missions that act as master discourses, which subsume and order all manner of political issues. Some politicians that employ nationalist discourses stress their liberation credentials as qualifications to govern and delegitimize opponents that did not participate in the struggle. National revolutions or liberations are portrayed as on-going projects with indefinite points of completion which give nationalism its regenerative qualities. Other nationalisms stress threats from rival groups, whether strangers within the nation's borders, or nefarious forces abroad.

Likewise, ethnic discourses are commonplace in sub-Saharan Africa, but their rhetorical contents differ. Some valorise an ethnic people. Other express an ethnic group's victimhood, or grievances, or fear of rival group threats. Equally, the goals that they espouse differ. Some propose compensation, others reconciliation, others still the capture of the central state, the devolution of state power, or the creation of a separate state of their own. Equally, they are contested and used by a variety of actors. Ethnicities are created from both above and below. They are used not only to mobilize people for mass actions to but make normative claims on politicians.

More broadly, politicians strive to develop conceptions of political morality. They present themselves as moral leaders and re-characterize various political issues as questions of morality or moral character. Putting these common discursive frames aside, African politicians employ any number of esoteric discursive frames which are not found elsewhere. Grand discourses aside, African politicians employ numerous rhetorical and symbolic techniques to suggest, reframe, perform and charm.

While messages win peoples' support, those messages must be imparted, through mass media or face-to-face contact. Political parties mobilize enormous resources to expose people to their messages on the ground. The ground campaign has received little attention to date, but a scattering of studies show that parties strive to gain local presence. Some establish branches and others recruit local actors. They rely on these local actors to organize their ground campaigns and employ a variety of targeting strategies.

Key words

Africa, electioneering, campaigning, clientelism, ethnicity, populism, nationalism, public policy, discourse.

Introduction

Political mobilization is the act of motivating others to undertake political action. This entry concentrates on political mobilization in the electoral domain. In other words, it concentrates on the act of motivating people to turn out to vote in elections and to cast their ballots for

particular political parties or candidates. On this stage, politicians and political parties are the primary actors. Most political mobilization is undertaken by them, or on their behalves. However, activists, opinion makers and civil associations resurface recurrently in the discussion that follows. Citizens, as potential voters, also loom large in the study of political mobilization. Their receptiveness to messages ultimately determines to what extent various methods of electioneering work. Citizens are active participants in mobilization, interpreting politicians' messages, reading signs that they construe and making inferences about what they are like and how they will behave. As such, political actors of all stripes script their messages in anticipation of how they will resonate with citizens.

Political mobilization takes place across the electoral cycle in anticipation of future electoral contests. From the moment that an election result is announced, political actors are already preparing for the next in what sometimes constitutes a 'permanent campaign' (Blumenthal, 1980). However, in most of sub-Saharan Africa, political mobilization is concentrated in the weeks and months preceding each election. As such, much of the discussion in this entry and much of the research it summarizes concerns electioneering.

Studies of political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa have focussed primarily on the messages that parties impart to voters. Some examine political mobilization through a framework which distinguishes between programmatic, clientelist and charismatic appeals. These studies reveal that clientelism is common-place in sub-Saharan Africa, but that it rarely constitutes vote-buying in the strict, transactional sense. Only in a minority of cases do politicians know whether the recipients of their gifts voted for them. Instead, most 'clientelism' is voluntary gift-giving intended to win voters' support in other ways. Clientelist politics are discussed in the next section.

While clientelist and programmatic appeals were once framed as exclusive ways of mobilizing support, the evidence suggest that they are typically used in tandem in sub-Saharan Africa. However, rarely do parties compete for voters' support by taking different policy positions. Instead, they concentrate on convincing voters that they can be trusted to deliver widely desired public policies. Programmatic politics is discussed in the second section.

Other studies of electioneering in sub-Saharan Africa hail from a different intellectual tradition and take interpretive approaches. These studies examine politicians' messages discursively and how voters understand them. One of the most-studied political messages in this canon is populism. The precise character of populism in sub-Saharan Africa has been the subject of much debate. Some characterize it purely in discursive terms. Others understand it as both a discourse and an accompanying political strategy. No matter which conception one adopts, populism remains relatively uncommon. Only a handful of cases have been documented. In part, this is because the feasibility of populism hinges on particular circumstances. Populism is discussed in the third section.

Nationalism has proved more prevalent than populism, especially in countries where liberation wars were fought. While nationalism is widely understood in terms of nation-building, nationalist discourses are also used to mobilize electoral support. However, there is great variety in the domain of nationalism. These discourses, variously, stress liberation myths, articulate with developmental discourses, emphasise foreign antagonisms, and express exclusive and ethnic conceptions of citizenship. Relatedly there is a range of ethnic discourses. Some valorise, some articulate grievances. Some call for restitution, others for protection,

others for separation. These families of nationalist and ethnic discourses are discussed in the fourth section.

While some parties' messages have clustered around these two '-isms' and ethnic discourses, an abundance of messages take more idiosyncratic forms. Studies of other political messages agree that politicians' ability and trustworthiness to deliver public policies is central to their messages. However, they also stress that performance, rhetoric and symbols are central to how they convey this to voters. Equally, politicians do not speak to policy 'issues' individually. Instead, they weave discursive frameworks that bind them together. Further electoral discourses are discussed in the fifth section.

While the lion's share of research on political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa has studied the selection and delivery of political messages, messages must be imparted as well as devised. A small, but growing area of study considers by which means messages are conveyed. Political messages are carried across a range of old and new mass media in sub-Saharan Africa. However, given the limited reach of mass media, considerable political mobilization happens face-to-face. Parties employ a variety of strategies which govern which sorts of voters to target. The efforts that parties undertake to expose voters to their messages is discussed in the sixth and final section.

Clientelism and ethnicity as electoral appeals

Much research categorizes political messages into types of appeals, the means by which parties attract citizens' support. Drawing explicitly or implicitly on Herbert Kitschelt's framework, these studies have classified appeals as clientelist, charismatic or programmatic (Kitschelt, 2000). For Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson, clientelism involves contingent exchanges of goods from politicians for turnout or votes by citizens which politicians can monitor (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). The contingency of these exchanges is crucial, because only then does the gift become part of an exchange for a vote, a gift which can be withheld or withdrawn if the vote is not cast accordingly. Some accounts of electioneering, primarily within the first decade of return to multipartyism, saw this politician-to-voter clientelism as uncommon. Instead, they thought that most exchanges of money took place between politicians and a variety of intermediaries (van de Walle, 2003). In these 'neo-patrimonial' accounts, intermediaries that received gifts in turn transformed this financial capital into social capital, which they used to sway voters (Daloz, 2003). For example, in Ghana, pentecostalist preachers' use money to enhance their charismatic claims to form a bridge with the divine (Mccauley, 2013). In Mauritania, the very performance of chiefs receiving gifts from the president at rallies added to their prestige (Jourde, 2005). However, since then, it has become increasingly well-established that voters receive gifts too. Ghanaian party 'foot-soldiers' frequently hand out gifts on the doorstep (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Indeed, multiparty competition encouraged these exchanges (Lindberg, 2003) and has driven rising expectations about how much politicians will or ought to give.

Many understand clientelist appeals as intertwined with ethnicity (Berman, 1998). By this conception, ethnic identities structure clientelist exchanges. Boundaries between ethnic groups

delineate whom to include and exclude in clientelist networks. For instance, in Kenya, much gift-giving has been from chiefs, big-men and politicians to their co-ethnics (Kramon, 2017). Ethnic affinities and the moral duties tied to them become the legitimating bases of clientelist exchanges, or 'moral ethnicity' (John Lonsdale, 2014). Correspondingly, ethnic identities structure political competition for spoils between rival ethnic groups, otherwise known as 'political tribalism' (John Lonsdale, 2014). Relatedly, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Luo and other groups in Kenya have come to perceive rivalry between them (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). In other words, many clientelist appeals are made to ethnically defined constituencies, and these clientelist appeals are couched in ethnic terms.

Ethnic or not, gift-giving is commonplace in African electoral mobilization, and it takes many forms. Some gifts take the form of gifts in kind given to individuals or small groups, such as the gifts of food and clothing which have become commonplace in Tanzania (Babeiya, 2011). Others still are delivered as cash such as largesse displayed by the ruling party in Uganda's 2011 and 2016 elections (Abrahamsen & Bareebe, 2016; Conroy-Krutz & Logan, 2012). Equally, gift-giving takes many temporal forms. Some are given between election cycles, well in advance of any vote, such as the long-term relationships between marabouts and disciples in Senegal (Villalón, 1995). Others are given in the immediacy of the campaign, typical, for example, of Kenya's expensive electioneering (Kramon, 2017), while others still are promised in the future.

However, it is not evident that these gifts constitute the contingent exchanges of which Kitschelt and Wilkinson conceive (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007), nor that they are thought of in this transactional sense by either politicians or voters. No matter how people promise to behave, in the privacy of the polling station, they can vote for whomever they please. Therefore,

where the secrecy of the ballot is preserved, vote-buying is unmonitorable. Evidence suggests that most 'clientelist exchanges' are unconditional gifts (Kramon, 2017), such as the food, clothing and even bank notes which are frequently distributed as *pakalast* in Ugandan elections, for example (Wilkins, 2016). Admittedly, while ballot secrecy prevents verification of whom people vote for, it does not prevent verification of whether people go to vote. Therefore, it prevents strict vote-buying, but not turnout- or abstention-buying. Equally, on some occasions, municipalities are monitored and rewarded or punished for their voting behaviour collectively over time. In Tanzania, electoral districts which do not support a ruling party in one electoral cycle are punished afterwards in differential provision of public goods, for example (Weinstein, 2011).

Once one relaxes this 'conditionality' criterion, the range of gifts that one might characterise as clientelist expands. For example, one might characterise pork-barrel as clientelism, the delivery of public sector goods such as roads or electricity infrastructure, in uneven amounts to specific areas. One study found that Ghana's ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) extended electrification to districts which had voted for its candidates more (Briggs, 2012). Equally, one might characterise the forms of public service delivery provided privately by politicians or parties as clientelist. As so much politics is distributive, this broaches grander questions about how to distinguish between programmatic politics and clientelism altogether. Susan Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco's answer to this conceptual issue is that distribution through programmatic appeals is expressed through public rules. They reserve the strict use of the term clientelism for contingent exchanges as Kitschelt and Wilkinson intend, and characterise distributive politics which is not in accordance with public rules as particularist (Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, & Brusco, 2013). This definition is

vulnerable to counter-examples of otherwise clientelist behaviour that follow publicly known rules, and this matter is far from satisfactorily settled.

This unconditionality of electoral gifts has led many to question the virtue of clientelism, and whether it is construed as a brokered exchange at all. Voters might 'have their cake and eat it' as Staffan Lindberg puts it, by accepting political gifts but deciding whom to vote for irrespective of the gifts they have received (Lindberg, 2013). One campaign song for Zambia's Patriotic Front in 2011 campaign was entitled 'Donchi Kubeba' or 'don't tell them', and expressed this sentiment (Paget, 2014). In fact, some studies of voters have queried how responsive voters are to gift-giving and whether it is less effective than other, more persuasive means (Fujiwara & Wantchekon, 2013). Nonetheless, other evidence suggests that gift-giving often works (Kramon, 2017). There is some experimental evidence that clientelist gift-giving alters voter behaviour (Wantchekon, 2003). However, monitored exchanges is infrequently the mechanism by which gifts translate into votes.

Instead, gift-giving serves other, more subtle purposes. Some consider the rational dynamics of clientelist exchanges between voters and politicians. People may doubt politicians' promises to deliver them resources in the future because they are untrustworthy, incompetent, or simply because they think that they are unlikely to win. By giving gifts in the present, politicians try convince voters that their promises about the future are genuine (Kramon, 2016). More broadly, electoral clientelism is laden with normative terms. What might be conceived of as exchanges are embedded in moral economies. They draw on common logics of negotiation, bargaining and gift-giving (de Sardan, 1999) which provide norms of practice as well as symbolic meanings to gift-giving in electoral contexts. In these social contexts, politicians give gifts in observance with social mores rather than in negotiated trades for votes. The East African and

particularly Kenyan culture of *harambee* – a form of community fundraising - is a case in point. Politicians give gifts in recognition of moral duties and in response moral claims made upon them by their communities (John Lonsdale, 2014). They give gifts to valorise or flatter their recipients (Gadjanova, 2017). Gift-giving is tied up with performances of virtue, contributing to displays of generosity (Wilkins, 2016), or wealth (Daloz, 2003).

Programmatic politics and issue ownership

While clientelism, broadly defined, is commonplace in sub-Saharan Africa, an enduring interest of scholarship has been the possibility of programmatic appeals. Politicians appeal to voters programmatically when they adopt particular public policies which contrast with other, alternative public policies. These policies might be defined in contrast to those proposed by rival politicians, or simply to the status quo. Programmatic appeals, thus conceived, are positional. The attractiveness of a policy programme is a product of its proximity to the policies that people prefer. In other words, the policies that politicians advocate appeal to people insofar as they approximate the policies that they like best. Scholarly interest in programmatic appeals is normatively as well as analytically informed. Programmatic politics is often seen as a salve to many problems that afflict African electoral politics, and many such problems are understood in terms of the deviance of electoral linkages from programmatic politics. At times, programmatic politics has assumed a modernist and teleological position in academic imaginations of African futures, some end-point upon which African democracies will eventually converge.

Despite the persistent interest in programmatic politics in Africa, few instances of it have been recorded in scholarship. The shift in mining tax policy in Zambia 2008 stands out as an

example, when the Movement for Multiparty Democracy sought to close down issue space opened up by the Patriotic Front (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2009). *Majimboism* or regionalism stood out as a point of programmatic difference in Kenya (Anderson, 2010). In part, this is a product of how strictly the term has been treated. If one examines contrasting discourses rather than policy programmes, a variety of differences emerge. Putting this aside, the absence of competition over rival policy programmes is not a sign that public policy is absent from electoral politics in sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, a large body of evidence reveals that they are ubiquitous. Numerous studies show that voters cast their ballots for ruling parties in accordance with their perceived management of the economy (Bratton, Bhavnani, & Chen, 2012). At the constituency level, citizens change their votes in accordance with how they evaluate incumbent MPs' past performances (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013). At the national level, people vote for parties that provide roads (Harding, 2015) and abolish school fees (Travaglianti, 2017) while in office. Some suggest that this behaviour is not static, but changing. African voters, some suggest, are becoming more critical and demanding with each decade of democratic experience (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2017). The 'No Lights No Votes' signs visible in Ghana's 2016 election are a vivid example of this critical citizen behaviour.

Accordingly, African parties strive to convince voters that they will deliver public policies better than their rivals would or have (Bleck & van de Walle, 2013). When politicians agree on the desirability of policies but contest who can handle them best, these became valence policies. 'Valence appeals' are based on the delivery of public policies which are widely, or even universally, desired, and upon which parties agree upon the desirability of. The ubiquity of promises of 'development' (Bleck & van de Walle, 2013), the abolition of local taxes in Uganda and Tanzania (Kjær & Therkildsen, 2013) and the roll-out of universal free primary

education in Burundi (Travaglianti, 2017) are typical of the valence issues that emerge in African electoral politics. Potentially controversial issues often, perhaps almost always, lurk behind valence issues (D. Stokes, 1963). For example, in Ghana's 2012 election, free secondary education became a prominent point of disagreement over which parties took up rival positions (Brierley & Ofosu, 2012). The opposition National Patriotic Party (NPP) made the expansion of secondary education a major plank in their platform, while the ruling NDC disparaged it; they described it as an unrealistic and poor use of scarce funds. This stands in contrast to the commonplace treatment of free education as a universally desirable and popular issue in Tanzania and Uganda (Kjær & Therkildsen, 2013). The treatment of policies as valence rather than positional issues arises from how they are portrayed and perceived. Therefore, public policy assumes a prominent role in African electoral politics, but often not in the form of parties' rival policy positions.

To appeal to voters using valence issues, politicians must convince voters not only that they will deliver such policies, but that they can be trusted more than their rivals to do so. As these rivals have every reason to make the equivalent claims themselves, valence appeals are widely contested. Accordingly, parties and candidates alike dedicate substantial effort to lay claim to issues over their rivals. These patterns of issue ownership split in part between ruling and opposition parties (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). Corruption, executive abuses of power and infringements on the rights of minorities are commonplace ruling party infractions. Opposition parties turn such transgressions to their advantage by portraying them as instances of ruling party failure or even untrustworthiness. As such, they are commonplace issues which opposition parties 'own' or 'lease' while they are in opposition (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). Equally, development, resource ownership and national sovereignty are issues on which ruling parties can display action. They can claim credibility on these issues by using their powers of

state. They can deliver on these policy areas in all sincerity and make those records the basis of their appeals. Therefore, they are issues which ruling parties frequently 'own' (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011).

Therefore, while clientelism is commonplace in sub-Saharan African political mobilization, it is not common to the exclusion of other appeals. Herbert Kitschelt conceived of clientelist, charismatic and programmatic appeals as mutually exclusive (Kitschelt, 2000). A politician, in his view, could employ one, but not the others. Subsequent research has found that politicians employ clientelist appeals alongside other electoral appeals. The evidence suggests that politicians can be found invoking both clientelist and valence appeals across almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Some have hypothesized that just like in parts of Latin America, party appeals might be segmented (Luna, 2014), one appeal used to mobilize some group of voters, and some other appeal used to mobilize some other group. Some argue that in sub-Saharan Africa, this segmentation occurs across class, with programmatic or public policy-regarding appeals used to mobilize middle-class voters and clientelist appeals used to mobilize working class voters (Nathan, 2016). There are other bases for this. Poorer voters are more responsive to clientelist appeals (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013). However, others argue that politicians bundle these appeals and use them to appeal to voters together (Gadjanova, 2017; Lindberg, 2013), unifying them rather than segmenting them. Some evidence that this is the case can be found in analyses of voter behaviour, which show that even poor voters change their vote in response to both clientelist and valence appeals (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013).

There are signs that parties may employ different mixtures of appeals. Primarily, these observations have concerned party systems in which ruling party dominance in entrenched. At the root, these arguments spring from dominant parties' advantages. Dominant parties have

avenues of action that allow them to claim valence issues in ways with which opposition parties often cannot compete (Bleck & van de Walle, 2013). Equally, they often enjoy enormous advantages in resources, especially financial resources (Dorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014). These common truths leave opposition parties at a disadvantage. Incumbent parties in general, and dominant incumbent parties in particular, typically lavish voters with more gifts, and more lavish gifts, than opposition parties do (Rakner & van de Walle, 2009). Equally, they emphasize valence issues more than their opponents (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). For these reasons, among others, opposition parties are often weak (Rakner & van de Walle, 2009). Opposition parties are more likely than ruling parties to draw their supporters from one ethnic group alone (Cheeseman & Ford, 2007). Equally, they are more likely to privilege programmatic platforms (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). Further still, opposition parties are more likely to focus their messages on a charismatic leader (Rakner & van de Walle, 2009). Opposition parties, in other words, faced with ruling parties' advantages, often look for alternative bases of electoral strength. However, these observed patterns are matters of degree. These claims are about how much particular parties use some type of appeal relative to other types of appeals, not whether they use some appeal to the exclusion of others altogether. The most typical situation is one in which all parties employ mixtures of electoral appeals, a complete inversion of what Kitschelt imagined.

The discussion so far makes clear that much electoral politics has been understood through the framework of electoral appeals. Kitschelt's schema of clientelist, charismatic and programmatic appeals have structured a generation of research on political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa. The emphasis on appeals has a clear normative impetus. Insofar as particularist appeals prevail, democratic accountability is interrupted (Ake, 2000). Relatedly, the prevalence of clientelist appeals or programmatic ones has immediate ramifications for public service

delivery. Electoral clientelism, it is often argued, is funded by the embezzlement, misdirection or otherwise misappropriation of state resources. Therefore, clientelist appeals are made at the expense of the delivery of public services. Accordingly, it is often contended, valence and programmatic appeals drive better public service delivery. Put simply, in multiparty democracies, parties win peoples' support by giving them what they want. Insofar as they want public services, democracy produces developmental outcomes. Barely a single article on party appeal passes up the opportunity to remark on these potential ramifications of democracy for development. Of course, even if people want public services, this electoral incentive is crude in effects. Further still, the delivery of public services is often uneven and can transform public goods into pork (Abdulai & Hickey, 2016). Equally, some research suggests that problems of attribution give politicians few electoral incentives to provide public services that they will not enjoy the credit for (Harding & Stasavage, 2014).

Populism

While the normative implications of different sorts of appeals are compelling, political mobilization can be understood without these terms, and some aspects of political mobilization are obscured by them. Another strain of research has eschewed these Kitscheltian categories. These studies examine the discursive content of parties' message and the meanings with which voters imbue them.

Studies of mobilization and discourse in sub-Saharan Africa have paid particular attention to populism. The conceptualization of populism has been controversial the world over, and it has been controversial in sub-Saharan Africa too. The object on which these conceptualizations have turned is the populism of Michael Sata and his party, the Patriotic Front (PF), in Zambia.

The PF was founded in 2001. The party rapidly gained ground in elections in a general election in 2006 and was propelled to power in the next general election in 2011. Sata died in office in 2014.

The differences between these conceptions are subtle and partial. In part, they mirror disagreements in the comparative conception of populism which stress the primacy of discourse or thin ideology (Stanley, 2008) and strategy (Weyland, 2001). The first to identify a populist dimension to Michael Sata and the PF were Miles Larmer and Alastair Fraser (Larmer & Fraser, 2007). They borrow from Ernesto Laclau (Laclau, 2005) and define Sata's populism discursively. What is crucial, they argue, is the structure that the discourse takes. Populism, as they define it, draws together demands of some constituency or constituencies in a 'chain of equivalence'. It construes their grievances and their demands upon others as though linked by some common thread. It presents the groups that articulate these demands as 'the people', where 'the people' is a rhetorical construction. For example, Zambian urban market vendors, urban youths, the rural poor and copper mine workers are distinct groups with different interests, but Sata sought to rhetorically united their disparate sets of grievances as the demands of 'ordinary Zambians'.

Populists, claims Laclau, express such integrated sets of demands as an antagonism between 'the people' and 'the elite', where 'the elite' is also discursively constructed. Sata characterised the ruling party, the MMD, as corrupt. He suggested that it collaborated with exploitative companies. Ultimately, he portrayed it as the source of common Zambians' grievances. Therefore, for these authors, it is not the policy prescriptions, nor its place upon a left-to-right ideological spectrum that defines populism, but its discursive framework. The grievances drawn together are in some important sense unrelated and the equivalence made between them

is fictitious. Managing these tensions requires ingenuity. Rhetoric, theatrical rudeness, and symbols are employed that can contain these contradictions. This emphasis on symbols and theatre is the primary contributions to this conception of populism in Zambia advanced by Fraser (Fraser, 2017), who draws on Benjamin Moffit and Simon Tormey to do so (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014).

Danielle Resnick returns to Kitschelt's schema of appeals (Resnick, 2013). Populism as she conceives of it involves an anti-elite discourse, but for her, this discourse weaves together a bundle of charismatic, programmatic and clientelist appeals. These programmatic appeals include policy appeals to a particular segment of society, namely poor urban residents, and particularly the urban youth. These programmatic appeals are explicitly taken as constitutive of populist 'strategies', and on these grounds, her conception is in clear disagreement with Fraser and Larmer. While Resnick presents evidence that the PF employs clientelist appeals, it is unclear why these are constitutive of the PF's populism. In part, this is because Resnick's discussion of defining populism is brief.

Like Resnick, Cheeseman and Larmer emphasize the strategic dimension of populism. They describe Sata and the PF as not populist, but *ethno*-populist (Cheeseman & Larmer, 2015). They are not the first to stress the ethnic dimension of the PF's support. Cheeseman and Hinfelaar do too (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2009). However, they are the first to see it as constitutive of the party's populism. For them, the grievances that the PF integrates into a set of equivalent grievances includes both those of the urban poor and a distinct ethnic constituency. A 'narrative of shared exclusion' is fundamental to their conception of ethno-populism, and so like Fraser and Larmer, discourse is central to their conception of populism. However, like Resnick, they stress the strategic dimensions of populism as well. For them,

appealing to multiple segments of society, in this case urban and ethnic constituencies, is constitutive of ethno-populism. So too is the prominence of a charismatic leader, who communicates with these constituencies unmediated by party actors, and relies on an uninstitutionalized party to hold the diverse and partly contradictory interests of this coalition together. Therefore, both Resnick and Cheeseman and Larmer draw on the strategic as well as the discursive conceptions of populism.

There has been considerable debate about where and when populism can be found, which stems in part from these differences in definition. While Sata and the PF employed populist discourses or strategies, scholars dispute when they did so. These disagreements arise in part from their competing conceptions of populism. Fraser contends that Sata's populism was fading as early as 2008 and was certainly gone by 2011 (Fraser, 2017). Cheeseman and Larmer talk about the prevalence of ethno-populism until 2011 (Cheeseman & Larmer, 2015), as does Resnick. Beyond Zambia, populism has remained a relatively rare phenomenon, despite the prominence that it has enjoyed in the literature. Raila Odinga's 2007 campaign was identified as ethno-populist (Cheeseman & Larmer, 2015). Julius Malema and the Economic Freedom Fighters' were characterized as populists (Mbete, 2015). So too was Cote d'Ivoire's Henri Konan Bédié (Boone, 2009), and John Pombe Magufuli of *Chama cha Mapinduzi* in Tanzania (Jacob & Pedersen, 2018). There is disagreement about the circumstances under which populism emerges. Some stress the contingency of the conditions that support populism and believe that populist appeals are prone to ephemerality (Fraser, 2017). Others stress structural conditions which make populist or ethno-populist strategies feasible, such as the size of young, poor, urban groups (Resnick, 2013), histories of urban radicalism, and the character of rural-urban ties (Cheeseman & Larmer, 2015).

Nationalism and ethnic discourses

Many studies have dwelt on nationalism in electoral discourse. Nationalism enjoys a special status in African politics, both as a discourse and a subject of academic study. Newly independent, African states, drawn with arbitrary boundaries, faced enormous challenges to create nations. Most African countries, and the grand majority of African states, undertook fundamental nation-building projects in the years immediately following independence (Coleman & Rosberg, 1964). Indeed, the grand majority of political projects in the years immediately preceding and following independence were explicitly nationalist (Coleman & Sklar, 1994). These nation-building projects and the actors that participated in them have enjoyed considerable attention in the study of sub-Saharan Africa. Equally, the centrality of nation-building to domestic politics have made nationalism especially prominent in electoral politics. Anti-colonial struggles feature centrally in the national narratives and national identity, especially in countries that fought liberation wars. As such, nationalist ideologies remain salient in public imaginations of many African countries.

However, for the purposes of this discussion, nationalism is relevant as a discourse used for electioneering. Nationalist discourses which stray into the domain of electoral politics have taken several forms. One such form is as a liberation ideology. Ruling parties in southern and eastern Africa, notably South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Uganda, Rwanda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Tanzania have described themselves as liberators or revolutionaries. The subject to be liberated is invariably the nation or its people. Most liberation struggles were against European colonialists. Others, relatedly, were against white settler regimes, such as in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Others still were against supposedly tyrannical African regimes, such as in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and

Uganda. Most of these liberation conflicts ended long after the wave of decolonizations in the 1950s and 1960s. Accordingly, these struggles are close rather than distant, both in time and the public imagination.

The liberation discourses of these regimes employ a series of commonplace features. One such feature is the status of the ruling party by virtue of its role in liberation. For example, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa has portrayed itself as the sole legitimate guardian of the revolution (Johnson, 2003). Their pasts are used to elevate their credentials above rival parties'. Their leadership in the struggle is stressed and mythologized to attribute them special virtues, and to place their ultimate intentions beyond reproach (Beresford, 2012). Equally, those without liberation credentials are delegitimized. In Zimbabwe, the leader of Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai, Morgan Tsvangirai, was repeatedly portrayed as unpatriotic and untrustworthy for not fighting in the liberation war (Tendi, 2013). In these respects, nationalism is connected to the performance of virtue and character. Aside from imbuing virtue, nationalist discourses of this sort are also employed to control who may speak. Once again, in Zimbabwe, voices in civil society and opposition were excluded from electoral debates on the grounds that the lacked the authority to speak about the nation (Dorman, 2017). Indeed, some have argued that the significance of the struggle over the constitution between 1998 and 2000 was that in the process thereof, voices in civil society successfully claimed rhetorically to speak for the nation (Dorman, 2017).

A distinct strand of nationalism in electoral politics, albeit, one which often occurs in combination with liberation discourses, is national development. Development discourses themselves inundate electoral politics, and not always in combination with nationalism. Development serves as a commonplace master frame for public and private services alike. All

manner of policies, services, and gifts are presented as part and parcel of politicians' contributions to develop. Roads, health clinics, fertilizer, trade deals, macro-economic policy, private gifts intended for future-bearing investments like school fees or farm equipment, are just a few of the examples of the things understood in the language of development (Cowen & Shenton, 1996). In this respect, an enormous range of politicians frame their political appeals in developmentalist terms, and this range stretches far beyond nationalists (Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). However, development is often framed as a *national* endeavour, and nationalist parties take advantage of this framing. They assert that they are the sole legitimate keepers of the national mission, and suggest that as development is national, they alone can deliver it. Thereby, nationalist and developmental discourses become fused.

Other transformative national missions of these sorts are portrayed variously as liberational (Lodge, 2004) or revolutionary (Beresford, 2012). In this respect, nationalism serves as an 'organising principle' (Dorman, 2017). Something that these discourses all share is that they portray national missions as in-progress. These projects are underway, but incomplete. This 'liminality' (Beresford, Berry, & Mann, 2018) places nations midway in transformative processes, currently neither in one state nor in the other. As nationalist projects promise transformative outcomes which are as yet unrealized, various matters are understood in light of them. Numerous issues are discursively placed in elaborate frames of reference in which nationalist projects are paramount (Beresford, 2012). Nationalism, thus employed, becomes a master narrative, a discursive framework within which other issues can be understood as relating to the national project. In such narratives, nationalist parties are portrayed as the best and most legitimate actors. Thereby, various claims made by voters upon politicians are either recognized as part of such national projects, or postponed or subordinated to these projects.

Politicians manage these claims and mobilize support by thus 'ordering' the substantive content of electoral politics.

The power of this rhetoric depends on nations remaining between stages, at some point after the beginning of transformation, but before its completion. Equally, the power of this rhetoric involves the continuation of the national project. In other words, nationalists need to create a sense of progress towards the transformations which they have imagined, while also delaying the moment at which they are completed. Nationalist parties deal with these contradictory pressures through the creative use of ambiguity. They recurrently reconceive their projects and thereby cast the anticipated moment of their completion back towards the horizon. In effect, they rhetorically delay the moment at which their transformative goals will be achieved. Thereby, they extend the period in which they can invoke their special statuses and sustain their 'extraordinary mandates' (Beresford et al., 2018).

A distinct aspect of African nationalisms, shared by parties with and without liberation heritages, concerns national sovereignty. Nationalisms of this sort discursively construct foreign actors, be they rival nations, companies, or constellations of transnational forces, which threaten the nation. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) portrayed Britain as the head of a network of foreign forces, which were working actively towards the destabilization of the Zimbabwean regime. It claimed that domestic opponents of the ruling party were agents of this foreign alliance. ZANU-PF mobilized voters to support it as part of a continuing national struggle. In a quite different setting, Laurence Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire and the *Front Ivoirien Populaire* invoked another foreign enemy. He presented the French, white businesses and the United Nations as part of a set of malign set of neo-colonial forces bent upon exploitation and domination of Cote d'Ivoire. For them, these forces were

actively subverting Cote d'Ivoire, and domestic politics turned on the question of Cote d'Ivoire's second 'liberation' (Banégas, 2006).

Ethno-nationalist discourses have also been invoked in electoral politics. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, Henri Konan Bédié and Laurence Gbagbo and their parties – *la Parti Democratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* and FPI respectively – constructed conceptions of citizenship that excluded a complex of immigrants, Muslims, and particular ethnic groups, for which 'northerner' came a collective term (Banégas, 2006). Therefore, the shared attributes of the people became particularly prominent in this nationalism. *Ivoirien*-ness, in this discursive framework, carried moral claims to land and other privileges which foreigners and strangers were portrayed as seeking maliciously (Marshall-Fratani, 2006). These politicians were not the only voices in the construction of these discourses. Numerous groups sought to pursue their own interests in the reimagination of the nation, and young 'new patriots' acquired new status in championing national causes (Banégas, 2006). However, politicians played on historic material interests and grievances of various groups in Cote d'Ivoire in their rhetoric. By changing rules about citizenship and the allocation of land, they made the state the site of arbitration of these disputes and mobilized support by promising to champion the interests of true *Ivoriens*. Therefore, this ethno-nationalist movement discursively constructed boundaries between citizens and foreigners and imbued each with virtues and vices respectively. This served to mobilize the former, first for elections and then for violence. This emphasis on the exclusive nature of citizenship is why the 'ethno-' is added as a prefix to the term 'nationalism'.

These ethno-nationalist political discourses bear notable similarities to other discourses which concern belonging and ethnicity. Such discourses invoke conceptions of *autochthones*, or 'people of the land', and *allogenes*, or 'strangers'. Numerous groups have developed claims to

land, rights, status or privileges based on their autochthony, and delegitimized rival claimants in the process. While some such cases involve demands on behalf of nationalities, others involve demands for peoples that do not have pretensions of state-hood. Therefore, they are not nationalist discourses, but ethnic ones. An enormous range of rhetoric devices have been used to assert these claims. Some have developed demands imbued with narratives of aboriginality or ancestry (Lynch, 2011). Others have invoked claims to land or other privileges by virtue of the work, their civilization, military service, rightful conquest or fair transaction (Lonsdale, 2008). Politicians have participated in the construction of these competing claims, and mobilized support by promising to intervene in these struggles over resources through the powers of the state (Cheeseman, 2008a).

This is just one of several ways in which ethnicity is not only constructed but framed in the service of political mobilization. Elena Gadjanova distinguishes between seven types of ethnic rhetoric which combine a variety of appeals and empirical claims in different ways (Gadjanova, 2013). The first involves politicians valorising ethnic groups. This involves the endowment of ethnicities with virtues and histories in ways which constitutes forms of flattery and recognition which might win politicians favour. The second involves focussing on articulating some groups' grievances. However, many ethnic rhetorical complexes are multifaceted. The third type of rhetoric stresses the distinctiveness of ethnic groups while characterising other ethnicities as non-threatening equals. Politicians employing this type mobilize voters in the cause of inter-group rights or some other equal inter-ethnic settlement. The fourth involves labouring past wrong-doing on multiple sides while stressing the non-threatening nature of groups in the present. Politicians using this rhetorical style mobilize voters by proposing platforms of inter-ethnic reconciliation. The reconciliation of South African ethno-nationalisms sometimes took on this form (Wilson, 2001). The fifth stresses the one-sidedness of past

wrongs and mobilizes voters through demands for compensation from other groups, such as the reclamation of land, the granting of minority rights or affirmative privileges. The development of Ijaw nationalism in the Niger Delta is a case in point (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012). The sixth depends on claims of superiority and mobilizes support by championing the assumption of privileges of one group over others in the central state, of which the ethno-nationalism in Cote d'Ivoire described above is a good example. The last stresses the on-going threat of rival groups and mobilizes support from a group by proposing secession or political autonomy. Separatism in Casamance (Diouf, 2004), nationalism in Zanzibar (Brown, 2010) and *majimboism* in Kenya (Anderson, 2010) have sometimes taken on this form. Like any framework, this schema is reductive. Many ethnic discourses involve blends of the different sorts of ethnic discourses, and many take on features not captured by this typology. However, this framework serves as a heuristic device to order the world of ethnic discourses and to illuminate the variety between them.

Putting these rhetoric complexes aside, ethnic identities themselves have been the subject of frequent construction and reconstruction. Groups have been amalgamated, invented and reimagined (Ranger, 1993). Boundaries have been redrawn, distinctions recoded, and characteristics re-described. Numerous actors have participated in the construction of ethnic groups, both from above (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) and from below (Spear, 2005). Not only have politicians participated actively in constructing ethnicities. They have played large roles in initiating changes institutions of state which affect how ethnicities are accommodated and reshaped. These include the creation of new administrative units (Suberu, 1991), the ethnic division of state benefits, and experiments in ethno-federalism (Erk, 2017), among other things.

Altogether, 'nationalist discourses' and 'ethnic discourses' are broad categories. Rich and varied sets of messages are described using these terms. Some, but not all, of the nationalist and ethnic discourses described here constitute programmatic appeals. For example, many of the subjects addressed discursively by nationalist parties fall under the wide tents of 'national sovereignty' and 'development'. However, it would confuse and obscure to suggest that a party simply emphasised these two issues. They promised not sovereignty and development, but the fulfilment of national projects, in which sovereignty and development were component parts. Their discursive creations enabled them to play to these separate 'issues' simultaneously. Other ethnic or nationalist claims are programmatic too. Demands for devolution, separatism, federalism and recompense concern public policies, albeit sometimes intended for subnational publics. Therefore, they merit categorisation as programmatic appeals.

Other discourses and symbols

Other studies relate at least in part to making valence appeals. However, these studies reveal that politicians do not merely speak about valence issues, but performatively and symbolically communicate their commitment to them. For example, in Senegal, the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* went to great lengths to symbolically perform its affinities with youth by developing *les marches bleues*, the blue marches (Foucher, 2007). These great processions, adorned with loudspeakers playing American music, borrowed from a style of protest normally associated with students in Senegal. In Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic used the historical role of their opponents, ZANU-PF, and its leader, Robert Mugabe, to associate them with the past and themselves with the future and therefore youth (Zamchiya, 2013). In both of these cases, politicians did not seek to convince voters of their ability to handle issues directly. Instead, they suggested that they understood their grievances, that they shared their poverty, and that they

displayed a set of youthful virtues, among other things. These are all characteristics that one might connect positively with a politician's ability to handle various issues. Therefore, by performing their connections to youth, or the future, they indirectly burnished their claims to particular valence issues.

In Tanzania, politicians from both major parties sought to capitalize on a profound sense of disenchantment with the recent past by laying claim to the mantle of *mabadiliko* or 'change' (Fouéré & Maingraud-Martinaud, 2015), a malleable concept capable of integrating almost any political programme or grievance. Appeals of this kind which draw various issues together are extremely prone to context. In Zambia, Michael Sata jettisoned some of his previously insubordinate and combative rhetoric for a style that was both reconciliatory and statesman-like after the death of the incumbent president, Levy Mwanawasa precipitated a period of mourning and retrospective admiration (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2009).

Various virtues and aptitudes desired in politicians have been performed in sub-Saharan Africa. In Tanzania, John Pombe Magufuli 'staged' events in which he discovered incidents of bureaucratic wrong-doing and punished the guilty parties on the spot (Paget, 2017). Thereby, he acted-out his indignance and displayed a commanding, executive style. In Zambia, Michael Sata earned a reputation as a 'man of action' by taking to the streets and leading protests literally to the doors of government ministries caught in wrong-doing (Larmer & Fraser, 2007). Equally, he acted out his contempt for government ministers and civil servants through his 'sheer rudeness' (Fraser, 2017). In Zimbabwe, Movement for Democratic Change leader Morgan Tsvangirai was attributed enormous bravery. At rallies, he frequently narrated times that he had been arrested and charged with treason (Zamchiya, 2013). Indeed, arrests and

beatings by police forces became issues of status among student activists in Zimbabwe (Hodgkinson, 2013).

Other studies reveal that the use of performance and discourse go beyond the capture of particular issues. Some studies reveal that politicians who do not articulate nationalist or ethnic messages also discursively weave together valence 'issues'. Thereby, they construct complexes of ideas that are more than the sum of the issues that they contain. For instance, some politicians have laid broad claim to political morality. In Tanzania, politicians made competing claims to the mantle of political morality through the nation's founding president, Julius Nyerere (Fouéré, 2014). Nyerere was mythologized as a saintly, virtuous figure, and the political philosophy he espoused, *ujamaa* or 'family-hood', was reconstructed as a time of moral integrity. Rival politicians have sought to burnish their moral credentials by portraying themselves as the heirs to Nyerere (Fouéré, 2014). In Senegal, politicians sought to develop rival conceptions of political morality. The *Parti Socialiste* sought to perform munificence in its campaigns by ritually giving gifts to young voters while showing deference to elders. In contrast, the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* stressed its poverty and aspiration and, in defiance of conventions of wealth and status, presented these as virtues (Foucher, 2007).

Other parties still have discursively sought to reorder politics, mobilizing voters not by connecting or reframing particular issues, but instead by framing the polity in particular ways which shapes voters' understanding of it. For example, Adrienne LeBas examines the deliberate creation of polarization in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008. She argues that the political parties in Zimbabwe deliberately sought to polarize and intensify politics rhetorically and through selective political violence (LeBas, 2006). They intended, among other things, to harden social boundaries between parties in order to mobilize their supporters and prevent them

from defecting. Distinctly, Sam Wilkins studies the performance of accountability and the monarchical presidency in Uganda (Wilkins, 2018). He argues that the Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Movement framed shortcomings in service delivery as the product of malfeasance on the part of mid-level politicians and bureaucrats, rather than the fault of the national government of Uganda. In fact, Museveni performatively castigated public officials for deficiencies in government performance at election rallies, symbolically placing himself as a benevolent advocate of the people, holding wrong-doers to account. Similarly, in Tanzania, Magufuli presented not just a new vision of his party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), but of Tanzanian society. He rhetorically relocated corruption. He transferred it from the apex of CCM, which was often assailed with allegations of malfeasance, to errant parts of the bureaucracy and business sectors.

Not only do politicians articulate political messages and wield political symbols. A variety of intermediary actors participate in the discursive construction of politics. For example, in Zimbabwe, civil associations articulated messages when they formed the National Constitutional Assembly in 1998. They claimed that they too could speak for the nation, and contested numerous governmental positions (Dorman, 2017). This acquisition of voice, while fleeting, changed the terms of the debate and went on to colour the constitutional referendum of 2000 and the 2002 general election. In Cote d'Ivoire, the debates about national sovereignty and responses to French and international pressure were articulated by 'new patriots', groups of young Ivorians (Banégas, 2006) who were engaged in acts of 'self-writing'. In Ghana, an educated commentariat contested the terms of political debate and articulated political messages, often but not always strictly in support of political parties (Bob-Milliar, 2012).

Campaign exposure

Until this point, the literatures summarized and synthesized have been concerned overwhelmingly with how politicians mobilize voters by selecting and discursively developing their messages. This topic is of paramount importance in studies of political mobilization, but in the comparative literature, much attention is also paid to the question of how politicians impart their messages. Indeed, in their review of the comparative literature, Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon summarize the 'predominant' way of thinking about campaigns as follows: 'adequate exposure is all that candidates need; the more people they reach, the more likely they are to win' (Iyengar & Simon, 2000). In contrast, questions of exposure have received relatively little attention in the study of political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa.

Considerable campaign exposure is achieved face-to-face. In sub-Saharan Africa, a large portion of news reaches people by word of mouth, or as Stephen Ellis puts it, by 'pavement radio'. Mobilizing people to vote through face-to-face exposure is the conventional task of the ground campaign. The ground campaign has received little academic attention in sub-Saharan Africa to date.

To run a ground campaign, parties need local presence, partisan actors that are operate in each locality to organise and staff ground campaigns. Dense networks of party branches provide visible local presence. They act as sites of recruitment and motivation for parties' supporters. They also provide local campaign control centres, from which electioneering can be directed and organized. The strength of parties' branches has been connected to the scale of parties' ground campaign efforts, and in particular the rate at which they canvass voters (Paget, 2019). The scarce attention which ground campaigns have received has normally been indirect, and

concerned the absence of such pyramid structures (Randall & Svåsand, 2002). Thereby, discussions of party weakness (Erdmann, 2004), especially opposition weakness (Rakner & van de Walle, 2009), have partly been discussions about poor local presence.

For others, local presence is particularly important for voter mobilization because local actors serve as clientelist brokers, local facilitators of clientelist exchanges. Brokers facilitate clientelism by acting as intermediaries. They marshal labourers to administer gifts. They exercise their knowledge about who to target. When gifts are part of contingent clientelist exchanges, they monitor voters' subsequent behaviour. Many associate brokerage with informal networks of intermediaries. Parties are typically thought to engage 'local elites', 'local leaders', or 'big men' to deliver clientelist goods. This creates an implicit division of labour; party branches campaign, and extra-party networks establish patron-client relations. However, these distinctions are contradicted by many instances. For example, in Ghana, party foot soldiers organised at the branch or ward are a primary channel for the distribution of petty gifts (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Likewise, South Africa's African National Congress's organs provide numerous channels for gifts and patronage (Beresford, 2015).

Equally, extra-party networks execute non-clientelist campaigns, even though the published evidence in support of this claim scarce. Local leaders can exercise their social capital to influence voters (Daloz, 2003). Others stand at the apex of political networks which can mobilize campaigners. In these circumstances, local leaders act as fully-fledged 'surrogate' or 'substitute' party branches (Koter, 2013). Others enjoy a symbolic position as community representatives. For example, chiefs sometimes receive gifts or privileges, broadcast and publicly performed, which voters infer as a sign that the gifting political party is on their side

(Baldwin, 2013). Therefore, founding party organs is just one way of acquiring the local presence necessary to operate ground campaigns.

Many of the studies that examine ground campaigns directly have focussed on the question of targeting. Targeting is a critical component of campaign strategy. If a party targets the wrong people, its efforts might be squandered, or worse, it might mobilize supporters of other parties against it. These studies of voter targeting in Africa take up a wider debate about whether parties target their supporters or swing voters. The emerging picture suggests that parties often target campaign contact carefully, but the patterns governing their targeting strategies are complex and contingent. In Kenya, presidential candidates focus their campaign visits in swing areas, populated by people whose ethnic identities are distinct from the identities of both leading candidates (Horowitz, 2016). In this case, ethnic demographics shape targeting. In sharp contrast, in Ghana, presidential candidates concentrated their campaign visits in their 'strongholds' (Rauschenbach, 2017). However, putting presidential candidates' visits to one side, incumbent and opposition or 'challenger' parties in Ghana employ different strategies. In the 2012 election, the incumbent National Democratic Congress employed more offensive strategies, dispatching canvassers to constituencies where they are weak. In contrast, the New Patriotic Party, which was in opposition, deployed a defensive strategies, concentrating canvassing in constituencies where they are strong (Brierley & Kramon, 2017). However, there are signs that these strategies are highly contingent. In the 2016 election, the New Patriotic Party, which was still in opposition, concentrated canvassers to marginal constituencies (Cheeseman et al., 2017). Furthermore, it canvassed in phases, dedicating early rounds of canvassing to identify target voters and using later rounds to reach them.

When party actors make contact with citizens, they may not use only persuasive means to mobilize them. They may use coercive means. Indeed, coercion is a prominent part of some election campaigns. Electoral violence is not the preserve of state security forces. Perpetrators of violence may be the very actors that also articulate parties' messages and dole out their gifts. Party foot soldiers in Ghana play all of these roles (Bob-Milliar, 2014). It may be perpetrated by special groups of party activists, especially youth activists, as was the case in Zimbabwe (LeBas, 2006). Alternatively, it may be initiated by ex-combatants, as became commonplace in post-war Sierra Leone (Christensen & Utas, 2008). In Kenya, violence was enacted by both the police and vigilante gangs (Anderson, 2002). Individualised coercion is employed to drag some people to the polls, to punish abstention or turnout. Violent acts can be committed in rivals' strongholds to foster fear and suppress turnout. Equally, it can be employed to drive people away from the areas in which they are registered to vote altogether, as it was in Kenya's Rift Valley in anticipation of the Kenyan 1992 elections (Cheeseman, 2008b). Equally, it can be targeted not at citizens as voters, but at campaigners, turning some areas into 'no-go zones' for rival parties' activists.

These campaign efforts come at considerable cost. Some of these costs concern campaign materials, such as posters, t-shirts and fliers. Significant sums are spent on hiring, decorating and fuelling vehicles. Allegedly entire fortunes are spent on gifts for voters. Estimates of the cost of campaigning for parliamentary candidates, made with different degrees of rigour, stood at approximately $56,000 in Ghana (*The Cost of Politics in Ghana*, 2018), $145,000 in Uganda (Wilkins, 2016) and $2 million in Nigeria (Owen & Usman, 2015). Not only are these sums high. In general, they are also rising. Rising costs have been reported in countries ranging as far and wide as Uganda (Conroy-Krutz & Logan, 2012), Nigeria (Owen & Usman, 2015), Kenya (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2014) and Benin (Koter, 2017). These patterns are not

uniform. In some elections, parties have struggled to maintain the high levels of finance, and total expenditure has dipped (Vokes & Wilkins, 2016). Studies so far attribute these rises in expenditure to clientelism. The common explanation is that competitive elections drive politicians to give voters more gifts in each successive election (Koter, 2017).

Conclusion

Political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa is conducted with striking ingenuity. Rhetoric, performance, symbols, gifts and policies are employed with remarkable skill and considerable craft. This creativity has given life to a variety of mobilizational forms. Politicians stand on platforms ranging from nationalist to ethnic and from populist to technocratic. Some claim to represent the future, while others draw their legitimacy from the past. Between them, politicians have sought to associate themselves with characteristics across numerous spectra: munificence to humility, modernity to tradition, aggression to reconciliation. African voters have been wooed with a plethora of messages.

Within this diversity are various bounded commonalities. Politicians frequently give gifts, though the style and content of this gift-giving takes numerous forms. Only in a fraction of cases does gift-giving amount to strict clientelist exchanges. Instead, most politicians give gifts to valorise voters and portray themselves as generous and wealthy. Politicians frequently convince voters of their commitment to and aptitude for public policy, and they do so with reference to a set of commonplace issues. A minority of politicians have woven the messages together into populist discourses or strategies. A larger portion have drawn their messages together into nationalist discourses, but these discourses have also appeared in numerous incarnations.

This entry has summarized a literature which is in formation. Until the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there was a paucity of studies that examined electoral mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa. Since then, African electioneering has become the focal point of a growing literature. Consequently, the coverage of political mobilization provided in

the literature and synthesized here is partial and changing. Many new facets of this topic may

be illuminated in the future.

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