Linkages between political parties and political violence: Some lessons from Kenya and South Africa

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Abstract

Political struggles and competitions are conflictual by their very nature, and if not well managed can lead to violence. As political parties are crucial actors in political processes, it is vital to understand the roles they play in escalating or de-escalating political violence. This paper provides an analysis of political parties in Kenya and South Africa, focusing on their linkages to political violence. It concludes that political parties are indispensable actors in peacebuilding. The design and implementation of peacebuilding interventions that effectively target political violence must therefore anticipate the involvement of political parties. This applies to both case study countries, but most probably to other countries as well.

Keywords: political parties, political violence, Kenya, South Africa

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1. Introduction

One of the means which social groupings have over the years used to formalise their struggles and competition has been political parties. Political parties are not only a means of influencing outcomes of elections, but they are also the most credible outlets for the meaningful participation of individuals in political processes (Gauja 2016:44). Political struggles and competitions are conflictual by their very nature and if not well managed, can lead to violence. Kenya and South Africa have both had histories replete with organised political struggles and competition. In South Africa, the political struggles and competitions have involved clashes between Britons and Boers[1] (Katz 1987:148), non-white resistance to the white-initiated policy of Apartheid (Zuidema 2002:11) and black-on-black clashes for political supremacy (Marks and Andersson 1990:54). Despite long periods of disenfranchisement in South Africa, political organisations were an available means for political expression by non-whites. In Kenya on the other hand, political struggles and competitions have been prominent between Africans and British colonial rulers (Durrani 2008:191) as well as among Africans themselves, with the most visible causes being ethnic divisions (Ahere 2012:33; Ayindo 2017:207).

The interactions between and among political parties and organisations in Kenya and South Africa have caused political violence. Beyond the divisive issue of elections, political parties in both countries have resorted to violence when their members disagree during competitive political processes such as parliamentary debates and street demonstrations.

The recurrence of political violence has continued to be a cause for concern for the respective governments as well as the civil societies. The adoption of new constitutional dispensations in South Africa (1997) and Kenya (2010) targeted many institutions with the aim of reforming the respective

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1   Boer, Dutch for 'farmer', is a South African of Dutch, German or Huguenot descent, especially one of the early settlers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The descendants of the Boers are these days commonly referred to as Afrikaners (Gooch 2000:ix).

societies in order to obviate recurrent violence. The structural reforms were so extensive and progressive that they may be said to have laid the foundation for what Lederach (2014:3) and Galtung (2007:14) refer to as conflict transformation.[2]

Despite the afore-mentioned reforms, political parties have continued to remain the weakest links of the national infrastructures for peace (NIfPs) in both countries. Kumar and De la Haye (2012:14) underscore the significance of NIfPs[3] in countries where structural conflicts are inherent. Anarchist theorists like George Woodcock would however question the efficacy of political parties in NIfPs, given that political parties are themselves imbued with the aim to seize the state machine that seeks to concentrate power, monopolise violence and perpetuate hierarchy (Woodcock 1962:31), whereas NIfPs aim to prevent conflicts and build peace. That said, the evolution of peacebuilding as a practice in Kenya and South Africa has seen the appreciation of political parties and organisations as crucial to National Peace Committees given that they offer citizenry the avenues for ventilating their political aspirations and by extension promote dialogue and consultation, which are pivotal in furthering sustainable peace (Odendaal 2012:47).

It is vital to understand the roles that political parties play in escalating or de-escalating political violence in Kenya and South Africa. This basic understanding can generate knowledge, which when properly contextualised, can be crucial in discerning how it relates to the present, and useful in peacebuilding intervention programming (Graseck 2008:367). This paper, therefore, provides an analysis of political parties in Kenya

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2   Conflict transformation is the envisioning of and responding to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (Galtung 2007:14).

3   Defined within the context of this paper as the '… dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building in a society' (Kumar and Haye 2012:14).

and South Africa, focusing on their linkages to political violence. This analysis is used in underscoring the indispensability of political parties as actors in peacebuilding efforts in both countries.

2. Methodology

The information collected is from primary and secondary sources, and consists of questionnaires, interviews,[4] conference papers and reports, research reports, policy briefs, journal articles, books, websites and other reliable publications that provide histories of political parties as well as political violence in Kenya and South Africa.

Trochim and others (2015:21) acknowledge that the first step in deciding how data can be analysed is to define a unit of analysis. For the purpose of this paper, the following units of analysis have been used: colonial heritage, ideological standpoints, ethno-racial motivations, and the type of political systems in place. This will set the stage for analysis of the linkages between political parties and political violence in both countries.

3. Historical analysis of political parties

3.1 Heritage of colonisation and Apartheid

Carey (2002:55) argues that the colonial heritage that was inherited at a country's independence had a significant impact on the shape and evolution of political parties in that country and in Africa. Whereas political parties' formation in Kenya and South Africa can be examined through the lens of colonial heritage, the South African context presents an additional lens of scrutiny – that of the era of Apartheid.

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4   Due to ethical concerns, pseudonyms are used to mask identities of interviewees and questionnaire respondents. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted in Durban and Pietermaritzburg (South Africa) as well as in Nairobi (Kenya) between November 2017 and February 2018.

3.1.1 Heritage of colonialism in Kenya

Until 1960, the British colonial authorities in Kenya prohibited the formation of nationwide political parties in order to suppress African national aspirations. Political organisations were only allowed to operate at the district level. Even then, Anderson (2005:549) affirms, the British continued by rewarding their allies while punishing their enemies. In Central Province, British colonial officers rejected attempts to form political parties. This was based on the perceived support of the Mau[5] by the Agīkūyū ethnic group that inhabits the province (Anderson 2005:549). In the rural parts of the Rift Valley Province on the other hand, the formation of political parties was encouraged by colonial authorities partly due to the delay in the Kalenjin and Maasai ethnic groups organising themselves politically. It can be inferred that the aim of the colonial authorities was to minimise the Agīkūyū political influence while encouraging and/or uplifting that of the Kalenjin and Maasai.

Upon the lifting of the ban and the calling for elections in 1961, two major parties were formed: the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). Barkan (cited in Carey 2002:56) contends that these parties 'were basically loose coalitions of the district and local level political organizations'. Apart from ideological differences which will be discussed in a subsequent section in this paper, it is important to note that the period between lifting of the ban on nationwide parties and the holding of national elections was short and might have influenced the choice by African political luminaries to combine the afore-mentioned coalitions in order to form two national parties. It is these two parties that participated in the negotiation for Kenya's independence in 1963.

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5   The Mau Mau was a militant revolt for liberation from colonialism that triggered the British declaration of a State of Emergency in Kenya from 1952 to 1960. While explaining that the Mau Mau had nationwide support, Ogot (2003:9) disagrees with the 'populist' narrative, which he says is postulated by the British, that the revolt was a manifestation of purely Agīkūyū frustrations.

3.1.2 Heritage of colonialism and Apartheid in South Africa

Political formations in South Africa have historically been shaped by the relations amongst whites (Britons vs. Boers) on the one hand and on the other hand, the attitude of other races towards white domination.

Briton-Boer relations, especially after the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), were fractured and this influenced the establishment of the white-dominated parties ahead of the formation of the Union of South Africa, a result of the granting of nominal independence by the British parliament in 1910. Maloka (2014:230) observes that white-dominated political parties were divided between those aligned to the English interest (the South African Party, the United Party, the Unionist Party, the Progressive Federal Party and its predecessor Progressive Party, the New Republic Party and the Democratic Party) and those affiliated to the Boers (the National Party, Afrikaner Party and the Conservative Party).

It is striking, however, that both sets of white-dominated parties were discriminatory against non-whites as they steered the country towards the formation of the Union of South Africa. They did this through disenfranchisement. This unity of purpose lasted through the formalisation of Apartheid in 1948, until after the 1966 elections when more Britons began to vote for the National Party after it had successfully projected itself as the party that represented white interests in conditions of increasing isolation and insecurity (Maloka 2014:231).

Galvanised by their displeasure with 'the pro-white policies of the British colonial administrators followed by the discriminatory legislation enacted by the Union of South Africa', non-whites formed political bodies for purposes of vocalising and advocating their social, political and economic rights, especially after the Second Anglo-Boer War (South African History Online 2011b: para. 17). This led to the establishment of organisations such as the Natal Native Congress, formed in 1902 to present African grievances to the colonial government (African National Congress 1982:5) and the African People's Organisation, which was formed in 1902 to represent

the interests of Coloureds[6] (South African History Online 2011a: para. 2). Also formed was the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) that, according to Maina and others (2004:155), was the first African political party, formed in 1912, to oppose the discrimination against Africans in the South African Constitution of 1910. In 1923, SANNC was renamed the African National Congress (ANC). Another organisation set up around the same period was the Inkatha Liberation Movement, which was formed in the 1920s to preserve the unity of the Zulu nation (Deegan 2014:16).

Ultimately, the formation, growth, agendas and relationships of all categories of the afore-mentioned parties were heavily influenced by the discriminatory policies from the colonial and Apartheid periods.

3.2 Ideological orientations

Just as has often been the case with political organisations elsewhere in the world, the formation of most major political parties in Kenya and South Africa has been based on ideology, which is defined by Jost and others (2009:309) as a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved. These are normally set out in the articles of association of the political parties and used as the basis of developing their manifestos. Ideally, ideologies determine the convergence or divergence of the positions of different political parties on issues. Be that as it may, there are political parties that, based on their political actions or inactions, could be said to be driven by a pragmatism shaped by political opportunism.

3.2.1 The discourse on devolution in Kenya

In Kenya, the formation of independence parties was based on ideological differences. KANU, who were the victors of the 1963 general elections, the last before independence, and KADU had divergent views on the shape of the post-independence state. Whereas KANU favoured a unitary system, KADU preferred *majimboism*. The latter means 'regionalism' and its promoters argued that decentralisation of political power to regions

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6   In South Africa, the term 'Coloured' refers to an individual of mixed race, as opposed to indigenous Africans or whites of European ancestry (Pinchuck et al. 2002:81).

of equal status would protect smaller communities from dominance by larger communities (Anderson 2005:547). However, the unitary system proponents prevailed when KADU disbanded and joined KANU in 1964 before the transformation of the country into a one-party state (Materu 2015:23).

Nevertheless, the seeds of *majimboism* had been sown and they never died. Amid the excesses and malfeasance of the unitary state under KANU, especially in marginalisation of sections of the country, the debate re-emerged in the 1990s, when political parties began a demand for a new constitution. In fact, the 2010 constitution, negotiated after the 2008 post-election violence, has at its core the devolution of government and resource management to structures known as Counties.

There is, however, a school of thought that contends that political parties in Kenya, with the exception of the independence parties, are driven less by ideology and more by the political ambitions of their leaders. Mutua (2016: para. 6) surmises that political parties in Kenya are empty husks for individual politicians to seek and keep political power. It is no wonder that during election years, politicians have been known to hop from one party to the other the moment they lose in the primaries. At one point, the chairperson of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) described this habit as 'political immorality' (Mayabi 2012: para. 4).

3.2.2 Apartheid versus the Freedom Charter in South Africa

Most political parties of note in South Africa have had, as a basis for their formation and existence, development policy doctrines for which they stand. Given the country's history of identity struggles and racial discrimination, the discourse on development policies became the glue that bonded like-minded political elites into forming political parties.

Legassick (1974:5) observes that the Boer vision of a South Africa driven by self-development in separate areas of the country delineated by race, influenced the formation and growth of the National Party which went on to legislate Apartheid when it came to power in 1948.

Before the end of Apartheid (and even after), a majority of the non-white dominated political parties coalesced around doctrines that were diametrically opposed to racial discrimination. The pillars of this coalescence were the tenets of the Freedom Charter. This Charter was the product of the South African Congress Alliance[7] and outlined the core principles of the demand for and commitment to a non-racial South Africa. The Freedom Charter contains elements of liberalism in its references to the protection of human rights, some elements of socialism in its call for nationalisation and redistribution of wealth, and Africanism with its observation that the people had 'been robbed of their birth right' in terms of their black identity, cultures and heritage of their ancestral land (Sisk 2017:150).

3.3 Ethno-racial motivations

Closely tied to the ideological orientations mentioned above is the issue of identity. In Kenya and South Africa, the identity question behind the formation and consolidation of political parties manifests itself in nuanced ways. Issues of racial divisions are prominent in South Africa whereas tribal differences apply in Kenya.

3.3.1 Tribal Politics in Kenya

The negotiation for independence pitted KANU against KADU. The former was synonymous with the politically dominant tribes of Agĩkũyũ and Luo while the latter was formed as a coalition of minority tribes who feared loss of land in the future as a result of the policies of the dominant communities (Maxon and Ofcansky 2014:158).

Maloba (1995:17) argues that the notion of political parties, whose foundations and existence are perceived to be ethnic identification, is an indicator of the failure of national politics. This manifested when, after

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7   The South African Congress Alliance consisted of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the Coloured People's Congress. The Alliance adopted the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955 after a historic meeting in Kliptown (Pillay 1993:88).

independence, suppression of political rivals and dissidents led to what Mazrui (cited in Maloba 1995:17) refers to as 'retribalisation' of politics. This occurs when the national centre or elite is viewed as unfair, especially when ethnic equations are used in determining the access to and control of national assets and opportunities. In this case, those who are not included may opt for sectional identification as a source of strength and safety. This explains the formation of the Kenya People's Union (KPU) in 1966 following the disagreement between Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of Kenya (Agīkūyū) and his Vice-President, Oginga Odinga (Luo). During the three-year period that the KPU existed before being banned by Kenyatta, it drew its support mainly from the Luo in Nyanza Province who had felt suddenly marginalised by the centre.

The period after legalisation of multipartyism in 1991 opened the doors to political parties formed around ethnic coalitions, especially during election years. The trend since independence has been for political parties keen on securing control of government to form multi-ethnic political party coalitions around four main tribes (out of approximately 42): Agīkūyū, Luhya, Luo and the Kalenjin. In fact, each of the four presidents that Kenya has had, rose to power based on the strong support of two or more coalitions of the afore-mentioned tribes (Kagwanja and Southall 2010:9).

3.3.2 The 'Rainbow Nation' and the political parties representing it

It is not uncommon to hear South Africa being referred to as the 'rainbow nation'. This is a product of the discourse that took place during the negotiation process for the end of Apartheid wherein arose the question of what would define a South African identity. The term 'rainbow nation' was therefore coined to symbolise the new South Africa in which there is recognition of the unity of multi-culturalism and convergence of people of many nations within a country once plagued by discrimination (Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection [MISTRA] 2014:76). The nature of political parties representing the interests of the 'rainbow nation' have throughout history been influenced by these realities of diversity.

However, Respondent Three (2017) suggests that in post-Apartheid South Africa, political party affiliation still is predicated along racial lines – the Democratic Alliance being mostly supported by whites and people of mixed-race, and the ANC by blacks. Van Tonder (2015: para. 7) cautiously challenges this line of thought by arguing that even though the Democratic Alliance was once a white-dominated party and operating under racist laws legislated by the National Party, it now has support from non-white voters due to its liberal principles which opposed Apartheid from within the system. In addition, it elected Mmusi Maimane as the party's first black African leader in May 2015.

Lieberman (2003:188) points out that even though there are indications that membership and support of political parties exhibit a racial dimension, it is interesting that after 1994 none of the leading parties have mobilised their membership based on explicit racial or ethnic claims, and all of them have attempted to attract supporters across the racial divide. Price (cited in Lieberman 2003:189) agrees with these sentiments, noting that parties such as the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Freedom Front that did try to mobilise membership based on racial or ethnic divides, suffered dismal electoral returns. Even the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party which is perceived to have most of its support from black South Africans, entered into an unexpected coalition with the Democratic Alliance[8] after the 2016 municipal elections in order to lock out the ANC from governing the metros of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay.

3.4 The political systems

The existence and natures of political parties largely depend on the type of political system on which they are domiciled. According to Heslop (2017: para. 1), a political system is the set of formal legal institutions that constitutes a government or a state. Kenya and South Africa are democracies

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8   In terms of ideology, the EFF and the Democratic Alliance are far apart, and many pundits have called their coalition a 'marriage of convenience' (Mtungwa 2017: para. 1).

with the most progressive constitutions in Africa, but their systems of government do not only differ; they have also taken different historical trajectories. Exploring these differences may provide indications about the extents to which they have influenced the nature of political parties.

3.4.1 Authoritarianism and the journey towards the Third Liberation in Kenya

During the time of the formation of KANU and KADU in 1960, Kenya was in essence a multiparty system (Ogot 1995:239). Soon after becoming a Republic in 1964, the country was transformed into a one-party state when KADU voluntarily dissolved itself and joined KANU. A mass defection of left-leaning members of KANU led to the formation of KPU in 1966 before the latter was banned by the government in 1969. With the banning of KPU, Kenya became a *de facto* one-party state until 1982 (Aubrey 2003:90). In 1982, an attempt was made by the opposition to form the Kenya African Socialist Alliance (KASA), but this was nipped in the bud when in June of the same year, Parliament amended the constitution and inserted Section 2A, which transformed Kenya into a *de jure* one-party state (Ogot 1995:239).

During the regimes of the first two presidents of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi, there was little or no tolerance for opposition parties. Political expression was only allowed through KANU, which was the only party that was legal and/or allowed to exist from 1969 to 1991.

Multipartyism was reintroduced in 1991 following the repeal of Section 2A. It was the commencement of a journey by Kenyans towards a system in which they could feel free from political economies surrounded by elitism, egregious graft and social inequality. Mills and Herbst (2012:7) refer to this as the 'Third Liberation'. Van de Walle and Butler (2007:19) offer a typology of political parties that would normally emerge upon the reintroduction of multiparty politics. This paper looks at two of them.

Firstly, there are parties that made the transition from a single party regime and continue to play an active role in politics. These include KANU, which after the return of multipartyism won the general elections in 1992

and 1997. It is important to note that, given its historical strength and association with the state, KANU received extensive support in the form of patronage, media access and logistical assistance (Throup and Hornsby 1998:358).

Secondly, and perhaps the bigger category, are the parties that emerged in the course of the transition to multipartyism. This category of parties appeared virtually *sui generis,* shortly before, during or after the afore-mentioned transition with the aim of competing for power (Van de Walle and Butler 2007:20). These new parties often had their origins in civil society, which was allowed to exist or somehow existed in spite of repression. The leaders of these new parties were often those who had long histories of opposition to the one-party regimes.

3.4.2 From a system of racial segregation to a fledgling democracy in South Africa

To many black South Africans, the one and only liberation they have had, came at the end of Apartheid. In fact, before Apartheid was ended, the Organisation of African Unity classified South Africa as a country that had not achieved self-determination (Page 2003:443). To many supporters of Apartheid-era white-dominated political parties on the other hand, liberation could be tagged to the independence that was obtained in 1910 when the Union of South Africa came into being. The nature and existence of political parties before, during and after each of these liberations depended on the legal frameworks and political spaces that the respective political systems offered.

Inasmuch as the Boers came to establish a strong political party that ruled for more than 40 years, White and Davies (1998:186) claim that it was only after the Second Anglo-Boer War that political parties began to form in South Africa. Among the indigenous groups, political organisation during this period was very low due to the Boer-Briton policies of segregation that kept the indigenous groups out of any form of government.

However, political organisation became more relevant to all groupings in the country after the Second Anglo-Boer War given that the country was negotiating its way towards the establishment of the Union. Different groupings needed their interests factored in the process.

The political system that emerged after formation of the Union was one that excluded the participation of non-white political parties in elections and government. A crucial waypoint on the path towards legislation of Apartheid was the 1936 removal of black South Africans from the common voters roll. This did not, however, prevent political organisation among non-whites. Political organisations continued to exist outside of the legal frameworks in place and when they started to agitate more aggressively, the government tightened the laws to suppress them even more.

Given its connections to global capitalism at the height of the Cold War, and in order to buy tolerance of Western powers to Apartheid, South Africa passed the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, which outlawed any political parties affiliated with Communism (De Visser 2005:52). This law, and others that came afterwards to strengthen it, defined the existence and parameters of political parties throughout the Apartheid era. It gave the Minister of Justice unlimited authority to arbitrarily 'ban' a person or entity. A banned person or entity could not organise/attend meetings, publish literature or promote their cause (Beck 2000:129). The ANC, PAC and many others were banned under this law and their leaders were forced, for fear of long jail sentences or indefinite arbitrary detentions, to go underground or operate from outside of South Africa.

The end of Apartheid and the coming into effect of a new progressive constitution in 1997 entrenched universal suffrage and multipartyism. Ever since, a political party may be registered even if the party is formed on the basis of ethnicity, religion, regionalism, tribalism or advocacy of secession from the Republic (Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa 2006: para. 4).

So far, this paper has provided a historical analysis of the formation and nature of political parties in Kenya and South Africa. The following

sections link this analysis with the manifestations of violent contestations attributable to political parties and the question of how peacebuilding programming can benefit from the historical analysis.

4. Political parties and political violence

In trying to understand the roles of political parties in political violence, it is useful to examine some of the most visible context-specific ways in which they escalate or de-escalate political violence in both countries.

4.1 How political parties escalate political violence

4.1.1 Kenya

Political parties can sow the seeds of political violence through enactment of certain laws or using state machinery to monopolise the political space. When it was in power from 1963 to 1991, KANU perfected this by suppressing all forms of dissent and avenues of effective political expression. In recent times, it was striking that during the period of brinkmanship that followed the Supreme Court's annulment of the results of the August 2017 presidential elections, it was the supporters of the opposition coalition, the National Super Alliance (NASA), that bore the brunt of excessive use of force by the police, who were under instructions by the Jubilee Party-controlled government to quell mass protests (Kenny and Ahere 2017: para. 5). However, mass protests by perceived Jubilee Party supporters did not receive similar attention from the police even when they turned violent or caused public anxiety (Gitonga 2017: para. 4; Maichuhie 2018: para. 7). From the afore-mentioned situations, it can be argued that when some part of a people are offered very limited or no options of ventilating their dissenting political expressions or are prevented from political participation, violence begins to become an attractive recourse (Saunders 2017:6).

The manner in which political parties reward their followers can also cause violent conflicts. Political parties in Kenya tend to favour certain classes or certain ethnicities, especially in allocating leadership positions in the parties and notably during nomination of candidates to represent the respective parties during elections (Respondent Ten 2018). When they

come to power, political parties also tend to reward the regions that voted for them and punish those that did not. Public appointments and state resource allocation would favour the constituencies of the ruling party or coalition. As to the few opportunities that would be available to election losers, they would be dished out by the victors in order to co-opt individual losers within the system – thereby diluting opposition to the incumbents and, as Ngunyi (1995:124) notes, ensuring the continuation of the system of political patronage. This 'carrot or stick' style of politics has continued to cultivate deep-seated resentments between the supporters of election winners and losers, and raised the stakes in elections since winning is synonymous with accessing state resources for the development of a region, class or a tribe.

Political parties also instigate political violence through overtly or covertly sponsoring violence directed at supporters of opposing parties. For instance, there are indications that, in order to authenticate President Moi's early 1990s contention that multipartyism would fracture the country along tribal lines, some of the ethnic clashes in the 1992 and 1997 general elections were orchestrated by KANU. This was through the use of violence specialists from the military as well as the police to furtively unleash deadly action against civilians (Klopp and Zuern 2007:135). Other political parties, notably the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU) also instigated violence, especially in 2008, that targeted supporters of opposing parties and these incidences of violence often took ethnic dimensions (Njogu 2009:4).

The formation and existence of political parties based on ethnicity remain strong; and in the run up to the 2017 general elections, political coalitions were formed based on ethnic backgrounds of the respective party leadership. This was a proximate[9] cause of the violence that was triggered by the dispute about the presidential election results.

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9   Proximate causes of conflict differ from root causes by degree only and are generally necessary to move a society closer to violence. They include such things as entrenchment of tribalism, electoral system manipulation, widespread human rights violations. For differentiation between root causes, proximate causes and triggers of conflicts, see Ahere 2012:32.

4.1.2 South Africa

The policy of Apartheid made discrimination endemic in the socio-economic and political processes and thereby cultivated deep-rooted conflicts. One of the consequences is the current disequilibrium that sees the minority white South Africans continue to control the major part of South Africa's wealth (Respondent One 2017). Some political parties have preyed on the exasperations of non-white South Africans about this situation and ratcheted up rhetoric that purport to identify with their feelings. It has therefore been common to hear of revisionist calls and campaign slogans by some political parties. Despite their well-meaning intentions, such calls may cause social fractures and anxieties, which if not well managed, may lead to violence.

That said, prominent incidences of political violence after 1994 have not only been between political parties but also among different factions within political parties.

Intra-party factionalism and the competition to control the process of development of party lists have led to political violence. Nowhere has this been felt more than in KwaZulu-Natal province where in the first half of 2016, there were at least 20 politically motivated deaths (De Haas 2016:48). Intra-party violence has mostly affected the ruling ANC where competition for seats is fiercest (Gottschalk 2016: para. 8; Respondent Five 2017).

There are also parties that have meted out violence against opponents in competition for political turf. A conspicuous case is the frosty relationship between the IFP and National Freedom Party (NFP) whose competition to control the KwaZulu-Natal vote has led to violence (Taylor 2011: para. 3).

It should be noted, however, that in spite of strong indications of political party involvement, it is not always possible to clearly mark the boundaries of political violence. In some localities, political violence overlaps with the taxi industry conflicts. Yet in others, it can be hard to separate political killings from other criminally motivated murders. De Haas (2016:44) posits that the distinction becomes onerous to make when political office-bearers

have business interests such as in the taxi industry. To compound the matter, *Izinkabi*[10] are used in political, taxi as well as criminally motivated killings.

4.2 How political parties de-escalate political violence

4.2.1 Kenya

Political parties have on occasion been able to rise above partisanship and pass legislation that is in the interest of peace and stability. Such actions have been useful in contributing to defusing structural political conflicts. A case in point was the 1997 Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG), which was composed of members of parliament from various parties who agreed on the repeal of certain colonial-era laws that restricted freedoms of association, and on expanding the composition of the electoral commission to bring in the opposition and to lay the groundwork for comprehensive constitutional reforms (Mwakikagile 2001:123).

Another crucial way that political parties have used to de-escalate conflicts has manifested itself in those occasions when they have closed ranks during periods of unabating political violence and worked in concert with other civil society organisations to end the violence and prevent its recurrence through advocacy. With initiatives such as the *Uwiano Platform for Peace*,[11] politicians have found a podium to participate individually and collectively in conflict prevention. There have also been moments when different political parties have implemented joint activities aimed at promoting peace among communities. An example is when Amani National Congress

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10   Plural of *Inkabi*, which in isiZulu denotes an individual who is hired to assassinate mostly political and/or business competitors. According to Respondent Two (2017), the wars between the IFP and the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s and early 1990s as well as the existence of *uMkhonto we Sizwe* (the paramilitary wing of the ANC) led to a situation where after the end of Apartheid, there were a lot of combat-ready young people roaming around KwaZulu-Natal with nothing to with their limited labour market skills. In their quests to earn a livelihood in a region awash with small arms, these young people joined the ranks of *Izinkabi.*

11   For more on Uwiano Platform for Peace please see: <http://www.ke.undp.org/content/kenya/en/home/operations/projects/peacebuilding/uwiano-peace-platform-project.html>.

and Ford Kenya political parties' members in the conflict-ridden North Rift of Kenya teamed up in April 2018 to preach peaceful co-existence in the region (Daily Nation 2018).

4.2.2 South Africa

On the national stage, political parties came together in 1999 under a conflict management programme. This programme was executed through provincial-level conflict management committees, which received election-related complaints and proposed ways of handling these amicably before they reached the courts or resulted in unrest (Booysen and Masterson 2009:419). This was followed by the 2009 signing of an electoral Code of Conduct by political parties wherein they pledged to eschew activities that encouraged violence and also to discipline any of their supporters who perpetrated violence (February 2009:61). Both initiatives were conceptualised and implemented through the facilitation of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).

The function of the IEC in the afore-mentioned initiatives brings to light another important role that political parties have played in the de-escalation of political violence. Political parties have, through comprehensive legislation and their supportive actions, collectively generated sufficient political will in support of the actions that the IEC takes to implement the afore-mentioned Code to the letter. According to one of its principal electoral officers, this has resulted in the public perception that the IEC is a neutral and impartial institution (Respondent Eight 2017). This has made a large contribution to reducing violent conflicts that would otherwise arise out of suspicion of the activities of the IEC as has happened in Kenya.

5. Lessons learnt and recommendations for peacebuilding

With its focus on political violence, this paper set out to provide an analysis of the nature of formation of political parties in Kenya and South Africa with the intention of using that analysis to underscore the indispensability of political parties as actors in peacebuilding efforts in both countries.

A historical analysis provided a snapshot of how political parties metamorphosed into the entities that they are now in both countries. By understanding such metamorphoses, a practitioner is able to descry the linkages between the nature of the parties and their actions as far as political violence is concerned.

This paper has ascertained that political parties do play a role in escalating and in de-escalating political violence. This is against the backdrop of the fact that prevention and management of political violence is an integral part of peacebuilding as a process. Since peacebuilding is political in nature (Cousens 2001:7), for the process to be legitimised, it is important that political parties are a part of it. Effective participation of political parties in this process calls for peacebuilding practitioners to design interventions that are congruent with the nuanced *raisons d'être* of political parties in both countries and the discernment of how their (the political parties') operations have influenced political violence over the years.

One of the ways in which practitioners can design interventions that anticipate the participation of political parties as actors or beneficiaries is to use the conflict mapping and analysis model espoused by Paul Wehr (see Jandt 2016:55). This model may enable the design of effective peacebuilding programmes by: 1) identifying the specific roles that political parties play as actors in political violence, 2) delving into specific aspects of political violence in the country concerned and 3) evaluating the contexts wherein the incidences of political violence occur.

The participation of political parties in the peacebuilding efforts in both countries can however be more effective if there is a solid guiding framework. Regulatory frameworks in both countries need to be reformed by the legislatures and commit political parties to be members of formalised NIfPs. An examination of the key regulatory frameworks that govern the operations of political parties in Kenya (Political parties Act: No. 11 of 2011; The Political Parties (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2016; The Political Parties (Amendment) Act 2012) and South Africa (Electoral Commission Act 51 1996) reveals that there is an absence of principles that explicitly prescribe the role of political parties in sustainable peacebuilding.

6. Conclusions

Political parties in Kenya and South Africa contribute to the vicious cycles of political violence. They have also played some crucial roles in the de-escalation of such violence. Analysis shows that the respective roles that they have played have been informed by their natures, derived from their historical metamorphoses. Given that peacebuilding has political impacts and political parties are fundamental to political processes, it is the conclusion of this paper that political parties are indispensable actors in peacebuilding. The design and implementation of peacebuilding interventions that effectively target political violence must therefore anticipate, and even encourage where possible, the involvement of political parties in de-escalating political violence.

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