Transforming Politics, Dynamic Religion:
Religion's Political Impact in Africa

Rachel Beatty Riedl
Northwestern University, Assistant Professor
r-riedl@northwestern.edu

"Participation in religious organizations is the most prevalent form of associational life in Africa today".[1]   Within the religious landscapes of African countries, Pentecostalism and charismatic expressions of Christianity are increasing at incredible rates of growth.[2] Adherents to Islam make up approximately one-third of the continent's population.[3] Given the social and personal importance of religious membership and the changing demographics it implies, *what are the political consequences* in Africa's transitional and democratic regimes? While an other-worldly focus provides an alternative to direct political action to address the social and political challenges facing the continent, does the growing membership and formation of new civic leaders provide a basis for political engagement? How does the Pentecostal/charismatic or Islamic religious view translate into beliefs about social mobilization, the need for representation, the potential for social service provision, and reforms for democratic rule and good governance? How do changing demographic realities inherent in the startling conversion rates to Pentecostalism impact national stability and peace, particularly in ethnically and religiously pluralistic societies? Finally, how do shifting sources of external support, such as the Islamic Saudi-Iran rivalry for influence among Africa's Muslim population, influence political mobilization and domestic agendas of religious followers?

In order to address the current and potential future impact of Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity and Islam in the political realm, it is necessary to understand patterns of variation across and within the African countries in terms of rates of growth, the forms of associational life that develop within and around particular religious organizations in all of their diversity, the impact that it has for participants' civic vision, and their likelihood to act and mobilize their communities politically based on their shared interests and agendas. Furthermore, it is essential to understand the local, national and global channels of communication networks that provide opportunities for exchange of ideas and resources between the international religious networks of Pentecostal/ charismatic churches and Islamic adherents around the world. These are the variables that are explored here in a preliminary analysis, with the goal of furthering a comprehensive picture of the political impact of global religions in Africa.

THEORY:

This research project is designed to contribute to a valuable and ongoing debate in the social sciences about the role of religion and politics, and the reciprocal influence that each has to shape the other. A vast amount of the existing literature has focused on the developed world, particularly the resurgence of religion in the public sphere in modern societies[4]; within the developing world the influence of colonial missionaries and outside

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[1] Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, Donald Rothchild, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2nd ed 1992, p. 94

[2] World Christian Database (2009); World Christian Encyclopedia (2001); Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Spirit and Power: A 10 Country Survey of Pentecostals.* Pew Research Center, 2006.

[3] Hussein Hassan, *Islam in Africa: CRS Report for Congress.* Library of Congress 2008.

[4] Alfred Stepan "The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the 'Twin Tolerations'", *Arguing Comparative Politics,* Oxford University Press, 2001.
Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* University of Chicago Press, 1994.

forces of religious conversion have shaped the earlier debate to a large degree.[5] The focus of this research project will center on the potential of Christian and Islamic religious networks to shape the future of social mobilization, interest representation and political engagement in Africa.

The starting point for this analysis is that modernity has not caused the overall increase or decrease of religion, but rather its evolution (see below, Fox 2008). Furthermore, while religion is a fully domestic entity that interacts with other social cleavages of race, ethnicity, region, social class, and political position, it also has an international dimension in terms of the resources, networks and ideologies that are shared in a globalized world. I am interested fundamentally in the intersection of these theories, the ways in which global religions are practiced domestically, and what consequent impact they have on the political system.

As we have seen in many regions across the world, religious actors were highly influential in the initial stages of the 'third wave' of democratization (Huntington 1991, Ranger 2008, Gifford 1998). While democratization has proceeded to different extents across the continent, there is no doubt that religious associations have increased latitude to organize for obvious political purpose, in newly pluralistic societies. And with the introduction of multiparty competition, we expect new cleavages to arise and be mobilized in the search for potential voters (Snyder, Mann, Posner). Within religious denominations as well there is new competition, as authoritarian regimes have receded in many cases and opened social space for new forms of religious practice to compete for followers. In Latin America, for example, under the political authoritarianism of the past, the institutional interests of the Catholic Church prevailed through a religious hegemony. With the rise of pluralism, the ideas of civil society – and the personal beliefs of the faithful – as mediated by and through the Church - have increasing influence on the political decisions (Hagopian 2009).

Given these major evolutions in both political and social spheres, it raises a number of questions to be explored in this preliminary attempt, and for future research across the African continent.

Hypothesis 1: Increasingly globalized religions employ new tools of recruitment, strategies of communication, and networks of organization that lead to increased politicization of religion (due to increased capacity as well as the intent of the international 'providers').

Hypothesis 2: Due to the political liberalization and democratization processes that have created newly pluralistic political environments, religious denominations will increasingly create overtly political organizations and pursue a political agenda.

Matthew Wilson, ed. *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic.* Georgetown University Press, 2007.
[5] Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa.* Zed Books Ltd. 1996.
Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. 1998.

Hypothesis 3: Religious parties (and religious organization/ mobilization where such parties are constitutionally proscribed) will be more common in places where a religious minority has experienced historical marginalization.

Hypothesis 4: Religious militancy and violent expressions will be more prevalent under more repressive, authoritarian regimes, that do not allow religious organizations to become political in the public sphere.

Hypothesis 5: Religious doctrine will increasingly be used as an alternative political ideology to protest the failures of certain secular philosophies touted since independence (nationalism, socialism, communism, liberalization and state retrenchment). In tandem, religious organizations will increasingly be sought out to provide not only an alternative political vision, but also an alternative governance, providing public services where the state has failed.

 CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS:

One striking feature of African religious mobilization across the continent has been its overall social importance, and –comparatively – minimal influence in the political sector. This is particularly true in comparison with the United States, in which a much greater proportion of the population would categorize themselves as minimally involved in religion, and yet the political weight of religious organization is felt on both the 'left' and the 'right' (Jewish, Christian, etc). In contrast, one of the perhaps surprising features across the continent of Africa is the degree to which religious cleavages are *not* mobilized as politically salient identities. The crosscutting cleavages of ethnicity are often primarily brought into the political discourse, and only in a few circumstances have the politics of religious divide been preeminent (Nigeria, Sudan).

This is all the more surprising given the incredibly important social role that religion and religiosity plays in Africa. According to Afrobarometer survey respondents in 20 countries, 80% replied that religion is very important, and another 17% suggested that religion is somewhat important. As the World Values Survey data pie charts demonstrate in a question about the importance of God in the respondent's life, the African countries included in the survey equate a much greater significance to belief in God (and, by extension and through other survey data, religious practice). Although the United States tends to view religion as much more important than in France, for example (with only 11% of French responded that religion is very important to them as individuals and 58% of American respondents describing religion as very important), in all of the African countries surveyed over 65% of respondents found religion to be very important personally, and countries such as Rwanda (79%), Ghana (87%) Morocco (88%) and Egypt (97%) had much higher totals.

Figure 1: World Values Survey Question: How important is God in your life? (1 – 10 scale, 1 is not at all important, 10 is very important).
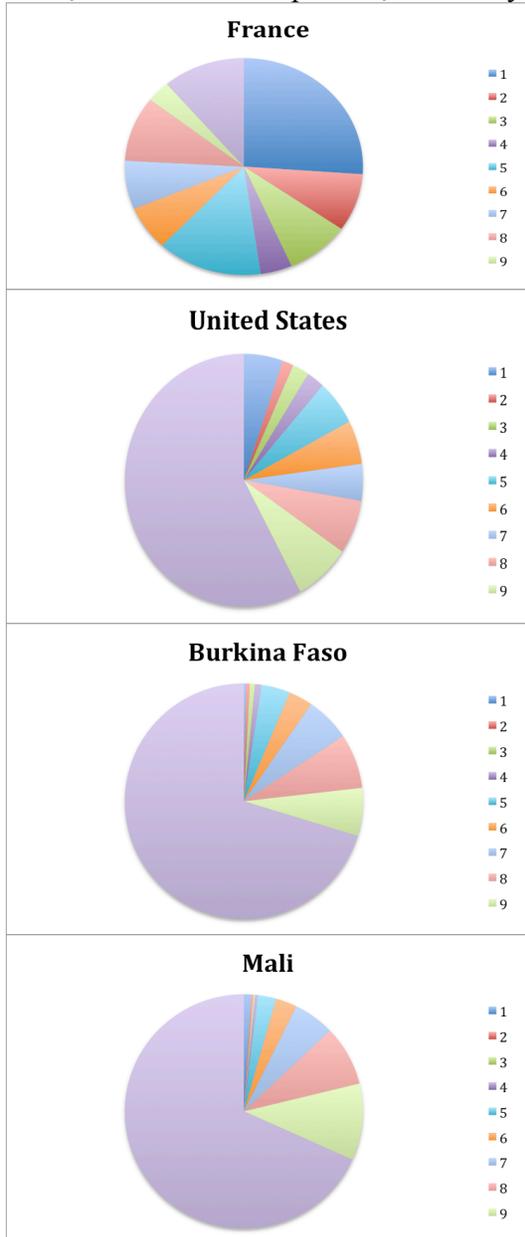
The social significance of religion is compounded in the African context when one considers the reality of weak states and neoliberal cuts in social services. Obadare 2007 claims that across Sub-Saharan African faith-based organizations provide greater than 50% of all health and education services. Furthermore, with the extension of multiparty competition in many places, and the politicizing impact on social identity that often accompanies regime change (Snyder, Mann, Posner), one might expect that religious identities would be especially useful mobilizational tools that would be used for recruitment to support particular candidates, or even the creation of new political parties

to advance an ideologically consistent politics, as with the 'Christian Democrats' common in Europe.

Certainly in some country cases and in some religious organizations we have seen more political mobilization than in others, and in some periods of regime struggle particular religious groups have been more mobilized. This is the key research question for this and future studies: when and why are religious identities politically mobilized, and to what political effect?

To begin to address the question of when and why religious groups become politically mobilized, we can analyze cross-national data trends that allow us at a very broad level to factor in regime type and the competitiveness of the political system, as well as an intra-country division by religious denomination. Within the Afrobarometer (round 4) survey data across 20 countries, there were few significant correlations between religious denomination and interest in public affairs. Overall, those who self-categorized as 'Christians', or 'no religion' had slightly lower levels of interest in public affairs, whereas Presbyterians, Evangelicals, and Muslims were above average interest in public affairs. When sorting by type of individual, 'religious leaders' had the highest level of interest in public affairs, 'active members' the next highest, whereas 'inactive' and not a member were sequentially lower. Roman Catholics, Muslims, Pentecostals, and Evangelicals had higher than average affiliation to political parties, but so did those with 'no religious affiliation'.

The World Values Survey data showed significant variation in respondents' ranking of the importance of politics by religious domination within each country. In South Africa, Pentecostals (35%), Roman Catholics (26%) and, to a lesser degree, Protestants (22%) responded that politics was very important in life, whereas evangelicals and Muslims were much less interested in that realm (19 and 14% responded that politics is very important in life). In Egypt the overwhelming number of respondents were, of course, Muslim, but only 9% said that politics is very important (and 6% of Christians). This highlights the importance of regime context, once again. However, in Ethiopia, an overwhelming 47% of Muslims claimed that politics was very important, 37% of Orthodox, and 36% of Protestants agreed. This was surprising given the lack of competitive politics imposed by the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). In Ghana, the Muslims responded in much greater numbers affirming the importance of politics, with 32%, whereas only 23% and 22% or Protestants and Roman Catholics felt politics was very important. What is not clear, however, is whether the 'importance' of politics transfers into a politically engaged religious identity, and a particular politics that is meant to improve the condition of the Islamic community or suggest a politics that is ideologically derived from the religious sphere. The brief case study of Ghana below suggests no evidence of the latter. In Zambia the Muslim community had only 11% responding that politics was very important, whereas the Protestants and Roman Catholics were at 22 and 23%.

This brief overview gives us only a very vague picture of the cross-continental dynamics, but it does suggest that in some places particular denominations are more and less organized and politically engaged than in others.

Another avenue of research has suggested that different types of religious organizations have been more or less successful in engaging in pro-democratic politics depending on the type of regime they were confronting (Ranger 2008). In the immediate post-colonial period, mainline churches were on the sidelines of political activism, and were largely status quo. In the late 1980's and the beginning of the 'third wave' democratic transitions that were attempted across the continent, mainline churches were some of the only organized social networks that could take an anti-authoritarian stand, and in many cases the mainline churches played a uniquely important role in the democratizing process. They spoke out in opposition against dictators, helped to chair conferences creating new constitutions, and mobilized their members to support the democratic reform. However, as Ranger contends, the hierarchy of mainline churches had made it difficult for them to be actively engaged in the current stage of democratic transition, that is embedding democratic practice. In many of these cases, evangelicals have been more politically animated in their crusades against corruption, seeking transparency and justice. Thus, the structure of the religious denomination may be particularly suited for some types of political engagement more so than others.

Finally, a separate indicator of the salience of religion for political outcomes returns us to a state-centric view. Jonathan Fox (2008) creates an index of government in religion, which measures the extent to which the state gives preferential treatment to some religions and/or discriminates against others. In a sweeping analysis of 175 governments and every world region, Fox concludes that government involvement in (and regulation of) religion is ubiquitous across the world, and has increased substantially in recent decades – in marked contrast to modernization and secularization theories that have predicted the demise of religion in the public sphere. In comparative analysis, government involvement in regulating religious affairs is relatively much more limited in Africa as compared to other world regions. I presume that this is in part a result of historical sequence in which the independent African states were established at the height of secularization in Europe, and in tandem with the domestic political agenda to push a new nationalist identity, the new constitutions were particularly free from historical contingencies of religious regulation (see also Villalon 2010 and van de Walle and Bleck 2010 regarding the legacy of colonial education in transmitting a particular vision of laïcité to the newly emerging elites). In other world regions, a majority of the states support a particular religion, but in Sub-Saharan Africa the majority offer accommodation to multiple religions and give no preference to any religion and/or do not place significant limitations on religion. Sub-Saharan states also exhibit a high level of tolerance for minority religions, in general. Whether this is caused by a particular historical or demographic phenomenon, or is merely reflective of the fact that religion has thus far not been highly politicized in many countries is a research question that remains open for further exploration.

According to the Government in Religion (GIR) index, Sub-Saharan African states also exhibit a high level of tolerance for minority religions. Where religious organizations have been banned, it is usually in response to their increasingly political activities, and government perceptions of the threat of potential rising opposition (examples include Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Eritrea).

In Africa, as compared to other world regions, there are relatively few states that have official religions. All except 1 of these (Zambia, see below), are Muslim states. Fox has found that where states impose a religious monopoly, it is correlated with reduced religious participation. However, the effects for political mobilization are complex, as we will discuss in the case of Zambia. In terms of state regulations, Sub-Saharan Africa includes some of the world's most secular Muslim states (Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Burkina Faso, etc). Elsewhere in the world states with Muslim majorities are largely unable to remain neutral with regard to religion in the public sphere (this is true for all religious traditions, but particularly so for Islam). As Villalon (2010) has aptly demonstrated, this suggests the high salience of correctly interpreting the state-society dynamics in these cases.

Another interesting trend in this data describes the continued, and increasing levels of missionary activity in SSA by both Christian and Muslim groups. Muslim activities focus on getting states with Muslim populations to be more Islamic, to get individual Muslims to be more religious, encouraging Muslim minorities to rebel against states, even where conflicts are not religiously motivated (Ivory Coast, Tanzania), and increased support for international Muslim terror groups. Christian activities tend to focus on individuals and the private sphere, also working like the Muslim missionaries through education and welfare services to recruit. Increasing state restrictions on proselytizing are probably in reaction to this increased missionary activity.

The general patterns indicated by the index of GIR suggest that modernity is causing a decline in some parts of the religious economy, as has been predicted by many in the social sciences, but that other parts of the religious economy are reacting to compensate (increasing religious fundamentalism, significant state action to regulate religion, etc) Not surprisingly, modernity has caused religion to evolve in complex ways. "Both secularization and its opposite, sacralization, are occurring. Religion is a dynamic, diverse, and multifaceted phenomenon, which exists in a society that is constantly changing and evolving. Consequently, religion must also constantly change and evolve, at least with respects to its relationship with society".   (Fox 2008 p. 20).

COUNTRY CASES COMPARED: KENYA, SENEGAL and ZAMBIA

KENYA: Increasing Politicization of Muslim Minorities

In Kenya religion has played an important political role, particularly in times of regime crisis. In many cases, the religious sector was among the few forces that dared to publicly express dissatisfaction with the government. This echoes the role of the church across the continent, as playing a key role in the anti-authoritarian struggles and helping to drive political reform to allow multi-party competition. Muslims in Kenya also were mobilized in a context of political authoritarianism and limited space for protest. This analysis traces the emergence of an increasingly politicized and militant Islamic political force in Kenya, which emerged as a response to social marginalization and political repression.

Muslims increasingly perceive discrimination and marginalization, which has led to their growing anti-government stance and overall politicization of Islam in Kenya. Muslims in Kenya have responded to the overall politicization of religion throughout the

country by redoubling their political activities, particularly through Muslim activists and preachers joining veteran politicians in the public realm, soliciting support. Greater Muslim engagement in national politics should not, however, be misconstrued as pursuing an Islamic political agenda. Rather, Muslims are organizing politically to address their perceived disadvantaged social position and have adapted deftly to changing regime circumstances throughout several stages.

Historical Overview of Muslim political organization

Initially, colonial administrators were known to be helpful and sympathetic to Arab Muslims over African Muslims. During colonial rule African Muslims, like the majority of other communities in Kenya, suffered disenfranchisement (Mwakimako 2003). Following the preferential treatment of Arab Muslims, the African Muslims refused to support the secession agenda of the Arab Muslims along the coast and joined other Kenyans in the earliest nationalistic political organizations such as the Kenya African Union (KAU), the Kenya African National Union (KANU), and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). Following independence there have been multiple attempts to forge a united Islamic front to address their perceived marginalization and to advocate for improved political status and services, but the racial and ethnic cleavages within the Muslim community that stem from the colonial period have presented an ongoing obstacle to their unity and political strength.

Muslims were integrated into the post-colonial political regimes of Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki, as the new independent state attempted incorporation to create a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Religious affiliation and ethnic identity as well as regional basis tend to overlap in Kenya, as the coast and northeastern regions are associated with ethnic groups such as the Digo and the Swahili that are largely Muslim and the hinterlands are generally Christian, such as the Luo and Kikuyu. Thus as politicians sought to balance competing demands, they recruited according to regional, ethnic and/or religious identities. However, given that approximately 86% of the population is Christian (Afrobarometer 2010; CIA 2010), and perhaps around 10% of the country is Muslim, many of the political competitions in independent Kenya have been dominated by competing inland ethnic groups, which are mostly Christian. Following struggles for power (and often ethnic tension), the government formed thereafter has continually demonstrated a preference for their own ethnic composition, which has resulted in an under-representation of Kenyan Muslims in government. The Muslim population has thus claimed that these regimes have undermined them and led to their collective marginalization.

Muslim groups attempted to unite under an umbrella body shortly after independence, the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM). The creation of the SUPKEM did not provide a significant change in the relationship between Muslims and the state, as SUPKEM tended to side with the government authorities whenever Muslim interests conflicted with those of the state. (Ndzovu 2010). The most significant Muslim organization in political terms was the unregistered Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK), founded in January 1992, which marked the shift from peaceful strategies of organization to the increasing militancy in the struggle for representation. Most importantly the IPK is representative of an increased political activism by Kenyan Muslims and the crystallizing radicalization of sections of the population, largely triggered by the shifting regime

context in that period and the rising campaigns for political reforms throughout the country.

The authoritarian state persecuted religious leaders who were critical. Under the Moi regime (1982 – 2002), the state had perfected the art of control over the lives of its citizens. In general the incumbent regime viewed criticism by religious bodies as encroachment into its political domain and insisted that religious leaders should not indulge themselves in politics since it is an arena exclusively for politicians (Sheikh Ali Shee, Ndzvou 2005). The call for separation between religion and politics was meant at that time to largely restrict the political engagement of religious leaders rather than to undermine a particular faith.

In response to a repressive authoritarian context and the denial of IPK's registration, the organization resorted to more forceful means in their activism. The politicization of Islam in Kenya is a reflection of the exclusionary-repressive politics of the various Kenyan regimes (Ndzovu 2010). It is ironic yet indicative of the explanatory power of regime context that the Kenyan government's fear of Islamic oriented political competition led the regime to proscribe the IPK, yet the organization began as an attempt to address perceived political mobilization, and became more oppositional and militant following the refusal of their recognition. The government has also exploited racial differences among the Islamic community, through clandestine support of the United Muslims of Africa (UMA) as the authentic voice of the 'African' Muslims as opposed to the 'Arab' element that purportedly dominated the IPK.

In the new regime context (post-Moi), forces are re-calibrating in the pluralistic environment as they compete for advantage. Political leaders are increasingly expressing private religious practice in a very public showing, enhancing the bond between Church and State, integrating religion with politics as leaders seek to mobilize support. As a result of political liberalization and increased freedom of association, religion has taken a prominent role in the public domain (Ndzovu 2010).

Following political liberalization, Islam in Kenya has produced the most politically visible form of associational activity. The common view among Muslims is that there is no distinction between religion and politics in Islam. That has led to the push for the introduction of Shari'a law in many cases (as in Nigeria), and it also helps to explain why Muslims have been more politicized than many other religious denominations, seeking both an ideologically distinct political outcome as well seeking social services that improve their welfare.

SENEGAL: Political and Religious Democratization

In Senegal, an increasing public religious influence in politics appears to be the normal outgrowth of liberalization in the political system, as religious associations and leaders engage in open competition for political support and resources, and are speaking more directly to the political agenda of the country. Contra Huntingtonian theories about the incompatability of Muslim societies and democratic practice, Senegal and neighboring countries Mali and Niger have been important examples of the construction and practice of democratic systems in West Africa (Villalon 2003).

In Senegal, political liberalization resulted in a rapid expansion of religious influence in public life. Debates about the appropriate role and place of religion in a democratic political order have flourished, and taken a form of public discussion and negotiation. Political liberalization facilitated the organization and mobilization of social groups, empowered them in efforts to exert control over the political agenda and shape outcomes of reform. The debates have largely been about two different visions of the emerging political order: the secular versus the religious construction of the state. Religious groups were initially adverse to the discussion, preferring to keep it out of the public realm. The default position for many religious leaders was to revert to prior modes of political and religious elite interaction, in which religious leaders were granted autonomy and resources to maintain their religious authority, in return for political support. But with the expansion of religious organizations, and the realization of religious groups' numerical weight in the new democratic order, religious leaders soon engaged heartily in the debate and argued for their position of a more religiously infused state order within the democratic framework. The fundamental issues of debate thus far have centered on issues of family code and gender equality. Questions in the democratic political order arise regarding the degree to which certain elements of democracy extend universal rights, which are essential elements to the political order, and which must be enshrined in the legal structure, and which elements should be adapted through the democratic process to reflect dominant cultural values. Most critically, the debate has emerged as a process of public negotiation, in which salient social issues are brought to the fore, and all voices could be openly expressed and arguments could be evaluated for their merit and support within the community (Villalon 2003). For our purposes, the key point is that religious groups are increasingly politically aware and active with a particular programmatic agenda. This is a divergence from authoritarian era interactions between the government and religious elites, focused on patronage benefits and symbiotic support.

A parallel trend has signaled that the interaction of the political and religious arenas has consequences for both the shaping of the new democratic system, but also has implications for the increasing democratization of religion. Given the increased political liberties and civil rights, Senegal has witnessed an associated rise in the number of new religious movements, a greater array of ideological possibilities, and more frequent and public question of religious authorities. Simultaneously, an increasing number of religious critiques of the public order signals a more assertive role for religion in public life in Senegal.

ZAMBIA: The Emergence of a Christian Nation and its Political Impact
The Zambian case is a particularly interesting case of state involvement in religion, which has spurred unintended political mobilization and regime consequences. The Christian population in Zambia (approximately 85%) was well mobilized in the democratization process, in an anti-authoritarian position that was common throughout the continent (Gifford1998). The regime transition culminated in the election of the opposition party candidate, the MMD's Frederick Chiluba in 1991. Although the evangelical Chiluba had large church support because his faith commitment was compared favorably against that of former President Kaunda (who had turned to 'Eastern'

religious practices), Chiluba did not come to political power on a 'Christian' ticket. Rather, he was the candidate of the heterogeneous opposition coalition, which included the academic elites, businessmen, and union members, from which Chiluba himself entered politics. Christian multimedia gave Chiluba extensive coverage that effectively introduced him to the masses, and "Christians also played a prominent role in promoting peaceful discussion among the different political parties, which led to the constitutional changes mandating multiparty elections in 1991" (Phiri 2008). The churches also formed the Christian Churches Monitoring Group, which was significant in increasing transparency and conducted elections that were largely free and fair. So, while the Christians were mobilized in an anti-authoritarian regime transition mode, Chiluba was the candidate of the opposition, and drew support from a wide swath of mobilized society.

It is following his election that Chiluba unilaterally decided to declare Zambia a 'Christian nation', "yet with full religious freedom for all faiths" (Johnstone 2001, p. 686). This ceremony was private and hastily convened, both because Chiluba correctly predicted that it was going to be controversial, and also because he felt it was an individual decisions (something that he had promised to God if he were to win the elections, to lead the country), and did not consider it a "political" function.

However, the move certainly had political consequences. The declaration generated serious conflict among the three main Christian bodes and between the churches and politicians (Phiri 2008). The Roman Catholic Church and the Christian Council of Zambia, as well as some evangelical groups, who in principle supported the decision, argued against the process. They maintained that there should have been public debate given Zambia's new status as a democracy. Pentecostal circles were very supportive because their political vision supported the rule of God coming to Zambia through Chiluba (which corresponded with a doctrine to not criticize Chiluba as true Christians, and those who raised critiques were enemies of God's government and therefore pseudo-Christians. The logical extension for these groups was that Zambia has become a chosen nation of God, and consequently, the ruling party stands for everything that is good, and any opposition is from the devil (Phiri 2008, p. 106).

Who was invited to the hastily arranged ceremony also created discord between the churches, who were struggling for state recognition. The Pentecostals were pleased, and believed they would no longer be marginalized. Other church bodies felt neglected, although they had previously been in forefront of politics.

Although Chiluba's declaration may have seen as a personal statement of his government's rule, the President took the final step to formalize the declaration by amending the constitution to name Zambia as a Christian nation. Although many again clamored for debate on this issue and held firm that any constitutional change should be passed by referendum according to the democratic nature of the country, Chiluba forced the item through the majority party dominated Parliament, who approved the measure easily (in tandem with the 'parentage' clause for presidential candidates, which barred Kaunda from running in the 1996 elections).

This declaration has had two interesting and largely unintended political consequences, particularly among the evangelical community but also among the larger Christian community. First, by stimulating an intensely political debate about the religious nature of the state, it has increased overall religious mobilization in political

matters. This is especially important if we consider that historically the mainline churches (which are said to over-represent the 'middle class' elements of Zambian society) had politically been more engaged, and with the evangelical character of Chiluba's rule, the mobilization shifted to the more 'marginalized' populations that were followers in these denominations.

Secondly, because Chiluba laid out a Christian vision of a moral and just democratic government, he established a criteria of good governance upon which the Christian population should judge his effective rule. In doing so, he mobilized civil society to lay a trenchant critique of his rule in later years.

In these two key arenas, the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation has had significant and long lasting consequences. Other political and social consequences of Chiluba's personal position included foreign policy decisions (re-establishing ties with Israel, and severing linkages with Iran and Iraq); appointing pastors as members of the cabinet; creating increased tension between the Muslim minority and the Christian majority, as Muslims felt increasingly threatened in the new state context; encouraging an influx of missionaries into Zambia and holding evangelistic crusades at government expense; creating a Minister and government department of Christian affairs, and providing discretionary funding to churches and other social organizations that support the president (Phiri 2008 p. 105).

Given all of the support that Chiluba provided to the evangelical community, it is highly significant that the religious organizations became increasingly *political,* but were also divided on whether their role was to support the President unequivocally or whether to critique his rule according to the notions of Christian governance that he had provided, specifically seeking improvements in poverty reduction and quality of life improvements, as well as a standard of just and moral behavior (which easily became an anti-corruption position). Political activity and organization did not translate directly to unyielding loyalty for the President in many cases. "In the ten years of Chiluba's rule, the role of the churches in relation to the state has expanded. The churches, representing the poor and the marginalized, have been increasingly outspoken in public… and demonstrate strong signs of the vibrancy of Zambian democracy and civil society" (Phiri 2008, p. 125)

A final note suggests that Christian mobilization is a powerful political force, but one that remains difficult for political leaders to capitalize on. A hugely popular evangelical Christian, Nevers Mumba, had a supportive domestic following in large part due to his religious television outreach campaigns. Mumba was initially supportive of Chiluba and often gave him a religious platform at Victory Conventions, to gain political support. However, as governance issues continued to deteriorate in Zambia, Mumba decided to enter politics and formed his own party, which the mission of cultivating 'leaders of integrity'. Given his large social following, it is salient that Mumba failed to win a seat in parliament in the 1996 elections with his nascent party. His religious following did not translate directly into a political following. Mumba tried to capitalize on the advancement of the Christian nation idea to attract the support of the masses, and he was a well known individual social leader, but he did not succeed in changing the overarching structure of political competition in Zambia to focus on religious issues, or even mobilizing enough support on that issue to win his own parliamentary platform.

In sum, the intense increase in political activism among the religious communities has played out in a debate about the proper balance between state's role in religion and

the criteria for judging effective leadership. Chiluba managed to make politics a live issue for evangelicals, whereas prior to his campaign they were largely apolitical. Many evangelicals seek a Christian leader, one who can improve life for the masses. Secular and church media alike continue to debate what it means for Zambia to be a Christian nation, and dictatorship and corruption continue to be the enemies of both the church and of democracy.

CONCLUSION

These short vignettes are neither comprehensive internally nor representative of continental trends, per se. However, they are fascinating and instructive in a number of different dimensions. They lend credence to the idea that religious organizations are mobilizing simultaneously on a number of fronts in newly pluralistic environments. They are simultaneously seeking to increase or retain their own followers internally, and must be relevant to the domestic populations in that capacity. They are increasingly politically mobilized, both encouraged by (Zambia, Senegal) and in reaction to (Kenya) the regime context. It is not surprising perhaps, that where religious organization has taken up the social cause and mobilized politically in order to address perceived social marginalization, if they are further repressed politically and suppressed of a voice, the remaining path is often increasing militancy (Kenya).

This paper has not provided extensive evidence of the international linkages, other than to suggest that resources and support flow in both directions. In the case of Zambia, the 'Christian nation' declaration opened the floodgates to increased missionary activity, often with government support. The evangelical leaders who have challenged Chiluba often had ongoing relations with American evangelical churches, and exchanged strategies of mixing the religious vision with political activism. In Kenya, the emerging political Islamist agenda has international linkages, connecting to a global discourse of perceived marginalization.

The cross-national data suggests that religion is taking new forms in the increasingly pluralistic regime contexts, and in response governments are increasingly finding it necessary to regulate certain aspects of religious practice – although in many cases they do so to limit the possibility of increased tensions and abate potential cleavages.

The politicization of new forms of Christianity and Islam also suggest the potential for increased civil society amongst a different sector of the African population. As David Martin describes, "we have in Pentecostalism and all its associated movements the religious mobilization of the culturally despised" (2002, 167). This is meant to imply the possibility of the social and political representation of the impoverished and marginalized members of the community for whom politics to date has failed. "This will be the real test of democracy in Africa" (Ranger 2008).

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