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Working Paper

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Working paper // World Institute for Development Economics Research, No. 2010,114

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Working Paper No. 2010/114

Populist Strategies in African Democracies

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October 2010

Abstract

Drawing on insights from Latin America, this paper examines the factors that contributed to the use of populist strategies by political parties during recent presidential elections in Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia. Specifically, the paper argues that the nature of party competition in Africa, combined with rapid urbanization and informalization of the labour force, provided a niche for populist leaders to espouse a message relevant to the region's growing urban poor. Simultaneously, such leaders employed ethno-linguistic appeals to mobilize a segment of rural voters who could form a minimum winning coalition in concert with the urban poor and thereby deliver sizeable electoral victories. While such strategies are similar to those used by Latin American populists, the paper highlights key contrasts as well. By combining cross-regional and sub-national perspectives, this paper therefore aims to contribute to a better understanding of how demographic and socioeconomic changes in Africa intersect with voting behaviour and political party development.

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Acknowledgements

1   Introduction

As much of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) enters its third decade of democracy, the employment of populist strategies by presidential candidates is becoming an increasingly notable feature across the region. Yet, while the conceptualization and manifestations of populism in Latin America have occupied numerous scholars in recent years, the emergence of populist strategies in Africa has received much less attention.[1] This paper builds on insights from the Latin American experience and applies them to the cases of Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia in order to address two main questions. First, what factors contributed to the emergence of populist strategies in these countries? Second, how did politicians in these countries ensure that populist strategies targeted at the urban poor did not alienate other constituents, such as the rural poor, who were critical for obtaining national electoral majorities?

Populist strategies are defined in this paper as a mode of mobilization characterized by an anti-elitist policy discourse that aims to rectify the exclusion of economically marginalized constituencies (e.g. Canovan 1999; Ionescu and Gellner 1969). This discourse traditionally is espoused by a charismatic party leader who professes an affinity with the under-class or a 'closeness with the common people' (Weyland 2001: 14; also Canovan 1999; Conniff 1982; Mouzelis 1985). This impression is reinforced by the leader's self-portrayal as an outsider to the political establishment against which s/he protests (Barr 2009: 38). By relying on nonmediated rapport between the leader and 'his people' (Mouzelis 1985: 334), populism is essentially plebiscitarian, 'vesting a single individual with the task of representing "the people"' (Barr 2009: 36). Poorer, sub-altern groups who lack any type of formal organization represent the primary constituency base of parties that use populist strategies (Roberts 1995; Weyland 2001). Importantly, the term 'populist' is used here to describe political *strategies* rather than *parties* per se in recognition of the fact that the same party can alter its mode of mobilization over time and with different constituencies (see Hagopian 2007).

Based on this definition, this paper argues that the emergence of populist strategies towards the urban poor in Africa can be attributed to two key factors. First, populist strategies are symptomatic of the nature of existing African party systems, including the inability of African parties to define clear programmatic orientations that simultaneously appeal to poorly educated voters and to international donors. Second, rapid urbanization without adequate economic growth has exacerbated poverty in Africa's cities, which traditionally have been the locus of political power. This in turn has increased the resonance of populist strategies among the growing ranks of the urban poor while also creating new issues for politicians to address. At the same time, informalization of the economy has eroded the influence of previously influential civil society organizations, such as labour unions, and thereby created the space for political leaders to forge unmediated ties with constituents.

However, populist strategies can also be alienating to certain constituents, particularly for rural residents who may not share the same priorities of their urban compatriots. As

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[1]   A non-exhaustive list of scholarship on this topic in Latin America includes Barr (2005); Cameron (2009); French (2009); Knight (1998); Leaman (2004); Levitsky and Cameron (2003); Panizza (2001); Roberts (1995, 2006, 2007); Seligson (2007); Weyland (1999, 2001, 2003).

such, the paper further argues that populist strategies in Africa often are predicated on minimum winning coalitions that consist of the urban poor and a segment of rural voters. These rural voters frequently are mobilized via ethno-linguistic overtures, even as the urban poor remain mobilized by populist appeals around service delivery, housing, and employment. In other words, populist strategies in Africa are predicated on Gibson's notion of 'metropolitan and peripheral coalitions' whereby the urban poor constitute the policy focus of parties while rural dwellers can deliver electoral majorities (Gibson 1997).

The following two sections elaborate on these arguments in greater detail. Subsequently, each of these arguments is explored with respect to the most recent presidential elections in Zambia, Kenya, and South Africa. Leaders such as Michael Sata, Raila Odinga, and Jacob Zuma pursued a three-pronged populist strategy in their respective countries. This involved targeting a constituency base firmly oriented around the urban poor, mobilizing constituents with a mixture of charisma and an anti-elitist message aimed at issues of social inclusion, and fostering the image of a personalistic benefactor who understands the plight of the 'common man'. Simultaneously, these leaders combined this populist strategy with ethno-linguistic appeals aimed at specific groups of rural dwellers. Sub-national election data reveals that mixing a populist strategy with ethno-linguistic appeals enabled these leaders to win the votes of both the urban poor and an electorally sizeable segment of rural residents. The final section draws on the three cases to highlight comparisons and contrasts with Latin America's neo-populist leaders.

The contributions of this paper are threefold. First, the study examines party competition in Africa from a cross-regional perspective rather than treating African politics as empirically distinct from other developing regions of the world. The incorporation of a sub-national lens that focuses on both African cities and different rural provinces constitutes a second contribution. As Snyder (2001: 94) observes, sub-national analyses enhance the ability to theorize about complex phenomena and to recognize linkages across regions of a country and levels of the political system. Third, the study examines how demographic and socioeconomic changes in Africa intersect with voting behaviour and political party development.

2   Party competition in Africa

The current nature of party competition in African democracies is both conducive to, and advantageous for, populist strategies. Africanist scholars have oft-noted the dearth of parties with programmatic orientations that advance distinct policy agendas or a clear ideology (e.g. Manning 2005; Ottaway 1999; Randall and Svasand 2002; van de Walle and Butler 1999). Instead, many parties either emerge as, or transition into, a vehicle for one individual's ambitions and consequently, revolve almost entirely around the personality of their leader. One reason for this is that Africa's democratic transition occurred before, rather than after, a significant industrial transformation of the economy, thereby hindering the emergence of salient socioeconomic cleavages that contributed to the rise of programmatic parties in more developed countries. Moreover, the financing of political parties by party leaders' personal resources and the high degree of centralization around the office of the presidency foster parties that are highly personalistic (Bryan and Baer 2005; Salih and Nordlund 2007; van de Walle 2003).

In addition, foreign aid constitutes a large share of central government expenditures in many African countries. For example, aid as a share of central government expenditures ranges from 24 per cent in Kenya, 40 per cent in Zambia, and 59 per cent in Senegal.[2] Donor conditionalities tend to limit the degree of freedom faced by African parties to define their own political programmes (Manning 2005). Given the neo-liberal orientation of most donors, politicians in aid-dependent countries face less autonomy to embed their policies within a leftist, interventionist agenda and instead tend to advance broadly similar proposals.

The education level of many African voters further constrains the ability of political parties to espouse programmatic appeals along a left-right ideological spectrum. Widespread illiteracy and low levels of schooling hinder many voters from reading party manifestoes or comprehending complex policies. Concepts such as 'free-market' or 'interventionist' may fail to mobilize these voters. Instead, they may use information shortcuts, such as how outgoing a candidate is on the campaign trail, as an indicator for how well s/he will perform in office.

Populist strategies draw on these common features of party competition while also creating a specialized niche within the party landscape. A key element of populist strategies, charismatic leadership, works well in a political milieu where personalism plays a dominant role. However, as mentioned earlier, populist strategies also involve a policy component, which is not programmatic in the traditional sense of alignment along a left-right ideological spectrum. Instead, it focuses on rectifying economic and political marginalization by placing outcome variables on the agenda that are critical to the livelihoods of the poor, including jobs, sanitation, and proper housing. Although these are outcomes easily understood regardless of a voter's level of education, they are not simply vacuous promises about valence goods. Addressing such needs involves vocalizing clear policy preferences in favour of the most disadvantaged. For instance, providing sustainable housing involves policy choices regarding whether existing slums should be upgraded or demolished to provide new housing. Because this policy component often is rare in the African context, a party that adopts a populist strategy is more likely to differentiate itself from its competitors while also increasing its congruence with the priorities of its poorest urban citizens. For opposition parties in particular, the fusion of charismatic leadership with a message of social inclusion is especially useful for gaining broader appeal when material campaign resources are scarce (Rakner and van de Walle 2009).

3   Urbanization and informalization

Populism also tends to be influenced by demographic and economic trends, such as urbanization of the populace and informalization of the workforce. Evidence from both Latin America's classical populist period of the 1930s to 1960s, as well as its more recent neo-populist incarnations, highlight that this mode of mobilization frequently emerges in cities. As Dietz describes, city-ward migration in Latin America at the end of the Second World War generated new demands by urban voters, causing 'an exploding demand for services such as jobs, housing, transportation, and physical infrastructure. Such services might not be essential in rural areas, but in an urban

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2   These figures are for the most recent years available in the World Development Indicators 2009.

setting, low-income inhabitants-migrants or otherwise-came to expect such services and to react in politically sensitive ways if they were not delivered' (Dietz 1998: 33). Moreover, urbanization eroded the strength of land-based oligarchic orders and occurred at a time of growing citizen enfranchisement and early industrialization, thereby creating a new constituency ripe for incorporation into the political system. Grass-roots organizations, such as labour unions, helped mediate the relationship between political parties and urban working classes. Consequently, from Argentina's Juan Peron to Brazil's Getulio Vargas, labour unions helped mediate the demands of the urban working classes, who in turn comprised the main constituency base of populist movements (Conniff 1982; Drake 1982).[3]

Yet, with the collapse of import-substitution-industrialization policies, the subsequent debt crises, and the adoption of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 1990s, Latin America's urban landscape was further altered. The combination of shrinking employment opportunities, falling wages, and increasing city-ward migration pushed many into the urban informal sector, which accounted for 48 per cent of the economically active urban population by 1998 (Portes and Hoffman 2003: 50). As once-important intermediaries between constituents and parties, such as labour unions, began to dwindle in membership and influence, a window of opportunity emerged for neo-populist leaders, such as Alberto Fujimori, Hugo Chávez, and Evo Morales. These neo-populist leaders mobilized the masses of the urban poor by forging unmediated ties with them (Canache 2004; Madrid 2008; Mayorga 2006; Roberts 1995). Though the economic orientation of these leaders is varied and eclectic (Roberts 2007; Weyland 1999), they all shared a message focused on improving the lives of the poor and excluded, gaining heavy electoral support in low-income urban areas. Since inequality creates circumstances conducive to generating redistributive demands by citizens (Kaufmann and Stallings 1991), growing economic inequality prior to the elections of these neo-populist leaders (Lustig 2009) most likely increased the resonance of such messages.

The underlying social and economic currents that facilitated neo-populism in Latin America increasingly are present in Africa. Africa is now the fastest urbanizing region of the world, and demographic projections predict a tripling of the region's urban population within 30 years, resulting in urbanites becoming the majority for the first time in Africa's history (Kessides 2006). Yet, this process has occurred in a context of uneven economic growth and a lack of employment opportunities in major urban areas (Bryceson 2006). Consequently, the growth in the absolute number of poor people in urban centers suggests an increasing urbanization of poverty in Africa (see Haddad et al. 1999; Mitlin 2004; Ravallion et al. 2007; Satterthwaite 2003). At the same time, Africa's levels of inequality rival those of Latin America (Milanovic 2003).

The impact of this process is visible on the landscape of many African cities, which face crises in water and sanitation, electricity provision, job creation, and housing. For instance, between 2000 and 2010, Africa's urban slum population increased from 103 million to 200 million people (UN-Habitat 2010). Furthermore, the lack of jobs has forced many to rely on low-paid and insecure work within the informal sector, which is a problem exacerbated by the large number of youth entering African cities each year

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3 See also Canovan (1981) for further claims that the period of classical populism had strong roots in urban areas.

looking for jobs (World Bank 2009a). Currently, the informal sector accounts for approximately 61 per cent of urban employment in Africa (Kessides 2006: 12) and represents the source of more than 90 per cent of additional jobs that will be created in Africa's urban areas over the next decade (UN-Habitat 2003: 103).

These conditions in urban areas are conducive to populist strategies for at least two reasons. First, they create the objective basis for grievances around which populist leaders can construct a mobilizing message. Cities augment the visibility of socioeconomic inequalities, especially as street vendors compete with shopping malls for customers, and slums abut upper-class neighbourhoods. Since most parties tend to concentrate their campaigns in cities, urbanites possess a greater awareness of party alternatives to ameliorate such inequalities than their counterparts in more remote rural areas.

Second, as in Latin America, the informalization of the labour force has eroded the strength of formal sector unions. Though Africa's labour unions were never equivalent in size to their counterparts in other regions, they were pivotal to many of the democratic transitions during the 1990s (see Bratton 1994; Cooper 2002; Decalo 1997; Ihonvbere 1997). Yet, the growing dependence of the labour force on informal sector work reduces membership within these unions. Though a large number of organizations representing the interests of the urban poor have emerged in Africa, their membership bases remain relatively small and their influence on policy questionable (e.g. ILO 2002; Lund and Skinner 1999; Tostensen et al. 2001). Thus, as in Latin America, there is a window of opportunity for African politicians to forge direct ties with the urban poor, whose interests are not mediated by strong civil society organizations.

4   'Metropolitan' and 'peripheral' coalitions in the African context

While rapid urbanization, informalization of the workforce, and the existing nature of political party competition have contributed to the rise of populist strategies in Africa, such strategies are not effective on their own for a party to win a national executive office. Although a populist strategy can appeal to certain constituents, such as the urban poor, it may offend other voters. For example, middle- and upper-class voters, who are often needed to finance the campaigns of resource-deprived African parties, may fear that populist promises to ameliorate living conditions for the urban poor could result in excessive taxation or other redistributive measures. Rural voters may find a focus on urban priorities superfluous or even antithetical to their own needs (see Nelson 1979).[4] Indeed, the advantage of populist strategies with the urban poor, which is that they can advance a policy message with a high level of congruence with that constituency's priorities, can at the same time make them largely irrelevant to rural voters. At the same time, parties in most African countries still cannot win a national election without at least some rural support.

A populist strategy can therefore create huge trade-offs. On the one hand, it may provide a party with the best chances of mobilizing an increasingly growing constituency, i.e. the urban poor. On the other hand, it may result in the loss of critical

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[4] It is plausible that where urban-to-rural remittances are high, rural residents do have a stake in urban livelihood issues. Thus far, however, there is no evidence that urban remittance flows influence rural voting behaviour.

financing or rural votes, which are essential if a party wants to create a base beyond the city. In order to reconcile these trade-offs, parties can form a minimum winning coalition. According to Riker (1962), such coalitions are large enough to ensure a party wins an election but small enough to minimize the number of side-payments needed to entice each additional coalition member to join. Instead of side-payments, the present study argues that African parties are most concerned about their scarce campaign resources having the greatest possible impact. Parties will aim to conserve campaign resources while still desiring victory and thus, they will only form the smallest coalition possible that contributes to this goal.

In the African context, parties participating in an election for national office have employed a populist strategy with the urban poor when they simultaneously possess an alternative means of gaining the minimum number of rural votes necessary to achieve a national majority. In other words, given the size of the urban population, populist politicians have targeted those groups of rural voters who, in coalition with the urban poor, collectively comprise the minimum share of the population needed to meet the party's electoral goals.

The main means of mobilizing specific segments of rural voters has been through appeals to ascriptive identity cleavages, particularly ethno-linguistic identities.[5] The reason for this is twofold. First, unlike in cities, rural residents tend to be highly attached to their locale (Barkan 1995), and ethno-linguistic identities consequently tend to be geographically-concentrated in rural areas (Kimenyi 2006). Therefore, campaigns based on identity do not require extensive travel throughout a country to garner sufficient support. Second, for rural voters, a party leader who is also a co-ethnic can convey greater credibility to deliver promises than a politician from a different group (see Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003).[6]

This segmentation of party approaches between urban and rural areas is not atypical. Indeed, Gibson (1997) popularized the notion of metropolitan and peripheral coalitions in his study of Mexico's *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) and Argentina's Peronists. He argues that both parties historically represented sub-coalitions of urban labour unions and the working classes, who were central to upholding policies of state-led development, and rural peasants and rural elites who were co-opted through clientelistic practices to deliver the electoral majorities that kept both parties in office. When both the PRI and the Personists embarked on free-market policies in the mid-1990s, they retained their traditional peripheral coalition while creating a new metropolitan one that consisted of wealthy business entrepreneurs, the urban poor, and the self-employed. Though consisting of different urban constituents than their historical antecedents, the use of metropolitan and peripheral coalitions allowed both parties to pursue the twin goals of economic policy reform and re-election.

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5   This study follows Chandra and Metz (2002, 10) in referring to identity as an ascriptive feature that is inherited by birth (e.g. religion, ethnicity, first language, race, gender) rather than acquired over an individual's lifetime (e.g. occupation, subsequent languages, place of residence).

6   Van de Walle (2003) notes that parties in Africa that focus on agricultural policy but lack ascriptive ties with rural voters, such as Zambia's National Lima Party (NLP), traditionally have failed to obtain much support from this constituency.

Other scholarship implicitly uses this framework to highlight how parties can combine policy objectives targeted to urban areas with identity appeals to rural dwellers. For instance, Gisselquist (2005) and Madrid (2008) both show that Bolivia's economic crisis in the 1980s led to a discrediting of traditional leftist parties, leaving new urban migrants and the urban poor voiceless.[7] Consequently, Evo Morales' *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) party filled an important gap by appealing to voters with both pro-poor policy goals and a rhetoric that empowered indigenous communities, which comprise approximately half of the population. In 2009, this example of 'ethno-populism' helped Morales achieve a high share of the votes in La Paz along with substantial majorities in rural areas of the Western portion of the country.

Similarly, dual metropolitan and peripheral coalitions have enabled a number of African party leaders to employ populist strategies aimed at the policy priorities of the urban poor without losing rural votes. As Madrid notes, the compatibility of these two modes of mobilization is unexpected in both the populist literature, which claims that populism is aimed at the undifferentiated masses, and in the ethnic literature, which emphasizes the exclusive nature of identity-based appeals (Madrid 2008). Nevertheless, by examining the dynamics of political contestation in Zambia, Kenya, and South Africa, the viability of this approach becomes more apparent.

4.1 Zambia: Michael Sata and the Patriotic Front

Since the early 2000s, Zambia's political scene has been transformed by an opposition party known as the Patriotic Front (PF), led by Michael Sata. Nicknamed 'King Cobra' because he can prove venomous to his political enemies (Mwiinga 1994), Sata formerly was a member of Zambia's post-independence party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). He then defected to the current ruling Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) when it was founded in 1991.[8] In 2001, Sata founded the PF when President Frederick Chiluba chose Levy Mwanawasa as his successor to lead the MMD. After a lackluster performance in the 2001 elections, Sata shifted his approach and combined a populist strategy towards the urban poor with one targeted at his Bemba co-ethnics in rural areas. Consequently, in both the 2006 and 2008 presidential elections, the PF overwhelmingly won in all major urban constituencies as well as in Luapula and Northern provinces, which is where Bemba-speakers are concentrated.

The dominance of personalistic parties in Zambia since the country's democratic transition, particularly amongst the opposition, provided a niche for the PF to fill. For instance, during the 2001 elections, Rakner notes that all the contesting parties were formed behind a strong leader who contributed the majority of the party's finances, and lacked any specific ideological leanings (Rakner 2003: 124). Momba (2005: 33) observed that 'the lack of significant differences in terms of policies due to similar ideologies and general outlooks raises questions about the meaningfulness of alternative choices presented to voters at election time'. Burnell (2001) noted that the opposition

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7 Moore (1997) also uses Gibson's framework to understand how Sri Lanka's People's Alliance (PA) was able to engage in economic reforms during the 1990s.

8 While a member of UNIP, Sata served as the Lusaka District Governor, a Member of Parliament (MP) for Lusaka's Kabwata constituency, and Minister of State for Decentralization.

had failed not only to craft a policy agenda targeted at key issues but also to mobilize grassroots support.

In addition, rapid urbanization, expanding urban poverty, and informalization of the workforce both influenced Sata's populist strategy and contributed to his appeal among the urban poor. During the 1990s, the MMD adopted vast reforms under a structural adjustment programme. As documented elsewhere, structural adjustment often hurt urban consumers by ending currency controls and price subsidies on staple foods (e.g. Tacoli 2001; Myers and Murray 2007). Simultaneously, greater economic austerity reduced available public spending for urban infrastructure, health, and education while privatization and trade liberalization forced uncompetitive domestic industries to either shed workers or impose wage freezes. So many Zambians resorted to labouring in the urban informal sector that by the mid-1990s middle-class Lusakans were complaining about the lack of walking space on city sidewalks due to the predominance of street vendors (see Chilaizya 1993; Mwiinga 1993). By 2004, formal sector employment had declined by 24 per cent from its 1992 level (Larmer and Fraser 2007). During the same period, membership within the Zambia Confederation of Trade Unions (ZCTU) declined by almost 80,000 workers (Muneku 2002; ZCTU 2001). Approximately 56 per cent of Zambia's urban population and 69 per cent of Lusaka's currently work in the non-agricultural informal sector (CSO 2007; World Bank 2007).

These pressures were exacerbated by increased migration into Lusaka. During the 1990s, the capital city's population growth rate was 3.3 per cent, more than twice the rate for Zambia overall (CSO 2003). Population growth placed increased pressure on the urban poor's housing, which is characterized by vast, unorganized shanty compounds on the periphery of the city center (Hansen 2002; Mulenga 2003). The construction of such housing consists of concrete block walls and corrugated iron or asbestos sheet roofs, and roads in such communities are gravel with no drainage, making many impassable during the rainy season (World Bank 2002). Pit latrines remain a common form of waste disposal but, space constraints limit the available room to construct new latrines and force many communities to share the same ones (Taylor 2006; World Bank 2007). In all, such settlements contain the highest density of the city's population and are home to 70 per cent of Lusaka's residents (UN-Habitat 2007).

After he was elected president in 2001, the MMD's Levy Mwanawasa steered Zambia to improved macro-economic health but did little to improve these circumstances for the urban poor. During his tenure, the country's inflation dropped to single digits and economic growth averaged approximately five per cent, buoyed by improved copper prices and substantial external debt forgiveness (*Economist* 2006; Larmer and Fraser 2007). However, service delivery remained sub-standard and expensive in urban areas. The average cost of electricity and water for a family of four living in Lusaka steadily increased by more than US$30 and US$60, respectively, during the period in which Mwanawasa was in office.[9] Moreover, just two months previous to the October 2006 elections, the cost of basic food staples and essential non-food items for a family of six was 1,421,650 Kwacha, or US$387 at 2006 exchange rates. This exceeded by more than

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[9]   See the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) CityData database.

double the average monthly income of 645,326 Kwacha found in most of Lusaka's low-income neighbourhoods.[10]

Harassment of the urban poor also increased considerably under Mwanawasa. When a cholera outbreak occurred in February 2004 in Soweto market, part of the market was razed with displaced vendors receiving no alternative land on which to trade (cited in Hansen 2007). In 2007, Mwanawasa invested 200 million Kwacha into the 'Keep Zambia Clean' campaign (*Times of Zambia* 2007). Designed to improve cleanliness around the city, the campaign added more stringent provisions to Zambia's Street Vending and Nuisances Act, which levies fees on those who are engaged in street vending or who purchase from vendors (*Times of Zambia* 2007). Crackdowns on street vendors and illegal marketeers ensued because they supposedly worsened traffic congestion and contributed to cholera outbreaks. In June 2008, 400 makeshift stalls in Lusaka's Town Centre Market were razed without warning and without offering traders alternative space (*Times of Zambia* 2008a). Similarly, illegal squatter compounds consistently experienced, or were threatened with, demolitions under Mwanawasa.[11]

By employing a populist strategy, the PF's Michael Sata effectively tapped into the growing frustrations of the urban poor with these conditions. He overwhelmingly defeated the ruling MMD, as well as the opposition United Party for National Development (UPND), in major urban constituencies in Lusaka and the Copperbelt in the 2006 elections. As seen in Table 1, a similar pattern occurred in the October 2008 by-elections that followed Mwanawasa's death. The MMD's Rupiah Banda beat Sata by only two percentage points at the national level, obtaining 40 per cent of the vote compared with his competitor's 38 per cent. However, Sata's vote shares remained extremely high in all of Zambia's major urban constituencies, including some of the poorest such as Chawama and Munali in Lusaka. By contrast, Hakainde Hichilema of the UPND actually obtained fewer votes in urban areas in 2008 than he did in the 2006 elections.[12]

The importance of Sata's victory in Lusaka is even more remarkable considering that the city's population is highly heterogeneous. Though migrants from the Copperbelt and Northern provinces have arrived more recently, most migrants are from Eastern and Southern provinces (Hansen 2002). Nyanja-speakers are in the majority, representing almost 53 per cent of the population as of 2000 (CSO 2004). Thus, even though Sata is a Bemba-speaker, he was still highly popular in a city dominated by Nyanja-speakers.

Sata spent a majority of his time campaigning amongst street vendors, marketeers, bus and taxi drivers, and the youth, the latter of whom comprise 66 per cent of the population in Lusaka Province (CSO 2004).[13] As a consummate political entrepreneur, Sata grabbed the attention of this constituency by crafting a charismatic and controversial image that involved theatrical antics. In 2006, his campaigns featured

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[10] See the basic needs baskets calculated by the Lusaka-based Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR), which can be found at http://www.jctr.org.zm/bnbasket.html (accessed 20 July 2009).

[11] For specific incidents, see Myers (2005), Jere (2007), and Mwanangombe (2007).

[12] Both the 2008 and 2006 elections were deemed 'free and fair' by local and international observers (see *Africa Confidential* 2008; Larmer and Fraser 2007).

[13] This percentage refers to Zambians who are 24 years-old or younger.

broken clocks because the clock is the MMD's symbol (Wines 2006). The implication was that the MMD's time had expired. The PF's own symbol is Noah's Ark and its rallying cry of *Pabwato* translates as 'get on the boat,' implying that Zambians should join the party to escape the country's deluge of economic hardships. Playing on the theme, Sata arrived at the Zambian High Court to register his party for the 2008 elections standing in a speedboat towed by a truck.

Table 1: Results from the 2008 Zambian Presidential Elections in major urban areas (%)

Main urban constituencies	Poverty rates	Presidential candidates (party)			
		Rupiah Banda (MMD)	*Michael Sata (PF)*	*Hakainde Hichilema (UPND)*	*Godfrey Miyanda (HP)*
Lusaka Province					
Chawama	0.61	25.5	60.3	13.9	0.3
Kabwata	0.25	20.2	63.3	15.8	0.7
Kanyama	0.57	26.1	52.2	21.3	0.4
Lusaka Central	0.26	24.7	58.6	15.9	0.8
Mandevu	0.52	28.8	63.2	7.5	0.5
Matero	0.42	25.0	66.5	8.1	0.4
Munali	0.58	27.1	58.5	13.7	0.6
Copperbelt Province					
Kitwe	0.45	18.5	75.2	5.6	0.6
Ndola Central	0.56	30.4	60.8	7.6	1.3

Sources: Election data calculated from the Electoral Commission of Zambia (http://www.elections.org.zm/). Poverty data from Simler (2007) and based on the 2000 Census and the 2002-2003 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey.

Coupled with this charisma is a package of policy promises that resonate with the priorities of the urban poor and aim to rectify their marginalization in Zambia's political economy. He has articulated this message most vocally through the PF's slogan of 'lower taxes, more jobs, more money in your pockets'. Low wages, high prices, and few job opportunities were cited among residents in Zambia's informal urban settlements as the top causes of their poverty (see World Bank 2007). Given Lubinda, the PF's spokesman and MP for Lusaka's Kabwata constituency recognizes that the message is particularly effective in urban areas rather than rural ones: 'We talk about lower taxes, we talk about jobs for people. Now, that appeals to the people in the urban areas because they're the ones who are looking for jobs, they're the ones whose incomes are overtaxed. So, we appeal to them more than to rural dwellers. We haven't articulated issues of agriculture that strongly'.[14]

In addition, improved water, sanitation, electricity, and housing are amongst the top promises offered by the PF during its campaigns. A comprehensive housing development programme is the main pillar of the PF's party manifesto, which stresses

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[14] Interview with Given Lubinda on 22 January 2009. Informal workers who do not pay income tax are still forced to pay monthly or daily fees for using a market stall. The urban poor also are more likely to have a higher share of their incomes going to pay VAT taxes on consumer goods.

the need to provide low-cost, decent housing to those individuals currently residing in squatter settlements.[15] Upgrading shanty housing by providing the proper infrastructure, rather than demolishing these settlements as the MMD has tended to, was stressed throughout the PF's last two electoral campaigns. PF MPs, such as Dr. Guy Scott and Given Lubinda, have been vocal in Parliament about ensuring that shanty compounds receive adequate government assistance during the rainy season when roads become impassable and cholera spreads (Zambian Parliament Tenth Assembly 2008). In addition, after housing demolitions in March 2007, Sata proclaimed that he would sue the state on behalf of the people who lost their homes (Mwape 2007). When asked about the housing situation, Sata personally replied that illegal housing should be upgraded and added, 'But, you don't demolish for the sake of demolishing. The people must come first'.[16]

Sata's populist strategy also involves the use of language, symbols, and party management tactics that bring him closer to the people. In turn, these actions reinforce his plebiscitarian relationship with the urban poor. For instance, Sata speaks in the vernacular during his campaign speeches while Mwanawasa used to given his speeches in English and then have a staff member translate them into local languages (Wines 2006). Moreover, Sata portrays himself as a common man who understands the travails of low-income urbanites. According to the PF's vice-president, Sata purposely highlights his own lack of education and refinement because it elicits claims from the opposition that one needs to be educated to run a country: 'He [Sata] likes the image that he's uneducated. It brings out the worst in the educated elite. They say, 'Honestly, a man with grade 4 [education], how can he run a country?' I mean, 99 per cent of the voters are grade 4 [educated]'.[17] Likewise, the PF tries to discredit the opposition UPND's leader by calling him 'calculator boy' as a reference to Hichilema's former background working in an accounting multi-national.

Yet, by focusing on the urban poor, the PF was at risk of losing rural Zambians, whose votes are still required for obtaining national majorities. As one disgruntled Zambian wrote, 'His [Sata's] political vision is in town alone, talking about making flyover bridges, sweeping the markets, etc. Coming to issues that affect the rural multitudes, he has nothing to offer or talk about. Ask him about agricultural policies and you will get nothing from him' (Daka 2008: 5). Cheeseman and Hinfelaar (2010: 23-24) further point out that some of Sata's promises to the urban poor, such as reducing food prices, were directly antithetical to the interests of rural producers. They also observe that Sata insulted rural producers during the 2008 campaign by claiming that their farm practices were from the 'stone age'.

Since the PF's policy pronouncements failed to address the interests of rural residents, an alternative approach was needed to mobilize these constituents. As such, the PF relied on ethno-linguistic appeals in order to build a peripheral coalition with a segment of rural voters who, in concert with the urban poor, could theoretically provide enough votes to constitute a majority. Based on Zambia's 2000 census, Bemba-speakers, who

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15 See 'Patriotic Front Manifesto', available at http://www.pf.com.zm/manifesto.html (accessed 3 February 2009).

16 Personal interview with Michael Sata, Lusaka, 28 January 2009.

17 Personal interview with Dr Guy Scott, Lusaka, 21 January 2009.

constitute almost 32 per cent of Zambia's rural population, are by far the largest rural ethno-linguistic group within the country. Moreover, they are the group to which Sata belongs. Because rural Bemba-speakers primarily are concentrated in three areas of the country, including Central, Luapula, and Northern provinces, the PF could invest its limited resources into these specific regions with the expectation of maximum rewards. The clearest evidence of this strategy emerges by observing where Sata spent most of his time campaigning in 2008. Table 2 illustrates the share of rallies that each candidate held within predominantly rural provinces.[18] Sata concentrated 35 per cent of his 21 total, rural campaign rallies in the Bemba-speaking Northern Province alone. Luapula Province, which is also majority Bemba-speaking, followed and accounted for approximately 12 per cent of Sata's rural rallies. Eastern Province, which is Banda's stronghold, received no visits from Sata who presumably felt that it was a waste of resources to campaign in the incumbent's main area of influence.[19] Both the Tonga-speaking Southern Province and those in Northwestern Province also obtained minimal attention from Sata.

Table 2: Share of campaign rallies in predominantly rural Zambian provinces

Province	Candidate			
	Rupiah Banda (MMD)	Michael Sata (PF)	Hakainde Hichilema (UPND)	Godfrey Miyanda (Heritage Party)
Eastern	18	0	18	0
Luapula	15	12	6	0
Northern	18	35	6	3
Northwestern	12	3	6	3
Southern	18	3	18	0
Western	21	9	3	0
Total	100 (N=34)	100(N=21)	100 (N=19)	100 (N=2)

Source: Calculated from news reports in *The Times of Zambia* newspaper between the 2008 presidential campaign period of 26 September-29 October.

Sata mobilized fellow Bemba speakers through appeals centered on their shared identity. Rather than presenting the PF as an exclusionary party only interested in representing Bemba speakers, he instead implied that other groups have, and would continue to, exclude the Bemba from political influence. For instance, the late President Mwanawasa's deliberate actions to reduce the dominance of Bemba representation among government appointments encouraged Sata to claim, in turn, that the MMD was

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[18] These figures were derived from counting the number of separate rallies held by each presidential candidate and reported in the newspaper *Times of Zambia* during the official campaign period, which started on 26 September and ended on 29 October 2008. Newspaper reports offer a useful approximation of candidates' geographic focus given that more extensive data regarding political campaigns remains unavailable.

[19] Rupiah Banda's father was Chewa and his mother was Ngoni, both of which are members of the Nyanja language group that is dominant in Eastern Province.

purposely marginalizing the Bemba.[20] In the same vein, the Tonga-speaking UPND leader, Hichilema, believes Sata purposely discouraged Bemba-speakers from supporting him because of his ethno-linguistic background: 'I went to campaign in Luapula Province. And Sata told the people there not to vote for me because I was Tonga and they are Bemba'.[21]

Language represented another means of implicit mobilization. In Northern and Luapula provinces, Sata relied on Bemba to address his rallies (*Times of Zambia* 2008b). More tellingly, the PF's slogan of *Pabwato,* which is Bemba, was never translated into any other indigenous languages in campaign materials, even though those of other presidential candidates were.[22] This presumably reinforced for rural voters, who were less likely to relate to a message of 'Lower taxes, more jobs and more money in your pockets', that Sata was indeed a Bemba candidate.

Table 3 illustrates how Sata's campaign strategy affected voting outcomes. Specifically, the PF's base of support centers on Zambia's most urban provinces of Lusaka and the Copperbelt, as well as the Bemba-speaking rural Luapula and Northern Provinces.[23] In these two provinces, Sata obtained 66 and 65 per cent of the vote in 2008, respectively. By contrast, the UPND's support base is predominantly concentrated in the Tonga-speaking Southern Province. The MMD's results emphasize that this ruling party, which originally emerged in the urban provinces of Lusaka and the Copperbelt, now has a predominantly rural constituency base.

The success of Sata in Bembaphone provinces is difficult to attribute to other factors besides ethno-linguistic appeals. Not only did the PF fail to focus on agricultural priorities during the PF's 2008 campaign, but also Northern and Luapula provinces disproportionately were benefitting from fertilizer distribution through the MMD's Fertilizer Subsidy Programme and through crop purchases by the Food Reserve Agency (Govereh et al. 2009). As such, support for Sata in these provinces could not necessarily be traced to farmers' disappointment with the MMD's agricultural policies. Moreover, within Northern Province, the MMD only won in non-Bemba speaking areas (Simutanyi 2009).

Sata's dualistic mode of campaigning therefore involved mobilization of the urban poor through a populist strategy targeted at this constituency's policy priorities, as well as ethno-linguistic appeals to rural Bemba-speakers who are concentrated in key provinces and sizeable enough to provide necessary electoral majorities when combined with the votes of the urban poor. Ultimately, Sata did not win the presidency in 2008, but he only lost by two percentage points to Banda. Since the elections occurred only two years after the previous presidential elections, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) refused to register new voters who had become eligible to vote in that two-year interim.

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20 Personal interview with Dr Neo Simutanyi, Lusaka, 3 February 2009.

21 Personal interview with Hakainde Hichilema, UPND President, Lusaka, 17 February 2009.

22 For instance, the UPND's slogan was printed on the party's campaign materials in seven indigenous languages, including Nyanja, Bemba, Tonga, Lozi, and a language of the Northwestern linguistic group (see UPND 2008).

23 Sata also performed very strongly in Kabwe, which is the fourth largest city and located in Central Province. He obtained 53 per cent of the vote there.

Given Sata's popularity among the urban youth, the decision not to re-open the electoral register most likely created an advantage for the MMD (Cheeseman and Hinfelaar 2010). Otherwise, Sata's dual coalition would more than likely have proved victorious.

Table 3: 2008 Zambian Presidential results by province

Province	Candidate			
	Rupiah Banda (MMD)	Michael Sata (PF)	Hakainde Hichilema (UPND)	Godfrey Miyanda (Heritage Party)
Central	56.0	22.5	20.8	0.7
Copperbelt	35.7	58.2	5.5	0.6
Eastern	74.5	18.7	5.8	1.0
Luapula	26.0	65.8	1.3	0.3
Lusaka	30.3	54.5	14.6	0.6
Northern	32.4	64.7	1.3	0.4
Northwestern	57.6	4.4	37.1	0.8
Southern	20.5	4.8	73.3	1.5
Western	68.4	10.1	20.4	1.1

Source: Election data calculated from the Electoral Commission of Zambia (http://www.elections.org.zm/).

4.2 Kenya: Raila Odinga and the Orange Democratic Movement

The party dynamics in Kenya's most recent elections closely mirror those of the Zambian case. Specifically, the opposition candidate, Raila Odinga, and his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) relied on a populist strategy to mobilize the disgruntled urban poor while also targeting a segment of rural voters through appeals to ethno-linguistic identities. Like Zambia, the impetus for this approach lies in the nature of Kenya's democratic, development, and demographic trajectories.

Although Kenya officially transitioned to multi-party rule in 1991, the long-ruling Kenyan African National Union (KANU) was not ousted until Mwai Kibaki won the 2002 presidential elections. Kibaki was leader of the Democratic Party (DP) as well as a broader opposition coalition known as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Similar to Mwanawasa's first term in office, Kibaki's first five years as president were characterized by good stewardship of the macro-economy. By privatizing failing state enterprises, enforcing tax regulations, and improving Kenya's business environment, the budget deficit declined substantially and tax revenue doubled (Chege 2008). Between 2003 and 2007, economic growth increased from 3.4 to 7 per cent (Chege 2008: 128). At the same time, however, Kenya experienced rapid urbanization, and Kenya's urban population grew by 4.4 per cent annually between 2000-2010 (UN-Habitat 2003: 252). As a result, the city is increasingly ethnically diverse, with the Kikuyu representing 32

per cent of the population, followed by the Luo at 18 per cent and the Luhya at 16 per cent (Butler 2002).

This growth has been accompanied by increased poverty and inequality in major urban centers. Between 1997 and 2006, two poverty studies conducted under the auspices of the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey Bureau revealed that the share of the urban population considered 'food poor' increased from 38 to 41 per cent (Oxfam 2009). Moreover, while the rural Gini coefficient decreased from 0.42 to 0.38, its urban equivalent increased from 0.43 to 0.45 (Oxfam 2009).[24] In Nairobi province, 44 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, and it is estimated that the richest decile of the city's population accrues approximately 20 times more income than the poorest decile (World Bank 2009b: 50). Youth unemployment in Nairobi alone stands at 42 per cent, and the dominance of the informal sector resulted in a 38 per cent decline in formal labour union membership between 1985 and 2000 (Pollin et al. 2007; World Bank 2009b: 50). An estimated 60 per cent of the city's population lives in crowded slums that occupy only five per cent of the capital's land area (UN-Habitat 2008: 10).

Harassment of the urban poor became problematic during Kibaki's first term as president. For instance, in February 2004, the government threatened to evict 300,000 people from Kibera, which is considered Africa's largest slum, because houses had been built by railway tracks, under electricity pylons, or in areas marked for road construction. Between 2004 and 2006, government authorities bulldozed and set fire to hundreds of homes in dozens of Nairobi's other informal settlements (COHRE 2006: 21–3). Even more controversially, gang violence within the slums resulted in heavy-handed police intervention that was resented by residents. A raid on gangs in Mathare slum in mid-2007, which resulted in the deaths of over 100 people, left the urban poor particularly incensed over Kibaki's inability to control the police (Kagwanja 2009: 371).

Raila Odinga was well-placed to capitalize on the urban poor's disenchantment. Nicknamed *Agwambo*, or 'the mysterious one', Odinga is a well-established Kenyan politician. During the early 1990s, Odinga belonged to a party known as the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD).[25] When that party split, he became leader of the FORD-Kenya faction. After losing internal elections to lead this faction, he left to form the National Democratic Party (NDP), from which he contested the 1997 presidential elections. Subsequently, he became a member of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which in turn joined Kibaki's NARC coalition in the 2002 elections. Odinga was appointed the Minister of Roads under Kibaki's government. Yet, in 2005, in the aftermath of Kibaki's failed referendum on strengthening presidential powers, a number of cabinet ministers, including Odinga, were purged. Odinga subsequently formed the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and Kibaki changed the name of his own party to the Party of National Unity (PNU).[26]

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[24] A Gini coefficient of 1 indicates complete inequality while a coefficient of 0 signifies complete equality.

[25] Raila Odinga's father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, had been vice-president to Jomo Kenyatta during the 1960s and a stalwart of KANU until he left the party and founded FORD.

[26] The origins of the ODM's name come from the 2005 referendum when an orange represented the symbol of those who opposed greater executive powers and a banana was the symbol for those who did not.

Despite traversing so many parties, Odinga's constituency base is undoubtedly tied to the urban poor. Since 1992, he has been consistently re-elected as the MP for Nairobi's Langata constituency, which contains the large slum of Kibera, estimated to house from 750,000 to one million of Nairobi's population. Residents have cited unemployment, poor housing, insufficient water and sanitation facilities, and insecurity as some of their main concerns (*The Nation* 2007). The ODM also has an unofficial office located in a part of the slum known as Gatwikira, and Odinga spent the day before the 2007 elections holding a series of rallies in Langata constituency (Barasa 2007; De Smedt 2009).

Like Sata, Odinga is highly charismatic and politically ambitious. A rich businessman who formerly subscribed to socialism, he is well-known for his flamboyant outfits and for driving around Nairobi in his expensive Hummer car. During the 2007 campaign, he would improvise riddles and alter song lyrics in order to highlight the Kibaki government's failings (Bosire 2007). Such tactics attract large crowds to his urban rallies. In fact, his motorcade was mobbed with adoring supporters during his opening rally in Nairobi's Uhuru Park where the crowd forced people onto trees and rooftops to find space to hear his message (Odula 2007). As Lynch (2006: 255) observes, 'Raila is a man who stirs up the strongest of emotions – be it "Railamania" or "Railaphobia"'.

A discourse firmly targeted at ameliorating inequalities and catering to the needs of the urban poor proved central to Odinga's 2007 campaign. The interests of slum dwellers in particular have long represented one of his interests. Back in 2001, Odinga had appealed to the then-president, Daniel Arap Moi, to lower the rents in Kibera (De Smedt 2009). In 2005, when speculators were trying to obtain private ownership of land in Nairobi's Kiambiu slum, Odinga gave a speech on behalf of protecting the slum residents' interests and argued that the Kibaki government should more actively upgrade slums in both the capital and elsewhere in the country (*The East African* 2005).

When accepting the presidential nomination by the ODM in September 2007, Odinga promised to end Kenya's 'economic apartheid' and ensured his young supporters jobs, free schooling, and cash for the poor (Chege 2008). In a subsequent rally, Odinga announced, 'Kibaki says that the economy is better, but the situation on the ground shows that inflation has grown high. Sixty per cent of Nairobi residents live in informal settlements because of government mismanagement. We want to improve the economic power of the people. We want a social movement' (cited in Odula 2007). While Kibaki focused on emphasizing his government's economic achievements, Odinga placed job creation as the first priority in his party manifesto and countered that growth under Kibaki only resulted in widening income gaps. As such, Odinga (2007: 7) promised the following: 'I give you a cast-iron guarantee that I will be a champion of social justice and social emancipation – a champion of the poor, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged in our nation. I will redress the imbalance between the powerful and the weak, between the rich and the poor, between the satisfied and the hungry'.

Such a campaign helped Odinga forge unmediated ties with the urban poor. The ODM's lively and colourful campaign oriented around exclusion proved much more entertaining than the PNU's bland and businesslike one, which tried to appeal to voters on the basis of dry statistics (Chege 2008: 135). Despite being 60 years-old at the time, Odinga portrayed himself as a modern and youthful leader, which undoubtedly aimed to endear him to Nairobi's restless and young population (Lynch 2006). The fact that the

ODM's orange campaign T-shirts espoused that Odinga was the 'People's President' provided yet another example of the candidate's attempt to convey that he was a man-of-the-people rather than a wealthy politician (see Odula 2007).

Table 4 below reveals that Odinga's populist strategy proved successful in most of Nairobi's constituencies, which are known as 'divisions'. Results from the Parliamentary elections, which were held concurrently, are presented here because they are more credible than the presidential ones, which independent outside observers claimed were rigged.[27] These results reveal that ODM candidates received the majority of votes in the poorest divisions of Nairobi, and Odinga did exceptionally well in Langata, where he ran again as MP.

Table 4: Poverty and votes in Kenya's 2007 parliamentary elections

Divisions	Number of poor people	Share of ODM votes (%)	Share of PNU votes (%)	Vote share difference (ODM- PNU)
Nairobi District	881,265	41.9	28.8	13.3
Central	91, 559	42.2	40.9	1.3
Dagoretti	106,177	38.1	47.7	-9.6
Embakasi	170,165	32.9	26.4	6.5
Kasarani	152, 825	48.5	20.8	27.7
Langata	110,504	69.7	28.1	41.6
Makadara	108,100	32.5	33.9	-1.4
Westlands	60,705	45.3	31.1	14.2

Sources: Poverty data calculated by Ndeng'e et al. (2003). Election data from the Electoral Commission of Kenya, www.eck.ke, (accessed 13 March 2008).

Notes: The poverty data is based on an urban-specific poverty line, pegged at 2,648 Kenyan shillings per adult per month for an urban household. This was equivalent to about US$35 in 2003 prices, which was when the survey was conducted. Official results in the eighth division, Kamukunji, were contested and went to court.

Yet, the urban poor were not Odinga's only constituency base. Similar to Sata, he forged a coalition with a segment of rural voters who were his Luo co-ethnics or belonged to other minority groups. Of all potential cleavages, ethnicity certainly has proved the most salient in Kenya's political history (see Barkan and Chege 1989; Hulterström 2004; Miguel 2004; Oyugi 1997). Perceived political domination and wealth accumulation by the Kikuyu has been a key concern among other ethnic groups. The Luo largely were excluded from power during both the Kenyatta and Moi regimes, and groups such as the Luhya and Kamba often felt that their political representation

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[27] An exit poll conducted during the elections funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) found that 46.2 per cent of voters had selected Odinga for president compared with 40.2 for Kibaki (USAID 2008). A news statement about the poll, and a copy of the final report, can be found at http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/iri-statement-kenya-election-day-poll (accessed 5 April 2010).

was not commensurate with their share of the voting population (Branch and Cheeseman 2008).

Unlike Zambia, no one ethnic group can deliver electoral majorities in Kenya's rural areas. Moreover, while Kenya shares Zambia's First Past the Post (FPTP) presidential system, the electoral rules require a candidate to obtain not just a national plurality of votes but also 25 per cent of the vote in at least five of the eight provinces and win his/her own electoral constituency. As such, Odinga constructed a 'pentagon' alliance with leaders representing not only his Luo co-ethics but also minority groups such as the Luhya, the Kalenjin, the Embu, and the Coast peoples (EIU 2007: 3). Furthermore, his rhetoric was often couched in class terms with ethnic implications, blaming the President and his 'Mount Kenya mafia' for creating massive disparities between Kikuyu-dominated areas and the rest of Kenya.[28] The ODM's campaign focused on Kikuyu domination in banking, government, commercial farming, and education as well as their influx into the Rift Valley, which historically was the home of the Kalenjin and Maasai (Chege 2008; Kagwanja 2009: 374). This storyline was reinforced by the ODM's campaign symbol, which was an orange divided into eight equal pieces. According to Odinga's manifesto, this symbolism represented that Kenya's eight provinces would receive equal resources under his administration (Odinga 2007: 4). The implication was that under Kibaki, inter-provincial disparities prevailed.

Table 5: Distribution of ethnic groups in Kenya

Province	Dominant ethnic group		Share of province in Kenya's population (%)
	Name	Share of province's population (%)	
Central	Kikuyu	93.8	11.2
Coast	Mijikenda	54.4	8.8
Eastern	Kamba	53.9	15.5
Nairobi	Kikuyu	32.4	8.7
North-eastern	Ogaden	36.0	4.0
Nyanza	Luo	57.9	14.5
Rift Valley	Kalenjin	46.4	24.9
Western	Luhya	86.2	12.4

Source: 1989 Kenyan Census; Population Projections from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (http://www.knbs.or.ke/, accessed 19 January 2010).

As in Zambia, ethno-linguistic groups in rural areas are geographically concentrated. Table 5 above highlights that the Luo dominate in Nyanza province while the Kalenjin, Luhya, and Mijikenda are the main residents of the Rift Valley, Western, and Coast provinces, respectively. Based on an analysis of campaign rallies in 2007, Horowitz finds that Odinga concentrated most of his rallies in the Rift Valley and Western Provinces (Horowitz 2009). He only visited the Kikuyu-dominated Central Province once and never visited Eastern Province, from where the Kamba leader of the ODM-

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28 Mount Kenya clan refers to those politicians in Kibaki's inner circle who hail from predominantly Kikuyu areas in Central and Eastern Province (*Africa Confidential* 2003: 2).

Kenya party, Kalonzo Musyoka, hailed.[29] Likewise, neither Kibaki nor Musyoka spent any time in the Luo-dominated province of Nyanza (Horowitz 2009).

Table 6 highlights the results of the candidate's campaign strategies. Parliamentary results are used to ensure consistency with those that were presented in Table 3. The results show that Musyoka's party only achieved a majority of seats in Eastern Province while the PNU was most successful in Central Province. Similarly, the ODM's biggest wins occurred in Nyanza, Rift Valley, and Western Provinces, which are exactly the provinces where the ODM concentrated its campaigns. In total, the ODM obtained 99 out of a total number of 207 Parliamentary seats while the PNU received only 43 and the ODM-Kenya won 15.

Table 6: Distribution of parliamentary seats won by party in 2007 Kenyan elections

Province	Number of seats				Total
	ODM	*PNU*	*ODM-K*	*Other*	
Central	0	18	0	11	29
Coast	12	3	1	5	21
Eastern	2	7	13	14	36
Nairobi	5	2	0	0	7
North-eastern	5	0	0	5	10
Nyanza	25	0	0	7	32
Rift Valley	32	11	1	4	48
Western	18	2	0	4	24
Total	*99*	*43*	*15*	*50*	*207*

Source: 'Office of Government Spokesperson: Election Results 2007' http://www.communication.go.ke/elections/province.asp (accessed 19 January 2010).

Notes: The results for one seat in Nairobi were contested and the results were never publicized. As such, the results for only seven, rather than eight, seats are indicated here.

By creating a peripheral coalition oriented around Luo co-ethnics and other minority ethnic groups, Odinga could mobilize a metropolitan coalition comprised of most of Nairobi's poor by employing a populist strategy. When well-documented vote-rigging caused Odinga to lose his presidential bid, despite the ODM's parliamentary victory, violence not only erupted among ethnic groups in rural provinces but also spilled out of Nairobi's slums, where disappointed Odinga supporters threatened 'No Raila! No Peace!' for weeks thereafter (De Smedt 2009). The violence underscored the emotional resonance of a campaign discourse that consistently focused on rectifying various manifestations of inequality.

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[29] The ODM-Kenya party broke off from the ODM shortly before the 2007 elections.

4.3 South Africa: Jacob Zuma and the African National Congress

Populist strategies are appearing not only amongst Africa's opposition parties, such as Zambia's PF and Kenya's ODM, but also among ruling parties such as South Africa's African National Congress (ANC). As one of Africa's most urbanized democracies, almost 60 per cent of South Africa's population lived in urban areas as of 2005 (World Bank 2009b). Yet, the legacy of apartheid has still left massive inequalities both between rural and urban areas as well as within cities. Johannesburg remains the country's most unequal city, with a Gini coefficient of 0.75 (UN-Habitat 2009). Racial disparities also still persist since approximately 25 per cent of the country's black population is unemployed, compared with only 4 per cent of the white population (Statistics South Africa 2009a). Declines in the manufacturing sector and low demand for both unskilled and semi-skilled labour has both contributed to this unemployment and depressed wages for those with a job (see Beall et al. 2000). Moreover, a quarter of the population still lives in shacks rather than safe and durable housing (Blair 2009).

Under Thabo Mbeki, the country's second democratically-elected president from the ANC, South Africa's economy experienced substantial macroeconomic growth but few improvements for the poor.[30] Moreover, Mbeki's neoliberal policy orientation prompted growing rifts within the ruling tripartite alliance of the ANC, the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). In the mid-1990s, the alliance partners developed the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which focused on growth through redistribution. The RDP called for a strategic role for the public sector, land reform, better training and a living wage for workers, and the provision of houses, electricity, and water to poor communities (Lodge 2002). Yet, without substantial foreign investment, the growth needed for these policies never emerged, prompting the ANC to shift to a more free-market plan known as Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) (Saunders 2005). Both COSATU and SACP opposed the ANC's abandonment of its *dirigiste* principles in favour of a plan that, among other things, emphasized privatization, tariff reductions, and productivity-linked wage rates (Lodge 2002; Saunders 2005).

At the same time, these policies prompted widespread discontent among the poor. In the largest city of Johannesburg, half of households earn less than 1600 Rand, or approximately US$170 per month (De Wet et al. 2008). Moreover, while a small number of extraordinarily wealthy black business tycoons benefitted from the ANC's Black Economic Empowerment initiative (BEE), most of the poor were still grappling with insufficient service delivery (Gumede 2008). In fact, between 2004 and 2006, the number of protests over substandard services in poor townships increased from 5,800 to over 10,000 (Gumede 2008). While water and electricity infrastructure were extended to millions of customers after the end of apartheid, the policies of cost-recovery, which require customers to pay the full cost of these services, meant that hundreds of thousands of residents effectively could not afford them (see Khunou 2002; Pape and McDonald 2002). Illegal reconnections of electricity subsequently became the source of violent conflict between the police and members of poor communities (Bassett and Clarke 2008). Moreover, while the ANC increased the number of people living in

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30 For example, between 2002 and 2008, the average annual GDP growth was 4.6 per cent (Statistics South Africa 2009b).

proper housing, the rate of progress disappointed many slum and squatter dwellers. Movements such as *Abahali baseMjondolo* ('shack dwellers') in Durban organized marches under the banner of 'No Land, No House, No Vote' while shack dwellers outside Johannesburg admitted losing faith in the ANC (Georgy 2007; Pithouse 2006). During 2008, tensions over insufficient jobs culminated with xenophobic riots in a number of Johannesburg's townships.

The dearth of jobs remains a major source of frustration in South Africa's urban areas. As in Zambia and Kenya, a demographic bulge in South Africa during the 1990s has resulted in a surfeit of young people now seeking jobs. While the official national unemployment rate is already high at around 26 per cent, it is double that rate for those between 18 to 24 years of age (Paton 2010: 33). Between late 2008 and early 2009, a further increase of 311,000 unemployed people occurred due to the loss of jobs in the trade, manufacturing, and construction sectors (Statistics South Africa 2009a, viii). One of the main drivers of unemployment is the limited supply of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs for those with little or poor quality education. Moreover, the country's labour unions increasingly are less representative of the country's most vulnerable workers. While the unions of the 1980s represented unskilled and semi-skilled workers, organized labour in South Africa today predominantly represents skilled, supervisory, and clerical labourers (Pillay 2008: 292).

Although he originally was a supporter of GEAR, Jacob Zuma capitalized on widespread discontent with these conditions (Bassett and Clarke 2008: 790). Having been vice-president until 2005, when he was forced to resign because of his involvement in a fraud case, Zuma blamed the government's failures on Mbeki's style of leadership rather than on the ANC. In December 2007, when the ANC held its first internal party elections since 1958, Zuma benefitted from both popular disillusionment as well as inter-alliance squabbling. With the help of leftist allies, Zuma unseated Mbeki as president of the ANC, and therefore as president of South Africa, by obtaining 2,329 delegate votes to Mbeki's 1,505 (Foster 2009). The vice-president, Kgalema Motlanthe, took over as interim president of the country until the next general elections could be held in April 2009. Furthermore, all of Mbeki's supporters were removed from the National Executive Committee, which is the party's main decision-making body (Bassett and Clarke 2008). Mbeki's followers left the ANC and formed a more economically conservative and business-friendly opposition party, named the Congress of the People (COPE).

In the period prior to the April 2009 elections, Zuma adopted a populist strategy that, like Sata and Odinga, was predicated on campaigning in poor urban areas, espousing a message relevant to the under-classes, and building on his charismatic image to forge unmediated ties with the marginalized masses. For instance, months before the official campaign period started, Zuma toured townships near Johannesburg to hear citizens' complaints about water and electricity and in turn promised greater public spending to create jobs and to improve services (see Brown 2008). In a study of voters' intentions in the country's largest township of Soweto, those who supported Zuma were more likely to be poorer in both objective and subjective terms (Ceruti 2008). Having grown up as a goat-herder with no formal education, he was able to endear himself to the poor, who viewed him as much more approachable than Mbeki. Indeed, Hart observes that Zuma held widespread appeal to the poor by simultaneously portraying himself as a liberation hero, a leftist, a traditionalist, and as an anti-elitist: 'His [Zuma's] regular reference to

himself as 'not educated' – but, by implication, extremely smart – is a direct attack on the technocratic elite surrounding Mbeki, often portrayed by Zuma supporters as arrogant and self-serving, and as not having served in the trenches of the revolutionary struggle' (Hart 2007: 97 and 98). Ceruti likewise finds a widespread perception that Soweto supporters viewed Zuma as someone 'like them' (Ceruti 2008: 322).

In addition to his 'man of the people' persona, Zuma both generates controversy and exudes charisma. He was not only implicated in the corruption case that cost him the vice-presidency, but also went on trial for rape in 2006. During his trial, masses of supporters gathered outside the Supreme Court each day to sing Zuma's signature song from his days in the liberation movement, 'Bring Me My Machine Gun', as well as other songs that symbolized the marginalization of the poor and the distance of the ruling elite (Gunner 2008). Zuma's campaign rallies also attracted massive crowds where the politician often danced on stage, thereby affirming the legitimacy of his clan name of *Msholozi*, which means dancer. Poor voters who attended these rallies saw the 67-year-old politician as a type of messiah who could revolutionize their lives (Foster 2009: 78).

Examining election results from Johannesburg's metropolitan region, which is South Africa's largest urban agglomeration, highlights the impact of Zuma's populist strategy. As seen in Table 7 the ANC won overwhelmingly in some of the city's regions with the most deprived neighbourhoods, such as Soweto, Ennersdale, and Midrand. Neighbourhoods in these regions tend to be categorized by large numbers of informal settlements and sub-standard housing. The breakaway neoliberal faction of the ANC, COPE, fared less well in these poorer neighbourhoods. However, Zuma's populist strategy proved less convincing to those in the wealthier areas of the city, such as Northcliff Randburg and Roodeport, where residents tended to lean more towards the Democratic Alliance (DA). According to Gumede (2008):

> COPE was unable to counter the ANC's message that it [COPE] forms part of a rich black and white cabal which opposes the interests of the poor. It and the DA focused their campaigns on Zuma's compromised morals and attacks on democratic institutions. This may have resonated in the black and white middle classes, but it fell on stony ground among those living in shacks, without jobs or food, who cling to Zuma's promises of free healthcare, education and social grants.

However, one of the goals of the ANC in the 2009 elections was not only to obtain a majority within the National Assembly, but also to win two-thirds of the parliament's 400 seats necessary to change the constitution. A substantial share of rural voters needed to be mobilized to achieve this goal, and one region where the party could make significant inroads was Kwa-Zulu-Natal, which is where the largest concentrations of Zulu-speakers are found and also one of South Africa's most rural provinces (Kersting 2009). Many Zulu speakers have long felt excluded from political power because the ANC's Mandela, Mbeki, and Motlanthe were all presidents from the Xhosa community (Johnson 2008). Instead, residents in the province historically aligned themselves with the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Table 7: Vote shares of selected South African parties in Johannesburg, 2009 elections

Administrative regions of metropolitan Johannesburg	Selected parties (% of vote within region)			
	ANC	COPE	DA	IFP
Ennersdale	67.1	8.6	16.7	1.3
Inner City	59.7	10.9	21	4.6
Midrand	69	9.9	17.6	0.7
Northcliff Randburg	26.3	11.8	53.4	0.5
Roodeport	48.3	9.5	36.8	0.5
Sandton	54.5	10.2	29.7	2.1
Soweto	84.1	7.9	1.9	3.5

Source: Calculated by author based on election data from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), available at http://www.elections.org.za/.

Given these circumstances, Zuma combined his reputation as a champion of the poor with an unabashed promotion of his Zulu identity. Importantly, Zuma did not portray the ANC as an exclusionary party. In fact, unlike his predecessor, Zuma actively courted white Afrikaners during the campaign, a community which had at one time included some of the most ardent supporters of apartheid policies (*Business Day* 2009). Yet, as a polygamist who readily dons animal skins to participate in Zulu ceremonies, Zuma showed that he was comfortable with his heritage. While Mbeki rarely mentioned his Xhosa background, Zuma explained in an interview that he was 'A South African who grew up here in KZN [Kwa-Zulu Natal province], who is a Zulu with Zulu traditions and Zulu values pushed into myself' (cited in Foster 2009: 75).

Before the 2009 campaign officially even began, Zuma supporters began wearing T-shirts with the politician's face and which stated '100 per cent Zulu boy'. He often threw Zulu phrases into his speeches, and his final campaign rally in Johannesburg was labeled the *Siyanqoba* rally, meaning 'to conquer' in the Zulu language. In a country with eleven official languages, the use of Zulu for national rallies reinforced the impression that Zuma was not simply an ANC candidate but also a Zulu one. This tactic certainly succeeded in wresting away voters from the IFP in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In 1999, the ANC only obtained 39 per cent of the vote in that particular province compared with 42 per cent for the IFP. In the 2009 elections, the ANC obtained 64 per cent in the province, which is more than triple the IFP's 20.5 per cent.[31]

At the national level, the ANC was never at risk of losing the 2009 elections. However, at a time when many South Africans were disappointed with the ANC's performance, the emergence of COPE and the growing ability of the DA to build on its reputation for competence did threaten to reduce the party's sizeable parliamentary majority. Though the ANC fell just shy of its two-thirds majority goal, it obtained six million more votes

[31] Election results from South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission. See http://www.elections.org.za/

than all of the other opposition parties combined, which is one million more than in the 2004 elections (Southall and Daniel 2009: 117). Moreover, it is notable that this incumbent party continued winning in urban areas in a continent where opposition parties traditionally dominate in cities. Zuma's ability to reinvigorate the party's image by fusing a populist strategy towards the poor with appeals along identity lines demonstrates that this tactic of building dual coalitions is not only available to Africa's opposition parties but also to incumbents.

5 Cross-regional comparisons and conclusions

Sata, Odinga, and Zuma all utilized populist strategies that involved the fusion of charisma with policy promises oriented towards the priorities of the growing urban poor. They portrayed themselves as 'men of the people' who were comfortable wading into slums, townships, and squatter compounds, and such strategies appealed to poor voters in ethnically diverse cities over the alternative approaches used by other political parties. However, such strategies can be alienating or irrelevant to other constituents. In order to still mobilize the share of rural voters necessary to win presidential elections according to each country's specific electoral institutions, ethno-linguistic appeals were used in those regions of each country where the party leader shared the ethno-linguistic identity of the region's respective residents. Thus, they combined class appeals in urban areas with overtures to ascriptive identities in rural areas, mobilizing both groups with either a real or imagined story of exclusion from political and economic power structures. As in Gibson's (1997) analysis, these three party leaders' support relied on the creation of a coalition that encompassed both 'metropolitan' and 'peripheral' elements.

Populist strategies in Africa therefore share a number of similar components to those found in contemporary Latin America. This includes the dual coalition-building that neo-populist leaders such as Bolivia's Morales employ (Madrid 2008), as well as the fusion of charismatic leadership with eclectic policy promises oriented towards the priorities of sub-altern groups, particularly in urban areas. Like Latin America, many of these promises have grown out of popular discontent with the inability of incumbent leaders to respond to key development challenges facing the region.

Yet, a number of contrasts are also apparent between the two regions. First, many of Latin America's contemporary populist leaders gained credibility from their status as political outsiders. Alberto Fujimori appealed to Peru's poor voters particularly because he lacked any partisan affiliations and therefore could credibly claim that he represented the interests of the people rather than those of established politicians (Roberts 1995: 94). Likewise, Evo Morales' MAS party never participated in any of Bolivia's coalition governments and consequently appealed to voters disenchanted with traditional parties (Madrid 2008: 493). Hugo Chavez's attacks on Venezuela's oligarchical regimes and promises of radical reform were believable precisely because he was an outsider to the political system (Weyland 2003: 828). By contrast, Sata, Odinga, and Zuma have all been insiders in their country's political scene for decades and often collaborated with those they ultimately came to oppose, including Mwanawasa, Kibaki, and Mbeki. Nevertheless, they all succeeded in creating the image of outsiders who loathed the existing political establishment for its alleged perpetuation of vast socioeconomic inequalities.

A second and related point is that contemporary manifestations of populism in parts of Latin America are viewed as symptomatic of a breakdown of long-established party systems in countries with highly unequal political and economic orders, which in turn created a window of opportunity for outsider candidates to emerge (Roberts 2007: 4). However, most African countries, including the cases presented here, are still in a period of nascent democratization. In fact, electoral volatility remains considerably high in Africa (Bogaards 2008; Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005), and even greater than that observed in Latin America (Kuenzi and Lambright 2001). In other words, these African populist leaders are emerging not as an alternative to established, institutionalized party systems but rather as a substitute for the lack of them.

Third, in order to reconcile the diverse policy orientations espoused by neo-populist leaders in Latin America, scholars such as Weyland have argued that the defining feature of populism is the plebiscitarian relationship and unmediated ties it fosters between a leader and his/her followers (Weyland 2001: 14). While affirming the importance of this relationship, this study has also illustrated that in the African context, populist strategies cannot be divorced from programmatic content, which is defined by the goal of social inclusion for economically marginalized groups.

At a time when Africa is reconciling rapid demographic changes and socioeconomic inequality with the challenges of party development and democratic consolidation, the emergence of populist strategies highlights the flexibility of African leaders to merge traditional forms of mobilization, such as personalism, with an awareness of new issues affecting their citizens. Moreover, this populism has proved surprisingly compatible with identity appeals in rural areas. Whether leaders who rely on populist strategies actually improve the welfare of the poor when, and if, they come into office is a question for future research. However, the incorporation of the urban poor's concerns into political discourse may at least signify a gradual transformation of African parties away from purely personalistic entities and into more legitimate representatives of their respective country's citizens.

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