

## JUSTUS OTIATO WAFULA CPS(K);Ph.D

### Ph.D ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine voter behaviour in general elections and its implications on the development of liberal political democracy in Kenya. An examination of voting behaviour in general elections might shed some light to the country's pursuit of a 'stable' political democracy. Consequently, this study endeavoured to examine the factors that structure voting behaviour, namely; purposive corporate social bonds, primordial corporate social bonds and socio-demographic variables. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design with a multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive and systematic random sampling methods to select 600 informants from six constituencies of which two were urban and four were rural in four regions of the republic of Kenya. Because of delimitations in terms of resources and logistics, only four regions were sampled out of the possible then eight provinces of Kenya. These four regions were the then Nairobi Province, NEP, Western Province and Nyanza Province. The four regions were chosen based on their unique voting behaviour in general elections. The main data collection instrument was structured questionnaire and where necessary secondary data were used to augment the study findings. SPSS was used in data management and analysis. The descriptive statistics used in this study included frequency distributions; percentages, means and later cross-tabulations were computed. Inferential statistics such as ANOVA, t-test and linear regression were also employed to test relationships, predictions and draw conclusions. Focus group discussions were carried out, summarised, categorised and emerging themes used in the discussion to augment quantitative information. Research findings obtained revealed that region, religion and income were the best predictors of voting behaviour. Voters in the then Nyanza (Luo) were highly influenced by social bonds in their voting behaviour, while Islam had a persuasive influence in shaping voting behaviour of its adherents more than any other religion. Voters earning more than Ksh. 10,000 were found to be independent of social bonds in their voting behaviour. On the basis of these findings, the research concluded that this might be some kind of modern day *functionalism*. Some form of 'function'-tangible or intangible that some regional or religious affiliation performs for voters which is why they are more likely to stick to one of their kind (or against as the case may be) or vote the highest bidder for those with low incomes. It was also concluded that it is because of lack of civic education coupled with strong primary social bonds (i.e in-group identity writ large). This means that voters are more likely to vote for candidates who originate from their regions, confirming voters' strong attachment to the notion of "home district". The notion of "home district" or region in Kenyan politics is a surrogate for ethnicity and/or clanism. On the basis of this finding, this research recommended that a policy framework be worked out for IEBC, NCIC and other players involved in civic education to engender liberal civic principles and consciousness in their curriculum that will inculcate in the citizens liberal democratic ethos necessary for the development of liberal democracy in Kenya.