KENYA AT 50:

between hope and despair in the creation of a new political order

BY JACOB M. MATI

Kenyans went to the polls on 4 March in a high-stakes contest to elect a new government under a new constitution that was promulgated in August 2010. The realisation of a new constitution was the culmination of a two-decade-long process involving multiple contentions among different social actors in Kenya. This struggle emanated from disagreements over the diagnosis of the Kenyan problem. On the one hand, so-called progressive forces within civil society saw the genesis of Kenya’s social political and economic problems in a bad constitution. For this group, the solution was the total overhaul of the constitution to redefine the relationship between the rulers and the governed. On the other hand was a conservative political elite who defined the problem as non-institutional. For this group, all that was required were well-trained technocratic managers to transform Kenya. While the progressive forces appear to have “forced” concessions for a new constitution after twenty years of struggle, the conservative forces are today more alive than before. They have regrouped and old orders have refused to die. Ethnic-based political mobilisation is the engine of politics and Kenya is divided down the middle.

When I arrived in Kenya shortly before the election, I encountered embers of political intrigue among politicians and their supporters in a debate that had been christened the “tyranny of numbers”. This was in reference to a prediction by Mutahi Ngunyi that the Jubilee alliance, led by Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto – two indictees of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their suspected role in the 2007/8 post-election violence – had already mobilised sufficient numbers from their support bases (Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups respectively) to guarantee them a first-round win against the Odinga/Musyoka-led coalition of Luo and Kamba ethnic groups. Ngunyi argued that the Odinga/Musyoka alliance had already lost the election because of the ethnic-based voting behaviour of Kenyans. He also predicted that the Kenyatta/Ruto alliance had the election “in the bag”, contrary to opinion polls showing that the presidential race would be a dead heat, none of the candidates being likely to get enough votes to make the constitutional threshold of 50% plus one vote. Naturally, given the political polarisation in Kenya, Ngunyi’s predictions were criticised, especially by the so-called progressive forces that did not believe Kenyans would make “irrational choices” by electing to the presidency anyone who had been indicted by the ICC. Some dismissed his predictions as bordering on insanity. The outcome of the
March 4 election has vindicated Ngunyi’s position. Kenyans, especially those from the largest ethnic groups like GEMA (Gikuyu, Meru and Embu) as well as the Kalenjin, Luhya, Luo and Kamba, voted along tribal lines. The choices they made seem not to be predicated by a universal rationality especially when one looks at the basic issues in the campaigns: land and the ICC. It was, as Ngunyi had predicted a numerical dictatorship playing out. My own observations of 4 March will amplify this point.

On Election Day I went to three polling stations in Tharaka and talked to several voters as well as candidates for county ward. Tharaka is a Jubilee alliance stronghold. As is usually the case, candidates who gave themselves half a chance of winning, positioned themselves in parties allied to the Jubilee alliance. That same night, I went to one of the polling stations to witness vote counting. Being a rural polling station, where only 304 votes were cast, the Jubilee candidate (Kenyatta) received over 95% of the total votes cast, while all other candidates shared the remaining vote. Indeed, save for Raila Odinga’s 14 votes and Peter Kenneth’s 1 vote, the other six candidates won zero votes. A similar story was being repeated at the other polling stations throughout the constituency. The reverse of this story was witnessed in Odinga’s strongholds, especially in Luo Nyanza but also in some areas at the coast where land issues had ensured the success of ethnic mobilisation by the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) team. But with fewer numbers of votes cast in such areas, the tyranny of ethnic numbers that Ngunyi had predicted came to pass.

The questions I have been asking myself since then are: why did people in a small rural constituency in Tharaka-Nithi County vote the way they did? Voting behaviour? What will be the price for such mobilisation? Are the rest of Kenyans taking kindly the tyranny of number of a few majority ethnic groups who dictate the political trajectory of the country, even when such decisions have critical ramifications for the very well-being of Kenya? Where is the once-celebrated Kenyan civil society in all this? Has civil society been totally co-opted by hegemonic tribal forces? Does civil society even exist or – as a colleague mentioned over a dinner table recently – is all that remains a handful of NGOs (Non-Governmental Individuals) who masquerade as civil society?

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The sentiments I discerned among Tharaka voters was that Kenyatta was ‘their man’, who had been framed by Odinga and the ICC. For them, a vote for Kenyatta was a rejection of the ICC. To be fair, the pillars of the Jubilee manifesto (national cohesion, economic transformation, transparency and accountability) speak to the core of what Kenya needs to do to place itself in the company of better nations. But the successes of all the pledges they have made depends on the ability of the Jubilee coalition to convince the other half of the country who voted against them that there is a need to work together. Already, the outcome of the court case challenging the Jubilee win has brought to the fore further fractures to an existing delicate situation in Kenya.

Civil society activism over the last two decades is also being blamed for a lopsided view of democracy. Some of the respondents I have spoken to pointed out to the fact that in the struggles for transformation of the Kenyan state have lacked critical interrogation of a democracy built on universal suffrage in societies with multiple fault lines. Moreover, civil society advocacy campaigns and programmes have been criticised for taking partisan positions dictated by Western interests that fund them. This, critics argue, has robbed them of the legitimacy to represent Kenyan interests. That the international community represented by EU and North Americans had already taken sides and threatened unnamed consequences for Kenya should Kenyans elect Kenyatta did not help matters. They have not said anything as yet. What is clear is that a Kenyatta presidency presents a great diplomatic headache for EU, the US and for Kenyans. Ethnic divisions in Kenya today have also been cited as contributory factors to the loss of legitimacy and trust of civil society by the masses.

From the interviews I have done in Nairobi and Kisumu so far, Odinga’s campaign became a victim of the better-oiled propaganda machinery of the Jubilee Alliance and the conservative forces. Suspicions are also high that the state and the electoral body favoured the Kenyatta camp. In Kisumu, which
was one of the epicentres of the violence that engulfed the country after the 2008 elections, there is great frustration. Nonetheless, unlike in 2008, citizens did not take to the streets over allegations of vote manipulation. Kisumu is also home to an emerging political sophistication by the electorate. For the first time in over 20 years, voters have refused to elect members of just one party that the Odinga’s provide to them. Even though Luo-Nyanza residents made choices from parties friendly to the Odinga bid, they defied his call for what he called six-piece voting (meaning that the president, governor, senator, women county representative, member of National Assembly, and county ward representative be elected from his party in his strongholds). What should we read when voters defy one of the most visible faces in the struggle for democracy in Kenya – one who has commanded a near-fanatical following in certain parts of the country in the past?

So far, the reasons for this point to a new counter-strategy by some of the people who support Odinga’s bid but are unhappy with his family’s dominance in all level of politics in Luo-Nyanza. It must be remembered that two of his siblings standing for gubernatorial positions in two counties of Kisumu and Siaya were rejected in the party primaries and, when they tried to force themselves into party lists, there were riots. For some of my interlocutors in Kisumu, the rejection of an Odinga-dictated hegemony signifies a dying order. During the primaries one woman said: ‘We may be poor but we are not stupid.’ Is this a sign of defiance by the poor against their leaders, especially since in the outgoing president’s constituency, voters defied his call to reject a controversial business woman named Mary Wambui, who successfully strove to replace him in Othaya? What of the voters in the urban slums of Nairobi who overwhelmingly supported Mike Mbuvi Sonko, a flamboyant young politician with a penchant for representing the poor, as their first senator, when more established politicians were running? Are we witnessing levels of awareness among the poor who, united in their poverty, realise they have numbers to dictate the direction of politics in Kenya? Are all the years of civic education bearing fruits, albeit in contradictory ways? These are puzzles that require unbundling.

Pundits imagined and predicted a meltdown should Odinga lose, as was the case in 2008. Fortunately, except for ongoing fierce wars on social media, this time around, this has not been the case. As certaining whether this is the result of fear borne out of the trauma of the 2008 post-election violence, or of peace messaging from civil society organisations and state institutions, or of a growing trust in the legitimacy of the new constitutional institutions, is the focus of my ongoing research in Kenya. Some of the people I have interviewed are convinced this has to do with trust in a changing judiciary, and especially the current leadership, to be a neutral arbiter in the dissent that afflicts our society. But might these gains be reversed if the current occupiers vacate office or deliver verdicts that citizens disagree with? For example, will the same trust continue to be placed in the judiciary given its verdict that confirmed Kenyatta’s win as legitimate or will some of the Kenyans discredit the judiciary the same way the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has received a batting from those who believe, as is becoming a political culture in Kenya, that elections cannot be genuinely lost, and that losers are always “rigged out”? This would be tragic, as the fragile peace in the country would crumble.

What is clear from the unfolding dramas and intrigues is that old orders
Emerging perspectives of African youth on a post-2015 development framework

African Monitor in partnership with Text to Change is using mobile technology innovatively to ensure youth participation in a post-2015 development framework. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have served as a global compact for poverty reduction, are set to expire in 2015. The United Nations has started a process to shape a post-2015 development framework, and various consultations are underway. Civil Society Organisation (CSO) groups led by Beyond 2015 have been actively coordinating CSOs to participate actively in the post-2015 process.

The project is being rolled out in 10 African countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and South Africa) to enable youth to participate in the post-2015 process and ensure their voices are heard. In Africa more than 60 percent of the population is below the age of 35. Since the youth will be Africa’s best development asset in the coming decades, it is important that their perspectives, needs and aspirations are taken into account as Africa and the world deliberate on a new global development compact.

Mobile technology is probably the fastest growing technology in Africa and is estimated to service more than 648.4-million mobile subscriptions (World Bank, 2012), providing opportunities for innovative application. Recently, it has become a powerful tool for social-mobilisation efforts. Its innovative use has been applied to enhance participation and social accountability.

The fundamental aim is to use mobile technology platforms to ensure African youth participate in shaping the post-2015 agenda. The youth tend to be the early adopters of technology, in developed as well as in developing countries, and have been using both the internet and mobile telephony as new ways of interacting with their peers and expressing themselves on a range of societal issues. The use of technology to involve the youth in the post-

"I wish for a life free from any form of discrimination, equal opportunity and dignity for all people in Africa" - youth from Kenya
supplemented by pilot study. In the first round a smaller sample will be drawn and scaled up to full capacity for round two. A proportional sample will be taken from each country based on the size of its youth population. The samples will be based on an agreed definition of youth (15 to 35 age groups).

Concept mapping exercises will be used to extract responses from youth groups to one focus question on their aspirations for Africa post-2015. This will help to generate a list of concepts on their perspective on “The Africa We Want”. The question is: 

“What is your hope or dream of a better future for you and Africa?”

In round two, African youth in each of 10 countries will be asked to rank the concepts that emerge. This round will follow a similar sample design as round one, but the sample size will be scaled up to 150,000 respondents. The quantitative data generated from round two will be processed using descriptive statistical methods and will be visualised in real time. The data will be further analysed for syntheses and reports.

**Preliminary findings**

The initial data from Uganda, Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania has provided interesting information. The data was coded and categorised into eight concepts, which were then ranked according to the frequency of reference to each concept.

When asked, “What is your hope or vision of a better future for you and Africa?” 21 percent of respondents from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana named democratic governance as an essential element of a better future for Africa. This was followed by 20.5 percent of respondents who cited growth, employment and economic opportunity as the second most important aspect of an improved African future.

Nineteen percent of respondents referred to better access to quality education as an essential aspect; 18 percent noted a more stable, peaceful and secure Africa; 11 percent of respondents referred to access to quality health care and the fight against HIV, TB and malaria; eight percent of the respondents wanted to see Africa free from poverty, hunger and other forms of human deprivation. Two percent of respondents rated elimination of inequality in all its forms as an important aspect; while one percent referred to environmental sustainability and access to safe water as one of the crucial elements in a better future for Africa.

This preliminary analysis-based data from Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda hints at the emergence of new development discourse in Africa. The responses are telling. One respondent from Kenya (Female, 21, Nairobi) said: “I dream of an Africa devoid of prejudices, an Africa that fully embraces democracy and shuns selfishness, an Africa free of debt and Africa where no one lacks food, homes are safe [and] children go to school instead of toiling in the fields. I dream of an Africa where the libraries are full and the slums are empty. An Africa where education is a right that everyone attains with or

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Concept mapping is a technique whereby the participants are grouped according to some criteria (e.g., age, sex, etc.) and they are asked a neutral focus statement that allows them to generate ideas/concepts around the issues under discussion. It allows the ideas to be generated in either a negative (pessimistic) or positive (optimistic) sense without predetermination by the researcher.

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“I hope for a free and fair election, the eradication of corruption and respect for human rights” – Youth from Uganda
without money. I want an Africa that gives birth to the greatest innovators.” Another respondent from Uganda hoped for Africa that is “economically integrated and politically stable…” The youth aspire to an Africa with clean and democratic governance, and with wider availability of employment and economic opportunities – a continent that is stable and peaceful, where access to education and health services is readily available.

Conclusion

These are preliminary findings based on interviews with a sample of African youths. It is not intended to provide a conclusive analysis at this stage. The project will continue to canvass African youth on prospects for a better future for Africa and a post-2015 development framework. This survey has the potential to provide a rich data source that can be used to articulate the perspectives of Africans on their future. The data set will be made available to wider CSO groups as well academics who are working on youth opinion. Similar data sets are being generated by the United Nations though its My World initiative.

For more information please contact Mr. YT Tsegay, Programme coordinator at Yared@africanmonitor.org or visit our website http://africayouth2015.org/
The report focuses on two central questions. Firstly, what might the contextual environment for civil society look like in 2030? Secondly, how might models of engagement for civil society, business, government and international organisations evolve in these new contexts? To answer these questions, the report looks critically at the current environment in which civil society operates and proposes four possible future scenarios in which it may have to operate. Furthermore, it provides tools that can be used by development practitioners to formulate strategies within these scenarios.

The main findings and conclusions of the report are based on the views of 200 leaders from all the sectors together with 80 expert interviews and five strategic-foresight workshops. The report notes that the notion of civil society “as the space where we act for the common good is expanding” (2012:9). As a consequence, its role is no longer as clear-cut as it was within the old paradigm, which specified distinct activities for the different sectors with little room for collaboration. Within the new paradigm there is greater diversity in strategies to address socio-economic issues within and between sectors. Moreover, there are organisations that straddle the traditional sectorial divides, such as business with a social purpose and civil society with market-aligned activities.

The report also highlights key trends that have come to shape civil society. The trends noted include the challenges posed by societal disillusionment with traditional governance institutions, which has led to a call for more participatory forms of governance and economic policy formulation. This disillusionment has been accompanied by a change in the centre of economic power, which has led to a shift in political power from North-South to South-South cooperation. Demographic shifts and the persistent issues of poverty and inequality are also major factors posing challenges to civil society.

A further issue that has a direct impact on the state and operations of civil society is the uncertainty about the funding environment: that is, where funding will come from and how much will be available. Also to be considered are the opportunities brought about by the hyper-connectedness of the global community, owing to advances in information and communication technology, which have reshaped the ways its citizens engage with one another.

A further trend to take into account is that the private sector, to pursue the strategy of “economic value with social value”, is increasingly taking on development issues formerly seen to be in the domain of civil society.

Finally, the role of faith and religious culture raises important questions for civil society: how can they be harnessed for development, and how can their potentially destructive fundamental elements be addressed?

Looking to the future, the report identifies six significant yet uncertain environmental factors that may influence civil society, its role, relevance and contribution. The factors include:

- The level and sources of funding for civil society stakeholders
- The social and political impact of increased access to technology
- The extent and type of citizens’ engagement with societal challenges
- The state of global and regional geopolitical stability and global integration of markets
- The effect of environmental degradation and climate change on populations
- The level of trust in governments, businesses and international organisations.

These factors raise critical questions regarding civil society’s relationship with the public and private sectors and under what circumstances these two sectors will be compelled to take on a more significant role in addressing development concerns. To explore the implications, the report proposes four possible future scenarios: “Mad Max”, “Privatised World”, “Transparency Blurred” and “Turbulence and Trust deficit”.

The World Economic Forum report was released as part of a renewed focus on the role of civil society within a rapidly changing global context, and its implications for the public and private sectors. The aim of the report is to open up debate by raising critical questions about the future role of civil society and its development strategies.
In the “Mad Max” and “Privatised World” scenarios, the role proposed for civil society is a limited one. In the “Mad Max” scenario, this is because political turmoil and conflict caused by economic uncertainty, poverty and scarce resources justify the state’s taking a prominent role. In the “Privatised World” scenario, corporations play an important role as the main providers of social services because of the high level of trust they enjoy from citizens. However, the “Transparency Blurred” and “Turbulence and Trust deficit” scenarios envisage a greater role for civil society, although in different forms. In the “Transparency Blurred” scenario, the role is greater as a result of the hyper-connectedness of society and because of increased funding opportunities; however, these depend on measurable goals and outcomes. In the “Turbulence and Trust deficit” scenario, there is decreased trust in the private and public sectors and in the relevance of international governance institutions. Consequently, populations have more faith in civil society organisations, although at a local level. They also operate within social-media and social-network communities.

These scenarios raise various questions. For example, which sector will take the lead in addressing development issues? What will be the role of civil society in an environment characterised by high levels of trust in which there is a concerted effort from all sectors to address development challenges? What would it mean for the role of civil society if governments were to drastically privatise many social services that are currently administered by governments? Where will civil society funding come from and what will be the restrictions imposed by states on civil society? How would volunteerism and funding for civil society activities change if the primary social identifier for a population was its employer or a corporate brand, rather than other forms of identification? What would a rapid, dramatic shift in economic and geopolitical power to Asia or high growth in Africa mean for civil society stakeholders?

In conclusion, the report highlights how the challenges and opportunities raised by the scenarios can be utilised to address the many societal challenges facing the global community. It notes the future roles of each sector together with its responsibilities as well as the importance of cross-sectorial collaboration in effective future development interventions. It concludes that new spaces are required, together with new rules of engagement that bring stakeholders together from different sectors for a common good.

Most importantly, the report offers the following advice for civil society. Firstly, the sector needs to utilise the revolution in technology and communication to its advantage, because the revolution is changing the face of civil engagement, giving local groups and populations from emerging economies a greater voice in development. Secondly, civil society needs to find ways to harness the energy and global perspectives of the population aged under 30, who have shown their considerable power in events such as the Arab spring. Thirdly, there is a need to better understand the role of faith and religious culture, which can create positive or negative change in society.

Fourthly, given the importance of trust for influence and engagement, civil society can act as a “broker” of trust within and between the sectors. This can be done through “radical transparency” and the illustration of “a set of social values that drive behaviour that demonstrates an acknowledgement of the common good” (2013:32). Aligned to this is the important role for civil society as facilitator and convener between sectors, especially where governments are weak. Civil society can create a political platform for “difficult policies to be designed, accepted and implemented” (2013:32). Lastly, civil society should utilise private-sector resources and adapt private-sector practices that may enhance effectiveness. There is also a need for accountability, transparency and measurement and alignment of civil society and policy-making.

The Research Institute for Work and Society has released a report detailing future scenarios for development cooperation to challenge the dominant paradigm in development cooperation and influence how it will be viewed and operationalised in the future. The trends will determine who will lead development cooperation, which development issues will be prioritised and what methods will be adopted to address development problems. Consequently, the report aims to encourage debate on development cooperation, which includes identifying the main trends and what they mean both for its future and its actors.

To this end, three scenarios are proposed in response to the failure of international governance institutions, the change in the international balance of power, an uncertain global economic environment, the emergence of new development actors and the increased complexity of development problems. What distinguishes each scenario is which sector becomes the dominant player, the implications this has for other sectors in development cooperation and the overall development agenda. Furthermore, the scenarios differ in their plausibility, who are winners and losers and the risks, opportunities and challenges.

The scenarios include Lonely Neighbours, Paradigm Shift and Cold Green. In the Lonely Neighbours scenario, the failure of international institutions and the global-development project gives rise to regional solutions to development challenges, and consequently government becomes the main development actor. The result is a multipolar world in which global challenges are left unattended. In the Paradigm Shift, civil society is the main actor. The change in the development culture leads to a proliferation of new development actors and the emergence of alternatives to development cooperation. Cold Green proposes a scenario in which development is translated into environmental sustainability, in which the main actors are government and the private sector. The uniqueness of this scenario is that environmental challenges are addressed at the expense of broader development challenges and their structural causes.

ISTR Africa is looking forward to the upcoming regional conference from 11 – 13 July 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. We have received an enthusiastic response and have accepted 43 papers for presentation at the conference. Thanks to the generous support of TrustAfrica we will be able to provide travel grants to a number of participants.

This year we have decided to focus the discussion on the significant intersection between faith, civil society and development in Africa. We selected this theme because there has been very little work on this issue, despite the fact that faith and FBOs have such a dramatic impact on governance, democracy and development in African countries.

The conference will be held at the Kivi Milimani Hotel in Nairobi. The Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) and the University of Nairobi’s Institute for Development Studies (IDS) will act as co-hosts and assist with the planning and logistics.

We want to thank Jacob Mati, Dineo Seabe, Kristin Seljeflot, Winne Mitullah, Ronelle Burger, Ebenezer Obadare, Alan Fowler and Margery Daniels for their help in organising this conference. A special word of thanks goes to Richard Wamai, who has headed the technical committee for the conference.
The main findings and their implications for different development actors derived from these scenarios are the following.

Firstly, new development actors need to be coordinated in such a way that they can meet the number and intensity of development problems. Secondly, the North-South dichotomy of framing development problems is losing its relevance, together with solutions that focus on taking development to poorer countries. According to the report, this raises the need to look to other sources of resources within developing countries. There is also an increase in criticism of, and resistance to, tied official aid on the part of developing countries because their dependence on it is decreasing, while other sources of funding are increasing.

Another finding of the report is that certain issues have been ignored in the development debate. These include the increase of urbanisation and demographic imbalances that are the consequence of an ageing population in the North and a growing population in the South, especially Africa.

A factor that has not yet been addressed is the impact of technological innovation on climate change. The report also notes that the growing involvement of the private sector in development needs to be acknowledged and properly engaged. Furthermore, the private sector in the South should also be brought into the debate and its role in development determined.

Another issue highlighted in the scenarios is the increased prominence of more pragmatic and localised national solutions for development concerns: these reduce the need for bilateral and multilateral institutions and challenge them to stay relevant. The findings suggest that there is a need for government to clearly define its relationship with other sectors, as ambiguity may prove a hindrance to effective development cooperation.

Lastly, the scenarios suggest that critical changes in the civil society landscape will influence development resources and how they are applied in the sector. These include the increase in civil society influence and assertiveness, especially in developing countries. For example, southern organisations are reflected as being more critical to the dominant models of development.

There is also more horizontal cooperation among southern organisations and the establishment of new forms of civic movements. The implications of these changes are that strategies to engage with civil society organisations (CSOs) in middle-income countries should be developed, while taking into account that governments tend to oppose the strengthening of these organisations because they are resistant to external influences. In addition, the increased assertiveness of southern organisations may be seen as an opportunity for more equal partnerships and coalitions, and the acceptance of development agendas, discourses and strategies from the perspective of developing countries. Furthermore, new opportunities occasioned by the sectorial divides should also be explored.

To conclude, the report suggests that, in light of these findings, future development strategies should focus on technical improvements and the governance of aid; reducing inequality and poverty; strengthening economic growth; and protecting global public goods. It notes that more work needs to be done to understand what these scenarios mean and what their implications are at the micro-organisational level.

**Scenario planning is about the ‘what if ...?’ It is a tool to make flexible long-term plans in the face of future uncertainty. A scenario is perceived as imagined narratives, or hypothetical sequences of events that convey different perspectives on how the world functions and explain how possible futures can unfold.**