PASTORS, PULPITS, PEWS, AND POLITICS: RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGIES OF DEMOCRATIC EMPOWERMENT

By

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To the beautiful people of Kenya
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PASTORS, PULPITS, PEWS, AND POLITICS: RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGIES OF DEMOCRATIC EMPOWERMENT

By

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Chair: Leonardo Villalón
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This dissertation explores types and forms of political influence churches have in Africa. The study supplements the studies on church-state relations in Africa with a closer examination of the political significance of the social learning environment and social capital found within African churches. I argue that most churches can be considered schools of political socialization, but not all of them are necessarily schools of democracy. Regardless of their emphasis on external engagement with the state, churches still practice internal and external religious pedagogies that can either empower the democratic process or retard democratization. This dissertation explores the attributes of these different religious pedagogies and thus contributes an explanatory framework for better analysis and comparison of why and how different churches can help or hinder the development of democratic values and principles.

Based upon 13 months of field research in Kenya, the study relies on a qualitative-interpretative research methodology that works from the ground up to develop concepts and theories, which when woven together with current scholarship, contributes to an understanding of how churches (one of the largest civil society organization across Africa) represent a social learning environment that shape political
belief and behavior. This study examines the following three structural domains to better analyze these internal church dynamics: Pulpit to Pew (Sunday sermons and activities); Pew to Pew (religious life outside Sunday services); and Pastor to Pulpit (theological education of pastors). Important cultural and historical analysis undergirds the development of these religious pedagogies of democratic empowerment and disempowerment.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE STAGE

Religious and Political Narratives in Kenya

In July of 1997, tear gas canisters tore through the sanctuary of Nairobi’s All Saints Cathedral. Reverend Timothy Njoya ushered the congregation outside to escape the ensuing chaos caused by the irritating gas, but his presence was soon noted by President Moi’s security detail. A scuffle ensued between Njoya and men armed with clubs. Njoya was beaten to the ground, kicked, taunted and dehumanized in the gutter of one of Nairobi’s main thoroughfares.\(^1\) Fortunately he escaped serious injury, but later encounters with the same security forces would put Njoya into a coma.\(^2\) What had elicited such reaction and hostilities? Njoya, a prominent Presbyterian minister, scholar, and vocal critic of President Moi, was commemorating the seventh anniversary of the Saba-Saba demonstrations in 1990.\(^3\) The demonstrations resulted in hundreds being killed, thousands taken to court, activist seeking exile, and Kenya’s future Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, jailed for over a year. These confrontations were not new to Njoya, for he advocated as early as 1986 for political pluralism, but by upsetting the traditionally amicable church-state relations, Njoya represented a religious thorn in Moi’s regime and a political thorn within the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.\(^4\)

\(^1\) This scene was caught on video and can be found here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBg6cllK3Ts](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBg6cllK3Ts)

\(^2\) Interview: Timothy Njoya, March 10, 2011

\(^3\) *Saba* is seven in Swahili, *Saba-Saba* refers specifically to the July 7\(^{th}\) demonstrations.

\(^4\) Njoya has since retired, but remains active as a social, religious and political critic. His book, *The Divine Tag on Democracy* (2003), represents some of the most radical and profound political theology from the continent.
This anecdote represents common narratives about the public and external aspects of church-state relations in Kenya—one that has garnered much scholarly attention. These narratives examine conflict between religious and political elite and is premised on the idea that churches’ explicitly shape members’ political attitudes and actions as it relates to specific political events such as an election or referendum.

A contrasting narrative receiving less research attention is demonstrated by Pastor Linda Ochola-Adolwa, executive pastor at Mavuno Church in Nairobi. Ochola-Adolwa is a politically active pastor, but she is less focused on the church-state realm. Her approach, along with Mavuno, is to build capacity among the congregation to actively participate in the social, economic, and political development of Kenya. The following statement captures a common theme running throughout her sermons and represents a different form of political influence emanating from Mavuno Church:

Should we just leave politics to the politicians? Should a few individuals dictate how our lives in the city are lived? We cannot afford to be passive observers while all hell breaks loose around us. Nairobi is not neutral; you must influence or be influenced (2010a:26-27).

This dissertation focuses on the internal nature of churches and their role and influence in Kenya. As one of the most prominent members of civil society in Africa, their internal workings reveal important insights about political socialization in Kenya. While the historical legacy and influence of pastors like Reverend Njoya are important, Pastor Linda’s biography is important because it identifies three domains of political socialization that provide structural organization for this study. These three domains

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5 Appendix A provides a more detailed biography, but in summary, she grew up in a political home, with her father serving as a Kenyan Member of Parliament in the late 80s, early 90s. Her political acumen sharpened when assisting her father’s numerous campaigns, but it was during her theological education that the concept of social justice became a growing passion. Her sermons typically contain a call for social action and Mavuno Church’s home groups utilize an extensive curriculum she developed on social justice.
include: Pulpit to Pew, Pew to Pew, and Pastor to Pulpit. The first domain consists primarily of the Sunday church service, but also looks at church structure and governance more widely. The second domain examines the role of religion outside of the Sunday service and purview of the pastor. The last domain represents the professional development of clergy.

This introductory chapter explains these domains in greater detail, but also give an overview of the key questions and arguments; situate the study in the scholarly context of religion and politics; address the study’s rationale and key terminology used; discuss my methodology and research design; and conclude with short summaries of each chapter.

Key Questions, Primary Arguments, and Scholarly Context,

Key Questions

At the macro-level this dissertation asks two key questions: what types of political influence do churches have in Africa; and in what forms does this influence occur? Political scientists traditionally consider churches to be an important component of civil society; and within Africa, churches have even been referred to as “schools of democracy” (Eklöv 1999, Gifford 1988, Mukonyora 2008, Ranger 2008, and Shah 2008), but if churches are truly political schools, their teaching approach or pedagogies raise important empirical questions that can be disaggregated into three micro-level questions: 1) What are the political implications of sermons and church structure? 2) What residual influence do churches have on days other than Sunday, i.e. beyond their one designated day of teaching? and 3) If pastors are more akin to teachers, what influences how pastors think politically? These micro-level questions correspond respectively to the three structural domains (Pew to Pew, Pastor to Pulpit, and Pulpit to
Pew) and will be addressed in greater detail in each respective chapter devoted to these domains.

**Primary Arguments**

Based on 13 months of field research in Kenya, I argue, contrary to some scholars, that a majority of churches in Kenya are not in fact “schools of democracy,” but instead practice internal religious pedagogies that actually hinder the development of democratic values and principles. Nevertheless, there are examples of churches that practice what I refer to as internal Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE). By this I mean the private and public model utilized by religious leaders and institutions that employ creative versions of power that guide congregation members in a reimagining process that fosters strong democratic values and principles. When combined with active social and political engagement, it is appropriate to consider such churches as “schools of democracy.” I contend the end result is that these democratic empowering churches lead to an increased civil society capacity to build and strengthen democracy in Kenya, Africa, and even beyond the continent.

My arguments are embedded within a wide body of scholarship, but I will briefly mention three here. Bayart claims that “[c]ivil society can only transform its relation to the state through the organisation of a new and autonomous structures, the creation of a new cultural fabric and the elaboration of a conceptual challenge to power monopolies” (1986:120). I claim that churches modeling RPDE are examples of these autonomous structures that can create new cultural fabrics capable of challenging hegemonic state monopolies. However, according to Chabal and Daloz, a key problem is that the divide between the state and civil society in Africa is not well delineated, due in part to the state being “so poorly institutionalized, so weakly emancipated from
society, that there is very little scope for conceptualizing politics in Africa as a contest between a functionally strong state and a homogeneously coherent civil society” (1999:21).

My arguments are premised on the idea that churches, regardless of their emphasis on external political engagement, still practice internal and external religious pedagogies that can either empower the democratic process or retard democratization. This dissertation explores the attributes of these different religious pedagogies and thus contributes an explanatory framework for better analysis and comparison of why and how different churches can help or hinder the development of democratic values and principles.

In unpacking my arguments a bit more, I want to elaborate where I focused my attention in this study and why. I posit that the concept of churches as “schools of democracy” over generalizes and explicitly focuses on the external and public relationship between church and state. Churches are schools of political values and principles, but not necessarily democratic ones. The reason for this oversimplification is that, with the exception of Eklöv (1999), most scholars typically equate churches’ public political theologies with the activities of a school. I agree that churches can be compared to a political school, but a distinction needs to be made between internal church structures, practices, and leadership development and the external social/political engagements driven by particular political theologies. My study identifies

6 RPDE and RPDD do not represent complete dichotomies. Churches in reality practice elements of both, but I would argue some churches are closer to one end or another of the continuum.

7 Studies in the United States and Latin America demonstrate the importance of examining the internal dynamics of churches; and provide various forms of evidence arguing churches should be considered political schools and that religious behavior and belief are important determinants of political engagement.
a range of religious pedagogies (practices, structures, and ideologies) that can either help or hinder the development of democratic values and principles.

On one side of this continuum are what I identify as Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE)—true “schools of democracy” and on the opposite spectrum are Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD), or what could be more akin to “schools of authoritarianism.” As the inverse of RPDE, RPDD represents the private and public model of religious leaders and institutions that disempower the development of democratic values and principles in followers. 8

Other scholars who have not used the idea of churches as political schools *per se*, still credit churches with being instrumental in the third wave of democracy of the early 1990s. I make the case that upon closer examination this public engagement and call for greater democratization within Kenya ensued at the behest of certain more socially active clerics (Njoya being a prominent example) who had some public support, yet often not the support of their respective denominations’ governing bodies, nor the general support of most Christians across Kenya. 9 So while these few but prominent religious leaders were disproportionately responsible for pushing for multi-party elections, a majority of the churches remained indifferent, silent, or actively supportive of the authoritarian governments in power. While I address arguments made by scholars who have already studied churches in Africa modelling RPDD, I chose to focus primarily on several case studies that exemplify RPDE. 10 Such an emphasis allows me

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8 Table 3-1 in Chapter 3 provides a detailed list of the comparative characteristics of RPDD and RPDE.

9 Njoya was eventually defrocked by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

10 There was also a practical element involved in my case selection process. Churches modeling RPDE were naturally open to letting an outsider “soak and poke” in their presence. Mavuno’s unprecedented access enabled a more thorough examination of their structures and practices.
to build from the ground up a conceptual framework that can be used to compare the various internal attributes of churches as political schools.

In short, I am primarily interested in the internal governing structures, practices, and ideologies of churches and less so the more external and public aspect of church-state relations. However, in practice it is not always possible to separate the internal dynamics from the external, so my case studies do incorporate discussions of external social and political engagements. For example, in my discussion of Mavuno Church painting a police station or refurbishing a prison, I contend these are activities of political engagement initiated by particular theological perspectives.

A majority of the field work was focused on case studies oriented around RPDE. In order to complete the other end of the continuum, I utilize existing scholarly sources as well as a portion of my field data to elaborate on RPDD. Evidence better explaining RPDD is found at the end of Chapter 3. Chapters 4 through 6 develop and support my primary arguments on RPDE and rely upon data gathered over a thirteen-month period of being embedded in the activities of Sunday services, church staff meetings, weekly home groups, social outreach events, and theological schools.

**Scholarly Context**

Broadly speaking this study explores the internal political role of churches in order to determine how they influence Kenyan politics.\(^{11}\) The study pays particular attention to the fact that in the African context, religion and politics “are parts of the same terrain [where] power flows between the visible material world and invisible

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\(^{11}\) There are four areas of research in Africa that give important context to this study: 1) religion and politics in Kenya; 2) religion and politics in Africa; 3) religion in Africa; and 4) politics in Africa. In the process of highlighting studies that advanced my own understandings, this study demonstrates where most scholarship has focused and how their institutional focus overlooks important internal dynamics related to church structure, leadership, and congregational practices.
spiritual world” and “the political kingdom contains a politically significant spiritual terrain” (Schatzberg 2001:74). In analyzing this shared terrain, this study primary contributes to a better understanding of how churches, as social learning environments, contribute to the political socialization process in Africa. In the process a conceptual and explanatory framework for better comparing the political role of churches is introduced (RPDE/RPDD). A general theme throughout the study wrestles with how to conceptualize this political socialization process occurring in churches.

Social scientists and theologians have typically addressed religion and politics in Kenya by exploring the relationship between religious organizations and the state. This more public and external focus addresses the competition, conflict, cooperation, and change within church-state dynamics (Choge 2008; Gecaga 2007; Gitari 1988; Gitari and Knighton 2001; Kavulla 2008; Knighton 2009; Lonsdale et al. 1978; Lonsdale 2005, 2009; Mugambi and Küschner-Pelkmann 2004; Ngunyi 1995; Njoya 1987a/b; Okullu 1974; Parsitau 2008).

12 Deacon’s recent work demonstrates this shared terrain (2015a/b).

13 From a historical perspective, three studies provide a comprehensive examination of Kenya’s church-state relationships. Throup (1995) examined the politics of Kenyan church-state conflict between 1978 and 1990 and argued that in the mid-80s the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) increasingly marginalized clergy who over stepped a government imposed boundary for debating social and political issues. Sabar (1995, 2002) focused on the Kenyan Anglican Church and extensively researched the political role the Anglicans played between 1963 and 1994. Her project showed how the average Kenyan sought solace within the Anglican Church communities, particularly when political authoritarianism curtailed active avenues of protest, but also how the Anglican clergy leveraged the church’s social services in health and education to gain an important voice in the political realm. More recently, John Karanja (2008) explored Kenyan Evangelicals’ polarized attitudes toward democracy. His in-depth study of the socio-theological characteristics of evangelical institutions led to the development of three useful typologies of political theology: activist institutions that have criticized the state; loyalist institutions that remain allied with the state; and finally apolitical institutions that remain aloof from state politics. Two scholars who do look more critically at the internal nature of churches include Paul Gifford and Gregory Deacon. As I developed my continuum of religious pedagogies of political empowerment, they both contributed important insight, especially to the concept of Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD). I will revisit their work in greater detail when I discuss RPDD in Chapter 3.
Like much of the literature in Kenya, scholarship that looks more broadly at religion and politics across Africa is primarily historical, descriptive, or normative in nature and again often centers on the external actions of the church and does not typically attempt to understand religious influence at the personal and practical levels. Addressing religion beyond Africa, influential scholars have contributed their understandings and different elements of their theories still hold sway among certain schools of thought. Geertz’s focus on the cultural dimensions of religious analysis is an approach most useful for this study, especially his differentiation between the scope and force of religion (1968). As a cultural anthropologist, he brings in-depth experience studying religion in Indonesia and Morocco and provides the following definition of religion that will be important throughout this study:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (1973:90).


15 Modern understanding of the functions of religion can be traced back to Freud, who claimed religion met an unconsciousness emotional need privately and publicly was a form of social control providing a brake on society. Scholars then building on Freud’s ideas suggested that strong religious beliefs lead to greater authoritarian political systems. Durkheim, a sociologist writing in the late 19th/early 20th centuries, defined religion as a collective phenomenon and a cohesive mechanism that society needs to form attachments. It also makes social order sacred and the profane is incorporated into sacred obligations, supported by the divine. Marx, like Durkheim, viewed religion as an agent of legitimation, but arrives at this conclusion from a materialistic perspective. Religion, representing a “false consciousness” distracts people from their “true consciousness,” or what according to Marx should be their economic/political situation being exploited. Weber brings a different perspective, in that he examines religion from a substantive approach versus the more functional approach of other scholars like Durkheim. This led to his belief that every religious value/assumption has something that addresses the economic/political systems (Pals 2006).
Underlying Rationale

Why study religion and politics, and why in Kenya? Over forty years ago, Geertz claimed the study of religion stagnated, with no theoretical contributions made (1973:87-89), but today the relevance of understanding religion and politics is only growing, and subsequently spawning new scholarship connecting religion to all subfields of political science. Its relevance to the field of comparative politics is of particular importance due to the highly religious nature of non-Western cultures. All major religions contain elements of virtue and ethics, but how is the religious realm manifested in the political realm? Religious systems are simultaneously constructed of symbols, rituals, beliefs, and practices that guide the government of the individual soul and public theologies informing how society should be governed. Place these symbols, beliefs, and practices in the social learning ecosystem of religious institutions and you create space for political socialization—but is it a space marked by democratic values or more authoritarian ones?

While scholarship on religion and politics in Kenya and across Africa are important, they for the most part do not focus on the fact that each Sunday, numerous citizens sit in these social learning environments and exposed to religious messages and forms of church governance, authority, and leadership that play important political socialization functions. In return these church-going citizens potentially shape the political landscape based on their synthesis of these political concepts gained in church with their political behavior, such as voting, party identification, attendance at political

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rallies, or with their political beliefs.\textsuperscript{17} What is not explored well in the literature on Kenya is how and to what degree this synthesis occurs. This study aims to better understand this gap, but to also provide a conceptual framework for comparing religious pedagogies of democratic empowerment and/or disempowerment. So while political science traditionally focuses on studying the public and external elements of government, a complementary focus on studying the religious factors that inform and guide the personal and internal government of individuals can inform a better understanding of the symbiotic relationship between religion and politics, church and state, citizen and leader, and democracy and authoritarianism.

Why Kenya? Kenya has had over a century of contentious relationships between religion and politics, with church-state relations ebbing and flowing between opposition and support. To demonstrate this history, I provide the following brief synopsis.

Colonialism and subsequent arrival of missionaries in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century introduced

\textsuperscript{17} The literature specifically on contemporary African politics focuses on topics such as personal rule, policy issues, development/dependency theory, institution building, good governance, democratization, ethnicity, and conflict. (Diamond and Plattner 2010; van de Walle 2001; Hyden 2006; Herbst 2000; Villalón and von Döpp 2005; Englebert 2002; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Throup 1993; Posner 2005; and Hyden and Bratton 1992, 1994a). In sum, the political science literature encompasses historical, cultural, geographical, economic, international, local, and personal factors to suggest the following linkages: 1) the colonial legacy left newly transitioning independent states weak and illegitimate with few options for immediate political and economic consolidation; 2) which led to the perpetuation of a state/society split built now on what is a path dependent neo-patrimonial system; 3) yet while bringing forms of personality-based stability via a cultural acceptance of disorder, remains impervious to exogenous forces (primarily the international donor and development communities) intent on attempting to undo the harmful consequences; 4) but more often than not exacerbate the situation for local populations (despite a mirage of altruism); 5) and all the while further entrenching clientelistic behavior and its role in providing a societal equilibrium; 6) which if becomes significantly unbalanced, can lead to state failure, possibly civil strife or even war; and 7) an eventual regime transition that again attempts to rebuild the equilibrium with most of the above elements reconfigured only modestly. The resilience of what appears to be a house of cards may be admired for its own intricacies and subtle forms of stability. Religion is occasionally mentioned as being a significant element of the social fabric in African societies, and if referred to, churches are cited as important civil society institutions. This limited discussion of religion overlooks the important ways political belief and behavior is molded within the confines of churches. Several scholars are beginning to examine the behavioral aspects of the electorate (Basedau, Erdmann and Mehler 2008; Lindberg 2006; Lindberg and Morrison 2008; and Wantchekon 2003), but again religion is not their primary focus.
foreign political and religious systems into a region previously organized along tribal
lines practicing traditional religions. In the decades prior to the Mau Mau Rebellion\textsuperscript{18} of
the 1950s, Kenyans reasserted their traditional religious practices, resulting in
numerous independent churches breaking off from more mainline denominations.
Colonial officials were particularly concerned with the oathing requirements among
those supporting the Mau Mau movement. During the independence movement, many
churches remained on the sidelines and shortly after, focused on consolidating their
power under new African leaders. In the late 1980s and early 90s, several prominent
clerics were advocating for multi-party politics and pushing Moi’s government to be
more democratic.\textsuperscript{19} In 1992 Kenya held its first multiparty elections, but Moi’s KANU
party maintained a tight grip on power through the rest of the 1990s and into early
2000s—despite the protests and pressure of religious leaders. In the 2002 election,
Moi’s KANU party lost to a coalition led by Mwai Kibaki. The Kibaki-led constitutional
referendum in 2005 was then embarrassingly defeated by opposition parties who had
successfully rallied the support of most churches across Kenya. In the months leading
to the December 2007 elections, churches were already divided along ethnic lines.
When election results were delayed and a sudden influx of votes for Kibaki added in the
last hours, the supporters of opposition candidate Raila Odinga clashed with Kibaki’s.
Within weeks Kenya imploded. Over 1,300 were killed, and over 400,000 displaced. The

\textsuperscript{18} The Mau Mau Rebellion was a conflict in British Kenya between 1952 and 1960. Centered in the
highlands, a region dominated by Kikuyus, the rebellion started when white settlers were attacked,
resulting in an eventual state of emergency declared by the British colonial officials. While white settlers
were victims, a disproportionate number of Kenyans were detained, imprisoned, killed, or simply went
missing.

\textsuperscript{19} The Washington Consensus simultaneously pressured Moi from a political and economic standpoint.
There remains a debate as to which was more influential, internal pressure from vocal critics, including a
few clerics or external pressure from Western governments. In reality it was a combination of both.
churches were horrified that ethnicity still dominated their thinking. A few churches rallied to provide relief supplies, temporary shelter, and reconciliation programs, others remained in stunned disbelief. In 2010 Kenya successfully adopted a new constitution, but churches were once again divided in their support. Fortunately the 2013 elections were peaceful, with contentious church-state relations ebbing.\textsuperscript{20}

This short historical overview demonstrates numerous layers of contention, and with Kenya’s present situation an ongoing reconciliation with the past, it is important to understand religion and politics at a deeper level, but even more imperative, is to approach this study from an emic perspective, thus giving precedence to local views and perspectives. As I mentioned early, the scholarly literature on the religion and politics of Kenya tends to come in three forms—historical, normative or institutional. Exceptions existed, but my scholarly review did reveal a gap in understanding the internal and private aspects of religion and its political role in Kenya. As a regional hub in East Africa, Kenya also serves as a central gateway to the region and projects influence beyond the country’s borders. Knowing more about the intersection of religion in politics in Kenya can potentially enlighten studies elsewhere in East Africa, across Africa, and possibly beyond the continent.

A final factor influencing my focus on Kenya relates to numerous surveys alluding to interesting phenomena regarding the role of religion in African politics. A 2005 Afrobarometer survey found Africans consistently seek advice from religious leaders more often than from government officials or local leaders. This suggests the apparent influence of these religious leaders, but does not fully explain the types of influence or

\textsuperscript{20} As of March 2016.
how it occurs on issues of both private and public welfare (Bratton and Cho 2006). Additionally, a ten-country global survey of Pentecostal and charismatic Christians complements this finding and reveals that Kenya has the highest percentage (83%) of respondents saying religious groups should express views on social and political questions (Pew Forum 2006). In the 2009 Legatum Prosperity Index, Kenya had a significantly higher ranking on the social capital sub-index, compared to indices measuring economics, education, health, governance, security, and personal freedom. Using Gallup World data, the Legatum authors explain this by noting that Kenya has “exceptionally high levels of religiosity” and “ranks seventh [globally] for the proportion of people who report that religion is important to them” (Legatum 2009:183). While these surveys and polls reveal a fundamental relationship between religion and politics, what connection actually exists in Kenya between high religiosity and high social capital? With millions of citizens across Africa sitting under religious leadership, what direct and indirect political influence to these clerics have compared to political elite? This study therefore seeks to provide a Geertzian “thick description” to these survey findings.

**Key Terms**

A brief introduction to clarify numerous terms used in this study will be helpful. Let me begin with the two biggest subjects: *religion* and *politics*. Both terms encompass institutions and agency, public and private, historical and contemporary, indigenous and foreign. This rather wide understanding will be narrowed in the forthcoming chapters,  

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21 Unfortunately, the survey data set does not allow the separation of the topics of conversation (personal vs. public) respondents had between religious leaders and government officials. It is therefore unknown to what degree religious leaders are involved in political discussions, but personal interaction with pastors during my preliminary research confirms that they are often sought out for political advice.
but initially I approached these subjects rather broadly. This in turn facilitated my examination of authority versus power; the sacred and spiritual ordering of society; the perceived location and role of power; churches as political schools, and the pedagogies of religious leaders. A broad definition of civil society is employed and encompasses all non-state actors, but focuses primarily on churches and other parachurch organizations, which include faith-based agencies and institutions without ties to any one particular denomination within Christianity.

Since this study examines the role of churches as political schools, it is important to discuss the concept of pedagogy— the art and science of education. The science and art of political education—be it formal civic education, informal learning from family, or skills gained from involvement with political campaigns—would represent political pedagogy. Similarly, a religious pedagogy would speak more broadly to how religious ideas are propagated and assimilated; and within the churches, reference formal and informal religious education. A church’s social engagement pedagogy denotes a specific education practice of involving the congregation in both the public square and public sphere, i.e. activities beyond those on a typical Sunday. My continued discussion of pedagogy employs theories gained from critical pedagogy, particular those advanced by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire.

Another important concept is spiritual capital, the religious sibling of social capital. I use the definition of Berger and Hefner, who consider spiritual capital to be a sub-species of social capital, and liken it more to the influence, knowledge, power and dispositions that arise from participating in certain religious traditions (2003:3). As the
surveys mentioned above allude to this social and spiritual capital, this study explores in
greater detail its formation, maintenance, and return on investment.

**Methodology and Research Design**

In this next section I expound on the mode of inquiry used in this study and the
rationale for this particular methodological approach and then detail my research
design, including a brief overview of the study’s history.

**Methodological Approach and Mode of Inquiry**

Methodologically this study’s episteme is a historical, social, and cultural analysis
of the interaction between religion and politics in Kenya and is primarily oriented around
an interpretive research design. I posit this is the most appropriate approach to
addressing my two macro research questions: what types of political influence do
churches have in Africa; and in what forms does this influence occur? This interpretive
approach demonstrates components of deductive and inductive reasoning, but relies
more on abductive reasoning, where I begin with a puzzle—can churches be
considered political schools and if so, are they really schools of democracy? By
beginning with this puzzle and identifying the empirical pieces of the puzzle, I work from
the ground up to develop relevant theories to examine holistically the discourse, social
arenas, institutions, and agency intertwined in the relationship between religion and
politics—a context where isolatable variables or the linearity’s of cause-effect have
limited explanatory abilities. Let me explain in more detail three interrelated concepts
contained in this paragraph—qualitative approaches, interpretive inquiry, and abductive
reasoning.

Methodological approaches are typically divided between quantitative and
qualitative approaches, but with the latter, there can be different underlying
philosophical assumptions. The qualitative approaches and methods arising from the Chicago School approach to field research primarily included: participant observation, interviewing, and content analysis of relevant literature. However, these qualitative methods have come to be undergirded more by positivist philosophical means of gaining objective and generalizable knowledge. The classic Chicago School’s modes of knowing that rest “on a phenomenological hermeneutics that privilege local, situated knowledge and situated knowers has increasingly become known as ‘interpretive’ research” (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012:5-6). This leads to a three-part taxonomy of methodological approaches: quantitative-positivist, qualitative-positivist, and qualitative-interpretive.

Geertz once claimed that social science needs to be “not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (Bevir and Kedar 2008:505). He also quipped that humans are animals suspended in webs of significance they themselves have spun and the job of the scholar in examining the symbols found in these webs entails an interpretive cultural analytical process of “guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions” (Geertz 1973: 20). This meaning-making within interpretive research has the purpose of understanding “how specific human beings in particular times and locales make sense of their worlds. And because sense-making is always contextual, a concern with ‘contextuality’—rather than ‘generalizability’—motivates research practice and design” (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012:10-11). Wedeen states that epistemologically, interpretivists “view

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22 Yanow went so far as to argue that an interpretive approach was not a subfield of qualitative methods, since it does “not live under the same philosophical umbrella (Bevir and Kedar 2008:504).

23 I will not go into the various philosophical debates regarding epistemologies and ontologies, but instead focus on better defining the qualitative-interpretive approach I use in this study.
knowledge, including scientific knowledge, as historically situated and entangled in power relationships [and therefore are] constructivists in the sense that they see the world as socially made [and] tend to eschew the individualist assumptions that characterize much rationale-choice and behaviorist literature” (2009:80-81). Researchers thus focus on the following when utilizing the interpretive approach: bottom-up *in situ* concept development; constitutive understanding of causality; the relevance of research identity in accessing sites and archives; the need to improvise in response to field conditions; and data co-generated in field relationships (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012:99). A related element is seeing research participants, not as subjects, but agents who actively and collaboratively construct and deconstruct “their polities, societies, and cultures—along with the institutions, organizations, practices, physical artifacts, and language and concepts that populate these” (46).

Finally, the concept of abductive reasoning may be unfamiliar to some. Deductive reasoning consists of theory, hypothesis formation, testable concepts, and then often statistical analysis of data collected. Inductive reasoning starts with observation of particular data sets and then induces a universal understanding. A third logic of inquiry, first articulated by Charles Peirce, is abductive reasoning, which “begins with a puzzle, a surprise, or a tension, and then seeks to explicate it by identifying the conditions that would make that puzzle less perplexing and more of a ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ event,” thus leaving the task of the researcher to continually tack back and forth “in an iterative-recursive fashion between what is puzzling and possibly explanations for it, whether in other field situations or in research-relevant literature” (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012:27). Inductive and deductive modes of inquiry usually follow a more linear logic,
whereas abductive reasoning is more circular or spiraling in nature and represents a simultaneously puzzling-out of theoretical literatures with field and other empirical data. This approach also appears quite apt at better understanding the intertwined systems organically arising from the interplay between religion and politics in Africa, but also can better describe religious experiences and practices first from an *emic* perspective (i.e. based on the local perspectives and ideologies) before translating into *etic* terminology (i.e. a more detached, scientific approach and language) (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:18-19).

A related methodology to this qualitative-interpretive approach is political ethnography. The ethnographical approach systematically studies the insights and underlying values, customs, and beliefs of a culture or group of people. Wedeen notes that you can have ethnography without interpretivism and vice versa. So they are not synonymous, though typically ethnographies rely on an interpretive approach, with Wedeen arguing that “[e]thnography is an especially good way to gain insight into actors’ lived political experiences, to observe how people make sense of their worlds, to chart how they ground their ideas in everyday practices and administrative routines, and to analyze the gap between the idealized representation and actual apprehension of events, people, and political orders” (2009:85). Political ethnography enables researchers to find, discover, and better understand what Denis-Constant Martin (2002) calls UPOs (Unidentified Political Objects). Political science often overlooks these, despite being surrounded by UPOs that could be politically significant. Ethnography is
also useful when we do not know from the start the right questions to ask (Jourde 2009). 

Research Design: Methods, Domains, Scope, History, and Reflexivity

In this sub-section I present my research design, including methods employed, discussion of the domains of study, the study’s scope, overview of the research history, and a short reflexive conclusion.

Methods

My field research relied on five core research techniques: in-depth interviews, focus groups, content analysis, participant observation, and an experimental modification of a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) exercise. Using both closed and open-ended questions, in-depth interviews with the pastors, seminary professors, and laity provided clues to what types of influence are occurring in each of the three domains. Interviews with pastors and professors explored their theological training, understanding of theology and church doctrine, and interaction with their congregation. Likewise, interviews with church members ascertained their understanding of social engagement theologies and what additional resources or factors (i.e. class, ethnicity,

24 Regarding the history of ethnography, many scholars will place its genealogy with anthropology, particularly with Malinowski’s Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922) and Radcliffe-Brown’s The Andaman Islanders (1922), but Yanow claims that ethnography did not originate with anthropology as it is often assumed, but instead its origin actually lies in the administrative practices of colonial regimes, where it was used as an organizational and political practice to enable empires to govern remote outposts (2009:33). Political ethnography can be distinguished in three parts: 1) methods resting on interacting with people, living in close approximation, and participating in their activities; 2) a narrative form of research writing; and 3) maintaining a hermeneutic-phenomenological orientation that sees social life characterized by meaning-creation via language (written, oral, and non-verbal), objects, and practices. (Yanow 2009:33-34). Ethnography is more than just interviewing—it “is a recursive and reiterative process between theoretical and field encounters. It is recursive in that we perform abduction within abduction within abduction, as one ‘discovery’ leads to another. It is iterative in that the same logic is repeated over and over again” (Yanow 2009:35).

25 Several of these qualitative tools were successfully employed in the American context (Smith 2005, 2008; Gilbert 1993, Djube and Gilbert 2002, 2003).
education, and African traditional religions) they perceived as shaping their political attitudes and action. Small focus groups were conducted with seminary students at three theological schools. Content analysis of seminary curricula, past sermons, church publications, official and unofficial doctrine, and theologies of social engagement, determined what political issues are addressed within seminaries, churches, and home groups.

Regarding participant observation, there are two continuums involved. One consists of moving from being a complete outsider to being a complete insider (Creswell 2006).\(^{26}\) The second relates to the three roles assumed during the process—complete participant, participant observer, and complete observer.\(^{27}\) Most of my activity was as a participant observer, and included my time attending Sunday morning services, small groups, Bible studies, prayer meetings, youth groups, and social outreach programs.\(^{28}\) My experimental use of a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) exercise resulted in important insight in my development of tristructuration\(^{29}\) and the subsequent conceptualization of religious pedagogies of empowerment and disempowerment.

\(^{26}\) Creswell does not clarify what he means by “complete,” for I would disagree some with the idea that I could become a complete insider in any of the LifeGroups I studied. While I did feel at home, welcomed, accepted, etc., the fact remained that I was a white American PhD student.

\(^{27}\) The first role involves the embedment in a group without their explicit knowledge of the researchers’ aim and purpose. In the middle is the role of participant observer, who both interacts and observes the group. The third role entails observing from within, yet without significant interaction aside from being in the group’s presence (Bernard 2006).

\(^{28}\) There were four instances though were I was more a participant, i.e. the two theology courses I audited (though the professors knew of my research) and two separate week-long conferences sponsored by an organization whose strategy involved changing churches’ social engagement perceptions and pedagogies.

\(^{29}\) Tristructuration is a conceptual paradigm for understanding the space where three forces—structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualities—create, adapt, maintain, and reproduce social, political, and religious systems, and is based on an emic, holistic, and diachronic analysis of all three forces without giving predominance to any one in particular. I expound on tristructuration in Chapter 2, where I use it as
Domains of study: structural and topical

My use of domains relates to the anthropological concept of domain analysis.\textsuperscript{30} Domains represent an identifiable space or category for further analysis, and in this study provide a general framework for guiding my research activities in response to the three micro-questions I ask in this study: What influences how pastors think politically? What are the political implications of sermons and church structure? What residual influence do churches have politically beyond the one day (Sunday) of schooling?

When woven together, my three structural domains (Pulpit to Pew, Pew to Pew, Pastor to Pulpit) provide a more systematic account of the direct and indirect influence of religion on political belief and behavior. The first domain—Pulpit to Pew—refers to the formal institution of the church, i.e. denominations, doctrine, authority structure, content of sermons, teachings, and publications. In examining both church structures and agency of individual clergy, this domain focuses on Sunday services, activities, and arenas where the pastor is the primary center of focus. The second domain—Pew to Pew—represents the accompanying informal domain based on the social context of congregational home groups and the impact arising from interaction with other church members. While this domain is not under the auspices of formal church activity, it represents an important arena sanctioned by church structure and leadership. This second domain can also be referred to as “Monday church” i.e. the activities conducted Monday through Saturday, outside the institutional purview of the church. As the last domain—Pastor to Pulpit—represents the professional development of clergy and

\textsuperscript{30} See Spradley (1980).
involves both theological training and understanding of church doctrine. This last domain also helps orient an understanding of pastors’ biographies, educational background and other social, cultural, political, and religious factors influential in comprehending their social engagement theologies, in short, how they think politically.

Alongside the three structural domains, the study simultaneously examines three topical domains: belief, behavior, and belonging. These three concepts form a central part of Chabal’s analysis of African politics (2009), and despite his different utilization, my adaptation to their relationship between religion and politics contributes to a holistic understanding. The social sciences have extensively studied belief and behavior in a variety of settings and geographies, but a recent focus on belonging adds the third dimension of affection, i.e. where the heartfelt feelings and emotions play a role within belief and behavior. Synonymous with belief, behavior, and belonging, is attitude, actions, and affections, or more informally and corporeal—head, hands, and heart. Religious and theological scholarship uses similar terms—orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy. Orthodoxy references accepted norms and beliefs within a particular religious creed. Adhering to a prescribed practice within a religious system constitutes orthopraxy. Orthopathy, a relative new concept within theological circles, references having right affections (Stackhouse 2011).

In short, belief, attitudes, orthodoxy, and the head refer to the mental and cognitive processes related to ideologies, religious doctrine, epistemologies, and worldviews. Behavior, actions, orthopraxy, and the hands references outward oriented agency and activities, i.e. what do people do in response to their faith. Belonging, affections, orthopathy, and the heart represent the broad category of emotions and
feelings, both conscious and unconscious. Significant overlap exists between these topical trilogies, with Murray (2005) noting that belief, behavior, and belonging are not separate stages, and the relationship, while often perceived as linear, is in fact more akin to a coil, i.e. progress in one stage influences the others. It is important to note here that traditional African culture and religions have long integrated these topical domains. Part of my analysis in this study consists of deconstructing contemporary African Christianity, and re-examining belief, behavior, and belonging historically, but specifically through the lens of various power structures dominating society at the time.

**Scope**

Each structural domain focuses on an important social sector that provides the empirical data to address the key questions. In the first domain (Pulpit to Pew), I focus on the internal structure and Sunday activities of Mavuno Church. I also visited numerous urban churches in the Nairobi area, plus a select few churches in rural areas. The second domain (Pew to Pew) focuses exclusively on two Mavuno Church small groups that met in individual’s homes. Both of these groups utilized the curriculum written by Pastor Linda, and were oriented around social justice and engagement within the community. The last domain’s scope is on the personal and professional

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31 Nairobi Chapel, All Saint’s Cathedral and Parkland’s Baptist Church represent additional churches of extensive study that helped inform my analysis of Mavuno Church.

32 This study consists of several case studies, but the primary focus was on Mavuno Church. Based on Lijphart’s (1971) theories of comparative case study selection, Mavuno would represent both a hypothesis-generating case study and deviant case analysis. The development of my two religious pedagogies of political socialization represent a hypothesis to be tested among a larger number of cases, but this hypothesis-generating potential arose because Mavuno also represents a deviate case from traditional norms of how church is conducted, I focused my research here to better explicate the different variables that were found in the Mavuno ecosystem.
development of pastors and is centered primarily on the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and the Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST). 

**Research history**

With my initial groundwork established through my pre-dissertation research (June 2008, October 2009), significant time was saved and allowed me to begin my research immediately upon arrival in Kenya in May 2010. To effectively immerse myself in the culture and realities of the dynamics between religion and politics, I enrolled in a two three-week long courses offered by the Maryknoll Institute for African Studies (MIAS). Immediately I found myself deeply immersed in a greater understanding of the underlying attributes of African culture and traditional religion—understanding based not on my previous experience, but from an academic perspective. By using these courses to begin implementing my research design and drafting dissertation chapters, I also gained access to first-rate scholarly resources and personnel well-grounded in utilizing an ethnographic approach. My engagement with MIAS scholars and faculty profoundly shaped my understanding of the pervasive role of religion in African political culture. MIAS faculty critiqued my methodology and theoretical assumptions, and

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33 Secondary schools of focus include: St. Paul’s University (SPU), Thomas Aquinas Seminary (TAS), and Africa Rural Trainers (ATR).

34 MIAS is affiliated with Saint Mary’s University in Minnesota and Tangaza College, at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. MIAS assists foreign students in gaining a quick, but thorough induction to the complexities of the social, historical, cultural, political, religious and economic realities of life in Africa and Kenya in particular.

35 My first course was entitled “Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment and African Religion.” I used my final paper for this class to pre-test my research design around the three structural domains and confirm that the structural domains provided a good structure. My second course on justice and peace in Africa was taught by Dr. Edward Oyugi, who as a vocal opponent of former President Moi, was politically detained twice (1982-85 and 1990-1993). My final project for this course entailed an ethnographical understanding of power, justice, and peace. The last course explored contemporary political and economic realities in Kenya. My final paper wrestled with the work of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and explored the pedagogies of theological education, eventually evolved into a major part of my conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3.
facilitated my introduction to other scholars working in other academic institutions across Kenya.

After the first two MIAS courses were finished I set aside some time to evaluate where my project stood in view of lessons and findings from the courses’ final projects. It was during this time that I followed up on a recommendation that I interview Pastor Linda Ochola, Mavuno Church’s executive pastor. I soon discovered Mavuno had a different story to tell compared to several of the previous churches I had visited.36 After I presented my research agenda to Mavuno leadership, my inquiries about the church, their approach, theology, administrative model, and history were all welcomed. I was soon given unprecedented access to meetings, personnel, and documents. Why was Mavuno different? What were they doing that set them apart from other churches? Was their approach truly different and did it actually have an impact on society? All of these questions were puzzling. I invested more and more time with this congregation, participating in small groups in the church, attending church meetings and conferences, and interviewing pastors and administrative staff—all which enabled me to gain a wider and deeper understanding of this church’s religious pedagogy.

While embedded in Mavuno activities, I did expand my focus though to gain a comparative focus. Between October 2010 and March 2011, I visited numerous churches and was engaged with interviewing faculty at local theological schools. I

36 In other churches I was greeted with suspicion and had great difficult arranging interviews with top church leadership. It was not necessarily due to my outsider status or white face—for I had several research assistant attempt to get access as well. They found the same inaccessibility as I found. I was puzzled by several of these churches. They appeared to be hiding something. Their websites provided few details. Staff seemed cagey in my presence and in one church I was actively harassed for remaining at the back of the church (this was partly to better observe the service, but to also protect my hearing from an incredibly loud, but equally poor sound system). When a research assistant later attempted to interview members of this church, several were visibly nervous and asked to be interviewed on side streets where no one from the church would see them chatting with a non-church member.
audited two graduate level courses—a political theology course at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and a course on good governance at the Nairobi International School of Theology. These courses gave me insight to how pastors were trained to think about the political realm. On Thursday and Friday nights during a typical week, I was participating in two different Mavuno home groups.

**Research reflexivity**

There are multiple definitions for reflexivity within the social sciences, but in this study’s context it refers to my awareness of my relationship to the subject matter analyzed. Every scholar approaches his or her research subject with a history, experience, and personal background. These perspectives determine how scholars approach and interact with their subjects, interpret their data, and eventually how they draw conclusions. The subjects or objects chosen for study are also typically closely related to a natural curiosity of such, driven by researchers’ past experiences. Therefore, it is important to briefly outline some of my background and acknowledge the factors that have influenced my interpretive lens.

I grew up in an evangelical Christian home, attended a Mennonite liberal arts college, and spent several years working for Christian relief and development organizations in Asia, Europe, and Africa. In the last decade, I began to question many of the presuppositions of evangelicalism and even Christianity at a larger level. People like me who were also disillusioned with American religious expressions were soon

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37 I presented my preliminary research findings at a NEGST sponsored conference “Politics, Poverty and Prayer: Global African Spiritualities and Social Transformation” and was introduced to numerous scholars from across Africa who were wrestling with similar themes in their research. My presence here also led to two separate invitations to lecture in graduate level theology courses at NEGST.
referred to as the “Nones” or “Dones” by pundits. Yet while conducting research in Kenya, I was strangely comfortable in the various religious venues where I spent countless hours observing and participating, yet a healthy skepticism dominated my thinking. Has my personal background and experiences biased my interpretation of the data I gathered? Yes, any type of interpretive study contains aspects of bias. However, as I attempted to let the facts speak for themselves, my interpretation of the facts comes more from a budding Christian skepticism rather than from either a conservative evangelical fundamentalism on one side or a harsh hard-core atheistic perspective on the other.

Aside from the changing paradigms of my religious journey, an additional factor that influenced this study was the year I took off from writing to work for the International Republican Institute. As an evaluation officer, I travelled globally to conduct research on democracy promotion activities. Exposure to the more practical aspects of the democratization process stimulated my own thinking in the final writing stages.

**Chapter Summaries**

The following chapter summaries provide a brief orientation to how each supports my argument. Chapter 2 introduces the cultural concept of tristructuration and then utilizes three time periods to convey the history of religion and politics in Kenya. The pre-colonial era explores the dynamics between the spiritual realms and tribal politics. Colonialism introduced missional Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa and represents a complex period of collaboration and contestation. The central argument in

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38 “Nones” refers specifically to a growing American demographic who claim no religious affiliation. “Dones” references those who were formally active in a faith tradition, but are “done” with organized religion.
this chapter reveals the complexity of church-state relations in Kenya and demonstrates how tristructuration can expand understandings of the external and internal dynamics at play within religious institutions.

In Chapter 3 I build on the historical foundation outlined in Chapter 3, and combine the empirical data from the field with three important theoretical frameworks related to pedagogy, power, and toxicity to build the two concepts undergirding my arguments—Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE) and Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD). These two religious pedagogies of political socialization are situated more broadly in several bodies of scholarship. In the last part of the chapter I discuss the genealogy of these religious pedagogies and use the concept of RPDD to revisit several arguments made by scholars regarding the political role pastors can play.

Chapter 4 initiates the study of the three domains and centers on the internal dynamics of churches. Using Mavuno Church as the primary case study and other churches as secondary case studies, this chapter argues that Mavuno is modeling a very different form of church, both internally and externally, and is more effectively engaging the congregation with political issues and activities.

Related to the formal domain of the Sunday service, Chapter 5 expands the focus to include the social context of small home groups and other church activities outside the confines of the Sunday sermon and service, or what Kenyan’s call “Monday Church.” This chapter emphasizes the importance and influence of the vast social networks that are of a religious nature. Chapter 6 explores the last domain (Pastor to
Pulpit) and the role formal theological training plays in developing the political theologies of pastors, but also the genesis of contemporary forms of RPDE.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings and related theories, but also highlights the general contributions to political science and African studies. I also mention several potential research agendas and conclude by revisiting current events in Kenya and the future prospects of the relationship between religion and politics.
CHAPTER 2
THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RELIGION AND POLITICS IN KENYA

Introduction

The genealogy of my two religious pedagogies of political socialization (RPDE and RPDD) is grounded in a cultural and historical trajectory, one that may be in unique to Kenya in particular, but also contains elements similar to other former European colonies in Africa. I use this chapter’s focus on the cultural and historical context of religion and politics in Kenya to demonstrate the need for examining the numerous narratives embedded deeper that can inform us about the internal dynamics of religion and politics in Africa. The next chapter’s specific focus on the development of religious pedagogies of political socialization (RPPS) is grounded in understanding these deeper narratives and will often reference details presented in this chapter.¹

I begin with a brief overview of Kenya’s current demographics and then introduce my conceptual paradigm of tristructuration, detailing how it moves beyond Giddens’ theory of structuration by incorporating traditional beliefs in immanent spiritualities. The next section highlights the relationship between religion in politics in three historical eras: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. For the last era, I include a brief political overview of the political environment under Kenya’s first three presidents, but then focus primarily on the church-state relations during their tenures. I close by highlighting several key questions that arise from this cultural and historical background—questions that drive the importance of looking at the internal nature of these churches and how

¹ As a society does not necessarily live in the past, but the past does continue to live within the society; and so while this study does not attempt a detailed historical account, it is important to highlight some of the key events, people, and experiences related to religion and politics that have made Kenya what it is today.
they help or hinder the democratic process, but also how tristructuration becomes a helpful analytical tool.

**Kenya’s Geography and Demographics**

Geographically Kenya is situated in East Africa, with South Sudan and Ethiopia to the north, Somalia and the Indian Ocean on the east, Tanzania on the south, and on the west Lake Victoria and Uganda. The equator cuts the country almost in half, but due to its high plateaus, many regions have more temperate climates.\(^2\) With a population of over 44 million, Kenya ranked 109\(^{th}\) on the Legatum Prosperity Index that measures both wealth and well-being. Kenya’s best performing sector is in the Social Capital sub-index, where it ranked 60\(^{th}\) (Legatum 2014). Ethnically, the Kikuyu are the largest and represent 22 percent followed by the Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalenjin (12%), Kamba (11%), Kisii (6%), and Meru (6%). The rest is represented by other minor ethnic groups, Asians, Europeans, and Arabs. The religious breakdown consists of Protestant (45%), Roman Catholic (33%), Muslim (10%), indigenous beliefs (10%), other (2%).

Approximately one third of Kenyans reside in urban areas. Nairobi, the largest city and capital, contains about six million people. Economically, Kenya’s GDP per capita (PPP) is around $1,500 (CIA 2013; World Bank 2014).

**Tristructuration**

Tristructuration is a conceptual paradigm for understanding the space where three forces—structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualties—create, adapt, maintain, and reproduce social, political, and religious systems, and is based on an

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\(^2\) Much of this territory is incredibly fertile and was highly coveted by British settlers. The homeland of the Kikuyu, Meru, and Embu is also in this area, with contention over land in this area being part of the rationale for the Mau Mau rebellion.
emic, holistic, and diachronic analysis of all three forces without giving predominance to any one in particular. Tristructuration builds on Giddens’ theory of structuration (1984), by emphasizing the importance of how traditional religious practices, especially belief in immanent spiritualities, influences attitudes, affections, and actions in regard to governmentality, power distribution, and how society in general should be organized.

Before elaborating on tristructuration, let me revisit Giddens’ theory of structuration, which he defines as “the structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure” (1984:376). This duality of structure is the reconceptualization of the classic actor/structure dualism and represents “the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both medium and outcome of reproduction of practices. Structure enters simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and 'exists' in the generating moments of this constitution” (1979:5). Giddens approach draws from many disciplinary sectors (e.g. history, sociology, geography) to unite two main traditions or approaches in social thinking—phenomenological/hermeneutic and structuralist—and recast both human agency (internal motivation) and structure (external forces) as being a mutually dependent duality (Rose 1999). He believes that individuals can “act as knowledgeable objects in conjunction with the social order to change their social reality” and recasting structure’s role as “both a constraining and an enabling element for human action” (Lamsal 2012:112).

While Giddens brings important reconciliation between the micro and macro and provides a holistic and more realistic approach to the social sciences, I contend that his theories remain grounded on secular presuppositions and do not adequately take into
consideration how for many Africans, a significant portion of power is rooted in the spiritual realm—where the nature of this power is considered both real and effective. Therefore, trstructuration is not based on a critique per se of Giddens’ theory, but rather the addition of an important and overlooked African cultural component related to the power that a belief in immanent spiritualities has in everyday lived religion. Immanent spiritualities are marked by: 1) the transcendence of the invisible world not competing with its immanence (Mulago 1991); 2) African traditional religion continuing to dominate African thought, i.e. society remaining sacralized with secularization rare (Mbiti 1991); 3) most African Traditional Religions (ATRs) did not typically make a secular/sacred distinction; and the divide between political and religious leadership was not well demarcated and in some cases was held by the same individual, thus demonstrating the shared terrain of religion and politics argued by Schatzberg (2001); 4) a community and hierarchy existing within these immanent spiritualities and the belief that communication between this realm and the physical is possible gives important power to these intermediaries (Ellis and ter Haar 2004); 5) who controls these intermediaries has great power and influence to affect both agency and structure (Gyeke 1996), and 6) the locality of this belief in immanent spiritualities best represented by Hiebert’s low religion vs an excluded middle (1982). Figure 2-1 shows this graphical representation of modern versus traditional worldviews.

One could argue there is sufficient space within the structural component of structuration’s duality to effectively incorporate spiritual belief systems, but I argue placing this belief in immanent spiritualities as a third component, adds another
dimension to structuration that help explain beliefs, behaviors, and senses of belonging not only in Africa, but any society that marked by belief in Hiebert’s “low religion.”

Another important element in the development of tristructuration comes from Vásquez’s materialist theory of religion (2011), which focuses the study of religion on how religion is lived in everyday life, how the common individual who may be quite unaware of the nuances of theology and “high religion” uses religion to meet numerous identified and unidentified needs. Vásquez’s approach is similar to the call of Ellis and ter Haar to take African spiritualities seriously by first focusing on an emic understanding before attempting etic analysis. Ellis and ter Haar specifically critique scholars who adopt an institutional approach to study the role of religion within African politics, arguing that religious ideologies and practices interact with and perceive political power in ways manifested beyond the scope of an institutional perspective. Two important examples include the concept that social stability is closely tied to a spiritual stability; and that a strong belief in an invisible world inhabited by various forms of spirits, demons, the living dead, and ancestors adds an additional element to any power matrix studied (1998, 2007). Tristructuration also represents the space to wrestle with the task Vásquez outlines for a focus on religion: “to study the logics of religious ways of being in the world and to elucidate how these logics are inextricably connected with other (nonreligious) ways of being in the world” (2011:8). His theory finds practical application in this study when examining the hybridity arising from the historical linkages between indigenous African religions, intervention and imperialism of missional
Christianity, and the religious/political space that opened after Kenya’s independence in 1963.³

Vásquez’s conceptual contribution is validated by local data based on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and a small survey that informed my understandings of African cultural understandings of leadership, power, authority, and social stability. During interviews⁴ conducted in Nairobi’s informal settlements, I learned about the prevalence of African traditional religious practices within these urban poor Christian communities. On a Sunday morning numerous small churches will be competing with sound and song, but at night, pastors and other church-goers trek across slums to seek the spiritual power of a traditional religious leader.⁵ I witnessed this belief in the reality and power of immanent spirits and the trust placed in diviners and traditional religious leaders to oversee this spiritual terrain—a terrain marked with a syncretism of a Christian belief in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, angels, and demons with the power of diviners, healers, living dead, and the ancestors.

Based on these data, I created an experimental modification of a Participatory Learning and Action exercise to determine where respondents would locate power, as defined by their own understandings.⁶ Would power reside more with the individual

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³ Vásquez’s concepts of embodiment, practice, and emplacement are instrumental not only for tristructuration but also in the development of RPDE/RPDD.

⁴ These included two diviners, a witch doctor, and several pastors and church attendees.

⁵ These traditional religious leaders were sought for various reasons, with some related to health, finding a job, breaking a curse. In other cases, pastors were seeking their assistance with church growth potions.

⁶ Development practitioners in India developed a PLA tool to capture where the poor believed power and control resided. My exercise was based on this Indian case study where a group of peasants was asked to divide ten seeds among three sources of power and control (themselves, outsiders, i.e. government/NGOs, and gods/spirits) over eight spheres of life (health, business success, agriculture, roads, rain, cattle, water, and income). This ten seed technique proved to be useful in gaining qualitative data on different issues, but particularly those related to a community’s perceptions of themselves and
(self), or the institutions/structures in society like traditional leaders, police, politicians (state), or maybe in a realm defined more my invisible forces (spirit)? Data from this participatory research reveals a recognition of the role of spiritual power plays in eight societal spheres. Table 2-1 shows where respondents identified the locations of power within eight spheres. Not surprising, spiritual power is highest within the church, followed by the family/tribe, though within the government, economics, and education spheres respondents placed nearly one fifth of power within the spiritual realm. Overall, respondents located nearly a quarter of power as residing in the spiritual realm.

Using this PLA data, I created a three-dimensional power matrix that better captures these perceptions of power (see Figure 2-2). The x axis captures a continuum between sources of power (spiritual/religious vs. natural/political), the y axis categorizes the location of power (micro-agency vs. macro-structural), and the z axis identifies the type of power (soft vs. hard). Eight quadrants can then be identified when specifying a certain realm of power. Structuration only facilitates analysis in the bottom four quadrants, while tristructuration entails all eight.

Within Africa it is important to remember that power is conceived not only in a non-dualistic manner, but represents an ability to live, to be healthy, to avoid poverty and misfortunate, to essentially have an abundant life (Kalu 2000). Spiritual power is thus the common denominator that enables people to control as much as possible situations that are not under the normal purview of power structures. This “…craving for

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how they relate to outsiders (Jayakaran 2002). I modified the sources of power to include the individual, state, and the gods/spirits. I used the following eight societal spheres: government, economics, media, arts/entertainment, science/technology, education, family/tribe, and church. Participants were given ten seeds which they then were asked to allocate across the three sources of power for each societal sphere. I first pre-tested this in a rural area in Central Province and then had research assistants carry out a larger survey among 165 respondents from mostly urban areas.
power is the driving force in the life of African religion...Man is weak, and what he needs is increased strength...The absorbing question for him is how to acquire some of this power so that it may serve for his own salvation or that of the group for which he is responsible” (Westermann 1937:84).

The moral basis of how one goes about acquiring additional power may be vague and syncretic, but “the practice of flouting rules and violating norms actually creates power, as long as the culprit gets away with the behavior”—and power seekers get away with it to a degree because a populations’ ability to navigate their world with confidence requires “reasonably predictable relationships between actions and their consequences” and with those encountering random, bewildering, and uncertain environments suffer three things: 1) a decline in motivation; 2) lack of consistent feedback stunts learning; and 3) and an increase in stress (Pfeffer 2013:2). Political disorder works because over time, a population has come to see this behavior as predictable and oddly enough assists with the navigation of their macro world (Chabal and Daloz 1999). At the micro-level, those in poverty face bewildering and uncertain environments, and while they may have the numeric electoral strength to challenge the system, they are unfortunately caught in this space of democratic disempowerment—a space I argue is fostered within religious institutions—where it can be used to either transform individuals or maintain the status quo. In short, tristructuration simply represents a conceptual paradigm for understanding the micro and macro-level space where three forces—structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualties—create,

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7 This also explains the practice of African politicians to acquire spiritual power and for religious leaders to obtain material resources (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:97-113).

8 Pfeffer echoes many of the same sentiments as Freire, just from a different perspective, one that helps explain how tristructuration facilitates the longevity of the misuse of power.
adapt, maintain, and reproduce social, political, and religious systems. Appendix B provides additional cultural and historical framing for tristructuration, but I now turn to short narratives of three historical eras—narratives that are mindful of tristructuration.

Pre-Colonial Realities: Non-hegemonic States and Hegemonic Clans

For centuries prior to the European colonization of Africa in the late 19th century, numerous kingdom and non-state societies existed across the continent; however, demographic and economic realities, i.e. low population densities, abundance of land, and sparse economic surplus, precluded the building of states as understood or experienced in Europe. Despite these differences though, archeologist, historians, and anthropologists demonstrate evidence for advanced judicial, accountability, and democratic systems. Overtime this institutional growth led to the development of sophisticated states. Examples across Africa include: Kongo (1550-1650), Mutapa/Butua (1450-1800), Ashanti (1760-1900), Songhay (900-1585), Mali (975-1550). Two factors from this era need acknowledgement though. Scholars categorize these states as non-hegemonic because they were not all-powerful entities needing to monopolize political power within a given geographical space. Porous borders also led to greater population migration and movements. Conflict, when it occurred, was not typically over land, but stolen resources like cattle, slaves or even gold. The second factor—the reality of kinship—resulted in embedded forms of solidarity, security, and social and economic welfare within these kinship lineage groups. These reciprocal relationships, where the chief is duty-bound to care for his clan and they in turn respect and honor the authority of the ethnic chieftaincy, result in a communal orientation versus the individualism found in the West (Thomson 2010:9-11).
It is into this political and cultural landscape that imperial powers entered Africa. The Portuguese explore, Vasco da Gama, visited Mombasa in 1498, ushering in an era when the Portuguese Empire controlled the trade routes between Europe and India. Monks and priests were sent to the region in 1593, and while initially seeing some success at converting Muslims, a rebellion in 1631 ended the first efforts at establishing Christianity in the area (Morad 1997). Economic and political competition arose in the 17th and 18th centuries from the British, Dutch, and Omani Arabs. The Sultan of Oman moved his capital from Oman to the island of Zanzibar in 1840, consolidating the Sultanate’s power along the coastal regions of East Africa. Prior to the artificial boundaries being drawn at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85, the area of what would become first the East African Protectorate and eventually Kenya found most African groups resided in stateless societies, with movement common across the permeable social and geographical boundaries (Thomson 2010:24). Many were pastoralists and freely migrated between what are now Kenya’s neighboring states (Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania). Within Kenya, the Kikuyu were divided into nine clans, each lead by a council of elders. The Maasai relied on the leadership of a laibon, a powerful religious leader who employed magic, but primarily served not in an executive capacity, but more as an advisor. The Kalenjin relied on local councils, the Luo, Luhya, and Kisii on kings for political and judicial affairs, while the Kamba were largely acephalous and did not rely on traditional chiefs or councils (Tignor 1976).

Colonial Realities: Kenya under British Imperialism

Speaking broadly about colonialism in Africa, European powers demonstrated eagerness to claim parts of Africa by the end of the 19th century, with the infamous Berlin Conference (1884-85) igniting the “scramble for Africa.” By the start of World War
I, Britain and France claimed a majority of territory. Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain also laid claim to various territories. The Imperial British East Africa Company received a royal charter in 1888 for territory that would eventually become Kenya, but after floundering financially, an East African Protectorate was established in 1895. A railway, linking Mombasa on the coast with the interior Ugandan Protectorate, commenced thereafter and was completed in 1903. With more white settlers migrating to the prime agricultural lands in the central and Rift Valley areas, the protectorate transitioned to a formal crown colony in 1920. Initially using chiefs as the primary form of administrative control, colonial officials later introduced local native councils, wherein political advancement was often tied to educational development (Thomson 2010; Gatheru 2005). Later, colonial policy was organized around what Mamdani (1996) called the “bifurcated state”—where urban direct rule was oriented around civil society/rights and indirect rule in rural areas.

Beginning in the 1920s there were organized protest against British rule, yet colonial officials remained indifferent to the various demands and considered their civilizing mission something the Kenyans should actually be grateful for. In 1944 the Kenya African Union (KAU) was founded to advocate greater freedom; and by the end of the 1940s nationalist leaders began being singled out for persecution, with the British thinking if you removed the figurehead, the movement will die, but failed to recognize the deep discontent across the colony. Sporadic violence against white settlers and increased racial tension resulted in a state of emergency being called in October 1952 after the Mau Mau rebellion gained traction (Maloba 1998). Over the next several years, tens of thousands of Africans were killed by British officers in an attempt to decimate not
only the Mau Mau fighters, but anyone deemed condoning the uprising. The entire Kikuyu population was more or less detained in internment camps, and over 1,000 Kenyans sentenced to death, with even more dying from the horrific conditions in the camps. Compounding the atrocities committed by the British was the death and destruction caused by the civil war within the Kikuyu communities, between those supporting the uprising and those opposed. Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of KAU, was accused by the British of leading the Mau Mau and consequently imprisoned in London between 1953 and 1961. By 1956 the uprising was winding down and the British slowly realizing they would have to relinquish control of their prized colony, resulted in a period of transition from colonial rule to independence, which was achieved in December 1963 (Berman and Lonsdale 1992a/b; Elkin 2005; Anderson 2013; Gatheru 2005).

Alongside the political developments of British colonialism, there simultaneously occurred a “spiritual imperialism,” a term coined in the 1940s by René Maunier. He defined it as the “domination of a religious nature” and considered it the first phase of imperialism, with “fear of evil” and “hope of good” being the two primary motivations for religion (1949:154). Historians though have not adequately described or demarcated the relationship between these two types of imperialism. Before analyzing the impact of these two imperialisms, let me briefly highlight some of the historical facts related to missionary activity.

The first Protestant Christian mission was founded on the coast by the British Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in 1846. The United Methodists followed shortly after in 1862, and as the railroad progressed further inland, so did the various mission organizations. By the beginning of World War I, the Anglicans, Presbyterians,
Methodists, and Catholics had established churches, school, and hospitals. These churches worked in cooperation with the colonial officials to partition their proselytizing efforts based on geographies, with the Anglicans and the Presbyterians claiming a majority of the central Kenya territory where the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru tribes primarily resided (Anderson 2013; Nthamburi 1991). Efforts to foster unity and cooperation among the different missions, four foreign missionary organizations created the forerunner of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) in 1913. In the late 1920s a revival broke out in the Belgian colonies (now Rwanda and Burundi) and slowly spread into Kenya in the 1930s and 40s. Two important consequences resulted. First, Christianity grew rapidly, but was driven and energized by African leaders and not foreign missionaries. This assisted with the indigenization process for the mainline churches and gave rise to their greater autonomy in the years preceding independence. Second, numerous African Independent Churches (AICs) were established during this time⁹ (Ward and Wild-Wood 2012). These AICs were opposed to not only the arrogance and insensitivity of the missionaries, but also resisted “the wider European project of harnessing the African continent, its resources, and peoples, to the glory, self-aggrandisement and financial profit of the so-called ‘metropolitan’ countries” (Wambugu and Padwick 2006:4).

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⁹ AICs can be a confusing acronym. Various terms can represent the “I” here, including: independent, instituted, indigenous, initiated, etc. AIC can also stand for the African Inland Church, an indigenous church denomination planted by the Western African Inland Mission. The two acronyms are not interchangeable with some scholars confusing them. Throughout this study AIC will refer to African Independent Churches and are defined as “churches which claim the title Christian in that they acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, and which have either separated by secession from a mission church or an existing African independent church, or have been founded outside the mission church as a new kind of religious entity under African initiative and leadership” (Padwick 2003:5-6).
Impact of Colonialism

Returning to a macro perspective, numerous scholars have examined the legacy and impact of colonialism, with their perspective particularly germane to concepts and theoretical frameworks I develop in Chapter 3. Schraeder (2004) points out that an authoritarian legacy permeated all aspects of life and that traditional checks-and-balance were destroyed. Nation-states were imposed that did not arise organically from the local people. Divide-and-rule diminished trust and fraternity within and between ethnic groups. Patriarchal forms of governance where reinforced, further marginalizing women, who in some African societies played an important leadership role. Kalu gets at an even deeper scar of imperialism stating that, “Colonialism was not just an administrative structure but also a psychological instrument that humiliated and wounded the soul and embedded a certain dependency as the victim internalized the values of the master figure” (2006:580). In short, empire is a condition (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, etc.) that does not facilitate the fullness of life (Allen 2015). The fabric of the soul was damaged, but also the fabric of society. The neatly defined categories of “tribes” as developed and instrumentalized during colonialism did not reflect the more fluid and overlapping identities found among ethnic groups prior to colonialism. Ethnic cartography enabled the systematic management of land and human resources. As this system developed and became a standardized path to hegemonic control, Africans themselves, both individually and as a community, began to adopt and adapt to these identities to advance their own political and economic livelihoods. Thus began a sub-hegemonic movement to create large ethno-regional groups to provide greater leverage and security. These phenomena ameliorate viewing ethnic conflict as some cultural clash of civilization, but instead a struggle over scarce
resources—leading to Bayart’s (1994) contemporary coinage “politics of the belly” (Thomson 2010:63-65).

After the chaos and destruction of World War II, European powers realized the tenuous relationship with their colonial territories. Despite a relatively short 70 or 80-year colonial era, independence movements sprouted across Africa in the 1950s and early 1960s, and soon newly independent African states were thrust into the international state system. Unburdened by the formal yoke of colonial masters, these states did inherit six important colonial legacies, ones important to highlight in this study. For brevity I will simply list the legacy, followed by the potential problems: 1) Arbitrary boundaries: divided communities, irredentist movements, internal ethnic conflict, inappropriate economic units; 2) Non-hegemonic states: inability to project state power into rural regions, concentrated state-power in profitable and strategic areas; 3) Weak link between state and society: no shared political culture between society and the state, legitimacy deficit, unaccountability within the state, disengaged civil society; 4) Formation of a state elite: political office associated with personal gain, state corruption, exploitative bureaucratic bourgeoisie; 5) Economic inheritance: natural resource extractive oriented exports, marginalization within international economy, underdeveloped human capacity, European market biased against local and regional; and 6) Weak political institutions: fragile democratic institutions following colonial disruptions, reappearance of colonial-style authoritarianism (Thomson 2010:22). The following three legacies are particularly relevant to religion and politics: weak links between state and society; state elite formation; and weak political institutions.
As European colonial process moved from a greater secularism and humanistic understanding of the world in the 19th and 20th Centuries, numerous Christian missionary movements arose from the West and proselytized large swaths of Africa, resulting in Christianity expanding rapidly throughout Africa in the last century. This demonstrates one of the most extraordinary transformations of culture in humanity’s history, but since this expansion occurred simultaneously during the development of various European political and economic empires, it is often assumed there was a direct correlation between empire and religion. However, the relationship between missions and empire has at times been separate, but parallel, other times completely intertwined, yet in other situations diametrically opposed. Where there was a connection was when “they played related parts in a larger drama – the spread of modernization, globalization, and Western cultural hegemony” (Etherington 2005:14). Missionaries often followed behind explorers, traders, and settlers, and though at times incriminated with certain atrocities committed in the name of God and country, they were not always “pliant handmaiden[s]” of empires and often lived in “uneasy alliance” with secular representatives of empire (Pagden 2001:65). However, because this connection between missions and colonialism was messy, it suggests multiple layers were added to the pre-existing African worldview, some at the subconscious, psychological level, as Fanon (1961) would suggest, while others were external and the simple adoption of Western domestic and industrial technologies (Shorter 1998).

At the surface level, missionaries and colonial officials brought changes to the traditional economic and political structures. The introduction of new management systems, modern technologies, and European values resulted in a new generation of
African professionals trained not only in skill sets applicable primarily in Western economic and political systems, but also a group that started demanding Western goods. Providing an education was an important means for colonial officials to staff colonial bureaucracies. However, a love for education was also equated with social respectability and economic advantage for the African, for education was viewed as an avenue for increasing wealth, which was in turn was a way to coalesce greater power, higher status, and prestige within society (Mbon 1987:48; Owusu 1970:92). So while the colonial officials demanded an educated elite, the Africans were willing to supply the students, and the missionaries equally willing to engage in the education process. This freed valuable resources of the colonial authorities to devote to tax collection, security, and commercial activities. Missionaries, with their colonial appointed and protected religious territory, essentially had a monopoly on education (Jenkins 1994:86-89); and while churches and missionaries were seen to be complicit in the empire building business their individual actions could undermine each other as was the case with an increased number of educated African advocating nationalist interests and subsequently viewed as a threat to colonialism (Porter 1999:245).

The church monopoly on education may have been a missed opportunity to instill democratic values in Kenya’s future political leadership, for there was openness to democracy among mission church clergy. Missionaries generally supported the efforts of independence movements, but hoped things would not move too quickly, for they still appreciated and relied on colonial funding for mission hospitals and schools. But action spoke louder than words when it came to democracy, for little support was found for
democratic principles within their own church structures, so despite their support for democracy, they essentially became pillars of colonial rule (Maxwell 2005:285, 289).\(^{10}\)

At the deeper level of Shorter’s (1998) values and worldviews, missional Christianity was still grounded in a secular/sacred dichotomy and did not initially comport well with the spiritual cosmologies of local populations. Missionaries “treated the natives as tabula rasa, in terms of religious awareness; they misunderstood their cosmological beliefs, and condemned the religious institutions which were the symbolic and psychological expressions of their social structure and milieu” (Ayisi 1992:107-08).

The adage of African Christianity being a mile wide and an inch deep resonates with some of the sociological realities of adopting a new religion, or as the Comaroffs referred to this spiritual imperialism as the “colonization of consciousness” and argued it was the direct result of missionary activity, but with a slight twist. The missionaries’ ideological message was not accepted explicitly, but implicitly, the civilizing process—based on Western culture, forms and systems—instigated the progression of many Africans into the imperial economic and political systems. “For while its ideological message was widely rejected, the mission enmeshed local peoples in the underlying forms of the European system – the commodity form, linguistic forms, and so on. Thus was initiated the process that incorporated many African peoples into the political economy of Empire” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989:267).

In later research the Comaroffs suggest this entailed a transformation to “a particular way of seeing and being” (1991:4). This process involves the move from

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\(^{10}\) There were a few notable missionaries and African clerics critical of colonialism, including Arthur Cripps and Thompson Samkange in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe today), Theophilus Hamutumpangela in Namibia, James Calata in South Africa (Etherington 2005).
dominance to hegemony, with the colonized tacit acceptance of “the structures and forms of coloniser systems of knowledge and attempt to negotiate their position within these systems, relegating their indigenous classifications, for the most part, to the past” (Cooper 2002:50). African Christians “learned that religious idioms could both legitimize and condemn political systems. By 1950 ‘everyone claimed…the sanction of religion in some form’, and this profoundly shaped the decolonization process” (Maxwell 2005:296). As the Europeans were viewed as symbols of power (along with Christianity, education, commerce, industry and civil service) an ideological climate developed that was favorable to religious change, particularly a conversion to Christianity (Peel 1968:50). Or as Horton and Peel state, “The European came with much more elaborate rituals for the supreme being, and his worldly success suggested that these were worth adopting” (1976:491). This is important because it goes back to traditional African views of where power resides in society. Traditional societies in Africa sought political, economic, and social power and status, thus leading them to think that within White man’s Christianity they could find this new and more powerful source of power and status. After all, they had witnessed their traditional shrines being destroyed by colonial officials who in turn suffered no repercussions from local deities (Mbon 1987:44). As Kalu noted, “the failure of the gods in crises opened [Africans’] cosmology to the acceptance of new gods. Christianity triumphed when the gods of the fathers could no longer protect. The Africans, with their precarious vision of a human world besieged by evil forces, sought more potent protectors” (1979:20). Christianity also opened avenue for an expanded social network that went beyond tribal units. “African traditional religions, belonging as they are to small tribal or even family units, by virtue of the
parochial nature of the ancestral spirits, tend to separate neighbouring peoples, and thus differ substantially from Christianity” (Mbon 1987:46). Joining a wider body represented by Christianity—which at a theoretical level, transcended ethnicity—could help reduce the petty differences that existed between neighboring communities (Stuart 1979:54-55). At the public level, these social, educational, economic, and political reasons for converting to Christianity are rational even if for an ulterior motive, but for many it was only an external conversion representing a re-socialization process, leading to the adoption of new ideas and values; and because the adoption of Christianity demonstrated an embrace of “civilization” it was only natural to avoid the stigmatization of being labeled “uncivilized” by joining the masses converting to Christianity. However, for many Africans their true identity (even if unconscious) remained more with the traditional African cosmologies. As Mbon states, “[A] change in religious affiliation does not necessarily imply a complete change in attitudes and ways of thinking and acting” (1987:49).

Post-Colonial Realities: The Birth of an Independent State in 1963

In this last historical period, I highlight in greater depth Kenya’s three past presidents and the politics of their era, followed by a discussion of church-state relations

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11 Woodberry makes a counter claim to missionary activity being a form of spiritual imperialism or colonialization of the consciousness. Using both historical and statistical analysis, he argues that conversionary Protestants (CPs), compared to mainline Protestant churches and Catholics, were a “crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organizations, and colonial reforms, thereby creating the conditions that made stable democracy more likely” (2012:244). He claims his analysis explains around half of the variation in democracy not only in Africa, but in Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. However, if a holistic democratization process, with culturally, historically, and socially appropriate metrics, were ever to be developed, I contend yes, Woodberry’s data supports the argument that CPs moved countries “three steps” forward (and there may be solid statistically significant data to support this claim), I would argue that anthropologists and critical theorists provide ample qualitative evidence to suggest a counter narrative (as I have suggested in this sub-section) that suggest other elements of CPs pushed countries “four steps” backward. While his statistical approach has stirred interest within positivist circles of political science, as of December 2015, Woodberry has not released his data for other scholars to examine.
during their tenure. Using tristructuration as a cultural and historical lens, watch closely how this concept continues to find applicability in contemporary times.

**Kenya Under President Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978)**

Kenya gained independence from the British on December 12, 1963 and declared a Republic a year later on the same date. Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, was the first prime minister, later to also become the first president under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party. Kenyatta’s inaugural address incorporated the concepts of *Harambee*\(^\text{12}\) and *Uhuru*.\(^\text{13}\) This won him the respect and support of a majority of the population (including white settlers), but many did not expect to see Kenyatta in power for long, due to his advanced age, which was actually unknown, but thought to be in the 70s (Kyle 1999:179). He did stay in power long enough to centralize power in a strong presidency and strengthen the power of KANU. He also placed key Kikuyu leaders in government posts, effectively creating a Kikuyu government under a *de-jure* one-party state that brought Kenya through 15 years of relative stability compared to other newly independent African states. In 1969 Kenyatta oversaw several amendments to the constitution created at independence (1963), all which served to weaken the democratic system and strengthen an imperial presidency. In August 1978 Kenyatta died in his sleep and was succeeded by Daniel T. Arap Moi, who was Kenyatta’s vice-president since 1967 (Githiga 2001:67; Chitere et al. 2006).

**Church-State Relations in the Kenyatta Era**

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\(^{12}\) Swahili for “let’s all pull together” and is a common community fund-raising event held often in a church and involving some form of political leadership. *Harambee* is an important concept in Kenya and is the state’s official motto and is part of the coat of arms.

\(^{13}\) Swahili for “freedom.”
Having converted to Christianity in 1914 and attended mission schools, Kenyatta maintained good relationships with the churches during his presidency. The churches were primarily focused on the private sphere and disentangling themselves from their missionary origins and colonial oversight, and not focused particularly on the political activities of Kenyatta (Maupeu 2001:51). The concept of harambee and the self-help spirit it embodied demonstrated a level of cooperation with the churches and other civil society organizations (Aseka 2004:14). The rebranded National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK) was actively involved in reconstruction efforts following the violence of the Mau Mau uprising, Theologically, NCCK member churches were more liberal and as dedicated to a social gospel as much as they were committed to an individual salvation message. In short, the NCCK did not carry the political baggage compared to the mainline and Catholic Churches, thus enabling them to interact more closely with the newly formed government under Jomo Kenyatta. This resulted in cordial church-state relations for most of Kenyatta’s presidency, though this did not prevent the lone prophets from uttering their cry. One of such figure was Henry Okullu, newly appointed Anglican Bishop of Maseno South (Oluoch 2006:58). He prepared the way for other clergy to vocalize their support for democracy and condemnation for the one-party state by stating:

The best system of government is one that is based on the principle of the constant exchange of ideas between the rulers and the ruled: a system which provides everyone with an opportunity to make his or her political contribution to the best of his ability and knowledge. Such a system entails a fair distribution of the instruments of power with political responsibility shared by the maximum number of people. It is such a government centered on the value and dignity of the individual who compose society, which we believe will embrace the most fundamental ideals of democracy (1974:74-75).
According to Sabar-Friedman, Okullu did not believe his statement represented opposition to the state per se, but instead was viewed as “constructive collaboration with power” (1995:436).

**Kenya Under President Daniel Moi (1978-2002)**

Compared to the relatively peaceful relations with the Church during Kenyatta’s era, events unfolded differently during Moi’s 24 years as president. To understand these changes, one needs to better understand the personal politics of Moi and related world events. Whereas Kenyatta had a large personality, was complex and enigmatic, a powerful public speaker, with a strong presence, Moi lacked these to large degree and had to work at both personality-building and institutionalizing his own personal power politics (Aseka 2004:13-14). Moi, who was from the Kalenjin ethnic group, quickly consolidated power, yet remained careful in how he diminished the Kikuyu’s control of key government positions. His first vice-president was Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, who served ten years until he lost favor with Moi in 1988. By 1982 Moi felt he had solidified his control of the government and consequently was successful in changing the constitution to make KANU the only legal political party. In August 1982, Kikuyu members of the Air Force staged an attempted *coup d’état*. The coup was followed by a swift routing of insurgents and court-martials of key military officials (Throup and Hornsby 1998:31-32). Moi modeled an almost fascist style of leadership involving “a violation of human rights, accumulation of wealth by a clique of the politically correct, an impoverishment of the majority, a persecution of the system’s critics, a manipulation of and spread of ignorance among the poor, and a one-party dictatorship” (Njeru and Njoka 2007:40). This authoritarianism led to further consolidation of power in the 1983 and 1988 general elections. Due to internal and external pressure, Moi was forced to
amend the constitution, and in 1991 opposition parties were once again allowed. Numerous parties challenged Moi in the 1992 and 1997 general elections, but Moi’s grip on power was strong enough to fend off challengers, including Kibaki in both elections. Moi was constitutionally barred from running for a third term and despite internal pressure to challenge this law, Moi stepped down peacefully in 2002, when Kibaki was elected president in 2002 (Throup and Hornsby 1998:33-45, 86-88, Wanyande et al. 2007:107-114). In sum, Moi remained in power using various means of authoritarianism, neo-patrimonialism, and other strong arm tactics used by other dictators and totalitarian regimes found around the world.

Upon ascendency to the presidency, Moi advocated his political ideology of Nyayoism. In Swahili nyayo are literally the visible foot prints when someone has walked through sand or dust. Initially this was in reference to following in Kenyatta’s footsteps, but later Moi deviated and started down his own path, creating nyayo that he thought Kenyans should follow. This concept was later summarized by the government with three words: love, peace, and unity (Gitari 1986:128, Godia 1984:22-32).\(^{14}\) The first era of Nyayoism related more the consolidation of Moi’s presidential power (as evidenced by his reaction to the 1982 attempted coup) and the second era marked by greater authoritarianism and abuse of power (Githiga 1997), or as Aseka says Nyayoism “ended up as mere populist coatings of political demagoguery” (2004:4).

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\(^{14}\) To further elucidate Nyayo and its pragmatic approach, Moi published *Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo philosophy and principles* in 1986. According to Moi Nyayo philosophy was founded on the following socio-cultural foundations: 1) Socio-cultural fabric and matrix; 2) Traditional philosophical foundation; 3) Traditional psychological environment; 4) Principles of traditional education; 5) Reflections from traditional economics; 6) Foundations of traditional wisdom and national security. Moi stated that Nyayoism stressed, “…the fundamental value of ‘being what we are’, or rediscovering our past, and of incorporating the best part of our collective national wisdom into the ongoing process of a forward march” (1986:10).
Church-State Relations in the Moi Era

President Moi was also a Christian, and unlike Kenyatta, attached himself to an organized establishment, the evangelical African Inland Church (AIC). The AIC disassociated itself from the NCCK, primarily over the issue of political involvement (Oluoch 2006:33). What is not explored in the literature is how the AIC and other fundamentalist churches may have bought into Moi’s Nyayoism. For Moi, church leaders are simply another type of leader and should foremost be a follower of Nyayo; and while Moi mentions the importance of the Christian faith (1986:21-22), he was highly critical and suspicious of clergy that spoke out against his government. He harassed foreign missionaries he suspected of being backed by foreign entities wishing to remove him from power (Kraft 1978). Moi also used the government’s registration process to control which churches became officially recognized and thus supportive of Moi. However, since the church was considered an extension of the government, Benson argues that it is precisely this difference of opinion between Nyayoism’s understanding of political ideology compared to that of the NCCK and Catholic Churches that resulted in the churches being such vocal opponents of Moi (1995:184-196).

According to Njoya (1987a/b) and Okullu (1974, 1984), Anglicans and Presbyterians had well-developed theologies of power. This may have provided the necessary foundation for the political platform from which these two denominations advocated, but Benson argues that while mainline churches had a well-developed biblical hermeneutics based on their evangelical theology arising from the East African Revival, they lacked a well-defined and articulated theology of political power. The result
was more a less a critique of Nyayo’s consequences, but not a thorough refutation of the underlying logic. So while the churches maintained an anti-hierarchical theology that opposed the sacred leadership ideology of Nyayoism, they lacked a coherent political ideology as an alternative (1995:191-5).

Current literature does not address how power was understood theologically for the AIC/fundamentalist churches, but if these churches in general supported Moi and their support was reciprocated with Moi’s favor, this may not have necessitated the need for a formal understanding of political engagement. The AIC churches though were birthed out the power struggle between Christian mission churches and indigenous believers, so had a history of opposing those in power, but capitulated to Moi’s “neo-Constantinism,” by actively supporting and spreading “presidential propaganda in the secular circles where they were in charge of creating a nation of docile Nyayo followers” (Maupeu 2001:53). An uncritical following of Moi was related equally to Moi’s penchant for co-opting independent and Pentecostal church leaders, using government appointments to gain their allegiance (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:102). KANU pressured churches to disassociate themselves from the NCCK, and when churches complied and joined the Kenyan Evangelical Fellowship, it effectively made the fellowship an important ally of Moi’s political agenda, leaving mainline Protestant and Catholic churches to oppose the growing authoritarian political culture. In the 1980s, Moi purged the Kamba leadership of the AIC and installed Kalenjin faithful for their support and acquiescence (Droz 2010:296). Nyayoism treated “the church as ‘part and parcel of the government.’ Church leaders are…just leaders; and all leaders must be part of the leadership corps…The church is not considered as an entity over against
the state” (Benson 1995:185). An example of this blind support was Moi’s visit to the Redeemed Gospel Church in February 1992, when the pastor exclaimed, “In heaven it is just like Kenya…There is only one party—and God never makes a mistake…We have freedom of worship. What else do we want” (Freston 2001:146)?

These AICs supported Kenya’s political elite who preferred a definition of the political as that pertaining to formal government institutions; and while mainline churches initially acquiesced to this delineation, they later came to prefer a definition broader in scope and drove church leadership to a more proactive engagement with the state (Sabar 2002:18). The mark of formal opposition to one-party rule came in August 1986, when 1,200 clergy members of NCCK condemned the queuing system that was to replace the secret ballot.15 Later, Beyond magazine, the main publication of the NCCK, addressed rigging, bribery, intimidation, and coercive activity that occurred in the February 1988 parliamentary elections (Chege 1994:57). The key Protestant crusaders throughout the 1980s and early 1990s were the three Anglican bishops, David Gitari, Alexander Muge, and Henry Okullu and Presbyterian Pastor Timothy Njoya. Scholars will often talk about the church being the midwife of democracy in the early 1990s, but in reality, it was primarily these four pastors and Catholic Bishop (later Archbishop) Ndingi Nzeki who challenged the state. Examples of their individual efforts in challenging Moi’s regime are numerous, so let me highlight just a few. Gitari used a sermon in June 1987 to warn government authorities that membership in KANU was not a requirement for voter registration. He said:

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15 Some of the churches that expressed support for the queuing electoral system included the African Independent Pentecostal Church, Full Gospel Church, and the United Pentecostal Church.
There are many poor people who cannot afford the party membership fee and who will be denied their democratic right to elect their parliamentary representative. There is also a danger that some rich politicians will pay the fee for party membership on behalf of poor people, on condition that they vote for them. To avoid such, the Constitution should be upheld and all citizens who qualify constitutionally should be allowed to register as voters whether they have paid party membership fees or not. Otherwise, many *wananchi* ¹⁶ will look harassed like sheep without a shepherd, unable participate in the general election (1988:18).

By 1989 various religious elite sharply increased their verbal attacks on the government. In a New Year’s sermon, Reverend Timothy Njoya, was the first to draw an analogy between Kenya’s political situation and the recent events that had occurred across Eastern Europe. One government official called for his detention with court proceedings. The Catholic Church, through a pastoral letter signed by 18 bishops, called for greater political liberalization. Anglican Archbishop Kuria announced the need for electoral system reform, condemned rampant corruption and called attention to the government’s take of concern for the poor and Bishop Okullu demanded the adoption of a two-term limit to the presidency. Throughout this period, the government continued their harassment of the churches, but did not take decisive steps to bring a closure through the use of force (Widner 1992:190-192).

Bishop Muge’s comments in particular were considered more severe since his diocese included the hometown of President Moi. Bishop Muge raised even more red flags when he compared the Moi regime with the apartheid regime in South Africa. This and other sermons and public announcements gained the support of other Anglican and Episcopalian leaders throughout the world, providing them with a strong role model in addressing political grievances in their own countries. The international press was soon

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¹⁶ Swahili for citizens
involved as well, with the BBC broadcasting some of Muge’s sermon addressing the political situation. This effectively enabled Muge to reach many Kenyans who would not have had the opportunity to hear his message. By garnering global attention, the church leaders were able to keep attention on this potentially precarious political atmosphere. This feeling of protection coupled with the idea that government would not censor religious speech, enabled church leaders to start distributing politicized sermons as either pamphlets or cassette tapes (Throup 1995:148-152; Widner 1992:191).

A tipping point did occur for Muge in 1990, when one of Moi’s ministers threatened Muge that if he uttered any further anti-government rhetoric in Moi’s home district, his life may be in danger. Muge was not intimidated, and in a direct challenge the next day, travelled to the area and once again condemned the government for its flagrant violations of human rights. On his return journey, his car was hit head on by a truck careening out of control on a steep mountain pass. Muge’s three passengers survived, but Muge was killed in the “accident” (Kamaara 2004:130-131).

On the flip side of these mainline denominations represented by the NCCK and the Catholic Church, are the numerous evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Kenya. Throughout the 1980s, Moi courted these more conservative groups, who in turn lent their support to him and KANU. Theologically they believed the Gospel placed more emphasis on salvation and thought it more important to leave economic and political issues to government leaders. Their dispensationalist thinking placed their focus on a future heavenly reward; therefore, what was needed on earth was a strong central government, one that could use the heavy hand of the state to keep the wayward on the straight and narrow. This fundamentalist ideology blended well with Moi’s Nyayoism,
and since Moi was a regular attendee of the Africa Inland Church and considered a “born-again” Christian, he was considered above the criticism coming from the NCCK. Moi readily capitalized on this favor and constantly directed commendation and praise to these churches, attended their fundraising efforts, and invited key fundamentalist leaders to his residence at State House. His co-optation resulted in having a significant base of power, but also one that continued to grow as these churches continued to expand throughout Kenya (Sabar 2002:189; Gifford 1991:10).

Throughout the rest of the late 1990s the churches’ voice diminished regarding championing multi-party elections, but not their involvement in other ways. Ethnic violence erupted in various parts of Kenya leading up to both 1992 and 1997 elections. The NCCK and Catholic Churches responded not only with word, but in deed by providing shelter and clothing to victims, offering reconciliation and mediation services, but also condemning the government and the KANU party for their involvement in intimidation tactics. The Roman Catholic Church sent a letter to Moi addressing this perpetration of ethnic conflict and other human rights violations. They wrote:

> Although our pleas, requests and advice ... seem to have been ignored by you, we on our side will not abandon our responsibilities. We have seen and heard of so much wickedness perpetrated in Kenya since the clashes began. Innocent people, peaceful and humble, and even churches and mosques have been attacked and destroyed. All these abominations are done in your name, by some of your Cabinet Ministers, your DCs, DOs, your GSU and your police (The Nairobi Standard 1993).

The Anglicans also responded with a 16-page pastoral leader that detailed the history of the clashes and was released to the media. The letter, signed by Archbishop Kuria and Anglican Bishops Gitari and Okullu, advocated civil disobedience if the government proceeded in a manner thought to be contradictory to the Bible. Such
language appeared to condone suggestive elements of an uprising or revolution, and Moi responded with equal force by calling on these bishops to resign and join the newly forming opposition parties, and squared his harshest remarks for the archbishop of who he accused of being the principle mastermind behind the letter; however, Moi managed to conveniently skirt the key issues addressed by the Anglican leadership (Sabar-Friedman 1995:446).

The NCCK and Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church also placed election observers at polling stations, but votes were later stolen or destroyed when in transit from the polling station. However, with the task of championing greater democracy and multi-party elections more or less accomplished, greater divisions started appearing among the churches. Part of this can be contributed to the fact that President Moi and the KANU political machinery managed to take advantage of the disunity among the opposition parties and consequently maintain their power in both the 1992 and 1997 general elections. Some churches opted to return to the traditional aspects of church work, others continued to be pursued by Moi and the KANU party to maintain a strong political base throughout the country, yet the Anglican church continued its vigil and spoke out when it felt necessary (Sabar-Friedman 1995:448; Maupeu 2001:50).

**Kenya Under President Mwai Kibaki (2002-2013)**

Moi hoped to see his legacy continue by selecting Uhuru Kenyatta (Jomo’s son from his fourth wife, Ngina) to succeed him in the 2002 elections. Mwai Kibaki, Moi’s former vice-president from 1978-88, and his National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) won 63 percent of the vote in 2002. KANU was defeated, ushering Kenya into a new era, where for the first time an opposition party defeated the ruling party in a free and fair election.
The pro-democracy, multi-ethnic element within NARC however, was quickly diluted as they came to power. One of the first Kibaki victims was Raila Odinga, who supposedly had a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kibaki to share the appointment of cabinet ministers 50-50. NARC fractured, with a large contingent of Luo, Luhya, and Kamba leaving and joining Odinga’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Kibaki also promised a new constitution within 100 days, but failed to deliver. Only until 2005 was a new constitution drafted that was acceptable to most parties; however, in August 2005, Kibaki’s attorney general, Amos Wako, redrafted sections that weakened the presidential system; and in the process ignited ethnic animosity and political rivalries. Odinga was joined by Moi, Uhuru Kenyatta, and numerous churches in opposing the new draft. The November 2005 Constitutional Referendum resulted in 58 percent of the electoral voting “No”—serving a humiliating defeat to Kibaki and his government. Kibaki responded by firing his entire cabinet and when it was reassembled a few weeks later, Odinga and his LDP members were excluded. In the two years leading up to the December 27, 2007 elections, this animosity remained latent, only to explode in early January 2008. Polls predicted a close race between Kibaki and his primary challenger, Odinga. Exit polls suggested Odinga had a slight edge over Kibaki, but during the next few days his lead crumbled as returns from Central Province, the stronghold of Kibaki’s supporters, pushed Kibaki ahead of Odinga. A hastily conducted swearing in ceremony attempted to leave little doubt about Kibaki’s successful return to a second term, but large parts of the country doubted the legitimacy of the election, with members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya even stating there were irregularities (Muli 2011).
Discontent was already manifested in sporadic violence in the two days after the election, but when Kibaki was declared the winner and sworn in, the lit match hit the gasoline that had been poured in the weeks and months leading up to the election. Kenya went up in flames and faced its greatest crisis since the 1982 attempted coup. In a two-month period an estimated 1,300 to 2,000 were killed, 400,000 to 600,000 people displaced, and $1.5 billion dollars lost in the economy. The speed and organization of the violence suggested it was not mob violence and spontaneous. Acrimonious actions by all parties involved prolonged the conflict, which finally ended late February with the signing of a brokered peace accord that created a power-sharing arrangement with Odinga taking the reconstituted post of prime minister (Kagwanja 2010). The new Governments of National Unity (GNU),\(^1\) while bloated and bogged down in even more bureaucracy, managed to steer Kenya out of the post-election chaos. The most important and significant achievement of the GNU was its unity in a successful campaign for the adoption of a new constitution in August 2010, which not only provided Kenya with a much needed new constitution, but also extended the life of the GNU until the 2013 elections (Amadi 2009). I will revisit current events in Kenya in the study’s conclusion, but since the GNU was in power during the time of this field research, I will end my political history here and turn now to how the churches responded during Kibaki’s presidency.

**Church-State Relations in the Kibaki Era**

Kibaki is a practicing Catholic and was educated at Catholic schools, and like Moi, made a regular habit of attending church services. Considering Moi’s reign in the

\(^{17}\) The GNU was the largest in Kenya’s history, with over 40 ministers and 50 assistant ministers, a vice-president, and two deputy prime ministers.
past, most mainland churches sighed in relief and welcomed Kibaki more ecumenical approach. After a certain honeymoon period showed that Kibaki was going to continue maintaining a strong presidency and in the process made numerous missteps, the churches realized they could not let their prophetic voice hibernate long. When in Kenya though, I had the impression that the Catholic Church was less critical of Kibaki compared to Moi and it were now the AICs, with Moi no longer their patron, joining evangelicals and mainline churches in challenging the Kibaki administration. The biggest church-state struggle during Kibaki’s tenure was the 2005 Constitutional Referendum.

Since the early 1990s, Moi was often pressured to begin the process of creating a new constitution. Finally, in 1997 the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission Act was passed, but resulted in two different commissions, one led by parliament and another by President Moi. In the same year, several churches set aside their doctrinal differences and formed the Ufungamano Initiative to review the constitution process in a more inclusive manner than believed was happening with the review lead by parliament. The act was amended in 2001 and combined all three review processes into the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC). For the next three years the CKRC reviewed the constitution and by March 2004 presented the “Bomas Draft” which garnered wide support across Kenya and included substantial reductions in presidential power and reinstituted the Majimbo devolution/federal system (Nunow 2004; Mbondenyi 2011). Kibaki’s attorney general, Amos Wako, made major changes in August 2005, effectively nullifying many of these changes in the Bomas Draft, and in some instances actually strengthened the presidency. With only three months before the November
referendum, Kenyans were in an uproar over these changes, with really only the Kikuyus and churches in Central Province fully supporting the Wako Draft. The symbol used on the ballot to support a yes vote was a banana and an orange for a no vote. The popular movement organized by various church leaders and discontented politicians, including Raila Odinga and members of his LDP (part of Kibaki’s ruling coalition) eventually morphed into the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and initially had wide support from the Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Kamba.\(^{18}\) The referendum saw various churches denominations (Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, evangelical, Pentecostal, AICs, and other mainline churches) from different regions and ethnic groups united in opposition to the draft, though the motives may have differed. Some churches and pastors were opposed on principle, claiming the Wako Draft made no substantial changes; while others viewed the referendum as a vote of confidence in the Kibaki administration. Regardless of mixed motives, the referendum demonstrated the capacity of Kenyan churches to mobilize their congregations, but also showed the deep rifts caused by a continued ethnocentrism. The antagonisms created during the referendum campaign would lay latent for several years, only to resurface in catastrophic ways following the disastrous 2007 elections (Hornsby 2012).

Kibaki’s win in 2002 General Election was an important transition for Kenya. It not only ended Moi’s authoritarian system, but opened future elections to a wider range of candidates. The National Conscience People’s Movement (NCPM) was founded in 2005 to elect members to parliament from evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

\(^{18}\) As I mentioned in my introduction, the rewriting of the Bomas Draft and subsequent defeat in the referendum occurred when I was working in Nairobi and was a significant factor in my decision to pursue a PhD in 2005.
Clergy (and their church in parentheses) involved in 2007 electioneering included: Paul Patni (Hope International Ministry); Walter Owade (Migori International Gospel Ministries); Peter Indalo and David Mairo (Maranatha Church); Titus Khamala (Cornerstone Ministries); Michael Otanga (Pentecostal Assemblies of God); Evole Asienga (Nairobi Pentecostal Church); Marksen Masinde (Kenya Christian Reformed Church); only Mutava Musyimi (Nairobi Baptist Church, and former secretary general of NCCK) was elected as a representative for Gachoka constituency. Pastors were often mere opportunists though, driven by greed and the lure of power found in elective politics, they would claim a call from God to vie for a particular constituency in the 2007 election, and when failing to get past the nomination stage for that constituency, switch to a different constituency (Parsitau and Kinyanjul 2009:167-70).

One mega-church pastor though has been successful at building both a religious and political empire. Margaret Wanjiru, founder and lead pastor of Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) based in Nairobi, was elected as an ODM MP for the Starehe Constituency (represented primarily by the downtown Central Business District) in 2007 and later appointed assistant minister for housing in 2008. She later failed to win the Nairobi Senate seat in the 2013 election.

In the months preceding the 2007 General Elections, churches were later viewed as highly partisan, but primarily along ethnic affiliation. The rancor among churches mirrored the heyday of opposition and support under Moi. Little did the churches realize that stoking ethnic fires would result in not only the loss of life and property, but it sullied the churches’ reputation in the months and years after the post-election violence of early 2008. The most horrific single atrocity was the 200 some Kikuyus who sought
refuge in the Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa. After the doors were barred and the church set fire by a crowd represented by the Kalenjin, Luhya, and Luo, a majority managed to escape somehow, yet 35 still died in the inferno. Over 400 other churches were also set afire. Arising from the smoldering ashes was an even more jaded population questioning the legitimacy of the church and a deeply dumbfounded clergy. The NCCK made a formal apology to the nation in the wake of the violence; and other churches initiated *Msafara*, a ten day nation-wide effort to bring relief supplies and reconciliation—a nice gesture, yes, but a little too late to compensate for months and years of compromised moral authority that contributed to the problem in the first place (Mue 2008). When conducting interviews in Nairobi, numerous respondents referenced the churches’ duplicity with some pastors openly admitting their ethnic bias, but most felt the violence was a sufficient wakeup call and that the country would be forge ahead stronger than before.\footnote{Swahili for caravan, convoy, entourage.} \footnote{There was a nervous fear that the 2013 elections would be a repeat of 2007. The pendulum probably swung too far in the other direction, with the media (highly implicated in provoking violence in 2007) and the churches playing it too safe and not venturing the criticize the irregularities that arose in 2013. This shows that there are few, if any, reputable institutions in Kenya that can speak with a level of gravitas, backed by a solid and historic reputation of non-partisanship and ethnic equality.}

Part of the National Accord signed in April 2008 included two laws that resumed the constitutional review process. The Committee of Experts presented a final draft to the government in April 2010 and was approved by 67 percent of the population in an August 2010 referendum. The church though was once again divided in its response to the proposed constitution. Opposing it in the “No” campaign were many Pentecostal and evangelical churches, backed by former president Moi and William Ruto (Kenya’s current vice-president). The “Yes” campaign and wider ethnic and religious support
across the country and had the support of most mainline churches, including the Anglicans and Catholics, though many of these were careful to not appear partisan or ethnic focused, and instead focused on messages of unity and holding voter education events to discuss the merits of the proposed constitution. These churches’ task though was easier when President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga both supported it and the government more or less demonstrated a unified front, but the churches were also willing to courageously confront top politicians when necessary. In a June service I attended at All Saints Cathedral, Prime Minister Odinga addressed the congregation, quoting 2 Corinthians 1:18-20, suggesting that God supported the “Yes” campaign. Afterwards, the Anglican Archbishop bravely admonished Odinga for taking scripture out of context and encouraged the congregation instead to remain united. Violence was kept to a minimum during this referendum period, but in June 2010, six people did die and over 100 injured when a grenade attack occurred during a “No” vote rally in Nairobi’s central Uhuru Park. Kibaki’s era as president ended in March 2013 when Uhuru Kenyatta defeated Raila Odinga in the general elections. In the conclusion I will provide a brief update on church-state relations under Kenyatta, but will end my historical review with the end of Kibaki’s presidency.

In sum, contemporary Kenyan networks of patron-client relationships are the primary political modes of maintaining hegemonic control. Common practices include instrumentalizing the state and using the government as a gatekeeper for access to jobs and financial resources as well as the diversion of state resources to maintain the

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21 “As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No (v18). For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes (v19). For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory (v20).” English Standard Version
regime’s support base. Here, sycophantism is rewarded and encouraged (Lewis 2012, Aseka 2004). Contra understandings that arise from a Western view of a distinct separation of institutionalized church and state, African religious and political figures compete for control of hearts and minds, leading to many politicians resorting to both co-opting the authority of religious via a patronage system and seeking the “consulting” services of religious specialists.²² This competition typically moves to the religious masses, where harambees are held on a regular basis and political elite have a religious sanctioned opportunity to mobilize voters, create clientelistic connections, and organize constituencies (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:67).

**Cultural and Historical Conclusions**

This chapter presented a lot of information, especially for those not familiar with African culture and Kenya’s history.²³ However, a majority of this information was public in nature, i.e. the actions of presidents and prime ministers, pastors and priests; and as I mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, a majority of scholarship has focused on these external church-state relationships. My goal in this study is to look deeper into the internal relationships and the more hidden dynamics, particularly those practices within religious institutions that inform and influence political belief and behavior—the space associated with tristructuration. This is the more private realm and thus the domain where governmentality and spirituality tango. Key questions arising from this chapter include: Why does the church seem to repeat the same patterns every five or ten

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²² In chapters three, four, and five of Worlds of Power, Ellis and ter Haar (2004) provide numerous examples of how political elite seek out spiritual leaders privately, hoping to utilize the esoteric techniques employed by witch doctors and such to grant them additional power for the material world.

²³ My brief summary may have glossed over other important historical details. This was not intentional. As this study is not historical in scope or nature, my goal was to provide enough background information to support my key arguments.
years? What direct and indirect influences do pastors have on the attitudes, actions, and affections of their congregation? Why do some pastors exhibit authoritarian tendencies, yet attract a large following, while others promote a more inclusive approach that builds and empowers congregates?

This study is not historical, nor really a dialogue with the past, but I do want to reiterate again that one cannot fundamentally understand religion and politics in Kenya today without comprehending and acknowledging not just the historical forces arising from pre-colonial systems, British colonial and missionary imperialisms, or Moi’s authoritarian regime, but also from the deeply held values and worldviews that have evolved throughout Kenya’s history. The past is a work in progress. The present is a reality of that work and the subject of Chapter 3. Using this chapter as the cultural and historical bridge, Chapter 3 uses the concept of tristructuration to closely examine religious leadership/followership, power, authority, legitimacy, transparency, and equality. From this journey arise two theories arise two religious pedagogies of political socialization—Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD) and Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE).
### Table 2-1. Power locality results for Kenyan respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal Spheres</th>
<th>Self %</th>
<th>State %</th>
<th>Spirit %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Tribe</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Modern Worldview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual World</th>
<th>Where God is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Christian Witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Traditional Worldview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Religion</th>
<th>Creator God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Allah</td>
<td>Formal Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Religion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Shamans &amp; magic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ancestors &amp; spirits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Curses &amp; blessings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evil eye, sacrifices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Folk religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Excluded Middle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seen World</th>
<th>What works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Hear, see, feel, touch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Science &amp; technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 2-1. Worldview comparison diagram
(Source: Myers 2011:8, adapted from Hiebert 1982)
Figure 2-2. Three dimensional power matrix
CHAPTER 3
RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGIES OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Introduction

Imagine you are looking for a school for your child. You decide to visit two different schools in your area. The first has an impressive building and on the day you visit, the students and teachers are friendly, enthusiastic, and filled with joy. However, when you ask to chat privately with them, they become fearful and only willing to talk where no one at the school will see them conversing. You find this odd, but you push on with your visit to see the principal. You get quite the run around here, told to come one day, and then rescheduled, and when you do finally arrive in his office waiting area, it feels more like something from a Harry Potter movie—guards, gatekeepers, doors to be buzzed through, and dark passage ways. You never do actually get to meet with the principal, but upon departing you ask the school secretary if you could have copy of the schools audited financial accounts. With a puzzled look, the secretary informs you the school doesn’t have that information nor would make it public if they did. Perplexed, you leave this school feeling confused. While you enjoyed attending some of the classes and appreciated the overt enthusiasm evident, something seemed odd—a dint of fear, secrecy, and authoritarianism was evident.

The next school was a breath of fresh air. Before you attend any class, you are welcomed into a sunny, open, spacious school courtyard. School staff are freely moving between glass-ensconced offices. You are offered a cold beverage before you walk over to meet the principal. Her office door also contains glass, enabling you to see into her private space. The hospitality and transparency here is in marked contrast to the previous school. Without asking, you are informed the school believes in financial
accountability and has a major firm audit their accounts annually—with the school posting this information on their website. Impressed, you can’t wait to attend class. Here you are greeted with a similar excitement and joy, but instead of a brick and mortar building, this school meets in what can only be described as large circus tents—in fact the school feels more like a carnival and a festive celebration. Staff and students all are willing to share their story—some even maybe sharing too much! Then during one particular lesson, the teacher has the students break into small groups to creatively solve a problem. The other school in contrast was more rigid, where student creativity and interaction with their teacher very limited.

This hypothetical situation was created based on an amalgamation of my experiences interacting with churches in Kenya. Swap school for church and principal for pastor and you get the idea. These two stories provide a visual image of two contrasting schools, but as I will argue in this chapter, churches represent social learning environments—and ones that not only find applicability on Sunday, but through the rest of the week as well.

This chapter focuses on building a theoretical understanding of churches as school and particularly on two religious pedagogies of political socialization—Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE) and Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD). This understanding sets the stage for my arguments presented in the next three chapters, which are based on empirical evidence situated around the three structural domains (Pulpit to Pew, Pew to Pew, and Pastor to Pulpit.). In the first section I describe these religious pedagogies in greater detail. The second section provides background on the sources related to their conceptual
development. Three different bodies of literature related to pedagogy, power, and toxic management serve as important theoretical frameworks informing the development of RPDE/RPDD.¹ In the third section I situate these religious pedagogies within several related scholarly bodies. I conclude the chapter by using RPDD as an analytical tool to re-examine the critique of scholars like Gifford and Deacon. An in-depth analysis of the scope and force of RPDD in this chapter will then assist with understanding the significance of RPDE, which is the focus of the next three chapters.

**Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment versus Disempowerment**

Broadly speaking RPDE and RPDD represent two ends of a continuum, each characterizing different types of political socialization that can occur in religious institutions. I define Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment as the private and public model of religious leaders and institutions that employ creative versions of power that guide followers in a reimagining process that fosters strong democratic values and principles. On the other side is the inverse of RPDE, Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment, the private and public model of religious leaders and institutions that disempower the development of democratic values and principles in followers.

These two terms are comprised of five key words that need to be explained in greater detail. “Religious” simply represents all domains related to religious life, and encompasses African Traditional Religions, missionary activity during the colonial era, theological education, church governing structures, bible studies, and attendance in

¹ A wide array of concepts, theories, geographies, and histories across a variety of disciplines beyond the traditional boundaries of political science are also visited in the development of the conceptual framework of RPDE/RPDD. These include: anthropology, sociology, religion, philosophy, education, management, psychology and even theology.
home groups. “Pedagogies” relate to “how” church is done, both privately and publicly and describes the social learning spaces and processes existing in churches across Kenya. Like a school, churches consist of teachers (pastors) and students (congregants), but also include activities like leadership development, sermon content, small group curriculum, financial management, transparency, accountability, political theology, social outreach programs, and interaction with media. I have chosen to use the word “democratic” to qualify the forms of empowerment and disempowerment. I differentiate between democratic and spiritual empowerment, for it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to speak to spiritual empowerment and how churches and their respective faith communities can bring hope and encouragement to the human soul and spirit.² By democratic I mean religious pedagogies that either tend toward modelling authoritarian and neo-patrimonial tendencies or assist with the flourishing and development of the core values and subsequent principles of democracy.

Core values would be Robespierrian in nature, i.e. liberty, equality, and fraternity, but this is not an exclusive list.³ I use these three values to represent aspects of democracy that are often overlooked by political scientists. Liberty has both a public and private component. A public liberty represents individual and corporate freedom from oppressive social, religious, economic, and political forces, both covert and overt. The private version corresponds to a personal freedom of the mind, body, spirit, and soul. Equality balances liberty with demonstrating the same rights, responsibility, status, and

² As I mentioned in chapter 2 though, several scholars argue there is a form of spiritual imperialism that is disempowering (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989, Cooper 2002, Kalu 2006, and Maunier 1949).

³ Additional values could include: diversity, pursuit of happiness, truth, popular sovereignty, patriotism, etc.
opportunity within and across communities. Fraternity connotes community, trust, cooperation, inclusion, empathy, commitment, and responsibility.

Principles of democracy include the following: rule of law, freedom of the press, respect for human rights, active political engagement, enlightened citizens, efficient institutions, free and fair elections, public accountability, independent judiciary, separation of powers, check and balances, etc. When thinking of democracy and the democratic process political scholars tend to give preference to the institutional aspects, but for these to fully manifest themselves in efficient and effective manners, I argue they need to be sufficiently undergirded by a strong sense of democratic values.

The essence of the continuum though comes with the last two words—“empowerment” and “disempowerment”—terms that relate to the use or abuse of power. Empowerment, a buzzword in development circles today, is defined as “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (Alsop et al. 2006). Disempowerment can be subtle and occurs in the hidden manners of making others weak, dependent, or unimportant. Like empowerment, disempowerment can come at the hands of individuals, groups, cultural systems, or religious belief.

Table 3-1 provides a comparative chart of the attributes of each type of pedagogy. The development of this table relied on field data and the theoretical frameworks I will address shortly. In Chapters 4-6 I utilize data from my case studies to focus more on RPDE. In the last sections of this chapter I further develop RPDD as a critical tool for analyzing the political socialization occurring in churches.
Conceptual Background

The conceptual genesis of these religious pedagogies of political socialization originates from three distinct sources arising during my field research. The first came from an interview with a seminary student who mentioned the concept of “vicarious satisfaction” and explained how Kenyans can consistently support, re-elect, and hail as their savior their particular tribal political leader, i.e. if their man (or woman) in power is doing well (evidenced by position, wealth, generosity, popularity, luxury car/SUV, etc.), they are doing well by default. During my field research I began to see parallels of vicarious satisfaction among the churches—attributes that I believe contribute to RPDD.

A second source was my exposure to Paulo Freire during my time at MIAS. As I read his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), I was struck at the similarities between his critique of the education system in Brazil and what I was observing in churches across Kenya. It seemed that several of the concepts Freire discussed could be transferred directly to the education structures and social learning environment found in churches. Freire’s theory was instrumental in the eventual development of RPDE/RPDD. I will address his theories in the next section where I discuss important theoretical frameworks that underpin these religious pedagogies of political socialization.

My familiarity with the scholarship critiquing the political role of churches, combined with my observations and data collected from Mavuno Church suggested there were two phenomena happening in Kenya. When members at Mavuno heard of my research, several inquired if I had read Paul Gifford’s Christianity, Politics and Public

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4 I traced the use of “vicarious satisfaction” to John Jusu, a professor at what was then the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (now Africa International University). Jusu mentioned that he uses the phrase to describe this African reality, but he has not formally published on the concept (Interview: September 14, 2010).
Life in Kenya (2009). Many expressed displeasure with what they thought was Gifford’s harsh criticism of Kenyan churches.\(^5\) I discuss Gifford’s book toward the end of this chapter, but throughout my research in Kenya, I was curious if Gifford’s conclusions (and similar conclusions from other scholars) could be approached from a different angle. As I spent more time at Mavuno I observed a different model compared to the ones presented by Gifford. Mavuno’s openness, their transparency, humility, and willing to assist where and when possible demonstrated the complete opposite of most churches I attempted to interact with when I first arrived.\(^6\) My general curiosity combined with my experience interacting with Mavuno staff and congregation members represent a third source, and becomes the primary rationale for discussing RPDE in greater depth in the following chapters.

### Developing Theoretical Frameworks

Three bodies of literature or areas of scholarship provide theoretical support for the development of these two religious pedagogies of political socialization. These areas include: Freire’s pedagogy of oppression, power and its many forms, and toxicity of people and places. After reviewing each body in section, I provide summary comments on how the theories support RPDE/RPDD.

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\(^5\) Implicit in these conversations was possibly an indignation at Gifford’s conclusions, and that they believed they were involved in something different, i.e. that Mavuno Church was not like these other churches Gifford critiques.

\(^6\) There were three exemptions. Parkland’s Baptist, All Saints Cathedral, and Nairobi Chapel. These three churches demonstrated a similar openness and hospitality to a researcher.
Freire’s Pedagogy of Oppression

In 1968 Brazilian educator Paulo Freire published his seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in Portuguese. While focused on a Marxist critique of an education process, his philosophy and critical approach can be applied to leadership in general. When I first read Freire I was struck by the parallels I was observing in the churches and theological schools. In fact, when first mentioning teachers and students, he immediately placed “leadership and people” in parentheses behind these words (1970:69), a fitting parallel for a pastor and his or her congregation. These three words—leadership and people—become part of my basis for adapting and contextualizing his pedagogy of oppression to the Kenya political and religious context. I utilize Freire’s insight to suggest there has been an historical pedagogy of oppression within religious institutions and communities. Since I reference key concepts of Freire in the next few chapters, I highlight the following three components of his pedagogy of the oppressed: *conscientização*, banking system of education, and antidualogics/dialogics.

Conscientização and the fear of freedom

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7 The book’s philosophical critique of not only education, but the colonization of the oppressed gained international repute, and his book was published in English two years later. This relatively short, four-chapter book examines the ongoing relationship between the colonizer (oppressor) and the colonized (oppressed) and when written, was situated within the Brazilian context of poverty in the 1960s. The preface and Chapter 1 introduce the concept of *conscientização* and explains the justifications and contradictions of oppression and the fear of freedom. Chapter 2 presents his theory of “banking” education and the interaction between teacher and student. In Chapters 3 and 4 he discusses antidualogics and dialogics, the latter being the essence of education as the presence of freedom and liberation.

8 Portuguese for “awareness”

9 Freire’s work serves as the most important theoretical framework, so I will be quoting extensively from his work.
Freire defines the Portuguese term *conscientização* as “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970:35). The English corollary is “critical consciousness” and demonstrates the perceived repercussions of this awakened consciousness—namely disorder, anarchy, and other forms of destructive fanaticism. The journey of self-affirmation required by *conscientização* moves men and women from finding refuge in achieving security to taking the risks necessary for liberty. Freire posits that men and women will not often acknowledge having a fear of freedom and in turn hide this fear, consciously and unconsciously, by declaring themselves custodians of freedom, yet “they confuse freedom with the maintenance of the status quo; so that if *conscientização* threatens to place that status quo in question, it thereby seems to constitute a threat to freedom itself (36). RPDD is premised on religious leaders knowing how to tap into this innate fear in order to maintain their own hegemonic control over their congregation.

Freire locates the genesis of the pedagogy of the oppressed in the beginning stages of struggle where:

> [T]he oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or "sub-oppressors." The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity. This phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of "adhesion" to the oppressor. Under these circumstances they cannot "consider" him sufficiently clearly to objectivize him—to discover him "outside" themselves. This does not necessarily mean that the oppressed are unaware that they are downtrodden. But their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression. At this level, their perception of themselves as opposites of
the oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradiction (45-46).

This structure of domination and subsequent relationship is based on a fear of freedom:

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion (47).

The fear of freedom is also coupled with the actions of the oppressor inducing an incapacity for risk taking. This leads to any freedom seeking efforts threatening not only their oppressor, but their fellow oppressed comrades:

...who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires. When they discover within themselves the yearning to be free, they perceive that this yearning can be transformed into reality only when the same yearning is aroused in their comrades. But while dominated by the fear of freedom they refuse to appeal to others, or to listen to the appeals of others, or even to the appeals of their own conscience. They prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; they prefer the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom (47-48).

Freire expounds on this seemingly catch 22 appearing as an omnipresent duality:

The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account (48).
Important ideas of the role of human agency are apparent in Freire’s arguments, where I argue that when this fear of freedom is placed beneath a spiritual façade, similar oppressive elements arise as they relate to agency. There is also a direct correlation between freedom and the public/private forms of liberty I discussed earlier and relates to Maunier’s “spiritual imperialism” and Comaroff’s “colonization of the consciousness” I referenced in Chapter 2.

The “banking system” of education

Freire then demonstrates how this fear of freedom is propagated via an education system. His “banking” concept of education is based on teachers issuing communiqués (lectures) and making deposits “which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat…in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (72). To be truly human, according to Freire, inquiry and praxis via creativity, transformation, and knowledge are crucial attributes that need to be permitted and fostered. This “banking” process is fundamentally narrative in character and involves the teacher (the narrating subject) and the students (the listening objects) in an environment where the “content,” whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated, to become lifeless and petrified. To counter the permanence and reactionary attributes of the banking system, Freire’s solution is an education oriented around problem-posing, which when rooted in the present, becomes revolutionary and “accepts neither a ‘well-behaved’ present nor a predetermined future” (84). This solution could be problematic however, as it comes into direct conflict with Christian eschatology that guarantees a particular predetermined future in heaven.
The antidualogical and dialogical

Antidialogical strategies used by the oppressor include the use of myth to justify conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion. The appetite for conquest leads to the oppressors "attempt to destroy in the oppressed their quality as ‘considerers’ of the world. Since the oppressors cannot totally achieve this destruction, they must mythicize the world" and is “accomplished by depositing myths indispensable to the preservation of the status quo: for example, the myth that the oppressive order is a ‘free society’" (139). Notice this form of subjugation keeps the oppressed not only passive, but also entails no true form of communication nor did it involve any sense of personal interaction with the people. Additional myths employed consist of the oppressor promoting:

the advancement of the people, so that the people, in a gesture of gratitude, should accept the words of the elites and be conformed to them; the myth that rebellion is a sin against God; the myth of private property as fundamental to personal human development (so long as oppressors are the only true human beings); the myth of the industriousness of the oppressors and the laziness and dishonesty of the oppressed, as well as the myth of the natural inferiority of the latter and the superiority of the former (140).

Counter strategies of dialogics include cooperation, unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis. These actions directly counteract the antidualogic strategies mentioned above. Space does not permit a detailed analysis for these strategies, but essentially these dialogic approaches constitute the actionable components of Freire’s conscientização.

Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed provides critical theoretical support for both RPDE and RPDD. RPDD is modeled when leaders in a church confuse freedom with the status quo; create environments where resignation to the risks of freedom
predominates; castrate congregants’ ability to create and re-create; diminish critical thinking skills; and utilize myth to propagate the phenomena of vicarious satisfaction. These pastors remain behind their pulpit and provide unilateral answers to the perceived needs of the congregation. It is a rote spirituality, a rinse and repeat of religious dogma that completely negates the problem-solving and creative thinking skills of the members present. RPDE on the other hand is apparent when churches provide an outlet for creativity; build problem posing and solving abilities; foster knowledge acquisition; and openly facilitate living not in captivity, but freedom in all dimensions. It is marked by a dynamism that creates sufficient social learning space for the fostering of the three democratic values of focus (liberty, equality, and fraternity).

As I have highlighted, power relations play an implicit role in Freire’ theory, but he does not address the spiritual or religious realities of power in his theory. The next area of scholarship adds a component related to power and how it is understood within the African context, including its spiritual component.

**Power in Multiple Guises**

To fully develop theoretical support that incorporates the concept of power, I discuss three types of power: invisible, spiritual, and creative. While this discussion is limited in scope, these three types are germane to the development of these religious pedagogies. Cultural understandings of power and authority, where it lies, with whom it is invested, how it is utilized, and in what forms it is manifested all relate to RPDE/RPDD.

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10 The more visible types of power—police, judicial system, armed forces, gangs, mob violence, etc.—are obviously there, but not the focus of my framework.
At the core of political science are various ideas, concepts, theories, and understandings of power, but power can be a contentious word “because, as a concept, we can understand it in many different ways and debates about meanings may remain fruitless should they stay at a theoretical level. It is also contentious because these different understandings are themselves shaped by power” (Eyben et al. 2008:5).

Invisible power

Steven Lukes’ 1974 seminal *Power: A Radical View* critiques the focus on behavior and subjective interest found in one and two-dimensional views of power. Using the first two dimensions of power as a jumping off point, Lukes posits that a third dimension of power is concentrated in overt and covert power struggles and goes beyond just the two dimensions of overt and covert power (1974:15-25). His third dimension incorporates latent conflict, i.e. where there are contradictions between the true interests of those excluded and the interests of individuals exercising power. Lukes describes the third dimension this way:

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11 Understanding the nature of political power has been pursued by scholars, scientists and sages for millennia. Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Gramsci, Foucault, to name only a few, have wrestled with this concept.

12 Several prominent political scientists premise their definition on power, i.e. Lasswell’s “politics as government determination of who gets what, when, and how” (1936) or Easton’s “politics as the authoritative allocation by the political system of values for society” (1965). In a November 2007 private conversation with Göran Hyden, when asked what he would focus his attention on if he was beginning his scholarly career afresh, he simply relied, “Power.”

13 The first dimension of power is accredited to Robert Dahl, where his intuitive idea of power looks like this: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (1957:202-3). A second dimension was later developed by Bachrach and Baratz to address the importance of who controls the agenda and in turn maintains a lever of indirect power. They state that “to the extent that a person or group—consciously or unconsciously—creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power” (1970:8). Lukes likens the second dimension more to coercion because it entails influence, authority, force, and manipulation, thus making any analysis of power examine both decision-making and non-decision making (1974:21-22).
The third kind of power can be the most insidious. It is the most hidden from view—the least accessible to observation by social actors and observers alike. It can be at work, despite apparent consensus between the powerful and the powerless. It is the power to influence people’s wishes and thoughts, inducing them to want things opposed to what would benefit them and to fail to want what they would, but for such power, recognize to be in their real interests (2014).

This type of power prevents people from airing their grievances because those in power have shaped their understanding, perceptions, and preferences to such a degree that they acquiesce to their place and role in society. Their acquiescence is even more troubling when they cannot envision or imagine a better alternative, or view it as natural and beyond change, or it signifies a divinely ordained condition and is beneficial from a spiritual perspective (2005:28).14

Related to Lukes’ concepts of power are Galbraith’s three types: condign, compensating, and conditioned; which emulate from three sources: personality, property and organization.15 His condign power “wins submission by the ability to impose an alternative to the preferences of the individual or group that is sufficiently unpleasant or painful so that these preferences are abandoned” (1983:4). Compensatory power “wins submission by the offer of affirmative reward—by the giving of something of value to the person so submitting….in the modern economy, the most important expression of compensatory power is, of course, pecuniary reward—the payment of money for services rendered, which is to say for submission to the economic or personal purposes of others” (1983:5). Finally, conditioned power is

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14 Echoing Lukes’ sentiments, Dowding comments on this acquiescence, which “may happen in both a thick and thin sense…the thick sense where people actively believe the values which oppress them and the thin where they are merely resigned to them” (2006:137).

15 Although Galbraith was addressing power within the economic, political, and military realms, his ideas remain relevant for this study nonetheless.
“exercised by changing belief. Persuasion, education, or the social commitment to what seems natural, proper, or right causes the individual to submit to the will of another or of others. The submission reflects the preferred course; the fact of submission is not recognized” (1983:5-6). Conditioned power is similar to Lukes’ third dimension and also helps explain the African vicarious satisfaction with its political and religious elite.

Finally, VeneKlasen and Miller (2007) make an additional distinction about power important to RPPS. They discuss four forms of power: power over, power with, power to, and power within. Power over is the most recognized form of power and is viewed as a zero sum game or win-lose situation. This type of power is viewed as domination and propagates poverty, inequality, and injustice, but interestingly, people in formerly powerless positions will imitate their oppressor when they gain power, thus negating that common assumption that formerly marginalized groups will demonstrate good leadership if and when they gain power (a sentiment echoed by Freire). Power with works to find common ground among competing interests and by building collective strength, can multiple individual contributions. Power to references the innate potential of an individual to make contributions to shape both their personal life and the world around them. Related to this external projection of power is power within—an internal power related to a sense of self-worth, self-knowledge, ability to imagine, and have hope, dignity, and fulfillment.

Like Lukes and Galbraith, VeneKlasen and Miller also come to similar conclusions regarding the levels of power, positing three levels of political power: 1) visible power—observable decision-making; 2) hidden power—setting the agenda; 3) invisible power—shaping meaning. They also identify three locations of power: public
(work, legal, public life), private (family, marriage, friends), intimate (internal sense of self-confidence and knowledge of self).\textsuperscript{16}

**Spiritual power**

Historically, Africans have understood power as being manifested in numerous forms such as their traditional belief systems granting tremendous power to an invisible spiritual realm inhabited by gods, spirits (both good and evil), and the living dead. Reiterating the arguments of Ellis and ter Haar, religion in Africa entails a “belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, that is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world” (2007:387). From this definition we can see the two components of power, spiritual and natural, that are in continuous interaction. This movement between these dualistic characteristics of analysis extends into other aspects of African epistemologies, including ideologies on justice, progress, and economic development, but also social relationships, with this invisible realm serving as an important element of people’s social capital. These relational dynamics between the spiritual and social can be categorized into four religious resources. The first are religious ideas or what people tend to believe; the second are religious practices and are the action related to people’s belief systems; the third are religious organizations or how the structures and institutions are formed to manage these beliefs; lastly are religious experiences and relate directly to an inner

\textsuperscript{16} In referencing the invisible power, they state, “By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this level of power shapes people’s beliefs, sense of self, and acceptance of their own superiority of inferiority” (VeneKlasen and Miller 2007:48). But the other levels and locations play a crucial role in shaping these processes as well, where “socialization, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe” (49). Among influential forces identified, the media, schools, political and religious leadership were mentioned as having the ability to shape norms and values that could actually instigate change.
emotion, feeling, attitude or change produced from an encounter with the invisible realm (Ellis and ter Haar 2007:392-394; ter Haar 2005:22-27).

A neat division between the supernatural and natural is not seen by many in Africa. The “excluded middle” identified in Figure 2-1 assists with bridging this division. It is within this context that Kraft argues that spiritual power is sought after to meet basic human needs and that this interaction with the spiritual world is programmed by the values and assumption found in the dominant worldview (1995:10).

Spiritual power can also be distinguished into two kinds, one which tends to be coercive, direct and consciously applied, and the other that tends to be indirect and even unconscious, yet works at levels where norms and ideas are made and where domination does its quiet work (Strange 1996:16-30). This distinction also provides interesting parallels for the dichotomy of spiritual and political power. Ellis and ter Haar state it most succinctly:

In Africa, spirit beliefs contribute substantially to shaping the realm of politics. Moreover the existence of widespread belief in the spirit world may become a political instrument, whose nature has to be understood. Hence a priority for social science research is to develop a method of analysis that takes full account of the effective power of belief. Such a method requires putting non-Western views of reality at the center of the analysis, or in other words “provincialising Europe”, rather than making these views subservient to a sociology of religion that has been shaped by the historical experience of the West (2004:177-78).

In short, Ellis and ter Haar are advocating that the knowledge gap between the spiritual and natural concepts of power needs to be closed in order to create a methodology that can better incorporate non-Western epistemologies. Tristructuration incorporation of this component of spirituality and represents my attempt to better understand the political instrumentalization of different types of power, particularly associated beliefs in spiritual power.
Creative power

The last type of power I want to discuss is similar to the concept of empowerment. Creative power has certain characteristics that provide an alternative to the often dichotomous and zero-sum orientation discussed thus far. Gaventa argues that power “is not a finite resource; it can be used, shared or created by actors and their networks in many multiple ways” (2006:24). Coming from a critique of both political and religious power, Crouch (2013) proposes a form of power that is positive-sum in nature and counters the various versions discussed previously. Using Nietzsche’s pessimistic vision of power as espoused in *The Will to Power* (1910), Crouch attempts to overwrite the negative themes and creates the following:

> All true being strives to create room for more being and to expend its power in the creation of flourishing environments for variety and life, and to thrust back the chaos that limits true being. In doing so it creates other bodies and invites them into mutual creation and tending of the world, building relationships where there had been none: thus they then cooperate together in creating more power for more creation. And the process goes on (2013:51).

Here, Crouch confronts Nietzsche on several fundamental points. Crouch’s version allows for the generation of more space, countering Nietzsche’s suggestion that true power attempts to master all space. Crouch states, “[T]here is a kind of being that delights in sharing space and a deeper, truer being that is able to create more than enough space—room for more being” (51).\(^\text{17}\) This creative power entails a cooperative and creative element that can overcome and even reconcile those coming from different perspectives and places in life. This cooperative power “creates more power than there

\(^{17}\) His definition of creative power avoids the dichotomous and zero-sum orientation toward power. Viewing resistance not as the solution to confronting power in the form of violence and domination, Crouch believes there is a deeper and better power that could create environments where individuals would thrive in society.
was before, so that the more we work together the more power we discover is available to us” (52).

Interestingly, there is a Swahili word related to creative power—utamadunisho—which refers to the condition of making culture (Magesa 2004:37). Thus embedded within the Swahili linguistic framework, Kenyans have been exposed to the potential of creative power. Unfortunately, other forms of dominating, coercive, and negative forms of power have marginalized and suffocated this creative form of utamadunisho in Kenya. Destructive forms of power via impunity, corruption, neo-patrimonialism, and authoritarianism prevalent within Kenyan politics (both pre and post-independence) and a parallel with religious pedagogies of democratic disempowerment is unfortunately self-perpetuating.

Power plays a vital role in these religious pedagogies. RPDD is marked by an insidious version of power that moves people to want what is not in their best interest. This created acquiescence prevents the imagining a better world, for disorder becomes predictable and thus preferred—the known takes precedence to the unknown. The prevalence of a power over within RPDD creates a scarcity model of power, which is the currency for survival. Yet this power can be compensatory in non-material ways, i.e. future blessings await the faithful in the next life. This zero-sum attribute negates any option for using power to challenge the status quo. RPDE on the other hand understands power as positive-sum phenomena and actively creates flourishing.

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18 In refuting Nietzsche, Crouch grounds his approach to creative power in the Christian account of creation, a narrative that should find particular relevance for Kenya’s religious population. Power, defined by Crouch as “the ability to make something of the world” (17) taps into jussive, cohortative, and imperative power. “Jussive ‘let there be’ power leads to cohortative ‘let us make’ power, in all its relational and communal joy. Imperative ‘make it so’ power is a kind of third derivative that is always dependent on prior creativity and relationship” (54). For Crouch “true power comes from the very creativity and love that Nietzschean power would extinguish” (52).
environments where *power to*, *power for*, and *power within* can be cultivated via cooperative relationships and shared power between leaders and followers.

**Toxic Leadership, Followership, and Environments**

The final component of theoretical support borrows from the business management literature and addresses toxic leadership, followership, and environments.¹⁹ In a conversation with Marta Bennett, Director of the Leadership Studies Department at the Nairobi International School of Theology, she mentioned the concept of toxic leadership and how scholars (Lipman-Blumen 2004) were addressing the concept. She thought it an apt approach to studying religious institutions. As I reviewed the material on business management toxicity, I found similar parallels to church management and leadership.

**Toxic leadership**

Lipman-Blumen (2005a) defines toxic leadership, both intentional and unintentional, as the engagement in numerous destructive behaviors and exhibition of dysfunctional personal characteristics that result in negative effects for followers and/or organizations. These “toxic leaders are those individuals, who by dint of their destructive behaviors and dysfunctional personal qualities generate a serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even entire societies they lead (2005b:2). One of the central questions for Lipman-Blumen is:

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¹⁹ When inquiring about what books were part of Mavuno’s leadership curriculum, several popular business books were included. I expound more on these subjects in Chapter 4, but the idea of exploring business leadership texts seems appropriate, as most scholarship has overlooked this angle when examining religious leadership in Africa.
“what are the forces that propel followers, again and again, to accept, often favor, and sometimes create toxic leaders (2005a:24)?\textsuperscript{20} A Kenyan critic even uses the term—claiming Kenya is in the grip of highly toxic leadership.\textsuperscript{21}

For Lipman-Blumen, behavioral characteristics of toxic leadership include:

1. Leaving followers worse off than when they found them
2. Violating the basic standards of human rights
3. Consciously feeding their followers illusions that enhance the leader’s power and impair followers’ capacity to act independently
4. Playing to the basest fears and needs of the followers
5. Stifling constructive criticism and teaching supporters to comply rather than question leaders
6. Misleading followers
7. Subverting those structures and processes of the system intended to generate truth, justice, and excellence
8. Building totalitarian or narrowly dynastic regimes
9. Failing to nurture other leaders
10. Maliciously setting constituents against one another
11. Treating their own followers well, but persuading them to mistrust others
12. Identify scapegoats
13. Structuring the cost of their removal and downfall too high
14. Ignoring or promoting incompetence, cronyism, and corruption (2005a:19-20)

Characteristics three, four, five, seven, nine, and 13 are particular germane to this study’s theoretical framework. Yearnings for orderliness and certainty in an unpredictable and chaotic world can appear satisfied when leaders promise to keep followers safe and secure when things fall apart. Leaders manage this fear by offering reassuring illusions, with the most influential illusions promising escape from death, but only if the followers submit to their leaders. As leaders gain more control over their

\textsuperscript{20} Throughout her work she references business leadership in Enron, WorldCom, and Morton Thiokol as well as the political leadership of Josef Stalin, Augusto Pinochet, Pol Pot, Alberto Fujimori, Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, and Charles Taylor (the Liberian president/dictator from 1997 to 2003, and not the Canadian philosopher).

\textsuperscript{21} He quotes an expert who defined the toxicity as an “approach that harms people...through the poisoning of enthusiasm, creativity, autonomy, and innovative expression. Toxic leaders disseminate their poison through over-control. They define leadership as being in control” (Tanui 2008).
followers, and the costs of trying to bring change deemed too high, a peculiar phenomenon occurs where followers displace their own fears, needs, and insecurities and instead find vicarious satisfaction with leadership. Lipman-Blumen calls this vicarious heroism:

Recognizing the superiority of these outstanding achievers, we seek vicarious heroism by identifying with them. If we can somehow become part of their spectacular accomplishment, by joining their entourage, their organization, their fan club, or their mass following, then some of their heroism rubs off on us. If we decide they are geniuses, despite the lack of any confirmatory metric, we endow them with the right to eccentricities from simple bad manners to uncontrollable rage or authoritarian hauteur. Then, in a curious tautological dynamic, we use their eccentricities as evidence of their genius (2005a:114).

Notice how Lipman-Blumen’s vicarious heroism is relatively synonymous with Jusu’s vicarious satisfaction. This heroism also goes back to the traditional worldview that African leaders are often endowed with an ontological difference, with this enchantment elevating them to an untouchable and almost divine status.

**Toxic followership**

There is a growing body of literature studying the inverse of leadership, i.e. followership. Barbara Kellerman defines followers as “subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence then do their superiors, and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line” (2008:213). From this definition, she identifies five types: isolate, bystander, participant, activist, and diehard (82-86). Similar categories are developed by Kelley (1992): alienated followers, exemplary followers, passive followers,

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22 Isolates do nothing and know nothing and further empower leaders with their uncritical acquiescence. Bystanders do not participate and only observe, yet their supposedly neutrality is tacit support for leaders. Participants engage and invest where and when they can. Activists are fully engaged and feel strongly about their leader, positively support or negatively by undermining their leader. Diehards are defined by their dedication and demonstrate extreme devotion to support or undermine leaders.
Chaleff (2009) identified four different followership styles: implementer, partner, individualist, and resource. Implementers are the most common, offering high support and low challenge to leaders. He then developed six dynamic characteristics of good followership consisting of: 1) courage to assume responsibility; 2) courage to serve; 3) courage to challenge; 4) courage to participate in transformation; and 5) courage to take moral action; and 6) the courage to speak to hierarchy.

Moving from typologies to the more psychological aspects of followership, Lipman-Blumen argues that followers develop rationalizations that solidify into “control myths,” which are beliefs individuals hold about why they should or should not act and eventually harden within a person’s superego where they control behavior. Control myths can come in many forms, i.e. ones that: make followers feel both inferior and safe; instill fear of repercussions; cause worry about the followers’ benefits; protect that general status quo; enable the avoidance of responsibilities; and promise ennoblement and immortality. These control myths work with incredible power, because they operate below conscious awareness, where they are not critically examined nor their validity questioned—thus becoming self-fulfilling prophecies in the process. “Control myths soothe our anxiety and calm our fears. They tell us what to do and what not to do. They warn us of the consequences of ignoring their ‘wisdom.’ They also help us go about our lives, pursuing our own interests and leaving the complex issues to the leader. The

23 Alienated followers are passive, but demonstrate independent and critical thinking. Exemplary followers are actively involved, but remain objective and critical when necessary (Kelley’s preference would be that all followers were this type). Conformist followers remain active, but exhibit dependent and uncritical thinking. Passive followers are disengaged and dependent on the leader for their thinking; and finally, pragmatist/survivors sit in the middle of the four quadrants of the previous four and assume a “better safe than sorry” attitude.

24 Partners are also supportive, but willing to challenge leadership when necessary. Individualists often challenge leadership and result in marginalization due to their lack of support. Resources do only the minimum required to stay in favor with the leader and other followers.
control myths immobilize not only our minds and our hearts. They also disable our mouths, our brains, our brawn…” and “coalesce into a complex power mythology that provides a framework for understanding why the ‘powerless’ don’t’ revolt” (2005a:136-37).

Toxic environments

Combining toxic leadership and toxic followership, Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser add a third dimension—the social environment—in what they call a “toxic triangle” (2007). These authors look less at the personal characteristics of a toxic leader, preferring instead to examine the outcomes and processes involved in the organization. This approach moves from a “leader-centric” focus to a more holistic understanding of the role susceptible followers and conducive environments can lead to destructive organizational outcomes. Their toxic triangle encompasses the following attributes for the three domains. Toxic leaders are characterized by charisma, personalized power, narcissism, negative life themes, and an ideology of hate. Toxic followers are divided into two groups, “conformers” exhibiting unmet needs, low core self-evaluation, and low maturity; and “colluders” representing ambition, similar worldviews, and bad values.

25 Related to Lipman-Blumen’s control myth is the concept of a negative core self-evaluation or basic conclusions that one holds about themselves. These beliefs consist of self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy (Judge et al. 1997). Self-esteem is what distinguishes leaders from followers (Judge et al. 2002) and in an attempt to be more desirable, individuals with low self-esteem often identify with charismatic leaders (who want to manipulate and control these individuals), with the followers’ acquiescence fated because they think they deserve this controlling behavior (Padilla et al. 2007). Locus of control refers to where an individual sees fate being determined, i.e. self-determination or by external factors. Those having an external locus of control can be more easily manipulated by powerful leaders who seem to care for their needs (Rotter 1966). When cultures elevate the collective over the individual, avoid uncertainty, and represent a high power distance, toxic leaders are more likely to emerge (Luthans et al. 1998). Finally, self-efficacy means “one’s capability to perform well” and “determines decisions about what activities to undertake and how much effort to spend on them” (Padilla et al. 2007:183). When situating a negative core self-evaluation within collectivist cultures that have both high power distance and endorse the avoidance of uncertainty, followers are more accepting of the power asymmetries that evolve (Hofstede 1991).
Finally, toxic environments contain instability, perceived threats, cultural values, a lack of checks and balances and ineffective institutions (2007:180).

Padilla et al. (2007) situate this toxic triangle within an organization, but I argue it has application to Kenya at a country-wide level—a macro approach capturing the toxicity within the organizations and institutions that dominated Kenya during the colonial era and their eventual metamorphosis to being Kenyan-led. Let me be clear—I am not saying Kenya is a toxic triangle, but instead characteristics of this toxic triangle have cultural and historical trajectories that influence religious and political organizations and institutions today. My distinctions will become more apparent as I continue to outline my two religious pedagogies of political socialization.

These three areas of toxicity are typically represented in RPDD. Pastors who employ control myths play to base fears and exacerbate the need for safety and security. When criticism is stifled, future leaders left unnurtured, and the church structured around their personality, these pastors become indispensable, in part because they have attracted followers like the above mentioned isolates, bystanders, conformists, and passive types. In contrast RPDE leadership is oriented around nurturing future leaders and is not based on maintaining the hegemony of one individual. The congregation is encouraged to be good leaders, but also good followers, ones like activists, partners, exemplary, and implementer mentioned above.

Situating Religious Pedagogies in a Scholarly Context

Aside from the various literature I used for the theoretical development of RPDE/RPDD, there are additional scholarly bodies related to these religious pedagogies of political socialization (RPPS). I highlight several in this section for several of reasons. First, RPPS relates to the space where democratic values and principles are
influenced, and inherent within this process is the development of keys skills needed for political participation. Second, RPPS at its core is about social learning, albeit a learning that occurs in religious settings that has an impact on the political. Important studies conducted among North American churches demonstrates the significance of this learning environment. The last two reasons relate to civil society and political culture more broadly. Churches are typically considered an important part of civil society, but the literature again assumes democratic principles dominate civil society systems. This may or may not be the case, as my incorporation of scholarship on civil society and political cultural below demonstrate.

**Democratic Theory and Political Participation**

Carol Pateman’s masterful work on participation and democratic theory (1970) grapples with the division within “classic” democratic theory (Rousseau, J.S. Mill versus Bentham and James Mill) and a subsequent shift in attitudes regarding the increased participation of contemporary non-participants and how this might upset the perceived stability of democratic regimes. While her work may appear outdated (her reference points are from the 1950s and 60s) and oriented around Western societies, the underlying premise adds an important contribution to RPPS.

Situating her critique within the conundrum that certain democratic theorists (Schumpeter 1943, Berelson 1954, Dahl 1956, and Sartori 1962) sidelined any particular role for political participation, she states, “limited participation and apathy

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26 Pateman argues there is not one “classical” theory of democracy, but actually two, each defined by their views regarding political participation. The theory that espoused participatory democracy maintained an ambitious goal, via Davis (1964:40) “the education of an entire people to the point where their intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities have reached their full potential and they are joined freely and actively in a genuine community,’ and that the strategy for reaching this end is through the use of ‘political activity and government for the purpose of public education’” (1970:20).
have a positive function for the whole system by cushioning the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change” (1970:6). This view is counter intuitive to Rousseau and J.S. Mill. Rousseau made three arguments: 1) participation serves an educative function, with individuals learning to become both a private and public citizen; 2) unless individuals are ‘forced’ through participation into “socially responsible action then there can be no law which ensures everyone’s freedom;” and 3) participation facilitates an integrative function, where citizens feel that they “belong” within their community (Pateman 1970:24-26). Mill posited that democracy is learned by individual participation at the local level for “[w]e do not learn to read or write, to ride or swim, by being merely told how to do it, but by doing it. So it is only by practising popular government on a limited scale, that the people will ever learn to exercise it on a larger” (1963:186).

From here Pateman references numerous scholars: Cole’s (1919, 1918) study of industrial servitude mirrored in political servility; Campbell et al. (1954) argument that individuals with a greater sense of political efficacy participate more often; Almond and Verba’s (1965) contention that belief in individual competency is an important political attitude and (1967) middle-class families are more likely to foster participation compared to more authoritarian practices in working-class families; Easton and Dennis’ (1969) correlation between low social-economic status (SES) individuals and lower senses of political efficacy and participation; and Knupfer’s argument that economic and psychological under-privilege are linked and foster “a lack of self confidence which increases the unwillingness of the lower status person to participate in many phases of

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27 Pateman (1970:25) references what she calls Rousseau’s most notorious or famous words: that individuals must be “forced to be free” and his definition of freedom as “obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself” (Rousseau 1968:64-65).
our predominantly middle class culture beyond what would be realistic withdrawal adapted to the reduced chances of being effective” (1954:253). Pateman utilizes these various studies to provide empirical support for the “important psychological impact of participation in nongovernment authority structures, and the central role of industry in the democratic socialisation process” and that the “notion of participatory society requires that the scope of the ‘political’ is extended to cover spheres outside national government” (1970:66,105).

Pateman and the numerous scholars she references examine how the work environment plays an important role in developing participatory skills (both full as well as partial or pseudo versions); however, she does not consider churches as being important social learning environments that can foster political participation (understandable given her focus on a secularized Europe), but with churches being one of the largest members of civil society in Africa, Pateman’s insight has direct correlation to models of RPPS. More recent scholarship has explored churches in this manner, and is the subject of the next sub-section.

**Churches as Social Learning Environments**

Related to the participatory aspects of democratic theory and the subsequent need for proper social learning environments to foster democratic skills, are studies demonstrating how an additional influence on political behavior is a common social environment distinguished by formal organizations that foster face-to-face interaction and consensus building. Wald et al. (1988) posit that churches are prime examples of these social environments. The church setting provides explicit opportunities for religious leaders “to communicate political messages through direct channels, such as
sermons, pastoral messages, adult education classes, poster displays and church publications” (1988:532-33). They also suggest that religious traditions maintain an underlying “political culture” that is implicitly conveyed through doctrine on authority, salvation, knowledge (533). While churches are obviously not considered political entities, they provide a weekly setting (more often for the extremely devout) where religious leaders have a platform for legitimately moralizing a political issue.

Within Protestant circles several scholars also researched political beliefs and behaviors. When reviewing factors that determine political attitudes and behaviors, Smidt lists the following: 1) theological factors;28 2) organizational and contextual factors;29 3) and various informational and personal factors30 (2003a:498). Smidt also discovered that among 6,000 Canadian and American church-goers, religious tradition and more importantly, church attendance, play influential roles in encouraging civic engagement (1999). In looking at the political interest and activity of clergy from six mainline denominations,31 a study centered on the 2000 US general election found an interesting dichotomy in that “PCUSA [Presbyterian Church USA] clergy were the most likely to express a high level of political interest and state that, if possible, they would like to be more involved politically, they also exhibited the lowest level of political participation. RCA [Reformed Church in America] clergy were the least likely to express

28 Guth et al. 1997
29 Djupe and Gilbert 2001; Crawford and Olson 2001; Guth et al. 1997; Olson 1997
30 Brown and Smidt 2003; Sawyer 2001; Crawford and Olson 2001; Beatty and Walter 1989
31 Presbyterian Church USA, American Baptist, Reformed Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, United Methodist Church, and the Disciples of Christ.
a high level of political interest, but were the most politically active of the clergy examined” (Smidt et al. 2003).

Related to Smidt’s work, Gilbert and Djube examine the social context of churches and subsequent impact on political attitudes and behavior and finds that churches corporately influence the political actions and ideology of their members. This approach demonstrates the importance of the social context of churches as a determining factor in shaping the political beliefs and behavior of its members (Gilbert 1993; Djube and Gilbert 2002, 2003), and represents an important component of religious pedagogies of political socialization (RPPS).

Revealing some of the complexity within the African context, Eklöv (1999) presents a similar analysis to this study. Using the concept of churches as “schools of democracy,” his study echoes many of the arguments posited by Pateman, but from the perspective of two denominations in Ethiopia. His “school” is defined by three aspects: learning structure, learning ideology, and learning process—aspects I argue are all encompassed by the term “pedagogy.” The democratic aspects included: balanced autonomy, broad popular base, internal democratic structure, and democratic ideology. His comparative analysis reveals a complex picture, with neither case representing pure schools of democracy, though his “division of the model of analysis into different

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32 Related to these findings is a study that dispels the common perception that conservative evangelical Christians have high rates of political participation, when in fact it is actually lower than the general population. Campbell (2004) posits that these evangelical groups provide numerous opportunities for involvement in the church and thus consequently diminish opportunities for political engagement and social activities outside the church. His findings support this hypothesis in that there is a negative relationship between evangelicals who are highly involved in the church and their political engagement. However, Campbell provides the caveat that these evangelicals may not have high levels of political engagement, yet they have potential to be mobilized into a potent political force.

33 Mekane Yesus (a national evangelical church founded in 1959) and the Full Gospel (an indigenous Pentecostal started in 1966).
operationalized variables has helped clarify the different dimensions of the church organisations and their relation to democracy” (1999:53).

Timothy Longman (1998) elaborates on the janus-faced actions of churches. Prior to the 1990s, churches condoned powerful elite by creating a submissive population within their congregations. In the early 1990s however, the autocratic regimes across the continent (Kenya, Malawi, Benin, Gabon, Zaire, etc.) began experiencing challenges led by churches. While possibly appearing contradictory, Longman argues that churches can in fact support the powerful political elite and simultaneously give the poor and marginalized hope and a voice in society. Longman identifies this paradoxical nature and finds its source in the “loosely bounded nature of churches as organizations” whereby they may be structured in a “hierarchal fashion, in practice the numerous groups, institutions, and individuals that function under the auspices of each church operate with a considerable degree of autonomy” (1998:50-51). Internal factors determining which side gains preference include: church size and resources, missionary history, church theology, and clergy/members beliefs; while external factors include the country’s social, economic, and political environment. These combined factors can result in individuals and organizations utilizing resources and influence in a complimentary, but also competitive manner, thus churches are “contested terrain, sites in which various political alliances compete for support” and “[s]imultaneously serving the interests of the powerful and undermining their power,” resulting in churches appearing janus-faced (54).

Related to Longman, Peter von Doepp’s research arrives at similar conclusions. In examining the external and internal “faces” of churches in Malawi, von Doepp
suggests the churches possess huge potential to influence political life at the social organization and cultural levels. He argues “the political impact of the Church is also realised through a ‘hidden’ face, whereby the clergy engage in practices which undermine the possibilities for civic, political life. Of specific importance in this respect are abuses of clerical office, often mirroring practices found within the state” (1998:106).

Considering that the dominant mode of social problem solving is via vertical patron-client relationships; therefore, when clergy model similar patterns, they undermine local practices of cooperation and social trust—key ingredients to a functioning and healthy democracy. In the long run though, the legitimacy of the church to continue being a credible civic voice to oppose state corruption and abuse is undermined. Von Doepp offers two caveats though. First, these practices are found not only in Malawi, but across Africa. Second, most clergy seek to model integrity and good leadership, but it only takes a small minority of problematic clergy to ruin the reputation of others (1998:122). In later work von Doepp argues that religious frameworks, organizational context, and membership in a distinct class explain clergy’s disinclination to engage in social activism (2002), or what I would contend helps exacerbate the practice of RPDD.

Ruth Marshall’s work among Pentecostals in Nigeria demonstrates the importance of focusing beyond the institutional church and religious elite. In earlier work she criticized scholars’ focus on elite politics, where the churches are only viewed in an institutional sense and clergy as the leaders of a religious version of a civil society organization. According to Marshall this leaves little attention “paid to the huge body of believers, [and] to popular forms of Christian belief and practice” (1995:240). She “attempts to restore intelligibility to religion in its irreducibility, to make sense of the
inherent rationality of its disciplines and practices, over and above its social, cultural, or political functions” and clears “an analytical space in which we might be able to understand practices and forms of life that are otherwise impossible to recognize from the standpoint of the secular vocabularies instituted in public debates and underwriting social scientific knowledge” (2009:3). By reconceptualizing religion and politics with Nigerian Pentecostals, she demonstrates the inadequacies of functionalist approaches, modern teleologies, and the artificial dichotomy between faith and reason. She posits instead that Pentecostalism capitalizes on Nigeria’s resources, both material and human, to take advantage of state failures and provide an alternative space that brings hope, comfort, and inspiration to those surviving in a relatively hopeless society. By being “born again” into a new spiritual family, these Christians essentially make a break from the past and now participate in a “spiritual empowerment for personal and collective progress” and then potentially regain the possibility of “controlling untrammeled powers through individual faith and prayer” (2009:65). This inward focus may initially appear to have few political implications, but I argue disassociation and removal from public engagement still have political repercussions. In short, hope, comfort, and inspiration represent short-term gain at the expense of long-term development of important civic skills needed for democratic sustainability.

Complimenting Marshall, O’Neill’s in-depth look at Pentecostal churches in Guatemala focuses specifically on the concept of Christian citizenship. He posits that civil society theorists remain in a public (citizen)/private (Christian) paradigm, leading them to relegate churches to the periphery of the democratization process by viewing them as just one of many voluntary organizations that build civic skills. O’Neill gives
greater agency to Christian churches stating they "do not simply deliver life lessons to congregants on how to act as citizens in the public sphere—by voting or protesting for example. These churches also provide a morality with which congregants constitute themselves as citizens through Christian practices, such as prayer, fasting, and examinations of conscience" (2010:3). O'Neill's insight is important because it highlights a dichotomy between the external and internal dynamics of churches, but I argue that even this internal modeling of morality is a form of political socialization.

**Civil society**

The concept of civil society has been used by different social science disciplines, in different contexts around the world, and throughout different periods of history. Within Africa there are two general schools of thought regarding the nature of civil society—one viewing civil society positively, and the other more pessimistic. In regards to the former, Gyimah-Boadi uses Larry Diamond's civil society checklist (1994, 1999) to outline the following civil society contributions to Africa's democratization process: 1) helped to pry open authoritarian systems; 2) limited the power of the state and challenged abuses of authority; 3) monitored elections and enhanced the credibility of the democratic process; 4) educated citizens and built a culture of tolerance and civic

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34 Hegel originally distinguished civil society from the state, but subsequent definitions have varied according to the context of its use (Gellner 1991). America's growing civil society was referenced by de Tocqueville in the early 19th century (1836, 1840). Contemporary usage of civil society includes: "a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication" (Bratton 1994:2); "an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in complex non-state activities—economic and cultural production, voluntary associations, household life—who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts pressures or controls upon state institutions" (Sachikonye 1995:400). Both of these definitions adequately capture how the activities associated with churches fit within these definitions of civil society.

35 Other scholars (Mamdani 1995; Nasong'o 2005; and Young 1994, 1999) find civil society not a useful concept in Africa, viewing it as "a theoretical construct lacking empirical locus, whose contemporary currency is only an intellectual fad that is inherently limited in heuristic value" (Nasong'o 2007:23).
engagement; 5) incorporated marginal groups and enhanced responsiveness; 6) provided alternative means for material development; 7) opened and pluralized the flow of information; and 8) build a constituency for economic and political reform (Gyimah-Boadi 2004:100-8). Other scholars see civil society in Africa serving as an active counter-hegemon against unrestrained state power, but also more passively by educating and equipping citizens with the necessary skills to advance the democratization process (Callaghy 1994; Diamond 1999; Harbeson 1994; Mafeje 1999; and Nyang’oro 2000)—what I argue occurs with RPDE.

Other scholars suggest that civil society has not supported democratization, but actually condoned authoritarianism. Okuku states norms of authority and hierarchy in Africa are highly pronounced, resulting in civil society actually being a “significant reservoir of authoritarianism and anti-democratic values” (2003:53), and would explain the prevalence of RPDD. Or as Kasfir argues, “[u]sing a normative concept of civil society to analyse African politics is likely to obscure more than it clarifies” due to patronage politics producing “incentives for civil society actors to organise platforms for gaining power rather than creating reform. Habituated by many years of extensive interference, and little effective capacity to implement policies, state officials both threaten and infiltrate organisations in order to deflect initiatives for reform” (1998:126). Clarke (2006) contends that organized religion focuses mostly on the private sphere, moral or spiritual regulation and is not equipped for an active role in civil society. Phiri (2001) posits that when civil society groups are actively repressed by governments, the church becomes more active, but when political repression wanes, churches begin withdrawing from their engagement with the state and return to their
more religious-only focus. Kenya, I would argue, has experienced similar phenomena.

Civil society organizations can also be a “repository of non-liberal values of hierarchy, gerontocracy, male chauvinism, and patriarchy” and “set the lead in illiberal politics” like deifying leaders, building statues to honor them or giving them “life” tenure (Gyimah-Boadi 2004:32, 116). Bayart perhaps summarizes the civil society’s core cultural issues at play most succinctly:

The concepts of democracy and of human rights are the products of Western history. They derive from the value placed on the idea of the individual (as opposed to the person) which pre-colonial societies did not share, and which was introduced into Africa in the wake of colonial rule. This makes these concepts neither contemptible nor suspect. Nor does it follow that non-Europeans, particularly Africans, were ‘traditionally’ more tolerant of arbitrary power (which they resisted by means of different conceptualisations), or that they cannot now conceive of democracy and human rights other than in Western terms. This foreign import has become an integral part of sub-Saharan political cultures. It cannot be eradicated by vague references to ‘authenticity.’ It prompts anguished political reflections which cannot be other than African, since they are made by Africans (1986:109-10).

This study contributes to the debate on the role churches’ play as an active member of civil society, regardless of their record of holding the state accountable. I agree with scholars who contend that religious organizations are part of civil society in Africa (Matanga 2000; Kasfir 1998; Kuperus 1999; Jenkins 1994), and argue that churches do indeed model different forms of government. While akin to a political school, numerous cultural, religious, and historical factors complicate the actual development of churches as “schools of democracy.”

Political Culture

Despite the challenges of using culture as an explanatory variable within political science, understanding political culture assists with understanding religion and politics
in Africa and lends theoretical support to religious pedagogies of political socialization.\textsuperscript{36}

As my study examines religion from within and from below, scholars doing likewise from the political culture perspective argue that disorder has become politically institutionalized by African elites, thus challenging conventional norms of comparative political analysis. Their ambition was to analyze politics in Africa from a different paradigm, one that would combine the empirical evidence found in today’s Africa with the framework provided by traditional political analysis (Daloz and Chabal 1999).\textsuperscript{37}

They suggest Africa represents a paradox with the juxtaposition of the “traditional” with the “modern,” for Africans readily adopt today’s technology, but seemingly maintain supposedly “backwards” social and psychological customs, i.e. polygamy or witchcraft (1999:143-45).\textsuperscript{38} By going beneath the standard presuppositions held by social

\textsuperscript{36} Regarding the challenges, the first problem relates to defining political culture. Most cultural studies of systems, whether micro or macro, begin with a definition, but due to culture’s multi-dimensional character, these definitions can often hinder comparative studies. Definitions are also usually imposed exogenously, subjecting the study to missing, yet pertinent data that could be gleaned with a better endogenous understanding of culture. A second problem relates to the distribution of culture (Molenaers and Thompson 1999). How fluid is it? Are there qualitative and quantitative elements? When does the distribution dilute the concept that the inclusion of sub-cultures is needed? If these two problems can be surmounted, a third arises when developing robust theoretical tools for measuring culture (Reisinger 1995; Janes 2005). Some scholars emphasize the autonomy of culture and argue it must be studied separate from any other structures or system, but this is near impossible, as argued by Alexander and Seidman, who state we “cannot understand culture without reference to subjective meaning…and social structural constraints” (1990:25-26). They go further in suggesting that a particular school of thought (such as those for studying democratization) or academic discipline do not provide an adequate enough framework to maintain a monopoly on cultural understanding.

\textsuperscript{37} The basic premise is that disorder has become politically instrumentalized in Africa, and that the current “modernization” process has its origins in a different historical framework. This in turn is counter-intuitive to Western understandings of development theory, for Africa seems to not only be moving in a different direction, but in a direction completely alien and unknown to social science scholars in the West.

\textsuperscript{38} To better understand this paradox, they posit that four key aspects of politics must be considered, with each leading subsequently to the other. First, the boundaries of politics is quite distinct from the West; whereas African assumptions of what is politically significant will vary according to the socio-cultural attributes that impact life, thus creating a functionality that is not similar to the West. Second, Africans have a different conceptual framework of how individuals and community interact with the various registers of political involvement, i.e. communal factors determine individual logic. Third, the rationality of the political process entertains the concept that Africa could avoid Westernization and still modernize. And fourth, political causality in Africa has not conformed to traditional Western views of political development (1999:148-155).
scientists in the West, they reinforce their arguments that a plausible African “logic” that satiates our perplexity with their rationality, and argue that Africa works in a manner that is not only different, but conceptually incomprehensible to understand from Western theoretical and developmental assumptions. Chabal and Daloz later argue that culture is not a residual category, but “constitutes the coordinates, the mapping, or the very blueprint of politics” (2006:21); and when viewed as system of meanings versus values, culture differences challenge many of the conclusions of cross-national comparative studies. Based on their findings, I contend there is an overlooked religious component that influences how individuals and communities engage with the political sphere, resulting in a modernization process in Africa that originates from different cultural, religious, and historical contexts—ones that like Chabal and Daloz argue run counter-intuitive to Western paradigms of the democratization process. RPDD is the religious equivalent or reflection of a culture that constitutes the coordinates, the mapping, the very blueprint of political system marked my neopatrimonialism.

Social capital is also a political culture concept particularly relevant to the study of religion and politics.\textsuperscript{39} Many definitions exist, but in essence the term refers to the social connections of individuals who, through greater investments in trust and community, form strong networks that can result in both tangible and intangible returns. While Putnam (1993, 2000) recognizes that faith communities represent the single most important aspect of American social capital, he does not devote further attention to the unique character of religion in building and sustaining social capital. Putnum (2000) also

\textsuperscript{39} This approach was developed in the early 1970s and later gained prominence through the work of Gary Becker in economics and Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman in sociology (Berger and Hefner 2003), and within political science, through Robert Putnam (1993, 2000).
discusses the “bridging” and “bonding” effects of social capital, i.e. bridging promotes community connectedness and greater social responsibility, while the bonding variety would see increased solidarity within the group.

Recent scholars, however, have posited that religion has distinct advantages as social capital, including the capacity to nourish, its durability, and ability to build civic skills (Harris 2003; Wuthnow 2003; Smidt 2003b). Within Africa, Widner and Mundt (1998) researched social capital and conclude that it does determine decisions in political participation. What they don’t explore though is if this participation is oriented towards democratization or authoritarianism.

My concepts of RPDE/RPDD explore in greater depth this social capital or what is more accurately called “spiritual capital” by Berger and Hefner. This variation of social capital refers “to the power, influence, knowledge, and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition” (Berger and Hefner 2003:3). Iannoccone and Klick consider spiritual capital a “linguistic union” of human and social capital with the vague concepts of spirituality, and assert its growing popularity is due to its blurring of the distinctions that traditionally divide the religious from the secular (2003). Woodberry (2003) posits three important considerations when examining spiritual capital: 1) religiously generated resources will differ by culture; 2) measuring these will require cultural contextualization; and 3) it may take decades to see a return on investments and their impact on social, political and economic institutions. My development of RPDE/RPDD is cognizant of all three, especially the differences related to culture. Verba et al. (1995) argues churches that promote lay leadership involvement
or are less hierarchical in structure to produce spiritual capital that generates more political and civic involvement.40

Revisiting Critiques of Religion and Politics in Kenya

With RPDE and RPDD described and situated in greater detail, I now use both theories as a critical tool to analyze Gifford and Deacon’s arguments on Kenyan churches. My purpose here is two-fold. First, the critique helps develop RPDD, and better defines its opposite parallel in RPDE, which is where most of my field research led to the development of RPDE. Second, it offers a “thicker description” of the realities of churches in Kenya and prepares the reader for my comparative analysis within the three domains in subsequent chapters.

Gifford has written on the socio-political roles of churches in Africa for nearly 30 years. In the mid-1990s Gifford argued that Pentecostal churches in Africa could in the long-run better advance political reform compared to mainline churches and associated liberation theologies. The free social space, voluntary association, new organizational styles, solidarity, opportunities for self-actualization, leadership development, and increased responsibility found in these new churches leads individuals to “exert control in the wider public sphere. The values, norms, and behaviour that have brought such improvements and advance in the personal domain, can then be brought to bear to restructure political society” (Gifford 1995:5-6).

A decade later, Gifford’s tone was more pessimistic, specifically in reference to churches in Kenya. Churches were not restructuring political society as Gifford

40 Related is Dowd’s (2015) study of communal religious involvement in Senegal, Nigeria and Uganda finds that religious diversity has a significant effect on how Christian and Muslim religious leaders utilize their respective beliefs, theologies, and doctrines to inform their engagement with the political, with this diversity helping to explain the fluidities of various political theologies.
envisioned (2004, 1998). If anything, they were propagating a prosperity gospel, tantalizing congregants with a pie in the sky promise of economic wealth if they would just first “sow” their future fortune by giving now to their particular church’s offering. I attended many of the churches Gifford references in *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (2009) and argue that RPDD could be applied in many of the case studies Gifford presents. Gifford notes in the beginning of the book that he is not interested in the internal organization of churches, their particular theologies, creeds, practices, or ministry activities. He claims he has a narrow focus and wants to focus on the external political and public function of churches—what I argue is partially rooted in the religious pedagogies of the churches. I want to briefly revisit some of his conclusions, but through the paradigm of tristructuration and the analytical lens provided by these religious pedagogies of political socialization. I am simultaneously going to group Gifford’s arguments into the three forces comprising tristructuration. In short, I aim to use tristructuration as a conceptual paradigm for examining a common trajectory of RPDD within these churches.

Starting with the agency component of tristructuration, much of Gifford’s analysis is centered on the content of Sunday sermons. Here he comments on not only the agency of pastors but also the agency of those on the receiving end of these sermons. A majority of sermons would model some form of message oriented around what many simply call the “prosperity gospel.” Its many guises emphasize material blessing, increased health, status, victory, promotion. According to Gifford the following six avenues to success are common: 1) motivation; 2) entrepreneurship; 3) practical life skills; 4) exercising faith through giving sacrificially; 5) seeking the anointing of a pastor
who claims they can prosper their congregants (thus making themselves indispensable in the process); and 6) the pastors also has the anointing to drive out the spirits that thwart success (2009:151-52).\(^{41}\)

An example of this prosperity gospel is Bishop Bonifes Adoyo of Nairobi Pentecostal Church, who states that the condition necessary to receive favor from God, is obedience, but not to the Ten Commandments or avoiding corruption, bribery, infidelity, etc. but to give your tithes and offerings to the church (114). Stories of this materialistic understanding of favor are replete throughout Gifford’s book. If not wealth as a sign of favor from God, there is also health and healing, and increased social stature. Small sections of Christian scripture from the Old and New Testaments are taken completely out of context, with a sermon cobbling several passages to provide assurances that if congregants will only sacrificially give, a new car, better paying job, or a bigger house awaits their future destiny. Gifford notes, and I found a similar phenomenon, that congregants derive a sense of determination and confidence from these sermons and willingly sacrifice their hard-earned income and time to their churches.\(^{42}\)

Pastors can’t just preach prosperity, they must emulate it by seeking the material comfort of a nice house, security, cars, international travel, advanced education—signs

\(^{41}\) Gifford’s impressive list of self-help books sold in tents outside churches, sidewalk kiosks, and downtown bookstores more or less mirrors the one I compiled (145).

\(^{42}\) Many of these churches meet in large sanctuaries that resemble more a theater or arena. The stage is marked by the pastor and a large choir, the focal point for the “spiritual performance” where clapping, waving of hands, shouting, and other forms of congregational participation mirrors the less spiritual version of a rowdy crowd at a football or basketball game. I would argue similar phenomena are happening in both arenas—where an exchange of goods and services occurs and the masses walking away feeling satisfied with their “purchase.” The church business is also competitive. A successful pastor needs a flashy building, ornate podiums, colorful backdrops, loud choir, powerful sound system, and national media attention. With hundreds of these churches in Nairobi alone, the average Kenyan can pick his or her “team” and become an avid fan not unlike those cheering for the Gators, Dolphins, or Rays.
of prosperity and success that goes far beyond the wants or needs of the poor masses, but signs nevertheless that God’s anointing and blessing is on their respective ministry.

From here Gifford makes an important parallel observation with the political class.

The churches and the nation generally share the same gulf between those with access to the benefits of office and those without, and patronage and clientelism, and the same pattern of power and authority, characterise relations between the two groups. Proper bureaucratic administration is less important than personal influence and persuasion. Hence the emphasis on skills like oratory, cultivation of patron-client relationships, organising and motivating supporters, ‘building a name’, mobilising clan solidarity, and displaying loyalty to a leader (228).

Thus the vicarious satisfaction that can feed into the blind, uncritical support for a particular political figure is easily replicated within the churches—“Big Man Politics” and its religious imitators “Big Man Pastors”—and they are without a few exceptions predominantly male and not female. To emphasis the poignancy of this, Gifford often turns to Kenyan pundits and editorialists stating:

These flashy spivs run multi-million shilling enterprises built on the back of poor and ignorant folk who who buy all the claptrap spewed out by self-styled evangelists, prophets, bishops, faith-healers, money-multipliers and so on who claim a direct line to God. And their quest for political power was often seen as the logical extension of their understanding of their ministry: Having tasted the power that comes with spiritual enslavement of flock, many preachers are casting their net wide for political power and more regular sources of material well being (166).

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43 Related to Gifford’s argument, Haynes suggests that while religious leaders have been highly involved in political participation, their actions are not as altruistic as first appearance gives. He contends that key religious leaders are often in partnership with political elites in order to accomplish mutually beneficial goals. He uses a Gramscian idea of hegemony to argue that religious figures involved in democratic initiatives across Africa are usually little more than “successful strategies of ‘passive revolution,’” [with] leading members of religious hierarchies often, but not always, intimately bound up with state representatives in a continuing project to maintain a hegemonic domination over society” (1996:7). Concurring to a degree with Haynes, de Gruchy (1995) posits that churches have easily been co-opted by state elite or preferred to perpetuate clergy’s privileged status. In other situations though, de Gruchy finds that the churches in Africa actively opposed state practices deemed undemocratic or unjust.
Gifford suggests “leaders sometimes resemble chiefs protecting the interests of their tribal churches, in comparison with which issues of good governance are rather subsidiary” (227).

From an institutional or structural side of tristructuration, Gifford offers only minor insight. “In manners of institutional building, the mainline churches are hardly models of best practice,” laments Gifford (84), yet he does acknowledge that certain clergymen (Njoya, Okullu, Gitari, Muge, etc.) were outspoken during the early 1990s and challenged that status quo, but these were individuals and not the churches themselves (41), thus confirming his thoughts that a “prophetic voice” exists, but typically comes in the form of individuals and not institutional churches endowed with a particular political theology. The debacle following the 2007 elections, left Kenyans wondering if the church deserved any respect after its spectacular failure to address the violence engulfing the country in early 2008.

Finally, when incorporating the immanent spiritualities entailed in the worldview of these pastors and church attendees, we can appreciate the third dimension of tristructuration. Gifford mentions “dual allegiance” to both Christianity and traditional religions, arguing that “churches which…unashamedly build their Christianity on precisely this enchanted worldview have considerable appeal…” (87). He later argues that the conceptualizing of social ills with a spiritual lens has not contributed to a critical “analysis of the dysfunctional patronage-client structures” and that “there seems evidence to the contrary; this spiritual worldview makes cooptation easier” (229). I concur with Gifford here. An excellent example is prominent pastors claiming that those outspoken clergy pushing for economic and political freedoms were linked to Satan. In
short, any spiritual analysis that supposedly challenges the dysfunctional structures with Kenya, fails to acknowledge that religious leaders “remain an essential plank of these [dysfunctional] structures” (232).

For Gifford causality is exclusively spiritual in Kenyan Christianity, and in some cases even fatalistic. Gifford quotes Pastor Oscar Muriu of Nairobi Chapel saying, “Africans ‘live with their problems’, because ‘You can’t solve Africa’—an idea engendering what some might call fatalism. Africans don’t express harsh opinions, especially if that might offend. So things are accepted as they are, and leaders who plunder, brutalise and destroy are left unchallenged” (233). The result is that “very few strains of Christianity challenge the system. In fact, all strains have been rather easily coopted to serve political aims, even to the extent of legitimating injustice” (245). Gifford concludes his volume by saying:

Church leaders are in many ways part of that elite themselves, sometimes equally lacking in transparency, accountability and attention to due process. [T]hose engaged in development argue that a more skilled, educated and empowered people could take control of their own lives [and that] people driven by truth, honesty and integrity would transform society. I would not disagree with either position, but continue to insist that the one thing that would best impact Kenya is what the churches studiously avoid (251).

Admittedly, Gifford leaves the reader hanging on what exactly he thinks churches should “studiously” focus on. His conclusion in part drove my search for what I believe is the missing focus—an examination of the internal dynamics of churches.

Gregory Deacon, a student of Gifford, studied four low-income churches in Kibera\(^44\) and two middle-class churches on the outskirts of Kibera. His study tested two metanarratives. The first focused on Pentecostalism’s modernity and ability to help

\(^{44}\) One the largest informal settlements in Nairobi.
others succeed in a capitalistic system, i.e. moving from poverty to a middle-class lifestyle. The second was oriented around how Pentecostalism represents a continuation of past tradition. He finds support for a metanarrative of modernity among the two middle-class churches, but among the four poor Pentecostal churches, neither metanarrative is particularly compelling. Instead, the socio-economic conditions in Kibera trap residents from the benefits of modernity, yet he also claims there is no overriding pre-occupation with continuing spiritual practices from African Traditional Religions.45

In the process of testing these two metanarratives, Deacon does mention several attributes of these churches that support my concepts of RPDE and RPDD. In the more pragmatic middle-class churches he finds an environment conducive to upward mobility, with education and social and financial capital being key facets supporting the modernity metanarrative. These churches have better educated pastors, exhibit better organizational management, provide greater opportunities for congregation members to gain civic skills, and practice an expository preaching style that is more logical, linear, and analytical in its approach. These attributes would suggest RPDE being modeled; however, Deacon also found authoritarian streaks related more to RPDD. For example, when leadership in one church wanted to change aspects of the service, they were confronted with numerous congregation members unhappy with the decision. In order to

45 I would disagree with Deacon on his arguments regarding these poor churches. Deacon mentions numerous occasions where the reality of the spiritual world is discussed and acknowledged as being a reality. I spent time interviewing witch doctors and diviners, and their stories contradicts what congregation members told Deacon during interviews. I would argue that residents living in informal settlements consult the power of both worlds. In church it is perfectly acceptable to talk about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and talk about the evils associated with a the spiritual forces of ATRs. However, my data suggest that slum residents and pastors actively seek the advice of traditional religious leaders, albeit always at night and a good walk from their home community, lest they be discovered for their spiritual duplicity.
maintain discipline in the church, the leadership simply asked these members to leave the church.\footnote{I was told by an individual who now attends Mavuno Church, that he used to attend AIC Milimani (Moi’s church). When a group of youth he was involved with presented a new outreach program, the top leadership simply asked this group of youth to leave the church, evidently threatened by their innovation and leadership initiative.}

His analysis though of the four inner-slum churches demonstrates numerous attributes of RPDD. He references one hypocritical pastor who stated greatness doesn’t come from how you dress or what type of car you drive, but greatness originates from who you are; yet this same pastor insists he needs to dress well and drive a nice car because if you don’t “then people will actually feel they don’t identify with you as a leader” (2011:35). In short, do as I say, not as I do. This example also illustrates the reality of vicarious satisfaction. The pastor knows that his social prestige is based on external appearances, and is actually subconsciously fed by a congregation wanting to see their pastor living successfully.

Other attributes of these pastors included: autocratic practices with little to no delegation of responsibility; disorganized church structures; lack of codified rules and policies; focus on a prosperity gospel emphasizing salvation through giving; theology where poverty is a result of personal sin; threatening church sanctions if members did not sacrifice enough; sermons marked by passive consumption by the congregation; elevation of pastoral status (even in small groups of ten or less, the pastors use a microphone and stand behind a podium); and greater economic, social, and geographic distance between the pastor and the average church attendee.

For the congregations, they remain trapped in extreme poverty, marked by uncertainty and ambiguity. Any resources available here are devoted to survival and not
accumulation. They lack confidence and exhibit low levels of social trust. Women in particular were marginalized from any leadership role. Deacon concludes that Kibera residents are placed in “an impossible ‘double bind,’ whereby they are restricted by their circumstances and must respond to them, but are held responsible for the situation that necessitates their attitudes and actions” (186-7).

With Gifford and Deacon’s arguments highlighted, one can see various parts of their critiques outlined in Table 3-1. In forthcoming chapters, I will continue to make comparisons between RPDD and RPDE, but these two studies demonstrate how RPDD can offer an alternative framework for analyzing the reality in the churches of their focus. Gifford’s more externally oriented approach has provided helpful diagnoses and identified several symptoms, but I attempt to dig a little deeper to examine the internal structure, practices, and mentalities that Gifford states he chose to overlook. My approach is more similar to Deacon and dissimilar to Gifford’s sole focus on the Sunday service that overlooks the reality of the other six days and how Kenyans’ faith informs their actions, attitudes, affections. While Gifford keeps his focus narrow, I actually widen the focus beyond Sunday to include home groups (Chapter 5) and the theological training of pastors (Chapter 6). My findings attempt to explore this space outside the purview of the sermon. Participant observation in these settings, particularly that found in Mavuno Church, reveal a different form of religious pedagogy—one modeling the opposite of those discussed by Gifford and Deacon’s four Kibera-centered churches.

Conclusion

This chapter is a crucial link in this study. My discussion of the various components that define both pedagogies, including the factors leading to their conceptual development, is best illustrated in Table 3-1. Numerous aspects of the three
incorporated theoretical bodies—pedagogy of the oppressed, types/forms of power, and toxicity of leadership/followership/environments—can also be seen in Table 3-1. By situating my religious pedagogies of political socialization within other scholarly work related to the social learning environments, civil society, and political culture, I demonstrate the role churches have in the democratization process.

Examples from Gifford and Deacon demonstrate the explanatory ability of an alternative conceptual framework oriented around RPDD (and RPDE to a less degree in the two middle-income churches Deacon uses for comparison). Deacon’s ethnographic approach also demonstrates how a “thick description” of these churches can better inform our understanding of the socialization functions occurring in these churches. Deacon’s dissertation did not explicitly address the political; nonetheless, his findings have relevance for investigating how churches influence political belief and behavior. RPDE, the primary focus of the forthcoming chapters, is another model that brings a new perspective on how some churches are fostering democratic values and principles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious pedagogies of democratic empowerment</th>
<th>Religious pedagogies of democratic disempowerment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Holistically fosters critical consciousness</td>
<td>• Subverts critical consciousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourages necessary risks for liberty</td>
<td>• Maintains need for “adhesion” to authoritarian pastor</td>
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<td>• Raises up and releases new leaders</td>
<td>• Diminishes autonomy and responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fosters autonomy and responsibility</td>
<td>• Utilizes a rote system, command style preaching—receive, memorize, repeat</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Permits/encourages inquiry, creativity, knowledge, practices cognition</td>
<td>• Caters to building spectators</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Builds recreators</td>
<td>• Tells people what to know, see, and say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows people how to know, see, and have a voice</td>
<td>• Fight for emancipation is based on gimmicks and spiritual magic</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Acknowledges that emancipation may require scientific knowledge and not just myth/magic</td>
<td>• Myths used to justify conquest, divide and rule, manipulate, maintain status quo by misplacing problem and solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Energizes the mind by challenging myths and cultural assumptions</td>
<td>• Uses power of the pulpit to induce congregants to want things opposed to what would benefit them and not want what would be beneficial</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Addresses cultural synthesis/reality of history</td>
<td>• Squashes the envisioning and reimagining process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses positive, creative, power with/to/within to unleash congregants to realize new dreams</td>
<td>• Relies on condign, compensatory, and conditioned power</td>
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<td>• Leads a reimagining process</td>
<td>• Employs power over (domination), keeps power within and at abstract level</td>
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<td>• Questions where submission lays</td>
<td>• Fosters a dependency or spiritualizing everything</td>
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<td>• Builds critical thinking skills</td>
<td>• Views power as finite and zero-sum</td>
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<td>• Builds cooperation and unity for liberation</td>
<td>• Maintains chaos to stifle true being</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Challenges over-spiritualized worldviews</td>
<td>• Poison autonomy, innovation via over-control</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Views power as infinite and positive sum</td>
<td>• Feeds illusions about leaders’ power</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Addresses chaos to unleash true being</td>
<td>• Impairs congregants capacity to act independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fosters autonomy and innovation</td>
<td>• Stifles constructive criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates transparent, accountable, decentralized models of governance</td>
<td>• Models a closed, guarded hierarchy, labyrinth style of leadership/structure—monument style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leaders marked by humility and authenticity</td>
<td>• Breeds captivity mentality, inequality, and sows discord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not fear other churches and leaders</td>
<td>• Movement style leadership with flat structure capable of adapting to new situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Movement style leadership with flat structure capable of adapting to new situations</td>
<td>• Invests in organic social innovators</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Views danger as real, but fear as a mentally manufactured myth.</td>
<td>• Views danger as real, but fear as a mentally manufactured myth.</td>
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CHAPTER 4
PULPIT TO PEW: DELIVERING POLITICAL MESSAGES

Introduction

Always dressed smartly, Pastor Linda's youthful face beams energy and excitement. Her diminutive physical stature is more than compensated by her passionate voice and powerful stage presence. When standing behind the pulpit, or aside, as she tends to wander the stage when speaking, she has this unique tone and manner of saying, “Eh.” It is loud, deep, drawn out, and forces the congregation to take notice. It is used in reference to her wanting the congregation to get serious about an issue she is raising—a one syllable moan that communicates “come on, are you with me or not.” It is a powerful voice with powerful affect. On numerous occasions I witnessed this phenomenon. After this utterance to get real, a shuffle of plastic chairs on the concrete floor announced the congregation had responded by falling to their knees in prayer.

This chapter explores the Sunday service and internal structures and practices of churches and thus addresses the study’s first micro-level question: What are the political implications of sermons and church structure? The above story demonstrates how a pastor can move a congregation, but what other forms of power and motivation do they hold? When Mavuno’s senior pastor makes a statement like “God gave you a brain so that you can give him a break,” what theological, sociological, political, and psychological questions arise from a deeper analysis of this statement? What

1 At the time of this study Pastor Linda was 37 years old. In Kenyan society, "youth" is considered to be between the ages of 18 and 30, sometimes even up to 35.
pedagogies do these pastors and other church leaders model? Do they lead to democratic disempowerment or empowerment?

These are some of the initial questions informing this chapter’s focus on the Sunday church service, the activities occurring, and topics of sermons and responses. In Chapter 3 the scholarship of Paul Gifford and Gregory Deacon were used to support my arguments for the prevalence of Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD) within Kenyan churches. I utilize evidence in this chapter to demonstrate there are examples of Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE) modeled in other churches.²

This chapter and the next look at one church in particular—Mavuno Church.³ I focus exclusively on the internal nature of this church; and while some aspects, such as the Sunday service, may be public in nature or even broadcasted on local stations or livestreamed, this chapter looks at the governing structures, church systems, leadership development, and the content of several sermons preached by two Mavuno pastors. Embedded within these elements I argue is the practice of Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment. My overall analysis of Mavuno is divided into two chapters, with the present chapter looking at structures, leadership, and sermons—Mavuno on Sunday so to speak. We often think of Sunday as being the prime event within Christianity, but Mavuno suggests that activities in the rest of the week (Monday church, as those who attend Mavuno call it) represent an important component of lived religion,

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² I am not saying churches lay completely in one camp or the other. They typically represent a mix, though I would argue some model greater forms of empowerment than others.
³ “Mavuno” means “harvest” in Swahili.
as emphasized by Vasquez (2011). Mavuno Church lived out Monday through Saturday is addressed in Chapter 5.

This chapter begins with a brief survey of Christian churches across Kenya and discusses some of the relevant typologies to describe these churches. Mavuno Church is then introduced, including the church’s history, mission, vision, etc. The next sections examine aspects of Mavuno’s governing structure and principles and their comprehensive strategy for engaging with society and discipling members of the congregation. The last sections dissect the numerous sermons, identifying content and themes that were unique compared to other services I attended in Kenya. I argue the content of these sermons play an important role in the democratic empowerment process. I then conclude the chapter by making three critiques of the Mavuno model.

**The Contemporary Christian Landscape in Kenya**

According to Kenya’s attorney general, there were over 8,000 registered churches in Kenya, with the Office of the Registrar of Societies receiving more than 60 applications a month. In 2007, there were over 6,000 applications still pending (Oduor 2013). Regardless of government registration requirements, churches dominate just about any landscape in Kenya.\(^4\)

The rural landscape is dotted with numerous churches attracting a few dozen to several hundred attendees on a typical Sunday. In the hierarchical denominations (e.g. Anglican/Catholic), a parish priest could be responsible for several small churches, visiting them only on a monthly basis. In the independent, Pentecostal and small

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\(^4\) If Kenya’s population is a bit over 40 million and using recent census data, 80% self-identify as Christian, this are 32 million Christians. The current rural/urban divide is approximately 75/25, but migration to the urban areas is increasing. To compensate for this trend, I will use a 70/30 split; therefore, Kenya is close to having over 22 million Christians living in rural areas and nearly 10 million in urban areas.
mainline churches, itinerant preachers would move throughout the rural areas and those lucky enough to have a permanent pastor would mostly likely have one with little to no theological training. The education level of the typical congregant would be basic at best. Literacy rates vary across Kenya, but with a nearly 90 percent literate population, a good portion of rural church-goes can read and might have access to a Bible, though a pastor would most likely be the only one with access or possess additional Christian books and resources. The typical Sunday service is a highlight of the week and can stretch for hours. An early morning prayer service typically initiates the day, followed by worship, times of giving thanks, praise and personal testimonies. A speaker will give a message, sermon, or homily. An offering or two will be taken, followed by more worship, taking the typical service into early afternoon.⁵

Moving to the urban setting, a city like Nairobi is equally dotted with churches. In a randomly selected kilometer stretch of paths through Kibera, 19 churches were identified, with an average membership of 46 per church.⁶ Services in these churches follow a similar pattern as those in the rural, but are often limited in time due to another church using the same rented facility. These churches would be similar in nature to those described in Chapter 6, i.e. “kiosk” churches that pop up anywhere, “marketing” their services on Sunday mornings.

Larger and wealthier churches have their own buildings. In the more affluent sections of Nairobi, large churches will easily have over 3,000 members, numerous Sunday services, with several targeting specific age groups and demographics. Those

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⁵ Participant observation in Nyanza and Central Provinces and interview data from a ministry worker who does training for rural pastors (June, July 2010, interview on October 21, 2010).

⁶ Based on research collected on four Sunday visits during the month of November 2010.
attracting a middle to upper class segment of Nairobi’s population are well funded and can have annual budgets exceeding 100 million Kenyan shilling ($1.25 million). Various evangelistic outreaches and social programs characterize these churches.\textsuperscript{7}

Within these three geographic areas (rural, urban poor, and urban middle/upper class), churches across Kenya could be classified into several categories and sub-categories based on theology, denominations, and political engagement. Examining various theological perspectives is beyond the scope of this study, though Putnam’s (2000) two orientations of social capital are helpful typologies: bonding and bridging. “Bonding” churches focus more on avoiding involvement with the world, fostering a “holy huddle” that prepares for a better life in the next world. This vertical orientation is compared with a horizontal version, or what would be called “bridging” where the congregation is concerned with present realities and engaged with social issues. Related to these theological orientations would be five primary denominational categories: Catholic, mainline Protestant, Pentecostal/charismatic, African Instituted/Indigenous Churches, and evangelical/non-denominational.\textsuperscript{8}

Typologies of their political ideologies have been defined by two scholars. Karanja divided Kenyan churches into three categories: activist (criticize the state), loyalist (support the state), and apolitical (remain aloof) (2008:70). Mukonyora identifies three types of “schools of democracy” operating among evangelical Christians in Zimbabwe. The first group would focus primarily on spiritual issues and view politics as dirty and “this worldly.” The second group she termed “salt of the earth” school of

\textsuperscript{7} These are general observations made from 13 months of dissertation field research.

\textsuperscript{8} An element of charismatic worship style would be found in all of these, including the Catholic and Anglican churches.
democracy and seeks to oppose various forms of political injustice. The last is more politically oriented and advocates for turning Zimbabwe into a “Christian nation” (2008:136-37).  

Based on my research findings, I would categorize churches into only two groupings—engaged and disengaged—with each demonstrating a political theology. Engaged would include both of Karanja’s activist and loyalist churches. Disengaged comprises those churches that bypass present political realities and instead substitute a future kingdom of God as their primary concern. I would contend this is still a political theology and has repercussions for society today. Examples from these two typologies would be found in both urban and rural settings.

Examples of urban churches in the politically engaged category include Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) on Valley Road and Jesus Is Alive Ministries (JIAM) in city center. NPC is the parent church for seven other assemblies that are part of the parent organization, Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM). It is a large urban church located about a kilometer from city center and has a history of partisan politics. JIAM is headed by Margaret Wanjiru, a controversial pastor who in 2007 was elected MP for the city center district and served as Housing Assistant Minister under President Kibaki.

On the other end of the spectrum are disengaged churches that have theologies marked by a “bonding” mentality that focuses more on spirituality and life hereafter (vertical focus).  

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9 Mukonyora’s three types of “schools of democracy” are all predicated on the churches external political theology and not the internal dynamics of a church. A more apt name for these churches is “political schools.” The democratic nature is thus left undetermined with her typology.

10 This is premised on Putnam’s (2000) “bridging” and “bonding” effects of social capital, i.e. bridging promotes community connectedness and greater social responsibility, while the bonding variety would see increased solidarity within the group. While the apolitical churches tend toward “bonding,” the political
considered far less important. Examples include the Deliverance Church in Langata and Winner’s Chapel near Kibera.

**Missing Analysis: Internal Dimension of Churches**

As I stated in Chapter 1, much of the literature on religion and politics in Africa is oriented around an institutional approach and how church-state relations have played out over the past half-decade. Gifford explicitly states that in his comparative analysis of Kenya churches he does not examine the internal aspects of churches, i.e. how they are governed, structured, operated, conduct their ministry, engage with society, etc. However, Smith’s study of the influence of Catholic priests demonstrates their influence on their parishioners’ political attitudes.\(^{11}\) He argue that priests may not exert direct control, but instead indirectly influence political belief and behavior “through their ability to shape their parishioners’ politically important religious beliefs” (2008:184). He discovers two religious variables that were important predictors of different political attitudes. These included religious particularism and the willingness to accept the priest’s political guidance.

\(^{11}\) Smith finds that the coefficient for liberal priests is statistically significant and demonstrates a correlation between the ideology of the priest and the issue positions taken by the parish; however, the coefficient for conservative priests did not provide statistical significance, though Smith suggests this may be related to the age of the Notre Dame Study (early 1980s) and that a contemporary survey would might uncover different findings. Yet conservative priests may in fact fail to influence parishioners because the conservative issues at stake—abortion, birth control and sexual morality—are issues that most Catholics refuse to take guidance on (2005). In his later survey (2008) of nine randomly selected Catholic parishes in the metro Washington, D.C. that it was specifically designed to measure the political influence of priests, his analysis found that priests in fact do not directly influence several aspects of parishioners’ political behaviors and beliefs. He found no statistically significant coefficient relating both liberal and conservative priests influence on voting decisions, partisanship, political ideology, evaluation of 2004 presidential candidates, views on foreign policy and five social issues (abortion, stem cell research, birth control, gay marriage, and death penalty).
After several months of ethnographic work in Kenyan churches it became more apparent that this internal environment was an overlooked aspect of churches being political schools. If the external aspects of the churches’ public engagement with the state represented a form of schooling, why would there not be a similar phenomenon with the internal dimensions? A comparative analysis of the internal structure of churches is possible, but I found it difficult to gain inside access to many of these urban churches. There were exceptions of course, but when I first visited Mavuno I was given unprecedented access. I took this new opportunity to further explore the depths of the internal and more private nature of churches: first, to see if there was merit to an internal influence and second, to explore what seemed to make Mavuno appear so unique, open, and transparent.

**Mavuno Church: Modeling a Different Approach**

Mavuno Church is a relatively new church, and at the time of research, located in the southern suburbs of Nairobi. Mavuno’s target demographic is what they call “Mike and Makena,” referring to the educated younger generation representing Kenya’s new and emerging middle-class. Using tristructuration once again as an analytical and comparative tool, I argue Mavuno Church understands structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualities differently. Mavuno is driven by a different orthopraxy and orthopathy, and even challenges some of Kenyan’s conventional orthodoxy. Proceeding sections will examine more closely the three forces at work in tristructuration with this examination continuing into Chapter 5.

Before diving into the details on structure and agency, I want to describe the mission, vision, values, and strategy of Mavuno, or what the church would call their DNA. Mavuno’s mission statement—*turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of*
society—is not about information, but transformation of typical Kenyans (who work hard, pay taxes, sit in massive traffic jams, and complain about corruption and unreliable electricity) into bold, assertive, competent change agents who are equipped to transform six identified sectors of society: church/mission, media/arts, economy/business, health/environment, politics/governance, and education/family. This mission drives a vision to plant a culturally defining church in every capital city of Africa and the gateway cities of the world by the year 2035. Mavuno’s values are expressed with the acronym REAP: Relevance, Excellence, Authenticity, and Passion.\(^\text{12}\)

The church’s strategy is essentially their theory of change for accomplishing their mission and fulfilling the vision, and consists of the Mavuno Marathon. Figure 4.1 captures this process. I discuss this strategy in this chapter’s fifth section. There are many facets about Mavuno that exemplify RPDE. These include their internal structure, their strategy for engaging with society, and the specific content of the sermons. After presenting a short history of Mavuno, each of these facets is taken as a separate discussion in the next few sections.

**The Mavuno Decade**

In August 2015, Mavuno celebrated ten years as a church, but its history actually extends to a pre-independence era. Oriented around Plymouth Brethren traditions, the Nairobi Undenominational Church was formed in 1952. As the Mau Mau insurgency escalated, the British sent additional troops to Kenya, with many of these men and their families calling the church their home during their deployment. The church grew quickly through the 1950s and into the early 1960s, but with the winds of independence growing

\(^\text{12}\) The acronym playing into Mavuno’s name—Swahili for “harvest”
in Kenya, many in the British community returned home, and by the late 1980s, its attendance had dropped significantly. With only 20 active members, the church leadership formed a partnership with Nairobi Baptist Church in November 1989. Pastor Oscar Muriu, his wife, and seven other families joined the church, now commonly referred to as Nairobi Chapel and quickly set about revitalizing the congregation.13

Nairobi Chapel grew rapidly and was bursting at the seams in the original small stone church on Mamlaka Road, near the University of Nairobi. In August 2005, Nairobi Chapel replicated its DNA and multiplied into five locations across Nairobi. Mavuno Church was one of these new churches. Moving first into South C, a suburb in south Nairobi, Mavuno quickly outgrew the sports club it was renting for Sunday services. Services and office space were then moved to the rented grounds of Bellevue Drive-in Cinema. At the time of my research, Mavuno was attracting over 3,000 attendees to its three weekend services.

In preparation for the fifth anniversary in 2010, Mavuno produced The Mavuno Story, a glossy, high-quality 125 page photobook that captured the history and major milestones of the church.14 This property was ideal in the short-term, but as Mavuno expanded, they wanted to make a long-term investment in its own property and thus began looking for land to purchase. In February 2014 Mavuno Church kicked off their first services on their new property near Athi River, approximately ten miles southeast of the international airport and 20 miles from Nairobi city center. Today Mavuno has nearly 4,000 members located in churches across Nairobi, but also in new church plants in

13 For more details on this history, see: http://www.nairobichapel.org/NC/our-beginning.php
14 An online version is found here: http://issuu.com/mavuno/docs/entire_mavuno_book
Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka, and even Berlin, Germany. Festivities marking Mavuno’s 10-year anniversary occurred in August 2015.

Movements vs. Monuments: Mavuno’s Internal Model

In a conversation with Mark Shaw, a professor at NEGST/AIU, he shared the concept of churches as either movements or monuments. Movements were flat, stable, decentralized, and flexible—imagine a triangle with a wide base and little height. Monuments would be represented as a tall triangle with a small base and tend to be hierarchical, rigid, and prone to instability. It is this latter type that I encountered on numerous visits to churches in Nairobi. Many church offices could only be compared to a fortress or a dark labyrinth leading into the inner sanctum of the senior pastor. I actually had better luck getting a pass to the viewing area of the Kenyan parliament, compared to attempting to gain access to top church leadership. However, when I started interacting with Mavuno’s pastors and staff, I realized Mavuno represented a movement model—an agile, culturally attuned, transparent, accountable, and decentralized church that exhibited a unique sense of creativity and calling. Attributes of this church can be categorized into four main areas: governing structure, leadership development, transparent finances, and physical use of space. These attributes facilitate numerous characteristics of RPDE listed in Table 3-1.

Governing Structure

Mavuno is led by a pastoral team consisting of four executive pastors and a senior pastor. Each pastor has a specific portfolio (expansion, operations, discipleship, development, transparent finances, and physical use of space. These attributes facilitate numerous characteristics of RPDE listed in Table 3-1.

Governing Structure

Mavuno is led by a pastoral team consisting of four executive pastors and a senior pastor. Each pastor has a specific portfolio (expansion, operations, discipleship,

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15 Three churches, aside from Mavuno, were exceptions. The pastoral staff at Nairobi Chapel was open, friendly, and welcomed my inquiries. Parklands Baptist Church’s senior pastor was incredibly open and devoted several hours to an interview and informal chat. The senior staff at All Saint’s Cathedral were also extremely accommodating and helpful in providing information on the church.
leadership development, counseling, etc.), but I observed them functioning more like a corporation’s management team. Mavuno’s sermons are organized into monthly series devoted to a specific topic. These series are divided among these pastors, with the senior pastor typically having only four of five series in a calendar year. The pastoral team is thereby publicly rotated, allowing the congregation to see the pastoral team working together, and not being dominated by the presence of one individual pastor. This approach also enables pastors to devote more time to a particular series, without the burden of preparing weekly sermons.

Below this pastoral team are numerous departments (youth, teens, children, accounting, human resources, maintenance, technical, administration, small groups, counseling, etc.). Despite Mavuno’s structure being decentralized, they managed to produce Sunday services for 3,000 attendees, plus plant numerous churches across Africa and Europe. Mavuno consists of nearly 250 small home groups (or what Mavuno calls LifeGroups or LGs for short). These groups meet on a weekly or biweekly basis. A pyramid structure does exist here where an executive pastor oversees several assistant pastors who in turn manage several pastors who are responsible for assigned zones across Nairobi’s metro area. Zone pastors would then be responsible for managing five to ten small group leaders located in their respective zone. During my participant observation of two of these LGs, several of these zone pastors would occasionally visit.

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16 Nairobi is constantly expanding, currently encompassing nearly 300 square miles, or roughly 1/3 the size of Alachua County in Florida.

17 Chapter 5 is devoted to greater discussion of these LGs, but overall the visits were always a cordial with the LG leader usually giving advance notice of their upcoming visit.
An accountability structure above the pastoral team consists of an Elder Court at Nairobi Chapel. As I mentioned earlier, over 6,000 churches are still awaiting registration as an independent church, with Mavuno being one of them. Nairobi Chapel’s predecessor was registered in 1952 and subsequent churches created by Nairobi Chapel remain part of this legal registration and thus under the authority of Nairobi Chapel’s elder board. When Mavuno is finally registered with the Kenya government, a governing board of elders will be created, but in the meantime this pastoral team is held accountable by the seven-member elder court that provides legal oversight and accountability for Mavuno Church.

Mavuno’s model also entailed a unique method of sermon preparation that I have not seen practiced in any other church across the world. During the weekly Wednesday staff meetings, one of the pastors would lead staff through various administration announcements and tasks, but toward the end, an individual or group would lead the staff in a time of worship and then the pastor who was preaching the following Sunday essentially gave a dress rehearsal by preaching the sermon to the staff. This accomplished two important goals. First, staff were able to fully participate and engage in a service, for most Sundays they would be preoccupied with various duties of their department. Mavuno was essentially saying we value our staff, here is a chance for you to preview the sermon, to worship, to feel like you are part of the church because we know that you will be serving all day Sunday. This one facet alone is noteworthy, but what happened next was even more remarkable.

After the message was given, the pastor sat down, and a facilitator arose to lead the staff through a critique of the message. Staff freely made comments, suggestions,
asked questions and for points of clarification. During this time the pastor was taking notes throughout this feedback and constructive dialogue. From a professional point of view, this process only makes sense, but for a church to practice this level of excellence was truly outstanding. Attendance at these meetings could easily number 80 to 100 pastors, pastoral trainees, and interns, but would also include various Mavuno members outside Nairobi using Skype as a conference call tool. This small chapel service for only Mavuno staff would easily be two or three times the size of a weekly meeting in the small churches dotting Nairobi’s informal settlements.

What I want to emphasize here though is the modeling of humility and willingness of a pastor to receive input from staff below his or her rank. It was a level playing field, with the ultimate goal being a well-crafted, polished presentation that would effectively and efficiently convey the heart of the message to the 3,000 Sunday service attendees. I argue this staff care, pastoral humility, and professionalism all represent key aspects of RPDE. In short, these meetings, aside from accomplishing administrative tasks/duties, foster a freedom to speak to authority figures, enable the practice and building of equality, and nurture a fraternity that raises the consciousness of the Mavuno community and continues the uniting process toward “turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of society.”

Leadership Development

The accomplishment and fulfillment of Mavuno’s mission, vision, and goals requires producing a growing cadre of leaders who support the Mavuno Model. Informal means of building leaders exist via the hundreds of volunteer opportunities, including leading a LifeGroup. Formal leadership development though has been implemented in Mavuno through four primary avenues, or in Mavuno parlance a “Leadership Pipeline.”
*Discovery Africa* is Mavuno’s one-year leadership development/internship program geared towards those pursuing church ministry as a vocational calling. During this program interns interact with leaders, discover their purpose and gifts by serving others, develop a support network, and sharpen their leadership/management skills.¹⁸ Interns are not paid, but Mavuno helps them raise financial support. Interns represent the essential support staff at Mavuno, lending administrative assistance to the various departments. Considering Kenya’s high unemployment rate, the opportunity to put into practice the training received in university provides interns the experience needed to hopefully gain future employment.¹⁹

Three qualities are emphasized during Discovery Africa: 1) Character - live according to a set of values not matter what the cost; 2) Competence - the ability to do the job at hand to the highest standard; 3) Chemistry - the ability to work effectively in a team of diverse kinds of people. Five additional factors make the internship program facilitate characteristics of RPDE. These focus on five E’s: 1) Environment - focus on creative and innovative experiences geared at transformation rather than information; 2) Equipping - trainings that impart knowledge, skills, and attitude needed to become a fearless influencer; 3) Experience - stretching assignments that facilitate the learning the practical aspects of leadership; 4) Exposure - interaction with many types of leaders who model specific aspects of personal life and service; and 5) Evaluation - honest

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¹⁸ There were approximately 30 interns at the time of my research (2010/11).

¹⁹ According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, unemployment was 40% in 2011, up from 13% in 2006. Between 1999 and 2011, unemployment averaged 22%.

feedback over time enables interns to learn from their experiences, training, and relationships.  

The next phase of leadership development available to interns is being selected as a pastoral trainee. Trainees are paid, but given increased responsibilities and begin managing others. These future leaders are typically groomed for a particular area or department, for example working with youth, or serving on a future church plant in an African capital city. I was told there were approximately 20 trainees on staff with Mavuno at the time.

Two major events also assist with equipping and training leaders. The annual Leader’s Day is a retreat to build capacity in Mavuno leadership team. Mavuno’s Fearless Leadership Summit is an annual three-day leadership conference that attracts attendees not only from Mavuno, but across Nairobi, Kenya, and Africa in general. I attended the 2011 summit and got a glimpse of not only the professionalism, but the scope of topics addressed. Five plenary sessions involved interviews and small talks from prominent members of Kenyan society. In the afternoon over 30 different workshops were offered, addressing everything from “Creating a Leadership Pipeline” to “How Politics Affects Your Church.” Overall, this conference represented a great opportunity to network, broaden one’s understanding of key challenges and opportunities facing the church in Africa, and discover new strategies for engaging with society, but also a chance for interns and trainees to put into practice their administrative and management skills.

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Transparent Finances

As I reflect on my field research experience, I realized one question could be asked of a church that would provide a good indicator if it tended toward RPDD or RPDE—can I please see a copy of your audited financial accounts? When in the field I asked to see these accounts from numerous churches, but was told in most instances that they were not available. I have also perused countless websites of mega-churches in Nairobi and these published financial accounts are rare indeed. This suggests they might exist, but are not made public, or worse, there are no professional standards for accountability and transparency and funds are simply at the discretion of top leadership. The mainline churches though will often have governing structures in place that provide high standards for financial practices. When I enquired with the Anglican All Saints Cathedral, they asked which year did I want to see, for they had records back to the 1950s. Mavuno simply places their annual report and Deloitte-audited financial statements on their website, stating they believe this practice is a key pillar of practicing accountability and good stewardship. Mavuno’s 2013 income was nearly 282 million Kenyan Shillings (3.3 million USD) and expenditures totaled 226 million KShs (2.7 million USD).

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21 The 2013 audited accounts can be found here: http://www.mavunochurch.org/new/documents/downloads/Mavuno_Audited_Accounts_2013.pdf

22 I used a 2013 average exchange rate of KSh85 per United States Dollar. In 2016 the exchange rate is KSh100 to the U.S. Dollar.
Physical Use of Space

I want to briefly highlight four characteristics of Mavuno that relate to their use of space and what it conveyed.\textsuperscript{23} Mavuno’s location at the Bellevue Cinema was unique. Imagine a large pie-shaped piece of property approximately the size of six football fields. Semi-circular ridges were originally developed so one could park their car “uphill” to get a better view of the large cinema screen. These were now part of Mavuno’s massive parking lot. On a buildup platform, say four feet high, 150 feet wide and 250 feet long is a massive four-pole white tent sheltering a sea of kale green plastic chairs. This is Mavuno’s sanctuary. A slightly smaller overflow tent situated nearby seats a couple hundred more. Various other small tents surrounding the main tent house information tables, ministry opportunities, food stands, and book/CD/DVD sale stands. Further afield are several other large tents where children and youth meet. The only truly fixed structures were the large structure supporting the huge cinema screen that overshadowed the main tent and the block of restrooms.

The stage at the back of the tent was creatively decorated with various props that reflected the theme of the monthly sermon series. Colorful streams adorned the entrances and massive poles supporting the tent.\textsuperscript{24} Nairobi’s near-perfect weather is conducive to this type of open air sanctuary, but more importantly, tents represent mobility and flexibility and not sunk costs in permanent structures that require maintenance and upkeep. Mavuno truly appeared to be a movement—nomads that met in tents. They could pack up and move with little notice or advance preparation—and

\textsuperscript{23} The last area falls beyond any formal expertise with spatial analysis, and is derived more from my avid interest in architecture, use of space, and the ambiance created by physical structures.

\textsuperscript{24} Imagine a smaller version of the white tented rooftop that makes Denver International Airport a unique architectural structure.
they did exactly that in February 2014 when they migrated to property they purchased several miles down the road. A similar arrangement with tents and office blocks has now been assembled on this new land.

Beyond the tents, Mavuno’s office space was also unique. Using ten pre-fabricated modular structures (10x20ft), the various office structures were organized in the form of a “U,” leaving a sunny courtyard open in the middle. There was no labyrinth or maze to navigate to find staff, like I had observed in other churches. Open curtains and windows clearly revealed who was in and who was not. The senior pastor even had a glass panel in his office door. A casual stroll by his office would disclose any meeting occurring. All of this may seem quite unordinary, but after visiting numerous churches this office layout was highly unusual. When I enquired if this arrangement was intentional, staff responded that it just seemed to make sense to arrange it in this manner. Regardless of the initial rationale, Mavuno’s office complex readily demonstrated an atmosphere of openness, transparency, efficiency, and facilitated the church’s congeniality, but also appeared to reflect efficient management strategies.

**Mavuno Marathon: Challenging, Changing, and Channeling Fearless Influencers**

When thinking about a church, we normally focus on the Sunday service. At Mavuno this is a busy day, with a 9:00am and noon service, each drawing around 1,500 attendees. However, throughout the rest of the week, Mavuno’s strategy is being

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25 On Sundays a tent was erected in the courtyard to provide childcare for infants and toddlers, but also give access to kitchen facilities and space more protected from the elements.

26 During my time at Mavuno, they started a Saturday evening service. The decision was driven mostly because they had outgrown the capacity of the main tent on Sunday. This service also catered to a crowd that wanted an evening alternative service to the traditional Sunday mornings.
implemented through various avenues and venues, or what the church calls the Mavuno Marathon. Figure 4-1 diagrams this process.

The Marathon has four distinct stages.\footnote{27}{http://www.mavunochurch.org/new/content.php?id=52 (accessed May 3, 2015)}

Stage 1: From Complacent to Consumer – This process attracts people to a Mavuno service where creative and contemporary styles are employed to maintain interest and develop a greater curiosity in the church.

Stage 2: From Consumer to Connected – Building strong relationships is the focus here, with getting individuals through Mizizi (a 10-week basic discipleship program/curriculum) and then plugged into more intimate home groups (LifeGroups).

Stage 3: From Connected to Committed – Once involved in a LifeGroup, individuals are further equipped to serve by taking additional courses (Simama-victory over personal struggle, Ombi-making prayer an adventure, and Hatua-raising your faith to relevance).

Stage 4: From Committed to Compelled – Service to the church is now directed to preparing believers to impact the six sectors of society targeted for transformation by Mavuno. This can be done via the internship program, leadership conference, or joining/starting a Frontline Initiative.

This study has already elaborated on Stage 1 by identifying some of the attributes of Kenyan society. In short, the Mavuno Marathon represents both internal and external components of religious life within a church congregation. This chapter has focused on the internal dynamics, structures, and processes that undergird the
functioning of the Mavuno Marathon. In the next section I look at Stage Two by dissecting several sermons to look more closely at the explicit and implicit messages embedded therein. Chapter 5 focuses solely on analyzing Stages Three and Four in more detail, but also examines the “marathon” as Mavuno’s theory of change for empowering the congregation to be more socially engaged.

**God gave you a brain so you can give God a break!**

With Mavuno celebrating a decade as a new church, the congregation has been exposed to over 100 sermon series preached via more than 500 sermons. Over 350 of these sermons are posted on Vimeo\(^ {28} \) or YouTube\(^ {29} \) and the 9:00am service is typically streamed live. Mavuno’s blog\(^ {30} \) posts the Sunday sermon series, including a synopsis of each sermon in the series. The blog is also open to comments during the series, thus serving as a platform to see the congregations’ reactions to some of the more provocative statements made from the pulpit. The blog details services back to August 2008. Mavuno’s Twitter account and Facebook page further tap into the social media realm.

With a plethora of publically available sermons, a detailed content analysis of every sermon posted on YouTube could be conducted.\(^ {31} \) The ten months that I spent in Mavuno services exposed me to several profound statements made in sermons series and served as one of the factors leading to the theoretical thinking underpinning RPDE.

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28 https://vimeo.com/mavunochurch

29 https://www.youtube.com/user/mavunochurchorg/videos

30 https://mavuno.wordpress.com/

31 It is beyond the scope of this present study, but the use of qualitative data analysis software like Atlas.ti, NVivo, dedoose, or QDA Miner could yield important insight into the exact nature of these sermons, in short, a macro view of the words, phrases, and key statements made by pastoral staff.
This sections heading “God gave you’re a brain so you can give God a break!” is from a February 20, 2011 sermon by Senior Pastor Muriithi Wanjua. I was astonished when he first said this. I looked around to see other congregant’s reaction. Nothing. I guess they were used to this form of exhortation. I was surprised nonetheless, for the theological implications are huge and have particular importance to this study—ones that I will address shortly. In this section I dive deep into content analysis of only two sermon series, one by Pastor Linda and the other by Pastor Muriithi. I take each pastor in turn, giving a brief biography, highlighting some of their other sermon series, discussing in greater detail a relevant series, and conclude with an analysis of the implications of the points made.

**Pastor Linda Ochola-Adolwa: Dissertation Co-narrator**

Pastor Linda was first introduced in Chapter 1 (with more details found in Appendix A). She is the pastor several informants told me I need to meet if I wished to see a different approach to political engagement. She graciously opened her life to me and agreed to be part of this study. I interviewed her husband and her father. I read extensively of her social justice work.\(^\text{32}\) I sat in on meetings she led. She also maintains a blog, where one can glean additionally insight into her thoughts.\(^\text{33}\) When I first started visiting Mavuno, she had just concluded a series entitled “Catalyst Formula” that entailed discussions on leadership development. A year earlier a sermon series entitled

\(^\text{32}\) There are two primary reasons I wanted to use Linda’s story. Oral tradition is an important cultural element in African societies. Story telling lends a personal element and hopefully one the reader can better connect with. Second, her story ties the three main chapters together. If her section is the only one read, one can get the essence of my study. Since this chapter focuses on the domain of the Sunday church service, it naturally includes the story of Pastor Linda’s sermons.

\(^\text{33}\) [https://pastorlindadotcom.wordpress.com/page/2/](https://pastorlindadotcom.wordpress.com/page/2/)
“Rules of Engagement,” outlined her vision for empowering Mavunites\(^{34}\) to transform the city of Nairobi. Throughout this series she interspersed clips from a 40 minute video entitled “Slum Survivor.”\(^{35}\) The use of this rather graphic portrayal of life in Kibera, one of Nairobi’s more infamous slums, had her intended effect, namely shock. From this stunned state, Linda used a sermon series to guide the congregation through a critical analysis and an envisioning process to reimagine a better future by understanding the city, engaging the structures, and initiating change starting with the individual. She reiterates that Kenyans are positioned for engagement and not self-preservation, and for too long society has expected religious leaders to follow in the tradition of Njoya, Muge, Okullu and others who risked their lives when demonstrating for change. She adamantly argued that engagement with society, even when the cost is high, was a must for all Kenyans, not just the religious elite.

One of the most important consequences from the first sermon in this series was her congregational challenge to get their domestic house help registered with the national health insurance program. The success of this series led Pastor Linda to compile her sermon notes into a small 64-page booklet aptly entitled *Engaging the City*, published in 2010. Key points and questions from the August 2009 sermon series included:

- As the city prospers, I prosper.
- What are the structures which allow the people we help to live in need and hence make our acts of charity necessary?
- We can build a just and cohesive society if we begin to move from tokenism and “feel-good” actions to sustained engagement.

\(^{34}\) The term used within Mavuno for those who regularly attend the church.

\(^{35}\) Produced by IRIN. A full version of the film can be watched at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPuNX07_tno
• We cannot afford to be passive observers while all hell breaks loose around us (referencing the 2008 post-election violence).
• The city is a space and that space is not neutral.
• Imagine what would happen if we took responsibility for our neighborhoods?
• You can influence or be influenced.
• We have been positioned for engagement not self-preservation. We are positioned to know what is happening in this country and respond to it.

In one month, Pastor Linda packed an entire sermon series with statements challenging the political, social, and economic status quo. More importantly though, she did it in a manner that was directed not as an issue of state redress, but as pragmatic concern and motivation for the young middle class assembled before the pulpit. These sermons were not spiritualized and over-dramatized pleadings and prayers that God will deliver Kenya from the clutches of crime and corruption. They were messages of tough love posed as compelling statements and arguments. I began this chapter by describing Pastor Linda’s powerful preaching style. Now combine this with sermons of societal substance, and you essentially have short, pithy, thought-provoking lectures, but with an added call for sustainable social engagement.

I was curious to what lay behind Pastor Linda’s passionate sermons and creative execution? In April 2011 she gave a series entitled “Sin City” where she examined the issues facing Nairobi and how Mavuno needs to respond as real people, with real issues, in a real world.\(^{36}\) I sat in on a strategy meeting for this series, attended by Pastors Linda and Angie and Tasha, a pastoral trainee. We met in the poolside garden café at the Kivi Milimani Hotel, a refreshing space to brainstorm and strategize. Pastor Angie was part of the original church plant and was Linda’s sounding board, graciously telling her boss when an idea was not good or would not resonate with the

\(^{36}\) For a cutting edge, Mavuno created advertisement for her series, see this video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDS1qGVnMqE or http://webtest.mavunochurch.org/this-month
congregation’s demographics. Angie knew the “Mike and Makena” demographics—
their carnal afflictions imbuing Saturday night clubbing, and then their careful balancing
the spiritual facades they are compelled to don on Sunday morning. Mavuno was not
after “perfect people” but the crowd that spends the weekend with their boy/girlfriend,
drinking, smoking weed, and caught in numerous moral quagmires. Discussion moved
to the influence of Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, and Oprah, but also to whom Jesus interacted
with, i.e. prostitutes, tax collectors, and in general, the hoi polloi of his time, or the
“ordinary people” that Mavuno wants to turn into fearless influencers of society. Overall,
the meeting revealed some of the behind the scenes processes that make the sermon
series attractive to the 20 and 30-year-old crowd. Frank discussions and a willingness to
honestly wrestle with where Kenyans are today enables Pastor Linda to empower
Mavunites to challenge and change the status quo, but the meeting also demonstrated
her humility and willingness to receive insight from those working under her.

Prior to the March 2013 Kenyan General Election, Pastor Linda addressed the
political situation in a November 2012 series called “The Governor” and specifically
referenced the newly elected position of Nairobi governor, which was a result of the new
constitution and subsequent devolution process. Nairobi had previously been governed
by a mayor and city council system, but would now have a governor and be assigned
country status with 46 other newly created counties. As the “CEO” of East Africa’s
commercial hub with multi-billion shilling budget, the Nairobi governor will essentially be
the second most powerful individual in Kenya, ahead of even the deputy president. She

37 I overheard on several occasions that Mavuno actually attracts some who go clubbing late Saturday
night, into the wee hours of Sunday, then drive (unfortunately some while intoxicated) to Mavuno to sleep
off their hangovers in time for church. This says two things. One, Mavuno represents an alternative yet
attractive after-party destination and two, clubbers know they are welcome, even if a bit inebriated.
begins the series with a video clip of the massive wildebeest migration from Tanzania’s Serengeti Park to Kenya’s Masai Mara National Reserve. Over 1.5 million wildebeest eventually have to cross the crocodile invested Mara River, with over 250,000 wildebeest (mostly the young and weak) not making the crossing. She compares the migration to Kenya’s elections that happen every five years—a journey through crocodile invested waters. Below I list several of her key points in detail and follow with short commentary per sermon. I then conclude my discussion with more analysis of her series.

The leaders we deserve

- Scripture: 1 Samuel 2:12-17

- Kenya gets exactly the kind of leaders we tolerate (She shows a video clip captured from a CCTV where a matatu purposely hits a pedestrian standing on the sidewalk. Several bystanders witness the incident and when the individual gets up, another man comes over and shoves him back down. The congregation snickers but Pastor Linda is not amused and tells them she is perplexed by their response and laughter, stating this was not some staged video for illustrative purposes. This was real and Kenyans tolerate such behavior.)

- We are not ready to see the right leaders in and the bad leaders out. This is our responsibility. Angels are not going to be dispatched by God. It is you and I! (She then asks the congregation a multiple choice question: Which of these represents your feelings with regard to politics in general and the race for governor of Nairobi? A) I'm put off by politics, B) I feel apathetic, C) It's a waste of time, too much is happening to prevent a clean election, D) I love our country, I just wish someone

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38 Sermon from November 3, 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPH8Q2sNjVg

39 12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. 13 The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, 14 and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” 16 And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” 17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt. (ESV-English Standard Version)
would make it better. She then gives several minutes for the congregation to discuss their response with those sitting next to them.)

• I’m afraid we will go into the election without sufficient reflection. (She teases the audience when they are not willing to pretend to be a wildebeest and find creative solutions to the crocodile problem, so she says she’ll hire them as consultants, since everyone in Kenya wants to be consultant. She then gives the congregation time again to discuss ideas for getting across the river.)

• If we don’t do anything about it by our non-engagement we are tolerating whatever leadership we will get, good or bad. (Bad governance will happen if I tolerate it. If I don’t play my part, I should be okay with bad leadership. We have a duty to vet those vying for public office and to determine the right leaders for this city and nation.)

• As the economy of Nairobi goes, so goes the economy of the country.

• God has placed us in the city for such a time as this. (We are not helpless in this situation. Neither are we mindless like the wildebeest. We have a God-given opportunity to choose the man or woman who will be governor.)

• Three takeouts are presented at the conclusion: 1) Get familiar with your constituency and ward; 2) Find out who is vying for office in your area or task someone in your LifeGroup to investigate and report back to the group; 3) Take a day or prayer and fasting and ask that God will expose bad leaders.

**Dangerous leaders**

• Scripture: 1 Kings 21:1-20

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40 Sermon from November 10, 2012 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWnK8yJXT74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWnK8yJXT74)

41 1 Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 And after this Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house, and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.” 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.” 4 And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food. 5 But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?” 6 And he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money, or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it.’ And he answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’” 7 And Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city. 9 And she wrote in the letters, “Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people.” 10 And Jezebel his wife sent word to Naboth’s sons, saying, “Come and let us rise and seize his vineyard, and then throw him down so that he will die.” 11 And they set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, ”You have cursed[a] God and the king.” Then take him out and stone him to death.” 12 And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had
• Which is the most dangerous: African buffalo, crocodile, lion, hippo, or elephant? (The hippo because it extremely aggressive, unpredictable and prone to attack without provocation. She compares this to how leaders operate in Kenya.)

• Personality of leaders does not matter, but character is what matters. (She quotes from Jim Collin’s book *Good to Great*, “The signature of mediocrity is not an unwillingness to change, but chronic inconsistency.” She asks what kind of leader are you? Can you keep your commitments? Are you a man or woman of your word? It is easy to point the finger at the public leaders, but do you pay your bills on time?)

• As Christians we cannot sit back when things are playing out on the national stage. We cannot be aloof. We cannot be disinterested.

• Takeouts: 1) Become burdened for the city. As goes the capital city, so goes the country. Go watch a movie—*Nairobi Half Life*,42 2) Take another day for prayer and fasting as a family or LifeGroup. Pray that God will expose them, that they will trip over hidden things and they will be exposed. Public institutions must work, while we are here, for the sake of the children (She gets very passionate at the close, pleading with the congregation to let their passion shine, to let their fearlessness come to the fore.)

The widow and the judge43

• Scripture: Luke 18:1-844

sent to them,12 they proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people.13 And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned; he is dead.”15 As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead.”16 And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.17 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,18 “Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession.19 And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Have you killed and also taken possession?” And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.”’”20 Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” He answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord. (ESV)

42 *Nairobi Half Life* tells the story of a young man who moves from rural Kenya to Nairobi and confronts the darker side of the city. The film was selected but did not make the nominated short list for Best Foreign Language Film at the 85th Academy Awards.

43 Sermon from November 17, 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUZ7efcsung

44 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.2 He said, “In a certain city there was a judge whom neither feared God nor respected man.3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man,5 yet because this
• It is unlikely for the needs of the people to be at the center unless the people demand it. (She reviews the first two sermons and then asks the congregation to share with each other what they would say to the governor you would want done in your ward if you were stuck on an elevator with him or her. She reads the biblical parable of the persistent widow who pesters the judge until he relents to her demands, even though he was unjust and didn’t care about people and didn’t believe in God. How did she do it? She found the appropriate authority figure, she understood her situation, and pursued the leader relentlessly and refused to be pushed away.)

• I must be vigilant in demanding accountable leadership. This city is not going to be dropped in your lap. (Let sleeping dogs lay is Mavuno’s philosophy. Most of Mavuno does not have courage to confront nepotism, corruption, and delays in service delivery. Power-distance governs most societies, i.e. between you and your boss above you or between you and your maid or watchman below you. At the micro-level, we’ve accepted the powerful in society. She then related the story of an American who stayed with her briefly. This woman talked freely with the watchman in the estate, stating that Western cultures often have less power-distance ratio compared to Kenya. She then proceeds to make fun of Kenyan’s seriousness of titles...“the most reverend, doctor, lawyer, sound technician.”)

• You must play your part. We must out persist, out smart, out fox, out maneuver, out fast, out pray every dodgy leader. (She then admonishes the congregation that sending a tweet is not being fearless and gets a good laugh. She states that most of them don’t know the real issues and the priorities and as the middle class, it is entirely possible to live a very sheltered life. She asks how many have made a visit to a police station out of curiosity. She relates the story of the widow again, but this time does a silly worship dance, poking fun of Mavunites over-spiritualization when in fact it shows their unconcern and aloofness. She does another little jig and sings “I give myself away,” but then asks, “How will this help you when the [public] money has been syphoned off? How? Her tone of voice gets super serious, eliciting whistles and applause. She exclaims, “We call for a worship night and you come and sing and dance and the money is gone! Let me finish the sermon quickly so we can...[she points to the audience and they respond “sing”] thus demonstrating her point with this wicked jab at the congregations aloofness and preference for singing and dancing over engaging with the city. She later gets embarrassed when she realizes she was being recorded and the sermon would be posted on YouTube.)

• Takeouts: 1) Take a drive or walk in your ward or local areas of residency. Establish by observation what the needs are in regard to health, waste management, security situation; 2) The scope is so huge, what can we do against so much. With regards to

widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.” "And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (ESV)
the spiritual realities, we outnumber the spirits against us. Pray: that God will open your eyes to see the challenges but also the power of God, the purposes of God.

Brand Kenya

• Scripture: 1 Kings 12:1-15

• In a bit of humor, the service leaders/emcees have consistently been getting more verbose and obnoxious with the titles they use to introduce Pastor Linda during this series, knowing it was irking her, but in a jestful manner. She congratulates them and states she is glad the series is over.

• Leadership is a brand which holds a certain promise. (Every brand has a promise, which is what the consumer experiences. If it doesn’t deliver, the consumer does not buy it. But what do we do when it does not deliver the promised result? She again facilitates a time of lengthy discussion and then notes that some crazy hand gesturing is happening in the congregation, suggesting passions are running wild on this topic.)

• When a leader becomes self-seeking, it is my duty to select another leader in his place. (When leaders reflect a tyrannical spirit, God not only expects us to pray but renegotiate the terms of the agreement with those who lead.)

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45 Sermon from November 24, 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMsIuqf39A8

46 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. 2 And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3 And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." 5 He said to them, "Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away. 6 Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people who have said to me, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us'?" 7 And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." 8 But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. 9 And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us'?" 10 And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. 11 And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'" 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." 13 And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions." 14 So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." (ESV)
A desire for good leadership comes with a responsibility. We cannot sit back and expect good leadership to come automatically. We must engage.

I feel we tend to over spiritualize issues. (She then references a popular Jim Reeves song she remembers listening to as a child, with lyrics like: This world is not my home, I'm just passin through...And I can't feel at home in this world anymore...she stops singing, raises the microphone toward the congregation and they finish seeking the song. She then tells the congregation they are in flight mode from the troubles of this world, continuing the song “I'll across the bridge where there will be no sorrow.” She exclaims, “I promise you there will plenty of pain if you chose the wrong governor. You are waiting for a sort of thing to reach for your hand and yank you through the clouds. When waiting to cross the bridge, you must engage.” Here she is referencing the “heavenly mentality that you are no earthly good mindset” that dominates many evangelical Christians who are waiting for God to “rapture” them out of their trials and tribulations.)

Takeouts: 1) Register to vote. “God works through human agency.” 2) Challenge to prayer, come to the final worship night.

Pastoral Pedagogies of Pastor Linda

Within theological studies homiletics is the study of how sermons are composed and delivered. My use of “religious pedagogies” captures the essence of homiletics, but expands the scope to include activities outside of the Sunday service and purview of the church. I am not trained as a homilist (one who studies homiletics) so my observations, analysis, and critiques are based on the comparative frameworks I build with RPDD and RPDE. I focus on what she says, how she says it, and why she says it. In Chapter 7 I will explore the Mavuno congregation’s response and reaction to her various sermon series and her curriculum found in Hatua.

Beginning with the “what” of her series, I posit that five interrelated elements can be identified: correlations, dichotomies, critical thinking, empowerment, and engagement. Pastor Linda speaks about several correlations—as the city prospers, I prosper; as the economy of Nairobi goes, so goes the economy of Kenya; as the success of Nairobi Country goes, so goes the success of Kenya; Kenya gets exactly the
kind of leaders we tolerate. She is not building a linear formula oriented around causation, but simply demonstrates the correlations between the micro and macro; and while much of this is already intuitive, her discussions brings it to the surface where the concepts and connections can be examined further as she leads the congregation into deeper analysis.

Several dichotomies are also presented, i.e. the city is a space and it is not neutral or you can influence or be influenced. A stark choice presented in either/or language sharpens the focus and moves it from a structural level toward the agency level. This is key as it challenges the congregation to move from the nebulous realm of politics that Kenyans talk about, complain about, and feel hopeless about to a more intimate reality that is more personal, as is demonstrated when she discusses the different correlations. Use of correlations and dichotomies move the congregation into a critical thinking mode. As she asks numerous open-ended questions, she involves the congregation in a creative and reimagining process. By demonstrating their vested interest and implications in building a just and prosperous society, she essentially moves them along a natural trajectory to begin thinking about how to go about doing just that.

Knowing the task of rebuilding Kenyan task is immense, Pastor Linda also provides empowerment. In deft analysis and use of Christian scripture, she relates similar challenges faced by biblical figures as they wrestled with similar issues. This practical application connects what some would maybe consider dry, irrelevant passages from the Old Testament into powerful prose to empower a contemporary generation of Christians to move from self-preservation to self-engagement. Now with
an empowered congregation, she directs them to engagement by ending each sermon
with takeouts or action steps she wants the congregation to do in the coming week.

The content of Pastor Linda’s sermons is sufficient to create a Governance 101
class for Kenyan Christians, so what she says is powerful on its own, but when adding
the “how” she takes the content to another level. It is difficult to capture in written form
the stage presence and delivery style of Pastor Linda. She exudes confidence, power,
and seriousness, but also humility, honesty, and compassion, all mixed with some
humor. The creative use of videos keeps the audience engaged, but her frequent use of
a congregational discussion time is unique. Many pastors in Kenya use the method of
having their congregation repeat a phrase to their neighbor, but she goes a step beyond
and asks them to actually have a conversation. As this happens, she stands silently on
stage. In the videos this actually appears rather awkward and would not be considered
good practice if the focus is a television audience, but at Mavuno this approach uses
conversations to stir ideas and actions. She will often ask for audience suggestions,
demonstrating that she does not have all the answers. Her humility here models that of
her mentor, Professor Chet Wood, who I will discussed at length in Chapter 6. Packed
throughout her sermons are also pithy quips that are easy to remember, but powerful in
their implications, as they typically summarize an entire sermon. She also has a great
sense of humor. While Mavuno sermon series are prepared months in advance, a level
of spontaneity is permitted, and it is here that Pastor Linda can make some hilarious
comments and poke fun of the congregation, for example when she imitated their
worship jig and singing songs that focus on a heavenly home at the expense of
engaging in the present world.
Behind the “what” and the “how” lies a “why.” During her training at NEGST she began to see connections between Christianity, politics, and justice. When Professor Wood enquired why it was that Africa is the most Christian continent and yet the most corrupt, Pastor Linda was struck by this dichotomy. Yet during her time at NEGST, she mentioned how many theological students were not engaged with this reality. Other factors affected her thinking, like participating in civic education initiatives at NEGST. During her “Rules of Engagement” series (August 2009), she invited the director general of Kenya Vision 2030 to share, where he said, “You don’t live in a separate space because you are saved.” She also mentioned Jim Collin’s Good to Great (2001) as being influential in her thinking.

Her thinking is also complemented by action. She received a Ford Foundation grant to conduct advocacy and training on land sector reform. Her “why” is thus informed by education and practical experience, she is also keenly aware of Mavuno’s demographics. She stated that the congregation generally “doesn’t see a strong connection between their faith and their work” plus “they work in hostile environments in Kenya” and “it takes time to deepen their faith.” Mavuno is cognizant of this and works to deliberately move Mavunites through the marathon, but she notes that many members lack basic discipleship and cannot do the whole marathon and have to drop out. Pastor Linda and the pastoral team at Mavuno walk a fine line between pushing the congregation too hard and discouraging them or just providing nice spiritual fluff to tickle their ears, as she said members can simply “go to a Pentecostal church down the street where they are fed a different diet.”

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Pastor Muriithi Wanjau: Communist Inspired Capitalist

As the lead pastor of Mavuno, Pastor Muriithi Wanjua, or Pastor M as he is commonly known, has boldly proclaimed some provocative statements. Two that immediately stand out include: “God gave you a brain so you can give him a break” and “You are all spiritually constipated.” The former is in reference to the fact that Kenyans are quite ready to seek God in prayer, for example asking for rain in a drought. God sends rain and Kenyans watch it flow into the Indian Ocean without ever bothering to use their brain to build gutters, home water catchment systems, dams, and ponds. The latter to the fact that the congregation doesn’t need more biblical knowledge, for they already have more than 90% of the pastors in Africa. Instead they need to work their faith out in practical engagement.

Before looking more closely at Pastor M’s sermons, let me give a bit of his background and history. He grew up in the Anglican Church, but practiced a dualistic faith, one between the dichotomy of sacred and secular. During his sermons he would often mention his wild days in high school, but never go into too much detail. He received a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry at the University of Nairobi and a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary in California. After completing his theological training he spent a year with the college ministry of Elmbrook Church in downtown Milwaukee. He worked several years in business and like many considered a career to acquire the Kenyan 1-2-3-4-5 dream—one wife, two kids, three-bedroom house, four-wheel drive car, and a five acre plot. He then spent four and half years as the outreach pastor at Nairobi Chapel. In 2005 he led the Mavuno Church plant out of Nairobi Chapel and has been the senior pastor since. He is married, has two children, and is an avid rugby fan.
Wanjau elaborated a bit on what generation Mavuno was trying to reach. When Mavuno first started, the church initially drove some people away who were looking for traditional church services. He was interested in “liberating the laity” from sitting and watching on the sidelines where they wait for the UN or the World Bank, America or China to solve their problems. But he knew the challenges of just equipping Christians again and again, resulting in 80 percent of the population claiming to be Christians, but seeing no visible results. He stated that building patriotic citizens has its limits as well, for it is shallow, like a soccer fan, but faith has to go below that. Mavuno chose instead to start almost from scratch, attracting non-Christians to their service and working from the ground up, to turn ordinary people into fearless influencers of society. This strategy in turn drove the development of the Mavuno Marathon as a holistic discipleship tool that focuses initially on internal change, but then begins to challenge new members to the reality and needs of society, and eventually helps them plug into social outreach initiatives they wish to invest in.48

During Mavuno’s 2011 Leadership Summit, Pastor M mentioned the top four sources of literature that have informed his thinking. Number one was communism. Stating that he did not agree per se with it ideology, he was nevertheless impressed with the discipline, conviction, sacrifice, and influence that followers of communism maintain. The second would be considered the ideological opposite—Opus Dei, the lay Catholic organizations. Third, was the U.S. Army’s Special Forces Handbook, and finally Jack Welch and his leadership style when at the helm of General Electric.49

48 Interview, Muriithi Wanjua, January 26, 2011.
49 Pastor Muriithi Wanjau, Plenary Session 5, Fearless Summit, Mavuno Church, June 9, 2011
Communism, Opus Dei, US Rangers, and GE are some of the intellectual foundations under Pastor M’s leadership and can be seen in his sermon series.

Pastor M blogs as well.\textsuperscript{50} Topics often mirror his sermons series, or he blogs on the current sermon series (even if he is not preaching), as he did when Pastor Linda was preaching “The Governor” series. Considering these various factors that have influenced Pastor M during his formative years, education, and work experience, his sermons naturally reflect a range of topics. One of the most expansive series was a series entitled “Wired for Greatness,” which focused on how Kenyans need to be involved in fearlessly transforming six sectors of society. Delivered in May/June 2011, the sermons addressed: 1) business/economics, 2) church/missions, 3) politics/governance, 4) health/environment, 5) family/education, and 6) media/entertainment. Here is an excerpt from his sermon on governance:

Africans often tolerate evils in society which they ought not tolerate. In Kenya, we have tolerated oppression of the poor, people starving whenever there’s a drought, slums and internally displaced people, matatu [14 passenger public mini-bus] hooliganism, impunity and public corruption. Our tolerance and our fatalistic acceptance perpetuate these evils within our society. Is it possible that we too will pay greatly for our apathy? It was Edmund Burke, an 18\textsuperscript{th} Century British Member of Parliament, who once said, ‘All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing.’ Many of us are not concerned because me, myself, and mine are fine within our pretty fences. What we don’t realize is that evil eventually catches up with us just like in the parable of the trees. The memories of post-election violence are still fresh in my mind. The monster that our silence helped create came to my door step and may be to yours too. All of a sudden, the middle class woke up to the fact that they could not hide forever from the realities that affect the rest of the population. How quickly we forgot and went back to business as usual! With 2012 around the corner, we must remember: evil wins when good people do nothing. I want to say that it is time for us to get involved in governance and politics. Africa desperately needs new type of leaders in our neighborhoods, businesses, civic and national

\textsuperscript{50} https://greatnessnow.wordpress.com/
offices; responsible men and women of integrity and excellence who refuse to enrich themselves or their tribe and who have a genuine concern for and commitment to the well-being of all their fellow citizens. And I am saying if not us, then who? If God’s people will not do this, then evil has already won!  

At the end of this message, he asked those in the congregation who felt compelled to take a more active role in politics and governance to stand. An estimated 250 people were on their feet.

In September 2010 his series “No Doubt, No Learning” addressed hypocrisy among Christians, how God can allow suffering, and aren’t all religions the same. In this last sermon he defined religion has a system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices through which humans search for a Supreme Being or some Higher Reality that will help them control the unknown and give ultimate meaning to life. He then identified three problems with religion: 1) It’s hard to sustain; 2) It gives no guarantees; and 3) It doesn’t satisfy. He suggests giving up on religion and trying a relationship.  

Pastor M set the tone for 2011 by announcing Mavuno’s theme “The Invasion Begins” and stating that God was asking them to step out and invade their city with the love of Jesus. If they were to maintain their relevance they must become an army that will move out of the confines of their Sunday services and small groups into the city they work in, the neighborhoods they live in and the places they relax in. He truly believed that God wanted them to launch a Love Invasion on their city that will change it completely. Using the next four Sundays in January, he essentially tackled

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52 He is referencing a relationship with Jesus, but this does not clarify much in that most Kenyans who cling to religion also cling to this relationship with Jesus.

53 [https://mavuno.wordpress.com/2011/01/02/the-invasion-begins/](https://mavuno.wordpress.com/2011/01/02/the-invasion-begins/)
developmental psychology, where he talked about the formation of human beings through the different life stages, beginning with young children, working through teenage years, into early adulthood, mid-life, and later stages.

The last series I want to examine was called “Create: Don’t Vent…Invent” and was delivered the following month in February. This series would have been equally at home at a World Bank conference or economic forum addressing sustainable development. In the first service\(^5^4\) he highlights several facts:

- Kenya has enough rainfall to satisfy the needs of six to seven times our population, and yet every other year there’s a drought.
- Only 8% of the Kenyan population has electricity to their homes the rest use charcoal and firewood, yet we only have 1.7% forest cover.
- A bulging youth population and yet the inability to create meaningful employment
- A poor savings culture makes us a net consumer as opposed to being a net producer.
- Apart from a few shining examples (Nelson Mandela, Paul Kagame), Africa is not known for good leadership.

He then reviews the development of the education system in Kenya and how the British used training to fill the civil service positions of the colonial bureaucracy, with the long-term result being today’s Kenyans wanting to work with multi-national corporations. Cramming a brain with facts and responding with servitude makes a good colonial employee, but today Kenya needs to move to a system that creates solutions and equips change agents. He termed this phenomenon as “National Mis-Education” but then talks about “Parental Mis-Education” where parents pushed their children to play it safe and find a good, secure job. Other important points included:

- We have a scarcity mentality. The myth of the “national cake” says that there are limited national resources that need to be shared out with everyone. The problem is that this so-called “national cake” has been shrinking. It’s time to stop dividing the cake and start baking more cakes.

\(^5^4\) February 6, 2011 [https://vimeo.com/19639961](https://vimeo.com/19639961)
You are a solution waiting for a problem to happen. You need to solve the problems around you. A problem is an opportunity for a solution…God created you a problem solver.

Time to throw off the shackles of our mind. Being a Christian means you need to start thinking.

Kenya’s love to find problems and complaining. Whining takes energy. Don’t vent, invent.

During the sermon he invites Lorna Ruto to the stage to discuss her brilliant solution to poverty and environment degradation, thus using her story to demonstrate how one person can truly make a difference. I address the company she created in Chapter 5, but her story perfectly illustrated Pastor M’s sermon points. He concludes by saying, “I think it is time for us to stop talking and start acting.” He then challenges the congregation to walk around their neighborhood and create a list of all the problems in their community and then create solutions to these problems. Upping the ante, he introduces the Pastor M Challenge, a competition among LifeGroups to find the most creative solution to a problem in society. Mavuno would award a KSh 50,00055 prize to either invest in the solution or to donate to a charity of their choice. I will talk about this competition in Chapter 5, but this contest certainly stirred the creativity at Mavuno.

At the beginning of the second sermon,56 the congregation is given small pieces of paper with a square formed by nine dots on it. They are asked to connect all nine dots using only four lines. The trick was to think outside of the perceived box, as that enabled you to draw a line beyond the imagined boundary and angle back up through the remaining dots. Pastor M exhorts the consequences of Kenya’s instant success mentality and desire to see quick results. He later invites a local business consultant on

55 About $625 in early 2011.
56 February 13, 2011
the stage and interviews him with what he’s seen in the business sector, e.g. a short-term perspective or conspicuous consumption. Pastor M then makes this poignant remark, “Prayer will not deliver us from these things. Something has to change up here (pointing towards his head). God has to work with people who are ready. We have to be transformed by the renewal of our mind.”

The third sermon discuses good systems and how Kenyans often fail to create good systems, for inadequate systems mean inadequate solutions. He identifies three reasons for lack of systems: 1) Kenyan’s don’t know better. They live with a high level of ambiguity and discomfort and simply adapt when it gets tough; 2) Kenyan’s are too busy surviving; 3) Kenyans are too gifted, meaning that if you created a well-defined system, complete with job manuals, you run the risk of being viewed as dispensable. Instead, the current system consists of individuals working to make themselves indispensable. It was during this sermon that he stated, “God gave you a brain so you can give him a break.” He concludes by stating that God is a God of systems and wants Kenyans to build systems, but also with a contrite heart confesses that as Mavuno has grown so fast, it has struggled to maintain proper systems. He spends much of his time working on building and improving these systems, but admits that inadequate systems in Mavuno have frustrated members and even hurt some people as they tried to connect or seek assistance, stating that he takes full responsibility. He closes by recommending the congregation read a book about systems—The E Myth: Why Most Businesses Don’t Work and What to Do About It, by Michael Gerber.

57 February 20, 2011 https://vimeo.com/20219244
The last sermon\textsuperscript{58} continues addressing the theme of finding creative solutions to African problems. He retold a story of a couple retrieving their package from the Kenyan Post Office. It took them one and half hours and 11 stops at various desks and offices to get their package. Pastor M quipped he now knows what to do to his enemies…send them a package! His story resonated with the congregation. He again reiterates his theme that “the biggest reason why Africa continues to underperform despite being perhaps the most well-endowed continent is because the most educated citizens have failed to provide creative, practical solutions for the rest of the continent.”\textsuperscript{59} Explicitly pointing his figure at the church he says they are among the worst rent defaulters in the city of Nairobi. Landlords seek three months back rent and are told the church is praying about it. He then noted, “It has been said that if the church did it, or a Christian planned it, you can expect it to be uncreative, unrehearsed, out of touch, badly finished, and I dare say, this what kept many of you out of church for a long time.” He proceeds to make numerous other points summarized here:

- We are used to the mediocrity. We don’t expect better and in fact we are shocked when we receive excellent service.
- Excellency is costly. It takes a lot of investment, time, energy, money, and thinking. We’re unwilling to pay the price.
- We spiritualize mediocrity. Since we are not willing to invest in excellency, we expect the holy spirit will come and cover up for our mediocrity.
- There is a saying in Africa that if you take care of God’s business, he will take care of yours. So now you just pray and not invest.
- We have no internal standards of excellence. We only do when it is a threat to us. We’ve become a copy and paste society.

\textsuperscript{58} February 27, 2011 https://vimeo.com/20697281
\textsuperscript{59} https://mavuno.wordpress.com/2011/02/27/above-critique/
He closes by stating, “My dream is that none of my children will ever want a green card. My dream is that people will want to come and live in our country.” He asks to the congregation about fulfilling this dream, “If not us, who?”

**Pastoral Pedagogies of Pastor M**

Pastor M models similar attributes and characteristics of Pastor Linda. His love for his country and continent is apparent and drives his desire to see Kenya and Africa transformed. He knows things can be changed, but also recognizes the challenges before him. With a wide knowledge base, his sermons cover numerous topics in various subject fields. While holding the title of pastor, his preaching/teaching often emulates that of an economist, social psychologist, artist, coach, or counselor. Like Pastor Linda, he invites the congregation to participant in the sermon and his in-service interviews conducted with various members incorporate insight from outside the church. His passion for Kenya and Africa is visible, which brings hope and encouragement. He knows that he doesn’t know all the answers and readily admits this and will humbly confess that the church’s systems are not always functioning well. This hope and humility is a helpful antidote to the hubris found among so many other mega-church pastors.

**Mavuno Church: Modeling Internal Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment**

This chapter’s fourth section examined the structures and systems of Mavuno Church. The fifth section looked briefly at the marathon and the role of discipleship and social engagement; and the preceding section explored the content of several sermons. In this section I want to examine how the above internal elements of Mavuno model RPDE. External elements outside of the church are explored in Chapter 5. These
internal elements consist primarily of church structure and sermons preached, each representing components of a church where the level of influence is high and any pedagogy of democratic empowerment considered an attribution of the church itself.\footnote{Chapter 5 looks at the reverse where the attribution of congregation members is higher and Mavuno in turn contributes only support and some overall direction.}

Turning again to my paradigm of tristructuration, I argue three interrelated phenomena are occurring in Mavuno that model internal forms of RPDE. The first relates to bonding and bridging concepts of spiritual capital.\footnote{Berger and Hefner consider spiritual capital a sub-species of social capital and represents the “power, influence, knowledge, and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition” (2003: 3). Putnam (2000) argued that a “bonding” variety of spiritual capital facilitated solidarity within a group, while a “bridging” type fostered a connectedness and social responsibility within communities.} In Chapter 3 I had argued that RPDD was built more around bonding or an escape from the realities of needing to take responsibility for life here and now. RPDE does not represent a sole focus on the reverse however, for it avoids this dichotomy and includes components of both bonding and bridging, where the engagement process subverts any inherent tendencies for escapism. The sermon series highlighted above were replete with calls for action and engagement with Kenyan society and the structures found therein, i.e. “bridging.”

Mavuno has articulated six sectors to target this transformational engagement and regularly invited guest speakers or interviewed experts to address the structures found in each sector. Mavuno’s emphasis on this horizontal aspect of life is balanced with an ongoing focus on the vertical, but this bonding is not oriented around escapism, but used instead for empowering the ongoing building and sustaining of the horizontal bridging engagement. Sermons that addressed the vertical aspects were not reviewed, but they addressed numerous topics related to basic discipleship and Godly living.
Mavuno’s bonding emphasized something different though that challenges some of the common beliefs in immanent spiritualities. Pastors Linda and Muriithi both highlighted how Kenyans over-spiritualize things, hoping that God will intervene in situations where they have planned poorly, not strived for excellency, or adopted a fatalistic attitude toward politics. Pastor M’s statements about God giving Kenyans a brain and that prayer will not deliver them from societal ills places a greater burden on human agency. Pastor Linda even stated, “God works through human agency.” Mavuno is attempting to place the onus on societal change into the head, hands, and hearts of ordinary Kenyans. This represents a dramatic shift from the belief in immanent spiritualities in other Kenyan churches, where elements of the prosperity gospel ignore structural injustices and issues plaguing society, but also treat God as some sacred vending machine. By focusing on the responsibility of the individual, Mavuno is desacralizing a cultural component of African Christianity, i.e. it is all God’s responsibility, but Mavuno is also resacralizing the six sectors, stating that Kenyans must use their faith and be engaged in these realms. In short, Mavuno is subverting the sacred/secular divide—portions of what is viewed as sacred need to be secularized and made of this world and engaged with human agency, and what is secular needs to be recaptured and influenced by the values and principles of Christianity.

I also posit that Mavuno’s leadership is informing, imploring, and instigating a reimagining process for an emerging middle class in Kenya. Pastors Linda and Muriithi start not with some abstract social theory, but with a “social imagination” consisting of the common images, narratives, and experiences that face the average Kenyan as they go about living and working. These pastors understand the spiritual trajectory in Kenya,
leading to what Charles Taylor called a propensity to invoke or placate the spiritual realm is order to gain prosperity, health, fertility, status, etc., but also be preserved from sickness, poverty, and death. For Taylor, this spiritual matrix leaves individuals unable to imagine outside of it and it was the responsibility of community leaders in early religions to lead the community in a reimagining process. What has happened in Kenya is that there remain residual components of earlier traditional religions within the purported “higher” religion of Christianity that dominates Kenya today. Mavuno’s pastors are radically questioning this earlier understanding of human flourishing and calling Mavunites to go beyond it to a reimagined flourishing that better corresponds to the realities of modern society (Taylor 2004:56).

The leadership at Mavuno is also fostering a critical consciousness or what Freire called conscientização, the “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970:35). Mavuno’s emphasis on “fearless influencers” and how God wants to work through human agency and responsibility taps into Freire’s discussion about fear and freedom:

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion (1970:47).

Related is the Mavuno Marathon as an antithesis to a “banking system” of discipleship. As I already discussed, sermons at Mavuno are interactive, oriented around problem-posing and solution creating, and contain dialogical strategies that build cooperation and unity, but also demythify beliefs and practices that preserve the status quo.
Lastly, Mavuno Church contains a unique blend of orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy. As I’ve demonstrated in this chapter, the Mavuno sermon series challenge the orthodoxy of many Mavunites. Pastors Linda and Muriithi guided the congregation with wrestling with deep cultural, social, and spiritual issues in society, and in the process the congregation’s thinking and worldviews were tackled in pragmatic and less philosophical manners, i.e. more Rorty and less Rawls. The orthopathy and orthopraxy elements are addressed in Chapter 5, so it is there that I will resume my discussion of how these three “orthos” are instigated in Mavuno and their relationship with RPDE. In short though, Mavuno is engaging the head, heart, and hands to influence Kenyan society, but maybe most importantly, reimagining a new horizon and building a new generation of Kenyans to lead their country in this direction.

**Conclusion**

This chapter represents the first half of a two-part examination of Mavuno Church. Here I have explored the internal structure of Mavuno and the sermon content of two of the church’s pastors. While still looking at the internal dimensions of churches, Chapter 5 moves the focus to how Mavunites live out their faith Monday through Saturday. After presenting this second half of Mavuno, I will make broader conclusions about Mavuno and how it models RPDE. I do however want to make a few critiques relevant to this chapter.

The first relates to a perceived contradiction. I demonstrated several times how Pastors Linda and Muriithi have pushed the congregation to consider how their agency has contributed to the problems in society and how future change will start with them. Examples include statements like: God needs human actions and not more prayers; angels are not going to descend and sort out the chaos enveloping Kenya; God gave
Kenyans a brain so that they can give God a break; a cure for their spiritual
“constipation” is not more spiritual activity, but practical action. Yet, sermons were often
concluded by an encouragement to come to a night of prayer and worship. I am not
suggesting a church should not pray or worship, but based on the content of the
sermons, a more logical strategy would seem to be holding creative Friday night “Invent,
Don’t Vent” meetings, where the congregation could have more than a few minutes to
share their ideas for transforming their neighborhood. The synergy from this meeting
could help identify and unite individuals who are passionate about different sectors and
methods of bringing change.

A second critique relates to Mavuno’s mission and vision, where I found
statements with underlying concepts of conquest:

- We desire to do nothing less than to change the world in our generation
  beginning with Africa!
- Change a city, take a continent, and win the world!
- In every nation, there are groups of individuals typically found in key cities, which
  produce and shape culture for the rest of society. They determine what’s in and
  what’s out, how people perceive reality, etc. To impact the world, we desire to
  plant churches that will disciple these culture-shapers by giving them the vision to
  shape and impact people and institutions in all sectors of society for the kingdom.

Mavuno is set on changing the world, winning the world, and impacting the world.
Rather ambitious, but it is not the ambition that is troublesome, rather a hubris and
dominating attitude. I am not implying Mavuno is on some crusade, but their strategy
appears predicated on placing key transformational leaders at the top of society, among
those influencing culture (politics, media, entertainment, economics and such) and then
hoping for a trickle-down effect. This approach unfortunately begins to model more of
the attributes of a command style leadership found in RPDD.\textsuperscript{62} However, in Chapter 5 I expound on Mavuno’s tangible practice of facilitating empowerment at the village and ward level. A practical strategy of cleaning up slums, employing women, and preventing deforestation or spreading the love by painting a police station or refurbishing a prison represents a bottom-up strategy of working with the culture. Mavuno can use the social and spiritual capital they gain by modeling RPDE, but squander it by investing it in high risk investments (change happens from the top down), and while it potentially might yield high returns (perceived cultural influence), history suggests these types of investments are typically disastrous. However, if Mavuno’s free thinking, fearless influencers are steered more toward low risk investments, but ones that have a track record in Mavuno of yielding transformation in society, they may see more sustainable returns.

My final critique is more technical and driven more by my experience with international development. Mavuno’s bold strategy for transforming six sectors of society and the Mavuno Marathon’s ambitious discipleship plan build both bridging and bonding types of social and spiritual capital. However, I did not find a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for managing the performance of their strategy or discipleship plan. So while I argue this church models democratic empowerment, without having specific indicators and measurement tools for accessing societal change in these sectors, they will lack evidence to argue their strategy actually leads to a

\textsuperscript{62} The CEO of Merck, Dick Clark, “‘C’ulture eats strategy for lunch” (Goldsworthy 2009:86). Peter Drucker, the infamous management guru said, “‘C’hanging behavior works only if it can be based on the existing ‘culture’” (1991:A14). I use these two business examples to argue the challenges of changing a corporate culture is near impossible, so Mavuno’s strategic model I argue faces a similar fate. Besides, there is ample evidence from the American political realm to suggest what happens when Christians try to change culture from the top down.
transformed society. The Mavuno Marathon is premised on moving Mavunites through four different curricula, with the end goal of becoming change agents for transforming society, yet this process lacks benchmarks for ascertaining the success of these programs. Yes, Mavuno can count how many Mavunites have completed Mizizi, Ombi, and Hatua, but quantitative data does not necessarily correlate to increased quality. As the former head of USAID stated, “[T]hose development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable” (Natsio 2010:1). I will revisit additional aspects of this critique in Chapter 5.

63 I understand that most churches in the world do not have monitoring and evaluation plans, but Mavuno has a specific and strategic plan to transform Kenya. Mavuno is on the cutting edge in Kenya and is surrounded by numerous local and international NGOs employing rigorous plans to observe the effectiveness of their strategies. I am simply suggesting that Mavuno could pioneer a similar practice, but within a church.
Figure 4-1. Mavuno Marathon
CHAPTER 5
PEW TO PEW: DISCUSSING AND DOING THE POLITICAL

Introduction

It could only be described as the Christian equivalent of a flash mob. As hundreds of Mavuno members descended upon the Kilimani police station—not in protest, or armed with rocks, but instead in service and love, armed with paint brushes and donated paint—this one church demonstrated a completely alien form of public service across Kenya. What church in Africa paints police stations and refurbishes prisons? This is the reviled police, constantly harassing citizens for small bribes, yet Mavuno Church is at the forefront of challenging public perceptions—not for political points or public relations, but to simply bless an institution with honor, respect, and dignity by donating valuable weekend time of the Mavuno congregation to give the station a makeover. The police were dumbfounded, Mavuno excited to serve, and the Kilimani community got a refurbished police station. Mavuno’s engagement with society beyond Sunday represent a new level of social engagement that needs further exploration and is the topic of this chapter.

As this chapter transitions from Chapter 4’s focus on Sunday oriented activities to what Kenyan’s call “Monday Church” (or what I am calling Pew to Pew), I examine the domain where Mavunites discuss and do politics Monday through Saturday, but without the direct control and supervision of Mavuno pastoral staff. My second micro question—what residual influence do churches have beyond Sunday—is explored by investigating three subdomains: Mavuno LifeGroups, Spread the Love campaigns, and Frontline Initiatives. Here, I utilize the approach of Vásquez (2011), Marshall (2009), and Taylor (2004) and explore how religion is lived every day and used to meet numerous identified
and unidentified needs, but also informs the re-imagining of Mavunites social environments.¹ Throughout this chapter I demonstrate that RPDE continues to be modeled within the wider Mavuno church body, outside the formal domain of church services and structures, with an impact extending further into society via what I call an emerging micro social movement.

In the next section I first explain some of the rationale behind small home groups and the purpose and workings of the Mavuno Marathon and then analyze two Mavuno LifeGroups (LGs) that were participating in the Hatua social justice curriculum. The third and fourth sections look at the political significance of Mavuno’s creative imagining process that resulted in the Spread the Love campaigns and Frontline Initiatives. Resuming a similar analysis from Chapter 4, the fifth section highlights a socially engaged model of RPDE and its consequences. The final section critiques Mavuno’s social engagement approach.

With church attendance the primary behavior measured, numerous studies find increased levels of religious participation leads to increased levels of participation in political activities.² Driskell et al. (2008) contend that religious beliefs need to be equally considered when measuring political participation and found that beliefs actually have a greater impact than religious behavior. They did find though that participating in

¹ This chapter’s domain relates to Charles Taylor’s concept of “social imaginaries.” He adopts the term “social imagination,” as opposed to social theory, because he wants to look at how ordinary people “imagine” their social environment; and this is often not in the form of some social theory, which is actually the approach of a small minority,¹ but social imaginaries—as common images, stories, and legends—that are shared by communities or even entire societies. For Taylor, this common understanding “…makes possible common practices and widely shared sense of legitimacy,” but his complete definition goes beyond just envisioning, and explains how people fit together, “…how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (2004:23).

² (See: Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Djupu and Grant 2001; Jones-Corea and Leal 2001; McKenzie 2001; and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995)
activities outside of the Sunday service had a greater effect on political participation. Equally compelling was their finding that different types of religious belief influenced engagement with the political. Believers in an active God that was perceived to be highly involved in human affairs and in control of world affairs, there was little reason to become involved in politics. However, those that believed God was more distance and less active felt more compelled to take some sort of political action. Freston’s study of 27 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America alludes to the need to study not just the actions and pronouncements of clergy, but also include the actual attitudes and actions of ordinary members of these churches (2001).³

Mavuno: LifeGroups…Where the Rubber Hits the Road

Throughout its history, Christianity has contained elements of small groups of believers who meet in individuals’ homes. In the early centuries of Christianity, more institutional and organizational religious hierarchies took form, moving the center of Christianity to large cathedrals and churches. In the late 1970s some American churches began moving from a church-centric approach to home-based groups. Distinct from the more institutional church, these private settings provided a more intimate religious experience. While house churches historically have been separate churches that met in homes, the concept of cell groups represents a micro-unit of a larger church body. The growth of large mega-churches around the world was predicated on the ability to provide a more personal space for ministry and discipleship and cell groups

³ These studies of Protestant churches are important, but as Freston warns, comparing Protestant churches in the West to those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America can be problematic. He has reservations about a theory he terms the “cultural potentiality argument” or that “the ‘logic’ of voluntaristic evangelicalism will supposedly produce everywhere results similar to those in northern Europe and North America” (2001:284). Freston’s arguments here demonstrate the importance of my study on the attitudes, actions, and affections found within African churches.
were a natural way to meet this need. Prior to Nairobi Chapel dividing into five
distinction congregations, small groups were an integral part of the church. Mavuno
inherited this tradition and at the time of my research over 250 small groups or
LifeGroups (LGs) existed within Mavuno Church.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, a well-developed administrative and pastoral
care system at Mavuno oversees this vast network of home groups. During my
research, I spent seven months embedded in two different LGs, whose members were
working through the *Hatua* curriculum. These groups met on a weekly basis, with each
meeting last two or three hours. This participatory observation is not a unique approach
to studying churches, but within Africa, I have not found studies that examine what,
how, and why these small groups discuss and do the political. Before going to an
analysis of these LGs, I need to describe the Mavuno Marathon and how it fits into the
overall arguments in this chapter.

**Mavuno Marathon Overview**

Kenyans are proud of their athletic prowess when it comes to winning marathons
around the world, and it is only appropriate that Mavuno refer to their discipleship
program as the “Mavuno Marathon.” This program was designed and developed to turn
ordinary people into fearless influencers of society. It is a result of the answers to
questions determining Mavuno’s “market niche,” questions like: Who are Mavuno’s
target audience? Who is Mavuno trying to reach as a church? What type of people does
Mavuno want to see in its services? These questions drove Mavuno leadership to
develop the “Mike and Makena” profile—a detailed description of their Kenyan target
audience: middle-class, educated, urban professional, young, single, married, and those starting their own families. Pastor Linda said, “We described who they were, their beliefs about God, their place of work, where they hang out, the music they listen to and their goals and aspirations” (Ochola-Adolwa 2010b:38). In short the Mavuno Marathon is the systematic process to take Mike and Makena from nominal Christianity to being fearless influencers of society—the motto of Mavuno. Inherent within the Marathon are several aspects of civic skill building for the congregation as whole. Civic skills include: engaging with community leaders, organizing events, leading small groups, advocating, fund-raising, networking, volunteering, to name a few. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Mavuno’s numerous leadership programs provide an even more extensive forum for building civic skills.

A graphic representation of the Mavuno Marathon is represented in Figure 4-1 and consists of the following ten steps:

1. Outreach Events – Spread the Love, Artistic Events, Ndoa (pre-marital counseling), Parenting Workshops, and Community Fundays.

2. Services – Invitation to join one of the three weekend services.

3. Mizizi Experience – This ten week introduces participants to the basic tenants of Christianity, highlighting areas often overlooked within the Kenya context.

4. Life Groups – These home groups provide the more intimate context for fellowship, bible study, prayer support, etc.

5. Life Group Curriculum – Simama (focus on discipleship issues), Ombi (focus on prayer), and Hatua (focus on justice/social outreach)

6. Serve Team Mavuno – Volunteer to assist with weekend services (usher, greeter, Sunday School teacher, etc.)

\[\text{4} \text{ Again, young is defined differently in Kenya. Youth is considered between 18 and 30 or 35, or what in Western parlance would be young adults.}\]

8. Frontline Initiatives – Church encouraged initiatives that formally engage with one of these spheres. Start-up funding might be provided, but the long-term viability is at the discretion of the individuals operating the initiative.

9. Fearless Influencers – The goal is the equipping of the Mike and Makena demographic to fearlessly engage with society.

10. Society – The ultimate goal is to change Kenyan society.

The creation of the Mavuno Marathon represented a paradigm shift for the leadership. Being process and not program oriented, the marathon lent greater opportunity to be agency driven versus the older paradigm of being program (institutional) driven. Much like a business strategy, the marathon provides a basic framework to help Mavuno leadership determine where to invest time, energy, and resources. The significance of the marathon strategy becomes more apparent as I discuss five of the ten steps in greater detail below.

Mizizi

In the early 2000s, when Pastor Muriithi Wanjau was in charge of discipling new believers at Nairobi Chapel, he discovered that giving people the right information was not resulting in long-term change. Scraping hold approaches, Wanjau raised the bar, demanding total honesty, and commitment to practical action versus rote learning. His challenging approach created a fire storm of enthusiasm. What originally began as the “Foundations Class” at Nairobi evolved in 2005 into a ten-week study in the form of a

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5 An influential text used by the leadership during the formation of the Mavuno Marathon was Jim Collins’ *Good to Great* (2001). This business management study shows how companies succeed over time and by defining their DNA, how they engineer the maintenance of sustained performance from the beginning. Collins’ emphasis on DNA explains why I often heard the term bandied about in Mavuno staff meetings, Life Groups and weekend services.
145-page book entitled *Mizizi*—the Swahili word for “roots” and references the idea that as a tree mature and grows, it requires a deeper root system (Wanjau 2010:42).

The introduction states, “*Mizizi* is not about information but transformation. It emphasizes practice, and not just classroom instruction” (Wanjau 2005:3). The ten-week study covers topics like: prayer, fasting, evangelism, mercy ministry, and money management, but also entails activities like a four week internship with a ministry, service projects, class retreat and a graduation ceremony. Because *Mizizi* attracts several hundred during each class, Mavuno rents space from local churches in the Nairobi area to host these classes. These individual *Mizizi* classes often form the foundation for future LifeGroups, due to the camaraderie and friendships developed during the ten weeks.

The energy, enthusiasm, opportunities, and friendships developed in *Mizizi* are akin to first year orientation for undergraduates or a cohort at the graduate-level. The concept of age mates is important in Kenya and was traditionally associated with initiation rituals into adulthood. *Mizizi* accomplishes something similar, but focuses on an experiential phenomenon geared at developing strong social and spiritual bonds between the “Mike and Makenas” of Kenya. *Mizizi* represents the starting point for the integration of the head, heart and hands by combining three elements: 1) a rigorous curriculum addressing topics not commonly covered (money management, for example) in churches; 2) a heart-level challenge to consider the injustices occurring throughout Kenyan society; and 3) a practical application through internships and service opportunities.
Mzizi begins and ends with great pomp and circumstances. The induction ceremony resembles a homecoming pep rally. A weekend retreat occurs at the end and affords a much needed break for urban professionals facing the rat race of Nairobi and offers a more intimate setting for deepening relationships. The final graduation ceremony celebrates the successful completion of Mzizi, with each individual class recognized during a Sunday service. The foundation laid by Mzizi undergirds the Mavuno Marathon by situating the ongoing personal and societal transformation in the context of a supportive network of social and spiritual mates, an environment that fosters the growth of social capital. Once individuals who have participated in Mzizi are plugged into a LifeGroup, three additional courses are available. If a LifeGroup is not participating in one of these courses, they still meet and use their time for fellowship, discussion of the sermon, prayer, and support.

Simama and Ombi

The next part of the curriculum is Simama.6 This was developed after my field research, but based on Mavuno’s website, the course assists members with “hidden personal and family issues that often sabotage them as they seek to make a difference.”7 Written by Pastors Muriithi and his wife Carol, Simama fills a gap they saw in the marathon. The third part of the small group curriculum is Ombi.8 Designed by Pastor Simon Mbevi, this 130-page book grew from his conviction that a grounded prayer life is the foundation for effective community service. Following a format similar to Mzizi and Simama, Ombi guides participants through a ten-week study of prayer and

6 Swahili for “stand”
7 http://www.mavunochurch.org/new/content.php?id=259
8 Swahili for “prayer”
fasting. A full day retreat is held mid-course and at the conclusion a weekend graduation camp wraps up the course (Mbevi 2007).

**Hatua**

The fourth and final course is *Hatua.* Pastor Linda developed this course to help members understand God’s passion for social justice and relies heavily on stories from the Old Testament. In 40 short segments, *Hatua* addresses social structures, institutions, justice, righteousness, and fairness (Ochola-Adolwa 2009). In her own words, Pastor Linda says, “This 10-week course creates the basis for every single individual to identify and engage in a social transformation venture as a lifelong pursuit. As you explore the lives of Old Testament heroes and heroines, you will build confidence in God and the ability to recognize opportunities to transform society” (Ochola-Adolwa 2010a:67). Because *Hatua* is an overt tool for building a rationale and strategy for social engagement, it naturally became an important component of my study. Therefore, I focus specifically on the influence of *Hatua* within LifeGroups in the proceeding sections and how it provides a horizon for integrated heads, hearts, and hands.

*Mizizi, Simama, Ombi,* and *Hatua* could be compared to higher education levels—*Mizizi* being the equivalent to a bachelor’s degree, *Simama* and *Ombi* a masters and *Hatua* a Ph.D. A majority of Mavunites would have experienced *Mizizi,* but an increasing smaller percentage complete *Simama, Ombi,* and *Hatua.* With the *Mizizi* experience under their belts, Mavunites are prepared for the next challenge—*Simama* and *Ombi.* While prayer is considered a vital element of the Christian faith, the actual

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9 Swahili for “action”
practice is often skirted. *Ombi* garners less attendance, attention and energy compared to *Mizizi*. The real challenge comes with taking *Hatua*. Rumors quickly spread that *Hatua* was tough, required a lot of reading, and made one uncomfortable when examining social justice issues. In January 2011, there were only four groups using the *Hatua* series and in May nine LGs were completing the course.

Compared to *Mizizi* (145 pages) and *Ombi* (130 pages), *Hatua* is more compact at only 88 pages. However, while only two pages are devoted per lesson, the assigned reading for that lesson may entail an entire book from the Old Testament (i.e. Leviticus, Ruth, Ezra, 1 Kings, etc.). After several seasons of LifeGroups working through *Hatua*, Pastor Linda began receiving feedback that the course was too intensive due to this heavy reading load. She set out to make revisions to what I term *Hatua* 1.0. When I joined the first Life Group’s study of *Hatua* in February 2011, they were one of only four groups utilizing *Hatua* 2.0. This new and improved version actually did not utilize the *Hatua* book, but instead relied on Pastor Linda’s two smaller booklet’s *Engaging the City* (2010a) and *Defining Moment* (2010b). Each book contains four main chapters and *Hatua* 2.0 worked through each book systematically beginning with *Engaging the City*.

*Engaging the City* takes an external approach by looking at the conditions of Nairobi as a city, i.e. disparities in income, living situation, and access to water, education, and health services. She begs the question: what is our response to a society of individualists run amok, where we reap exactly what we have sown? Using

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10 Two elements are probably at play in this feedback. First, a brief perusal of a book like *Leviticus* will not bring great excitement, as one muddles through Jewish ceremonial law. Second, I often heard the rumor that Kenyans in general do not like to read. Aside from the news dailies, Kenyans did not appear to be avid readers. There are always exceptions, but books are generally expensive and the only libraries in the country are associated with colleges/universities that require a student ID to gain access. So while Kenyans generally own a Bible, being asked to read Old Testament history, poetry, and law may not be as attractive as reading the Gospels or Pauline letters.
the Jewish exile in Babylon (as recounted in the biblical book of Jeremiah), Pastor Linda provides this paraphrase of Jeremiah, “Now that you have gone into exile and are living in a city of inequalities; the rich vs. the poor, the educated vs. ignorant, the powerful vs. the powerless, in order to survive, you must see the prosperity of the city” (2010b:13). If Nairobi prospers, I prosper and the opposite corollary being true as well. An example of a long-term, sustainable solution is the pioneering efforts of the Mavuno leadership to spearhead a movement to obtain health insurance for their house-help.11 Pastor Linda also cautions readers though about surface level engagement, stating, “If we as the church can begin to move away from tokenism to sustained engagement, working beyond the feel-good actions that soothe our conscience, then it is possible for us to do something about the situation of the city” and then she reiterates that Mavunites have been positioned for this type of engagement and not self-preservation (2010b:22, 44).

Engaging the City addresses structural issues in the city, but in her second book, Defining Moment, Pastor Linda focuses on the changes that need to happen internally in the life of a Christian, identifying three spheres of fearless influence: family, finances, political participation. Pertinent quotes include:

• What do you want to be known for? What do you want to live for, to give your life, your best energies and efforts to, in these next ten years? (10)

• I would like to believe that at the heart of each and every one of us is a similar desire—to be a person of fearless influence! Yet the truth is that this fearless influence does not happen by chance. It does not happen by taking life as it comes. The choices we make and the mindset we adopt is what determines whether or not we leave a legacy of fearless influence. (10-11)

11 As a middle to upper-middle class church, most Mavunites would employ at least one household staff that might clean, cook, provide childcare, or even chauffer children to and from school.
• To build a legacy of influence, you must let go of your fears. We are afraid to stand out. We love the security of numbers. As a result we fear the consequences of being different or standing up. (29)

• God is looking for people who will have the courage to begin to engage in the decision-making process of this country. And this is from the level of neighbourhood associations and wards, all the way to elected representatives at the National Assembly. (62-63)

• It is not necessarily the numbers who will win the battle for influence, but the few who choose to dance in the centre, who choose to exercise courage and a commitment to win the battle. (65)

When I joined a second LifeGroup in May 2011, Pastor Linda returned Hatua to the original curriculum found in the 88-page booklet, or what I am calling Hatua 3.0. Again I include several of the more germane quotes, this time from the Hatua study (2009):

• Injustice exists because individuals and groups deliberately maintain or tolerate it. Personal choices, operating through structures, are what breed poverty, oppression and misery. (9)

• The danger with my doing charity is that it does not challenge the systems that produce poverty. (13)

• Christians need to influence situations through lobbying for policy change. Justice is when we get involved to pull people up so they have access to the means of producing wealth. God’s Word does not seem to emphasize the possible causes of poverty. It is not interested in assigning blame. We, on the other hand, often see the poor as a problem, wanting to blame them or lecture them on what they must do to get out of poverty. The focus of God’s Word is instead on those of us who have the power to do something. God requires us to take action, not necessarily because we are responsible for causing it, but because he wants us to show his love and concern to those who have fallen through the cracks of society. (13)

• Indifference to the gap between the powerful and the powerless does not mean that I am neutral, but that I side with the powerful. (27)

• There comes a time when the right response for me is not to be tolerant but to be pro-active. (31)

• Politics is about personal and strategic interest. In many parts of the world, the way it works is that you sell your vote to the highest bidder. Often it’s not about credibility and certainly not about principles. People change sides again and again, depending on what is at stake. The bottom line is power and influence.
Therefore, politics become very fluid. Today’s enemies are tomorrow’s allies, and vice versa. Particularly in the run-up to polls, individuals have been known to defect multiple times. But has our political culture influenced the way we live our everyday lives? Do we sell our credibility and our principles to the highest bidder? Are you tempted to bribe your way out when you’re pulled over by a cop? We shift alliances in more ways than we recognize sometimes. (32)

- I am not just a passive citizen; I am an agent for God’s peace and justice in a broken world. (41)

These brief statements from the Hatua study (both versions) illuminate how it challenges views on agency, structure, and belief in immanent spiritualities. The first three studies in the Marathon represent classic Christian tools for discipleship, but Hatua emphasizes “socially applied” Christianity, i.e. taking one’s faith beyond the individual and church environments and into society. The personal agency of those participating in Hatua is confronted with new tests of their faith and willingness to leave their middle-class comfort zones, but done in a supportive network of their peers. Hatua also fosters a critical analysis of the structural factors related to social, economic, and political problems (and solutions). Finally, participants’ belief system is pushed to consider their ideas and understandings of social justice and God’s concern for the marginalized. Countering a belief that God helps those who help themselves, Hatua turns this upside down by exposing Kenyans to the social injustices occurring in their backyards and presents them with narratives from the Old Testament modeling how individuals can affect change in society. In the forthcoming part I examine how two Mavuno LifeGroups wrestle with Hatua’s challenge to rethink and respond from these new paradigms.

Mavuno LifeGroups

With thousands attending Mavuno’s Sunday services, the challenge of building greater community is met by encouraging members to get plugged into a small home
group or LifeGroup (LG). Mavuno has over 250 of these groups scattered across the metro area. A well-defined and managed structure exists to support the training and capacity building of these leaders. Mavuno’s LifeGroups are where important civic skills are learned, leading to more engaged and community-minded citizens. Complementing these skills are equally important attitudes related to the values and principles of democracy I discussed in Chapter 4. If you take the civic building environment of a LG and overlay it with the Hatua curriculum, you have an ideal environment to study the social context and influence of the church outside the more formal elements of a Sunday service.

During my research I embedded myself as a participant observer within two Mavuno LifeGroups (five months with one group\(^\text{12}\) and two months with another\(^\text{13}\)). These groups were chosen for two reasons: they were studying Hatua and they were both easy commuting distance from my home. On my first visit, I was given the opportunity to share a bit about myself and my rationale for attending their group.\(^\text{14}\) From this point on I was made quite welcome in both groups. As a stranger in their midst, I was quite surprised at members’ frankness in discussing their personal life, struggles, joys, pressures, and family issues.\(^\text{15}\)

I refrained from steering the conversation in any particular direction, but would pose a specific question based on pre-existing dialogue. Kenyans quip that they love to

\(^{12}\) Fridays, between 6:00 and 11:00 pm, February-March, May-July 2012

\(^{13}\) Thursdays, between 6:00 and 9:00 pm, June-July 2012

\(^{14}\) I made email contact with the leaders in both groups and explained my reason for wanting to join their group. Pastor Linda had also prepared a letter of introduction for my use, which certainly enabled me to gain quicker access to these groups.

\(^{15}\) Jokes were often made that I was a Mavuno spy employed by Pastor Muriithi, for they knew I had my little black book in which I was typically making copious notes.
talk about politics and my observations testify to this fact, giving me insight to their political ideologies, opinions and thoughts. In the next three subsections I introduce the two LGs and highlight a couple of the experiences from each and then conclude with a more detailed discussion of key themes arising from their comments and my observations.

**LifeGroup one (LG1)**

In February 2011 I joined a Mavuno LifeGroup that had already completed *Mizizi* and *Ombi* and was beginning the *Hatua* series. LifeGroup (LG1) met on Friday nights and was formed out of the small group that did *Mizizi* several years earlier. Composed of young professionals, married, engaged, and single, LG1 preferred meeting on Friday nights, as most in the group had a past “clubbing” lifestyle and thought this time to be a welcome distraction from the Nairobi norm of hitting the bars and clubs. Vocationally, the group represented several professions: Nate worked in the hospitality industry; Ronald worked for Bamburi Cement Ltd, one of Kenya’s largest firms; John in bank management; Ethan an architect; Karl worked for the University of Nairobi’s IT Department and his fiancée Nancy was an accountant for KPMG; Andy worked in insurance; Gina was in medical school; Esther a sales representative for Kenyan-brewed Senator beer; Helen was a Mavuno intern, and Audrey was on staff at Mavuno.17

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16 This was not driven on a left/right, liberal/conservative political divide, but a general sense of apathy and complete disregard for the political class.

17 All names have been changed to a pseudonym to maintain anonymity.
The first activity for LG1 was to watch a 45 minute DVD entitled “Slum Survivor.” This gripping video reveals the harsh realities of life in Nairobi’s Kibera slum and is told in a narrative form from the perspective of several residents. The first scene is a graphic account of a woman giving birth in her tin shack—a neighbor lady is seen quickly sliding a plastic sheet under the women squatting in agony, only to provide some semblance of sanitation from the dirty floor. I observed shock and horror on the faces of these LG members as they watched the video. Events like this were happening within blocks of where they lived.

After watching the video Esther shared her struggles with selling beer and the marketing ploys utilized, such as giving out unga so low wage earners could purchase more beer. Senator's consumer marketing motto “inspire confidence for a better tomorrow” now sounded so wrong to Esther after seeing the travesty of life in Kibera. During a highly spirited discussion after the video, the group made several comments regarding what they had just watched and its contemporary implications for Kenya. A snapshot of their analysis include:

- Politicians are happy to have people living in the slums, for if you keep someone poor and illiterate, they are your pawn for life. Slum dwellers need education, but if you unleash their minds and improve their situation, you lose their vote.
- The political climate has changed since Kibaki became president. Less fear today compared to under the regime of Moi.

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18 The video was produced by Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The entire video can be found in five segments on youtube.com:
Part 1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPuNXO7_lno
Part 2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wELeL_gFSk&feature=relmfu
Part 3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2lWRFivFEI&feature=relmfu
Part 4 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtQxKUSbD1c&feature=relmfu
Part 5 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9qcq0Hu3OM&feature=relmfu

19 Flour in Swahili

20 Esther defined low wage earners as those making around Ksh300 per day (~USD 4).
Kenya’s Vision 2030 lacks a fourth pillar. This missing moral pillar was compared to having functioning hardware, but operating faulty software. This software comment references the issues of poor ethics and wide-spread practice of bribery, nepotism, patrimonialism, and other forms of corruption. This “software” was a mindset and is hard to change.\(^{21}\)

The moral compass is so hard and frustrating, but necessary. Everyone in the group had stories to contribute of how they constantly face ethical issues in the workplace. John even recounted how he got busted by the police for talking on his cell phone and bribed the officer with Ksh200 (~USD 2.70).

If you accept some form of bribery (say shopping voucher from your boss), you are already comprised and in their pocket, and you in turn block something bigger from God, i.e. eating into your inheritance from God.

These five comments represent only a small sample of the comments made during my time with LG1. They illustrate the scope and depth of thought, but also the honesty and frankness displayed in these private and more intimate settings.

It was during my time with LG1 that Pastor M gave his challenge for Mavuno LifeGroups. During his February 6, 2001 sermon, he began his challenge by stating how Kenya has enough rainfall to meets the needs of a population six to seven times larger and that only eight percent of Kenyans have electricity in their homes, with the rest relying on charcoal/ firewood, yet Kenya only has 1.7 percent forest cover. He asked how many solutions are locked up in this congregation, but demonstrated his passion when saying, “I’m mad about this. I think it time for us to stop talking and start acting.” He challenged the congregation to walk around their neighborhoods and create a list of all the problems in their community, then identify solutions to these problems, thus making them problem solver for their estate. LifeGroups were then asked to submit a one page proposed solution to the church and at the end of February (2011), a panel would review the proposals to identify the most creative one. A cash award of

\(^{21}\) This comment is related to Pastor Linda’s comment in Engaging the City page 57. The group had not started reading the book, so I’m guessing Pastor Linda had stated this from a sermon series.
50,000KSh (about $600 at the time) would then be awarded to either invest in the solution or to donate to a charity of their choice.

In the intervening weeks LG1 brainstormed ideas and eventually settled on a pro-bono consulting service to other groups in the church participating in social justice initiatives. Since LG1 had a wide range of professions, the group thought they could get other church members organized into professional service groups (i.e. accounting/finances, event planning, public relations, sales/marketing, program management, leadership development, etc.) that could provide sector specific assistance to Frontline Initiatives and other church projects needing more technical guidance.

Almafi LG won the final award. They developed solar powered LED lighting for police check points, including handheld rechargeable flashlights. The Almafi LG leader had accidently run over a poorly executed traffic road block, due to poor lighting. My own experience testifies to how poorly lit these police stops can be, almost appearing out of nowhere. This practical solution demonstrated a creative approach to working with an issue common to all Kenyans, but also one that served the needs of local police forces. The other three nominees include a LG initiative to organize women in the slums to run a cooperative day care center to watch the children of working mothers; taking Mizizi to four local police stations and running the curriculum for local officers; and finally a LG was assuming mentorships and the schools fees of four young guys in their neighborhood.

LifeGroup two (LG2)
The second LifeGroup (LG2) I attended met on Thursday nights. Like LG1 it consisted of a mix of middle-class professionals (bankers, attorneys, teachers, etc.) and was formed out of a Mizizi group. With LG2 I was able to attend a Hatua launch. Around 70 members attended the kickoff ceremony on May 25. They represented nine different LGs that were doing the second season of Hatua. The launch addressed having an effective impact and influence on society. It was noted that the pop star Lady Gaga had ten million Twitter followers, far above any political leader in Kenya, and with 140 characters, she can reach millions.

The launch facilitators reiterated how Hatua builds on the consensus that something has to change in Kenyan society and influence does not come easily. Hatua systematically breaks down the challenge into manageable tasks. Beginning with identifying an individual’s passion and then local areas of society they want to address, Hatua essentially provides a biblical framework for a social change strategy based on S.W.O.T., i.e. identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The launch sets the stage, the curriculum provides the practical pieces, and the retreat brings it all back together. The July retreat was a half day event that showcased some of the Frontline Initiatives that LG members could get involved with, but also demonstrated creative ways to provide solutions. For example, one group was collecting and recycling the plastic tarps from large billboards and making backpacks for children. Another initiative was recycling small plastic water bottles by filling them with a sand and water mixture to make bricks.

A celebratory ambience also marked the completion of Hatua as an important milestone for the Mavuno Marathon, for this curriculum represents the final stage of
formal church organized/sponsored LifeGroup study. The onus for ongoing engagement now falls on the individual and/or LifeGroup, with the retreat providing some guidance on some possible next steps.

During my time with LG2, the following comments and conversations shared demonstrates on how *Hatua* challenged their thinking:

- “We huddle (in prayer) too much, God has called us to break the huddle and go out and play. What we learn we do. For your umpteenth summit (church sponsored event) and you do nothing but sign up for the next summit.”
- “If you tow the line, your life should be smooth.” This referenced how *Hatua* challenged the consequences of towing the line and desiring a “smooth” life. When confronting social issues, disruptions will arise, giving the LG pause to these often unforeseen consequences. “When the opportunity comes, are you willing to take the risk, willing to go to a higher standard?” one individual enquired, stating that Christianity is so difficult.
- “I view God as a sadist. No, I’m being honest!” A serious statement from a female member drew the others’ laughter to her gut honesty.
- “After Hatua, something should click in or change.” Transformation was seen now as more who you are versus what you do, with one’s purpose now a process versus a destination. Some wait for purpose not realizing it is right there in front of them.
- “We have a skewed view of influence at Mavuno.” The group discussed how they saw and heard about big things happening when Pastor M interviews people, yet these individuals all were ordinary Mavunites who started small, with their influence growing from there.
- With *Mizizi* the group felt that life purpose was out there that you had to grab it, but it changed with *Hatua*, purpose now being more a process and related to dignity of human beings.
- During the retreat LG2 was asked to process their *Hatua* experience. One individual said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results each time. We are all insane then. Something needs to change.” They then discussed how the Kenyan education drills into students a mechanical ability (part of what Freire critiques in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), resulting in future careers where you are only paid to push the right buttons.
Prior to the retreat I conducted a brief survey of Hatua participants to discover overall impressions and feedback. Some of the one word descriptions for the Hatua experience included: profound, impactful, transforming, purpose rooting, important, eye-opening, charging, transformational, and challenging. Expectations going into Hatua involved discovering and/or connecting to their purpose in life; intensive Bible reading and learning about the Old Testament; understanding the grey areas of Christianity; and gaining perspective on how to have an impact in society. One respondent stated there was so much initial hype, almost a feeling of coercing one into action, or a kick in backside; but as the last step of the marathon, the experience was energizing and things fell into place. Another respondent expressed fear of Hatua, but specifically that it would result in being involved with some form of church leadership, something they were not prepared or ready for; but they learned they were actually solution providers outside of church leadership and that it only takes commitment to engage.

Survey respondents listed numerous areas where they were challenged with their actions and thinking during the Hatua experience—samples include:

- Facing issues more boldly. It is about engagement and not self-preservation.
- Stop having excuses on why I can't engage in changing things that are not working in my community, God expects me to engage.
- My area of responsibility is leadership, politics and governance. Hatua has made me realize I can begin small anywhere because it is not about me.
- Hatua was God's intention too to live in equality—equitable distribution of land inheritance to gap between powerful/powerless doesn't mean I'm neutral, but that I side with the powerful.
- My finances and decisions on how to spend are related to how I perceive who gives the same to me.
• Engage society and improvement, always thought you had to do it big, through corporate social responsibility or big organizations, but now realize you can start it off with individuals, can start initiatives on your own.

• Starts with small things, I can do a lot just by myself. The way I lead my life, manage my environment, work place, anywhere you find yourself. There is no neutral space.

• Intended to bring you closer to the reality on the ground, what is happening in your environment, where you work, less fortunate, coming face to face with issues and reality that we take for granted on a regular day basis and nuts and bolts basis. Why hasn’t anything been done. What can I do to change the status quo? Bringing issues to reality and into what I call my space.

After spending nearly seven months with these two LifeGroups I came away with several observations and impressions. First, the home environments for each LG provided a friendly relaxing place to gather, share a lite snack, and fellowship at the end of a busy day. Attendees were often coming from work and would typically be late or caught in Nairobi’s infamous traffic, and despite being tired, and frazzled by a day at work, would quickly settle into the group’s dynamic. The commitment and dedication to attend a weekly small group demonstrated a willingness of LG members to engage in extracurricular church activities, let alone the disposition to actively participate in the intensity of Hatua. The social atmosphere was marked by a safe zone to share frustrations, doubt, and be vulnerable. I was somewhat surprised by the members’ level of honesty, humility, and transparency. In this environment one could admit that they felt God was a sadist and found pleasure in torturing people; the occasional swear word uttered; the admission of paying a bribe to the police or hitting a pedestrian with their car; or even recollection of wild times of excessing drinking at bars and partying at dance clubs. Pretention was absent and an ordinary realness present. I was witnessing the lived faith of the average middleclass Kenyan. As Taylor (2004) and Vásquez (2011)
suggest, this is where the real applications of a religious system are to be found, i.e. in the everyday life of religious adherents.

Kenyans often talked about “image management” or the strategy of maintaining a certain façade of perceived success with career, appearance, and family, but this could be set aside in a private, yet group environment. The more or less unstructured format in these two LifeGroups more resembled a book club or graduate seminar, but one that focused on the present realities of the challenges facing Kenya. *Hatua* was not social justice information, it was a social justice invitation and challenge, and one predicated not on a rigid, dogmatic command and control technique of impartation, but instead on a personal reality check and fostering of greater critical consciousness combined with a call and direction to action. My analysis of how *Hatua’s* pedagogical approach and modeling of RPDE shapes and reimagines this space within LifeGroups is addressed in the fifth section below, where I combine it with a similar analysis of the Spread the Love campaigns and the Frontline Initiatives—both which are the topic of the next two sections.

**Mavuno: Spreading the Love**

Mavuno’s small group system represents the equivalent of a large network of local affiliates, franchises, or branch offices. On Sundays these home groups come together to worship, pray, receive teaching, encouragement, and participate in Christian fellowship. When adding a third-prong of large community service projects to the already existing small private gatherings and large public Sunday services, Mavuno leadership multiplies the impact of the church in unusual, but powerful approaches—ones I highlighted in the introduction to this chapter.
Being aware of the ills plaguing Nairobi, Mavuno wanted to build a greater sense of ownership that by working together, Kenyans can make the city a better place. In September 2009 Mavuno inaugurated the first “Spread the Love” campaign with a large concert in Nairobi. Grammy Award winner Kirk Franklin performed at a fund-raiser, with two million Kenyan Shilling (~$26,000) raised to purchase beds for prisoners in the Industrial Area Remand Prison. Spread the Love is founded on the reality that together Kenyans can make a difference, and Mavuno plans on doing this by touching the lives of those around them by starting with where they live. In 2010 Spread the Love evolved into a much larger hands-on movement consisting of a month of service projects and culminated with an even larger concert and fund-raising event. During the month of September, over 1,300 Mavuno volunteers devoted their weekends to painting and renovating two primary schools, one secondary school, and four police stations, plus cleaned up a soccer field in the Umoja Area. Spread the Love also gained corporate sponsorship from local firms the donated 300 brooms, 800 liters of paint, schools supplies, and books.

Spread the Love really represents a unique phenomenon in Kenya, but simultaneously a unique opportunity to challenge the social norms of middle-class citizens and leverage the social capital to benefit important entities in Kenyan society.

23 Peace Primary School (Mukuru) and Mbagathi Primary School
24 Gladways School of Kawangware
25 Embakasi, Kilimani, Nairobi Central, and Langata
To understand this, it is important to remember the perceptions of the police I discussed in the previous section. The Almafi LG project of providing improved lighting for police check points represents the agency of just one small group, but when Mavuno targets an entire police force based at a particular station, something even deeper occurs in the social perceptions of public life in Kenya. First you have Mavunites forfeiting a golf game or sleeping in late willingly giving up their Saturdays and Sundays to do manual work. It is one thing to paint a school, knowing that children are the future of the country, but an entirely different phenomenon when dedicating your energy to blessing the detested police, who seem to constantly seek bribes and do little to prevent crimes or protect the innocent. Pastor Muriithi said, “People are skeptical about love. When we went to paint the Langata police station, the officer in charge was expecting that we wanted something in exchange. But once they realise there’s no catch, it changes everything.”

Once Mavuno members saw the dilapidated conditions the police were working in (some police stations and not been painted since the 1960s), they realized that a simple facelift of new paint inside and out could bring inspiration and publicly acknowledge the dignity of these officers. One officer in charge at the Langata station was absolutely dumbfounded and could not believe volunteers were actually doing this. This really was an “economy of affection” (to use Hyden’s 1980 terminology) with the currency of exchange actually actions of love. This officer said all he could offer in return were two cups of tea. In short, Spread the Love had demonstratively subverted the patrimonial system in which most police are familiar.

Spread the Love remains a vital outreach of Mavuno. Just after my departure from Kenya in August 2011, Mavuno was planning another month of spreading the love, but focused on renovating local prisons. I have spent nearly four years living in various countries across Africa and not one time can I recall local churches initiating a campaign similar to Spread the Love. Yes, churches in Africa have historically operated orphanages, schools, and hospitals, or partnered with a less fortunate church to renovate a structure. Spread the Love is much different on a sociological, religious, and political level. After this next section, I discuss in greater detail the implications of Spread the Love on the associational life of Kenyans and implications for citizenship, democracy, and good governance.

Mavuno: Fighting on the Frontline

Social outreach is a common activity for any church across the world and may have a more evangelistic orientation or more focus on meeting an immediate physical/social need. Spread the Love represents a church-led social outreach where activities are administrated by church leadership and remain more or less under the church’s jurisdiction. Mavuno has another social outreach program that is focused on releasing members to initiate their own programs. This entrepreneurial tactic results in numerous Frontline Initiatives started by Mavuno members. Mavuno leadership desires that every Mavunite will start or be plugged into Frontline Initiatives at some point during their fellowship at the church. Without being encumbered with the administrative burden of overseeing these initiatives, Mavuno effectively releases,

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28 Activities associated with Spread the Love were predominately the domain of foreign church groups, visiting Africa on short-term mission trips. Here orphanages or schools would be painted, kids played with, songs sung, prayers prayed, and concluded with an obligatory tour of the slums, but also safari or time along Kenya’s beautiful beaches.
empowers and equips their members to engage with society on a more personal level. Frontline Initiatives are thus important environments for building civic skills. Compared to Spread the Love organized by professional staff, Frontline Initiatives fosters skill building for laity, who may work as professionals, but their social program may call upon them to utilize new skills related to fundraising, communications, and management.

Table 5-1 demonstrates a sampling of the scope of Frontline Initiatives. All of these Frontline Initiatives emphasized a common theme—sympathy, charity, and the provision of opportunity, dignity, encouragement, technical advice, support, and empowerment. The following two examples represent how Frontline Initiatives morphed into full-fledged independent entities.

During the introduction of Pastor M’s Challenge in February 2011, he invited Lorna Ruto to the stage for a short interview. Lorna had attended Mavuno for two and half years and completed Mizizi, Ombi, and Hatua. With an education in accounting and a banking background, her passion however lay with environmental conservation. Hatua exposed her to issues of poverty and social justice, with the “Slum Survivor” video and a field trip into the Dandora slums being a dramatizing experience. Something clicked through during this time and she began writing a business plan to address plastic waste and chronic unemployment. The result was EcoPost Recycling Company.29 Started in January 2011, the company hires local residents to collect plastic shopping bags that litter the informal settlements dotting Nairobi. An extrusion machine converts the polypropylene and polyethylene plastics into composite fence posts. Kenya contains barely two percent forest cover and the coveted red cedar trees traditionally used for

29 http://www.ecopost.co.ke/
fence posts are now protected. The final product of EcoPost delivers an important commodity that has many benefits over wood posts. In short, EcoPost effectively addresses plastic waste in slum areas, employees several in-house staff, as well as hires local women to collect the waste, plus prevents further deforestation by supplying a viable alternative for wood fence posts.

EcoPost’s initiative, mission, and vision have been recognized domestically and internationally since incorporation. The 2011 Women’s Initiative, sponsored by Cartier, the luxury watch/jewelry firm, Lorna was awarded $20,000, business coaching/support, networking opportunities, and press exposure. In 2012 EcoPost won the Energy Globe Award for sustainability and Lorna was named as one of the “20 Youngest Power Women in Africa” by Forbes magazine and The Guardian newspaper named her one of “Africa’s Top 25 Women Achievers.

According to Lorna, the vision and success of EcoPost, can be tied to her experience with Mavuno and specifically with Hatua. EcoPost resulted from the confluence of a personal vision, professional training, empowering environment, and support from Mavuno leadership. A composite fence post manufacturing firm is not typically viewed as a church initiative, but represents an excellent example of Mavuno turning ordinary people (in this case a banker) into a fearless influencer of society who creates jobs for over 300 Kenyans, generates over $120,000 in annual revenue (2012), preserves over 250 acres of forests and collects nearly 230 tons of plastic waste.

31 http://www.ecopost.co.ke/awards (accessed April 7, 2013)
Another noteworthy Frontline Initiative is Transform Kenya,\textsuperscript{32} which has evolved into a national organization via the Prayer Movement Trust. Founded and led by Simon Mbevi, former pastor at Mavuno (I will discuss more of his story in Chapter 6), Transform Kenya focuses on four activities: 1) organizing prayer meetings/summits for Kenya; 2) developing a generation of men who can more effectively care for their families; 3) mentoring program for young men ages 13-21; and 4) building the capacity within political leadership, including mentoring aspiring political candidates. The organization's mission is "[e]quipping the leader to impact society for national transformation" and vision is "[t]o lead Kenya into a healthy and prosperous nation."\textsuperscript{33}

The work of TK is not my focus, but I do want to highlight how support from Mavuno led to the growth of TK—from a Frontline Initiative to a full-fledged national organization. Like EcoPost, TK was able to take advantage of Mavuno’s model of empowering others to influence society.

**Mavuno Church: Modeling External Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment**

In Chapter 4 I used tristructuration to argue how Mavuno internally models RPDE via its structures, pastors, and sermons. This chapter looks at the external Mavuno church life occurring Monday through Saturday—a realm where there is less tangible influence of formal church structures and leadership. Taylor suggests that the reimagining process has to be led by religious elite, but what happens in their absence?\textsuperscript{34} Can the reimagining journey continue and be sustained? I would argue yes,

\textsuperscript{32} [http://transform-nations.net/](http://transform-nations.net/) (accessed February 17, 2012)


\textsuperscript{34} Taylor claims that social embeddedness leaves individuals unable to imagine themselves outside a particular matrix—a matrix defined not by the individual, but the actions of society as a whole, thus the
and Mavuno is creatively experimenting with different approaches via Hatua, Spread the Love, and Frontline Initiatives.

Returning to the theory of tristructuration, I argued in Chapter 5 that Mavuno is on a mission to inform, implore, and instigate a reimagining process for the growing Kenyan middle class. Mavuno pastors used Sundays to critically challenge conventional wisdom regarding agency, structure, and belief in immanent spiritualities. This was accomplished by sermons suggesting that Kenyans will either influence society or be influenced; that structural injustices can fundamentally undermine the dignity of individuals, and that God has empowered, equipped, and elected ordinary people to bring societal transformation in this life versus retreating into a bunker mentality and await the glory of the future heavenly city. This pastoral challenge though extended beyond just Sunday, for I observed LifeGroups wrestling with the implications as they studied Hatua and participated in Spread the Love and Frontline Initiatives, which gave practical expression of this new social engagement.

Hatua and Habitus

During my participant observation with the two LifeGroups, I witnessed how Hatua cultivated Freire’s conscientização. This new critical consciousness caused angst...
and initial distress, but ultimately eustress. The *Slum Survivor* video, *Hatua* readings, field trips to prisons, painting schools and police stations, volunteering with a Frontline Initiative represented successful strategies of creating mutually reinforcing social transformation mechanisms as the *conscientização* moved from the head, to the heart, and eventually to the hands. If this process begins to take off, Mavuno will only find more Lorna Rutos to invite on stage, thus demonstrating that Taylor’s reimagining process can also be led by laity and ordinary citizens who have tapped into the fundamental visioning responsibilities of a leader. The Mavuno Marathon has empowered an agency that has learned “to see social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire 1970:35). To become “fearless influencers of society” though is predicated on seeing a sustained engagement in the long-term or in Bourdieu’s terminology, a change in habitus. The latter stages of the Mavuno Marathon really only represent the beginning of Bourdieu’s internalization of externality and accompanying externalization of internality. I posit that the mental challenges presented in *Hatua* combined with the practical application found via projects like Spread the Love or Frontline Initiatives contest traditional habitus in Kenyan society.

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35 The prefix "eu" is Greek for “well” or “good.” Eustress is what Parker Palmer calls creative tension leading to positive and growth inducing change, or the opposite of a negative and destructive distress (Palmer 2011:13).

36 Bourdieu (1977/1990a) developed a theory of social practices “…that posits as a premise (not as a hypothesis) that all practices are oriented towards the maximisation of material or symbolic results, that is, mainly interest-motivated. Symbolic or material interests are objective forms of interest and this presupposition allows him to develop concepts such as religious capital and cultural capital as irreducible forms of power [and these different forms of capital] are also the mechanisms that give rise to social hierarchies, thus becoming objects of struggle as valued resources” ((Navarro 2006:14). His main ideas can be presented in his rather simple formula: \[ \text{habitus} + \text{capital} \] + field \[ = \] practices (1984:101). For Bourdieu, habitus “…provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. It ‘orients’ their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them (1999:13).
In other words, using the tristructuration paradigm suggests Mavuno is explicitly and implicitly provoking the hegemony of traditional habitus my reimagining a new way society can become “deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities, and structured propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu” with this new habitus “endowed with built-in-inertia…to produce practices patterned after the social structures [those of Mavuno presented in Chapter 4] that spawned them” (Wacquant 2005: 316-17).

**Affective Intelligence and Habits of the Heart**

When discussing religion and politics, scholars focus more on belief and behavior. This overlooks belonging and the related emotional component of human psychology. Studies related to affective intelligence question the paradigms of the rational choice approach to understand political behavior and rely on neuroscience, physiology, and experimental psychology to build a more holistic and realistic model that explores both mental and emotional components of human decision making processes. Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen’s seminar work *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* (2000) contests the generally assumed concept of the ideal citizen as detached, disinterested, and well-informed and posits instead that affect (emotions) and reason should not be viewed as oppositional but rather complementary. They argue:

individuals monitor political affairs by responding habitually, and for the most part unthinkingly, to familiar and expected political symbols, that is, by relying on past thought, calculation, and evaluation. But the central claim of our theory is that when citizens encounter a novel or threatening actor, event or issue on the political horizon, a process of fresh evaluation and political judgment is required (2000:1).
The authors posit further that Western political traditions “derogate the role of affect in the public sphere” because a politics driven by emotions are “associated with psychological distraction, distortion, extremity, and unreasonableness” (2000:2). This in turn has influenced how the trajectory of global democratization efforts have given precedence to the rational half of human behavior to build and install institutions, systems, laws, etc. that are designed to protect governing structures from the passionate and emotional aspects of life that are viewed detrimental to political stability and sustainability. However, this top-down, rational approach is driven more by an intellectual ideology than the cultural reality on the ground, where the neat divisions between cognition and affection are not easily separated.

Within African studies, this affective approach has not been widely utilized. Göran Hydén (1980) though uses the term “economy of affection” to describe a socially embedded rationality among African peasants based on kinship and tribal obligation that effectively bypasses more formal institutions (governments/markets). His approach, despite the use of “affection,” is still undergirded by rational choice assumptions, but ones that are wider to include considerations for communal security and respect, thus its underlying difference with Western models of exchange (Hyden 1997).37 Based on my observations though, I suggest that within Mavuno and the church’s small groups Kenyan citizens are certainly encountering novel events and issues that require a new process of evaluation and political judgment. As the Mavuno leadership pushes new ideas that spur creativity, build a critical consciousness, and provide avenues for greater

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37 Some scholars, like Chabal and Daloz (1999), argue this African model actually works.
social engagement, the necessary changes required to be more effective citizens will require the complementary utilization of both affective and cognitive intelligence.\(^{38}\)

Relying not only on studies using neurobiology and experimental psychology, I still want to continue wrestling briefly with affective reasoning, especially as it relates to the “habits of the heart,” a phrase used by de Tocqueville (2003) in his early 19\(^{th}\) Century analysis of democracy in America and later the topic of Bellah et al.’s *Habits of the Heart* (1985).

As I visited numerous Protestant churches across Kenya, a strong passion and enthusiasm was evident in most churches.\(^{39}\) Exuberant worship, public intercessory prayers, hand raising/waving, and dancing are the hallmark of many Sunday services. Faces reflected joy, passion, intensity, sincerity, commitment, and love. I distinctly recall asking one LifeGroup zone pastor what drove her passion and enthusiasm for social justice. She vibrantly replied, “Jesus” but she didn’t say it quite like you just read it, for it was more like “Jeeeesuuus!”—a response grounded in reason, passion, and affection. She also happened to be an attorney working for a social justice advocacy group, so it was just not her pastoral duties that ignited this response.

Kenyan Christians are passionate about their faith. Earlier I discussed how this can lead to phenomena of vicarious satisfaction and ultimately to forms of RPDD. If the adage is true that you can't change someone who doesn't see an issue in their actions, how do you get someone to see the issues and eventually change their belief and

\(^{38}\) Much more could be said about how affective studies in the continent could reveal important insight into an overlooked component of the political decision making and behavioral process and in fact is a research agenda all on its own.

\(^{39}\) The more reserved Anglicans might be an exception, but they too had services dedicated to more contemporary praise and worship.
behavior? If the sole focus is on a cognitive approach, a vital human component is missed. Gal and Rucker reveal “that people who are shown solid evidence contradicting their most fundamental beliefs often become more forceful in advocating those beliefs. We will want the information we need in order to come closer to the truth only when we stop fearing whatever might challenge our convictions and value it instead” (2010:16).

So it appears that fear of change, fear of the unknown, fear of being wrong all contribute to a general stubbornness, but this fear is also what primes the lower-class’ need for the promised stability and security that comes at the hand of religious leaders practicing RPDD.40 I would posit that affective reasoning and emotional dispositions are key and relate to the figurative use of the “heart” by de Tocqueville and Bellah et al.

**Healing the Heart of Democracy in Kenya**

Related to affective intelligence is Parker Palmer’s *Healing the Heart of Democracy* (2011); and while focused on the American context, his reflections as a community advocate and sociologist resonate with my observations in Mavuno and especially within these two LifeGroups. He states that how your heart breaks matter. If the heart shatters into thousands of shards, depression, withdrawal, then anger can arise, but if it “breaks open into greater capacity to hold the complexities and contradictions of human experience, the result may be new life” (2014:18). He continues:

> The heart is what makes us human—and politics, which is the use of power to order our life together, is a profoundly human enterprise. Politics in the hands of those whose hearts have been broken open, not apart,

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40 However, there is a difference between fear and danger. Danger is real. Danger can be immanent and bring death or injury. Kenyans know what danger is and face the reality of carjacking, terrorist attacks, and personal home robberies. Fear, on the other hand, is typically a mental construct that can be overcome or at least faced without the repercussion associated with danger.
helps us hold our differences creatively and use our power courageously for the sake of a more equitable, just, and compassionate world (2014:18).

I witnessed how Hatua assisted with breaking the heart open and not apart, but also provided guidance and support in holding the ensuring complexities and contradictions soon confronted. I saw how the Kenyan police were brought to tears via the simple expression of love through a renovation project. LifeGroups, Spread the Love campaigns, and Frontline Initiatives all represent what Palmer calls local venues representing pre-political layers to common life. The distant centers of power may typically be viewed as the most important (as evidenced by the spheres of influence targeted by Transformational Leadership approaches), but “the common good is rarely served if citizens are not speaking and acting in these local venues, gathering the collective power necessary to support the best and resist the worst of our leaders as they decide on matters that affect all of us”—and it is from here that a “broken-open heart is a source of power as well as compassion—the power to bring down whatever diminishes us and raise up whatever serves us well. We can access and deploy that power by doing what every great social movement has done: *put time, skill, and energy into the education and mobilization of the powers of the heart*” [author’s italics] (2011:23-24).

Palmer also reveals a negative parallel or what happens when the heart is brutishly manipulated. RPDD entails a similar manipulation of the heart, and while maybe not of the brutish type, rather one based on Lukes third dimension of power—an insidious manipulation. Palmer states:

The human experience that these manipulators so skillfully exploit is heartbreak, plain and simple. They use reverse alchemy to turn the gold of human sensibility into the dross of banality, with its potential for evil. Their
success reveals what we get when we fail to understand our own heartbreak and do what is required to heal it. Egged on by the hucksters of hate, a handful of citizens becomes violent, slashing the fabric of our common life, while many become cynically or fearfully disengaged, their alienation helping unravel that fabric as they withdraw from the shared task of reweaving it” (2011:58)

The post-election violence that ensued in Kenya is a perfect example of how ethnicity can be insidiously manipulated as a mean for particular political ends. This destructive power bent toward fomenting hate and heartbreak, can be redirected, reformed, reconciled, redeemed—or what Crouch calls a creative power (2013). If this creative power is used benevolently to assist the heart—which is where “we wrestle with the question on which democracy hinges…we want to be equitable and generous. But we also want to cling jealously to our share, even when it is more than we need. We want to listen to others. But afraid of what we might hear…” (Palmer 2011:50-51). An organized and empowered citizenry can play a more proactive role in public life, thus becoming the antidote to organized tyranny.

It is these “habits of the heart” that Tocqueville identified and claimed are required for democracy’s success. They are “deeply ingrained patterns of receiving, interpreting, and responding to experiences that involve our intellects, emotions, self-images, and concepts of meaning and purpose—habits that form the inward and invisible infrastructure of democracy” (Palmer 2011:24). Palmer, Tocqueville, Bellah et al. are essentially getting at the soft underbelly, the gut, the heart of democracy. This nebulous, emotional, intangible, unquantifiable and even unqualifiable realm is typically off the radar of traditional political science. Political experts might bring from the top the right democratic institutions, structures, and laws or in the parlance of technology, the right hardware, but if the operating software is incompatible, the system is inevitably
going to crash. The tech world has the luxury of mandating operating system upgrades—dictating cultural and worldview upgrades are not options in our world today. RPDE represents this cultural and worldview software change and hardly is ever glitch free, but does attempt to keep up with the demands of new hardware. This gets to the essence of LG1’s discussion about Kenya 2030 missing a fourth pillar—one related to values and ethics.

These habits (both mental and emotional) that serve as the invisible infrastructure of democracy are directly related to my principles modeled in Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment, i.e. the fostering of critical consciousness, raising up leadership; encouraging creativity; building recreators; showing how to know, see, and have a voice; unleashing new dreams; demonstrating authenticity and humility; and leading reimagining processes. These represent principles I saw at work in Mavuno and within the two LifeGroups.

Mavuno: Emergent Micro Social Movement or Hip Millennial Middle-Class Social Club?

I now conclude with a short discussion of Mavuno’s sustainability and a continuation of my earlier critique of determining the success of Mavuno’s model. Here I ask: Is Mavuno an emerging social movement or simply a hip millennial middle-class social club? The answer is both. Let me explain using the Pareto Principle (the 80/20 rule or law of the vital few), a simple formula that at its essence suggests there is an uneven distribution to most things in life and provides a rough guide to typical distributions, i.e. 20 percent of the workers produce 80 percent of the products or 80

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41 The principle arises from the work of Vilifredo Pareto, an Italian economist, who observed in the late 19th Century that about 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population.
percent of sales come from 20 percent of the customers. If I use a current attendance figure of 3,000 for Mavuno’s Sunday services, this would result in about 600 active members who do 80 percent of the work via active engagement, volunteering, giving money, leading LGs, and such. I would argue this 600 represent the “fearless influencers” Mavuno is on a mission to create. Others also argue the principle is exponential (Marshall 2013). So now 120 of these 600 individuals at Mavuno are responsible for 80 percent of the influence. So back to my original question, these 120 to 600 individuals represent an emerging micro social movement and the remaining 2,400 would find Mavuno a hip, millennial, middle-class social club. The latter see Mavuno as the place to see and be seen. The cutting edge sermons, livestreaming, tech-orientation, fashion, and creativity evident during a sermon draw those who want something novel and relevant to their perceived place in life. Kenya’s religiosity drives many to church simply because it is the cultural thing to do. With a glut of churches dotting Nairobi, there is one for every style, theology, and social class. Granted Mavuno’s targeted demographic, the Mike and Makena’s, may not be particularly beholden to this tradition and in fact could be more likely sleeping off a hangover or playing golf on a Sunday morning. I would conjecture that these 80 percent also represent a good portion of those who start the Mavuno Marathon and maybe get through Mizizi or Simama, but never progress beyond. My study did not necessary focus on this segment, but by attracting a sufficient mass of attendees, Mavuno does

42 I have a hunch that if I would ask Mavuno’s executive team as well as all the other staff pastors to name the most active and influential members of their church, 160 to 800 individuals would quickly be identified.
get to the 20 percent who are more engaged and have the potential to emerge as leaders of these micro social movements.

**Emergent Micro Social Movements**

I would describe these Mavuno micro social movements as sector specific versions of social movements, one representing “collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities” (Tarrow 1994:4-5). With over 250 LifeGroups within several zones across Nairobi, Mavuno is comparably structured almost like military divisions, brigades, and battalions. As Mavuno leadership continues to press these LGs to critically examine the issues facing their community and then creatively find practical solutions, the potential is there for future micro social movements to develop.

An important theoretical framework for studying the political engagement of religious groups is found in social movement theory (SMT).\(^4^3\) Wald, Silverman and Fridy argue that SMT provides three theoretical avenues to better explicate this relationship: 1) culture/identity, 2) resource mobilization, and 3) political opportunities. These three avenues correspond to what these authors refer to as motive, means and opportunity. Motives refer to what cultural factors cause religious groups to either engage in political action or remain more passive in support of the status quo. One of the most important cultural factors is individual orientation versus a more communal orientation. These groups also need the resources or means to facilitate their

\(^4^3\) Social movement theory has seen application in a wide variety of contexts: religious rebellion in Bolivia (Nash 1993); democratization in Kenya (Friedman 1996); anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Borer 1998); the Iranian revolution (Salehi 1996); and the American civil rights movement (Morris 1986).
participation and finally an opportunity needs to be available for the motive and means to be realized (2005:124).

The Spread the Love campaigns are certainly unique forms of social movement, birthed not in a grievance or adversarial mode, but love, compassion, and kindness, or a type of subversive social movement oriented around blessing and the Beatitudes found in the bible. Frontline Initiatives are currently geared more as social outreach/service projects, but this does not prevent future scenarios where public advocacy becomes the focus, such as Mavuno’s efforts to get household help registered for national insurance plans. This could easily have morphed into a wider effort among churches in Nairobi.

All three of these external components of Mavuno are backed by a strong consensus among the leadership to push middle-class Kenyans into greater social engagement, so the motive is there, as is the means. The Spread the Love campaigns demonstrated how this up and coming class of young Kenyans can mobilize the necessary resources for substantial renovation projects. Mavuno can raise personnel and corporate funds, but this is multiplied exponentially with all the business connections within the church, with Mavuno becoming the corporate social responsibility outlet for these firms sponsoring the Spread the Love campaigns. Mavuno also opens

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Matthew 5:3-12 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (ESV)
the congregations’ eyes to the needs in their neighborhood and presents numerous avenues to meet social needs.

Lastly, the opportunity is present for these types of social engagement approaches. Kenya’s current political regime is far from the oppressive environment of the Moi era, and while still prickly about any mass demonstration in city center, other forms of social movements are tolerated and even welcomed. The creativity and re-imagining process fostered at Mavuno enables the continued ability to take advantage of new opportunities for social engagement.

From an African perspective, Nasong’o presents three types of social movements: transformative, redemptive, and reformative. The first is more radical in nature and is oriented around disrupting the status quo, even if it entails forms of violence. The redemptive type targets a spiritual renewal and challenges a group’s belief systems. The last group aims to change only certain elements of society, such as women’s’ empowerment, injustice or inequality. Nasong’o later explains four variables that can determine the success of social movements. The first is dependent on the clarity and realism of the movement’s objective. The quality of the leadership (i.e. their strategic thinking and planning abilities) is the second variable. The ideology and organizing principles which mobilize the movement is the third variable. The final variable consists of the quality of the followers, whom can be categorized into three types: ideologues, militant followers, and passive sympathizers (2007:22).

The internal cultural dynamics of religious groups often determine the degree of engagement with the political. Religious organizations are complete with various institutions and resources (influential leadership, finances, property, and a weekly
platform for messages) that help facilitate involvement, making means for the motivation to be actualized. The successful mobilization of motive and means is largely determined by different opportunities presented by the political system, whether it be an apparent weakness, uncertainty, structural change or outside force. What is more difficult to ascertain is the exact causal nature of the relationship between religion and politics. Does religion exert a greater influence on politics or is it vice versa? These examples demonstrate though that motive and means have an uncanny ability to checkmate political regimes when the right opportunity presents itself.

According to Nasong’o’s social movement definitions (transformative, redemptive, and reformative), Mavuno would come closest to emulating his reformative type, i.e. aiming to change only specific elements of society. Mavuno utilizes a lot of transformative lingo, but Nasong’o identifies this with more revolutionary or even violent means of disrupting the status quo. Organic social movements might be a better term to contrast with Nasong’o’s typology and are the consequences of Mavuno’s organic intellectual leadership. In Chapter 7 I will discuss in greater depth how my arguments about Mavuno and RPDE relate to the concept of the organic intellectual. Enrique Dussel states, “The most oppressed classes do not always have the most acute critical awareness, but such awareness can be reached by classes that, although objectively not the most oppressed, are the ones upon whom ideological contradictions weigh the heaviest” (2003:135). I would posit that Mavuno’s middle-class demographics represent a class that is weighing more than just ideological contradictions—Hatua combined with the social engagement theologies of Mavuno leadership is pushing this class’ critical consciousness to higher levels including their role in society and intervening
relationships with the upper and lower classes. This intellectual engagement with this middle class, combined with Mavuno’s organic development of leadership and Frontline Initiatives, has the potential to lead powerful social movements across Kenya.

**Conclusion: Measuring Social Movements**

In Chapter 4 I initiated a critique measuring Mavuno’s mission of turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of society. As I’ve analyzed my data for this chapter and done additional research on the relationship between churches and social movements, the Mavuno Model represents a hybridity of social movements and project implementations similar to an international development organization. Earlier I referenced Mavuno’s dedicated 20 percent (approximately 600 active members) as emerging micro social movements oriented toward bringing change in the six sectors identified by Mavuno’s leadership (church/mission, media/arts, economy/business, health/environment, politics/governance, and education/family). From this perspective, measuring the Mavuno Marathon could be possible using various metrics for measuring the impact of social movements combined with the more quantitative tools used within the development community. The marathon represents Mavuno’s theory of change and therefore comprised of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and eventual impact. Identifying and measuring the first three is usually not difficult, but it is assessing outcomes and impact that become challenging. Mavuno targets six sectors of society, but what outcomes/impact do they want to see in these sectors? In Chapter 7 I address the future implications of how the Mavuno Model emulates RPDE, and is tied to understanding the exact impact of emerging micro social movements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bawa la Tumaini</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial opportunities for women in low income areas to sell jewelry, handbags, scarves, and other handicrafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filamujuani</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Training of school children in Kibera slum to use media production for expression and income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kijiji Records</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Developing artists, musicians, and entertainers that have a transformational message for youth culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kweli Media Network</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Production of an online magazine to inspire, inform and entertain youth in Africa and the diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu Girls’ Trust</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Educating girls in Mitumba slum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maona</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial capacity building for slum residents via business training and microfinance to enterprises working in the communications, food, energy, and hair/beauty sectors</td>
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(Source: *The Mavuno Story – Frontline Initiatives*, pp 90-97)
CHAPTER 6
PASTOR TO PULPIT: DEVELOPING POLITICAL THEOLOGIES

Introduction

It was a whole new adventure for Pastor Tobias early one Sunday morning. As we drove through his Nairobi neighborhood of Kayole, I was probing him with open-ended questions regarding his community, the socio-economic conditions, types of churches, and issues and problems facing Kayole residents. Pastor Tobias was obtaining his M.Div. degree at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology and was working through the Pastoral Circle, a tool used within theological circles for social analysis.¹ His education was now being pushed beyond the more abstract social analysis limited to the confines of a classroom to the realities facing his own congregation—an experience representing applied research and analysis combined with theological perspectives. Through my time with Tobias I began to understand the normal purview of theological students is two or three years ensconced in biblical exegesis, yet separated from the realities on the ground.

When considering churches as political schools and pastors as teachers, what factors influence the political thinking of these pastors/teachers during their education process? This chapter’s structural domain of analysis pastoral theological training and other forms of education and experience that influence the development of their political theologies, and in turn their religious pedagogies and subsequent political socialization effects. Within this domain I argue that the current state of theological education is not well-equipped to build and sustain RPDE; and in order for democratic empowerment to

¹ The Pastoral Circle consisted for four stages: 1) experience; 2) social analysis; 3) theological reflection; and 4) action.
become a greater reality, it will require theological schools to alter their approach and method of instruction. However, pastors who I argue model RPDE did specifically mention particular courses and professors who were instrumental in developing their political theologies. This suggests that as a space where pastors learn ministry tools as well as theological instruction, these schools can be an influential component of a pastor’s views on social engagement. This chapter focuses on exploring this space.

Organizationally, the chapter is comprised of five sections. In the first section I provide a brief history of theological education in Kenya, and in the second I address the numerous types of and approaches to theology and subsequent debates arising within the political theology community. An in-depth discussion of several schools and training programs is found in the third section. I use tristructuration to analyze these different theologies in the fourth section, and the final section I highlight three contemporary theological approaches to addressing social problems facing Kenya.

**History of Theological Education in Kenya**

Without going into great historical or cultural detail, let me use tristructuration to highlight the development of theological education in Kenya. In many Africa societies, religious leaders were often synonymous with political leadership, whereas in other societies, dedicated spiritual leaders provided religious direction and guidance. There were only loose structures guiding these oral-based African Traditional Religions (ATRs), and with no written moral code, ethics and morality were guided more by practical concerns and often at the prerogative of a community’s elders or spiritual leaders.\(^2\) Training occurred during apprenticeships with their parents or grandparents,\(^2\) Future religious leaders often arose from the offspring of prominent diviners, witch doctors, witches, herbalist, etc.
or maybe another close relative.\textsuperscript{3} This type of training process is still in place today for traditional religious leaders, as evidenced by one diviner recounting how he underwent a rigorous apprenticeship under his grandfather.\textsuperscript{4} The propagation of leadership to guide ATRs is therefore informal and based on personal tutelage.

Transitioning to Christianity, European missionaries arrived on Kenya’s coast in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} Century and soon realized the need for more formal theological education. In 1903 St. Paul’s Divinity School was founded outside Mombasa to train and ordain Africans for ministry in the Anglican Church in Kenya. In 1955 the Methodist and Presbyterians joined the Anglicans in transforming the school into an ecumenical body that would be relocated to Limuru, 25 miles northwest of Nairobi, where it was renamed St. Paul’s United Theological College. In 1973 the Reformed Church would later join these three denominations and the National Council of Churches (NCCK) joined in 1993. In 2007, the college was granted a government charter and became Saint Paul’s University.\textsuperscript{5}

As other small bible colleges and seminaries were founded across Kenya, the primary task of these educational institutions remained the training of clergy for ministry roles, with a secondary task focused on teacher training for secular institutions.\textsuperscript{6} The dominant theological perspectives was imported from Europe and entailed prescribed

\textsuperscript{3} The community often observed behavior of children, discerning closely if the gods or ancestors had identified a particular child with keen spiritual insight and gifts.

\textsuperscript{4} Based on three interviews with two diviners and a witch doctor in Nairobi, June 17, 22, 28, 2010. Additional information on the training of diviners/witch doctors, Ngubane (2002) and Busia (2005).

\textsuperscript{5} \url{http://www.spu.ac.ke/home/spu.html} (accessed November 27, 2010)

\textsuperscript{6} Seminaries are typically denominationally affiliated, whereas theological schools are more diverse and ecumenical in scope.
practices and patterns that often conflicted with traditional religious and cultural views. Western Christianity believed in a spiritual realm, like the local population, but the inherent ideas in local belief in “immanent spiritualities” were too much. Thus this contestation over the “excluded middle” mentioned in Chapter 3 (Figure 3-1) drove many Africans to found their own churches (African Indigenous/Initiated Churches)—ones that provided greater contextualization and allowed such things as dancing, drumming, and clapping, but also the incorporation of traditional spiritual practices and beliefs.

In the years following independence, theologians and church leaders in many began discussing their inherited theologies and the need for developing theologies and approaches relevant to local needs and concerns. One approach was the adoption of Theological Education by Extension (TEE), which enabled the wider Christian community to gain greater access to Christian teaching without the expense of a formal education. Several associations were also organized to provide greater oversight and accreditation for theological schools. A majority of training though remains focused on preparing clergy for ministry roles via courses on Christian history, biblical studies/languages, hermeneutics, homiletics, leadership, etc. A secondary focus is vocational training for those wanting to teach theology.

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7 As Rohr often reiterates, Western Christianity was and still is presupposed on a dualistic mode of thinking and is influenced more by Plato than Jesus Christ (2011).

8 According to Mambo, there were over 340 TEE programs listed in the Christian Learning Material Centre in Nairobi (2002: 130).

9 Founded in 1976 the Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) is a regional member of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), and has more than 150 theological schools affiliated with it. Similarly, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) was established in 1976 in Tanzania (Mambo 2002).
Reverend Timothy Njoya, a contemporary critique of current theological education in Kenya, states that charismatic/evangelical pastors have no theological education, but give themselves fancy titles like bishop, apostle, reverend, even doctor, and constantly live with a dichotomy between money and conscience. They “claim special powers to multiply money, raise the dead and make miracle babies. All this masquerade goes contrary to the selfless responsibility that the followers of Jesus Christ are called upon to shoulder” and squarely places much of the blame on the education system. He goes on to critique Kenya’s education foundation as well:

Let me state categorically that due to its foundation on wrong missionary philosophy and theology, the whole Kenyan system of education is obsolete; it can only manufacture elite misfits but not scholars. Kenya lacks a philosophy of education which aims at transforming ethnic and racial identities from their broken material relationships, as expected by the market, into whole human relationships, as expected by God (Mwaura 2010).

The next section examines several theologies found in Kenya, where I find some truth to Njoya’s claims, but also a vision and strategy to increase the quantity and quality of African scholars beyond theological and religious studies.

Theological Typologies

There were several theologies that developed across Africa following the independence movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, with Palmer (2012) identifying four types in contemporary Africa: 1) inculturation theology; 2) African evangelical theology; 3) prosperity theology; 4) and liberation theology. The first focuses on contextualizing Western theology and appropriating it into the African culture. The

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10 Njoya has a College Certificate from St. Paul’s United Theological College and a Diploma in Theology from Makerere University in Uganda (both obtained in 1966), a Master of Theology (1971) and PhD (1976) from Princeton, and a Doctorate of Divinity from the University of Toronto (1998).
second represents an African version of early missional theology and centers on conversion of the soul and salvation in the next life versus a focus on transforming society in the present life.\textsuperscript{11} Prosperity theology, while holding many of the central tenets as evangelical theology, posits that prosperity is the right of every Christian, but is premised on the individual doing the right thing. The last type—liberation theology—focuses on rectifying societal injustices and specifically addresses the public and political realms. Historically, this type of theology has developed independent paths and terminologies around the world—in Europe it is known as political theology;\textsuperscript{12} in the United States, Black power theology;\textsuperscript{13} in Latin America, liberation theology;\textsuperscript{14} in South Africa, Black theology;\textsuperscript{15} and in sub-Saharan Africa a unique blend\textsuperscript{16} (Wachege 1992).

I would argue Palmer overlooks two political theologies. The first is a growing, but influential theology rooted in an American tradition similar to evangelicalism. This theology lacks a coherent name, but would be close to dominion theology, Christian reconstructionism, or theonomy. Evangelism and personal salvation remains important, but a social engagement with society is equally emphasized. Society in turn is divided into spheres that are viewed as being under the dominion of God; therefore, the Christian’s task is to retake this territory. The strategy entails training servant leaders using transformational leadership models in order to place highly motivated, gifted,

\textsuperscript{11} Personal belief in Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles and prayer are also paramount.

\textsuperscript{12} Moltmann (1967), Metz (1969), O’Donovan (1999)

\textsuperscript{13} Cone (1969, 1986), Wilmore (1979)

\textsuperscript{14} Gutierrez (1973), Boff and Boff (2013), Segundo (1976), Bonino (1975), Sobrino and Barr (1988)

\textsuperscript{15} Boesak (1990), Mosala and Tlhagale (1986)

ethical, and well-educated Africans in prominent places of power in society. An implicit theory of change inherent here is driven by a belief that societal change can be driven from the top down. Prominent U.S. organizations and schools\textsuperscript{17} advocate variations of this view and now many of these views have migrated to Kenya.

A theology of reconstruction is the second theology overlooked by Palmer. Jesse Mugambi, a professor of religion at the University of Nairobi, has written extensively on this political theology. Reconstruction is oriented around rebuilding the country and local communities after gaining independence, but according to Mugambi, reconstruction also presupposes that citizens know the work to be done, in contrast to liberation where the commanders and elite lead the way in the struggle. Mugambi’s approach addresses not only leadership issues (hierarchical vs. horizontal leadership), but is multidisciplinary in scope:

Reconstruction, as a paradigm, challenges theologians and other specialists to review the role of academic disciplines in social engineering, to make African leadership more accountable to the ordinary people. The method of theology within the construction paradigm is necessarily multidisciplinary, ecumenical, and inclusive. It embraces both the social and natural sciences; both the humanities and the creative arts. Theology of Reconstruction is introspective, in the sense that it takes off from the foundation laid by those who struggled for liberation in the preceding generation, and builds a new consciousness that looks to the future with hope while taking into consideration all resources at the disposal of the present undertaking (Mugambi 2003:30).

He proceeds to detail how this reconstruction needs to happen with the political, economic, aesthetic, moral, and theological; and argues that the African church should be at the forefront of these initiatives. Another distinct difference between liberation and reconstruction theologies is the mode of discourse. Mugambi finds the Hegelian

\textsuperscript{17} Examples would include: Regent University, Liberty University, Trinity International University, Fuller Theological Seminary, Campus Crusade for Christ International, and Youth With A Mission.
dialectical method adversarial and with a focus only on the “dislodgement of the oppressor from power, and the accession of the oppressed to power after their liberation” results in the elite expecting some form of reward for the liberation struggle (2003:165). This dialectical process is challenged by different activities in a theology of reconstruction:

This theology should be reconstructive rather than destructive; inclusive rather than exclusive, proactive rather than reactive; complementary rather than competitive; integrative rather than disintegrative; programme-driven rather than project driven; people-centred rather than institution-centred; deed-oriented rather than word-oriented; participatory rather than autocratic; regenerative rather than degenerative; future-sensitive rather than past sensitive; cooperative rather than confrontational; consultative rather than impositional (1995:xv).

The development of RPDE emulates an internal reflection of a theology of reconstruction and is built not only on “liberation from” injustice, oppression, poverty, etc., but also “liberation to” construct “a more equitable human society, to exercise mastery of one’s world and control one’s rhythm of progress” (Okolo 1994:102).

Ethnographies of Theological and Seminary Training

As I visited numerous churches in Nairobi, I discovered numerous clergy and lay leaders had graduated from two local theological schools—Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST). Several specifically mentioned a particular course at NEGST that challenged their thinking regarding social justice and a Christian response. I interviewed faculty, students, and administrators; perused course catalogues, theses, and marketing material; and even audited two courses to experience life in a theological school.

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18 Italics are Mugambi’s
Speaking broadly though, theological education is changing rapidly in Kenya, as is higher education in general. A major platform during Mwai Kibaki’s presidential campaign in 2002 was providing free primary education across the country. As more children attended school, pressure was created on secondary schools to meet higher demand a few years later. Colleges, technical schools, and institutes have in turn responded to an increase in the graduates from secondary school. Thus the demand for theological education will expand as well, though there will be greater demand for undergraduate and graduate programs in non-theological programs. I will discuss shortly how NEGST and NIST are already taking advantage of these demographic trends. There are already several schools across Kenya providing theological training, with some being denominational seminaries and others small Bible colleges.¹⁹ What follows is an in-depth look at two of the most prominent Protestant schools in the Nairobi area.

**Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST)**

The history of NEGST, located on a large rural campus north of the Nairobi suburb of Karen, is traced to the vision of the late Dr. Byang Kato of Nigeria. In the early 1970s he foresaw a crisis within African Christianity, where “Christopaganism” would be the norm and to combat this trend he called for greater theologically training beyond the certificate or diploma level.²⁰ The school’s vision is: A Christ-centred learning

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¹⁹ A partial list of the more prominent schools would include: Daystar University, Africa Nazarene University, Scott Christian University, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya Methodist University, Adventist University of Africa, Presbyterian University of East Africa, St. Paul’s University, and East Africa School of Theology.

²⁰ Aside from this academic concern, he desired to see a practical dimension that would edify and strength the faith and practices of the ordinary African Christian. He also saw the need for greater theological training for evangelical churches. His vision resulted in a theological school founded in 1977 in
community in Africa, transforming society. Their philosophical foundation is “[m]otivated by the love of God and his Mission, NEGST provides Christ-centred learning/educational experiences to nurture Christian leaders and scholars as people of integrity and life-long learners. This philosophy is embodied in the core values of excellence, relevance, community, spiritual development, justice, evangelical, and leadership.”

In 2010 NEGST had almost 600 students enrolled in various degree programs. In March 2012 a university charter was granted to NEGST and a rebranding effort began under the new name: Africa International University (AIU). NEGST is now the largest of the four schools within this new university, offering several M.A., M.Div. and Ph.D. degree programs. The School of Business and Economics (SBE) focuses on undergraduate studies in the fields of business, ICT, HR management, etc. and offers one graduate degree, a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership. The School of Education, Arts and Social Science (SEASS) consists of four departments: education; psychology and counselling; development studies; language, linguistics and communications. Degree programs consist of diploma, certificate, bachelor, master, and Ph.D. levels. The Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR) does not offer degree programs, but instead is the home of five centers: Center for Research and Publications, Center for the Study of Religions, Center Peace-building and Conflict Transformation; Center for Values, Ethics, Law, and Governance; and Center for Church Empowerment and Community Engagement. The purpose of ISAR is “

Central African Republic. A sister Anglophone graduate school in Nairobi was started in 1983, graduating its four M.Div. graduates in 1986.

provide an environment for in-depth examination of crucial issues in African society from the perspective of the vision and values of Jesus and the Christian worldview, with the intent of employing interdisciplinary resources and listening to representative voices for the purpose of synthesizing real-world solutions and strategies for transformation of individuals and systems.”

The six foundational values for ISAR include Christian values for nation-building, evangelical scholarship, interdisciplinary studies, research and writing, serving the Christian church and learning resources and technology.

**NEGST courses, seminars, and theses**

In perusing the 2006-2008 NEGST course catalogue, several courses were pertinent to this study. How often these courses were taught or enrollment figures were not available, but this would seem to suggest that NEGST has provided a range of course in the social sciences, ones beyond the typical focus on biblical studies, hermeneutics, theology, etc. It can be anticipated that additional courses will be added as ISAR, SBE, and SEASS become more established.

During the 2011 January term, I audited a political theology course taught by Dr. Boyo. In this setting I was able to observe the interactions among the students and how they grappled with the material. Boyo had a Ph.D. from Fuller (2005) and taught part-

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23 Information on the background and history of NEGST is based on notes and conversations from 2010/11, but primarily from AIU’s website accessed April 2015. AIU is experiencing growing pains as it expands its traditional focus on theological education, with ISAR being a good example of an entity that may appear well established on the website, but in reality most of the centers are not funded or fully staffed.

time at NEGST and Daystar University. The course was organized as a weekly three hour seminar. Students signed up for a particular historical era to lead the class in a short lecture followed by a discussion. Boyo’s approach was historical, addressing numerous influential theologians who engaged with the political; however, attempting to cover 2,000 years of political theology in 30 some hours can barely touch the surface of these rich, penetrating, and dense theologies. Boyo initiated the class by first stating that he was looking for practical application of the material, thus making it relevant to the context of each student. He then made several assertions about the overall nature of political theology. I highlight several that I found particularly germane to my research and would be supportive of the development of RPDE:

- The purpose of political theology (PT) is to explore the ways that theological discourse reproduces inequalities of class, gender, or ethnicity and reconstruct holistic theologies that serve the cause of justice.
- PT deals with the analysis and criticism of political arrangements—including cultural dynamics, psychological, social, and economics—but from the viewpoint of distinct religious traditions. PT addresses micro politics of the family to the macro globalized world system. All forms of politics have embedded theologies and all theologies address politics, i.e. the doctrine of the Trinity is a political doctrine.
- Evangelicals place a clear dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, but Boyo believes this a false dichotomy and wants to make a distinction versus a complete separation. This has led to inheriting distorted theologies based not on an objective theology of God, but the context and subjective experiences as lived in reality.
- Before reconstructing bad theological structures, we have to acknowledge what has failed, otherwise remodeling has only occurred on the surface level. We fail to ask relevant questions today in Kenya and instead apply wrong solutions to problems we don’t fully understand.

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25 His dissertation focused on the Africa Inland Church and the role it played in the social and political issues affecting Kenya.

26 Since I was auditing the course, I let the other students choose first. I was left with the early Church Fathers, i.e. Clement, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, etc. (representing writings between 80 and 600 C.E.)

27 Students were from Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, and Cameroon.
• The scientific worldview of the West is quantitative oriented and only counts numbers, not quality and the ability of Christianity to change culture or be changed by culture.
• God made us rationale, to make sense of our experiences. Living by faith still requires using the mind.

While the course was fascinating, I did not observe it facilitating good discussions of the contemporary realities facing Kenya. Part of this perception arises from the fact that most of the students were enrolled in the Master of Divinity program and most likely oriented toward pastoral ministry. They are less concerned with asking more general question related to the social sciences, despite Boyo’s stated objective to do so throughout the course.

Gaining a macro understanding of the research interests of NEGST faculty and students came when doing content analysis of over 250 master theses at NEGST produced by faculty and students between 1975 and 2010, I discovered only seven related to society outside the context of the church or missions. Of these seven, three examined teaching methods in theological schools; the fourth looked at perceptions of police corruption; the fifth examined poverty relief models; the sixth compared the ethics of Jesus and the early church with social ethics in Kenyan society; and the last was a case study of the African Inland Church and its engagement with social and political issues. In a conversation with an expat professor at NEGST, he commented that it is easy and all too common for NEGST students to wrestle with biblical texts and other scholarly material in a library cubicle for two or three years and never venture into the realm of contemporary Kenyan society and the issues facing Christianity there. A fact that made my experience with Tobias, as told in the introduction, so fascinating.

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28 The last one was actually Boyo’s dissertation from Fuller. The master list included faculty theses/dissertations even if obtained elsewhere.
NEGST student responses

Focus group and numerous interviews conducted with NEGST alumni shed important light on how former theological students see their course work preparing them for the ministry. The executive pastor at Mavuno Church, Pastor Linda Ochola-Adolwa, is a 2004 graduate of NEGST. She credits Professor Wood for shaping her political theology via his Old Testament Theology course, where he wove the theme of justice throughout. According to Pastor Linda, Wood forced various issues into the debate and made theology in Africa relevant for Africa’s contemporary context. His influence extended beyond the classroom for Linda. In March 2010 she instigated and implemented a three-month civic education program addressing contentious land issues in Kenya. This program was funded by the Institute of International Education and the Ford Foundation. Chapters 4 and 5 focus more on her approach to social justice and the role she has played in challenging the status quo in Kenya and across Africa.29

A Nazarene pastor’s political theology was also challenged at NEGST. During his course work he learned that the church is called to be engaged in the political realm and cannot remain outside and aloof. His views now stand opposite of orthodox Nazarene doctrine of keeping the church removed from the political realm.30

Two professors were consistently mentioned as being important in their intellectual development: Professors Nkansah and Wood. Alumni stated that Professor Wood brought his courses down to the non-superficial level and were oriented around contemporary social and political realities. One alumnus elaborated on Wood’s course.

29 More biographical information about Pastor Linda is presented in Appendix A.

30 Interview, NEGST alumni, October 4, 2010
“He talked about how God is interested in making things right. This affected the way I look at politicians and the people who want to be in leadership. A leader must be the one who promotes justice.” This has challenged his faith and now before making any political decision, he asks himself how whatever he is doing is going to honor God and how it is going to affect others. He said, “Politics is about life, mostly to do with governing and Christians need to be involved fully because if it is issues that govern life, it may have implications to their faith.”

Wood’s focus on justice in the Old Testament was an eye opener for another student when pondering the current political dynamics in Kenya. She said:

I realized that the power brokers (politicians) always address the immediate needs of the people. These power hungry people normally thrive on the needs of the minority (in power and economic power) who are the majority (in terms of numbers) but they eventually forget them once they attain their goal to get power. When I am talking to a group of people, I always try to present this model of God as a true bringer of justice. It also challenged me to become the voice of the voiceless. When I am in a political context, I first observe and interpret it through the eye of this model. Needs may change according to each situation but the model remains.

These interviews emphasize the importance of how a course can alter a person’s worldview and perception of Christianity’s role in the public sphere.

Focus group participants emphasized that course work does not necessary make a person, and that the students’ worldviews are well entrenched before they reach seminary. Factors influencing worldview development would include level of education, broader exposure to new cultures and religious traditions, and most importantly, the denominational theology they were raised in exerts significant influence. One student

31 Interview, NEGST alumni, October 7, 2010
32 Interview, NEGST alumni, October 7, 2010
stated that when their worldviews are challenged, processing the material and mulling
the new paradigms raised isn’t determined in class and is one’s personal responsibility
to integrate their new realities with the Bible. The quality of a course is often determined
then, not by the syllabus, but the individual qualities and character of both student and
lecturer. This relationship factor appears a powerful tool for challenging preconceived
ideas and causing the students to intellectually engage with the material.

Unfortunately, any pedagogy based on the British rote system typically leaves
little room for mulling new paradigms. Instead, students are simply tasked with
regurgitating information during a final exam. Though I did see in Boyo’s course I
audited that he was pushing students to think about the implications, but there was little
time to actually allow this process to be undertaken during the course timeframe.

NEGST leadership and future vision

NEGST/AIU has unfortunately suffered several untimely deaths among its
leadership recently. Dr. Adeyemo served as the chancellor between 2002 and 2010 and
upon his death was replaced with Dr. Omulokoli. Vice-Chancellor Dr. Carew died while
visiting the US in 2012. Finally, the acting director of ISAR, Stephen Sesi, passed away
in November 2011. While in Kenya, I was fortunate to interview Dr. Carew.33 He
reiterated AIU’s vision by stating it was two-fold: the ongoing theological training of
pastors and training qualified Christian professionals for the marketplace and civil
society. He mentioned how Christianity in Kenya was influenced by the East African
Revival, leading to a political theology of disengagement from the political sphere.
NEGST inherited a Western paradigm that was more holistic and willing to speak to

33 January 18, 2011
contemporary issues, but Carew states that NEGST lacked the social science expertise and other integrated disciplines to complement theological training as well as provide the degree programs to train scholars outside theology. Finding the right personnel, resources, and finances to fund a major expansion has been challenging. Carew firmly believed that a holistic education incorporating multiple perspectives was key to addressing societal issues like poverty, corruption, ethnic and religious violence. The problem though extended beyond just AIU. He stated that Kenya has historically been dominated by individual thinkers, ones more in a prophetic tradition (or what he called “Elijah complex”) versus a more institutional approach.\(^{34}\)

As AIU moves forward, its theological foundation will still remain embedded in Western worldviews and understanding of holistic education. A majority of the professors and top-level administrators were educated in the United States, with several schools being heavily represented. A majority of the theological schools are in the American evangelical tradition. Of the 45 faculty listed with a Ph.D.,\(^ {35}\) two schools alone represent over one third of the total represented: Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA) with nine and Trinity International University (Deerfield, IL) with seven. The University of Edinburgh had four and the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa), Asbury Theological Seminary, Biola University, and Westminster Theological Seminary each had two alumni.\(^ {36}\)

\(^{34}\) The NCCK is the closest Kenya has to a Christian think tank. Overall, Kenya has no architectural framework to network, connect, and leverage the cutting-edge and creative thinking necessary to address Kenya’s problems.

\(^{35}\) Full-time, part-time, adjunct, and visiting as of April 20, 2015 (non-resident scholars were excluded)

\(^{36}\) Remaining schools include: AIU, University of Nairobi, York University, University of Pennsylvania, University of London, Kenyatta University, University of Kwa Zulu-Natal (South Africa), Boston University, State University of New York, Hunan University (China), and Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Kenya)
Finally, one former NEGST professor needs mentioned specifically. Dr. Chester (Chet) Wood was referenced numerous times by alumni of NEGST. His influence appeared disproportionate, so I dug a little deeper into his courses, methodology, pedagogy, etc. In a personal interview, Wood mentioned that he was heavily influenced by Professor James “Buck” Hatch when enrolled at Columbia Bible College (CBC) between 1960-64. Hatch was trained in psychology and the social sciences at the University of Chicago and theology at CBC, with Wood inheriting Hatch’s pedagogical theory that differentiated between “teaching” and “training.” Hatch essentially agreed with Freire regarding the banking system of education and that training entailed additional levels of cognitive engagement that had practical application beyond just head knowledge. Wood later received a Master in Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (now Trinity International University) and finally received his Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews in 1974. While teaching at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, Wood stated he had his second “conversion” experience. His exposure to the poor and needy in the garbage dumps surrounding Manila caused him to question his own theological training and the inadequacies he found in not dealing with issues of poverty, environmental degradation, injustice, and corruption. He started teaching at NEGST in 1984 and in 1993 moved his family to Nairobi. He taught hermeneutics, Greek, Theology of Poverty and eventually a two-part course that addressed a biblical theology of justice as found in the Old and New Testaments. He would later become the dean of doctoral studies at NEGST (2000-07).

37 Now renamed as Columbia International University
Based on interviews with students, Dr. Wood brought two distinct attributes that had an impact on several generations of NEGST alumni. First was his use of justice as a theme to provide a survey of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is a vast collection of books,\(^{38}\) so having one theme as an organizing motif would appear to be a powerful method, not just for teaching the Bible, but also training young theologians on the practical implications arising from knowing more about justice and injustice. I had access to one of his course readers entitled “With Justice for All: The task of the people of God, a biblical theology.” This 300-page tome was filled with charts, graphs, timelines, bibliographies, questions, and much of it oriented like a script, with acts and scenes. A quick glance illuminates the connection made between Old Testament passages and concepts of God's justice. Consequently one can see the seeds that sparked the vision for the literary work of Pastor Ochola.\(^{39}\) Social justice is a common theme in American evangelical circles today, but in the late 1990s, Wood’s course would have been ground breaking within evangelical circles.\(^{40}\) Wood brought a second attribute that complemented his focus on justice. The occasions and manner that former NEGST alumni and current pastors mentioned his influence suggest something deeper to his authority and significance—one related to his pedagogy.

Wood was known for his seminar-style approach. He rarely lectured. He modeled equality. He sat his students in a circle and joined them, essentially coming down from the exalted platform of a Kenyan teacher and joining the lower status of a student. He


\(^{39}\) Ochola wrote several books and bible studies oriented around justice. These are discussed in chapters seven and eight.

\(^{40}\) The Catholic Church and mainline Protestant churches have a much longer history of addressing social justice, so the concept is not new to Christianity, just for the newer evangelical sects.
didn't teach, but sought to develop teachers. He worked from the bottom up, examining the text via dialogue with the students. He used the Socratic Method to get students confused, but at a higher level where they would have to deliberately wrestle with the ambiguities and contradictions found in the Bible. He always began his courses with a review of Mortimer Adler’s *How to Read a Book*, which assisted them in reading and thinking critically. It appears Wood’s approach was new and invigorating for his students. What he said was compounded by how he said it. In short, Wood models the type of pedagogy that Freire is looking for, one that does not oppress, but liberates. Wood aimed to use the Bible as a liberating tool in his courses.\(^{41}\) The legacy of Wood (and even back to Hatch) was passed down to several students in the late 90s and early 2000s. Wood’s approach exemplifies the practice of RPDE within the setting of a theological school.

**Nairobi International School of Theology**

Situated off a dirt road in the Kilimani area of Nairobi is the Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST). NIST was my second school of focus in this study for two reasons: First, several pastors I interacted with in Nairobi were graduates; and second, they offered specific training on leadership and had unique graduate degree in governance.

NIST’s genesis is closely linked with Campus Crusade for Christ’s work in East Africa in the early 1970s. NIST’s first class of five students began in 1981 and

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\(^{41}\) Background information on Wood comes from a personal interview in his home on December 11, 2010 and from his personal website [http://www.inpathsofrighteousness.org/about/](http://www.inpathsofrighteousness.org/about/) (accessed December 7, 2010).
enrollment has since grown beyond 300 students. NIST offers the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts and the Diploma Programme in Christian Ministry. Several other entities provide additional education experiences. The Institute of Christian Leadership (ICL) offers short seminars in a variety of areas of Christian ministry. The Bright Leadership Centre (BLC) is a unique institution focusing on research, training, and consulting in the area of culturally relevant leadership for Africa, including working with corporate and political/government leaders. The BLC offers a Masters in Organizational Leadership (MOL) and a Masters in Governance (MG), each a two year, 48, 42 credit hour degree respectively. NIST like AIU/NEGST is undergoing a transition to an accredited university and in August 2014 was awarded a Letter of Interim Authority to become International Leadership University (ILU). At the time of my research NIST was

42 The school aims “…to provide leadership to the Church and society and spearhead spiritual, social and cultural transformation in Africa and the World.” The vision consists of creating a “world-class university for advancing biblical values through academic excellence and transformational leadership development” and the mission statement calls for the educating and training “Christ-like visionary leaders to spearhead holistic transformation in Africa and the World” (NIST 2006: 2).

43 In five areas of concentration: Leadership Studies, Counseling Studies, Mission Studies, Pastoral Studies and Educational Studies

44 BLC objectives include: 1) To promote a value based leadership that transforms organizations and societies; 2) To equip leaders with innovative and problem solving skills; 3) To promote consultancy services and make recommendations for organizational developments; 4) To conduct leadership research and a resource data bank for organizations and governments; 5) To develop culturally relevant leadership resource materials for training. http://www.nistkenya.org/content/view/44/125/ (accessed December 15, 2010)


46 ILU is actually the Kenya campus for International Leadership University Africa (ILU-Africa). There are also campuses in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. ILU-Africa is a result of the mission and vision of the International Leadership Foundation (ILF), founded in 2004 by Dr.
registered with the Kenya government and accredited by the Accreditation Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA).

**NIST student responses and course evaluation**

With this array of course offerings at NIST, I was curious what current students found influential in their educational experience. Students provided examples of numerous courses that addressed social justice, economic development, and political transformation.\(^ {47}\) Two professors, Aseka and Ngaruiya,\(^ {48}\) were referenced as teaching most of these courses. Students were exposed to themes and issues of social justice; had their theology challenged by understanding the gospel entailed a message beyond just personal salvation; grappled with the colonial legacy and subsequent impact on African theology; and recognized the dominant perception that political and economic issues are considered dirty and of this world, and began critically examining them with fresh perspectives. Students’ personal political theology represented a spectrum from those who hold residual beliefs in the divine rights of kings to those thinking that leaders with dignity and integrity can effectively influence the political system.\(^ {49}\)

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\(^ {47}\) Theology of Conflict and Resolution, Community Development, Organizational Leadership, African Theology, Christian Stewardship, etc.

\(^ {48}\) Aseka received his PhD in political history from Kenyatta University and Ngaruiya from Trinity International University.

\(^ {49}\) Based on survey responses and focus group discussions
I audited a course at NIST entitled “Foundations of Governance,” taught by Dr. Aseka. Topics addressed included: good governance, democratization, the art of politics, forms of governance, etc. This largely lecture format course essentially gave an overview of various themes covered in an introductory political science course in the United States, but with an emphasis on the particular dynamics of Kenya’s political system. Aseka noted that politics is the art and science of formulating political principles for guiding society, and if missing, leaders become anarchists. How can they be principle driven when they have not been given any principles, he enquired throughout the course? Consciousness is the driver of moral principles. It grows by feeding it certain values. His comments would support the assertions found with Freire’s conscientização, but also how religious leaders can both subvert and develop this consciousness.

**NIST leadership and future vision**

Several interviews with faculty and administrators revealed some of the challenges, opportunities, and vision of NIST/ILU. The following interviews revealed several components that were foundational in my development of RPDD and RPDE. In the next section I will address some of the potential ways theological education/research could advance RPDE.

Dr. Emmanuel Bellon, the Vice-Chancellor, highlighted some of the accomplishments of ILU, including how faculty and administrators were instrumental in the development of Kenya Vision 2030, but lamented the lack of a moral pillar in the

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50 Aseka was one of my professors at MIAS. His book *Transformational Leadership in East Africa: Politics, Ideology and Community* (2005) traces the evolution of leadership styles.
strategic plan.\textsuperscript{51} He also explained how ILU would eventually consist of four entities: NIST (providing theological training), School of Leadership, School of Counseling, and an undergraduate division. Challenges facing ILU included: raising sufficient finances; wrestling with how you effectively influence Africa; shortage of teachers, particularly Ph.D.s; and getting a university charter from Kenya’s Commission of Higher Education (now the Commission for University Education).\textsuperscript{52}

The director of the Bright Leadership Centre, Dr. Aseka, shed important insight into leadership training across Kenya and how NIST/ILU was positioning itself to be a leading center for educating future leaders. Kenya is becoming a knowledge driven society and if NIST remains anchored in theological studies, it will not be enough to provide leadership in other sectors of society. Traditional political science departments in Africa focus on international relations, comparative politics, political theory, and public administration. ILU wants to widen students’ insight to understand the core issues beneath just academic sub-disciplines of political science and good governance, i.e. the orthodoxy of political science needs to be transcended by bringing in a highly interdisciplinary approach to address the growing needs and challenges of society. According to Aseka, several courses in the NIST M.A. in Governance were listed as fundamental in changing the way people think.\textsuperscript{53} The previous vice-chancellor had a

\textsuperscript{51} Kenya Vision 2030 is a document originating from the president’s office and is the country’s development blueprint for the period 2008-2030 and is built on three pillars: economic, social, and political.

\textsuperscript{52} Interview, January 21, 2011

\textsuperscript{53} Courses included: 1) Ethics and Social Responsibility; 2) Public Regulatory Framework (poor regulatory framework in Africa allows for misuse and mismanagement in public sector, this course helps people understand role of government in regulatory behavior); 3) Governance and Public Accountability; 4) Leading Across Culture (addresses supra-ethnic consciousness and how tolerance is a great value to democracy); and 5) Foundations of Governance.
focus on making NIST a theological academy, but Vice-Chancellor Bellon has a Ph.D. in leadership, theology, and a MBA (commerce background); and pushed to rethink the intellectual foundation and format of the domain of knowledge production. Bellon wanted to create a greater legacy in leadership development, and not focused on a narrow disciplinary enclave.

In regard to the role of clergy in encouraging civic engagement, NIST is redefining and rethinking how theological schools can better contribute to the transformation of society. Currently there is a deficiency in theological knowledge and philosophy that would enable ministers/leaders to intervene as actors of change. Black Theology (black power/ consciousness) couldn’t break the back of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Liberation Theology in Latin America faced similar struggles; and compared to these two, there is nothing comparable in the rest of Africa. African theology is essentially absorbed in a Western theology. NIST/ILU is working with other institutes to create synergies. An example is NIST making inroads to training Kenya government officials by providing seminars for the prime minister’s office. A Theology of Works Seminar was a week-long training where over 150 Christian leaders focused on how to have an impact on the various domains of society. Seminar tracks included: project management; transformation of markets; and transformation of church-based organizations. Aseka concluded the interview with this insightful statement:

Pastors need the skills and acumen to challenge their flock to be more involved in civic engagement. There are three arenas where standards, norms, and values are created: religion, ideology, and culture. When churches become irresponsible and abdicate their central role in transforming the national psyche, they become directly responsible for the current state of corruption and bad governance. The churches need to lead the way in corporate governance, and considering the considerable wealth
within the churches, they should focus on poverty and the environmental conditions that dominate their congregations.\textsuperscript{54}

Aseka’s comment here would suggest the prevalence of RPDD and the need for more churches to practice RPDE, but notice how he echoes many of the same sentiments as espoused by Pateman (1970), i.e. how churches represent this social learning space where standards, norms, and values are fostered.

Dr. Marta Bennett, then Director of Leadership Studies and now Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, explained some of the history of NIST/ILU and its implications for leadership development today.\textsuperscript{55} NIST started in 1981 as an affiliated ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ (an American evangelical organization founded by Bill Bright in 1951 and focused on student ministry around the world, now rebranded as Cru in the United States).\textsuperscript{56} The BLC therefore inherited a particular theology of leadership development; one that Bennett suggested was fundamentally different from how leadership is perceived within Kenyan civil society. Pastors still hold unusually high levels of authority and status, with few congregants challenging their power. Thus current styles of leadership are still perceived to be good and are just the way things work in Kenya, explained Bennett, alluding to the power distance differences and how contemporary leadership development faces deeply entrenched cultural traditions. The two degree programs offered by BLC (Master of Organizational Leadership and Master of Governance) targeted two demographics: businesses, NGOs, churches, and

\textsuperscript{54} Interview November 9, 2010 (Aseka is currently ILU’s vice-chancellor)

\textsuperscript{55} Interview January 27, 2011

\textsuperscript{56} \url{www.cru.org}
parachurch organizations for the former; and leaders in government, civil service, public sector, and those involved in advocacy and social justice for the latter.

Two initiatives of ILU/NIST have expanded the schools influence beyond just degree programs. The first was the development of the African Forum on Religion and Government (AFREG), with an inaugural conference held in Nigeria in 2006. The second was the creation of Transformational Leadership Seminars (TLS), developed to assist leaders in government, business, education, and religion understand and practice transformational leadership.

NIST is trying to place itself strategically as a center for leadership development. Its proximity to central Nairobi is helpful in facilitating government and civil servants to attend courses/seminars without battling horrific traffic. The goal of building a transformational leadership training movement across Africa, utilizing the AFREG/TLS, represents at first glance an indigenous driven approach to taking leadership training beyond just Kenya. However, when looking a bit closer at this transformational leadership training curriculum, something fundamental is missing and relates to religious pedagogies of democratic disempowerment. Transformational leadership may have the goal the transformation of society via a re-engaged and re-energized church,

57 The goal of the forum was “to build a movement of African leaders of integrity who are committed to transforming Africa into a Premier Continent based on God-centered values.” The second forum was in Kenya in 2009 and a third was held in Zambia in 2013. Hundreds of top leaders from the political, business, and religious sectors attended these forums. However, recent events in Burundi regarding President Nkurunziza’s controversial decision to run for an unconstitutional third term implicates AFREG in supporting authoritarian style government. Nkurunziza, known for his evangelical zeal, received an award from AFREG for his exemplary model of Christian leadership, but realities are on the ground in Burundi suggests society is not faring well during the attempted coup and subsequent election fiasco. Transformational Leadership in this situation become embedded with authoritarianism, power grabbing, and a militant understanding of God’s “calling” to lead a nation.

but if the underlying practices, principles, and values are the same, the result will likely only be continued social, political, and economic disempowerment.

**African Rural Trainers**

The last type of theological education I want to highlight relates to the vast rural pastors scattered across Kenya who have little to no formal theological training. Africa Rural Trainers (ART) is an organization working with these pastors to provide not only formal training, but also micro-enterprise skills to assist with their livelihood. ART was founded in 2009 by Jan and Jeremy Peckham, a British pharmacist and entrepreneur, respectively. They serve as trustees, along with Nelson Makanda, Deputy General Secretary for the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK). With over 70 percent of rural pastors lacking formal theological training, the only education for most pastors would be that of those who managed to get public education and the required teaching on religion. An ART volunteer trainer said, “This is what they carry into their pastoral responsibility.” As I mentioned in the introduction, this study only provides a cursory glance at Kenyan Christianity in rural areas. While a majority of Kenyan churches would be found in these remote areas, I chose to focus on urban churches deemed more influential in their scope of social and political engagement.

**Tristructuration and Theological Training**

Standing back and analyzing these schools, their vision, mission, and approach through the conceptual paradigm of tristructuration reveals several conclusions. From an immanent spirituality perspective, African Christians still believe in a transcendent

60 Makanda has a PhD in Biblical Studies from NEGST.
61 Interview, February 2, 2011
and immanent God, yet the theological schools I studied in Kenya are directly and indirectly influenced more by Western theologies underpinned by a secular/sacred divide (the left column in Figure 3-1). A targeted focus on how belief in the traditional spiritual entities influences life for the average Kenya, especially those in rural areas is overlooked. Historically, Christianity has equated any association with “low religion” with evil. Fortunately, there are some theological students and faculty who are doing research in this area, as evidenced by the review of NEGST theses/dissertations.

I argue there is a fundamental rationale for why many Africans continue to seek advice and guidance among traditional religious leaders; and tristructuration’s focus on the power of these beliefs is an important paradigm for further exploring the influence of these beliefs. From the structural component of tristructuration, theological schools aim to transition to offering more than just degree programs oriented for clergy and other religious leaders. Kenya’s growing youth population will necessitate the need for more university spaces. AIU and ILU strive to position themselves for this growing demographic group. Expanding a university is a challenge in any setting. Creating sustainable academic institutions without relying on external support in environments of corruption, low accountability/transparency, and limited private and public finances present numerous obstacles for academic leaders in Africa. If relying on a Western donor base, strings often come attached as to what type of theology is to be taught.

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The Institute for the Studies of African Realities (ISAR) is strategically placed to expand research and analysis of this “excluded middle” (Hiebert 2008), but NEGST/AIU is currently focused on building capacity for degree programs oriented around professional studies (business, health care, finance, technology, etc.). Sociology and anthropology programs that could undergird the mission of ISAR are not a high priority at this stage.

The term “youth” encompasses a much larger age set compared to Western understandings. According to the Kenya Constitution, ages 18 to 34 are considered to be youth. According to Njonjo, nearly 80% of Kenya’s population is under 35, 43% would be under the age of 14 and approximately 35% between the ages of 15 and 34 (2010:4).
Avoiding this form of theological imperialism may potentially be pegged to strong economic growth in Kenya leading to greater financial independence, but also a willingness of Kenyan theologians to really wrestle with their needs, culture, history, in light of their imported theologies; and in turn reimagine their engagement with society based on this critical analysis. Mugambi’s theology of reconstruction demonstrates the possibilities of re-invigorated public theologies that can better grapple with African realities.

Finally, theological education remains centered around the individual pastor. The agency of these future leaders is deemed paramount, for the transformed individual, equipped with powerful leadership tools and perspectives, is hoped to drive sector reform from the top down—trickle down transformation will then evidently follow. But as I mentioned early, a leadership model that expands beyond traditional theological degrees can still remain oriented around pedagogies of disempowerment. Based on my observations and understanding of transformational leadership in this context, God’s intervention on behalf of the saved soul is still viewed as the primary panacea for society’s ills. The social engagement modeled by Mavuno needs to be undergirded by theological schools providing more expansive taught and practices theologies that build a critical consciousness and simultaneous creativity to address solution issues.

**Contemporary Political and Theological Perspectives**

The next three case studies provide theological responses to contemporary social issues facing Kenya. My purpose here is to show what current theological thought looks like when engaging with societal issues. This is not meant to be representative, but based on my interaction with pastors and content analysis of numerous documents related to how the church can engage society it does demonstrate a common approach
in Kenya. As I already alluded, most theological master theses focus on biblical, missions, or ministry-oriented topics. These three narratives represent the rarer instances when theology interacts with political, economic, or social development.

Simon Mbevi is a trained lawyer and ran for political office in 2002; and though he won his party’s primary in his constituency, party politics resulted in the nomination being sold to a candidate he had beaten. While stating he had some great moments during the campaign, overall it was not a good experience, with him stating, “It did not take long for me to realize that I was ill-prepared for the task. I began to face challenges in handling criticism, corruption, violence, and fundraising. My Christian friends would have loved to help, but they had no clue what to do. Some had an attitude against me, claiming that I had denounced the faith by having an interest in politics” (2008:1). Mbevi would later be one of the founding pastors of Mavuno Church. He later resigned and started an organization called Transform Kenya in 2010.64 Obtaining a Master of Leadership at Pan African Christian University in 2008, he concentrated his studies on leadership. His thesis was entitled, “Servant Leaders for Africa: Christian Political Leadership Development Program.” I want to specifically explore some of the issues and themes he addresses in his thesis.

Mbevi begins his thesis with numerous quotations from prominent Christian leaders.65 Of those cited only two were African, Kinoti and Kimuyu (1997). This would

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64 Transform Kenya’s vision is “to lead Kenya into a healthy and prosperous nation” and mission is “equipping the leader to impact society for national transformation.” The organization is built around four primary programs: 1) Boys to Men mentors young men ages 13-21; 2) Man Enough calls men above 21 to lead in service; 3) Lead to Serve supports and equips transformational leaders; 4) Konnect is a prayer ministry for the nation.

65 A sample includes: John Maxwell, John Haggai, Bill Hybels, Mike Huckabee, Chuck Colson, Don Eberly, Jim Wallis, Pat Robertson, and John Stott.
suggest that Mbevi theory of transformational leadership has been informed by the
umerous and primarily American evangelical leaders he references throughout his
thesis. He also states there is little literature connecting political leadership to
community transformation (2008:13). Here Mbevi appears to have overlooked the entire
good governance literature that addresses this topic. According to Mbevi, servant
leaders are needed in the very thrones of power. The three pillars he identifies for this
servanthood are character, competence, and understanding political issues. He also
references Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) call for reinventing government through an
entrepreneurial approach. Mbevi then discusses transformation by stating:

Transformation begins with the individual. Darrow Miller and Scott Allen
have said, “Until a critical mass of the individual members of the society is
transformed, the leadership of the society will not be transformed. The
heart of the leaders springs from the heart of the people.” (2005, p. 36)
They argue that leaders reflect the people’s culture. Transformation
begins with individuals beginning to think differently and producing leaders
who bring a new perspective to societal issues. Miller and Allen add:
“Transformation comes as one individual, one church, and one community
is fully persuaded.” (p. 49) The persuasion begins with the church and
Christian political leaders and then spreads to the community (2008:28).

Mbevi’s 17-page appendix is essential a training curriculum for Christian political
leaders and addresses three areas: servant leadership, competence, and political
issues. Mbevi appears to adopting the theory of change advocated by Miller and Allen,
i.e. a focus on individual transformation. Transform Kenya’s primary outreach is oriented
around reaching teenagers, young men, and older mature men, instilling the values of
servant leadership in each of these generations. An explicit focus on training political

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Mbevi may easily have not been aware of this literature. I’ve seen the limitations African students face
when it comes to reliable internet access and specifically access to the large online research databases
like EBSCO, Academic Search Premier, LexisNexis, ProQuest, etc. Many universities and colleges in
Kenya cannot afford the access fees charged by these databases and the libraries are often limited with
hard copies of books.
leaders is no longer listed as a primary program for Transform Kenya. Mbevi places the onus of societal change on an amassed group of transformed individuals. I think this is idealistic and fails to understand the deeper and more systemic structural issues, but also does not encompass the complicating dynamics arising from the syncretic belief in immanent spiritualities. In short, Mbevi’s version of transformational leadership finds its rationale and history from Western theologies of social transformation that have limited application to the complex traditional religions and spiritualities found across Africa.

My next example is a NEGST graduate and comes from Nairobi Chapel, Mavuno’s sister church. Eda Esilaba was an intern (2003) and pastoral trainee (2004-2006) at Nairobi Chapel. In 2011 she established and now directs the Halisi Trust, a not-for-profit organization with the vision “to invoke change, for the individual, their neighborhood and then the country by exploring through God’s Word the foundational values for positive and sustainable development.”

The Halisi Trust has published curriculum by Esilaba entitled *Mkenya Halisi: A Bible based workbook towards a healed and prosperous Kenya*. The trust is also piloting an economic empowerment curriculum. In the introduction to *Mkenya Halisi*, she states:

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67 In my interview with Mbevi on October 13, 2010, he mentioned that Transform Kenya was pursuing training for political leaders. Based on their website now, the Lead to Serve program appears to have refocused on leaders in all sectors of society.

68 She has a B.A. in Botany and received her M.A. in Christian Ministries from NEGST in 2006. Her thesis examined the influence of post-modern culture in Nairobi Chapel. Her husband pastors Nairobi Chapel Rongai and is also a NEGST graduate. Esilaba is also currently an East African Regional Fellow with Acumen.

69 [www.mkenyahalisi.org](http://www.mkenyahalisi.org)

70 Mkenya Halisi means “True Kenyan” in Swahili
I choose to see our situation as a country of overwhelming potential. This book is a tool towards harnessing that potential and processing what it would mean to be part of the solution to a cancer that has racked our country for far too long. Not to be naïve that there are some deep issues we must address, but to take responsibility and look the cancer straight in the eye and then equip ourselves towards a sustainable ideal.

This three-week guide is oriented around daily readings for church youth groups. With almost 80 percent of Kenya being under 34 years of age, reaching this demographic will represent “infinite possibility or definite disaster” (Njonjo 2010). The chapters are devoted to addressing corruption, integrity, tribalism, equity, justice, greed, corporate responsibility. Daily readings provide stories and reflection/discussion questions. The first reading on *kitu kidogo* provided three case studies, presenting scenarios that youth could and do likely face in Kenya. I found this approach helpful for engaging youth in a critical thinking process and assisting youth with developing proactive responses prior to encountering issues of corruption. The rest of the readings are good, but come across more like a Sunday School curriculum. Halisi Trust also references the idea of transformational leadership much in the same way that NIST/TLS/ILF/AFREG and Transform Kenya do. So again, the emphasis is placed on personal agency and premised on reaching a critical mass of transformed individuals, which somehow morphs into a transformed society.

My last example represents a local pastor wrestling with the realities of his community—a narrative I shared at the beginning of this chapter. I first met Tobias Jairo

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71 Swahili for “something small” and used in reference to the small bribes used on a daily basis in Kenya.

72 My analysis is based on a review of her draft book, which only contained three chapters. According to the Halisi Trust website, the new book consists of ten chapters. I did participate in a high school group in which Esilaba was piloting her curriculum.
during a lecture I was invited to give at NEGST in 2011. Tobias asked me to help him with a final paper for his World Christianity course. We met early on a Sunday morning, before traffic was an issue and church-goers started their journeys. I asked him emic and etic questions, probing and prodding into the realities of Kayole, a neighborhood within the larger Embakasi area to the east of Nairobi.

During our journey Tobias saw his community from a different perspective. His final paper was entitled, “A Theology of Kiosk Christianity: an exploratory analysis of the Kayole social environment.” Kiosk Christianity, according to Tobias, refers to formal and informal churches that pop up like kiosks selling fruit, soda, and cell phone airtime. A cacophony of worship music wafts from hundreds of these churches, as they compete for Sunday service goers, with some churches literally only a few meters from each other. He said, “Kayole is polluted not just by rubbish, but also by noise from small churches competing with each other” (2011:5).

Tobias used the Pastoral Circle to analyze poverty in his community. He discussed issues related to tribalism (each church attracts members from a particular ethnic group); disempowerment and indifference; spiritual entrepreneurialism and the commodification of the church planting process; balancing the “pilgrim principle” (believing in an afterlife and the world is only a temporary reality) with the “indigenous

73 I was invited on two separate occasions to give lectures at NEGST. On September 15, 2010 I presented “Concepts for Exploring the Role of Power in African Societies” on May 26, 2011 “World Christianity and World Politics”

74 It would be interesting to see Tobias interact with Finke (1997) and his supply-side analysis for religious competition.

75 The Pastoral Circle is a social analysis tool developed from Catholic traditions and consists of four stages to develop critical and systematic approaches to social transformation: 1) Immersion; 2) Social Analysis; 3) Theological Reflection; and 4) Pastoral Planning (Holland and Henroit 1983).
principle” (the gospel is relevant now in present realities); and attitudes of gratitude and blessing others. He asked pertinent but tough questions:

How has the gospel liberated Kenyan Christians from such images that make them feel as though they are ‘second class citizens’ rather than those created in God’s image and therefore equal to the rest of humanity? How much has changed in the minds of Kenyan Christians who have inherited this perception from the Western missionaries? How do we affirm the dignity of people, motivate them, and help them take responsibility for their own lives? (2011:5-7).

His analysis found that poverty is a result of all three forces found in tristructuration. Individuals are responsible for greed and corruption and it is they that must change. Structurally, there are numerous oppressive centers and levels of power that operate like a staircase, but one where everyone is stuck on their particular step and not allowed to move up, and the horrible conditions of poverty instill an innate fear that one might fall down the step and never regain their original position. Spiritually, residents of Kayole remain caught in a dynamic that places health, material goods, and social status within the paradigm of the prosperity gospel. Tobias concludes by stating he wants to use his master thesis to revisit the pastoral circle, but diver deeper into analyzing Kayole. Despite not receiving anthropological or sociological training, his paper represented a nexus of ethnography with theological reflection.

These three stories capture how pastors have utilized their theological education to engage with social and political issues. It is encouraging to see them struggle with the relationship between Christianity and the realities facing Kenya today, but I would argue all three do not adequately address the issues and problems in society that are structural in nature, but also the long-term social impact arising from changing beliefs in immanent spiritualities. A continued focus on an agency-based transformational leadership theory of change borrowed from Western theological foundations is therefore
culturally mismatched and an ineffective public theology. Yet Oscar Muriu, a NEGST alumni and senior pastor at Nairobi Chapel, once suggested that pastors in Africa need to actually expand their educational training from a focus solely on the theological and should complement this schooling with an understanding of history, sociology, economics, psychology, and anthropology. Interestingly enough, a majority of the pastors I interviewed had some form of training outside of theological school, but few with social science disciplines. They have worked in banking, business, hotel industry, education, etc. This has certainly given them the opportunity to see life firsthand outside the confines of the church environment. Greater non-theological exposure would help expand insight and critical analysis for future pastors as they use their theological training to focus on important concerns facing Kenya. However, the inclusion of more sociology, anthropology, development, and human psychology course has traditionally been beyond the scope of a typical theological education.

**Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter highlighted some of the history of theological education in Kenya, referenced several important and influential types of theology practiced in Africa, examined closely two schools and traced how political theologies are developed for clergy, and discussed how theological education is oriented around only one and half of the three spaces found in the tristructuration paradigm (agency and the Christian side only of immanent spiritualities).

An overview of my argument can best be captured by the following short historical narrative. Prior to colonialism, traditional religious leaders were trained via informal apprenticeships. The authority and skills of these religious leaders maintained a solidarity and order within society. As colonialism disrupted this system, both
administratively and with the introduction of Christianity, theological schools were
established to provide the ministry training for future clergy. These schools had narrow
focused academic programs (aside from the teacher training component), but as I
discussed in Chapter 2, the colonial era placed a premium on education. Theological
education was no different, with trained clergy for the most part at the mercy of colonial
policy. Independence resulted in clergy consolidating their religious domains no longer
mediated from London. In the late 1980s and 1990s, a few radical clerics challenged the
authoritarianism of President Moi, but this was generally not a wide-spread movement
across Kenya. Clergy and churches continue to be politicized for electoral gain or
referenda support.

During this period, theological education continued to pump out clergy in many
theological flavors, but all carrying on various aspects of a historical legacy that is
oriented around religious pedagogies of democratic disempowerment. In the last
decade or so though, there has been a change in strategy at NEGST and NIST to meet
new and future education demands. As Kenya grows in both population and
economically, an increased need for secondary education is now on the radar with
these two schools transitioning from a sole theological focus to include other fields of
study such as business, psychology, education, etc.

However, as curricula and degree programs expand, a dominant theological
perspective focused on transformed individuals in partnership with a belief in an
immanent Christian God represents a hegemonic paradigm for how the church is to
engage with society. Current visions for these schools include training and placing
transformation leaders into key positions in society (business, finance, media, politics,
entertainment, and so forth). Overlooked are historical, sociological, anthropological, economic, and psychological understandings of social structures, institutions, power, authority, submission, freedom, and equality and how all of these are embedded in subconscious worldviews arising from belief in immanent spiritualities. It is at this juncture that I argue tristructuration provides a conceptual paradigm for deciphering the complex puzzle of how religious belief, behavior, and belonging have an impact on how society is organized, governed, and transformed.

In short, the prevalence of RPDD across Kenya today is the historical outcome of societal expectations for how clergy should lead and how congregants should follow. Have religious pedagogies changed over time? Of course. Kenya is a dynamic and fluid society. But at the worldview level, fundamental elements of RPDD remain ingrained and the current state of theological education in Kenya represents a natural trajectory based on past and contemporary understanding of the role of religion in society. It is within this context that I argue that the current state of theological education is not well-equipped to build and sustain RPDE; and in order for democratic empowerment to become a greater reality, it will require theological schools to alter their approach and method of instruction. In sum this will require a simultaneous focus on three elements: 1) incorporation of more of the social sciences into theological training (as Pastor Oscar recommended); 2) an emphasis on critical thinking and research methodologies (e.g. an expanded version of the Pastoral Circle); and 3) a pedagogy oriented around liberty, equality, and fraternity (as exemplified in Professor Wood’s courses).
CHAPTER 7
PASTORS, PULPITS, PEWS, AND POLITICS

Weaving Themes and Theoretical Threads

This study has been guided by two macro-level questions: what types of political influence do churches have in Africa; and in what forms does this influence occur? Combining these two questions with the concept of churches as political schools, I formulated three micro-level questions: 1) what are the political implications of sermons and church structure? 2) what residual influence do churches have Monday through Saturday? and 3) what influences how pastors think politically? The three structural domains were the three primary spaces where I explored these micro questions. Each domain provided an important framing component that assisted with the classification of data and the analysis process. Chapters 4 through 6 dove deep into each of these domains.¹

Using the macro and micro question and structural framework mentioned, I argue that churches are political schools, but only a few can truly be identified as “schools of democracy.” My research finds that most churches in Kenya practice types of Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment. However, some middle-class churches model Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment and represent a model challenging traditional methods and approaches to social and political engagement.

Before further discussing these religious pedagogies, I want to briefly revisit the conceptual paradigm of tristructuration (a more in-depth discussion is in Appendix B). In

¹ While conducting simultaneous research in each domain, it became apparent that three additional topical domains were germane to the study. I have referred to these using the following four different alliterations: orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy; attitudes, actions, and affections; belief, behaving, and belonging; head, hands, and heart. When discussing politics or religion, beliefs and behaviors are often at the forefront. I took a more holistic approach to human understanding and therefore included the more affective side, one connected to the heart and emotions.
heeding the admonition of Ellis and ter Haar (2007) to take African epistemologies seriously, tristructuration is a tool for better grasping African cultural and religious realities. By expanding on Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, I emphasize the importance of local belief systems. As a theory of the space where three forces—structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualities—create, adapt, maintain, and reproduce social, political, and religious systems, tristructuration provides a framework for measuring changes in the attitudes, actions, and affections—all important variables at play with social, economic, and political progress. Tristructuration also enables the capturing and comparison of various cultural “snapshots” across time and within different demographics, geographies, and denominations. In Chapter 2 I used this paradigm to highlight the changes in the relationship between religion and politics from pre-colonial times, through colonialism and independence, and now into contemporary environments. Post-field research analysis of these various snapshots reveal different phenomena occurring within churches that related to democratic empowerment or disempowerment.

As an analytical tool, tristructuration led to the identification of the religious pedagogical spectrum between democratic empowerment and democratic disempowerment. On the one side of the spectrum are the private and public knowledge, attitude, and practices of both religious leaders and institutions that disempower the development of democratic values and principles in followers, or what I call Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment (RPDD). The other side is represented by Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment (RPDE), which characterizes the employment of creative versions of power that guide followers in a
reimagining process that fosters the building of strong democratic values and principles. I contend that RPDD adds an analytical framework for previous critiques of certain churches across Africa. Paul Gifford and Gregory Deacon make compelling cases for how certain churches are caught in different theologies that do not necessarily make social, political, and economic progress sustainable. I use RPDD to re-examine these churches to suggest that many of these churches model attributes represented by the PRDD side of the spectrum. Secrecy, lack of transparency, limited accountability, complete deference and a cult of worship surrounding the top pastor, fear of the outsider, and command-style management where just a few of the characteristics in these settings. Tristructuration suggests that RPDD is embedded in much deeper cultural, social, and theological constructs, both visible and invisible; therefore, it is not just a pedagogy imposed exogenously—it feeds into endogenous needs and takes advantage of the congregants' longing for forms of stability that come from vicarious satisfaction. As Taylor (2004) argues though, it is the religious elite who have to lead the people out of this worldview, yet RPDD remains neatly path dependent, supposedly meeting the spiritual needs of the average Kenyan and simultaneously enriching the prestige and bank account of “big man and woman pastors,” all while fostering and modeling pedagogies that disempower the flourishing of democratic principles and values.

My primary interest though was better understanding the genealogy and development of RPDE. Its conceptual genealogy arose from observing the practices and structures in Mavuno Church. After seven months of in-depth interaction within this church, I witnessed a significantly different model. Again using tristructuration as an
analytical tool, I used the three structural and topical domains to provide an empirical basis for the explanatory ability of RPDE. My examination of church structure, use of space, leadership development, as well as the content and delivery style of the sermons show a different approach of not only doing church, but what I argue are pedagogies that build the foundational values and principles for a more democratic society.

These pedagogies where reinforced outside the traditional Sunday domain of a church by an extensive network of home fellowship groups completing the Mavuno Marathon. A “marathon” may appear at first glance an excellent name for this process— for Kenyans are famous at excelling in these races, but a marathon is a linear race, typically takes place on a well-marked path, and is a solo competitor sport. Transforming society is hardly linear, on a well-delineated, smooth path, and undertaken only by the individual. It is actually more akin to a Tough Mudder, the 10 to 12-mile team-oriented, military-style obstacle race that forces individuals into group participation as they face common fears (water, fire, heights, etc.).

In Chapter 5 I highlighted how the Hatua curriculum challenged many Kenyans’ misconceptions about social justice and how to engage. I witnessed how these ideas confronted many of the fears Christians have, for example, thinking they have to engage as an individual and accomplish great things in the process or realizing there is a cost involved when standing up to injustice. The “Slum Survivor” video initiated the process with a shock to these middle class Kenyans. From this mental and emotional jolt, Hatua’s ten-week study timeframe facilitated greater reflection and the fostering of a critical consciousness. Hatua field trips again moved LifeGroup members into the real world of those on the margins of society. The Spread the Love campaigns provided
additional venues for expressing care and compassion. Renovation activities at local police stations subverted the typical acrimonious relationship between police and the public. Frontline Initiatives moved social engagement to an even deeper level, by initiating long-term commitments to addressing social needs. EcoPost and Transform Kenya demonstrate how these initiatives can take a life of their own and become full-fledged entities having an even larger impact in society. All of these activities and events represent team work, group participation, and a willingness to overcome obstacles to success.

Mavuno’s modeling of RPDE is driven from the inside out via the actions of Mavuno’s pastoral team, whom have questioned the dominant matrix or paradigm of how Christianity should engage with the social. Pastoral agency within Mavuno has simultaneously remained steadfast in their orthodoxy, but also managed a process of disenchantment (e.g. God gave you a brain so you can give God a break) that has taken Mavuno into atypical directions. However, there are two related questions that get at what Mavuno is really doing when they are doing what they are doing—a “how” and “why” question so to speak.

How Mavuno operates contains a hidden, but important element. Mavuno’s internal structures model important characteristics related to democratic values and principles. These structures include transparent financial audits, a decentralized pastoral team, a massive leadership development system, and open plan office space that facilitates the free interaction and provides a level playing field for all staff. The “why” goes even deeper. Pastor Muriithi saw how ineffective Christian discipleship programs were in Kenya and set out to change that via the curriculum found in *Mizizi*
and Simama. Pastor Linda was driven by concerns regarding social justice issues and what she saw as a disengaged faith community passive waiting for God’s intervention. Mavuno’s model was also targeting a middle-class that was increasingly frustrated with the direction of Kenya. What Mavuno does, how they do it, and why provides the empirical basis for the development of RPDE.

In sum, Mavuno represents a new generation of church leaders that are cognizant of Christianity’s history in the country and are now adopting new models, approaches, and structures to more effectively engage the head, hands, and heart of a growing segment of Kenyan Christians—an ongoing conversion of attitudes, actions, and affections that go beyond just a conversionary experience, resulting in a faith that derives not just spiritual succor, but the mission of transforming society. In turn the Mike and Makena’s at Mavuno demonstrate a growing discomfort with the servitude to certain religious paradigms viewed as no longer viable. This demographic group yearns for a new freedom, but one they are finding comes with radical responsibilities for what they do and who they become. Mavuno Church as a whole has discovered and is wrestling with the ideas that the Christian metrics of character and virtue (loving God, loving others, and demonstrating joy, peace, kindness, mercy, humility) can all be evident in society—both unfree and authoritarian and free and democratic. However, a nation full of self-proclaimed Christians does not automatically lead to democratic governance, free and fair economies, and a flourishing society.

**Key Takeaways**

Highlighted below are several key takeaways I hope scholars can take from this study. They are macro in perspective, with the next section addressing more fully how
some of them can contribute to a wider understanding of religion and politics in Kenya and beyond.

1. All Kenyan churches are modeling some form of governance. Unfortunately, in too many cases, the model is Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Disempowerment. Mavuno Church is modeling and fostering democratic empowerment, but only for a small, yet growing niche of young middle-class Kenyans. An unanswered question from this study is how do you build Religious Pedagogies of Democratic Empowerment for the majority of church-going Kenyans who live in rural areas or urban poor settlements, especially when it is in the vested interest of religious elite to maintain blind allegiance, but also the desire of the average church member to find spiritual vicarious satisfaction with this authoritarian elite? I will revisit the issue of class toward the end of this chapter.

2. Kenya’s ongoing democratization process needs to be re-examined. The state-centric, institutional focused approach overlooks important local understandings of power, freedom, liberty, equality, empowerment, etc. Well entrenched cultural, social, and religious worldviews influence the fundamental principles and values inherent to democracy. Building Western versions of democratic institutions on misunderstood foundations is a recipe for ongoing tension between African political leadership and Western diplomatic/aid personnel.

3. Africanist scholars need to take African worldviews seriously. Religion and politics are part of the same terrain, where political and spiritual kingdoms overlap. The conceptual paradigm of tristructuration can be a powerful analytical tool for determining power relationships, localities of influence, and discovering hidden forms of submission and fear, but also for identifying strategies for change and empowerment. In this context, religion and politics, power and disempowerment, freedom, liberty, and equality, have to be studied from both bottom up and top down perspectives.

4. Quantitative approaches to understanding politics in Africa have contributed important insight, but have not focused on an in-depth integration of religion. A qualitative-interpretivist research methodology applied in the African context contributes important insight overlooked by other methodologies. If Africanists take African worldviews more seriously in conjunction with interpretive approaches, import new insight will be gained about how Africa works and does not work, not just in the realm of religion and politics, but in other related social arenas of health, education, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.
Contributions Beyond Religion and Politics in Kenya

As a student of political science, my research contributes to several sub-areas of the discipline. Obviously the first is religion and politics. Tristructuration provides a helpful paradigm for elucidating how the more hidden components of cultural worldviews can directly and indirectly shape public and private discourse on a variety of social issues facing a country. By reincorporating the significance of belief in immanent spiritualities, it can also be an analytical tool for studying religion and politics beyond Africa. The conceptualization and utilization of tristructuration directly resulted in the development of the two religious pedagogies of political socialization. RPDE and RPDD contribute insight to other topics studied within political science including: civil society, social movements, political culture, democratization theory, and political socialization. Other social science disciplines that could benefit from the framework provided by these religious pedagogies of political socialization would be: anthropology, sociology, religion, history, and psychology. African studies in general benefits from this study as well. My theories and arguments fill a gap between those who provide excellent insight into African epistemologies (Ellis and ter Haar) and those critiquing the more public dynamics of Kenyan churches (Gifford, Haynes, and Deacon).

My use of the toxic leadership/followership/environment literature come primarily from the field of business management. The management structure of Mavuno and all the activities on Sunday and beyond suggest Mavuno operates very much like a corporation. Numerous books on business were referenced by Mavuno’s pastors as being influential in their life and in how the church is managed. Churches are big business in Kenya and have large budgets that surpass most small businesses, but they are rarely considered part of the economy in Africa. Businesses are driven by a
These mega-churches represent a unique mix of business strategy and theologies, but rarely studied by management scholars.

Implicit within the Mavuno model though is an entire public theology driving the churches engagement. This entire study’s focus on what Mavuno is doing organically reveal a religious pedagogy fundamentally different from other churches. As a social scientist, I do not unpack the theological “why” but I do examine how their approach models RPDE as opposed to the more typical RPDD. I discovered that democratic values and principles are good business management values and principles, but also appear to have numerous roots in biblical values and principles, as demonstrated by Mugambi’s theology of reconstruction.

The field of development studies represents many of the disciplines already discussed, but yet holds certain paradigms that can be informed by this study. Rees (2011), Belshaw et al. (2001), and Marshall and Saanen (2007) represent just a portion of scholarship that looks specifically at faith in relationship to the activities and approaches of the World Bank. Faith is obviously on the radar of the World Bank, but my study can contribute perspectives from the inside and up and is drawn from thick descriptions of the religious activities of a growing middle-class segment in Kenya, and how this can influence the democratization process.

**Future Research Agenda**

Throughout the research and writing process numerous additional research agenda were identified. The first would entail the ongoing development of the comparative framework of RPDE and RPDD. I would like to see a survey instrument that could better measure attitudes, actions, and affections that undergird these
pedagogies. For example, a scaled questionnaire covering multiple aspects of church life, structure, practices would bring additional empirical evidence to better locate exactly where on this political socialization continuum a church sits.

Second, I believe tristructuration is a powerful paradigm for a more holistic analysis of other cultural, religious, and social phenomena that are distinct from the agency/structure debate. While in Kenya in March 2016, scholars I interacted with suggested that development issues related to health, education, and economic development could be better understood if understood from the perspective of tristructuration. They concurred that this belief in immanent spiritualities remains an important factor in the actions, attitudes and affections of Kenyans.

Third, I would like to look at religious influence beyond the church and would include sources like religious programming on television and radio, media coverage, newspapers, websites, books, and popular musicians. Is a similar phenomenon happening within these faith-based non-government organizations? If I remove the “R” from the acronym, do pedagogies of democratic disempowerment and empowerment (PDD/PDE) exist in other non-religious civil society organizations? If research was conducted among prominent civil society groups and local non-governmental organizations, would we find similar management pedagogies that either empower or disempower democratic values and principles? My initial guess is that many organizations would still model pedagogies of democratic disempowerment. This research could go even beyond civil society and look at the typical work environment for Kenyans. Does Barclays, Safaricom, and Kenya Airways model PDD or PDE? Pateman
(1970) argues that these are influential social learning environments that influence democratic participation.

Finally, I would like to further incorporate the theories of two scholars, Enrique Dussel and Sheldon Wolin, into the research I have conducted in Kenya. An underlying question that this study does not address relates to Mavuno Church being composed predominantly of middle-class Kenyans. Does class composition influence the practice of RPDE? As a middle-class church, Mavuno is situated to influence vertically (into the upper echelons of power, representing by the six spheres of influence identified by church leadership), but also horizontally (as evidenced by their social outreach programs). I would argue Dussel and Wolin contribute insight into how churches can use their social position to subvert the influence of RPDD.

Dussel is an Argentine-Mexican political philosopher who discusses organic intellectuals and liberation praxis, among many other topics. His work is incredibly compelling and relevant to religion and politics in Kenya and the ideas, findings, and arguments made in this study. He reinforces Freire when he states, “A people alone cannot liberate itself...It is because of this that critical mentality of the organic intellectual, or critical communities or political parties, is indispensable so that a people acquire a critical mentality” (2003:94). In later work he writes:

Liberation praxis is not solipsistic—that is, it is not created by a single and inspired subject: the leader (who should necessarily be distinguished from obediential leadership). Liberation praxis is always an intersubjective community act of reciprocal consensus, which does not reject leadership, as we have said, but definitively abandons vanguardism. It is a “rearguard” action by the people itself which educates social movements about its democratic autonomy, its political evolution, and about being mutually responsible for its destiny. The liberation politician, Gramsci’s organic intellectual, is more a promoter, an organizer, and a light that illuminates the path constructed, unfolded, and perfected by the people.
Political leadership is service, obedience, coherence, intelligence, discipline, and devotion (2008:98).

Despite speaking to political and social arenas, Dussel has direct application to religion as well. In future research I would argue his insight aptly describes what Mavuno is facilitating, i.e. the critical mentality of the congregation, but also through the unique leadership of pastors like Muriithi and Linda, Mavuno is promoting, organizing, and building the capacity of middle-class Kenyans to better engage with a liberation praxis. In Gramscian terms they are promoting, organizing, and illuminating a path for Mavuno. Mavuno models “rearguard” action, as exemplified in RPDE. Other churches model RPDD or what I would call a “spiritual vanguardism.”

In a related direction, Princeton’s emeritus professor of politics, Sheldon Wolin, argues that the common citizen is “capable of creating new cultural patterns of commonality at any moment” and that by addressing common concerns and social problems [as demonstrated by the various social outreach programs of Mavuno and the various Frontline Initiatives] he or she is “experiencing a democratic moment and contributing to the discovery, care, and tending of a commonality of shared concerns. Without necessarily intending it, they are renewing the political by contesting the forms of unequal power that democratic liberty and equality have made possible and that democracy can eliminate only by betraying its own values” (1996:43-44). For Wolin democracy is about how it is experienced and not where the political is experienced. He writes:

Revolutions activate the demos and destroy boundaries that bar access to political experience. Individuals from the excluded social strata take on responsibilities, deliberate about goals and choices, and share in decisions that have broad consequences and affect unknown and distant others. Democracy is more a movement than a form, its presence “occasional and fugitive” (1996:38-39).
I suggest that Mavuno is motivating individuals to take on new social responsibilities and build a critical consciousness that wrestles with liberty and equality; and how and when these values are betrayed, democracy goes awry. I want to explore specifically this “occasional and fugitive” aspect Wolin mentions and apply it to a Kenya case study.

He goes on to say:

The so-called problem of contemporary democracy is not, as is often alleged, that the ancient conception of democracy is incompatible with the size and scale of modern political societies. Rather it is the conception of democracy grounded in the citizen-as-actor and politics-as-episodic is incompatible with the modern choice of the state as the fixed center of political life and the corollary conception of politics as continuous activity organized around a single dominating objective, control of or influence over the state apparatus. Democracy needs to be reconceived as something other than a form of government: as a mode of being that is conditioned by bitter experience, doomed to succeed only temporarily, but is a recurrent possibility as long as the memory of the political survives. The experience of which democracy is the witness is the realization that the political mode of existence is such that it can be, and is, periodically lost. Democracy is a political moment, perhaps the political moment, when the political is remembered and re-created. Democracy is a rebellious moment that may assume revolutionary, destructive proportions, or may not” (1996:42-43).

Here again, Wolin touches on a phenomenon common to the state-centric descriptors of African politics—the vampire state, politics of the belly, neo-patrimonialism, etc. Mavuno even falls into this trap by labeling one of the sectors they want to influence as “politics/government” or what is viewed as the fixed center, the state apparatus. Mavuno knows that it needs fixed, but I would argue they are actually onto something more important and related to Wolin’s reconceiving concept. RPDE, imbued with a reimagining process, fosters this reconceiving process by demonstrating important democratic values and principles, which in turn empowers citizens-as-actors and politics-as-episodic.
Concluding Remarks

I now come full circle. I dedicated this study to the beautiful people of Kenya. I acknowledge many of them at the beginning, but again find great inspiration and hope in their attitudes, actions, and affections as they continue to use their agency to radically examine and question ordinary understandings of religion and go beyond it, to challenge particular matrices and push people to imagine outside these paradigms.

In August 2015 Mavuno Church celebrated their tenth anniversary. Their future appears bright, especially as Kenya’s middle-class continues to grow in both quality and quantity. My time in this church was encouraging, enlightening, and most of all thought provoking—for Mavuno’s approach to “doing church” provided the genesis for the conceptual framework oriented around religious pedagogies of political socialization.

Transitioning to a focus on Kenya as a nation, the country has a bright future for many—economic growth is consistently high, the 2013 elections were held without widespread violence, a new constitution is being implemented, and devolution occurring, albeit slowly and with many challenges. Obviously there are ongoing obstacles. Many critics find that President Uhuru is resorting to tactics to undermine a free press, maintaining a blind eye to corruption, marginalizing political opponents, and continuing and possibly expanding the patronage system. This can only be expected. This is what the political and economic elite do in Kenya. Why change the system when it maintains or elevates your power, prestige, and position? On the other end of the societal spectrum are millions of poor and marginalized Kenyans. They are hard-working, devout, patriotic Kenyans, but can never seem to find that tipping point out of poverty. They will continue to find strength and comfort in their churches, but the ongoing modeling of RPDD by their pastors only exacerbates the path dependency of socially
disengaged and marginalized churches, populated by only what would be could be described as a powerful, but latent army. Who will unchain this army? As Buckminster Fuller said, “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” If Mavuno and other churches representing a broad section of Kenyan society can become a liminal-facilitating rearguard—a fugitive force modeling, advocating, and building freedom, equality, and fraternity for all types and categories of citizens—then maybe Kenya will see a greater flourishing across all regions and sectors of society.
APPENDIX A
LINDA OCHOLA-ADOLWA BIOGRAPHY

Pastor Linda’s family comes from Nyanza Province in Western Kenya, where she grew up in a home dominated by political life. Her father, Tobias Orao Ochola Ogur, worked in both the civil service and as an elected representative. Mr. Ochola received his BSc and MSc degrees from Zagreb University in Yugoslavia (1964-68) and a BPhil in the early 1970s from Nairobi University. He worked as planner in the Ministry of Planning and Finances, but was later found acceptable to Moi’s KANU party and served the first of three five-year terms as the Nyatike Constituency’s Member of Parliament (KANU 1988-92; Ford-Kenya 1993-97; NARC 2003-07). With KANU, he was also the Assistant Minister for Health (serving under then Minister of Health and future President Mwai Kibaki). He was the Shadow Minister of Health during Ford-Kenya’s opposition after Moi relented to multipartyism in 1991. Here he served with Jaramogi Odinga, father of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Linda’s maternal grandfather was also a member of parliament in the mid-1960s.

Born in January 1974, the second daughter of three, Linda soon involved herself in her father’s campaigns, serving as the chief clerk and writing supporters. Her knowledge of the constituency and local Luo language served her father well in his 2002 campaign. Linda followed the well-educated path of her father. After Lavington Primary School and Alliance High School, she received her B.A. in linguistics, German, and sociology at the University of Nairobi, and a Master of Divinity at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in 2004. She is currently enrolled in a distance education Ph.D. program at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. After working with Life Ministry at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, she interned with Nairobi Chapel and was mentored by Pastor Oscar Muriu. Following a year-long stint with Barclays Bank, she returned to Nairobi Chapel as a pastoral trainee. In August 2005, she served as a core member of the leadership team of Mavuno Church, one of five churches created when Nairobi Chapel self-divided into smaller congregations. In June 2007 she married Peter Adolwa, the Cathedral Administrator at All Saints Cathedral Church, and together they have two sons.¹ As the Executive Pastor, she oversees discipleship activities as well as several administrative and ministry departments at Mavuno Church. She also typically preaches two four-week sermon series a year. She has authored three books: Hatua: Raising your faith to relevance (2009), Defining Moment: Building a legacy of influence (2010b), and Engaging the City (2010a). Following the post-election violence that engulfed Kenya in 2008, Pastor Linda received a $20,000 grant in early 2010 from the Ford Foundation to use the Hatua curriculum for a National Land Policy Awareness Creation Program. She contributes regularly to her blog² and Twitter account³ and speaks at conferences and leadership summits.

¹ Interview: Tobias Orao Ochola Ogur, February 24, 2011
² pastorlindadotcom.wordpress.com
³ @LindaAdolwa
APPENDIX B
TRISTRUCTURATION

Introduction
Tristructuration is a conceptual paradigm for understanding the space where three forces—structure, agency, and belief in immanent spiritualities—create, adapt, maintain, and reproduce social, political, and religious systems; and is based on an emic, holistic, and diachronic analysis of all three forces without giving predominance to any one in particular. Tristructuration builds on Giddens’ theory of structuration (1984), which attempts to bring a balance between structure (macro perspectives focused on external forces, determinism, and constraint) and agency (micro perspectives focused on internal motivation, volunteerism, and enablement). Giddens’ insight makes important contributions to exploring the various relationships between actors and institutions, including how resources and power dynamics can be used to form authority. His theory certainly leaves room for incorporating religious practices and spiritual beliefs, but I argue this spiritual component needs to be considered as a powerful force, distinct from structure and agency.

Tristructuration therefore represents a triad of forces, taking Giddens’ structure and agency and adding a third—the belief in immanent spiritualities. This latter force may be unfamiliar to some and relates to African worldviews and a common belief in a cosmology consisting of three primary realms: the earth where human beings visibly reside; the spirit world; and the heavens where God resides (Milingo 1993). I use these three realms to better explicate how tristructuration can be a helpful paradigm for better understanding traditional African religions. I start with the most tangible (family/lineage), move away to the intangible (God/spirits), and then return to see how this influences leadership and political structures.

Family and Lineage
The first cultural force relates to the individual, family life, family lineage, and roughly corresponds to understanding agency within the African context. Birth, adulthood, marriage, childbirth/rearing, elderhood, death, and life after death represent a circular pattern and are the most apt description of human existence in Africa. This circle of life doesn’t really have a beginning point, but let me start with initiation into adulthood. Men and women, often age mates spanning two or three years, are sanctioned for marriage, procreation, right to property, and the right to be involved in the decision making process. As an adult advances in age and their children move into teenage years or even marry and have children, elderhood represents passage to being highly respected, dependable, and considered custodians of wisdom, and given a wider range of responsibilities and authority in the community. Death, the final rite of passage on earth, ushers in a new life in the spiritual world with ancestors. The burial site and rituals are determined by the cause of death (natural circumstances, sickness, accident, witchcraft, or evil spirits), and while considered the end of breathing, death is not the end of life. The belief in nominal reincarnation facilitates the ritual transmission of life.

1 The circle of life or African lineal system provides several social functions, including: 1) giving individuals identity, life, and meaning when socialized into a family, clan, and wider community; 2) influencing values, rituals, and behavior; 3) determining the various rites of passage; and 4) representing the interconnection between those yet to be born, the living, recently dead, and ancestors.
after death and is the process and procedure for naming newborns after recently deceased members of the community, enabling the continuity of life by signaling the presence of the living dead.

While it has historically been the main socializing agent in society, urbanization has resulted in a breakdown in this circle of life, leaving widows and orphans without the lineal support of family structures. These different stages of life represent different levels of empowerment and agency. Levels of agency would also fluctuate between rural and urban areas, between the rich and the poor, educated and uneducated. It is important to note that agency in this context is deeply embedded in communitarian views, with less emphasis on any individualized rights. Less Cartesian “I think, I am” and more “We are, I am,” as encapsulated in the African philosophy of Ubuntu.

**God and spirits**

The rituals, practices, beliefs, and cyclical patterns found with life in the visible world is complemented with a belief in the invisible world, one inhabited by the recently departed, ancestors, spirits, and God, who is a supreme being, creator, and father of all that exists. The visible and invisible worlds intersect each other, but with the invisible world’s transcendence not in competition with its immanence (Mulago 1991:119). Regarding its physical locality, Mbiti posits it can be found in the following places: rituals, ceremonies and festivals of the people; shrines sacred places and religious objects; art and symbols; music and dance; proverbs, riddles and wise sayings; names of people and places; myths and legends; beliefs and customs; and in all aspects of life (1991:20-30). In sum:

- It has dominated the thinking of African people to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organizations and economic activities. We can say, therefore, that religion is closely bound up with the traditional way of African life, while at the same time, this way of life has shaped religion as well (Mbiti 1991:10).

The visible and invisible worlds also involve community and hierarchy, with the social arrangements in the invisible world a reflection of those in the visible and presuppose the possibility of interaction between the seen and unseen realms, and thus the need for these intermediaries who provide the communication link (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:15). Who controls this communication system or network has immense power and provides a religious parallel to Lasswell’s (1936) famous dictate that politics is who gets what, when, and how. The belief that the ancestors maintain an ongoing interest in their community and have the power to reward or punish offenders of the traditional moral values results in the ongoing utilization of these supernatural agents’ powers and attributes for the welfare of those living in the visible world (Gyeke 1996:23, 161).

African Traditional Religions are "cosmo-centric in that [their] vision aims at restoring all things in existence, both human and nonhuman entities, [where] ethics are

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2 This brief overview of family/lineage is based on a summary of Michael Kirwen’s African Cultural Knowledge (2005). He breaks down African culture into 15 themes, which were focus of the introductory lectures for the three courses I took at the Maryknoll Institute for African Studies in Nairobi.

3 This cultural understanding demonstrates how agency in Africa is influenced by numerous factors that are more or less completely off the radar compared to an individual in Western countries.
based upon traditional moral codes that have governed society for centuries” (Douglas 2005:131-32, 138). ATRs are not revealed religions, but instead based on the messages, wisdom, and practices of the religious leaders. According to Gyeke, ATRs “may have some moral import and relevance for the people of a community,” but “can hardly constitute an elaborate and coherent basis of the moral values of the people” (1996:56). Moral values thus arose not from an inherited moral code found in the religion, but instead from the existential conditions needed for communal life to succeed if not flourish. Due to this oral and customary nature of ATRs, it makes them more difficult to define and locate using traditional Western definitions of religion.

Broadly speaking ATRs are the historical, sacred, and cultural practices of indigenous people in Africa, and is practiced by millions not only in Africa, but in diaspora communities throughout the world. It is not an ancient religion, but one practiced today, and is still marked by its focus on oral tradition, pragmatism and non-proselytizing attributes. Some of the positive and negative characteristics of ATRs relevant to political systems include: the importance of the nuclear and extended family for upholding social systems; strong sense of sharing, solidarity, justice and peace; fear and superstition dominating a people’s thinking; secret cults controlling and manipulating society; and individuals being blamed and punished when believed to be responsible for a natural disaster, disease, or other calamities (Majawa 2005:103-106).

Are ATRs inadequate in meeting the needs of Africans today? While they “have preserved for the people their identity as Africans through such massive crises as slavery and colonialism” Magesa argues they will “continue to exert a more important and fundamental influence on African spirituality than many Christian leaders and Western academics care or dare to admit” (1997:18). Kirwen (1987) concurs with Magesa saying ATRs seem to be thriving and show no signs of abating in Africa today. Anderson though argues the opposite and suggests:

The supreme being seems often distant and unfathomable, the human ancestors appear sometimes fickle and unpredictable, and the diviners seem limited by the omnipresent fear of powers that might be greater than their own. The solutions offered in traditional religions...seem to be seldom completely satisfying and leave people uncertain, threatened, and fearful. “African” problems caused by a loss of power and life through the malicious workings of sorcery, magic, and witchcraft, and through capricious spirits who often demand more than people can provide, demand a Christian response (2001:213).

Others argue that Christianity has in turn thrived at the expense of ATR by “offering security and identity to immigrant groups” and a means for “escaping unpleasant social obligations” and betterment through religious education (Shorter 1974:90).

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4 Agency for these individuals becomes a center of power not just for religious life, but for the political as well.

5 Christianity, in comparison, had centuries to perfect a written law and moral code that was passed from generation to generation, primarily through the Bible, but more recently through other Christian literature.
While historical Christianity may have replaced ATR as the religion du jour, ATRs continued to find a place in urban areas. Traditional medicine men and diviners are sought in times of crisis among urban populations, even among Christians (Mbiti 1991:192; Shorter and Onyancha 1997:127). It is also important to note that it is not only AICs that have been influenced by the belief systems inherent in traditional religion. Within Africa there is an interchange or dialectic between ATR and orthodox churches as well (Shorter 1974:80). This suggests that African religions will continue to influence Christianity, especially in regards to the concept of anthropos, the “enhumanment” that is echoed in African religion’s focus on an anthropocentric and interrelated cosmos, which reflects the heart of the original early Church in the first centuries C.E. (King 1986:113). While ATRs have adapted and changed in the face of colonial and neocolonial realities and have been interpreted and reinterpreted according to the needs of society, Africa’s future spiritualities may once again tap into the rich liberating values found in ATRs (Young 1992:96).

Leadership and political systems

The governing systems that arise from the intersection of the family/lineage structures with the spiritual cosmologies result in some intriguing forms of political organization. To fully understand the ensuing governing systems, I first start with the visible and tangible components and then address the more complex worldviews and accompanying spiritual and psychological dimensions.

Leadership has existed in many forms, from head of the household, to diviners, chiefs, teachers, priests, government officials, herbalists, and prophets, to name a few; and can arise from leading a meritorious life, inheritance, appointment (both by the community or from God), or some deep mystical experience. Ancestors can also grant political power, for their roles include being a guide, guardian, judge, arbitrator, counselor, peacemaker, protector, and overseer; and are viewed as being a wise, responsible, respectable, reliable, charismatic, and selfless leader (Kirwen 2005).

Regarding political systems, there is a certain sense of continuity running from the pre-colonial period, through colonialism, and into the current political environment. During Africa pre-colonial era, well-developed politic system existed, and while not akin to Western understandings of a state, these societies instituted various forms of legal procedures, representation, and collective security. Societies typically were characterized politically by one of the following four systems: 1) centralized authority with established administrative and judicial structures; 2) decentralized; 3) kinship-based; 4) and an age-set/elite status holder system (Ayisi 1992).

As communities consistently produced an economic surplus, states began to form. Two key characteristics prevailed though—non-hegemonic states and lineage. These non-hegemonic states did not have clearly defined boundaries and power.

6 In a sense Africans get their cake and eat it too. They have one foot in Christianity and can reap the spiritual and material benefits of being seen in this category, but they also have a foot in traditional African cosmic world-views, which they can fall back upon if they find difficulties with the realities in the Christian realm (Anderson 2009:197-98).

7 Examples of these states, empires, or kingdoms include: Hausa (1400-1800); Kongo (1550-1650); Ashanti (1760-1900); Buganda (1800-1900); Omani Sultanate (1680-1880); Swahili Kingdoms (950-1600); Songhay (900-1585); Timbuktu (1650-1800). See Thomas (2010), for more of an overview.
dissipated as it moved from the center out, with some communities overlapping in their political allegiance. The free movement of people also prevented the monopolizing of political power.

Lineage on the other hand is a bit more complex. A leadership system built on kinship trace their origins back to common ancestors, resulting in ancestor worship as described in the previous section. Kinship systems create powerful social bonds resulting in deference to the community versus the individuality dominating the Western worldview. This community orientation results in individuals obeying:

[L]ife-determining customs regarding marriage, inheritance, justice and the allocation of land. This gives the leader of a clan, village, or ethnic group a great deal of political power. Lineage groups, in return, provide solidarity, offering security and welfare to their members. There is thus a reciprocal relationship between those who respect the authority of ethnic leaders and the chiefs who are obliged to look after their followers (Thomas 2010:11).

The exercise of political power included a careful balance of control and consent. The common members of a community, not the chief or king, represented the foundation of political authority. The chiefs or kings depended on the support, consent, and opinions of their subjects, resulting in a form of checks and balances in the exercising of power. Leadership was a consultative process, first with the chief’s councilors, who in turn conferred with members of the community to gauge public opinion (Gyeke 1996:110-114).8 This social equilibrium that existed was severely disrupted and corrupted by colonialism, eventually leading to forms of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism.

The last comment related to the expression of individualism within communal oriented societies is in order. Pre-colonial political systems “evoked in the individual citizen a sense of personal commitment to the affairs of the state, a conviction that any harm done to the state as a whole directly harms the individual. This personal commitment to the affairs of the state was an important political value” (Gyeke 1996:116). Communalism didn’t diminish individualism, it absorbed and accommodated the realization of individual traits and characteristics and brought it to fruition, guided by the elders and moral standards of the community. Yet the individual still finds “meaning only in the community and outside it is nothing and has nothing. The community makes people into what they are socially, psychologically, and morally”; and the common “belief in a hierarchy of forces in the universe, which are constantly interacting between them” results in an “important rapport between individual and the other. The individual, even in his personal aspirations, has to achieve an inner equilibrium and support the well-being of society” (Makumba 2007:131, 129).

Other scholars though differ with Gyeke’s conclusions. Rutto and Njoroge claim that traditional systems, suppress individual expression and over-emphasize the dominance of the communal, with the will and wishes of the individual always being subjugated to the wider community; however, democracy is built on the development of individuals and empowering them to express herself or himself—“a process of learning to be oneself and to speak for one-self. The growth of personal initiative, creativity, self-reliance and self-determination is this respect signifies personal growth in democratic capacity” (2001:62). From the individual standpoint, “democracy is visualized as a

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8 Gyeke notes thought that despotism and authoritarianism could still exist in society.
process of personal growth that leads to the formation of certain mental capacities and attitudes” and socially, democracy “involves the development of social skills, attitudes and practices which enhance positive and constructive social relations and behaviour. It involves learning to balance self-interests with social interests” (Ibid, 9). In short, the moral experience involves a democratization process concerning fairness, justice, and equality; however, colonialism, a focus on individual salvation by missionaries, and ongoing globalization have resulted in contemporary Africa being a mix of traditional, modern, and even pockets of post-modernity; therefore one could posit that a continuum more or less exists in Africa today, between communalism and individualism, with rural areas still oriented around a communal lifestyle and the urban upwardly mobile adhering more to individual fulfilment.

The role of individualism and self-actualization in the growth of democratic capacity was explored in Chapter 4 and 5, but where individualism has truly gone awry in Africa is when individuals in top leadership roles rally a whole population behind them in defense of themselves and their interests under the guise of the rights of their people and their “duty” toward them. When a population, whether clan, community, or nation, falsely believe the interests of these individual leaders are actually the interests of the group, the phenomena of vicarious satisfaction sets in, leaving the democratic capacity of most citizens impaired or highly handicapped (Makumba 2007:153). In this instance, vicarious satisfaction could be considered an unidentified political object (UPO), as referenced in Chapter 1 (Martin 2002). A key question herein relates to how you reconstitute a communalism that meets self-care and community-care simultaneously.

Turning now to the more intangible and hidden aspects of these traditional political systems. In Africa there is a highly relational aspect between humans and the spiritual world, and the spiritual forces that are believed to govern these relationships are viewed as being real, despite being unseen. I, like Ellis and ter Haar, what to emphasize that it is not necessary to personally hold to this belief system or cosmology, but to really understand how religion interacts with politics, it is important to take it at face value. An emic approach prevents one from falling into a false dichotomy between rational and irrational, but instead focuses on a suspended transrationality for further etic analysis. Similarly, it is important for the reader to understand African cultural and religious systems do not encourage the development of the autonomous self as commonly is understood within a Western paradigm. Society was ordered around relationships and community, with authority emulating from the spiritual world, giving immense power to those who mediated the spiritual and material worlds. In short, the political realm is enchanted or sacralized, and because politics is a moral performance, it becomes religious in nature, reflecting the underlying values shaping authority structures and governing abilities (Kalu 2003a/b). Individuals who had authority within in the spiritual world “translated into authority over people, making religion an outstanding means of instrumentalising political power by dominating webs of relations over a wide area” with political power “exercised by people using essentially religious techniques which enabled them also to command material aspects of power such as armed forces and rights of taxation or tribute” (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:24).

A result of this cosmology is that African traditional cultures understood causality in terms of supernatural power and “science has been mixed with religion, so that what could have become scientific knowledge open to everyone, became a sort of secret
knowledge, a specialized knowledge, open only to priests, spiritual healers, and others who are traditionally acknowledged as the custodians of the secrets and truths of nature" (Gyeke 1992:139).

Two examples illustrate consequences for today. When an elder is elevated to a chief, a phenomenon occurs when he moves to this new role as a mediator and a “channel of power between the ancestors, on the one hand, and the descendants with their patrimony, on the other” (Temple 1961:70). An ontic change occurs—"[t]his new form of being modifies…adapts one’s intimate being so that it lives and behaves according to the new situation [and] behaves like the ancestors so as to be a worthy continuation of them" (Mulago 1991:122). The rituals that confer and affirm this ontic change separates the chief from the elders and he assumes a place apart, but one determined by divine and ancestral authority, or as Turner states, “[T]he political leader or head was the channel through which ultimate or cosmic forces operated for the welfare of society. Sacral kingship has been widespread, and separation between religious and political institutions and activities has been rare” (1969:49). This traditional inseparability of religion and politics was not unlike Europeans living in the Middle Ages or even some fundamentalist sects in the United States today. In short, political legitimacy was based on an understanding that authority came from an appointment system residing in the spiritual world (Davidson 1965; Mbon 1987; and Bediako 1995).

A second example arises when colonial activity clashes with local beliefs. Across Africa, colonial officials destroyed religious shrines, suppressed cults, and tried to eradicate witchcraft (Boahen 1990:217-18). Simultaneously, Christian missionaries were proselytizing and introducing Christian cosmological concepts. From the vantage point of an early 20th century African, seeing British, French, Belgian, and German forces attack religious symbols, rituals, and communities without any noticeable revenge or response from African deities gave local doubt to where power truly lie. While religion and politics may have been thought separate by colonial powers, the African viewed them as one and the same, i.e. this white man’s God must be more powerful. Thus those converting to Christianity had ulterior motives—ones that were not easily recognized by missionaries eager to gain adherents. During this stage a subtle but influential power matrix was inherited by the Africans. So while colonial administrations promulgated a politics extrinsic of religion and missionaries vice versa, a more intrinsic value was adopted by the colonized, i.e. one that demonstrated a greater instrumentalization of power than had previously been observed in society.

How is this played out across Africa today? Ellis and ter Haar argue that for “[m]any ordinary Africans—those who are not part of any elite—show deep ambivalence about how they are governed, engaging enthusiastically in clientelist politics when it suits them and lamenting its failures at other times. Pretty much the same can be said of foreign donor governments too over the years” (2004:193). This enables “Africa’s current political elites and their foreign partners …to exploit to their advantage the differences between how things are done in theory and how they are done in practice, or the gap between the formal and informal. Therefore, they have little incentive for changing things” (Ibid). While their conclusions are rather pessimistic and although Africa’s path dependency on clientelistic and patrimonial political systems is well researched and discussed, it remains helpful to step back and examine the foundational components of the local worldviews that enable its ongoing propagation. I concur with
Ellis and ter Haar when they exhort Western officials and analysts to develop a deep interest and understanding of religious worldviews as both “a system of belief and in its effects on people’s actions” (*Ibid*).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Steven Lichty holds a Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science (comparative politics, political theory, anthropology) and a Certificate in African Studies from the University of Florida. He also has a Master of Arts in International Relations from Baylor University, a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (economics, business, and communications) from Goshen College, a second Certificate in African Studies from Tangaza College (Kenya), and a Certificate in Social Sector Leadership from the Haas School of Business at the University of Berkeley. His research interests include: religion and politics, civil society, African religions, international development, western and non-western political theory, political culture, democratization, political anthropology, organizational/leadership development, and environmental politics.