

**JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI AND POLITICAL PLURALISM IN
KENYA, 1932-2012**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Conferment for the Degree of Master
of Arts in History of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology**

August, 2025

DECLARATION
CANDIDATES' DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for the award of any certificate degree in any university or for any other award.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my beloved family—my husband Francis Sitati, my son Talib Kigame, my daughter Lani Tendai—and to my grandfather, Samuel Enos Akhwaba.

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I owe the success of this research and writing of this thesis to Almighty God who bestowed upon me the strength, good health, resilience and unanimous grace of the whole journey. His teachings have always been my inspiration and the motivator when faced with a difficult situation. My utmost gratitude is to my supervisors, Rev. Fr. Dr. Kizito Muchanga and Prof. Pontian Godfrey Okoth, whose priceless assistance, guidance, and commitment made this work to become what it is today, having been nurtured to its completion levels by these two men. Their positive criticism, intellectual stimulation, and self-sacrifice gave me the clearness and strength to narrow down on my thoughts and aim at the best in my study.

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ABSTRACT

The plural society has both a lot that the citizens have to expect out of the government and vice versa. This study questioned the article by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and Political Pluralism in Kenya, 1932-2012 due to the participation of the politicians. The research objectives used in the study were as follows i.e. to: examine the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi 1932-1960; trace the history of political pluralism in Kenya concerning Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since 1960; assess the contributions of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenya since 1960 and finally, evaluate the impacts of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. Notably, the study will help achieve the understanding that, democracy is healthy in political governance everywhere across the globe. The justification of the study is based on two justifications which include the academic and policy justification. It embraced a pluralist theory of government as one of its theories. Along with theoretical framework, a literature review was conducted under the target objectives. The methodology of the research involved a qualitative research methodology which embraced historical research design. The target group was the veteran politicians, immediate family members and the veteran journalists. Primary and secondary sources were used to collect data in the study. Content analysis and presentation in the form of themes have been used to carry out the analysis. The results according to the particular objectives are as follows; firstly, young Shikuku was frequently caught listening to those who talked about the Kenya African Union and the Mau Mau revolts. Also, the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution was a turning point in Kenya politics, which involved the introduction of new legal frameworks, which increased political pluralism. Also, Shikuku was not afraid to oppose oppression. He was among the handful of voice of the voiceless that could voice his opposition to the government and remind it that Kenya was not a one party state but a one party State by force and finally, the battle against political repression by Shikuku began in the early sixties as the country was going through the transition phase to independence. The findings in accordance with the outlined research objectives are: The first, the early upbringing of Shikuku was heavily conditioned by the strong synthesis of the religious discipline, the traditional African culture and the awareness of anti-colonialism. According to the second objective, cross-cultural operating capacity provided Shikuku with the means through which he could voice African issues to the colonialists and subsequently to the Kenyan government. According to the third specific objective, Shikuku was one of the first leaders to caution about the risks of the power being concentrated in one party. According to the third definite aim, during the initial years, it was still possible to oppose it, however, after 1964, the disobedient people were considered as traitors. In the recommendations following each particular research objective; first the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Arts could use the integrated mentorship and civic education program implemented in the primary and secondary schools in Kenya. Second: to safeguard the political history of Kenya, a national archival and digital centre on political pluralism ought to be implemented as well as thirdly, the history of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi about political pluralism should be incorporated in the Kenya history education. Finally, there is the need to consolidate civic education programs in order to raise awareness of the citizens on the role and implications of political pluralism in Kenya.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

CCM:	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
DPS:	Directorate of Postgraduate Studies
F.G.D:	Focus Group Discussion
FORD:	Forum For the Restoration of Democracy
FRELIMO:	Front Liberation of Mozambique
ISERC:	Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee
KADU:	Kenya Africa Democratic Union
KANU:	Kenya African National Union
KPU:	Kenya Peoples Union
MMD:	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
MMUST:	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
NACOSTI:	National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation
U.S.A:	United States of America
U.S:	United States
UNITA:	Union Nacional Para la Independencial Total de Angola

OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

De facto: It means what is practiced as opposed to the law. Also it outlines how things were in the Kenyan politics between the years 1964 and 1982 when Kenya was technically a one party state.

Democracy: a government that is run by the entire citizens or all qualified citizens of a state, preferably by election. In this regard, it is a system of government that permits several interests, which have divergent opinions.

Democratic state: This is where a government is ruled by the rule of law, and it has an elected representative government, and the decision making is accessible to every social group of the state.

Law-maker: a person who creates laws, particularly of a political unit, particularly of a Legislative body such as parliament. Martin Shikuku was a representative legislator in the national assembly as a member of Butere Constituency.

Multiparty system: It is a political system that has more than one political party that constitutes the political spectrum, all of which may be awarded a government office, either individually or in a coalition government. A type of system that involves numerous political parties in process of legislation and all the activities of the parliament.

Political Pluralism: This is the acknowledgment and the acceptance of diversity in a political institution, which is enshrined in laws. It is whereby more than one political party is formed and permits divergent opinions.

Single party state: This is a form of a sovereign state whereby only a single political party holds the state usually through elected officials. KANU was the one party between 1964 and 1991 in Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has revealed the background of the study, statement of the problem and objectives of the study. It also discusses the extent, restrictions, importance and rationality of the research. The theoretical framework, literature review and research methodology that was used in this study has also been discussed in the chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Political pluralism concept of a government that will incorporate the presence of different political ideologies and party politics is based on the broader democratic ideals that have developed over the centuries. Pluralism in the world history is inspired by the philosophy of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Montesquieu who upheld the principles of separation of power, civil liberties and representative government.¹ However, political pluralism as a practice became markedly significant in the 20th century, especially following the global shifts during and after the Cold War.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a defining moment for political pluralism worldwide.² The communist theories that had long repressed multi-party systems were ruined as the Cold War was nearing its end, thus leading to liberal democracy models in authoritarian states. As the Soviet influence was weakened, Eastern European states like

¹DeWiel, Boris Cedric. *Democracy as diversity: civil society, pluralism and the limits of the state*. 1998., p.56.

²Jayapalan, N. *Comprehensive history of political thought*. Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 2001., p.56.

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia rapidly shifted into multiparty democracy.³ St. Pope John Paul II contributed significantly towards the achievement of these changes, both through authorizing peaceful opposition groups, such as Solidarity in his homeland Poland and through advocating human rights and moral standing within the Eastern Bloc. Such influential leaders as Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia became the voices of the new democracy, just like the Pope had proclaimed the freedom, dignity, and spiritual strength against the totalitarian rule. All these changes in the world acted as a great inspiration to the political reform movements globally, especially in Africa where single-party regimes that were authoritarian had dominated the world since independence to a large extent.⁴

In Africa, the influence of the global pro-democracy wave manifested in the early 1990s with the collapse of authoritarian regimes and the establishment of multi-party politics.⁵ Other nations such as Ghana under Jerry John Rawlings initiated a process that would see them move towards democratization in 1992 following decades of military dictatorship. The process of democracy in Malawi saw Bakili Muluzi and civil society organizations leading the way and finally having a referendum that brought to an end the one-party rule of Hastings Banda in 1993.⁶ Frederick Chiluba, in Zambia, opposed and overtook Kenneth Kaunda in the 1991 general elections, which was the first peaceful change of leadership in the nation through a multiparty system. All these cases in Africa are an indication of how the pluralism

³Prushankin, Keith. "How to Break a State: How Populists Challenge Liberal Democracy in Post-Communist Central Europe." PhD diss., 2023., p.61.

⁴Leff, Carol. *The Czech and Slovak republics: Nation versus state*. Routledge, 2018., p.92.

⁵Rakner, Lise. "Institutionalizing the pro-democracy movements: the case of Zambia's Movement for Multiparty Democracy." In *Political Opposition and Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp. 51-69. Routledge, 2016., p.63.

⁶Kumah-Abiwu, Felix, and Kwame Bofo-Arthur. "Complexities of Ghana's foreign policy under Jerry John Rawlings (1981–2001)." In *Jerry John Rawlings: Leadership and Legacy: A Pan-African Perspective*, pp. 233-249. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022., p.242.

was advocated by domestic actors with the encouragement of international pressure and the ideological vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁷ The civil society, churches, student movements, and opposition leaders became the main agents in questioning the need to liberalize politics. An example of the power of the internal coalition in eliminating one-party systems can be seen in the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) which was a coalition of opposition parties, trade unions and church leaders in Zambia.⁸ These continental shifts laid the groundwork for similar demands in East Africa, including in Kenya.

The East African region had an uneven movement to pluralism. Under Yoweri Museveni, Uganda has had a no party system, but in 2005, a referendum made the multi-party politics legal. Pluralism was also adopted in 1990s by Tanzania as constitutional amendments in 1992 legalized opposition parties although the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) continued to dominate.⁹ On the contrary, Kenya started its formal transition earlier but without resistance. The multiparty democratic pressure in Kenya was at full force in the late 1980s and early 1990s, whereby in 1991, the section 2A of the Constitution that had officially made Kenya a de jure one-party state was repealed. This turning point facilitated the enrollment of alternative parties and also revived the opposition voices which had been

⁷Njoroge, Joseph Gichuhi. *Dilemmas and prospects for democratization in sub-Saharan Africa: democratic transition and consolidation in Kenya and Zambia*. The University of Tennessee, 1999., p.13.

⁸Muwowo, Simon. *Multipartism and the Matrilineal governance system of the Bemba speaking people of Zambia: An African theological perspective*. University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2015., p.12.

⁹Nyaluke, David. "The basis of democracy and regime legitimacy in African states: The case of Tanzania." PhD diss., Dublin City University, 2013., p.82.

curtailed under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government under President Daniel arap Moi.¹⁰

The history of political pluralism in Kenya cannot be understood without acknowledging the individuals who championed the cause.¹¹ Though the efforts of Oginga Odinga, Ahmed Bamahriz, George Nthenge, Raila Odinga, Kenneth Matiba, Charles Rubia, and George Anyona are frequently mentioned, Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi is a very unique personality whose political activism can be traced in the pre-independence and post-independence periods. As the so-called People's Watchman, Shikuku was a key figure in the process of pluralism in Kenya as he believed in constitutionalism, civil liberties, and inclusive government. His political life that started during the early 1960s represents both opportunities and risks of promoting the principles of democratic rule in an environment that is usually unkind to the opposition.¹²

Shikuku was central to the opposition politics in the early years of the multiparty democracy in Kenya. Being one of the founding members of the Forum of Restoration Democracy (FORD) together with Masinde Muliro and Oginga Odinga, Shikuku gave the party ideological foundation and political leadership which helped the party to challenge the monopoly of power of KANU. His focus on grassroots mobilization and civic education appealed to average Kenyans as most of them had become disillusioned with Moi regime that had been autocratic in nature. Even after FORD was divided due to intra-faction power

¹⁰ Killian, Bernadeta. *Pluralist democracy and the transformation of democratic attitudes in Tanzania*. University of California, Los Angeles, 2001., p.32.

¹¹Muango, Ettah A. "Cultural pluralism as a source of political instability in Kenya: a critical analysis." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2013., p.92.

¹²Olukoshi, Adebayo O., ed. *The politics of opposition in contemporary Africa*. Nordic Africa Institute, 1998., p.40.

wrangles over leadership between Shikuku and Oginga Odinga into several groups, FORD-Kenya under the leadership of Oginga Odinga and FORD-Asili under the leadership of Kenneth Matiba. Shikuku was a firm believer in political rivalry and election change.¹³

Shikuku did not only add some historical footnotes to the politics of pluralism in Kenya, but he embodied the wider struggles of inclusion, representation, and rule that have characterized the Kenyan state. Through his speeches, meetings with the people and his publications, he repeatedly highlighted the threats of centralization, loss of checks, balances, and electoral control. Shikuku demonstrated a pan-African vision of governing Kenya based on pluralism, accountability, and justice by connecting the issues of democracy in Kenya with more continental and global flows.¹⁴

Despite his significant contributions, Shikuku's role in entrenching multiparty democracy remains relatively understudied compared to other figures.¹⁵ This paper attempted to address this gap by analyzing his political life between 1932 and 2012 and putting them in the context of the overall historical development of political pluralism. In so doing, it not only offers a more holistic history of the Kenyan politics, but also gives an insight into how the relevance of pluralism in the current governance can be noted. It is in this context, which is experienced in political arena, that informed the necessity of questioning Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and political pluralism in Kenya, 1932-2012.

¹³Khadiagala, Gilbert M. "Political movements and coalition politics in Kenya: entrenching ethnicity." *South African Journal of International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2010): 65-84., p.67.

¹⁴Muna, Wilson K., Anne Stanton, and Diana M. Mwau. "Deconstructing intergenerational politics between 'Young Turks' and 'Old Guards' in Africa: an exploration of the perceptions on leadership and governance in Kenya." *Journal of Youth Studies* 17, no. 10 (2014): 1378-1394., p.1385.

¹⁵Omari, Nyagaka Edwin. "Political Participation of Ethnic Minorities in Kenya with Specific Reference to the Asian Community in Nairobi City County, 1963-2017." PhD diss., Kenyatta University, 2021., p.95.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Not many politicians can flout the government and system. One of them was Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, the mystery and destroyer. Shikuku was the final individual to cross the floor of the house to join the government side at the time when Jomo Kenyatta was murdering pluralism and plunging Kenya into a one party state following the merger between KANU and KADU in 1964. In the year 1975, Shikuku was arrested in the parliament precincts because he dared to criticize the KANU government and called it dead, and he was detained as such. Shikuku was in the forefront at the beginning of the second liberation as the champion of multipartyism. Along with all the security forces of Moi, Martin Shikuku took his fellow men to the historical march to Kamukunji grounds on 7th July 1990 (Saba Saba Day). Regardless of this famous march, Shikuku helped in disintegrating the opposition in 1991. As a legislator, the parliament sittings were lively and his services in the house made him to be given the title, poor man watchman. But unlike his counterparts who attended the Lancaster House Conference and the Liberation process have gained and amassed wealth, Shikuku is one of the few who have died a poor nationalist. Moreover, Shikuku even received the Golden Jubilee Award (posthumous) in 2013, but died poor in 2012 as a former. The parliament is today undermined and undermined due to the allegation of bribery and negative ethnicity. Maybe, the 14th parliament can emulate the example of Martin Shikuku, who revised the history of his country he once again. Despite his contribution, little research has been conducted in a bid to reconstruct the history of his contribution to pluralism in Kenya. It is against this backdrop that this paper reduced to Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and political pluralism in Kenya 1932-2012.

1.3 Objectives

This study has both the general and specific objectives. These objectives aided the researcher to navigate through the study. They are as follows;

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective was to examine Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and political pluralism in Kenya, 1932-2012.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives that guided the research were four. These specific research objectives were to:

- i. Interrogate the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, 1932-1960.
- ii. Trace the history of political pluralism in Kenya relating to Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since 1960.
- iii. Assess the contributions of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.
- iv. Evaluate the impacts of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenyan history since 1960.

1.4 Research Questions

The four specific research objectives that guided the study were addressed by research questions as follows;

- i. How did the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi impact on his future career?

- ii. What is the history of political pluralism in Kenya relating to Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since 1960?
- iii. Did Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi leave any legacy in the struggle for political pluralism in Kenya since 1960?
- iv. What are the impacts Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenya's history since 1960?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This paper has made a historical evaluation of political pluralism in Kenya and especially the monumental work of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi between 1932 and 2012. Martin Shikuku has been selected due to the fact that he was an understudied person as far as political history is concerned unlike his counterparts such as Ronald Ngala. The political career of Shikuku was majorly based on ideals of democracy hence political pluralism, although the wider temporal frame of the study is the year 1932 up to the year 2012 in which Shikuku was born and died respectively. The focal point of the study is the year 1960 which was a very significant year in the political development of Kenya. This is the year when Shikuku came into the limelight as a young representative to Kenya in the first Lancaster House Conference in London and it is the theme of political pluralism around which the legacy of Shikuku can be viewed.

The paper critically examined how political pluralism in Kenya has developed over the past five decades through the political career of Shikuku as the main analysis tool. His involvement in the political system, which included his leadership in opposition, membership of major political parties, and his activism in the area of democratic space, provided his own distinctive view of what multiparty democracy in the country was and is. The study explored

political, economic and social aspects of pluralism in Kenya to ensure that the extent of his influence is contemplated. This also constituted his works in parliament, party politics, civil liberties and reforms of governance and the influence he had on what people spoke about concerning the freedom of political representation and freedoms. The research adopted a historical approach, which utilized an archival approach, oral interviews, parliamentary documents, and secondary literature to rebuild on the role and evaluation of Shikuku to the overall democratization process in Kenya.

The data was gathered in the field during three months, November 2024 to January 2025, with the formal consent of the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST-DPS). This time slot facilitated much interaction with respondents and institutions in Kakamega, Mumias, Butere, Nakuru and Nairobi that gave a lot of information about Shikuku heritage and political pluralism in the post-independent Kenya. By this narrow but broad based questioning, the paper had the objective of not only charting the life and political philosophy of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi but also of shedding light on the larger trends in the democratization process of Kenya and the issues and stepping stones that were taken in pursuit of political plurality.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations were expected in this study. Indicatively, there are few secondary sources on the availability of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. Secondly, reaching politicians who had close ties with Martin Shikuku was another blow as a few politicians have not been in the limelight in the recent past. In this respect, this research was able to address such problems by; on the problem of few secondary sources, the research used videos on YouTube and primary data through oral interviews of close friends and relatives. Furthermore, the

researcher made reservations with individuals who worked directly under Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi when he was in office. This made sure that the strategies are implemented to gather appropriate information on political pluralism as promoted by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in his political life in Kenya. When the researcher encountered the Shikuku relatives which are younger and young people living in Butere constituency in the event of the data collection, they were unable to give the necessary information. They were referring to those with rich information on the role of Shikuku towards political pluralism.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The political class and the society will greatly benefit in this study. Also, it is hoped that, this study will play a great part in ensuring that, democracy is conducive to political governance across the globe. This will witness a shining nation that will anticipate the dominance of peace, political stability and enjoying of human rights. Moreover, the research will help the future researcher of political history to have a background of political pluralism particularly in Kenya. This will create a platform of reviewing and potentially developing on the relevant issues that will occur in other regimes that are established and that will accrue.

1.8 Justification of the Study

The study was justified in two fundamental ways. These are academic justification and policy justification.

1.8.1 Academic Justification

Knowledge has been documented by different scholars basing on political pluralism. Thus this research hanged onto these research works to construct its strong conclusion. This study

on Ethnicity and Political Pluralism in Kenya has been partially taken up by academicians like Kwatamba (2008). His works also helped the researcher to relate his findings and recommendations with what came about in the works of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. Moreover, Andreev (2021) has devoted the majority of his attention to Political pluralism as one of the contributors of contemporary society and state development. These readings provided the researcher with pertinent information that a contemporary society needs to be able to anticipate the right progression of pluralism in keeping with the efforts that the present generation of politicians has contributed towards and compare it with the efforts that the early politicians put forward. This acts as a comparison in history of politics within a state. It is also crucial to add that a successful study that analyzes the comparisons up to the extent of pluralism is highly important. The study was informed by the writings of Stepanenkove (2013) who authored on comparative analysis of institution of political and functional representation of the United States and Russia in the information revolution. This gives the setting of this study in a wide global outlook of academicians.

1.8.2 Policy Justification

This paper is grounded on the fact that there is a necessity to critically analyze the historical development of policies that regulate the political pluralism in Kenya and its effectiveness in terms of creating the democratic society. The reintroduction of multiparty democracy eradicated the policies that had been adopted before the 1964 and the 1982 Constitutional Amendments, which enshrined a one-party system by concentrating power in the executive and quashing the voices of dissent. Such structures repressed dissent, suppressed the rights of association and encouraged a climate of suppression and ethnic divide. It was a significant step towards opening democratic space with Section 2A being repealed in 1991, the 1997

Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) reforms and finally the 2010 Constitution. These policies have however not been perfect as they are characterized by poor implementation, politicization of institutions and the existence of ethnic based politics that prejudice genuine pluralism.

The study also helps to improve the policies by relying on the political life of the democratic fight hero Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to highlight both the achievements and the gaps that are still lingering in the political systems of Kenya. The unremitting belief of Shikuku in inclusiveness and accountability is a good way to analyze the past and current policies and see the reason why most reforms have failed to produce the desired effect. The research will also provide historically based findings and suggestions that can guide the next generation of policy-makers to enforce the provisions of the 2010 Constitution concerning democracy and representation and aim at overcoming the structural impedimental factors to inclusive governance. In this way, it seeks to contribute to the continued conversations about ways in which Kenya can further and continue to embrace real political pluralism.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This paper was led by Pluralist theory of Government. This is a theory that was propounded by David Truman in 1951 and subsequently developed by Robert Dahl in 1956. Additionally, this theory has been practiced particularly in the United States of America which is one of the well established pluralist countries in the world. Thus, the success of political pluralism in Kenya in the context of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi required the utilization of this theory by the current study.

1.9.1 Pluralist Theory of Government

This paper took, The Pluralist Theory of Government, which was developed by a political theorist, Robert A. Dahl in 1956. It offers a critical concept framework of the development of the political pluralism in Kenya and involvement of individual actors like Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. His initial publication, A Preface to Democratic Theory, suggested that in the contemporary democracies, the rule is no longer exercised by one elite but rather, it is the competition and interaction of several interest groups that shape the modern democracies.¹⁶ These groups have their objectives and constituencies and they affect the decision-making processes and the public policy by negotiating and coalition-building. The primary interpretive tool that will be used in this study is the pluralist theory, where the political life of Shikuku and the overall trend of democratic development in Kenya will be analyzed.

The applicability of the pluralist theory to the study is based on the concept of diversity, political involvement and decentralization of authority.¹⁷ The political career of Shikuku covered decades of critical moments of the post-independence history in Kenya where he was able to uphold the ideals of multiparty democracy, inclusiveness, and anti-authoritarianism. The way he has been involved in various political parties such as Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), and other opposition parties, are all part of his ideology of pluralism. The application of pluralist theory can help the study to unravel the logic that Shikuku used in his political decisions, championing minority voices and his long-term impacts on bringing a democratic order in Kenya.

¹⁶Ibid., p.56.

¹⁷ Beaumont, Justin, and Walter Nicholls. "Plural governance, participation and democracy in cities." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32, no. 1 (2008): 87-94., p.91.

Pluralist theory believes that political power is diffused among a wide range of organized interest groups as opposed to the centralized elite that concentrates its power.¹⁸ This supposition is a reflection of the Kenyan political space especially between the 1960s and the early 2000s where various parties were grappling with the extension of democratic space. The activities of Shikuku in the debate in parliament, his cross-ethnic alliances and attempts to voice the peripheral voices show how citizens can be used to shape the pluralistic process.¹⁹ The theory considers political competition as part and parcel of democracy hence the importance of civil society groups, political parties and advocacy groups in the process of governance. Shikuku existed in this competitive world, frequently distancing himself as an upright critic and mediator between incompatible political agendas.

In a next application of the theory, the research is based on the pluralist notion that the best way of attaining democratic governance is via inclusivity in the decision-making process.²⁰ The parliamentary work of Shikuku, especially the opposition to constitutional amendments implementing the single-party rule as well as his opposition to the request to change the constitution to support the rule of law, demonstrates how he used the institutions to effectively counter the authoritarian drift. His adherence to dialogue, negotiation and reform is similar to that of pluralists, who believe in gradualism and reform through systematic political action as opposed to radicalism.²¹ Another key feature of the theory, which Shikuku

¹⁸Jordan, Grant. "The pluralism of pluralism: an anti-theory?." *Political studies* 38, no. 2 (1990): 286-301., p.293.

¹⁹Weisiko, Christopher M. "Implementing the Right to Public Participation in the Legislative Process in Kenya." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2023., p.70.

²⁰Bauböck, Rainer. "Democratic inclusion: A pluralist theory of citizenship." In *Democratic inclusion*, pp. 3-102. Manchester University Press, 2018., p.92.

²¹Hart, Stephen M. *Cultural dilemmas of progressive politics: Styles of engagement among grassroots activists*. University of Chicago Press, 2010., p.26.

promoted, is the issues of political tolerance and coexistence, which the man of consideration pursued despite the contradiction of his views with the mainstream political trends.

However, the theory does not lack restrictions. It assumes the equality among the political actors, and this is one of its weaknesses since the structural inequalities limiting access to political influence are usually ignored.²² Ethnicity, economic differences and state oppression has often tilted the playing field in the Kenyan context. The other constraint is that pluralism can also be overshadowed by the continuation of the elite domination particularly in the transitional democracies, where informal networks and patronage can easily demean formal institutions. Lastly, the pluralist theory fails to explain the existence of authoritarian regression or manipulation of democracy by influential incumbents. The weaknesses are not that strong, but they do not refute the overall utility of the theory in this work as its major principles can be applied to the Kenyan political environment and the career of Joseph Martin Shikuku.²³

The theory is very effective in responding to the four objectives of the study. When looking at the early life of Shikuku, it is possible to analyze it through the prism of pluralist theory that enables to see how his life in a multicultural world and early exposure to political diversity influenced his pluralist orientation.²⁴ Personal experiences have played a role in making him devote his life to inclusive governance. The theory can be used to explain the structural explanation of the rise of many political actors and the concerns of legal and institutional reforms in Kenya since 1960.²⁵ It assists in explaining the ways in which the

²²Young, Iris Marion. "Structural injustice and the politics of difference." In *Intersectionality and beyond*, pp. 289-314. Routledge-Cavendish, 2008., p.295.

²³Ibid., p.718.

²⁴Young, Crawford. *The politics of cultural pluralism*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1979., p.56.

²⁵Ndegwa, Stephen N. "Citizenship and ethnicity: an examination of two transition moments in Kenyan politics." *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997): 599-616., p.604.

opposition parties, civil society and reformists such as Shikuku have maneuvered through a generally hostile political environment to champion democratic transition.

In the analysis of the effects of political pluralism in Kenyan history, the pluralist theory can be used to determine how competition and emergence of several political voices has transformed governance in the country, enhanced accountability, and civic consciousness.²⁶ The power of Shikuku as an opposing voice helped to achieve this change, which is why the role of the colorful opposition in a good democracy is important. Finally, in evaluating the contributions of Shikuku on political pluralism, the theory is able to capture his essence as a resilient supporter of dialogue, accountability, and democratic space which were some of the characteristics of his political activities in various periods of time.²⁷

Overall, it can be concluded that the Pluralist Theory of Government not only fits but also supplements everything in this research. The main themes it explores such as the diversity of power centers, competition among groups, toleration, and institutional participation are clearly brought out in a political life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi.²⁸ The fact that the theory is able to explain adequately the achievement of every goal of the study and the fact that it is able to capture the dynamic nature of the political environment that Shikuku worked in, makes it a complete and complete theoretical framework. It, therefore, does not need other theories to supplement it. It is the best model to explain the legacy of Shikuku and the history of political pluralism at large in Kenya.

²⁶Muango, Ettah A. "Cultural pluralism as a source of political instability in Kenya: a critical analysis." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2013., p.72.

²⁷Ibid., p.75.

²⁸Jordan, Grant. "The pluralism of pluralism: an anti-theory?." *Political studies* 38, no. 2 (1990): 286-301., p.296.

1.10 Literature Review

In this section, the different literatures reviewed to help in developing the background of the study are discussed in sequence of the first, second, third objectives and fourth objective of the study. Weaknesses have been noted and the manner in which they were addressed has been expounded. A conclusion of gaps that have been experienced has also been given at the end.

1.10.1 The Early Life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi

The biography of the political actors has always been a significant focus of interpretation of the greater political processes and changes. Political scholarship the world over has recognized the significance of experiences of leaders during their early years of growth in their ideological beliefs, leadership approaches, and their roles in the evolution of democracy. In this regard, literature about leaders like Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, and Mahatma Gandhi has drawn an enormous insight on the experiences of their early lives, education, family dynamics, and socio-political environments as initial aspects of their political characters.²⁹ Nevertheless, the research in the Kenyan setting is not extensive on the early life of political figures and very few researchers have been keen on the individuals lives that constitute political agency. This can be noted especially in the case of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi.

The world world of education There is an academic tradition in political psychology and political biography, which stresses the importance of a childhood and adolescence in shaping political behavior. The theory of Van Manen, Karen-Jo psychosocial development and Susan

²⁹Adebajo, Adekeye. *Global Africa: Profiles in Courage, Creativity, and Cruelty*. Taylor & Francis, 2024, p.67

Krauss works on the connection between personality and politics contributed to a lot of political biographies during the 20th century.³⁰ These works indicate that it is necessary to know the background of a leader, including his/her economic, educational, cultural background to explain his/her political decisions and commitments. In the West, the emergence of biographical studies in political science was related to the efforts to understand charismatic leadership, democratic values as well as ideological consistencies.³¹ Although these works gave a solid foundation of relating early life to political influence, they mainly dwell on Western individuals, which lack comparison information of the African situations.

African political biographies are prone to start with the public life especially with the formation of the nationalist movements at the continental level. It is also noteworthy that the literature on Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela carries a lot of information on their early life experiences, which indicates how their formative conditions, particularly the colonial education systems, mission schools, and indigenous cultures impacted their worldviews.³² Nevertheless, despite such plentiful description, the pre-political lives of the leaders are most of the times summarized or covered as initial stages instead of being the focal point of analysis. With oral traditions and community life being major agents of socialization on a continent, such omissions leave a major gap in research on the relationship between indigenous upbringing and contemporary political paths.

³⁰Van Manen, Karen-Jo, and Susan Krauss Whitbourne. "Psychosocial development and life experiences in adulthood: A 22-year sequential study." *Psychology and Aging* 12, no. 2 (1997): 239-255., p.245.

³¹Edinger, Lewis J. "Political science and political biography: reflections on the study of leadership (I)." *The Journal of Politics* 26, no. 2 (1964): 423-439., p.429.

³²Biney, Moses O. *From Africa to America: religion and adaptation among Ghanaian immigrants in New York*. Vol. 18. NYU Press, 2011., p.45.

East Africa The intersection of early upbringing and political careers of postcolonial leaders has not been studied in detail in East Africa. The only exemption is that of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania whose childhood life is examined as being biased to his ideologies which were Ujamaa and African socialism.³³ In Kenya, scholarly focus has been placed on such elite actors as Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Oginga Odinga whose autobiographies or biographies can give an idea about their childhood surroundings, education, and personal influences. Nevertheless, such studies tend to concentrate on their political ascendancy to political prominence and do not provide much systematic coverage on the importance of their childhood experiences upon their extended political engagements.

In Kenya, narratives of resistance, nationalism and post-independence state-building processes have dominated the political historiography of the country nationally. Although a few political leaders have been discussed in mass media and literature, there are few scholarly works describing their childhood and relating it to their future political career. As an example, the research done on Raila Odinga, Mwai Kibaki and Daniel Arap Moi provide details about their lives but lack analytical approaches on how their early life experiences, including family structure, religion and early work environments contributed to their political activities.³⁴

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi on the contrary, even though he played a key role in the political history of the country has remained grossly underrepresented in the political biographies of Kenya. As a supporter of pluralism in his vocal, as well as being a participant in both the colonial and postcolonial politics, the political life of Shikuku cuts across vital

³³Eckert, Andreas. "Julius Nyerere, Tanzanian elites, and the project of African socialism." In *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 216-240. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011., p.221.

³⁴Mang'eni, Linda, and Helga Schroeder. "The Manifestation of Ideology in the Metaphors used by Kenyan Politician Raila Odinga." *Language, Discourse & Society* 11, no. 1 (2023): 143-158., p.151.

periods of transition in Kenya. However, until recently, scholarly literature on him is limited to passing references in larger historical/political science books, which deal with such parties as KADU or the multiparty reawakening of the 1990s.³⁵ These sources fail to elaborate on his childhood life experiences in Magadi and Butere, family background, introduction to the Christian education, and his early life in colonial Kenya.

This work thus, allows a considerable void in the political history of Kenya by presenting a detailed and refined report on the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku. His reconstruction of his upbringing based on oral testimonies, archival and field interviews helps bring a more comprehensive view of how the early exposure to mission education, grassroots community relations and colonial socio-political repression influenced his subsequent political ideology and activism. It also makes us better appreciate why local cultural settings in other parts of the country such as Western Kenya would lead to influence of politically important figures in nations.

Further, this research also places Shikuku in context in terms of being the product of more historical processes, including the influence of Christian missionary education on the generation of nationalist leaders, the influence of political organizations on politics (both labor and youth), and the policy of colonists on the formation of political awareness among African youth in the 1940s and 1950s. The study conforms to academic demands to reclaim subaltern political biographies and the work of documenting the efforts of leaders who

³⁵Oyugi, Walter O. "Ethnicity in the electoral process: The 1992 general elections in Kenya." *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique* (1997): 41-69., p.63.

frequently remain peripheral in mainstream historiographies through the use of primary sources and oral histories.³⁶

To sum up, even though the worldwide, continental, and national research on political leadership acknowledges the role of childhood experiences, the personal experience of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi is less researched. This review of literature demonstrates that one of the greatest scholarly gaps relates to the dearth of biographical work covering Shikuku, and in particular, his childhood. This work addresses this gap by providing a narrow analysis of his biographical life in his early years, thus contributing to the comprehension of his subsequent support of political pluralism, as well as also shedding some light on how the local histories and lived experiences apply to the national politics. By so doing, the study does not only reclaim an important piece of the Kenyan political history, but also adds to the larger body of the African politics biography and leadership literature.

1.10.2 History of Political Pluralism

Andreev cites a year 1712 trial to bring the concept of political pluralism into scientific circulation by the German philosopher Harold Wolf, who suggested to conceive it as a principle of the legal society order, which demanded the variety of subjects in the economic, political and cultural life of society.³⁷ The term presupposed the presence of different subjects in the society that have their views, ideas, and concepts, and which were opposed to monism and dualism. In the onset of the 19th century, the state was the subject of much attention of scientists, who regarded it as an entity which brings the nation together. Nevertheless, the

³⁶Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Subaltern studies: Deconstructing historiography." In *In other worlds*, pp. 270-304. Routledge, 2012., p.292.

³⁷Sergey D., Andreev, *et. al.*, "Political pluralism as a factor in the development of modern society and state." *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S3 (2021): 890-898., p.891

blistering evolution of capitalist relations generated the growth in the number of different politically active elites by carrying out the organizational structure of various group interests.³⁸ This was when the theory of liberal democracy was proposed by Harold Laski in the form of pluralism, aimed at opposing the idea of the monistic state. Then, thoughts started to come forth among pluralist thinkers that large groups ought to assume a significant role in the political procedure, as well as life of the society however, to achieve this it is required that activity of the large groups be guaranteed by legal norms.³⁹ The contemporary era of legal science is not very much concerned with the study of the concept of political pluralism. Nevertheless, there are authors who attempt to examine it in terms of the meaning in contemporary society or individual elements that constitute the content of political pluralism.⁴⁰ It is based on this that this research paper bridged this gap by evaluating the history of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

With reference to the United States of America(USA), the scientists interpretation of the first amendment to the US constitution which grants an unlimited right to self-expression applies in consideration. Their controversial and offensive expressions are not harassed by the government. Practically, a reciprocal self-expression proves to be a response to offensive self-expression, and not a state ban.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the freedom of expression is not absolute. Therefore, threats of violence, actual threats, slander and obscenity should not be made directly.⁴² The US Supreme Court can make the decision to restrict the impact of the first amendment to the US Constitution during a particular case. Given that in countries that

³⁸Ibid., p.893

³⁹Ibid., p.890

⁴⁰Ibid., p.890

⁴¹Andreev Sergey D., *et. al.*, (2021): 895.

⁴²Ibid., p.896.

follow the Anglo-Saxon legal system the decisions of the highest courts are binding on the part of a judicial claimant, such limitations on the right to expression in the United States are obligatory on all other courts. Simultaneously, it is quite hard to demonstrate the necessity to limit some actions in the court. As an illustration, an internet declaration that the only solution to problems in a country is a violent revolution is not considered as an invitation to violence.

The manifestation of the political pluralism is clearest in the system of representation of the interests of the US civil society which can be divided in the fair opinion of S.V. Stepanenkov into two subsystems, party and political, as well as the functional representation.⁴³ Although the historically laid down bipartisan system in the United States has guaranteed groups of citizens to form their own political parties, even that whose interests are meant to undermine the universal human rights and freedoms that are being experienced by the world community, not to mention the fact that some of these are outlawed by a number of states.⁴⁴ It is not only political diversity, and political pluralism encompasses the opportunity to reconcile the interests of different social groups. First of all, this mechanism is offered on the level of the existing parliament.⁴⁵ The citizens can advance group interest not only at the election time when they are involved in drafting party agendas but also in the US parliament.

The presence of such a great number of groupings or caucuses in the Congress, the duties of which are to solve certain problems and to advocate group interests, gives rise to a hidden and quantitatively uncertain multiparty system.⁴⁶ According to the fair opinion of S.V. Stepanenkov such model of interaction between the state and the civil society will enable the

⁴³Ibid., p.892.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.893.

⁴⁵Ibid., p.894.

⁴⁶Ibid., p.895.

legislative and executive authorities to adopt more balanced attitude to the adoption of socially significant decisions and observe its effects. The result of this is a considerate attitude to a balance of various interests.⁴⁷ Therefore, the parameters of the political pluralism, which have established themselves in the United States, appear to be exhaustive and have a sound history of establishing and developing. Is Kenya following the same parameters as it is being done in USA? This paper thus examined how the state has been engaging with the citizens as far as the historization of democratic practice is involved.

The French Republic is another state that had a long history of democratic tradition.⁴⁸ The right to freedom of thought and speech is contained in its 1789 Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms that is included in the French Constitution: Free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of the most valued human rights; therefore, every citizen has the right to be free in his/her expression, in writing and publishing, being responsible only to the violation of this right according to the law (Declaration of the rights and freedoms of man and citizen).

Nevertheless, this article of the Declaration cannot be viewed independently of the rest of its provisions. Article 4 therefore captures such a significant principle of restriction of rights and freedoms like the prevention of infringement of the rights and freedoms of others. 893 Article 5 permits the banning of only actions that are detrimental to society. Thus, everything that is not forbidden by law is allowed.⁴⁹ Article 6 takes a particular importance in this example and it says that the law is a manifestation of the general will, and every citizen is entitled to contribute to the law, either individually or by the means of their representatives. In other

⁴⁷Ibid., p.896.

⁴⁸Komang Rinatha, Suryasa Wayan and Luh Gede Surya Kartika. "Comparative analysis of string similarity on dynamic query suggestions." In *2018 Electrical Power, Electronics, Communications, Controls and Informatics Seminar (EECCIS)*, IEEE, 2018, pp. 399-404., p.399.

⁴⁹Ibid., p.401

words, the entirety of these provisions of the Declaration of 1789 is what ensures the French society the principle of political pluralism. Simultaneously, as many of the writers underline, the freedom of speech in Fifth Republic is humiliating at the current level. The Anti-Fake News Bill is one of the examples of the suppression of the freedom of expression, which was drafted in 2018.

Its author, Naym Muchtou, pointed out that the Law is being implemented in response to an effort to destabilize it, in specific, one made outside of France, and founded upon the insidious spreading of fake news.⁵⁰ The Law provides a candidate in the elections with an opportunity under the court to forcefully prevent the circulation of false information about him or her three months before the voting day.⁵¹ And social networks Facebook and Twitter will be asked to show the paid publications along with the paid themselves.

According to historians, the President of France tries to limit the freedom of speech and add censorship to media with the assistance of this Law.⁵² Although the freedom of speech is not only limited by the court but also by the Law, as in the case of the United States, France also applies it in mass demonstrations as the country with the long-established traditions of democracy. A special law regulates the procedure of holding the public events in the country. It is necessary to concur with such authors as state that country of France has rather strong tradition of direct participation in politics whose origins can be traced back to its revolutionary history. The tradition of partnership and dialogue has long been lacking in social and labor relations, the tradition of antagonism on the contrary stands the test of time.⁵³

⁵⁰Ibid., p.402

⁵¹Ibid., p.400.

⁵²Ibid., p.401.

⁵³Ibid., p.401.

It is against this backdrop that this paper articulated how the governments that have been in power have enabled the direct involvement of Kenyans into making political decisions.

As Young Crawford points out, one should note that at the beginning of the millennium we are bombarded with conflicting images of Africa.⁵⁴ In one of the portraits, painted in luminous colors in the epochal (but soon to be forgotten) tour of Africa in March, 1998, President William Clinton, sketches an Africa of resurrection and renewal, mobilized by the liberating movements of democratization, and projected by a youthful generation of leaders not burdened by dogmas and practices of a failed past.⁵⁵ In what appeared to be an irresistible wave, a "third wave" of democratization according to Samuel Huntington swept across Africa, first by a wave of urban rioting in Algiers in October 1988, and then by a shocking coup of effective power by a so-called sovereign national conference in Benin at the start of the year 1990.⁵⁶ Democratization continued to slow towards the end of the decade, but there were new democratization avatars in the shape of new and seemingly successful elections in Nigeria and South Africa.

A second and less joyful picture was seen in 1993 and 1994 in Burundi and Rwanda where democratic transition erupted into a virtual ethnic holocaust, killing much more than a million citizens. Following these interactive disasters, hundreds of thousands were displaced most of them into the neighboring states.⁵⁷ The rapids of bloody ethnic discord keep on whirling, pouring into other states and they become an ongoing source of chaos in the African Great Lakes region. The demons of ethnic and religious difference are lurking in the background

⁵⁴ Crawford Young, "Africa: Democratization, cultural pluralism, and the challenge of political order." *Macalester International* 9, no. 1 (2000): pp.3-30.,p.7.

⁵⁵Ibid., p.3

⁵⁶Ibid., p.3

⁵⁷Ibid., p.3

of this picture, they are the ghosts that are seen looming over Africa, and this is always a constant threat to delicate political establishments.

The third image was formed almost at the same moment when the democratization was swept the first. In 1991 the state institutions just disbanded at two ends of the continent. The destiny of Somalia and Liberia came into the limelight to witness a totally new and unexpected event, state collapse. This would be followed by other cases with Sierra Leone being the most notable. Such a figure of an Africa rotating down into a whirlwind of uncontrollable chaos found popular circulation in the popular article by Robert Kaplan about the coming anarchy. Better, the horrors of Sierra Leone and Liberia were just a prelude of what was going to happen to a broader universe; Kaplan wrote, West Africa is becoming the icon of the global demographic, environmental, and social stress, where criminal anarchy becomes the actual menace to the strategy. The overly sensuous hues of the Kaplan portrait put off a lot of readers. However, in the 1990s two major transnational areas of intractable interpenetrated civil war cropped up, one that extends northward to Mauritania and the other to the south west and ending in Angola and the two Congos.⁵⁸

Governments in over a dozen of the 54 countries in Africa did not pass the Weberian test of stateness: a functioning monopoly of the means of coercion over their territorial space. Therefore, democracy, cultural pluralism, and political order are the major issues in Africa at the beginning of the 21st century.⁵⁹ There are few voices that scream to go back to the days of patrimonial autocracies that had presented the alternative form of polity in most of the post-independence years. And certainly, the very bulk of the modern dilemma of

⁵⁸Ibid., p.4

⁵⁹Ibid., p.4

statecraft is a heritage of the various failures of this kind of rule.⁶⁰ Despite its disillusionments and flaws, there will be a fight of adapted and naturalized democratic institutions. Liberalized political order continues to focus on effective accommodation of cultural diversity as a key central aspect in the processes and practices. Possible increase in ethnic or religious war is a given on many countries, but it is not inevitable. The fact of the crippled power of institutionalities of several states in this decade, and the excessive expenditure of endemic anarchy, render the recovery of the state back in indispensable.⁶¹

Although a decade of stateless socioeconomic order has seen the Somalis demonstrate exceptional resourcefulness in their operations, the extreme boundaries of such survival mechanisms are eminent. The gains assured of a democratized political order a more responsive, accountable, transparent and moralized polity, assumes the instrument of a working state. Therefore, the search of the effective state becomes part of the agenda along with democratization and diversity accommodation. These three themes of African politics were examined in the study, and their interplay. A retrospective look at the development of these three will give us a starting point. The main task of the study is to clarify the process of democratization, cultural pluralism, and civil order in the last decade of the century.⁶² Thus, this study was centered around the dynamics of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960 using Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi as the reference point based on these dynamics observed in the whole of African continent.

Concerning political pluralism in Kenya, among the most persistent features of the colonialism legacy in the post-colonial Kenya was a sense of ethnic division, which was

⁶⁰Ibid., p.4

⁶¹Ibid., p.5

⁶²Ibid., p.5

manifested not only in the context of group identity, but also in terms of mobilizing force towards economic gains. The complicated procedure of formation of classes collided with the efforts of the colonial regime to regulate the qualities of the traditional society and mobilize it to create a colonial capitalistic market. As such, the ethnic incubus in the politics of Kenya cannot be readily comprehended without a reference to the colonial capitalism and the disproportionate influence it had on different ethnicities.⁶³ The ethnic consciousness as exhibited in the political processes in Kenya can be traced back to the arbitrary nature in which the British colonialists had made their administrative boundaries and local governments based on the cultural and linguistic boundaries, a move that was influenced by an assumption that Africans were living in groups of ethnicities and thus, should have formed the foundation of the colonial government.⁶⁴

It is educative to remark that Kenya briefly tried a two party system a year after independence in 1963, when KANU engulfed Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), and between 1966 and 1969 when the Kenya people union (KPU) was on the opposition.⁶⁵ In 1966, a so-called Little General Election was organised. With the mentioned exceptions Kenya was a de facto one party state until 1982 when it was transformed into a de jure one party state before returning to political pluralism in 1991. The great difference between how ethnicity emerged in one-party states and in multiparty democracies is that in the former the focus of political struggle is on the local constituency level, whereas in the latter it is on the national level of the state.⁶⁶ As Moi had prophesied of doom ethnic warfare consumed the Rift Valley

⁶³Shilaho Westen Kwatamba, "Ethnicity and political pluralism in Kenya." *Journal of African elections* 7, no. 2 (2008): 77-112., p.79.

⁶⁴Ibid., p.79

⁶⁵Ibid., p.96

⁶⁶Ibid., p.96

province's territory, which was occupied by people who were deemed as foreigners and cost lives and property. Ironically, it was the Moi government who politicized land issue yet it was Moi who had helped in the resettlement of some Kikuyu in the Rift Valley some years after independence to the despair of other Kalenjin politicians, especially those of the Nandi and Kipsigis sub-tribes.⁶⁷ The Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya and Kisii were the targeted ethnic groups. The provincial administration was blatantly involved in government complicity, with the administrators, by their inaction, complicitly helping in the murders of innocent individuals. In some ways they even helped the marauding gangs that terrorized the ethnic groups that were foreign.⁶⁸

The attitude of the Moi government since their compliance with multiparty politics was that of a weak state and there was also commercialization of the politics in Kenya between 1991 and 1998 where patronage was an open influence. The Kenyan state at this time was unable to conduct its affairs and the rule of law at the behest of Moi and his courtiers which led to a lawless state where the facade of social cohesion peeled off. All these factors led to a loss of legitimacy by the Moi government to govern.⁶⁹ The system robbed the state at the expense of some of the political elite of various ethnic groups who lived in economic and political purgatory. The rule of law which was left behind collapsed, as the police, in co-ordination with the groups of the youth militia, closed off parts of country, particularly the Rift Valley and declared it a KANU territory, where the opposition were not allowed to roam freely. The Kenyan taxpayer was swindled during this time in astronomical amounts of money through a scam dubbed Goldenberg. This scheme allowed Central Bank to give money to people

⁶⁷Ibid., p.97

⁶⁸Ibid., p.97

⁶⁹Ibid., p.97

associated with President Moi under a non-existent export compensation program with counterfeit gold. The scandal might be interpreted in the light of patronage politics in which case the ruling elite was badly in need of money so that it would repel an opposition onslaught.

The funds were supposed to be spent to mess up the opposition and employ more loyalty during a period when KANU was facing extreme jeopardy to its power. Although the argument exists that modernity increases the politicalization of ethnicity, there is still the flip side argument that social networks that connect the better educated and wealthier people across ethnic and local borders may see the development of political ideologies and practices that cuts across the politics of prebendalism, clientelism and ethnicity.⁷⁰ Case in point the Kenyan situation indicates that the counter argument is never given a moment of rest. Even though Kenya has a large middle class ethnic cleavages, they always have sabotaged any effort to reform the nation state. The unscrupulous side of ethnicity has been experienced in Kenya since the political space was opened in the early 1990s. The interface between ethnicity and pork-barrel politics has been so violent and unsettling that some analysts have claimed that few powers in Kenya have had such an impact on political parties, since the birth of the political pluralism, as ethnicity.⁷¹

The opposition to authoritarianism by Moi was initiated and continued by the political elites who were predominantly the Luo, Luhya and Gikuyu communities. They were however against the highhandedness of Moi on various grounds. Nostalgia of the privileges they had under Kenyatta had been the motivation of the Kikuyu elite, and the Luo and parts of the

⁷⁰Ibid., p.98

⁷¹Ibid., p.98

Luhya had been the marginalized under Moi, the same way they had been under Kenyatta.⁷² These disparities were however overridden by international search of multiparty democracy. They so factored their political change that when Kibaki took over Moi, some of his most vociferous critics, most of who had made their political careers of criticising Moi, adopted the very systems that Moi had used to misuse power.

The tribal barons controlled most political parties in Kenya and at the same time served as financiers and owners of the party. Parties are simply not members except those who associate with them simply due to ethnic reasons that makes Makau Mutua refer to most of them as reservoirs of ethnic nativism.⁷³ He also notes that demagoguery always played its role during electioneering seasons as party leaders toured the nation spreading political myths that were of an ethnic nature, false historical accounts and grievances towards other communities. Trying to blur the crude character of the ethnic politics in Kenya cross ethnic alliances, such as presidential and vice-presidential candidates of different ethno-regional backgrounds, are made.⁷⁴ Such alliances proved useless as demonstrated in a section of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (Ford) parties that took place during the 1992 general elections. Where Kenneth Matiba, a Kikuyu, was able to secure vast votes in the Luhya dominated regions due to the virtue of having a running mate contributing to the campaign John Shikuku, of the Kikuyu community, Ford-Kenya presidential aspirant Oginga Odinga had a dismal chance in Kikuyu dominated constituencies, including his own constituency, which was occupied by his running mate, Paul Muite.⁷⁵

⁷²Ibid., p.98

⁷³Makau Mutua. *Kenyas quest for democracy: Taming leviathan*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008., p.22

⁷⁴Ibid., p.22

⁷⁵Ibid., p.87

The first competitive polls since Kenya resumed political pluralism in 1992 during the general elections ended in a shambles with what was predicted to be an opposition land-slide defeat foundering on the ethnicity rocks. During the run-up, some quarters of the Kikuyu political elites have allegedly influenced Matiba, who was in the hospital in London, to run against the presidency with less intent on a political plan and more on a cultural fear. These included the fact that according to Kikuyu traditional values, men had to be granted leadership by having undergone irua (circumcision), which signified maturity, bravery and willingness to lead. To these elites, the thought of having Odinga, who was Luo and therefore, by Kikuyu standards, was kirugu (uncircumcised) to the presidency was unthinkable and a political impertinence.⁷⁶ The presence of Matiba in the presidential race caused division of the Ford party. When that once powerful opposition party, the oppositions, was splintered, their hope of unseating Moi was burnt. According to the evaluation of the presidential votes as well as the parliamentary votes in the same year, it is evident that the ethnic ideology prevailed over the political liberalism.⁷⁷

This failure to develop a unified political opposition to Moi in 1992 was also found, according to Southall R., in what he termed as the minutiae of ethnic politics and the entrapment web of patronage client relations and recognition of individual politicians that the attainment of the political class opens the door into the spoils system.⁷⁸ But re-election of Moi could not be narrowed down to the scenario of ethnic factionalism in the opposition. In the aftermath of the election outcome, three simple explanations were promoted including that they are a result of a rigged election; that they were a result of an election won by Moi

⁷⁶Shilaho Westen Kwatamba, (2008), *Op. Cit*, p.99

⁷⁷Makau Mutua, (2008).*Op. Cit*, p.87

⁷⁸Roger Southall, "Moi's flawed mandate: the crisis continues in Kenya." (1998): 101-111., p.106

and KANU; that they were a result of an election lost by the opposition by virtue of their division into parts. All three contain some truth.⁷⁹ Moi, in 1997, won his second and final term in office with ease as once again, opposition leaders were seen to have learnt nothing during the 1992 loss and that, again, political egos were playing between opposition unity. The five large ethnic groups of Kenya each had a candidate in the presidency which made it easy as Moi almost swept all the votes of all the ethnic groups except the Luo and Kikuyu, which he practically had no chance of getting into.⁸⁰ The group of smaller ethnicities was still loyal to Moi and with heavy votes of the Luhya people, which was the second-largest in the country, Moi was at home and dry. Following another routing by the ruling party it was evidently clear that nothing less than unity could assist the opposition to remove power out of the grip of Moi. It is against this background that the study has added value to the historicization of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

1.10.3 Contributions of Politicians to political pluralism

Alludedly, in the USA, James Madison, the 4th President, believed that a pluralistic world is diverse and allows conflicting ideas.⁸¹ Ideas in a pluralistic society are treated as a constant challenge and discourse aids in enhancing the good ones as the bad ones are filtered out. To Madison, the only way to make sure that one group in the society does not become too strong is to make sure that there is plenty of space to allow the emergence of another group that can be heard and disputes the overpowering voice. That is the reason why the freedom of speech and free assembly protections are of great essence in a society. Freedoms give a check to

⁷⁹Ibid., p.107

⁸⁰Ibid., p.107

⁸¹J.L. Hochschild, Pluralism, Identity Politics, and Coalitions: Toward Madisonian Constitutionalism. In: *The Future of American Democratic Politics: Principles and Practices*. edited by Gerald Pomper and Marc Weiner. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press ; 2003. pp. 11-28., p.16.

those in power where they are actually exercised since one can be publicly challenged by means of opposing voices.⁸² The drawback of the approach of Madison, though, is that pluralism is premised on an assumption of equality. Pluralistic ideal only happens when all people in the society are given equal opportunity and access to take part in policy making. A voice of opposition will only be able to threaten a tyrant when the voice possesses the power and resources to communicate it.⁸³ On this ground, this research evaluated the reasons why did Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi defied the questions of one party state politics in Kenya. Madison desired a political structure that would restrain the impulse of opinion, passion, or interest through dividing citizens into comparatively small groups located in far-flung regions given that they were primarily concerned with material interests. This particular type of "equilibrium" was what all of the separation of powers, checks and balances and veto points, layers of federalism, multiplicity of systems of representation, and other elements of American constitutional construction were geared toward, in order to support the Rawlsian just and stable society of free and equal citizens who nevertheless remain deeply contentious.⁸⁴ Through this literature that has been advanced by Madison, the researcher is able to answer the question of where the civilians are in Kenya in case of exercising their political rights in a free and fair manner.

In Mozambique, the 1992 General Peace Agreement signed in Rome by president Joaquim Chissano and guerrilla leader Afonso Dhlakama heralded the start of a pacted and truly successful process of democratic change in Mozambique.⁸⁵ In 1994, the first pluralist

⁸²Ibid., p.12

⁸³Ibid., p.12

⁸⁴Ibid., p.14

⁸⁵Giovanni M. Carbone, "Developing multi-party politics: stability and change in Ghana and Mozambique." (2003)., p.5

elections in the country placed the country on a formally competitive system, thereby opening the political scene to the guerrillas of the Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana (Renamo). It was the democratic reform that helped in bringing peace and stability in the country, and as economic activities once again resumed throughout the whole territory, there were dividends that came in the form of growth rates that were impressive.⁸⁶ However, Mozambique still is one of the poorest states in the world. The dramatic difference between its success during the past ten years and the unsuccessful political shift of the neighboring country, Angola, is underlined. It was in the early 90s that the political paths of these ex-Portuguese colonies - to which Marxist-Leninism regimes were implemented at independence in 1975 and to which former Southern Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa sponsored civil wars - diverged. Whereas Mozambicans were rapidly heading to peace and pluralist politics, the negotiated settlement in Angola failed as the guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi pulled out of the electoral process in 1992.⁸⁷ The research touched on measures that were proposed by a pluralist society at the time of Martin Shikuku to reduce peace whenever chaos erupts in the country as it did in Kenya.

When his Union Nacional para a Independencia Completa de Angola (UNITA), rebels returned to the battlefield, the nation was hurled into another wave of shattered destruction that lasted a decade before another peace chance was won in early 2002, after Savimbi was killed in battle. The inability to make political reforms will not allow any pacification in Angola and, apart from thousands of lives, there was no chance of development during another ten years. The election held in Mozambique in 1994 and 1999 reinstated the ruling party the Front Liberation for Mozambique (FRELIMO) as the ruling party in the country.

⁸⁶Ibid., p.5

⁸⁷Ibid., p.5

Joaquim Chissano who was an un-elected president since 1986 was twice endorsed by the electorate with an absolute majority. During both of the parliamentary elections, Frelimo secured a majority of the vote, which was converted into a majority in the House. However, one of the major consequences of the initial vote, subsequently nullified by the 1999 vote, was the good performance of Renamo. Despite a terrible history of cruelty done to Mozambicans, the guerrillas-to-party immediately took the position of an unquestioned and confronting second force under the new constitution.⁸⁸

In Uganda, with his election as prime minister in 1962, Milton Obote was content to receive a constitution that granted Uganda five traditional kingdoms, one of which was Buganda a federal status.⁸⁹ Obote, in a move to entrench his rule, came up with a new constitution which dissolved all the kingdoms and other vestiges of federalism in the nation.⁹⁰ An executive presidency was also created under the new constitution, and Obote assumed it still as the prime minister. However, the rising dependence of Obote on the military and the police to threaten his political opponents aroused the anger of southern Ugandans and enabled Amin to gain a following that was based on recruits of his own Kakwa.⁹¹ This research thus questioned the role played by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in political pluralism in the history of Kenyas.

But following independence in 1963, the major political parties the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) were ethno alliances. Kenyatta employed ethnic cabal to entrench in the office of the president and sidelined his

⁸⁸Ibid., p.6

⁸⁹Phares Mukasa Mutibwa, *Uganda since independence: A story of unfulfilled hopes*. Africa World Press, 1992., p.7

⁹⁰Ibid., p.8,

⁹¹Ibid., p.8

former liberation associates like Jaramogi Odinga.⁹² The Kenyatta and Moi states easily circumvented any dissent by having a one-party government because they claimed that they had to do it in order to promote national unity and nation-building.⁹³ With the help of a group of politicians with ethnic leanings, Kenyatta tampered with the doctrine of separation of powers by emasculating the judiciary and the legislature, and establishing an imperial presidency shortly after independence in Kenya. The majority of the politicians who dominated the political and economic space in the reign of Kenyatta belonged to the Kikuyu people to which he was a member. This coterie kept on amending the Constitution seeking unbridled authority. The net outcome was the formation of a presidential giant which led to one party dictatorship.⁹⁴

The Constitution was amended many times between 1963 and 1978 with the very aim of independence as they were a reversion to the colonial authoritarian patterns.⁹⁵ Besides demonstrating an insensitivity to the Constitution Kenyatta throttled an emergent multiparty democracy and put in place one-party rule, which provided cover to an apparent ethnic relationship without actually attempting to oppress his detractors.⁹⁶ This is a possibly disastrous way of dealing with ethnic distinctions, which only helps to conceal ethnicity yet it cannot bring ethnic divisions to extinction by means of repression or assimilation. Ethnic cleavages should be controlled to achieve a peaceful co-existence between the various ethnic

⁹²Shilaho Westen Kwatemala, (2008). *Op. Cit*, p.80

⁹³Ibid., p.80

⁹⁴ António Costa Pinto, "Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-making in Fascist-era Dictatorships." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 3 (2002): 429-454., p.436.

⁹⁵ Bradley Robert Simpson, *Modernizing Indonesia: United States-Indonesian relations, 1961-1967*. Northwestern University, 2003., p.67.

⁹⁶ Waruhiu S.N. *From Autocracy to Democracy in Kenya: Past Systems of Government and Reforms for the Future*. S.N.Waruhiu,1994,p.45

groups.⁹⁷ In this literature we find the opinion of politicians serving Martin Shikuku but he is disregarded. Thus, this analytical research revealed the role played by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in the political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

Waruhiu S.N. attempts to provide an analysis of the government of Kenya between the grant of internal self- Governance in June 1963 and the multiparty general elections in December 1992, to bring out the shortcomings of the government in the realisation of the democratic ideals the people of Kenya desired upon gaining independence. Although the book refers to many of the contemporaries of Shikuku, it does not refer to Shikuku. Waruhiu's book was relevant because it identified the gaps that led to the need to document the contribution that Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi made on the political pluralism in Kenya.

In his article, Election and Political Legitimacy, David Throup follows the history of political processes in Kenya under the reign of Kenneth and Mwai. He asserts that by the time the death of President Jomo Kenyatta in August 1978, Kenya had gained the image of being among the polities in Africa.⁹⁸ He goes further to say that during the Kenyan accession, in August 1978, Kenyans gradually lost their freedom. The article cites Mwangale, in arguing that, other than Abaluhya stalwart, Elijah Mwangale, in Western Province, and ex-Vice President Mwai Kibaki who continued to hold the health ministry post until December 1991, Moi preferred relatively inexperienced people, whose political role was almost wholly tied to his patronage. Nevertheless, the article is significant because it illuminates on Martin Shikuku political existence and his enthusiasm on multiparty politics in Kenya.

⁹⁸Aggrey W. Mabololo, "A Political Biography of Elijah Wasike Mwangale: 1939-1992." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2016., p.64.

Nonetheless, these literatures have not focused on a particular politician that has made significant contributions towards the development of political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960. It is based on this gap that this study covered the contribution of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to the political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. Moreover, these literatures have provided a gateway to the study not only in the evaluation of the history of political pluralism but also to determine the effect of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

1.10.4 The Impacts of Political Pluralism

Pluralism practices make individuals value differences, gain tolerance and understanding, collaborate and pursue synergy. Pluralism also transcends the prescriptions of diversity and inclusivity by aiming to reconcile the differences between people.⁹⁹ Though conflict is one of the inevitable by-products of pluralism, the knowledge of pluralism can help individuals recognize the existence of the conflict at an earlier stage and prevent its development. It also enables the constructive nature of conflicts to be drawn to positive change. Pluralism allows us to be more realistic about the limited duration or partiality of agreements which enlightens us of the manner in which to preserve them in a better way. Pluralism therefore is able to make people appreciate social diversity that does exist, and to utilize it in a manner that does not discriminate social and personal needs. Pluralism allows an individual or groups to preserve their independence yet remain the members of a bigger community. It is concerned with the attempt to reach cooperation with the differences. It is due to this reason that, this research study set out to establish whether the present generation of politicians still uphold

⁹⁹Eva Wollenberg, López Citalli and Jon Anderson. *Though all things differ: pluralism as a basis for cooperation in forests*. CIFOR, 2005., p.55.

their political and democratic independence having joined the National Assembly, by assessing the effects of political pluralism in the Kenyan history.

Pluralism as a concept is connected to the issue of democracy, religion, race and ethnicity, as well as assimilation in the American context. The founders established themselves to establish a political system that would be able to suit a large number of varied groups and interests and generate common agreements in which loyalty would be followed. The equality of the right to liberty was to be achieved by the universal and general laws in the form of a constitutional system. An argument ensured by James Madison in the Federalist No.10 is that the political machinery established under the new constitution was precise in balancing the conflict within, between the competing factions and interests. Political pluralism in the sense of the representation and engagement of many and competing groups mobilized around and by the interests of classes, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups has been perceived as being among the features of American democracy. The constitutional model which facilitates the existence of political pluralism in the United States secures the presence of diversity of religious practices as well. The U.S. constitutional amendment one guarantees the freedom of every religious conviction.¹⁰⁰ Kenya is a secular state. Thus, based on this reading, this research was eager to assess the role of religious traditions as the influence of political pluralism in Kenya.

The Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, who advised John F. Kennedy throughout his campaign to be the first Catholic president of the United States, dealt with the implications of religious diversity. Religious diversity means there is disagreement, dissension which was observed by Murray but there is also religious diversity which means that there has to be the

¹⁰⁰Norman Richard, *The Idea of Pluralism in the United States*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p.2

community in which there has to be agreement and consensus. The problem of a plural society comprising of different ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups is to find some common principles without obstructing the preservation of a group identity. Murray wrote with a catholic view concerning the issues of religious pluralism in a democratic context. Upon a more recent note, Umar Faruq Abd-Allah asked Muslim Americans to develop an intended special cultural identity that captures the American tradition of tolerance towards different races and ethnicities. Abd-Allah argues that the Islamic tradition of pluralism that acknowledges ethnic and cultural differences is essential with American pluralism. The immigration of people to the United States in the late 19th century and early 20 th century provoked a re-evaluation of the American ethnic identity. Cultural pluralism was often understood and identified with ethnic and racial dimensions.¹⁰¹ Based on this, this study was keen on the advancement of the effect of political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960.

Horace M. Kallel and Randolph S. Bourne insisted on using the right to choice within democracy to the right of the groups to be culturally different.¹⁰² In 1915, Kallen proposed a democracy of nationalities, and this time collaborating willingly and supporting themselves autonomously in the business of self-realization by perfecting men in its own kind. In 1916, Bourne proposed a cosmopolitan federation of national colonies in which the ethnic groups would be merged and not fused. Kallen and Bourne attempted to replace the conventional concept of Anglo-Saxon identity in the U.S. by the realization of the ethnic and cultural diversity, which was the major outcome of the process of industrialization, urbanization and

¹⁰¹Ibid., p.3

¹⁰²Richard J. Bernstein, "Cultural pluralism." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 41, no. 4-5 (2015): 347-356., p.352.

immigration.¹⁰³ When it comes to creating an American national sense of identity, this has been a controversial task.

Europeans displaced native Americans and they thought that they were establishing a new form of civilization in the wild America. In most of the 18 th and 19 th centuries, the typical American was a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.¹⁰⁴ By the end of the 19 th century, such a self-image was no longer true. Indeed, immigrants of southern and eastern Europe, or Asia and Africa and Latin America and Middle East everywhere transformed the composition of the U.S. society and reinvented the American culture. The ethnic groups, languages, community practices and religious practices and cultures interacted with each other.

The process of assimilation in which the immigrant and minority groups were integrated into the American society was not smooth and often stopped, but defining what and who is American is not always clear-cut. Due to that reason, there are those who celebrate the diversity of the United States and those who lament it.¹⁰⁵ Openness and differentiation that defines American society has been a curse and a blessing at the same time. Discrimination, prejudice and bias have favored some and discriminated others. The pluralism implies divided loyalties rival values and commitments, moral codes, principles and goals, regional and ideological particularism, conflicting ethnic and religious claims but it is also a sign of power in diversity. The harmonization of conflicting identities and allegiances is an end-less challenge.¹⁰⁶ As such, this paper was eager to elaborate on the efforts undertaken by

¹⁰³William Greenbaum, "America in search of a new ideal: An essay on the rise of pluralism." *Harvard Educational Review* 44, no. 3 (1974): 411-440., p.414.

¹⁰⁴Eric Kaufmann, "Ethnic or civic nation? Theorizing the American case." *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 27, no. 1/2 (2000): 133-155., p.137.

¹⁰⁵Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting assimilation: The rise, fall, and reappraisal of a concept in American ethnic history." (1995): 437-471., p.439.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, p.2

governments in power to address political disputes that could be emerging over the next four terms in power. The reason is that, most of these political conflicts have occurred due to necessity of political pluralism.

The fairness of freedom and equality is in an endless debate in a democracy.¹⁰⁷ The consensus which binds the plural societies is that they must agree and concur on some values: they must respect various ethnic and cultural communities and the rights of individuals, and they must counter prejudice and discrimination and back these values which are linked with the principles of toleration. This is what we would like our project to achieve in order to make people more aware of the contribution of ethnic minorities and immigrant groups to the American society, and to be more informed about the individual and universal experience of every American.¹⁰⁸ Among the myths of the term plural society is the myth of a compound word, which creates the perception of complexity of functioning and essence. It also discourages a structured company of individuals united jointly on religious, economic, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic or other various grounds.¹⁰⁹

This also involves other individuals at large, who are imagined to cohabit in decent societies with common laws, customs, and values. Plural society is also used to denote or describe a community of people sharing different values, cultures, languages, religions, traditions, origins, etc. to Furnivall, a plural society is a comparison of two or more different social orders, and do not significantly mingle with each other, even though they share the same

¹⁰⁷ Jeff Jackson, *Equality beyond debate: John Dewey's pragmatic idea of democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

¹⁰⁸Ibid, p.2

¹⁰⁹ E. O., John, & U. I. Usoro, (2016). Plural society and the challenge of democratic practice in Nigeria. *Developing Country Studies*, 6(1), 139-149.

political entity.¹¹⁰ Furnivall too considers plural society to be: Exploitative of the individual and destructive of group values which traditional society would have possessed, and at the same time falling short of those supposedly ideally distinctive of modern democratic societies and which would control the unity of all its subdivisions.¹¹¹ To Furnivall, then, a plural society is literally a jumble of peoples, who are mixed but not merged. Each group is attached to its religion, its own culture and language, its ideas and ways.¹¹² The picture that comes to mind of the above is that of a salad bowl rather than the idealized picture of the American melting pot in reality where Nigeria can be visualized as the salad bowl, the melting pot works well to depict the American society and its democracy.

In the Nigerian case, plural society exists in the multi-cultural and multi-linguistic nature of the society. As mentioned in the previous discussions, Nigeria and her 250 ethnic groups is known to match the classical definition of a plural society. What it implies is that beyond the same geographical expression or entity termed as Nigeria, individual ethnic groups are unique in their culture and social make-up. Within another sense, the secular concept of Nigeria is home to various religious opinions. Rabushka and Shepsle define a plural society as one that is culturally diverse and where the cultural segments of the society are integrated into political units. Determination of a plural society then becomes an issue of observation. Political mobilized cultural sections, communally grounded political parties, division of major social unit (such as labour unions) into culturally homogenous subgroups, and political

¹¹⁰Ibid, p.140

¹¹¹ Elijah Okon John, and Usoro I. Usoro. "Plural society and the challenge of democratic practice in Nigeria." *Developing Country Studies* 6, no. 1 (2016): 139-149.

¹¹²Ibid., p.140

calls to primordial feelings are all clear signs of a plural society.¹¹³ It is on this argument that this study dwelt based on the role of ethnic politics in a plural society in Kenya.

But Furnivall had barely Nigeria in his mind when he watched a mixture of people, Europeans, Chinese, Indians and natives mingling together. However, his opinion that these individuals co-exist, but never merge, is a good representation of what is happening in Nigeria. Therefore, it is observed that, as a plural society where intermingling of cultures exist in subjected political setting, where the politically strong groups absorb everything and the weak groups languish in poverty and frustration. Soon, as in the case of Nigerian experience, cleavages impose more severe ties and the experience leads to group or ethnic loyalty. The plural society in Nigeria is made up of each group subscribing to its religion; or its culture and language; or its own ideas and ways of life.¹¹⁴ Is this the case in Kenya? Thus, this paper disentangled this woe in connection with ethnic politics as the result of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

The reality of Ethiopia being multiethnic does not violate the fact that one is employing a pluralist politics as far as he does not propagate the hate/love zero game. Differently put, promoting both democracy and ethnic politics simultaneously in a scenario whereby a nationalist can be a democrat and a democrat a nationalist is disastrous.¹¹⁵ In any case, the nexus between democracy and ethnicism, as it is rightly called, is to instigate a political society that is based on the rule of law that would guarantee a stable peace, a democratic order, and enhance our economic and social order. It is the democratization of ethnicism that is important and not the vise-versa, in other words, not the ethnicization of democracy. There

¹¹³Ibid., p.140

¹¹⁴Ibid., p.141

¹¹⁵Solomon Ali, "Is pluralism a fiasco in Ethiopia?." *Ege, S et al (eds) 2 (2009).*, p.77.

are two values practiced by ethnic nationalism and democracy.¹¹⁶ The analogy between them is that of a planet and the sun, in a specified solar system. Ethnicity is to a planet like the sun is to democracy. A sun is superior to a planet. The truth is that in Ethiopia, political forces have been learning and thinking on how to hatch ideologies to employ them as weapons over the past forty years. They must learn and train on how to bury a hatchet. It is only after that they begin to know how to forgive, to forget.¹¹⁷ This research paper used the Ethiopian facts to discuss the role played by the Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in advancing peace in Kenya in the face of pluralism politics.

Kenya is one of the few African States which over some time since independence had a reputation of continuous peace.¹¹⁸ This was an unprecedented progress considering the fact that the country has experienced its share of turbulent times. A nascent plural democracy was silenced by the Kenyatta state (1963-78) several years after the independence. Then there were periods of political assassinations during the single party rule. Such a system of violence as an alternative to the free trade in ideas later transformed into a stage of ethnic confrontations as Kenya returned to multiparty democracy in the beginning of 1990s.¹¹⁹

All these happenings were meant to put the nation on a dangerous political path. Political intolerance established and opposition was underground as with the prohibition of multi-partyism strong debate was smothered.¹²⁰ Instead of confronting the canker that was eating away at the body politic of the country successive political leaders were engaged in a dance of self-deception that worsened the struggle with challenges like the endemic but mundane

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.671

¹¹⁷Ibid., p.672

¹¹⁸Shilaho Westen Kwatamba, (2008). *Op. Cit.*, 79.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p79

¹²⁰Ibid., p.80

corruption that afflicted the nation and worse, believed in the self-created fantasy of peaceful country. The political turmoil that followed the disputed 2007 presidential election posed a greater threat to the political stability of Kenya more than any previous occasion, almost setting the nation in a spiraling civil war.¹²¹ Similar to a sore wound, it revealed the professional decay within the framework of the country.

A combination of anomalies that was touching on land allocation, a control-freak presidency, a culture of impunity, and ethnicization of power, malfeasance and sheer mendacity amongst the political elite and the rabble almost drove Kenya to the edge.¹²² The crisis, however, also gave the Kenyans an invaluable chance to revitalize the country by instituting institutional and constitutional reforms and it would be unfortunate to see that political elite has wasted this chance and started playing politics again, with serious problems of the nation.¹²³ This paper, thus, evaluated the role of Martin Shikuku in political pluralism in the context of the Kenyan historiography. The question is: why was the ethnicity as an influence as so overtly politized in a politically pluralist Kenya back in the day of Martin Shikuku?

1.10.5 Summary of the Gaps Identified

Inability to achieve a united political front against Moi in 1992, Southall R. traced the failure to the minutiae of an ethnic politics and to the entanglement in the web of patronage client relations and the discovery on the part of individual politicians that they, by belonging to the political group, can gain access to the spoils system. Nevertheless, his writings have not dwelled on a particular political figure that has significantly contributed within the facet of

¹²¹Ibid., p.78

¹²²Ibid., p.78

¹²³Ibid., p.78

political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. It is in this light that this research paper discussed in a more comprehensive manner the inputs made by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi on political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

The rise of the concept of pluralism in the American setting is connected with the issues of democracy, religion, race and ethnicity, and assimilation. Kenya is a secular state. Thus, relying on this literature, this research examined the role of religious customs as an influence of political pluralism in Kenya.

Randolph S. Bourne and Horace M. Kallen maintained that the rights of groups to be culturally distinct should be applied using the principle of democracy and its rights to individuals. Pluralism refers to divided loyalties that conflict on values and commitments, moral codes, values and principles, regional and ideological orientations that are unique and rival ethnic and religious claims as well as diversity strength. Thus, this analysis extended on the efforts implemented by governments that have existed to resolve political disagreements that might have been emerging owing to political pluralism over the last four tenures in power.

In Uganda, Obotes growing dependence on the military and the police to intimidate his political adversaries excited the spleen of the southern Ugandans and it enabled Amin to develop a following in terms of recruits amongst his own Kakwa community. This paper thus evaluated the role played by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in the political pluralism in Kenya.

1.11 Research Methodology

The methodology research is the techniques or procedures that are applied to identify, select, process and analyze information on a topic.¹²⁴ Research design, study population, target population, sampling size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and presentation and ethical considerations are discussed in this section. The research was a qualitative one as it concerned non-numerical data collection and analysis using you-tube video, text and audio. This was done to get the understanding of different concepts and views of the different respondents. Thus, the approach followed by this study is described in the following way:

1.11.1 Qualitative Research Approach

This research study used the qualitative research method. This is due to the fact; this method deals with non-numerical data in form of texts, video or audio to know ideas, views or experience. One can also use it to obtain deep insight into an issue or broad new concepts of a study.¹²⁵ Hence, this methodology helped study Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and political pluralism in Kenya, 1932- 2012 by using videos in you tube, archives, documentaries, newspaper in form of texts, audios among other media through which his history was recorded and which was accessible to this research.

¹²⁴Paul Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. Englewood: Prentice Hall (1997), p.182

1.11.2 Research design

The research design utilized in the study was historical research. Historical research design, a plan/ strategy in which a researcher gathers information in an organized manner and compares the information by comparing them with the past events to determine the causes, effects or patterns of the events with the view of using the information to comprehend the past and explain the present or relate to the current.¹²⁶ Under the historical research design, the writings are simply descriptive, they start by giving a narration of what happened in a chronological order, and analysis was based on the questions of explanation, relationship and consequences of events. This was mainly to provide a comprehensive account of what was being reported basing on the primary and secondary sources of data that was used to report this research.

1.11.3 Target population

Ogula states that target population is a group of interest on which measurement is done regarding individual participants or objects.¹²⁷ It's therefore the entire population to whom the results of the study would be generalized.¹²⁸ The target population in this study was 73 respondents whom they contacted after exhausting the data collection phase. This was specifically intended to be the veteran politicians, veteran journalists and members of close family of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. The respondents were reached in purposive and snowball sampling since these respondents were people who had knowledge and experience on Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and political pluralism,1932-2012.

¹²⁶Paul D. Leedy, and Ellis Ormrod Jeanne, *Practical research: Planning and designing*. New Jersey: Merritt Prentice Hall (2001), p.190

¹²⁷Ogula, David Clyde Neintare. *Stakeholder involvement in corporate social strategy: An ethnographic study of the Niger Delta, Nigeria*. University of Phoenix, 2008., p.45.

¹²⁸Ibid., p.52.

1.11.4 Sample size and sampling technique

Sampling refers to the process of selection of the right number of subjects of a given population.¹²⁹ Purposive and snowballing sampling methods were used by the researcher to identify the stakeholders. A total of 18 respondents were interviewed using purposive and 23 respondents were interviewed using snowball technique therefore giving a saturation point. In this aspect, careful selection of veteran politicians (those who served under Martin Shikuku) the likes of Dr.Lwali Oyondi former MP Nakuru Town, veteran journalists (Peter Omurunga) and close family members of Shikuku -Holiness Omurunga, Robert Makambo and Rosemary Madanji who came up with unique and rich information on the study took place with the purposive sampling technique. In addition, purposely sampled respondents provided referral, and thus snowballing method. In addition, 4 focused group discussions were conducted and comprised of 32 respondents with each FGD containing 8 respondents in Kakamega, Shikunga, Mumias and Butere. In both FGDs, the researcher took the age factor into consideration in which, it revolved around the Shikuku agetates who are still living, the availability of the veteran politicians, a teacher of history, a family member of close friends to Martin Shikuku. There was also the saturation of information reached by the researcher to 4 FGDs, when the discussions took place in these groups.

1.11.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources using the following tools:

¹²⁹ Chakravanti Rajagopalachari Kothari, *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International, 2004., p.29

1.11.6.1 Primary Sources

This study utilized archival sources, question guides, Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. These sources are discussed below:

1.11.6.1.1 Archival Sources

This paper used archival sources in form of Kenya National Archives, Parliamentary Hansard Reports, Electoral Commission of Kenya Reports, Butere Constituency Development Reports and other Human Rights Reports. Such sources played a significant role in tracking the early history of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, historicizing political pluralism in Kenya since 1960 and assessing the role of political pluralism through the contribution of Shikuku. They also availed background information that informed the main process of data collection. Nevertheless, some of the archival materials were difficult to access such as bureaucracy, unfinished records as well as privacy to sensitive information. The researcher overcame these challenges by placing early access requests, regularly following up with the archive staff and filling gaps by referring to digitized record, published biographies, newspaper archives and institutional repositories where possible. Nevertheless, it was worth the difficulties because work with the archival materials proved to be priceless due to factual information on historical events and institutions, as well as the important political figures presented in the context.¹³⁰

¹³⁰R.C.Jimerson, Archives and Memory. OCLS Systems and Services: *International Digital and Library Perspectives*, (2003), 19(3),p.89

1.11.6.1.2 Question Guides

The question guides were purely open-ended questions and were distributed to purposely chosen participants, who were the veteran politicians, the veteran journalists, and close relatives of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. The guides were well designed and formulated with the four objectives of the study so as to capture focused and relevant data. The first part discussed the life of Shikuku (1932-1960s) as a young man; the second read about the history of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960, the third part analysed the effects of political pluralism on the politics of Kenya, and the last part evaluated the contribution Shikuku made to the advancement of political pluralism. The open-ended questions have been selected on the basis that the respondents may give detailed, personal and extensive knowledge that is not possible in closed forms. These guides were only given to the identified group due to their direct experience, historical association, or close personal attachment to the topic in question, which helped the researcher to come up with data that was rich, credible, and context-related information.

1.11.6.1.3 Key Informant Interviews

This instrument was designed to gain the majority of the pertinent data of veteran politicians, veteran journalists and close relatives of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who stayed informed of the issues of political pluralism. The qualitative data obtained through the key informants improved data obtained on archives. The paper selected 41 key informants purposely and through snowball because it was saturated.

1.11.6.1.4 Focus Group Discussion

This instrument contained probing items to respond to all the key themes that are variables of interest. The FGDs guaranteed the interaction of the groups of respondents therefore triggering more enriching responses on the basis of the history of political pluralism in Kenya and the role of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960.

The participants of FGDs must be established based on the amount of researchers with varying explanations. Also, opinion is divided as to the number of FGDs that must be used to conduct a research. Selecting the appropriate sample size of a research study is not an easy task. Recommendations of increased participation between 8 and 12 or better have been put across. Yet, and most essentially so, the principle of saturation acquires the pre-eminence. Once no new information is available to add properties to a particular category, then it is said that the category is saturated.¹³¹ The current study was based on this; four FGDs with a population of 8 members respectively representing various locations in Kakamega town butere Lower market, Mumias town and Shikunga were carried out. The researcher took into account age factor in both FGDs whereby, it involved the Shikuku agetates that are alive, availability of veteran politicians, a teacher of history, a member of the family, and close friends of Martin Shikuku. The researcher also found out 4 FGDs when the information available in the discussions held in these groups reached the limit.

¹³¹Kizito Muchanga, *Evangelisation Paradigms In The Development of Catholic Diocese of Kakamega, Kenya since 1904*, A Doctoral Thesis, MMUST-Kakamega,(2022) ,p.241

1.11.6.2 Secondary Sources

Libraries, YouTube videos, journals, articles, books and newspapers offered more information that was used to write the findings of this thesis. Secondary data to this study was gathered through the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology library and The National library in Kakamega as well as the internet.

1.11.7 Data Collection Procedure

Creswell J. says that data collection is a set of interconnected actions that intend to collect good information to answer arising research questions.¹³² It involves the determination of the data sources, choice of the instruments, attaining access and authorizations, and applying ethical measures. The researcher initiated data collection on getting formal approval of the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Institute of Ethics Research Committee, and National Commission of Science, Technology as well as Innovation (NACOSTI). The research was undertaken as an archival study at the Kenya National Archives between 4th and 15th November 2025 where original and authentic documents were read, including parliamentary records, electoral reports, constituency development plans and press clippings of the history of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. These were sources of preliminary historical background of the political climate under which Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi worked.

The question guides that were only open-ended questions were crafted with reference to the four objectives of the study. They were subdivided into thematic sections that included; the early life of Shikuku (1932-1960s), the evolution of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960,

¹³²Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014, p.78.

the effects of political pluralism on the Kenyan political history and lastly, personal contribution by Shikuku in this process. The guides were sent to the veteran politicians, veteran journalists and close relatives of Shikuku through purposive and snowball sampling and sent by email. The respondents were provided with a sufficient time to fill out the guides and the researcher would then retrieve the filled out responses at the convenience of the participant or through email.

Besides written interview, oral interviews were done with Key Informant Interviewees (KIIs) such as former parliamentarians, political analysts, and those who had closely worked with Shikuku. The interviews took the semi-structured format in order to provide flexibility but without going out of study objectives. Besides, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with some groups of veteran political observers and journalists to extract give-and-take discussions and elicit collective memories and dissenting interpretations of the role of Shikuku in political pluralism.

Creswell J. and Kothari C.R both note that the methodological triangulation is important in the qualitative research, in which the archival research, guided questions, KIIs, and FGDs are combined to improve the validity and depth of information. This multi-methodology provided cross-checking of the results and reduced bias, whereas the open-ended nature of data collection enabled the respondents to provide more detailed, thoughtful, and deeper information, which would be limited otherwise by structured instruments.

1.11.8 Validity of tools

Since the study used a historical research design and involved the use of qualitative methods only, the validity of the research instruments was determined by the review of experts. The

interview guides were handed over to the research supervisors and subject-matter experts of the Department of Social Science Education. They analyzed them with regards to the suitability of the questions to the study aims, the language used and the appropriateness of the items to capture past data. On their response, the tools were refined with appropriate adjustments based on their feedback to make it contextually acceptable and able to generate plausible, accurate, and significant qualitative information to the study.

1.11.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is used to refer to a process where information collected is analyzed and interpreted in order to make meaningful conclusions. The triangulation approach used in this research allowed the researcher to cross-check and support the data provided by primary sources (interviews and question guides) with such secondary sources as written records and archival documents, which allowed validating and corroborating the obtained data. Since the study was historical and descriptive in nature, the analysis of the data was done using content and thematic analysis whereby the information could be categorized in a systemic manner depending on the objectives of the study.

The speech of the respondents such as veteran politicians, journalists, and family members were at the focus of the analysis. Their views were maintained with the help of verbatim quotations, which made their findings deep, authentic and rich. These voices provided in-depth explanations of the political life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi and how Kenya is heading towards political pluralism. The voice of the researcher served as a critical prism, which intertwined these stories, interpreted trends, and placed the testimonies in the context of the greater historical and political contexts. The equilibrium between the voices of the respondents and the analytical vision of the researcher made sure that the results were based

on the lived experience and their interpretation was carried out critically within an academic discourse.

The findings were put forward in thematic manner, which conformed to the study objectives, and they represented the complexity and multiplicity of ideas expressed. Such a method provided a consistent and significant display of the information and created an opportunity to have a fuller insight into the works of Shikuku in the context of political pluralism in Kenya.

1.11.10 Ethical Considerations

Polit and Beck, emphasize that ethics represents a moral value system that is careful in as far as the extent to which research processes comply with professional, legal, and social responsibilities to research subjects in a study.¹³³ Ethics in research are not the primary goal of the research to harm the participants due to research activities. Research design requires ethical considerations that bring about humanity in to protect rights and dignity of the research participants. The following ethics were followed in this research:

1.11.10.1 Informed Consent

An informed consent is an important ethical principle that promotes voluntary involvement, which is informed according to the comprehensive knowledge of the purpose of research, research procedures, and possible consequences. Participants should not be intimidated or deceived and their free will should be honored as stressed by Israel M and Hay I.¹³⁴ The

¹³³ D.F. Polit and C.T. Beck, *Nursing Research:Principles and Methods*, JB Lippincott, Philadelphia, (2004),p.219

¹³⁴Israel, Mark, and Iain Hay. *Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Regulatory Compliance*. London: SAGE Publications, 2006., p.56.

researcher in this study presented the objectives and expectations both orally and in writing, and the respondents signed the informed consent form (Appendix II). Their rights were defined in the form which comprised of the choice to withdraw as well as the choice to reveal or not to reveal their identities.

Traditionally, the field of historical research is based on attribution and facts that can be verified, however, to conduct an ethical practice in the field of oral history, it is essential to be sensitive to the tastes of the living subjects. Whereas some respondents- particularly those who are public figures such as old-time politicians and newspapers reporters- want to be known so that their names can be recorded in history, others would want to remain anonymous, especially when they are talking about sensitive matters touching on politics. Oral historians like Portelli A. have admitted this tension and believed that although history is constructed out of facts, the moral duty of the researcher should involve participant safety, privacy, and dignity, particularly when the story they are about to tell is in danger of personal or political harm.¹³⁵ Therefore, this study respected respondents' choices, balancing the need for accurate historical documentation with ethical research standards.

1.11.10.2 Permission to conduct the study

The right to conduct research is an essential prerequisite of academic research, especially when human subjects and institutional data are taken into account. Not only is it a form of procedural formality, but also an ethical concern to assure that the research meets the accepted standards of research, that the rights of the participants are respected and are not violated. Israel M. and Hay I. are of the view that gaining institutional and regulatory

¹³⁵Portelli, Alessandro. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991., p.76.

acceptance can help to enhance the legitimacy of the research process and market academic inquiry.¹³⁶ In this research, this was done with formal permission of the MMUST Directorate of Postgraduate Studies (DPS), the MMUST Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC), and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Such approvals were critical to grant permission to the data sources such as human respondents, archival sources or institutional reports as well as ascertain that the study was conducted in regards to the ethical, legal and academic standards. In the absence of such permissions, the research will not be institutionally legitimate and can be deemed to be non-compliant or unethical.

1.11.10.3 Confidentiality and Avoidance of Anonymity

The feedback collected on the subjects is supposed to be handled with high confidence to safeguard the privacy. It must however be noted that, the aspect of anonymity does not feature in historical research. The reason is that we must know facts and sources of data so as to demonstrate clarity and accuracy. In addition, the respondents were also mentioned wherever needed and provided their consent as mentioned in appendix II. All this is based on the fact that history is entirely evidential. People place, time and what they said have to be provided. Their photos are even considered necessary where there is an opportunity.

1.11.10.4 Beneficence

The principle of beneficence states that the research must be conducted to maximize the potential benefits and limit the potential harm to the participants and the society in general. It is an ethical principle in the process of conducting research with human subjects, as it has

¹³⁶Israel, Mark, and Iain Hay. *Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Regulatory Compliance*. London: SAGE Publications, 2006., p.58.

been pointed out by both Belmont Report (1979) and by scholars like Israel M., and Hay I., who state that ethical research must not only be in compliance, but must also be helpful in the well-being of the people and communities involved.¹³⁷ The concept of beneficence in this study was achieved through the research design in such a manner that the research provides valuable and practical findings.

The research sought to serve the political fraternity by critically assessing the political ideologies of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, particularly his frequent preaching of democracy, political accountability and multi party rule. The principled actions of Shikuku and his political misjudgments can also be useful to the political leaders and policymakers who may apply them to be more successful in enforcing democratic principles in modern politics.

This research is also aimed at the citizens of Kenya. The study will enable the citizens to have information that will empower them to make informed choice in addressing their rights as citizens by participating in the political process and guarding against the loss of democratization gains as the country has gone through the historical evolution of political pluralism and what it has brought, both positive and negative in the politics of Kenya. The paper further notes how the citizens can counter the adverse consequences of political pluralism including ethnic polarization and political intolerance in an effort to create a more inclusive and knowledgeable society. Overall, the beneficence of this research is an attempt

¹³⁷Israel, Mark, and Iain Hay. *Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Regulatory Compliance*. London: SAGE Publications, 2006, p.89 and National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979, p.92.

to safeguard the study participants and generate new knowledge that can lead to the political maturity, historical consciousness, and democratic sustainability of the Kenyan society.¹³⁸

1.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter was a detailed account of the background of the study giving the historical context and relevance of political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960. The chapter set the research problem by outlining the gaps in the existing research especially the lack of emphasis on the contribution that Joseph Martin Shikuku had made to the practice of political pluralism. The objectives of the study were well stipulated to inform the study and some of the main points addressed in the study included the early life of Shikuku, development of political pluralism, the role of Shikuku and the effects of multiparty democracy in Kenya.

The chapter also touched on the scope and limitation of the study as it indicated the geographical and temporal boundaries on which the research was done. The importance and the rationale of the study were addressed, which includes its importance in the context of knowing the democratic history of Kenya and adding to the political discourse. The theoretical framework was put forward basing the study on Pluralist Theory in examining the effects of political participation and institutional functioning in the political arena in Kenya.

An extensive literature survey was conducted in order to establish some of the most important academic views on political pluralism, democracy, and governance in Kenya. The review has looked at the works of both past and more recent times, and found a knowledge gap that was

addressed in this study. The methodology of the research was also described and the qualitative approach was exemplified with question guides, archival research, FGDs and secondary data analysis. Respondents were also selected, data collection procedures and ethical considerations were also discussed.

In general, the chapter gave a conceptual background of the study as it placed the study issue in context using the existing theoretical and empirical literature and defined the methodology used in the study. In the following chapter, the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, 1932-2012 is covered.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY LIFE OF JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI, 1932-1960

The ingredients that comprise the proposal part in research were unraveled in the previous chapter. In this chapter, a short historical background and culture of Marama where Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was born are outlined. It is intended to determine the historical impact of these cultural aspects on the life of Shikuku. It also outlines how the childhood and education of Shikuku led to him getting interest in politics particularly political pluralism. Moreover, it also describes the first interaction of Shikuku with foreign cultures and his reaction to them.

2.1 History and Culture of Marama

Among the nineteen Luhya ethnic groups is the Marama also referred to as Abamarama. They geographically inhabit Marama site in the Kakamega County of western province of Kenya. Butere is a major trading Centre in Kakamega found in west Marama. The Marama site was established by the year 1598 to 1733.¹³⁹

Abamarama clans have their accounts that their ancestors were once residing in Eastern Uganda, which followed their supposed departure out of Egypt. Their migration probably took place between 1598-1625 after a period of wandering about Marachi, Samia and Bunyala they moved to Bukachi, the current area of the Luo community of Alego. The migration towards Western Kenya is attributed to overpopulation and the ensuing aspiration

¹³⁹Gideon Were, *Western Kenya Historical Texts*; Abaluhya, Teso and Elgon Kalenjii, East African Publishers, Nairobi (1967), p.196

to better and spacious nation and the necessity of new grazing and hunting areas and so-called cannibalistic nature of the Abashienda clan of Bagishu among other factors.¹⁴⁰

It was there that most of them passed through portions of Kisa location and settled in the Marama where they were followed by other Bantu clans. This was eleven generations prior, c.1625-1652. They slowly developed and became the mainstream society. They were divided into clans of Abamukhula, Ababoko, Abamatundu, Abakhuli, Abakara, Abamukhuyu, Abashiongo and Abamunali.¹⁴¹

Marama appears to have been finished with the colonization seven generations earlier, in c.1733-1760. By this point some of the Aberecheya tribe men already had crossed River Isika and inhabited their current territories; the others were still residing in the current Irecheya hill in the current site of Gem. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi belonged to the clan of Aberecheya that was considered a minor Marama clan.¹⁴²

2.2 Traditional Culture of Marama

Culture is the lifestyle or the way of existence of the individual. In each and every society, there is a cultural heritage that more influences the individuals to act, assuming their identity and attitude toward themselves than the genetic heritage.¹⁴³ In evaluating certain cultural values in the past which may have influenced the life of Shikuku, its value includes reviewing

¹⁴⁰ Gideon Were, *A History of The Abaluhya of Western Kenya*, East African Publishers, Nairobi (1967), p.67

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.68

¹⁴² Gideon Were, *Western Kenya Historical Texts; Abaluhya, Teso and Elgon Kalenjin*, East African Publishers, Nairobi (1967), p.196

¹⁴³ Lenzerini, Federico. "Intangible cultural heritage: The living culture of peoples." *European Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (2011): 101-120.

some of its issues such as kinship, marriage, property rights and social duties amongst the Marama.¹⁴⁴

The traditional values of the Marama people of Kakamega County were based on the communal values and elder-hood. The seniors, particularly those in the dominant Abamukhula clan are deemed as bearers of culture and are the peacemakers and negotiators. They were a crucial part of conflict resolution and advising on decisions to the community. Shikuku belonged to a small clan, Aberecheya and only made the first member of Parliament of the Marama because he had the capacity to mobilize other clans of Marama against the dominant clan (Abamukhula).¹⁴⁵

The Marama people were no exception and had customary African religious beliefs and values just like any other African community. They also had faith in the existence of God who gives life by watching the rising and setting of the sun as a symbol of pleading God to give life. They were also believers in spirits and the living dead. Moreover, they were of the opinion that there is life after death. Marama community thus possessed a rich traditional African religious culture such as religiosity, respect, and hospitality that contributed to creating a harmonious and stable society that facilitated cooperation.¹⁴⁶

Kinship is a phenomenon that implies that every person in the society is the brother, sister, father or mother, grandfather, grandmother, cousin or brother-in-law and the uncle or aunt of the other individual in the society. This system is a huge network that runs literally in all the

¹⁴⁴Robert Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe on 15/12/2024

¹⁴⁵Rosemary Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe on 15/12/2024

¹⁴⁶Forde, Daryll. *African worlds: Studies in the cosmological ideas and social values of African peoples*. LIT Verlag Münster, 1999.

directions to cover everybody within a local given group. Kinship system regulating social relationship governs the whole way of life of an individual in the society.¹⁴⁷

Marriage placed the individual and the family on the social, religious and physical map in the community. It was a common knowledge that when a person got married and had children, he/she was full. Children would always be concrete testimony to a family that was bound to be immortal. The larger the number of children a man had the more he was regarded in the society. Due to this African traditional value of marriage has always been at loggerheads with the Christian teaching of celibacy in the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁸

2.3 The Life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi

Shikuku finally secured formal education in St. Peters Mumias and then went to St. Peter seminary-Mukumu where he was a seminarian and he studied seven years. In 1952 however he left the seminary following a disagreement between him and the catholic vow of celibacy which was said to have occurred after he fell in love. It was a turning point in his life since he was no longer on a religious path but rather a political and service path. Joseph Shikuku also practiced polygamy, which was a tradition in most Kenyan societies in those days. These are four wives of his; Joska Indeche, deceased, Dolly Achieng, deceased, Alego, Beverly Ongecha, deceased, Ebusakami, and Frida Nafuna, deceased, Bungoma. He had eight sons and eight daughters and his family talks about his father as a disciplined, principled and intellectually curious man who was not only devoted to his service to the people, but also devoted to his position as a patriarch.

¹⁴⁷ Mbithi J. S. *African Religion and Philosophy*, Heinmann, Nairobi, (1967), p.100

¹⁴⁸ Rahner K. *Encyclopedia of Theology*, Burns and Oats, London (1975), p.178

In different interviews, his siblings recount him as being an independent thinker at a young age and that he was the type of boy who would challenge authority but in a respectful manner. They observed that even after abandoning the seminary, the teachings of the Catholic Church had a profound impact on him especially in matters pertaining to justice, morality and telling the truth, which were to dominate in his political life. As one of his siblings opined, Shikuku would never remain silent whenever faced with injustice, even when he was a young man. He would get on his feet, even when he was the sole speaker.



Plate 1: The photo of Joseph Martin Shikuku

Source¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹<https://www.namlolwe-anecdotes.com/post/martin-shikuku-what-manner-of-man>

Such early roots inspired by faith, family, and a colonial atmosphere that had an electric political awakening would subsequently be utilized by Shikuku to become one of the most outspoken and ideological advocates of political pluralism and democratic governance in Kenya.¹⁵⁰

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi has a very strong connection of his early life with the social, cultural as well as political life of the colonial and early post-colonial Kenya. Being born in a conservative Luhya community in Western Kenya, his childhood experience was characterized by the clash of local traditions, missionary training and anti-colonialism.¹⁵¹

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was born on Christmas day 1932 at Magadi town, the former Rift Valley province.¹⁵² His parents were Osule Oyondi Johana and Lucia Indeche. His parents were employed in a Soda Mining Company in Magadi. The Oyondi name was hereditary and Shikuku name meant that he was born during the Christmas period. Joseph and Martin were given Christian names as His parents were faithful Catholics; baptism and sacrament of confirmation services respectively.¹⁵³

He was the second born in a family of six namely Silvanus Madanji (deceased), Domitilla Aloya Oyondi (deceased), Wilfrida Alwanga Oyondi (deceased), Ambrose Oluchiri Oyondi(deceased), Dr. Lwali Oyondi (former Member of Parliament in Nakuru town) and Peter Omurunga Oyondi (former head of Hansard).¹⁵⁴ His father, Osule Oyondi, was a respected man in the society, an upright individual, disciplined, and of sound moral judgment.

¹⁵⁰Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview, in Irechea, on 4/1/2025

¹⁵¹Rahner, K. Encyclopedia of Theology, Burns and Oats, London (1975), p.178

¹⁵²Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview, in Irechea, on 4/1/2025

¹⁵³Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/2025

¹⁵⁴Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/2025

Being a respected elder, he had sound moral principles and was never afraid to say the truth and make unpopular decisions.

Shikuku frequently referred to the influence of his father as the basis of his personal moral and political philosophy. This was introduced to him at a very young age and he was taught that doing what is right is more than doing what is easy or even popular. This initial moral establishment was seen in his political life, in which he always made himself a truth-teller and a champion of democratic ideas, even against his mighty political opponents. His audacity to highlight authoritarian, corrupt and political hypocrisy was not just a personal attribute and this was also a sign of the non-compromising moral standing of his father. Shikuku in most aspects inherited a culture of moral courage, which was a characteristic feature of his leadership approach and his interactions with the people, throughout the decades. This high level of ethics enabled Shikuku to gain popularity with the people who gave him the title of the Peoples Watchman, a title that he adopted since he had a firm belief in transparency, accountability and justice that he said he had learned at home.¹⁵⁵ Since his parents were Catholics, he was raised a devout catholic. He underwent catechism as a process of becoming a church member.

Shikuku was a strong Christian who was not willing to venture into fulltime ministry as he felt that he had a different calling and that was The watchman of people.¹⁵⁶ According to his view, he held that, politics and Christianity were hostile realms of living. Moreover, Christian

¹⁵⁵Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview in Irechea, on 4/1/2025

¹⁵⁶<http://www.abeingo.org>, Interview between Shad Bulimo, editor of Abeingo Community Network and Martin Shikuku(2009), p.1

virtues to him were to be applied in promoting good governance, democracy, peaceful co-existence and nationalism.¹⁵⁷

It is not only the life history of Shikuku as it is a reflection of the Kenya march towards independence and democracy. He began his political career at the tender age of six in 1938. He began to despise the colonialists at this age since his mind had been developed and he had sworn to drive the “mzungu” (the British) out of the land. He referred to a strange event that he had observed to explain the reason.¹⁵⁸

When Shikuku was six years old, 1938, he recalls how he was being crudely lifted off the ground by a collar of his shirt. He felt sick of the uncivil intrusion into his play and wanted his dad to clarify to him at once what was the identity of the intruder. Atse, solola omukhongo abiranga (can't you see , the big man is passing by), his father said. Then in the early 1930s it was polite of Africans to rise and even salute whenever they saw the Whiteman or woman.¹⁵⁹ At six years of age Shikuku was not persuaded with the explanation. What irritated him more, was the manner in which the man treated his father, when he stood straight up, and saluted him. This defeat of his father who was his role model led his mind to the conclusion that a Whiteman was a bad fellow. Incidentally, it is what turned out to be his motivation on how to struggle to gain independence. He was brought up, as Peter Oyondi and Ochieng R. state, in the spirit of discipline, intellectual curiosity, and precocious intellectual understanding of socio-political questions, all of which would later mark his

¹⁵⁷Ibid, p.3

¹⁵⁸*Daily Nation*, Saturday September,18, 2004 Updated July 03,2020

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

political persona. Peter Omurunga Oyondi who, being a kinsman of Irechea/Ebukhokoro, grew up with Shikuku, told him the story of his early life:

Joseph was born in a family where discipline, church teachings and hard work were upheld. His father used to be highly engaged in the church activities and that automatically affected his initial moral growth.¹⁶⁰

This background concurs with the scholarly reports that indicate that most of the early African political leaders were a by-product of the missionary world, in which they learnt literacy, discipline, Christian values, and skills in public speaking, which would be invaluable in the political arena. It is reported that early education in missionary or church schools was also received by such leaders as Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Malawi), and Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal). These environments exposed them to Western systems of governance and political thought as well as instilling in them moral values and language mastery that proved to be influential instruments in the anti-colonial movements and leadership. Similar to them, the seminary education of Shikuku gave him not only a spiritual foundation but also a critical mind, eloquence, and a vision of the world of principles which would mark his place in the history of Kenyan politics.¹⁶¹

It was the groundwork of political pluralism in the background of the home and education of Shikuku. His parents were very strict Catholics thus necessitating him to attend St. Peters Primary school in Mumias.¹⁶² Though there are other schools within five miles of his place of residence, he had to carry his food to last him through the week every Monday morning

¹⁶⁰Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview at Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on January 4, 2025.

¹⁶¹Ochieng', William R. *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940–93*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995., p.66.

¹⁶²*Wajibu*, Volume 7. No.1(1992),p.5

and bring it back on Friday. What he had been taught at home was complemented by the education at school.

Shikuku joined secondary school after his primary school. It is in this level of education that Shikuku began his life as a seminarian at the St. Peters Seminary in Mukumu where he was being trained to be a priest. He had a training period of only seven years. This training focused on honesty at all costs and this made him a mentee of being a maverick politician. He claimed that politics and Christianity were hostile spheres of life.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, it is ironical that he notes Christian virtues are observable in his effort to spread good governance, democratic coexistence and nationalism. His teacher was the late Mwalimu Matayo Shiundu of Mumias who termed Shikuku as a clever and naughty boy. Besides, these characteristics brought Shikuku to national prominence at the age of twenty. He abandoned the vocation of serving the Lord to take up the pressing demand of ensuring his people were free of the burden of the colonialism. Guiding his way in becoming a would be a priest to a political stalwart epitomizes the richness and flux of the political development in Kenya.¹⁶⁴

From a very early age, Shikuku was exposed to religious and communal structures that emphasized leadership and service. Holiness Omurunga of Ebukhokoro recalled:

He was a boy who never missed church... he even led Sunday school songs before he turned ten. He had a strong voice, and everyone listened when he spoke.¹⁶⁵

Berman, Eyoh, and Kymlicka state that, at an early age exposure to Christian value and well-organized institutional life often placed young African boys in a special role within their own

¹⁶³Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview at Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on January 4, 2025.

¹⁶⁴Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview at Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on January 4, 2025.

¹⁶⁵Holiness Omurunga, Oral Interview at Ebukhokoro, on December 12, 2024

communities as they were geared towards leadership in the nationalist and post-independence times.¹⁶⁶ This opinion is confirmed by an FGD conducted with teachers of history in Mumias in which they confirmed that Joseph was an eloquent speaker even in primary school, and thus stated that:

He was inquisitive and would confront teachers in a respectful way by asking questions regarding the colonial rule and African uprising. He was not a learner, but a thinker.¹⁶⁷

It is true that Robert Makambo of Eshirembe, too, recalled the scholarly power and curiosity of Shikuku: His voice was an authoritative one even in his youth... teachers used to request him to read to the school. He liked books, books concerning African heroes.¹⁶⁸ Religion, education, and politics were the three aspects of life that Shikuku synthesized, which were reinforced by the value system in his family. Robert Makambo noted that:

His father would walk miles to make him access good books. He entered school at a tender age and missed grades. They thought that education was freedom.¹⁶⁹

The focus on education is symptomatic of a larger trend within Kenyan societies where literacy was regarded not only as a means of personal empowerment but also empowerment against the oppression of the colonial rule.¹⁷⁰ Colonial and missionary education gave birth to a pool of elitists or the intelligentsia who were the pioneers of nationalistic movements in

¹⁶⁶Berman, Bruce, Dickson Eyoh, and Will Kymlicka. "Ethnicity and democracy in historical and comparative perspective." *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa* (2004): 1-21., p.8.

¹⁶⁷FGD with History Teachers, at Mumias Town, on January 10, 2025.

¹⁶⁸Robert Makambo, Oral Interview at Eshirembe, on December 15, 2024.

¹⁶⁹Robert Makambo, Oral Interview at Eshirembe, on December 15, 2024.

¹⁷⁰Atieno-Odhiambo, Elisha Stephen. "Hegemonic enterprises and instrumentalities of survival: Ethnicity and democracy in Kenya." *African Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 223-249., p.228.

Africa. They could facilitate African consciousness that brought about decolonization because they had an exposure to knowledge, good in spoken and written English.

Another point worth mentioning is that in 1952 Shikuku quit the seminary and got his first employment as a laboratory helper at Magadi. The job saw him enter into the corporate world that was his first accomplishment in the labour market. This assignment brought him material gratification and his greatest difficulty was that Magadi was in the remote regions and he was an emotional person who believed that people were important to him this was not the right place that he could call home. This saw him leave the chemical firm.¹⁷¹

At the time he resigned as the laboratory assistant, he had to work as a train guard with East African Railways in Nairobi. He became the first African to be in the post. The work in the railways was regarded as a prestigious occupation during that period and Shikuku used the work to place himself at the strategic position.¹⁷² His role in the railways saw him being active when Mau Mau led the fight towards uhuru (independence). He helped the Mau Mau rebellion when he used to conceal weapons of the rebels. His role enabled him to assist the cause in the background, and this situation was one of the initial points of contact between his work and nationalism.

The political career of Shikuku influenced the establishment of the governance system in Kenya as he took decisive roles.¹⁷³ He joined the Nairobi people convention party in the year 1959 and was appointed the secretary general of the party. He left Nairobi People's

¹⁷¹ Robert Makambo, Oral Interview at Eshirembe, on December 15, 2024.

¹⁷²<http://www.abeingo.org>, Interview between Shad Bulimo, editor of Abeingo Community Network and Martin Shikuku(2009), p.5

¹⁷³Shilaho, Westen K., and Westen K. Shilaho. "Motion Without Movement: Kenya's Transition Without Transformation." *Political Power and Tribalism in Kenya* (2018): 81-112., p.86.

Convention Party in the year 1960 and joined Kenya African Democratic Union where he became its youth leader.¹⁷⁴ KADU was developed to serve the complaints of the minor communities since KANU was now established by the Kikuyu and the Luo.

The initial engagement with the political ideologies was not only influenced by the family but also by the local actors in the anti-colonial struggle. According to an FGD of political analysts in the town of Kakamega, it is stated:

Young Shikuku was caught at a number of occasions listening to the older people conversing about the Kenya African Union and the Mau Mau rebellions. He was inquisitive and posed hard questions. He was able to articulate the Lancaster House discussions better than some adults at a very young age, at the age of teenage.¹⁷⁵

These early encounters highlight the fact that political maturity in Kenya in many ways had its start in early childhood as knowledge was passed on through observation and oral transmission.¹⁷⁶ This political tendencies was also strengthened by Kenneth Kaunda of Mumias:

He was capable of repeating the Bible verses and political speeches. He was born to be in church and to be in parliament. He would preach about liberty and fairness as the preacher would preach about heaven.¹⁷⁷ This fusion of religion and politics was by no means unique to Shikuku, but it is symptomatic of a wider tendency amongst African nationalist leaders to

¹⁷⁴Mabolo, Aggrey W. "A Political Bioography of Elijah Wasike Mwangale: 1939-1992." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2016., p.62.

¹⁷⁵FGD with Political Analysts, Kakamega Town, December 5, 2024.

¹⁷⁶Anderson, Eric. "Orthodox and inclusive masculinity: Competing masculinities among heterosexual men in a feminized terrain." *Sociological perspectives* 48, no. 3 (2005): 337-355., p.346.

¹⁷⁷Kenneth Kaunda, Oral Interview at Mumias, on December 15, 2024

invoke the symbolism of religion and religious rhetoric as a source of moral authority. Community memory only further illustrates his mature manner and potential as a leader at an early age. "Calson Wagenbuitier of Eshirembe said:

Though he was being grown up at a time where children were meant to be seen, not heard, Joseph found ways of speaking without being disrespectful. Elders liked him. They said he had wisdom against the years.

From the discussion above, the researcher noted that Shikoku displayed the initial signs of being politically savvy, emotionally competent, and strategic with his communication skills, which would later define his presence in the national stage. His youth notwithstanding, and despite customary expectations, he could not be stopped from engaging thoughtfully with elders and becoming a trustworthy and thoughtful voice in the community. This feeling was shared by a FGD with Butere Lower Market residents: He carried himself like a stiff little kid grown man. People believed that he would be either a priest or a lawyer. Politics came later but leadership was with him throughout. Even other parents respected his opinions.¹⁷⁸

From the researcher's point of view such reflections point to a natural charisma and social awareness that made Shikoku a respected figure even from an early age. These first signs of political leadership, based on a community respect, and moral discipline, later found expression in his intrepidity on the national political pole. The testimonies seem to suggest that Shikoku's political consciousness did not "happen" in adulthood but was forcefully embedded in his upbringing and in his early experiences with the power and with community life. Such testimony indicates that Shikoku's existence in his early years was marked by

¹⁷⁸FGD with Butere Residents at Butere, on February 1, 2025

exceptional cognitive and social skills, which allowed him to popularly exist as an adult.

Perhaps the most enlightening word came from long-time politician Lwali Oyondi:

Joseph would follow his father to meetings . . . Never interrupted . . . just listened. But post on he would repeat the speeches almost word for word. That boy possessed a photographic memory.¹⁷⁹

This observational learning - listening, retaining and rearticulating complicated ideas - was critical to his later political career. Indeed, this is comparable to what scholars have termed "intellectual apprenticeship" in which young boys learned leadership by shadowing local elders and political actors. The intersection of oral tradition and Western education in the process of his upbringing gave him the dual foundation for traditional leadership roles and formal leadership roles. As Omurunga Peter noted:

He had elders to teach him riddles, proverbs and folk tales. He never forgot them. But at the same time, he had the ability to speak fluently English and Swahili. It's like he had two minds.¹⁸⁰

The ability to function across cultural contexts has enabled Shikuku to convey the African concerns to the colonial authorities and later to the Kenyan government. It also made him a man who linked generations and represented the tensions and transitions in his day.

Historically, Western Kenya, particularly the Kakamega and Mumias belt, played an important role in the nationalist movements in Kenya, owing to its high concentration of the missionary society and a high level of local leadership. Shikoku's early life therefore took place in a region of increased political consciousness. That the region was a hotbed for early political mobilization and civic education, and provided a rich environment for political

¹⁷⁹Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview at Nakuru, on January 6, 2025

¹⁸⁰Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview at Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on January 4, 2025.

grooming, is confirmed by secondary sources.¹⁸¹ It is also important to recognize that the issues of his community, such as land issues, labor injustices, and cultural suppression, were all a part of his experience. An FGD of political analysts showed that he knew the discriminatory practices of the colonial regime from a young age. One political analyst put it this way:

He would question his uncle about why he had to carry a kipande. He knew it was wrong. He once said this, "If God created us equal, why do we carry books on our necks?" That was him at maybe 12.¹⁸²

This early political consciousness resonates with the concept of "childhood agency" in African political history, which considers that it is not always recognized as children as passive subjects, but early subjects in social transformation.¹⁸³

Altogether, Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi experienced the early life based on the mixture of spiritual background, academic performance, political consciousness, and communal confidence. He was shaped by a family that stressed integrity, a society that was struggling with colonial injustice and an individual temperament fit to be a leader. The experience he had as a young boy was not a case of incidents but a foundation of a national figure who would later become the national watchman to Kenyan politics. Early biographical contexts are important, as R. A. Berman claims, they determine the moral vision and strategic orientation of future leaders.¹⁸⁴ The impact of mentorship and peer pressure on the early

¹⁸¹ Maxson, Hillary. "From "Motherhood in the Interest of the State" to Motherhood in the Interest of Mothers." *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms* (2017): 34-49., p.42.

¹⁸²FGD with Political Analysts, at Kakamega Town, on December 5, 2024.

¹⁸³Akyeampong, Emmanuel, and Hippolyte Fofack. "The contribution of African women to economic growth and development in the pre-colonial and colonial periods: historical perspectives and policy implications." *Economic History of Developing Regions* 29, no. 1 (2014): 42-73., p.48.

¹⁸⁴Berman, Ruth A. "Introduction: Developing discourse stance in different text types and languages." *Journal of pragmatics* 37, no. 2 (2005): 105-124., p.113.

development of Shikuku was reflected as well. Most of the respondents mentioned that he tended to socialize with elderly people, unlike the normal adults, and thus displayed an odd fondness of company of adults even in childhood. This, says Calson Atenya, was a symptom of a growing mind:

He did not care at all about the games we played. Rather, he would go under the tree and elders deliberated on various issues. he never broke in--he assimilated.¹⁸⁵

It was this attribute that resembled the old Luhya models of apprenticeship with the future leaders being groomed through observation and imitation of older and respected men in the community. It was this internalization in the communal life and formal education that differentiated Shikuku. One aspect that was fascinating about his early life was his skill in the art of orature and debate. The teachers of Mumias were interviewed on FGD and stated that:

At the age of intermediate school, he was already conducting a debate, quoting the Bible and also the African proverbs. He was not parroting, he was translating and using.¹⁸⁶

This was used as his strength in rhetoric later to characterize his politics in national forums, like the Lancaster House Conference and in the post-independence Kenya parliamentary debates. Due to the power of eloquence, as Oginga Odinga pointed out, the success of grassroots activists in the transformation into national icons was among the most important things in Kenya.¹⁸⁷ The impact of family is hard to overestimate. Many African leaders were

¹⁸⁵Calson Atenya, Oral Interview at Eshirembe, on December 18, 2024.

¹⁸⁶FGD with History Teachers, at Mumias Town, on January 10, 2025.

¹⁸⁷Jaramogi, Odinga Oginga. *Not Yet Uhuru*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1967.p.51

born in political families, but the previous Shikuku belonged to the religious circle and shared community. Lwali Oyondi is an elderly politician, and a family member who stressed:

Politics was not inherited by him but acquired. The discipline, the spirituality, and respect to the values of the community was what he inherited. It was a vocation of politics and not a family business.¹⁸⁸

This opinion can be attributed to the difference in place between dynastic politics and populist nationalism in postcolonial Africa and this point was mentioned by M. Mamdani who stated that in this case popular legitimacy was frequently based on moral authority, rather than lineage.¹⁸⁹ Shikuku started defying norms at a tender age in his teenage years, but he did it in ways that were very subtle and deep in nature. During the FGD held in Butere Lower Market, people have observed:

Joseph would question the chief even in cases where the chief paid visits to the school. One time he came and said, Why does the chief get better treatment when all our fathers pay tax? That was bold in those days.¹⁹⁰

This is a probing of the top-down power, which foreshadows his subsequent populist politics, which were based on the notion that leadership can and must be answerable to the populace and not dictated by a colonial or elite power. His youth years also are the same with the political awakening in Kenya during the 1940s and 1950s. New ideas were introduced to the rural areas by newspapers, returning World War II soldiers and early nationalist movements. Respondents such as Robert Makambo recalled the impact of this changes as far as young minds were concerned:

¹⁸⁸Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview at Nakuru, January 6, 2025

¹⁸⁹Mamdani, Mahmood. "Citizen and Subject." *Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

¹⁹⁰FGD with Butere Residents at Butere, on February 1, 2025.

Men had stories that came back on the war. Joseph had overheard them more than any. He would make notes of what they said in his little notebook, and read them out to others.¹⁹¹

This story is substantiated by archival sources that most of the future leaders in Kenya such as Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga learned and acquired political wisdom by talking to the returnees and being exposed to early Pan-African philosophy.¹⁹² The sociopolitical organization of the western Kenya and especially the existence of mission schools, colonial chiefs and cooperative societies also influenced the early years of Joseph Shikuku. These schools provided possibilities and contradictions. One of the participants of the FGD in Kakamega stressed:

He knew what a contradiction was. He would tell you, the colonial chief is our praying-mate, but he beats our fathers. His early thinking was influenced by the paradox.¹⁹³

His mental activity regarding the contradictions of colonial life equipped him to be a keen critic of the neocolonial systems in adulthood. According to historian John Lonsdale, it is not merely the resistance of many African nationalists to colonialism that was created but the negotiation with it.¹⁹⁴

Another main factor that contributed to his early development was the spiritual underpinning that arose as a result of Catholic mission education. Some of the respondents said that he attended church regularly and even attended catechism classes. Holiness Omurunga underlined:

¹⁹¹Robert Makambo, Oral Interview at Butere, on December 15, 2024.

¹⁹²Throup & Hornsby, *Kenya: Politics and the Struggle for Democracy*, London: James Currey, 1998, p.56.

¹⁹³FGD with Political Analysts, at Kakamega Town, on December 5, 2024.

¹⁹⁴Lonsdale, John. "Soil, work, civilisation, and citizenship in Kenya." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 305-314., p.310.

Even before Joseph was confirmed, he would be teaching younger boys the Bible. He was attracted towards justice and Jesus was a fighter of justice to him.¹⁹⁵ Such spiritual worldview would subsequently shape his stances on moral matters in the political arena such as his most celebrated anti-corruption, inequality and dictatorship stands. Interestingly, formal schooling was crucial, but most of the respondents pointed out that informal learning, through the elders, war veterans and oral narrations influenced his political awareness. Peter Omurunga explained:

Joseph would hear of Dedan Kimathi, and Harry Thuku. He referred to them as soldiers of the spirit. He saw himself among them.¹⁹⁶

This romanticization of African heroes was not an exception of young nationalists as demonstrated in work by Ngugi wa Thiong'o who claimed that memory and oral history are essential in defining political identity.¹⁹⁷ Even the language used when he was addressing people was different in age. Rosemary Makambo recounted:

He later stopped using the word mimi (I) and began using the word sisi (we) to refer to problems at about thirteen. He was early a believer in collective struggle.¹⁹⁸

This is the intellectual transformation of individualism to collectivism which is the core of Africa nationalist thought whereby the leader is considered as a carrier of the will of the people. By the time he became of age, Shikuku was already a community mobilizer. He participated in youth forums, church missions, and school debates which created awareness of colonialism, injustice and African identity. These platforms were his rehearsal areas into

¹⁹⁵Holiness Omurunga, Oral Interview, on December 12, 2024

¹⁹⁶Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview, January 4, 2025.

¹⁹⁷Brinkman, Inge. "Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, 1986." *History of Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2024): 353-359., p.357.

¹⁹⁸Rosemary Makambo, Oral Interview at Butere, on December 15, 2024.

future ascendancy into the national politics. A complex web of early life conducted in the oral lore and literary research of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi demonstrates the importance of a crossroad between individual life and national development. They were not just a picture-frame to his subsequent success but the very crucible where he made his political, moral, and ideological character. The reminiscences of old statesman Lwali Oyondi are addressed to the character-creating forces which helped to mould the integrity that was Shikuku:

Joseph would tell young men, though other members of his age were being tempted with money or gifts by colonial officers; I prefer respect to silver. That stuck with many of us.¹⁹⁹

These expressions do not just represent one or two personal anecdotes but also follow a trend to be found in other postcolonial African leaders that rose to power with a good moral compass, leaders like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, who too were influenced by religious teachings and the principles of community unity.²⁰⁰ The Kakamega political analysts emphasized that this particular charisma of Shikuku was partially explained by his capacity to combine the traditional values with the modern ambitions:

He did not hate our fashions as other new elites. English in Parliament and Luhya in the village--and both of them were real. And that split personality was an asset..²⁰¹

This process of bilingual and bicultural authenticity is well presented in the research of charismatic leadership in Africa. E. Hobsbawm, and T. Ranger believe that the amalgamation of tradition and modernity played the important role in the mobilization of the mass in the

¹⁹⁹Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview at Butere, on January 4, 2025.

²⁰⁰Iliffe, John. *A modern history of Tanganyika*. Cambridge University Press, 1979., p.78.

²⁰¹FGD with Political Analysts, at Kakamega Town, on December 5, 2024.

decolonization era.²⁰² The other significant theme that comes out of the data is the pedagogical role Shikuku played when she was a leader even prior to being elected into power. He was often called a teacher without classroom since he taught morality, justice and civic awareness to others. One of the respondents, Kenneth Kaunda of Mumias, said:

Joseph once wrote to the colonial DO [District Officer] regarding the ill treatment of African workers in the Mumias District Offices- he had not yet attained the age of 18. He had copied three copies, one to the DO, one to the chief, and one to the church notice board.²⁰³

This, as well as being a profound expression of civic duty, foreshadows his subsequent efforts as a mouthpiece against state instrumentality, whoever it was. It is also a demonstration of the concept which postcolonial theorist Achille Mbembe has developed that the first forms of opposition to colonialism were frequently incidents of small rebellion, which led to national revolution.²⁰⁴ Teachers in Mumias pointed to the fact that Shikuku had a voracious appetite regarding books, stories, and intellectual discussion, which could not be satisfied through colonial school experience:

He used to travel by walking to Ebukhokoro to Kakamega to read a newspaper since it contained an article about Kwame Nkrumah. On coming back, he sat around ten boys and read it to them aloud.²⁰⁵

This description leads to the strengthening of the concept that even though formal schooling in colonial Kenya was restricted and racially discriminative, it did not entirely inhibit the intellectual aspirations of African youth. Instead, the ingenuity of characters such as Shikuku is a witness to the development of an informal intellectual tradition which was coexisting

²⁰² Eric, Hobsbawm, and T. Ranger. "Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870–1914." *The invention of tradition* (1983): 263-307., p.284.

²⁰³ Kenneth Kaunda, Oral Interview at Mumias, on December 15, 2024.

²⁰⁴ Mbembe, Achille. *On the postcolony*. Vol. 41. Univ of California Press, 2001., p.58.

²⁰⁵ FGD with History Teachers, at Mumias Town, on January 10, 2025.

with the colonial curriculum.²⁰⁶ His inclusivity and his concept of justice since his early years were further demonstrated by the experiences of Rosemary and Robert Makambo, who lived in Eshirembe and were close to Shikuku. Robert shared:

A boy in our class was not able to buy uniform. Even the teacher was convinced by Joseph to allow her to remain and even arrangements were made by the church to assist him.²⁰⁷

This empathy and grassroots organization was to be his trademarks in the future leadership style. In fact, researchers have pointed out that the foundations of the people-centered governance in postcolonial Africa were frequently traced back to the period of youth movements and acts of community solidarity during the colonial rule.²⁰⁸ The precocity in politics, housing perhaps the greatest hallmark of the early life of Shikuku. As noted by Peter Omurunga:

He never waited to gain independence before he began to fight towards it. He added, the British go, and what are we putting in their place? This was the question that haunted him throughout his life.²⁰⁹

This prescient, and preemptive, worry over the quality of postcolonial leadership and governance echoes more general critical assessments of the post-independence African state, such as the one by Mahmood Mamdani that most nationalist leaders had underestimated the structural legacies of colonial rule.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶Anderson, John. "Self help and independency: The political implications of a continuing tradition in African education in Kenya." *African Affairs* 70, no. 278 (1971): 9-22., p.14.

²⁰⁷Robert Makambo, Oral Interview at Butere, on December 15, 2024

²⁰⁸Berman, Bruce, Dickson Eyoh, and Will Kymlicka, eds. *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa*. Ohio University Press, 2004., p.89.

²⁰⁹Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview at Butere, January 4, 2025.

²¹⁰Mamdani M., *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996., p.76.

The fact that Shikuku was already involved with the contradictions of power, his position of grassroots activism, his ethical clarity and intellectual inquisitiveness was not merely a product of personality. They were placed in history as reactionary to a certain colonial and communal setting a period of flux, tension, and promise. It is in this sensitive space that his political philosophy and leadership ethics were condensed.

Simply put, the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi makes it clear how a man is made through the community, church, conscience, and a grander calling than himself. He not only came of the dusty streets of Ebukhokoro and Irechea, but with discipline. His native place was not only geographical, but also intellectual. He was the finest of both worlds, old fashioned wisdom and new fashioned political wisdom. These discoveries provide an essential groundwork on which his subsequent political career can be interpreted and a prism in terms of which the greater history of democracy in Kenya can be analyzed.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the early years of the life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who lived in Ebukhokoro and Eshirembe villages by utilizing the oral testimonies, focus groups discussions, and secondary historical data. It confirms that early life of Shikuku was marked by great sense of moral clarity, intellectual curiosity and civic responsibility-this would subsequently become the hallmark of his political career.

The respondents told how he was an upright and eloquent young man whose world-view had been shaped to a large extent by his Catholic-training and their early experience of colonial injustice. He has proven to be an excellent leader and very just since his early years, he used

to stand up for fellow learners to be just and not to succumb to the colonial influence. His humane nature was reflected in the verbatim accounts especially in helping his disadvantaged classmates, and the fight against discriminatory practices in local institutions.

The results of the focus group interviews with political observers and teachers of history were highlights of the outstanding communication capabilities and his ability to move between the traditional and modern arena of influence that Shikuku had. The way he mastered local languages and received colonial education made him a mediator between the people and the state which made him an extremely respected person. The oral tales are supplemented with secondary sources, which place Shikuku within a larger pattern of postcolonial African leaders who had been introduced to inequality in their early years and then became active in anti-colonial movements. His youthful activism, letter-writing to administrators, organizing youth, and starting neighborhood discussions all highlight how he was a political thinker unlike other politicians before he got into the formal world of politics.

In general, Chapter 6 discloses that the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was not merely a precursor to his future contributions made in the field of national politics but the very critical time when his ideals have been pruned. The values that he held in his life, which included justice, integrity, and democratic participation, were both a foundation and a reflection of the background that he had developed in Western Kenya. This background stage puts into perspective his life long opposition to dictatorship and his dedication to the people-oriented leadership in the political development of Kenya. The following chapter follows the history of political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL PLURALISM IN KENYA RELATING TO JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI SINCE 1960

The previous chapter underscored the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku. This chapter traces the history of political pluralism in Kenya relating to Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since 1960. The following subthemes emerged; The Struggle for Independence and the Birth of Political Pluralism (1960–1963), the Early Post-Independence Period and the Shift to a De Facto One-Party State (1963–1969), the Consolidation of the One-Party State (1970–1982), the Struggle for Multiparty Democracy (1980s–1991), the Multiparty era and Political Liberalization (1992–2002), and The Democratic Transition and Constitutional Reforms (2002–2010).

3.1 The Decolonization Process of Kenya and the Birth of Political Pluralism (1960–1963)

In Kenya, political pluralism was boosted as the nationalist movements gained strength during the late colonial era. Peter Omurunga also writes that the most important events that saw political pluralism preceding independence included decentralization of power and support by organized groups which were made up of settlers, Asians, and traders.²¹¹ Establishment of political parties like the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) in 1960 and the African People party (APP) in 1962 was important in the process of fighting the independence struggle. These parties became the

²¹¹Peter Omurunga, Oral Interview at Irechea, on January 4, 2025

outlets of African political agendas, and they opposed the colonialism and demanded self-government. The colonial government however considered the political activities of multiparty as a threat to stability and they tended to suppress the African political life by prohibiting their activities and detaining them.

According to oral testimonies, the nationalist leaders had a strong will to have a political structure that would enable various people to be represented. Holiness Omurunga observed that;

The colonial rulers did not desire the Africans to party and the ban was eventually lifted in 1958 when Sir Alan Lennox Boyd visited Kenya via his constitutional reforms. The likes of Jaramogi Odinga, James Gichuru, Ronald Ngala and Martin Shikuku could easily pressure the government to adopt a multi-party system so that they could be heard.²¹²

This statement is consistent with historical accounts that early African statesmen perceived political pluralism to be a form of opposition to colonialism and demand more representation in the government.

Lancaster House Conferences of 1960 and 1962 greatly influenced the struggle of political pluralism, and were the foundations of Kenya into independence. According to the secondary sources, these negotiations led to the writing of a constitutional framework that at first supported a multiparty system.²¹³ Nevertheless, KANU under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta soon became dominant at the expense of small parties such as KADU which had

²¹²Holiness Omurunga, Oral interview at Ebukhokoro, on 12/12/2024.

²¹³Martin, Lanny W., and Georg Vanberg. *Parliaments and coalitions: The role of legislative institutions in multiparty governance*. OUP Oxford, 2011., p.12.

been established to ensure that the interests of the minorities were taken into account. The leaders of KADU, Ronald Ngala and Daniel arap Moi, later on dissolved their partysssss. Lwali Oyondi claimed that, the disbanding of KADU was a result of bribery of Ronald Ngala by KANU government and Kenyatta desired a unitary form of government.²¹⁴ In 1964 KADU followed suit with KANU and marked the start of a new de facto one party state.

Although the political developments were favouring KANU, there is documentation that multiparty democracy was well supported on the ground. In a secret colonial report in 1961, it was reported that African political parties were gaining ground in the population with a large number of people demanding greater representation as opposed to the domination of KANU.²¹⁵ This paper indicates that even as KANU became the dominant nationalism party, other voices that sought to promote a multi-party system were equally felt.

The participants remembered that the political campaigns in the early 1960s were marked by the great interest in party politics. People in our village would go to markets and listen to speeches made by various political leaders regarding the future of Kenya, said Robert Makambo.²¹⁶ In the same manner, Kenneth Kaunda had observed that; Shikuku and other young politicians worked actively to involve the people and that the independence would not be controlled by one party. These views show that political activism in its youth was heavily entrenched in people engagement, which supports the argument of the pluralist theory that the idea of democratic governance is best served by mass mobilization.

²¹⁴Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on January 6,2025

²¹⁵Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/POL/1961/04, Report on African Political Mobilization

²¹⁶Robert Makambo, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

The effects of political activism at the grassroots were revealed in the structure of the first independence government which was forced to balance numerous political interests. Yet the process of independence changed leadership through relationships between political parties. Calson Atenya commented; There were fears that KANU had intentions of silencing other parties but the leaders such as Shikuku and Ngala insisted that democracy should be able to give diverse voices.²¹⁷ This statement conforms to the academic opinions that although independence was attained during the reign of KANU, the first years were marked with power consolidation at the cost of political pluralism.²¹⁸

Archival records also show how multiparty politics were a serious problem during the early independence years. In 1963, the government issued a circular that requested provincial commissioners to keep an eye on and report any political meetings held by other parties except KANU.²¹⁹ This order indicates that even though there were constitutional provisions that the politics was to be multiparty, the state machineries were already working to curb political competition.

Historians who study Kenya in the early post-independence years hold that the move to a one-party state did not come at once but was a prolonged development affected by power politics and ideological anomalies. Gertzel C. reports that the control of KANU was enhanced by the strategy of co-opting the opposition leaders and the state resources, which were used to subjugate other parties.²²⁰ On the same note, Throup and Hornsby observe that the

²¹⁷Calson Atenya, Oral interview, in Eshirembe, on 18/12/2024.

²¹⁸Katete, George. "Leadership, Constitutional Changes, and Functions of Governments in East Africa." In *The Political Impact of African Military Leaders: Soldiers as Intellectuals, Nationalists, Pan-Africanists, and Statesmen*, pp. 69-85. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023., p.72.

²¹⁹Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/SEC/1963/07, Government Surveillance of Opposition Political Activities.

²²⁰Gertzel, Cherry J. "The politics of independent Kenya, 1963-8." (*No Title*) (1970).

administrative system that followed that of the colonial government gave KANU sources to centralize power denying political rivalry room.²²¹ These academic views support the point that although independence brought with it the system of political pluralism, structural and institutional aspects had the effect of undermining it.

During the focus group discussions, the participants were left to consider the relevance of early political pluralism and its connotations on democracy. According to a respondent in Butere Lower Market, the political parties used to be very active in mobilizing the people in 1960s as opposed to 2012 when political parties are merely the means of holding an election.²²² Another player in Kakamega Town continued, at that time, people were greatly attached to political ideologies but nowadays, parties are built around individuals as opposed to ideologies.²²³ These remarks demonstrate the development of political parties throughout the history and the transformation of ideology-based politics into the movements, which relied on personalities.

According to the pluralist theory of government, democracy thrives when various political groups strive to influence the government so that no one of the groups acquires power monopoly. During the initial period of independence in Kenya, the colonial rule was replaced by the self-government, which offered avenues to political diversity. Nonetheless, structural limitations and politics increasingly limited political pluralism, as manifested by the accumulation of power in KANU. According to Dahl R., to have a truly democratic political

²²¹Throup, David, and Charles Hornsby. "Multi-party politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta & Moi States & the triumph of the system in the 1992 election." (*No Title*) (1998)., p.56.

²²²FGD held in Butere Lower Market, on 1/2/2025.

²²³FGD held in Kakamega Town, 5/12/2025.

system, a system should be able to support a real competition and popular involvement, which have been compromised in the post-independence governance of Kenya.²²⁴

The researcher concludes that political pluralism was central in this transition to independence in Kenya but the post-independence government was systematically undermining the opposition parties. The initial independence years were characterized with the transition of multiparty democracy to the dominant-party system as a part of the bigger conflict that is the democratic principles and political consolidation. The political process of Kenya is marked by the history of the conflict between pluralism and a centralized system of governance, and these two aspects of political system development remain in a state of tension that determines the politics of Kenya.

With the development of the concept of political pluralism, their influence on the system of governance and democracy was more evident. The urge towards one-party status in later years marked a break with the non-exclusive political realm that had been envisaged at the time of the struggle against British rule. Nevertheless, these activities of the civil society and opposition movements made sure that the ideals of pluralism were not totally put out in the flames. The political history of Kenya would be marked by further struggles to achieve multiparty democracy which would pave the way to reintroduction of pluralism in 1990s.

²²⁴Dahl, Robert A., and Participatory Polyarchy. "Opposition." *New Haven and London* (1971)., p.12.

3.2 The Transition from Political Pluralism and the Shift to a De Facto One-Party State (1963–1969)

Political pluralism in Kenya started to decline with independence in 1963 and the opposition parties were systematically dissolved or merged into the ruling party. Kenyan African National Union (KANU) that had acquired a majority in the 1963 election took power by employing political strategies. The combination of KANU and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) in 1964 was a major move towards the one party system. Although this merger was formally motivated to unify, it actually killed the opposition paving way to a factual one party state.

There have been oral reports that the merger was not that voluntary but it was the outcome of political pressure. Robert Makambo said, KADU leaders had been compelled to affiliate KANU and those who had opposed had been pushed to the periphery.²²⁵ This statement is substantiated by history, which shows that both inducement and force were employed by the ruling elite on the opposition parties to dilute them. Others who did not conform to KANU were marginalized politically, denied government jobs or even exiled.

The secondary sources emphasize how the post-independence government rapidly made changes to the constitution in order to centralize the government. Oyugi and Ochieng, opines that such changes in the law undermined multiparty democracy as it gave the executive more power and diminished the role of the parliament.²²⁶ An example presented here is the 1964 amendment made to the constitution in which the office of the Prime Minister was abolished,

²²⁵Robert Makambo, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

²²⁶Oyugi, Walter O., and Jimmy Ochieng. "East Africa: Regional Politics and Dynamics." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2019., p.67.

and Jomo Kenyatta assumed the position of the first executive President of Kenya. This reorganization gave him vast authority including the power to remove and appoint regional leaders thus destroying federalist systems that had previously facilitated political contestation.

Archival records also show that there was a systematic undermining of opposition politics. In 1965 a government directive said, all political leadership should be aligned itself with the national agenda as led by the ruling party to promote and maintain unity.²²⁷ This document demonstrates that political dissent was packaged as the danger to the national unity and the need to stop other political dissenting voices.

Respondents told about how the political scene transformed radically after independence. According to Rosemary Makambo in those early years they could still find space to go against the government but after 1964 they were declared as traitors.²²⁸ On the same note, Kenneth Kaunda noted that Shikuku was one of the rare leaders to openly criticize one-party rule and suffered many arrests on the same.²²⁹ These testimonies emphasize how political dissent was being suppressed more in this era.

The pluralist theory of government assumes that democracy is best achieved in a situation where a variety of interest groups are competing in the political arena. Nevertheless, during the initial years after post-independence, the opposition parties of Kenya were systematically dismantled by the ruling elite, which weakened the fundamental principles of pluralism. Dahl R., focuses on the fact that a real democratic system should have devices that allow the

²²⁷Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/GOV/1965/08, Circular on Political Unity.

²²⁸Rosemary Makambo, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

²²⁹Kenneth Kaunda, Oral interview in Mumias, on 15/12/2024.

existence of political diversity, but the amendments of the 1960s constitutions acted contrary to this idea, concentrating the power in the executive.²³⁰

This crackdown on political dissent heightened following the assassination of Pio Gama Pinto in 1965, who was a very critical commentator of the government atrocities. According to scholars, this was a turning point in the history of the politics of Kenya as it gave a strong message to the political pluralists. Throup and Hornsby argue that the assassination of Pinto gave rise to a culture of fear, whereby, political competition was not encouraged.²³¹ Later, the Kenya People's Union (KPU), the remaining opposition party led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, was outlawed by the government by the year 1969, and Kenya became a one-party state.

The respondents during the focus group discussions gave information on the impact of these political developments on the common people. One of the participants in Shikunga commented that there were numerous people in support of KPU since they wanted a formidable opposition but through police intimidation, the government silenced its supporters.²³² Another participant in Kakamega added, after KPU was banned, people became afraid to openly discuss politics unless they were praising the government.²³³ Through these stories, it is possible to see how political oppression did not work its way to the level of party leaders only but also to the grassroots political participation.

²³⁰Dahl R.,(1971), *Op. Cit.*, p.34.

²³¹Throup and Hornsby (1998), *Op. Cit.*, p.87.

²³²FGD held in Shikunga, on 6/2/2025.

²³³FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/12/2024.

According to the archival reports, there was active surveillance and suppression of the opposition activity by the security agencies. In 1969 Special Branch report observed, all political activities of KPU members have been subjected to close monitoring so that subversive propaganda can be curbed.²³⁴ This report highlights just how much the state finances were employed in order to subdue multiparty politics and uphold the leadership of KANU.

The disaggregation of political pluralism in institutions in this period, according to the scholarly analyses, had long-term effects. According to Gertzel, the political culture that was built in the 1960s, whereby opposition was measured against, had an impact on the patterns of governance in further decades.²³⁵ In the same breath, Wehliye A.K. believes that a power centralization under Kenyatta served as a precedent to political authoritarianism, which only ended with the reinstating of multiparty politics in the 1990s.²³⁶

The author of the research discovers that though independence had at first contributed to the existence of political diversity, the era of 1963-1969 was characterized by the conscious destruction of political pluralism. Constitutional amendments, political intimidation and security apparatuses were some of the tools that the government employed to stamp out opposition, thus weakening democratic rule. These results support the pluralist theory that proper democracy must leave room to competing interests and this was exactly what was being undermined in the early post-independence years in Kenya.

²³⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/SEC/1969/11, Security Report on Opposition Activities.

²³⁵Gertzel (1970), *Op. Cit.*, p.78.

²³⁶Wehliye, Adan Keynan. "Dynamics of parliamentary diplomacy and Kenya's foreign policy (1963-2014)." Unpublished MA thesis, Kenyatta University (2020)., p.80.

The effects of governance and political participation became more evident as Kenya was turned into a de facto one-party state. Power was centralized especially in the executive at the expense of the opposition parties thus limiting democratic debate which in turn fostered authoritarian political culture. Nevertheless, political pluralism was not suppressed without resistance and opposition was voiced both inside and outside the legal political systems. The following phase would be characterized by heightened political tensions which would preempt the need to struggle towards achieving democratic reforms in the future.

The research also observed that, a number of factors that were interrelated led to the shift of Kenya to political pluralism to de facto one party state. Kenya adopted multiparty democracy at independence in 1963, but internal party wrangles and disintegration occurred due to strong ethnic cleavages between political elites, ideological differences and conflicting visions of nationhood.²³⁷ The then governing party, Kenya African National Union (KANU) under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta aimed at centralizing power and quashing any opposition in the name of national unity and national development. The Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) was the main opposition party and it voluntarily disbanded in 1964 and joined KANU in effect eliminating meaningful opposition.²³⁸ The political favors and co-optation of the leaders of the region who were threatened to be sidelined, partly motivated this move. There were also state apparatus, like provincial government and security agencies, which could keep an eye on, intimidate and subdue the voices of opposition. Cold war situation also contributed since Western powers tended to support

²³⁷Akumu, Bonface O. "The Influence of Ethnicity on Presidential Election Competition in Kenya: the Case of 2013 and 2017 General Elections." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2020.

²³⁸Hakes, Jay Edward. "The Parliamentary Party of the Kenya African National Union: Cleavage Andcohesion in the Ruling Party of a New Nation." PhD diss., Duke University, 1970.

authoritarian governments in Africa which seemed to be stable and pro-capitalist.²³⁹ The government could silence the opposition further by the introduction of repressive laws that allowed the government to detain its opponents without trial, which included the Public Security Act and the Preservation of Public Security Act. When vocal politicians such as Pio Gama Pinto and Tom Mboya were assassinated this resulted in a culture of fear that deterred political opposition. All of this had led to the orderly demolition of the pluralistic politics of the good old days, and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, Kenya had become effectively a de facto one-party state, although it would not be officially recognized as one until 1982 by a constitutional amendment.

3.3 The Consolidation of the One-Party State (1970–1982)

The 1970s was a time of further political oppression in Kenya under President Jomo Kenyatta and later on Daniel arap Moi. The reason is that, the political repression was aggravated in the 1970s as the ruling elite tried consolidating power, oppressing dissent, and precluding opposition.²⁴⁰ Increased political activism, economic disparity and fear of instability also led the Kenyatta and Moi governments to resort to detention, intimidation and surveillance as a means of ensuring control and silencing of those who are opposed to the status quo.²⁴¹ The nation had been enjoying political pluralism elements initially, but this was the period when it was systematically aimed to put down the opposition and cement the control over KANU. State repression was applied to political activists and vocal leaders like Joseph Martin

²³⁹Yohannes, Okbazghi. "The United States and sub-Saharan Africa after the cold war: Empty promises and retreat." *The Black Scholar* 32, no. 1 (2002): 23-44.

²⁴⁰Goldstein, Robert Justin. *Political repression in modern America from 1870 to 1976*. University of Illinois Press, 2001.

²⁴¹Ibid

Shikuku and J.M Kariuki because they criticized the increased authoritarianism of the government. In addition, the researcher realized that the years 1970 to 1982 were also a major part of the political history of Kenya since it was during this time that authoritarian rule was amplified and the one party state is formalized. It is a decade that was characterized by repression, especially by President Kenyatta who detained people without trial and assassinated those who spoke against him such as J.M. Kariuki.²⁴² It is a decade of deterioration in the democratic space and increasing executive powers. There was also a failed coup attempt in 1982 by some members of the air force under President Moi which paranoia the state even more. The government responded by changing the constitution, signing Kenya into a de jure one-party state and making it illegal to oppose it and further cementing the KANU hold on political power.

Imprisonment of political dissidents was a popular policy adopted by the state to get rid of the opposition. According to the archival data, Martin Shikuku was arrested in 1975 following the accusations that KANU had killed democracy in Kenya.²⁴³ His arrest was included in a larger crackdown as it attempted to silence those who opposed his rule and strengthen the one party rule. Detention without trial was intensified and it created fear among the political actors. An example is veteran politician Bildad Kaggia, who had been vocal to criticize government corruption and inequality and was harassed on several occasions. After the attempted coup in 1982, a number of politicians and intellectuals such as George Anyona, Jean Marie Seroney, Chelagat Mutai and Raila Odinga among others were detained without trial on grounds that they had connections with the opposition

²⁴²Harms, Jake. "Disrupting ethnic politics and imagining alternative futures in Kenya, 1975: The JM Kariuki assassination." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2021.

²⁴³KNA/CP/1975/004

movements. Their arrests further delivered a message that they would never tolerate dissent and many activists either went underground or fled the country. Such arrests are typical examples of the state repression of pluralism through legal and extralegal methods of the establishment of authoritarianism.²⁴⁴

The government was known to be intolerant to the opposition leaders. As Kenneth Kaunda observed, Joseph Shikuku was also one of the few politicians who criticised the government openly only to face detentions as a repercussion.²⁴⁵ On the same note, more spying of those opposing the regime has also been reported in archives meaning that since the death of Kenyatta in 1978, Moi escalated the oppression.²⁴⁶ Though Moi started by giving an inclusivity pledge, his rule was soon authoritarian just like that of his predecessor.

According to the political scholars, the one party state was solidified by organized repression of political disobedience. Ogot B.A. informs that during this time, there were mass arrests, police violence and political meetings were banned. As an illustration, in 1980, George Anyona was detained on account of trying to establish an opposition party with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga against the doctrine of single party.²⁴⁷ Likewise, in 1982, following the unsuccessful coup attempt, several university lecturers, students and civil society activists were swept up and imprisoned without trial including Raila Odinga and Willy Mutunga. Political assemblies that were seen to be anti-government were always broken by the police

²⁴⁴Kariuki, Godfrey Gitahi. *The illusion of power: Reflections on fifty years in Kenya politics*. East African Publishers, 2001.

²⁴⁵Kenneth Kaunda, Oral interview in Mumias, on 15/12/024.

²⁴⁶KNA/SR/1978/002.

²⁴⁷Ogot, Bethwell A., and William Robert Ochieng, eds. *Decolonization & independence in Kenya, 1940-93*. Ohio State University Press, 1995., p.99.

with violent force to disperse the crowds further cementing a kind of repression and fear.²⁴⁸ Political environment became very restrictive, and many activists were either going into exile or giving up on the opposition politics. Calson Atinya remembered that the government viewed the opposition leaders as the enemies of the state and no one would dare to oppose the KANU regime.²⁴⁹

Towards the end of 1970s the political system of Kenya had been restructured into an elite sphere of KANU. The party turned into the voice of the state of which there was no possibility of other voices of politics. According to the archival documents, the attempts to formalize the one-party state lead to the constitutional amendment of 1982 that officially proclaimed Kenya a de jure one-party state.²⁵⁰ The amendment survived this opposition and strengthened the repression of political pluralism even though certain leaders such as Shikuku opposed the amendment. Peter Omurunga Oyondi insisted on the fact that any opposition was considered to be treasonous following this amendment.²⁵¹

The institutionalization of a one party form of government had extensive implications to democracy and governance in Kenya. Newton Kataka noted that the amendment virtually nullified all political rivalry forcing the opposition leaders to either leave or be jailed. This change conformed to the greater authoritarian tendencies of post-independent African countries as most of them shifted their democracy to multiparty to one-party rule in order to gain authority.²⁵² In Kenya, the 1982 amendment to the constitution (Section 2A) entrenched

²⁴⁸Ogot, Bethwell A., and William Robert Ochieng, eds. *Decolonization & independence in Kenya, 1940-93*. Ohio State University Press, 1995., p.102.

²⁴⁹Calson Atinya, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 18/12/024.

²⁵⁰KNA/AG/1982/011.

²⁵¹Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral interview in Irechea, on 4/1/025.

²⁵²Heywood, Jean S. *A Introduction to Teaching Casework Skills*. Routledge, 2013., p.134.

KANU as the sole legal party undermining the checks and balances principle. Parliament turned into a rubber-stamp, most executive decisions were passed without question or investigation by the parliament. There was a serious limitation on civil liberties like the freedom of association, freedom of expression and press; the press like the Sunday Post and Weekly Review was censored or closed down altogether due to publication of critical materials. The independence of the judiciary had been compromised where the appointments were made under a heavy influence of being loyal to the regime. Moreover, the civil service and provincial government became politicised with senior government jobs being held by KANU loyalists, in which the patronage networks were established. Political competition was also suppressed, and thus, no other ideas and reforms proved to be subversive. This political inertia helped spur up the disenchantment amongst the people until internal dissent and demands to democratize the country began to grow in the late 1980s.

The Pluralist Theory of Government also emphasizes the significance of many political parties and competing interest groups in politics.²⁵³ Nonetheless, the repression of dissent in Kenya at the time compromised the principles of political pluralism resulting in an unchecked executive and deteriorated institutions of democracy. According to the scholars, it was the period that preconditioned the system of corruption in the state and violations of human rights, which, in the end, conditioned the necessity of political changes in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁵⁴ These long-term consequences of the consolidation of the one-party state would

²⁵³Dahl, 1971., *Op. Cit.*, p.89.

²⁵⁴ Githongo, John. "Inequality, ethnicity and the fight against corruption in Africa: a Kenyan perspective." *Economic Affairs* 26, no. 4 (2006): 19-23., p.22.

also help in the revival of pro-democracy movements leading to the abolition of the one-party rule in 1991.

3.4 The Second Liberation and Reintroduction of Multiparty Democracy in Kenya (1982–1991)

In 1982, the constitution was amended which solemnly stated that Kenya was a de jure one-party state which further consolidated the power of KANU and suppressed the opposition. The amendment was rationalized by the government as being needed to maintain the national cohesiveness and political stability, since the government feared that a possible ethnic disintegration and subversiveness after the reported coup by a group of the Kenya Air Force in August 1982.²⁵⁵ President Moi and his cronies claimed that multipartyism would promote tribalism, disloyalty and anarchy and undermine the weak nation-building efforts, especially after independence.

²⁵⁵Muoka, Boniface K. "Management of politicized ethnic conflicts in the post cold war period: a case study of Kenya, 1991-2008." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, Kenya, 2010.



Plate 2: The late Martin Shikuku, James Orengo and others
Source²⁵⁶

The move was however harshly criticized by opposition personalities and pro democracy activists who considered it as a clear effort to legalize authoritarianism. The amendment was widely criticized by Martin Shikuku, once a critic of one-party rule and an ex-detainee who publicly blamed the amendment, terming it as a betrayal of the democratic ideals that were fought during the independence. Together with the rest of the reformists like Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, George Anyona and Raila Odinga, Shikuku pointed out that the amendment deprived the citizen of their political agency and institutionalized repression. Opponents of the move were harshly punished.²⁵⁷ In 1982 George Anyona and Jaramogi were arrested on account of seeking to establish the Kenya African Socialist Alliance (KASA), and Raila Odinga was arrested at allegedly conspiring in the unsuccessful coup as well as being

²⁵⁶<https://web.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2908859712709929&set=pcb.2908859759376591>

²⁵⁷Lugano, Geoffrey. "Politicization of international criminal interventions and the impasse of transitional justice: a comparative study of Uganda and Kenya." PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2018.

affiliated with the underground movements such as Mwakenya.²⁵⁸ Shikuku remains personally under the surveillance and harassment of the state, as a symbol of the crackdown on dissent more generally.

In spite of the dangers, the opposition against the single party rule continued especially underground movements such as the Mwakenya which tried to challenge the authoritarian control of the state. Brutal as they sometimes were, these campaigns created the foundation of the drive to the Second Liberation Kenya and the subsequent repeal of Section 2A in 1991.

During the 1980s, the state was characterized by the use of brutality on opposition figures such as the use of state security agencies to suppress any critics by arresting them arbitrarily. Documents, Archival records indicate that people suspected of acting against the government were, more often than not, detained without trial.²⁵⁹ The situation of opposition leaders deteriorated, yet the spirit of pro-democracy people preserved the process of political pluralism. Lwali Oyondi remembered how numerous politicians were randomly detained, among them such high profile leaders as George Anyona, Raila Odinga, Koigi wa Wamwere and Chelagat Mutai because they remained vocal in criticizing the government and were suspected to have ties with the underground movement. However, increased economic predicaments, widespread corruption as well as an increasing pressure of the international donors specifically the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank compelled

²⁵⁸Maasi, Kennedy Wakhungu. "Navigating Coalition Politics in Kenya: A Historical Journey Since 1945." *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 9, no. 1 (2025): 4814-4829.

²⁵⁹KNA/SEC/1986/014, *Government Crackdown on Political Dissent*.

the Moi government to rethink the one party system, a move that ultimately led to the political liberalization in the early nineties.²⁶⁰

At the end of the 1980s, the economy started to deteriorate, which increased social unrest. The increasing inflation, corruption, and misappropriation of government funds undermined the hold of power of KANU. There were poor archival records that showed that the economy of Kenya had collapsed, indicating increased inflation rates, increased foreign debt and a decreased GDP growth. By mid 1980s, the inflation was up to greater than 20 percent with stagnant per capita income. External debt of the country increased at an alarming rate of about KSh 43 billion in the year 1980, up to a high of over KSh 200 billion in the early years of 1990s and this led to a debt crisis.²⁶¹ The levels of unemployment were high, the basic social amenities like healthcare and education were hit by reducing the budgets through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the IMF and the World Bank. These economic strains contributed to the general dissatisfaction of the population and the increase in the demand of political reform and economic reforms so that external forces like the World Bank (International Monetary Fund (IMF) compelled them to carry out political and economic reforms as a condition to receive the financial assistance.²⁶² It was also during this time that more powerful opposition movements have surfaced, which have been emboldened by the international democratic tendencies after the fall of the authoritarian regime in Eastern Europe.²⁶³

²⁶⁰Lwali Oyondi, Oral interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/2025.

²⁶¹Kimongo, Stephen K. "Determinants of External Public Debt Servicing in Kenya (1980-2019)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2020.

²⁶²KNA/ECON/1989/007, *Economic Decline and Foreign Pressure on Kenya's Governance*

²⁶³Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between hope and despair, 1963-2011*. Yale university press, 2011., p.13.

The scholars maintain that both internal and external forces were very instrumental in compelling the Moi government to consider multiparty democracy. Njagi P., observes that donor conditionalities especially by the Western countries related the financial aid to political liberalization.²⁶⁴ Suleiman Kombo stressed that foreign pressure helped Kenya to undergo the transition as Moi could not ignore the international pressure to be democratic any longer.²⁶⁵

At home, civil society organizations, religious leaders and student movements were becoming more and more aggressive against the one-party system. The most outstanding instances are the National Convention Assembly (NCA) that organized civic actors to insist on the reform of the constitution, the Catholic Church with leaders like Bishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki who openly criticized state repression and the student bodies including the University of Nairobi Students Union (SONU) whose leaders such as Titus Adungosi and Wafula Buke were arrested and jailed on the grounds of organizing protests and publishing anti-government literature.²⁶⁶ Frida Mwale remembered that; when Saba Saba protests erupted on July 7, 1990 it was a turning point because through mass demonstrations it was evidence of the unhappiness with the ruling KANU regime.²⁶⁷ The Moi regime was further weakened by these protests led by individuals such as Kenneth Matiba, James Orengo, Martin

²⁶⁴Njagi, Peter M. "International Institutions As Diplomacy Tools For Kenya." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2019., p.85

²⁶⁵Suleiman Kombo, Oral interview in Imanga, on 18/2/025.

²⁶⁶Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack Wanjala Nasong'o, *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 34–36; David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 331–333; George Gona, "The Resilience of Student Activism in Kenya," *CODESRIA Bulletin*, Nos. 1 & 2 (2009): 40–46.

²⁶⁷Frida Mwale, Oral interview in Eshilunyire, on 31/1/025.

Shikuku and Charles Rubia, which were brutally suppressed, but which brought to the fore, the weaknesses of the Moi regime.

Historical documents show that the continued existence of the one-party rule could no longer be sustained with the escalated political activism, coupled with the long-standing pressure of the population.²⁶⁸ In due course, in December 1991, Section 2A of the constitution was scrapped, the multiparty democracy was, officially, restored. Newton Opembe pointed out that this was a concession that Moi was making unwillingly as he was increasingly being opposed locally and internationally.²⁶⁹



Plate 3: Martin Shikuku address during a political rally on 22nd May, 1963
Source²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸KNA/POL/1990/009, *Saba Saba Protests and the Political Crisis in Kenya*.

²⁶⁹Newton Opembe, Oral interview in Shikunga, on 6/2/025.

²⁷⁰<https://www.alamy.com/martin-shikuku-african-leader-at-rally-in-nairobi-kenya-22-may-1963-image623558858.html>

Political pluralism was the outcome of the reinstatement of multiparty politics and it is in line with Pluralist Theory which focuses on the contribution of multiplicity of political interests in form of governance.²⁷¹ The change, however, was fraught with challenges such violence in politics, ethnicity, and opposition of forces in the ruling party. Researchers like Mutua Makau., posit that as multiparty democracy in Kenya heralded a new dawn in the history of the country, the tradition of political patronage and authoritarianism had not been eradicated in ova.²⁷²

The multiparty democracy struggle in Kenya was a mirror of other political changes in Africa where most states changed their one-party to the competitive politics in the 1990s. Examples of this new wave of democratization were countries like Zambia where multiparty elections were restored in 1991 which saw the defeat of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) led by Kenneth Kaunda and also Malawi where Hastings Banda came to an end due to a 1993 referendum. On the same note, in 1992 Tanzania adopted the multiparty reforms, and in 1994 South Africa witnessed a historic shift akin to an apartheid to a democratic government.²⁷³ These continental transitions were affected by internal pro-democratic movements and foreign pressure by the international financial entities and donors. The history of this era was the context of political reforms in Kenya which was the foundation of the coming electoral games and governance in the coming years.

²⁷¹Dahl Robert, 1971., *Op. Cit.*, p.67.

²⁷²Mutua, Makau. *Kenyas quest for democracy: Taming leviathan*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 2008., p.75.

²⁷³Hermann Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 330–332.

3.5 The Multiparty Era and Political Liberalization (1992–2002)

It was an optimistic and volatile time as multiparty democracy was restored in Kenya. One of the brightest lights in this new democratic playing field was Martin Shikuku who had been a consistent critic of authoritarian rule in the one party rule.²⁷⁴ He linked up with other opposition leaders through the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) where he emerged a strong supporter of political pluralism and electoral reforms.²⁷⁵ The enduring strength of Shikuku to resist repression and his symbolic revival into active politics was the wider aspirations of many Kenyan people to realize the true democratic change in the face of the unpredictabilities of the early 1990s.²⁷⁶ The 1992 elections marked an important change in politics by being the first multiparty elections, and they were also marked by massive electoral fraud, ethnic killings, and state force intimidating the opposition leaders. The government of President Moi held power by use of political patronage, electoral manipulations and state sponsored violence in the strongholds of the opposition.

The Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) was primarily a strong opposition coalition that came into placement soon after the repeal of Section 2A in 1991 that legalized multiple party politics in Kenya. FORD was initially an alliance that incorporated the leading pro-democratic leaders, such as Martin Shikuku, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenneth Matiba, Charles Rubia and Masinde Muliro, initially as a united front against the dictatorship of KANU. But major personal feuds and ethnic strains divided the movement in 1992, and

²⁷⁴Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack Wanjala Nasong'o, *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 47–48.

²⁷⁵Karuti Kanyinga, *Governance Institutions and Inequality in Kenya* (Nairobi: Society for International Development, 2006), 96.

²⁷⁶Peter Wanyande, "The Politics of Alliance Building in Kenya: The Search for Opposition Unity," in *The Politics of Transition in Kenya: From KANU to the Rainbow Coalition*, ed. Walter Oyugi, Peter Wanyande, and Michael Odhiambo-Mbai (Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2003), 63–65.

FORD-Kenya, which was under Jaramogi leadership, was formed and FORD-Asili, which was co-led by Kenneth Matiba and Martin Shikuku.²⁷⁷

Martin Shikuku was instrumental in his capacity as the Secretary General of FORD-Asili; he helped in organizing the grassroots mobilization and the national campaign apparatus of the party. The movement was credible as he was close to ordinary citizens and opposed autocracy. Another aspect with which Shikuku was well-known was his keen political acumen and gestures such as when he ate ugali at State House where he had made it clear that he needed to be humble and lead as a servant unlike the elitism of the ruling class.²⁷⁸

Matiba factor was a major factor that contributed to popularity of FORD-Asili. After enduring the Moi rule and being a victim of detention and complications brought by poor health, Matiba garnered national sympathies and was considered the most formidable opponent during the 1992 general elections.²⁷⁹ President Moi was however re-elected winning the elections by 36.4% of the votes over a divided opposition- Matiba 26, Jaramogi 17 and Mwai Kibaki of DP 19. The victory of Moi was greatly attributed to divide and rule within the opposition, purported cases of electoral malpractices, ethnic bloc voting, and his clever management of the state resources.²⁸⁰

In 1992, Martin Shikuku came out publicly to challenge the authenticity of the election that Moi had won citing electoral procedures and voter intimidation. He also criticized the

²⁷⁷Murunga, Godwin R., and Shadrack W. Nasong'o. *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy*. London: Zed Books, 2007, 52–54.

²⁷⁸David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 246.

²⁷⁹Stephen Brown, "Quiet Diplomacy and Recurring 'Ethnic Clashes' in Kenya," in *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*, ed. Chandra Lekha Sriram and Karin Wermester (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 71.

²⁸⁰Throup and Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya*, 258–262.

defection of opposition MPs back to KANU after getting a cabinet post and state patronage citing that such defection was a betrayal of the trust that the people had vested in them and how it would destroy the reform agenda.²⁸¹ Shikuku declined to cross over to KANU although there was so much pressure, he has stuck to the opposition politics and multiparty democracy. To him, to go back to the party which had suppressed reformers was a way of giving up the fight.²⁸²

Shikuku served as the Secretary General of FORD-Asili and this is where he played a major role in party organization, mobilization of people and the push of democratic changes. He was a crusader of constitutional reform, political responsibility and social justice. Shikuku was an ardent supporter of political integrity and a check on government excesses although FORD-Asili later became weak because of internal fissures and the withdrawal of Matiba by Matiba in active politics. He was a respectable elder statesman in the history of Kenya politics because of his principled stand and his unwillingness to compromise on democratic ideals.²⁸³

In 1992 elections, the opposition was divided into various parties and this weakened their power to challenge the supremacy of KANU. The history of voter intimidation, vote rigging as well as unfair electoral methods are recorded in the archives in favor of the ruling party.²⁸⁴

Habil Mukolwe observed that; despite the historic election, there were massive irregularities and ethnic violence that made many citizens doubt the validity of the democracy process.²⁸⁵

President Moi tactically disintegrated the opposition before the 1992 elections taking

²⁸¹Karuti Kanyinga, *Democracy, Governance and Politics in Kenya* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2006), 112–113.

²⁸²Interview with Martin Shikuku quoted in *Daily Nation*, December 1993.

²⁸³Wanyande, Peter. "The Politics of Alliance Building in Kenya," in *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, ed. Oyugi et al., 68–70.

²⁸⁴KNA/ELEC/1992/011, *Election Irregularities and Political Violence in Kenya*

²⁸⁵Habil Mukolwe, Oral interview in Eshisebu, on 7/1/2025

advantage of their differences in ideologies, ethnic tensions and personal ambitions amongst the main opposition leaders. The archival records and eyewitness testify that the state intelligence and the KANU loyalists were busy stoking the mistrust among the members of the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), which eventually divided into FORD-Asili and FORD-Kenya.²⁸⁶ Through defections, financing splinter organizations and with the help of state resources to reward collaborating opposition leaders; Moi was able to shorten the chances of an unified opposition against his regime. Not only did his divide and rule strategy weaken the opposition vote but it also established a sense of suspicion on reformists that would last for a long time. This tactic, together with manipulation of elections and intimidation guaranteed that KANU won and undermined the belief of the people on multiparty democracy. The integrity of the democratic process was seriously undermined as Habil Mukolwe pointed out.²⁸⁷

Ethnic tensions broke out in different regions of the country especially in Rift Valley, Coast and Western Kenya. This struggle was seen to be mostly caused by militias that were supported by the state in order to evict the opposition and give KANU an upper hand in its election. Literature claims that such organized conflicts were a calculated political agenda as opposed to natural ethnic animosity.²⁸⁸ Archival records show the way in which security agencies had a part to play in not preventing the violence or even in some instances, being complicit in aiding KANU-aligned entities.²⁸⁹ Modern newspapers like Daily Nation and The

²⁸⁶Kenya National Archives (KNA), Office of the President Files, OP/13/16/92, "Intelligence Briefings on FORD Leadership Conflicts," Nairobi, 1992.

²⁸⁷Habil Mukolwe, Oral interview in Eshisebu, on 7/1/2025

²⁸⁸David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 270–275.

²⁸⁹Kenya National Archives (KNA), Office of the President Files, OP/23/14/92, "Security Briefings on Ethnic Violence," Nairobi, 1992.

Weekly Review had reported tendencies of selective policing, slow reaction of security personnel and incendiary statements by KANU leaders which triggered tension.²⁹⁰ The main news items were often indicating coordinated assaults on the opposition strongholds and aroused public anxieties regarding the politicization of the security agencies and the apparent lack of interest by the government to prevent the violence.

Joseph Martin Shikuku was also instrumental in the opposition politics who pushed constitutional and electoral reforms. Being on the opposition, he was quite vocal of the necessity of fair and transparent democratic process. In one of his speeches to the people in the early 1990s, Shikuku said,

Neither did we struggle to achieve multiparty democracy so that we could change one dictatorship with another. The Kenyans should be given the autonomy and freedom to elect their leaders.²⁹¹

His expression highlighted the anger of most reformists that felt that with the reinstatement of multipartyism, it was being sabotaged through electoral fraud and betrayal by the elite. As Oloo E. has put up, Shikuku was always in opposition to the Moi regime and he was on the move to bring about inclusivity in politics and safeguard the democratic rights.²⁹² George Mukolwe remembered that; the resistance by Shikuku to state repression made him a hero among pro-democracy activists but, at the same time, the source of constant confrontations

²⁹⁰*Daily Nation*, November 3, 1992, "Police Blamed for Delayed Response to Rift Valley Clashes"; *The Weekly Review*, October 30, 1992, "Ethnic Violence or Political Strategy?"

²⁹¹Joseph Martin Shikuku, speech at a FORD-Asili rally in Kakamega, September 1992, quoted in *Daily Nation*, September 21, 1992, "Shikuku Demands Electoral Justice."

²⁹²Oloo, Edward O. "The effects of stock split announcements on share returns at the Nairobi Security Exchange." PhD diss., 2012., p.78.

with the government forces.²⁹³ With pressure building up and a flood of defections by opposition leaders back to KANU- many of who would offer to take up ministerial positions or protection in the party- Shikuku would still not give up the opposition agenda.²⁹⁴ Such defections were denounced by him as betrayal and he posed that people who run back to KANU are not the reformers but are opportunists who have betrayed the struggle by selling it at their own expense.²⁹⁵ It was his unwavering character that made him stand out of the crowd of many people of his time and cemented his legacy as a voice of integrity during the democratic process in Kenya.

The 1997 elections were no different as the opposition was still inflicted thus leaving Moi with a second term. The election process was not perfect although more political parties were involved. Beatrice Mukolwe remembered that; the opponents such as Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga were building up ground, but their internal wrangles delayed their petitions to oust Moi. The works of historians indicate that vote-rigging and political influence allegations existed, which only added to the civic dissatisfaction with the democratic process.²⁹⁶ In the view of the researcher, the 1997 elections highlighted the weaknesses in the structure of the Kenya opposition politics, more specifically, the absence of a unified approach and a consistent policy agenda. Despite the freedom of dissent that multipartyism had brought back, there was no successful democratic consolidation. The continued existence of electoral

²⁹³George Mukolwe, Oral interview in Eshisebu, on 7/1/025.

²⁹⁴Karuti Kanyinga, *Democracy, Governance and Politics in Kenya* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2006), 112.

²⁹⁵Joseph Martin Shikuku, quoted in *The Weekly Review*, March 14, 1993, "Shikuku Condemns Return to KANU."

²⁹⁶KNA/ELEC/1997/022, *Electoral Disputes and the Role of the Opposition in 1997*.

cheating and patronage networks showed that the changes that had been made during the 1990s were more of a procedural change than a transformative one.

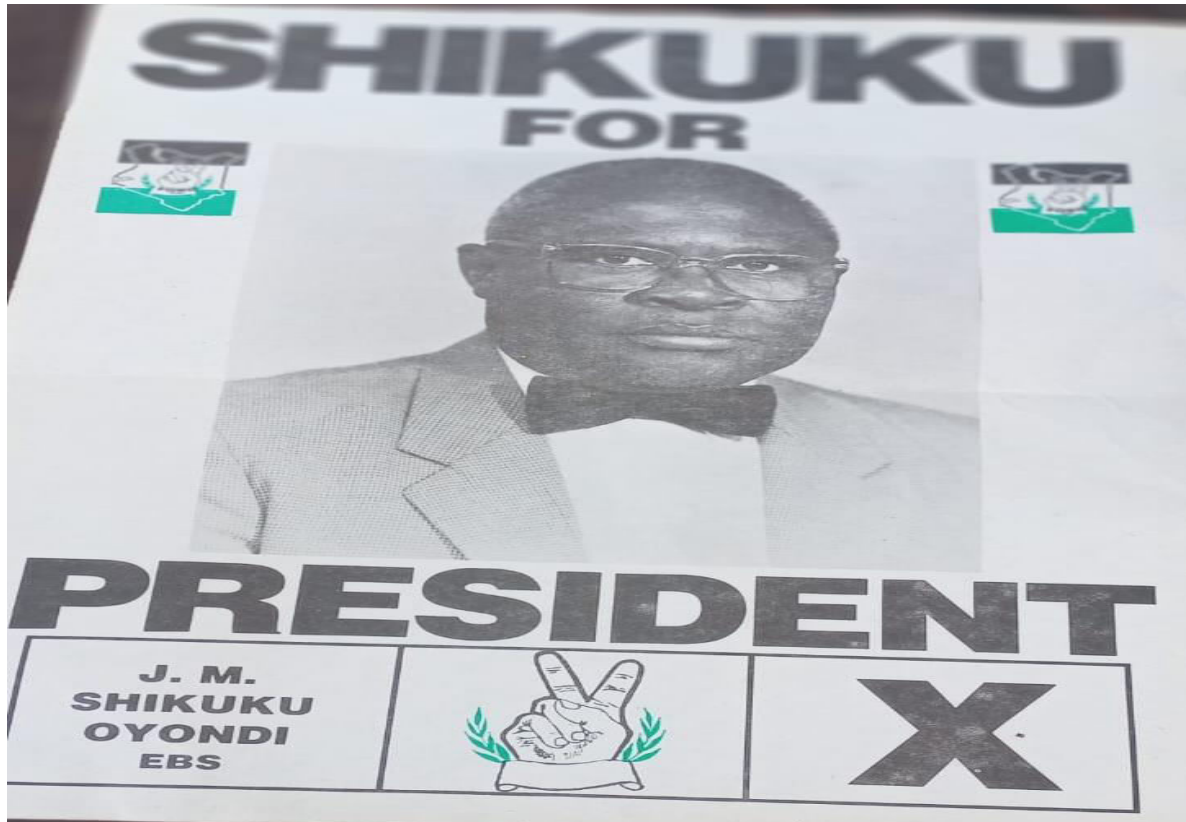


Plate 4: A poster of Joseph Martin Shikuku as a presidential candidate

Source²⁹⁷

Nevertheless, in the late 1990s, there were more demands of constitutional reforms. The Law Society of Kenya (LSK), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), and the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) were the main players in stimulating public demand towards change in Kenya in the civil society.²⁹⁸ Archbishop David Gitari of the Anglican Church and Bishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki of the Catholic Church were those on the forefront to denounce political repression and preach justice, transparency, and review of the

²⁹⁷ A photo hanging on the wall of Shikuku's house during a visit in Butere, Shikuku's ancestral home

²⁹⁸ Mutua Makau, *Constitution-Making from the Middle: Civil Society and Transition Politics in Kenya, 1992–1997* (Nairobi: SAREAT, 1998), 35–39.

constitution.²⁹⁹ The Moi regime was pressured by the international community, which set conditions of aid on democratic reforms and included the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, and the British government.³⁰⁰ Such concerted actions contributed to jump-starting the constitutional review process, such as by using the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) in 2000, a key action towards a wider democratic change.³⁰¹

Alexander Mukolwe emphasized that; the constitutional reform movement gained traction, with demands for an independent electoral body and presidential term limits.³⁰² Archival records show that these moves later resulted in the amendment of the constitution by forming the Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) in 1997 that preconditioned a more competitive political environment.

The IPPG was made up of members of the ruling party KANU as well as other opposition parties such as Democratic Party (DP), FORD-Kenya, FORD-Asili and Safina. The prominent personalities were Mwai Kibaki, Michael Wamalwa, Charity Ngilu, Anyang' Nyong'o and James Orengo.³⁰³ As an active figure, Martin Shikuku, the Secretary General of FORD-Asili and Member of Parliament was actively involved in the negotiations. His most vocal criticism was on the need to have reforms in the law, equal opportunities in terms of campaigning, a fairer Electoral Commission and press freedom.³⁰⁴ Shikuku was also

²⁹⁹Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), 141–144.

³⁰⁰Karuti Kanyinga, *Democracy, Governance and Politics in Kenya* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2006), 120–121.

³⁰¹Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC), *The Final Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission* (Nairobi: CKRC, 2005), 4–6.

³⁰²Alexander Mukolwe, Oral interview, in Eshisebu, on 7/1/025.

³⁰³Kenya National Archives (KNA), Office of the President Files, OP/12/25/97, “Minutes of Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group Consultations,” Nairobi, 1997.

³⁰⁴*Daily Nation*, August 8, 1997, “Shikuku Pushes for Deep Reforms in IPPG Talks.”

championing repealing of the oppressive laws including the Public Order Act and demanded reforms that would affect the role of the executive in the election. The IPPG reforms, small though they were (including appointment of opposition-backed Electoral Commissioners), contributed to leveling the playing field during the 1997 elections and was a step in the right direction towards the democratization process in Kenya.³⁰⁵

The dynamics of this period of time are consistent with the Pluralist Theory where the influence of various political actors in governing are emphasized. Although KANU was the dominant force, the opposition parties, the civil society and the grassroots movements were instrumental in supporting democratic reforms.³⁰⁶ Everlyne Shikanda saw that; in spite of the setbacks democracy experienced, the perseverance of reformists and activists saw to it that multiparty politics kept developing.³⁰⁷

In Kenya, the political scenario changed tremendously by the year 2002. Decades of divided resistance, state suppression and unsuccessful reformist efforts made opposition leaders feel that they needed to come up with a united front. The development that resulted in the formation of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) starts with the merger of the reformist forces along the political spectrum. Dissatisfaction of the move by President Moi to nominate Uhuru Kenyatta as the presidential candidate of KANU led to internal unrest that saw the defection of some of the most prominent KANU politicians including Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka, Charity Ngilu and George Saitoti who joined forces with opposition parties such

³⁰⁵KNA/CONST/1999/028, *Debates on Constitutional Reforms in Kenya*.

³⁰⁶Dahl, 1971., *Op. Cit.*, p.92.

³⁰⁷Everlyne Shikanda, Oral interview in Tsalwa, on 8/1/025.

as the Democratic Party (DP) led by Mwai Kibaki.³⁰⁸ The national mood to change was reflected in the slogan of the coalition Yote Yawezekana Bila Moi (All is Possible Without Moi).

Even Martin Shikuku, who was not so active now, was a symbol of opposing and being democratic. He remained as a moral compass of the opposition movement having declined to join KANU again in 1990s despite defections by erstwhile supporters. Shikuku came out publicly in support of the notion of a united opposition and approved the attempt by NARC to overthrow KANU, calling the coalition a historic amalgamation of democratic forces and the second wave of struggle.³⁰⁹ His campaign plan also had a moral force because he was a veteran of the struggle of multiparty democracy in Kenya. The rise of the coalition to power in the 2002 general elections, where Mwai Kibaki was elected the winner over Uhuru Kenyatta, signaled the departure of the 24-year reign by Moi and gave credence to the relevance of coalition politics in Kenya under the multiparty democracy.³¹⁰

3.6 The Democratic Transition and Constitutional Reforms (2002–2010)

The 2002 General Elections brought about great change in the political scene of Kenya as it broke the long serving rule of KANU that had been in power almost 40 years. The election of Mwai Kibaki under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was perceived as a democratic triumph in the sense that it marked a peaceful change of power as a multi party

³⁰⁸Karuti Kanyinga, *Re-Distribution from Above: The Politics of Land Rights and Squatting in Coastal Kenya after the 2002 Elections* (Nairobi: Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 2006), 8–10.

³⁰⁹*Daily Nation*, October 15, 2002, “Shikuku Backs Rainbow Coalition, Calls It ‘Second Independence.’”

³¹⁰Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack W. Nasong’o, *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 68–71.

electoral process. It was also the time of great constitutional and governance reforms in order to make political pluralism stronger and the executive less dominant. Martin Shikuku did not even feature in frontline electoral politics at this time, but the elder statesman had been a successful figure of accountability. He celebrated the non-violent change as the work of the Second Liberation dream but he was careful not to be complacent and advised the new government not to replace one dictator with other. He also still spoke against corruption, political favors, and broken vows in NARC, and he encouraged leaders to put into action the values upon which the democratic struggle had been formed. Things however went awry when the democratic transition of Kenya was put to test by the internal party wrangles, the failed 2005 constitutional referendum and the post election violence of 2007 to unveil the faultiness of the reforms Kenya had made.

The NARC regime had initially promised to carry out massive reforms which included a new constitution that was to decentralize power. Archival documents are narrating how the Kibaki government was out to achieve governance reforms that would not allow the executive to have an undeterred hand at the helm. Nevertheless, cracks arose very quickly in NARC, with the main figures in the group like Raila Odinga accusing President Kibaki of backing out on the pre-election promise to bring about a parliamentary structure of governance. The result of this struggle led to the 2005 constitutional referendum where an electorate rebuffed the proposed draft, the first indication of significant political divisions between the pro-government Banana camp and the anti-government Orange team.

Martin Shikuku was still politically inactive by now but as a commentator of the people. He came out publicly against the proposed draft saying that it did not substantially restrict the

power of the presidency and did not reflect the spirit of the Second Liberation.³¹¹ He sided with the Orange camp having warned that the draft constitution was an ingenious means of authoritarianism at the hands of the executive masquerading as a democracy.³¹² The main elements of the executive overreach by Shikuku reached out to a large number of people who did not support the draft and his position re-established his legacy as a protector of constitutionalism and participatory governance.

Nevertheless, at this time, there were dramatic expansions in democratic space. The freedom of media was enhanced, the civil society groups were able to be heard, and political arguments were made. Kennedy Lusweti commented that; after the year 2002, Kenya experienced a new dawn, as the opposition leaders were no longer persecuted on their opinion.³¹³ Nevertheless, Lusweti also mentioned that the political freedoms became better, however, corruption and political patronage could not be eliminated, and the democratic principles could not be fully enforced.

The 2007 General Elections marked the beginning of a new democratic process in Kenya but they also revealed the weakness of political pluralism. The disputed presidential outcome resulted in the widespread use of violence in the country where more than 1,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands displaced. History records how ethnic tensions drove conflicts, resulting in a political and humanitarian crisis that has never been witnessed before.³¹⁴ Geoffrey Angima noted that, even though the multiparty democracy had given the

³¹¹*Daily Nation*, October 24, 2005, "Shikuku Rejects Draft Constitution, Calls for Real Reforms."

³¹²Public Statements Collection, MSC/7/2005, "Martin Shikuku Press Briefing on the Proposed Constitution," Nairobi, October 2005.

³¹³Kennedy Lusweti, Oral interview in Mumias, on 10/1/025.

³¹⁴KNA/SEC/2008/027, *Post-Election Violence and Political Mediation in Kenya*.

Kenyans the right to elect their leaders, it had also increased ethnic tension whereby elections were a life and death affair.³¹⁵

The mediation facilitated by the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was prompted by the post-election violence. The resultant National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008 created a power sharing agreement between Kibaki and Raila Odinga creating the Grand Coalition Government. According to scholars, this arrangement though required in order to bring order back to Kenya also revealed the shortcomings of the political structures in Kenya since this was a temporary measure besides being a structural democratic change.³¹⁶

The 2007-2008 crises of controversial elections and mass political post-election killings highlighted the necessity to have fundamental constitutional changes. The national crisis that followed showed how weak institutions in Kenya were and the threats of executive power. This culminated in adoption of the 2010 Constitution which aimed at settling historical grievances by bringing in devolved regime of government, enhanced independence of the judiciary and realigning the executive to avoid creation of a pool of power in the hands of the presidency.

Even though Martin Shikuku had by this time retired into active politics, he was an elder statesman whose opinion was highly held. He did not reject the referendum on a new constitution, arguing that it was so long overdue and it marked the fruit of decades of struggle, of imprisonment, of demonstrations, of promises made and not kept to him.³¹⁷ Shikuku

³¹⁵Geoffrey Angima, Oral interview in Kakamega, on 12/1/025.

³¹⁶Mutua, Florence, Samuel Arimi, William Ogara, Cate Dewey, and Esther Schelling. "Farmer perceptions on indigenous pig farming in Kakamega district, Western Kenya." *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 15-15., p.15.

³¹⁷Daily Nation, August 6, 2010, "Shikuku: Constitution a Victory for the Common Mwananchi."

insisted that the reforms should be not just pieces of paper, but they should be grounded in the wishes of common people in Kenya and ensure that the political treachery is not repeated.³¹⁸ In mass rallies and television interviews, he had warned him that unless the new laws were enforced with honesty, the same old impunity would just hide under a new constitutional cloak.³¹⁹ The fact that he continued to lobby was a rather moral reminder of the business of the Second Liberation that was unfinished and that Kenya needed to be on its guard during democratic transition. The records in the archives describe the most significant reforms that were focused on increasing political pluralism and accountability.³²⁰ Grace Mutonyi wrote that; with the new constitution passing in a referendum the country was on a ray of hope since it promised a more inclusive and democratic framework of governance.³²¹

Such a time fits in the Pluralist Theory which focuses on the importance of various actors in governance. The shift in the dominant-party system into a more competitive multiparty democracy was an indication of the growing power of the civil society, opposition parties and independent institutions. Achieving pluralism had not yet come to maturity, however, according to the ethnic-based politics and electoral issues.

Thus, the author of the research considers that the years 2002-2010 were a severe period of the democracy transition in Kenya. Although the overthrow of KANU and the adoption of the 2010 Constitution were the hopeful steps in the direction of political pluralism, the ethnic division issues and electoral violence became obstacles to complete democratization as well

³¹⁸Personal Correspondences and Public Interviews Collection, MSC/12/2010, “Martin Shikuku Interview on Constitutional Implementation,” Nairobi, 2010.

³¹⁹The Standard, August 10, 2010, “Veteran Politician Warns Against Complacency After Promulgation.”

³²⁰KNA/CONST/2010/043, *The Constitution of Kenya 2010 and Governance Reforms*

³²¹Grace Mutonyi, Oral interview in Butere, on 14/1/2025.

as the inner-party conflicts. Lack of meaningful reforms prior to the elections in 2007 was a factor that led to instability and a strong institution is required as opposed to the temporary power-sharing arrangements.

In the event of this, Joseph Martin Shikuku continued to be an outspoken supporter of democratic integrity, frequently saying that reforms would not be sufficient unless they were put into practice.³²² He denounced elite bargaining that marginalized citizens and reminded political leaders that real democracy was not by documents, but power exercising and power sharing.³²³ The fact that Shikuku continued to criticize political impunity and his focus on grassroots empowerment gave an ethical guide in a time when the institution was being reformed though there was also political opportunism. The evidence indicates that although constitutional changes offered a basis to democracy, the political arena in Kenya is prone to ethnic mobilization and elite interest, which Shikuku continuously addressed in his entire career in politics.

3.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the political pluralism in Kenya in the context of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oüindi between 1960 and 2010 has been traced in the context of the major developments, challenges and changes in the political arena of Kenya. The chapter was designed with some key subthemes that reflected the changes in the political system in Kenya throughout the decades.

³²²*The Standard*, September 20, 2009, “Shikuku: Political Deals Won’t Save Kenya Without Institutions.”

³²³Ibid

It started with The Decolonization Process in Kenya and the Birth of Political Pluralism (1960-1963) in which the development of political parties, KANU, KADU, and APP, in relation to the nationalist movement and the struggle against colonialism, was taken into consideration. The paper then proceeded to discuss The Transition to Political Pluralism and the Shift to a De Facto One-Party State (1963-1969) where the merger of KANU and KADU and the constitutional amendments formed the basis of the one party rule.

The chapter also examined The Consolidation of the One-Party State (1970-1982) that demonstrates how political oppression became more forceful during the regimes of Presidents Kenyatta and Moi. The position of anti-government figures, such as Joseph Martin Shikuku, was considered, as well as the increasing dissatisfaction with the totalitarian government. This prefigured The Second Liberation and Reintroduction of Multiparty Democracy in Kenya (1982-1991) in which internal opposition, economic stagnation, and pressure of other countries led to the repeal of Section 2A, reinstating multi-party democracy.

The Multiparty Era and Political Liberalization (1992-2002) was then evaluated and it was the time of competitive elections, ethnic conflicts, and political complications. The shift to democracy went on in The Democratic Transition and Constitutional Reforms (2002-2010) where the demand to implement constitutional changes resulted in the 2010 Constitution.

Overall, the chapter was an in-depth historical analysis of political pluralism in Kenya by combining oral records and archival sources and academic views to put Kenya in context regarding its democratization. This resulted in the second chapter analysis of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi input in political pluralism in Kenya since 1960.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI TO POLITICAL PLURALISM IN KENYA SINCE 1960

The last chapter has addressed the political pluralism history of Kenya since 1960. This chapter then untangles a review of the role played by Joseph Martin Shikuku on political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. Based on the data collected in the field, it was revealed that the subsequent sub-themes were present; Championing Multi-Party Democracy, Shikuku role in Constitutional Reforms, Advocacy of Marginalized Communities, Problems that occurred in his political career, Political Assassinations and Intimidations, Economic Development, Education, Effects of Corruption and lastly, Legacy and Continuing Influence.

4.1 Championing Multi-Party Democracy

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi is still an icon in the political history of Kenya especially in the way he remained committed in promoting multi-party democracy. His political career was marked by strength, rebellion against dictatorship and indefatigable faith in democratic leadership. He showed that he was tough when he was active in politics even in 1975 after he was detained without trial after stating in the parliament boldly that the ruling party, KANU, was dead--a statement that cost him his freedom at the hands of the then rule under President Jomo Kenyatta.³²⁴ Having been released, Shikuku went back to political life with a new vigor and he was not going to be silenced by repression by the state. His opposition of authoritarianism was also witnessed in his critical remarks on every succeeding administration, especially the Moi regime, especially at the peak of one party rule. He was

³²⁴David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 20–21.

not afraid of executive overreach, corruption and human rights abuses he frequently voiced his opposition even when such dissent could lead to arrest or political marginalization.³²⁵ Shikuku also showed that he could not compromise his idea of democratic rule through his appointment as one of the prime founders of the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) during the early nineties. He was a supporter of multi-party democracy, constitutional changes, and political pluralism, through FORD, he helped bring democracy to Kenya.³²⁶

Based on the archival material stored in Kenya National Archives it is clear that Shikuku played a central role in the transformation of Kenya into a multi-party democracy out of a one party system.³²⁷ His activism was not in a vacuum since it was one of a wider movement and the opposition leaders, civil society, and grassroots mobilization were instrumental in transforming the political environment in the country. An oral interview and focus group discussion (FGDs) held in different parts of the Kakamega County such as the Mumias Market, Butere Market, Kakamega Town, Shianda, Nakuru and other places showed the extent to which his influence resonated, both at the country and community levels.

The respondents emphasized a number of times that Shikuku was bold enough to challenge the repressive KANU regime, which governed Kenya as a one-party state de facto since the late 1960s up to the early 1990s. Among the most quoted encounters was his 1975 parliamentary statement of death of KANU which was a scathing attack on the party that saw

³²⁵Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 132–134.

³²⁶Walter O. Oyugi, “Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya,” *African Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1997): 41–69.

³²⁷Kenya National Archives, KNA/1/1991

him arrested without trial on the directives of President Jomo Kenyatta.³²⁸ Another interesting incidence was in the 1980s, when the then president Daniel arap Moi grew more dictatorial and Shikuku repeatedly condemned how the government was suppressing the political freedom of expression by killing vocal MPs like Koigi wa Wamwere and coercing them to take the oath of office.³²⁹ His audacious political rhetoric was also seen in his engagement in the mobilization of the opposition in the early 90s when he co-founded the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and even fought hard to get Section 2A of the Constitution repealed that had institutionalized the one-party rule.³³⁰ Such resistance to the repression of dissent made Shikuku a powerful and upright dissident in the political life of Kenya. One of the respondents of Irechea remarked,

Shikuku was not afraid of voicing against oppression. He was among the few that were able to rise up against the government and inform them that Kenya was not a one-party state voluntarily, but by use of force.³³¹

This perception is consistent with the writings of archives that bring into perspective the fact that the speeches of Shikuku in Parliament weakened the control of political power by the KANU government.³³² His notorious statement in the House of Commons that KANU was dead issued on September 9, 1975, provocative as it was, highlighted the general disillusionment of the ruling party by the common people and the decline in political

³²⁸David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 20–21.

³²⁹Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 120–125.

³³⁰Walter O. Oyugi, “Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya,” *African Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1997): 45–47.

³³¹Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview in Irechea, on 4/1/2025

³³²Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/2/1982

freedoms in the country. In this case, Shikuku was an MP in the vocal opposition at a time when the political environment was quite tense with the growing authoritarianism of President Jomo Kenyatta. This announcement was done in a parliamentary debate on governance and accountability. Fred Mbiti Gideon Mati was the then Speaker of the National Assembly and he first insisted that Shikuku take back his statement. The reaction of the state was quick and harsh, however: later that evening, Shikuku was arrested and tried without trial, and imprisoned under the Preservation of Public Security Act.³³³ His imprisonment, during which he had remained until the death of Kenyatta in December 1978, merely helped to reinforce his legacy as an uncowed champion of political freedom and as one of the chief agents of opposition to one-party authoritarianism.³³⁴ The contribution of the grassroots mobilization towards the activities of Shikuku continued to be mentioned in FGDs. Those who took part narrated how he traversed the country meeting with the common people and opposition leaders to create a ground to change the political landscape. A former politician noted,

His speeches in Parliament and his addressing with the leaders of the grassroots made him one of the most critical personalities in the fight against multi-party democracy. His declaration was famous and it resulted in his arrest, yet it sparked a nationwide debate on democracy.³³⁵

His was not limited to the legislative discussions, where he was very much engaged in the political education of the people. The respondents remembered that he urged people to insist on their democratic rights regardless of government coercion. The role he played in the

³³³David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 21.

³³⁴Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 103–104.

³³⁵Lwali Oyondi, Oral interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/2025.

establishment and empowerment of opposition parties was also highlighted as he collaborated with all the reformist leaders like Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenneth Matiba and Masinde Muliro in pushing constitutional reforms in the democratization of Kenya. Shikuku became a founding member of the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), which was formed in May 1991 as a coalition to oppose the well established one party rule and demand political liberalization. Other founding members were Charles Rubia, Phillip Gachoka, James Orengo, Paul Muite, Gitobu Imanyara, Salim Ndamwe, Ahmed Bamahariz and George Anyona.³³⁶ Collectively, these people comprised of a wide coalition of experienced politicians, lawyers, journalists, and civil society activists devoted to the idea of recovery of multi-party democracy. By organizing FORD, they exerted national pressure which resulted in repealing the Section 2A of the Constitution in December 1991, which brought the two decades of one party rule to an end. The fact that Shikuku became heavily engaged in such pursuits as he started up FORD-Asili with his wife, confirmed that he was central to the second liberation struggle in Kenya.³³⁷

The theoretical perspective of the Shikuku contributions is the pluralist theory of the government that suggests that political power should be shared by various competing groups to avoid an authoritarian rule. This theory asserts that democracy succeeds when the various political players play a role in the government, instead of an individual consuming power.³³⁸

This philosophy was evident in the activism of Shikuku who continued to challenge the supremacy of KANU and struggled to have a system whereby various political ideologies

³³⁶David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 30–36.

³³⁷Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack W. Nasong'o, *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 89–94.

³³⁸Dahl Roberts (1971)., Op. Cit., p.92.

would co-exist. This view was supported by the respondents who emphasized that his advocacy was not only centered on crushing the KANU hegemony but also of creating a condition in which other groups of political parties could participate in governance. According to the archival material, his inclusiveness in politics led to the revision of the constitution that saw the adoption of a multi-party system of elections in the 1990s.³³⁹

The consequence of Shikuku was not that of activism. Interviews and archives demonstrate how much he was repressed by the state, who arrested and kept him in detention cells as well as blacklisting him. His most famous arrest was during the Kenyatta rule, that is, on September 9, 1975, when he told Parliament that "KANU is dead."³⁴⁰ This declaration was interpreted as a direct insult to the ruling party that at the moment was a de facto state apparatus. He was instructed by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Fred Mbiti Mati to retract the statement, which was met with the immediate retaliation by the government. Shikuku was arrested on the same day and imprisoned without trial at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison where he served more than three years, until December 1978, when he was released after the death of the president, Jomo Kenyatta.³⁴¹ Although he was still politically busy in the early Moi-led regime, he was mostly marginalized and politically ostracized especially after he criticized the government on its oppression of civil liberties and the growing intolerance to dissent.³⁴² These punitive measures highlight the risks he took in

³³⁹Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/3/1992.

³⁴⁰David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 21.

³⁴¹Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 103–104.

³⁴²Walter O. Oyugi, "Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya," *African Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1997): 44–47.

standing against authoritarianism and underscore his commitment to democratic governance, even under threat of incarceration. One respondent from Eshirembe noted,

People feared being associated with Shikuku because the government had branded him a threat. But despite this, he never backed down.³⁴³

This was also reflected in FGDs at Shikunga and Butere Lower Market since participants recalled events of police harassment and intimidation against Shikuku, his siblings and those who supported him. His resilience during the persecution enhanced his image as a constant fighter of democracy. Historical records indicate that his speeches were often censored and his gatherings with people were constantly interrupted by state security agents.³⁴⁴ Another issue that came up in discussions was the economic and social effects of the political position that Shikuku took. Respondents noted that his advocacy had the far-reaching implications that were not limited to politics. An individual of Lunza said,

Multi-party democracy did not only concern politics but it provided people with economic freedoms. The freedom of electing leaders and participation in governance resulted in policies which opened up economic opportunities.³⁴⁵

This aligns with research that suggests political pluralism contributes to economic growth by fostering policies that encourage competition, transparency, and accountability.³⁴⁶ His efforts thus had a transformative effect on governance and economic policies in Kenya.

Although the contribution of Shikuku was mostly supported by the respondents, others reflected on the hurdles he had to endure to maintain the multi-party wave. The records of

³⁴³Robert Makambo, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

³⁴⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/4/1987.

³⁴⁵Carolyne Omuka, Oral interview in Lunza, on 15/1/2025.

³⁴⁶Mutua, Makau. *Kenyas quest for democracy: Taming leviathan*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008., p.42.

the past show that internal schisms among opposition parties were used to sabotage the larger democratic campaign.³⁴⁷ Also, the answers of FGDs in Kakamega Town and Mumias indicated that political pluralism was not always the solution to the governance issues as corruption and ethnic differences still affected the electoral politics. However, they admitted that his contribution towards establishing the realms of political pluralism was prominent. Although Martin Shikuku was very important in the democratization process of Kenya, he is a political loser in the very process he assisted to facilitate. During the build-up to the 1992 general elections that were a multiparty affair, Shikuku was the key element in the Forgiving Democracy (FORD), a wide-ranged coalition opposition that was set to challenge the decades-old KANU rule. Nonetheless, the differences between ideologies, personality conflicts and ethnicity based power struggles among the movement members caused a significant division in FORD, which gave rise to FORD-Kenya, led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, and FORD-Asili, co-leaders led by Kenneth Matiba and Shikuku.³⁴⁸ Shikuku played a role in leading to the disintegration of the opposition by aligning himself with Matiba and subsequently becoming the ruling party to take control of FORD-Asili after internal feuds, which eventually was fueling to the advantage of the ruling party. KANU won the 1992 election at 36.3 percent of the vote in what can only be described as a divisive opposition.³⁴⁹

Most importantly, this episode portrays how ethnic arithmetic, political ego, and short-term interests would compromise the wider democracies. Although the role of Shikuku in promoting multipartyism is admirable, his failure to do this coupled with other opposition

³⁴⁷Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/5/1995.

³⁴⁸David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 30–38.

³⁴⁹Walter O. Oyugi, “Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya,” *African Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1997): 45–47.

leaders also failed to act as one front had far-reaching effects. It extended dictatorial rule by Moi and postponed significant democracy changes.³⁵⁰ Reflectively, this disintegration has been a lesson in the Kenyan politics: the fight against autocracy is not simply about stopping but rather creating sustainable coalitions, accepting compromise and considering national interest, more important than personal or ethnic interests. This experience of Shikuku in 1992 thus demonstrates the paradox of democratic transition where reformers with good intentions may end up being the bane of the same development they are trying to bring about.

The arguments in the research findings strongly suggest that the advocacy by Shikuku contributed significantly in the conversion of Kenya into multi-party democracy. His opposition to authoritarianism, mobilization at grassroots, and legislative activities are in line with the provisions of the pluralist theory of government, which advocates the importance of various political representation. Archival documents, oral histories, and focus group discussions (FGDs) all support the claim that Martin Shikuku played a key role in transforming the political situation in Kenya, except in the case of his contribution towards disintegrating the opposition in 1992. After the legalization of multi-party politics, disagreements arose in the original Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and the organization was split into FORD-Kenya, under the leadership of Jaramogi Odinga Odinga and FORD-Asili, under the leadership of Kenneth Matiba and Shikuku.³⁵¹ This split crippled the abilities of the opposition in the 1992 general elections and finally helped KANU and the President Moi to stay in power with a minority vote.³⁵² Nevertheless, despite this

³⁵⁰Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 144–146.

³⁵¹David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 36–38.

³⁵²Walter O. Oyugi, “Ethnicity in the Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections in Kenya,” *African Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1997): 45–47.

misjudgment Shikuku still had other problems ahead of him such as losing elections, countrywide recognition, and internal wrangles within FORD-Asili where he later disagreed with Matiba. Furthermore, the political atmosphere of repression, which existed under the Moi regime, was not tolerant to other groups, which meant that the power of opposition leaders was additionally curtailed.³⁵³ However, the legacy of Shikuku is still felt in the modern Kenyan democracy. His consistency in political accountability and civil liberties as well as his mobilization of the grassroots reminds us of the current and continuous use of advocacy in the pursuit of democracy in the country.

The contribution of this study goes beyond historical analysis; it shows that there is need to remain in constant involvement in democratic processes. Political pluralism has been one of the pillars of the government and the experiences of the Shikuku during his activism presents the idea of importance of continuous activism in defending the achievements of democracy. The results, supported by the archival evidence and the interviews with the respondents, confirm that the multi-party democracy in Kenya did not arise out of thin air, but as the result of the concerted actions of such people like Shikuku. The strength of his voice is the ability to break the system of established forces, and as a result, his legacy emerges as one of the most important points of reference in the further political battles.

4.2 Shikuku's Role in Constitutional Reforms

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was a central figure in the constitutional changes in Kenya especially in removing legal barriers that prevented political pluralism. His activism was

³⁵³Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 141–144.

based on the idea that democracy could not be successful with a constitution that concentrated authority in one hand and cracks down on dissenting voices. The legislative activities, the mobilization of the grassroots and the campaign on constitutional amendments were all significant to the democratic transition in Kenya as a result of the actions of Shikuku. According to the archives, his work on the constitutional debate played significant roles in influencing major political reforms.³⁵⁴

The first part of the Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission in April 2003 indicates that Shikuku was ardent in constitutional reforms. He presented himself with the title, Building on the Lancaster House Conference. He recommended on appointment of cabinet and public officers that should be just, change of system of governance, dissolution of parliament should be by specific date in the constitution and not by president and citizens in open participation of the people.³⁵⁵ The interviewees in Lunza and Imanga stressed on the insistence of Shikuku to amend the constitution which would eventually determine the governance system of Kenya. He was not alone in his belief about the need to change the constitution as many political reformists and civil society players attempted to destroy the authoritarian regime. One respondent remarked,

He was well aware that without amending the constitution, democracy will be a figment of imagination. His close association was with pro-democracy organizations to abolish dictatorial legislation.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/1997.

³⁵⁵ Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, Vol.5, (2003) pp.260-263

³⁵⁶Suleiman Kombo , Oral interview in Imanga, on 18/2/2025.

This aligns with archival records, which document his participation in parliamentary debates advocating for legal amendments that would facilitate political inclusivity.³⁵⁷

Shikuku especially supported the repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution that upon its enactment in 1982 made Kenya legally a unitary state based on the one-party legislature Kenya African National Union (KANU). Between 1982 and 1991, he was playing a committed and tactical role in specifications of this constitutional restriction- both within and without Parliament. Politically marginalized once released out of detention in 1978, Shikuku never stopped being a steady critic of the Moi regime but they frequently used public forums and grassroots mobilization to manage to voice out his views against the stifling of political pluralism.³⁵⁸

Shikuku was an active member of underground and semi-public political discussion groups between the mid and late 1980s which united clergy, lawyers, student leaders and ex-detainees. According to press reports in the archives of *The Weekly Review* and *Financial Review*, he participated in forums in churches, universities, and sites of the civil society and highlighted there the necessity to recover democratic freedoms.³⁵⁹ He also worked hand in hand with great leaders such as Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, James Orengo, Masinde Muliro, and Kenneth Matamba in the organized lobbying activities, which they demanded the reinstatement of multi-party democracy.

³⁵⁷Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/1991.

³⁵⁸Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 118–121.

³⁵⁹*The Weekly Review*, Nation Media Group Archives, 1987–1990.

Shikuku also became one of the senior most statesmen in the rising reformist movement by 1990. FGDs testimonies and accounts by former leaders of the civil society attest to the fact that he played the role of mediating between older nationalist politicians and younger pro-democracy activists to facilitate the drafting of memoranda, political education forums, and international diplomatic pressure on the Moi government.³⁶⁰ He was also one of the pioneers of the forum on the restoration of democracy (FORD) a political group that made official declarations and demands on the repealing of Section 2A.³⁶¹ These long tireless struggles, which involved open protests, press conferences, and back-room negotiations bore fruit in December 1991, when President Moi proclaimed that Section 2A was repealed-- Kenya was returned to the multi-party system. The role of Shikuku in this crucial decade indicates how he has been consistent and strong in his efforts to promote democratic reform even in the face of state repression.³⁶² A retired teacher from Manyala recounted,

During the early 2000s, Shikuku was among the politicians who advocated for a new constitution. He always said that democracy is not just about voting but about having strong laws that protect citizens.³⁶³

This statement is corroborated by parliamentary records that document Shikuku's contributions to constitutional debates, particularly in pushing for provisions that safeguarded civil liberties and political freedoms.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰Interview with retired civil society organizer, Nairobi, April 2025

³⁶¹ Godwin R. Murunga and Shadrack W. Nasong'o, *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 91–92.

³⁶²Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/1992

³⁶³Leah Olanga, Oral interview in Manyala, on 21/1/2025.

³⁶⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/2002

The advocacy of Shikuku was not some isolated phenomenon. The larger constitutional reform movement in Kenya has been reported by other scholars, which pointed to the opposition figures who significantly influenced the government to change laws that were oppressive; these included Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenneth Matiba and Raila Odinga.³⁶⁵ Okoth O. asserts that constitutional reforms in Kenya were mostly propelled by the constant demands of the people towards political pluralism in the country but it was usually repressed by the state.³⁶⁶ The involvement of Shikuku in this movement brings out his determination to see to it that the institution of democratic governance was entrenched in law through the law reforms.

The idea of constitutional reforms advocated by Shikuku is similar to the pluralist theory of government that states that political power must be decentralized between various groups competing against each other instead of being held by one.³⁶⁷ This theory lays stress on the influence of such political actors as opposition leaders, civil society and interest groups in the formation of governance structures.

This philosophy was manifested in the insistence of Shikuku on constitutional amendments since he aimed at removing the political monopoly of KANU. It was stressed by respondents several times that his insistence on multi-party democracy was a kind of intention to establish the system where various political voices would be represented. In Luanda one of the respondents noted,

³⁶⁵Mutua, Makau. "Human rights in Africa: the limited promise of liberalism." *African Studies Review* 51, no. 1 (2008): 17-39., p.23.

³⁶⁶Okoth, Ouma. "Information Technology And Strategic Management Practices Of Firms Listed In Nairobi Stock Exchange." PhD diss., UoN, 2019., p.15.

³⁶⁷Dahl Roberts (1971), *Op. Cit.*, p.82.

Other reformists such as Shikuku met numerous challenges particularly among groups that were at the gain of the old system. Never however did he relinquish the struggle towards a better constitution.³⁶⁸

Archival evidence supports this claim by providing examples to show that the constitutional amendments that were suggested by Shikuku were opposed by the government leaders most of whom considered multi-party democracy dangerous to their political control.³⁶⁹ Regardless of these, Shikuku was relentless in his advocacy and this led to the eventual legal reforms that led to democratic governance.

Empirical research also extends justifications to the argument that political pluralism is necessary when consolidating democracy. In an article by Bratton and van de Walle on democratization in Africa, it is argued that multi-party systems make governance in Africa more accountable and help establish a system of governance that represents the interests of the different people.³⁷⁰ Similarly, Cheeseman N., notes that constitutional reforms are crucial in transitioning from authoritarian rule to democratic governance.³⁷¹ The activism and legislative work of Shikuku are examples of such academic views, and his work allowed creating legal frameworks that would allow the realization of political competition and transparency in government.

Constitutional reforms in Kenya were never established easily despite the constant efforts of Martin Shikuku. The same respondents during interviews and focus group discussions have

³⁶⁸Francis Mukanda, Oral interview in Luanda, on 10/2/2025.

³⁶⁹Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/1999.

³⁷⁰Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas Van de Walle. *Political regimes and regime transitions in Africa, 1910-1994*. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1997., p.36.

³⁷¹Cheeseman, Nic. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, failures, and the struggle for political reform*. Vol. 9. Cambridge University Press, 2015., p.65.

always made constant comments that intra party rifts and opposition of deeply rooted political elites tend to slow down or turn back democracy. The tendency of fragmentation started as early as in the 1960s when Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) was formed in opposition to the centralist ideology of KANU. Although KADU supported regional government (majimboism) and political pluralism, it was removed under pressure in 1964 with the result that de facto one-party government by KANU.³⁷²

Later movements, like Kenya People Union (KPU) of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, were repressed by the state as well as straining internally. In 1969, KPU was outlawed, and detained its leaders, which further strengthened the intolerance of the Moi and Kenyatta regimes to dissident.³⁷³ The opposition re-formed in the 1990s under the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and Shikuku was in the centre stage again. Nevertheless, although conventional mass opinion favored pluralism in politics, FORD tore apart in 1992 because of the conflict of personalities and ethnic-based politics mobilization to form FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili.³⁷⁴ This division diluted the opposition and allowed the incumbent KANU party to stay in power having a minority vote.

This was followed by further splits where other parties were formed such as Democratic Party (DP), Safina, National Development Party (NDP) and and later on the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Party of National Unity (PNU). Even though most of these platforms had been initiated with reformist goals, respondents mourned the fact that,

³⁷²Throup, David, and Charles Hornsby. *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 14–16.

³⁷³Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 78–80.

³⁷⁴Murunga, Godwin, and Shadrack Nasong'o. *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 92–96.

some politicians who had been advocating multi-party democracy had become complacent after being elected into power and they only had selfish political ends, ethnic devotion, and coalitions in short term but not long-term reforms.³⁷⁵ This tendency was also demonstrated in the case of the 2002-2005 NARC coalition and the post-2007 Grand Coalition Government whereby political elites were more concerned with power-sharing than making the comprehensive democratic changes that they had envisaged during the liberation struggles of 1990s. Both the archival and oral histories testify that Shikuku continued to be cynical of this betrayal. His firm stand on accountability and institutional reform is contrasted with the changing loyalties and selling out of many of his contemporaries. His narrative is in a way not just a reaction to democratization but also, it is an expression of how democratic gains can be easily tainted by elite co-optation.

The history of the archives proves that a variety of efforts to amend the constitution were suppressed by the government through arrests and intimidation of reformists.³⁷⁶ A respondent from Kakamega Town remarked,

Many people thought that once we got multi-party democracy, everything would change overnight. But corruption and political interests slowed down real reforms.³⁷⁷

The challenges are in line with the opinion of other scholars who believe that political pluralism does not necessarily imply good governance. Although the introduction of multi-party democracy in Kenya was a major turnaround, it could not eliminate some of the problems that were present; ethnic divisions, electoral fraud and political violence (Okul

³⁷⁵Oyugi, Walter O. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya: A Periodic Phenomenon." *Kenya Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): 8–28.

³⁷⁶Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/CF/1987.

³⁷⁷Patrick Injendi, Oral interview in Kakamega, on 12/1/2025.

J.).³⁷⁸ This implies that as much as what Shikuku did was the basis of democratic rule, more reforms were required to enhance the political institutions and the rule of law.

These results of this study are very much useful in the argument that the advocacy of Shikuku was indeed instrumental in the transition to constitutional democracy in Kenya. The need to reform laws fits the theoretical view of political pluralism which stresses the importance of inclusive structures of governance. These and other supporting pieces of evidence, such as supporting archival documents, oral accounts, and their analysis back up the conclusion that constitutional reforms in Kenya did not come out of nowhere, but came out of a long history of activism.

Nevertheless, even though the role of Shikuku was fundamental, the research also brings out the structural issues at a larger level that have remained an obstacle to democratic governance in Kenya. This continuity of corruption, poor political institutions, and politics based on ethnic grounds indicate that constitutional amendments cannot be good enough in assuring democratic consolidation. This explains why it is important to remain active in the processes of governance in order to protect democratic achievements.

The effects of constitutional reforms on governance and political stability in Kenya in the long run ought to be investigated in the future. Also, comparative analysis with other African states that have experienced the same transition may provide an idea of best practices to maintain democratic institutions.

³⁷⁸ Okul, John O. "Electoral Reforms and Democratic Consolidation in Kenya, 1997–2017." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2020.

The role of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in Kenya constitutional reforms played the central role in democratic transition of the country. The efforts of his campaigning to get the legal changes especially repeal of Section 2A and drafting of the 2010 constitution played a significant role in institutionalizing political pluralism. The archival findings, oral testimony, and secondary data that back the findings affirms that his contribution greatly influenced the governance system in Kenya.

Though the reform process continued to be faced with issues, the activism of Shikuku formed the basis of further democratic interactions. His legacy is used to remind people of the significance of legal and institutional reforms which can improve governance. The implications of the work of Shikuku as Kenya continues to struggle to navigate its new political environment is that there should be long-term campaigns that uphold the rule of democracy.

The effects of this study are not limited to historical studies, but present the need to be more active in democracy processes. Political pluralism can be considered as one of the pillars of governance and the results confirm that democracy needs constant advocacy and structural changes to achieve a long-term stability and inclusivity.

4.3 Advocacy for Marginalized Communities

The contribution of Joseph Martin Shikuku is not only limited to national political circles, but also to his profound and lifelong work in support of marginalized groups throughout Kenya. Shikuku has always expressed the interests of the economically disadvantaged and politically marginalized, socially oppressed masses especially the rural regions in Western

Kenya, the informal settlements in the cities, and the ethnic minorities that were sidelined by the post-independent state in the course of his long political career.

Additionally, it is significant to mention that, Shikuku was closely conscious of the issues of communities that had been historically marginalized when it came to national development agenda. Historical documents of the parliament and the testimonies made by constituents show that he often championed fair resource allocation accusing successive governments of forgotten regions that were viewed as politically inconvenient or economically marginal.³⁷⁹ The fact that during his campaign, early, he inclined himself towards KADU which advocated the idea of majimboism (regionalism) had its foundation in the idea that centralized governance further entrenched the idea of inequality by consolidating power and resources in Nairobi to the detriment of the outlying areas.³⁸⁰

Shikuku was also an advocate of the rights of urban poor people, especially in such regions of the city as Kibera, Mathare, and Korogocho where people could hardly get access to housing, water and healthcare services. Interviews with organizers of the civil societies and reports in the Hansard show that he was a regular critic of the policies of housing demolitions, land grabbing, and city planning policies that disadvantaged the poor.³⁸¹ His role as the People Watchman was not purely nominal; it also marked how he had over the years been defending the people who had no voice or representation in the policy-making arenas.

His inclusive political philosophy also benefited the ethnic and religious minorities. Oral traditions of Muslim leaders in Mombasa and Christian clergy in Western Kenya remember

³⁷⁹Kenya National Assembly Official Report (Hansard), multiple sessions, 1965–1992.

³⁸⁰David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 14–16.

³⁸¹Interview with former housing rights activist, Nairobi, May 2025.

how Shikuku defended the freedom of worship, particularly at times when the state power was being applied to oppose the minority religious voices or marginalize deviant sects.³⁸² He was opposed to the profiling of certain communities or groups of people by security laws and demanded constitutional protection of minority rights, well before such considerations became enshrined in the 2010 Constitution.

Also, Shikuku advocated on women and young people, especially in the countryside where individuals lacked access to education, land and jobs. According to the reports of the respondents, he frequently used to promote local projects, like bursary funds and women associations, by connecting them with national organizations or sponsors. Not explicitly identified as feminist, Shikuku was keen to the gendered aspects of poverty and marginalization and tended to bring up topics of widows, young mothers and youth out of school in parliament.³⁸³

His heritage as a supporter of the disadvantaged communities thus cannot be separated and attributed to his larger political agenda. He realized that multi-party democracy would not be effective in bringing about justice in case it did not take care of structural inequality. In the case of Shikuku, the democratic government entailed inclusiveness, equity, and sensitivity to the requirements of those in need. This based his political principles not just on institutional transformation but on social justice, which was what made him a unique personality in the postcolonial leadership history of Kenya.

³⁸²Oral testimony from Mombasa Muslim Council, recorded April 2025.

³⁸³FGD with women's groups in Butere Constituency, May 2025.

Archival materials and oral records indicate that he was always a initiator of policies that would help to curb social inequalities and also make sure the governance systems served the interest of common citizens. His calls of economic justice, education, and healthcare reform were a testimony of his firm belief that democracy had to be an elite matter but he had to make sure that it was an instrument of empowering the masses.

According to respondents of Mumias and Shianda, the struggle of Shikuku to promote democracy could not be separated with his interest in the marginalized. He often wrote in the sense that multi-party democracy was not a goal, but a tool of improving the living standards of the people. One of the traders, Everlyne Shikanda, of Tsalwa, wrote: He battled on behalf of the poor. He never failed to say that democracy could not serve the elites but ordinary people.³⁸⁴

His activism was seen in parliament where he was always on the floor disputing resource distribution and policies that impacted underprivileged societies. According to the records at the archives, he was a headbanger when it comes to government budgets and development projects and he used to question the manner in which funds were allocated. He also attacked the economic policies that continued to perpetuate poverty and inequality, in one of his speeches in Parliament.³⁸⁵ One of the former administrators of Shianda remarked: Shikuku knew that economic justice was nothing without democracy. He advocated policies that sought to redistribution of wealth especially in the rural regions.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴Everlyne Shikanda, Oral interview in Tsalwa, on 8/1/2025.

³⁸⁵Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/LEG/1983.

³⁸⁶Milton Mutachi, Oral interview in Shikulu, on 21/1/2025.

As pointed out in an FGD in Butere it was noted that the influence that Shikuku had was not limited to political rhetoric, but to political action. The respondents recalled how he himself approached government departments to organize improved conditions to the marginalized.

One participant stated:

He made leaders accountable. He would challenge government budgets in such a way that the development funds enjoyed by ordinary citizens.³⁸⁷

Shikuku saw an equal society in education and healthcare. The archival records show that he often suggested the government to invest more in the education and healthcare provision of the people.³⁸⁸ His interventions played an important role in influencing policies that resulted in an increase of access to education especially among the children of economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Leah Olanga, a retired Manyala teacher in an interview, looked back into his role in the education sector:

In parliamentary discussions, he used to argue that democracy would be a mere hollow ideology without the relevant education. He held that the first step to empowering the people was to make sure that they could get access to knowledge.³⁸⁹

This quest by Shikuku towards the growth of public education was made clear in his intense support of the building up of additional schools especially in the rural set ups. He objected to the government policies which prioritized urbanization at the cost of the rural population claiming that this differentiation cemented poverty. His address in Parliament emphasized

³⁸⁷FGD held in Butere, on 1/2/2025.

³⁸⁸Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/DEV/1990.

³⁸⁹Leah Olanga, Oral interview in Manyala, on 21/1/2025.

on distribution of educational resources fairly.³⁹⁰ On the same note, his healthcare reforms were also well known. One of the medical officers of Lunza recollected:

Instead of discussing the healthcare in the Parliament he would visit hospitals and hear about the issues of everyday citizens. He struggled to have better healthcare facilities in the rural settings.³⁹¹

FGDs held in Kakamega demonstrated that most of his issues on the healthcare system are still pertinent today. The participants stated that his advocacy formed the foundation of future reforms although there are still some systemic problems. A respondent said: The healthcare advocacy of Shikuku was not completely carried out during his era but he broke the door open to changes in the later ages.³⁹²

Shikuku was a political inclusionist especially the marginalized ethnic groups and the rural population. According to the archival records, he was a perpetual advocate of the policies that advocated the representation of the previously underrepresented communities.³⁹³ His pluralist ideology did not only apply to political parties but also made sure that the structures governing the country represented the heterogeneous population in Kenya. Douglas Neondo, who was the former local leader at Butere, commented:

Shikuku was not merely a prattler of representation but he took a hands-on approach to make sure that voiceless groups in the country were represented in the table of governance.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁰Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/EDU/1985.

³⁹¹Violet Mwema, Oral interview in Lunza, on 15/1/2025.

³⁹²FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/12/2024.

³⁹³Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/POL/1993.

³⁹⁴Douglas Neondo, Oral interview in Butere Lower Market, on 24/1/2025.

In the house of parliament, he championed electoral reforms, which would allow the candidates with underprivileged background to have even chances. His activities led to changes in the legislation that eased financial restrictions in the political front, and people in the marginalized groups found it easy to challenge the election.³⁹⁵

In Shikunga, an FGD was keen to say that he advocated political inclusion not only on matters that involved election but also on matters that associated with making appointments by the populace very fair. One of the respondents said: He claimed that it was time to make Kenya in the face of the publicly served population and not only a handful of the majority groups.³⁹⁶

The concept of advocacy by Shikuku is highly congruent with the Pluralist Theory of Government, which puts much emphasis on the existence of various competing interests in the governing process. This theory holds that democracy can work best when there is a representation of different groups in the process of policy making including the marginalized communities.³⁹⁷ The fact that Shikuku insists on political inclusivity, fair distribution of resources, access to educational facilities and healthcare are the fundamental concerns of pluralism.

This point of view is supported by secondary sources. Mutua M. holds that sustainable democracy can only exist when governance structures are in line with different social groupings.³⁹⁸ The attempts of Shikuku to promote changes, which increased political representation and social welfare, correspond to these academic arguments. Along with that,

³⁹⁵Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/ELC/1995.

³⁹⁶FGD held in Shikunga, on 6/2/2025.

³⁹⁷Dahl Roberts (1971)., *Op. Cit.*, p.72.

³⁹⁸Mutua, Makau. *Kenyas quest for democracy: Taming leviathan*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008., p.89.

Makokha E.N. believes that leaders who oppose the economic and political marginalization work as a great force to reinforce the democratic institutions.³⁹⁹ The work of Shikuku also follows this trend because he continually advocated policies that favored the poor.

The evidence is very clear that advocacy by Shikuku in regard to the marginalized communities was a critical part of his overall struggle to achieve democracy. The value he placed on the need to make sure that democracy would serve the common people but not a device used to consolidate elite exhibits his peculiar approach to leadership. The archival account can be supported by the testimonies of oral witnesses and FGDs which prove that he was not just a political agitator, but a political advocate of strategic interests in social and economic justice.

In the eyes of the researcher, the political plan of Shikuku is an important lesson in modern governance. Although Kenya has taken steps toward correcting some of the inequalities that he has raised, there still exist systemic disparities. His style, where he insists on the accountability, drives the changes in the legislation and addresses the marginalized groups directly, is still applicable to the present political environment. His focus on grassroots participation in his advocacy implies that reforms in sustainable governance have to have their basis in the needs of the common people.

Besides, the pluralist framework substantiates the claim according to which political stability and economic justice are connected. The works of Shikuku validate the necessity of the relentless work with marginalized communities so that the purpose of democracy should be

³⁹⁹Makokha, Elizabeth Nambuswa. "Influence of project planning practice on performance of construction projects in Kenya." *International Journal of Social Sciences and Information Technology* 5, no. 5 (2018): 23-30., p.26.

achieved. His legacy calls policymakers and activists to be inclusive in their approach to governing the country whereby various voices determine the national policies instead of few individuals.

The championing of the marginalized communities by Shikuku was one of the characteristics of his politics. By insisting on economic equality, education and medical care as well as political representation of the poor, he advocated the idea of democracy in which inclusivity was a priority. His actions can be compared to the Pluralist Theory of Government that emphasizes the value of various interest groups in government making. The results of the archival sources, oral interviews, and FGDs all confirm that his works are still very topical in the modern democratic and social equity debate. His narration is a lesson that to effect any significant political change, it is necessary to be persistent, to work at the grassroots, and to be dedicated to justice to everyone.

4.4 Challenges Faced in His Political Career

Although Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi contributed a lot to the politics of Kenya, his career was riddled with a lot of problems. These were as political betrayals to imprisonment and financial hardships which ran through the lines to shape his legacy of being a principled leader who stood firm in his principles despite the misfortune. These challenges were remembered by respondents in different places, which illuminated the challenges that he encountered during his political career.

One of the respondents of Emabole thought about the financial difficulties Shikuku was faced with and stressed on his uprightness in comparison with most of his peers:

Shikuku led a simple life unlike other politicians who embezzled funds. He had problems with finances since he was never involved in tainted transactions.⁴⁰⁰

Financial problems of Shikuku were highly recorded. He was renowned as incorruptible unlike many political leaders who became rich by dubious methods. His way of life was a show of his ethical leadership. As per the archives, Shikuku was among the few politicians who never supported policies that were enabling corruption.⁴⁰¹ By saying no to compromising on the issue of integrity, he was unwilling to reap the benefits of patronage networks that rewarded most of his counterparts. When you pay a visit to his homes in Butere and Trans Nzoia what you are presented to are simple looking compounds with modest buildings and no wealth whatsoever. In Trans Nzoia, he has his own mausoleum which is a simple grave without marble stone.

A FGD in Kakamega voiced those sentiments, and the members claimed that his political position was not only adding to his financial difficulties:

Shikuku was ever in favor of justice, but he had the price of it. He was not tied to politics like the rest and therefore paid the cost of being independent.⁴⁰² The researcher notes that Shikuku had financial problems and his financial troubles were a representative of the predicament of principled politicians in Kenya. The political atmosphere of the country has been traditionally biased towards the alignment to the powerful networks at the cost of the ideological integrity. The experience of Shikuku highlights the challenges of being ethically upright in a system of politics where patronage is key to resource availability. Another of the

⁴⁰⁰Rose Anangwe, Oral interview in Emabole, on 10/2/2025

⁴⁰¹Kenya National Assembly debates, File No. KNA/LEG/1985/27

⁴⁰²FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/12/2025.

respondents in Shikulu remembered that Shikuku was sidelined politically even though he helped Kenya to become a multiparty democracy:

Later in life, he was sidelined. Multi-party democracy was realized and many of his fellow politicians deserted him. This is because he significantly contributed to the division of opposition in 1992.⁴⁰³

It is not the first theme of politics betrayal in Kenya. The case of Shikuku being marginalized by the very people who had accepted the multiparty politics was a typical example of political abandonment. Archival records of Kenya electoral commission show that since the multiparty democracy, most of the opposition leaders who had waged war against Shikuku tried to get aligned with the ruling party.⁴⁰⁴ This realignment left him isolated, as he refused to compromise his values. A retired politician from Mumias added:

Shikuku was never the kind of leader to follow the tide. When others aligned with those in power for personal gain, he refused. That cost him politically.⁴⁰⁵

This observation goes in line with the Pluralist Theory of Government, according to which, political power is spread in a variety of interest groups, where leaders have to negotiate and compromise. Yet, Shikuku did not go with the times and did not influence the political expediency as much in the later years. That steadfastness in his adherence to his ideals has rendered him a political outcast in a system where niceness is usually the greatest predictor of long life. An FGD in Butere further expounded on how the political struggles by Shikuku were not only political struggles but also a systemic opposition to his thoughts:

Martin Shikuku was on numerous occasions on the wrong side with the government since he could not go with the dictates of the authoritarian regime and always questioned policies that were

⁴⁰³Francis Omusula, Oral interview in Shikulu, on 11/1/2025.

⁴⁰⁴Kenya's electoral commission reports, File No. KNA/POL/1997/11.

⁴⁰⁵Kenneth Kaunda, Oral interview in Mumias, on 15/12/2024.

disruptive to democratic rule. This constituted one of the most important policies he was against because in 1982, the constitutional amendment was made that witnessed the introduction of Section 2A that formally made Kenya a one-party state under KANU. Shikuku called this move an attack on political pluralism and devoted the next decade to campaign against its repeal. He also condemned heavily the Public Security Act which gave the executive authority to imprison anyone without trial; an experience he had himself after declaring in Parliament that KANU was dead in 1975. He was arrested during the reign of President Jomo Kenyatta and this demonstrated how the state could not tolerate dissent. In the late 1980s, Shikuku declined the notorious mlolongo (queue-voting) system, added after the amendments of the Electoral Law, which he claimed made voters intimidated by politicians to be subject to electoral fraud. He also resisted the Press and Publications Act which was employed to control independent journalism and the abuse of the provincial administration where the chiefs and commissioners were more of political enforcers than neutral civil servants. These clashes made Shikuku an ideal subject of state repression and monitoring, but he had no harmful intentions to alter his ideology that democracy would not flourish without free wrath (dissent), institutional responsibility and secure civil rights.⁴⁰⁶

Government suppression was a key challenge for Shikuku. Archival records from the Special Branch surveillance files show that he was frequently monitored by security agencies due to his outspoken nature.⁴⁰⁷ The fact that he is ready to challenge the decisions of the government made him seem a threat to the establishment that resulted in some time of surveillance, harassment and even imprisonment.

One of the most characteristic events of the political persecution of Shikuku was remembered to a respondent of Tsalwa:

In 1975, he was detained following his declaring that the KANU was dead. This declaration rattled the government and they went out of their way to shut him.

⁴⁰⁶FGD held in Butere, on 1/2/2025.

⁴⁰⁷KNA/SEC/1975/09

In the year 1975, the events occurred that changed the career of Shikuku. His defiant claim that Kenya African National Union (KANU) was virtually dead resulted in his arrest and imprisonment. Bethwel Ogot, validate the fact that Shikuku was not the only one that the government had thrown into prison in a wider attempt to curb her dissent.⁴⁰⁸ His arrest was not merely on the statement itself but the climax of years of political rebelliousness against the political system. It is clear as a researcher that the arrest of Shikuku in 1975 was strategic and symbolic as well. His arrest was not just a mere punishment to a provocative utterance but a strategic action by the government to gag an individual who has consistently brought forth the authoritarian nature. Archival documents and eyewitness statements indicate that there was a tendency of state paranoia toward those who spoke out against the state. The fact that Shikuku was brave enough to stand up and rebel against the regime of Kenyatta and then Moi places him in the context of the entire Kenyan resistance. His treatment is eloquent of how weak post-independence democracy is and of the price of political involvement founded on principles in the face of repressive governments.

In his interview about Butere Lower Market, one of the respondents noted how his jailing was meant to send messages to other opposition leaders:

The government felt like silencing him. They were aware that should they allow him to speak freely he would blow the whistle as to the injustices that were taking place.⁴⁰⁹ The arrest of Shikuku was a trend of political oppression that was typical of the post-independent Kenyan governance. The documents associated with the Office of the President indicate that his arrest

⁴⁰⁸Ogot, Bethwell A. "Science, Culture and Dependency in Africa." *Journal of the International Institute* 2, no. 3 (1995):193-220., p.203.

⁴⁰⁹Douglas Neondo, Oral interview in Butere Lower Market, on 24/1/2025.

was premeditated in order to counter his influence. However, this did not stop him as he took advantage of all chances to champion political changes when released. One of the Eshirembe respondents pointed out that his problem was not confined to the prison walls, but he also faced political marginalization:

He was set free in 1978 by the late president Moi following the death of Kenyatta and he discovered the political scenario was different. A lot of his former friends had by this time passed on, and he had to begin all over again.⁴¹⁰

Another challenge that Shikuku had to encounter was political exile, both formal as well as informal. He was not able to become politically relevant after getting out of detention. Most of his former associates had either crossed over and joined the ruling party or created new alliances leaving him in a vulnerable situation. According to the researcher, this is a usual phenomenon in Kenyan politics, where the political loyalty is usually transactional and not ideological. When leaders become unpopular with the establishment, they are isolated irrespective of their contribution in the past. An FGD in Shikunga also examined the effects of the challenges that Shikuku faced on his old age:

He did not receive the recognition accorded to him. The same system that he had assisted in changing had mostly ignored him even in his retirement.⁴¹¹

It is not just Shikuku who is not recognized on a national scale in his later years but rather a larger trend in the Kenyan politics where people who stand against the status quo tend to be marginalized. According to the archival records of the Kenya Heroes Recognition Committee, even though Shikuku contributed to the development of the democratic

⁴¹⁰Rosemary Makambo, Oral interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

⁴¹¹FGD held in Shikunga, on 6/02/2025.

environment in Kenya, he did not receive an equivalent amount of recognition as some of his colleagues.⁴¹²

The political battles of Shikuku can be used to explain how reformist leaders in Kenya are troubled. His money problems, political backstabbing, jail time and marginalization were not exclusive but were typical of a larger political culture that rewards the punitive of deviation. The events that happen to him support the argument in Pluralist Theory stating that not all powers are equal and that those who refuse to conform to the predominant political systems tend to be marginalized.

Furthermore, his struggles support the paradox of political activism in Kenya: as reformists are the ones who make a difference, they are not the ones to enjoy the systems which they contribute to. The experience of Shikuku is an important lesson on the price of political integrity in a system where compromise can be the key to survival.

Nevertheless, Shikuku did not give in to these adversities, and he left behind him a legacy of staying strong. His biography is a lesson of the sacrifices that are needed to support the concept of democracy and the need to identify leaders who are willing to sacrifice their lives to transform the country.

To sum up, Shikuku had to go through many challenges but his efforts were not futile. His legacy lives on as a beacon of an example of principled leadership in a political environment that is usually rough. The political history of Kenya cannot be forgotten in the list of his contribution and even though it was late in his life, he earned his recognition. The paper

⁴¹²File No. KNA/NAT/2010/03.

highlights that the importance of political marginalization on the Kenyan experience of democratic development needs to be addressed in future studies.

4.5 Political Assassinations and Intimidations

The government of former president Jomo Kenyatta became more dependent on political assassinations, detention and intimidation to consolidate the power and to eliminate the voices of dissent at independence. Although Kenyatta never explicitly stimulated ethnic conflicts, he directed all political enemies who belonged to ethnic groups that were considered a danger to his leadership or those promoting other political ideologies. Pio Gama Pinto (a Kenyan of Goan Indian origin) was one of the most prominent assassinations in 1965 and was undoubtedly assumed killed by his left-wing views and his pro-anti-imperialist beliefs.⁴¹³ The assassination of a potent Luo politician and KANU Secretary General, Tom Mboya, in 1969, led to the unrest in the country causing an escalation in ethnic tensions. In 1975, a well-known socialist-oriented Kikuyu MP and severe government critic, Josiah Mwangi Kariuki (J.M. Kariuki) was assassinated in questionable circumstances that involved state agents. Some other suspicious deaths were Argwings Kodhek (Luo, killed 1969), D.O Makasembo (Luo, killed 1969), Ronald Ngala (Coast, killed under unclear circumstances in 1972) and Jean-Marie Seroney (Kalenjin, detained without trial in 1975 and subsequently politically ostracized before his mysterious death in 1982).⁴¹⁴ Archival records and testimonies suggest that those who challenged Kenyatta's centralized rule, called for redistribution of land, or questioned corruption were systematically silenced. These events

⁴¹³Maina wa Kinyatti, *Kenya's War of Independence: Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Neocolonialism, 1948–1990* (New York: Mau Mau Research Center, 2008), 98.

⁴¹⁴Kenya National Assembly Hansard Reports, 1969–1975; Interview with former political detainee, Nairobi, May 2025.

created a climate of fear and entrenched the personalization of power, where loyalty to the presidency became a tool for survival, while dissent carried fatal risks.⁴¹⁵

This policy of eradicating or silencing dissidents continued into the Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002) years when some of the eminent people too died mysterious deaths. One of them was Dr. Robert Ouko (Luo), the Foreign Affairs Minister of Kenya who was kidnapped and killed in 1990 in an incident that incriminated senior government officials. Owiti Ogili (Luo) was an ex-assistant minister killed in 1992 in what was reportedly a suicide case, but most people did not believe the account.⁴¹⁶ Otieno Ambala (Luo) was killed in 1988 following political backlash with the government and Hezekiah Oyugi (Luo), who was Permanent Secretary in charge of Internal Security, was killed in 1992 during an investigation of Ouko murder. Bishop Alexander Kipsang Muge (Kalenjin) who was a bitter opponent of the Moi government and a proponent of social justice was killed in a mysterious road accident in 1990 only a few days after he ignored warnings given him by the state not to go to Busia. Masinde Muliro, a main opposition figure, including the founding member of FORD, failed to get his flight and collapsed and died at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in 1992, soon after visiting London, a factor that raised speculation of poisoning, especially since the Luhya community.⁴¹⁷ Equally, Titus Adungosi, a student leader at the University of Nairobi and a member of the Kenya African Socialist Alliance was killed in 1987 in a prison sentence of 10 years on charges of sedition, allegedly because of medical neglect.

⁴¹⁵KNA/SEC/1969/03.

⁴¹⁶ Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 145.

⁴¹⁷Murunga, Godwin R., and Shadrack W. Nasong'o. *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 92.

Also in the same era, there was the prevalence of detention without trial as a way of silencing opposition leaders, intellectuals, students and journalists. The Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch archives record incarceration and torture of such figures as Raila Odinga, Charles Rubia, Kenneth Matiba, and Martin Shikuku who were detained and imprisoned multiple times and were subjected to inhuman conditions. The government used the Public Security Act and the state of emergency to confine individuals on lengthy periods without charges and in most cases in Nyayo House torture chambers as confirmed by both the court testimonies and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) evidence. These actions indicate the systematic denial of civil liberties and show how the postcolonial state of Kenya has used the legal and extrajudicial means to entrench the authoritarian regime, as well as repress pro-democracy activists.⁴¹⁸

A critical voice of the government such as Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was intimidated in his political life. First, Kenyatta tried to gag him by making him Chief Whip (1968-1969) and then by making him the Assistant Minister in the Office of the President in the year 1969. Nevertheless, Shikuku was still able to voice the concerns of the masses. His decision to simplify the process of communication among the backbenchers and the executive was one of his most remarkable hits as Chief Whip, which ensured that the parliamentary debates were always informed by realities affecting common Kenyan people. He also helped to ensure that the MPs are held to their legislative responsibilities and also demanded that younger voices should be incorporated in the processes of parliament- a very unpopular approach in the political conformity era.⁴¹⁹ He was ousted by the government in 1974 but

⁴¹⁸KNA/HR/1990/07.

⁴¹⁹Peter Omurung, Oral Interview in Irechea, on 4/01/2025

continued to be a vocal backbench rebel who continued to press forward with his demands of transparency, democracy and safeguarding civil rights.

His most dramatic, though, was on October 5, 1975, when he was arrested after he challenged the state to adopt the report on the assassination of the reform-minded and charismatic Nyandarua North MP, J.M. Kariuki.⁴²⁰ Shikuku and Kariuki were not only close political partners but also close ideological siblings as they both cared about the plight of an ordinary Kenyan. Both of them were born out of lowly backgrounds and were pursuing populist agendas, which made them have a significant following among the young and the working masses of Kenya. They were close friends who were known to have meetings outside the parliamentary sessions where they sat down and strategized on how to deal with corruption, inequality and repression by the state.

Their relationship could be seen through their unapologetic criticism of the post-independence elite who according to their interpretation, had sold off the spirit of the liberation struggle.⁴²¹ The case of the mysterious and brutal murder of Kariuki in the forest of Ngong in March 1975 affected, Shikuku made a strong stance at the parliamentary meeting, which discusses the investigative report about the murder. In the intense discussion, he stood up to declare, KANU dead, a speech that was very bold and symbolic, and was a condemnation of moral degradation of the ruling party. He was backed up by his own Deputy Speaker Jean-Marie Seroney who insisted that the remark was not subject to substantiation-

⁴²⁰Njoroge, Ruth, Peter Waweru, and Tom Nyamache. *J.M. Kariuki: A historical Potrait of a Kenyan Politician*. LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012., p.67.

⁴²¹Ayittey, George BN. "Post-independence African scholars and the second liberation struggle." In *African Scholars and Intellectuals in North American Academies*, pp. 153-169. Routledge, 2020., p.93.

-a move that went against parliamentary tradition and infuriated the executive.⁴²² They were detained brutally in the year 1975. Both Shikuku and Seroney were arrested and detained indefinitely by the Preservation of Public Security Act. It was the start of a long phase of political repression on the part of Shikuku however, it was also the start of the reputation of a fearless champion of justice and transparency. His activities in this time established his place as one of the most principled opposition figures in Kenya and his friendship with J.M. Kariuki as a heartrending reminder of a bygone age of idealistic and people-centered politics. One of the main informants, Peter Omurunga Oyondi of Butere Sub-County, Ebukhokoro Village, narrated what happened to cause the detention of Shikuku:

The murder of Josiah Mwangi Kariuki in Parliament was a case that Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was making contributions on in October 1975. Shikuku was challenged by Clement Lubembe (MP of Shinyalu). Shikuku stood up and remarked, you would kill this movement in the same manner KANU was killed. Lubembe had a point of order which Shikuku ought to prove. Then followed the celebrated rejoinder, of Jean-Marie Seroney, occupying the place of Speaker: There is no necessity to prove the evident.⁴²³

This utterance resulted in their arrest. According to reports by The Standard Newspaper (November 22, 2015), on October 15, 1975, a large number of police personnel surrounded Parliament. Speaker Fred Mati defied warnings by MPs against the strange deployment. The session concluded at 6.30 pm, but Shikuku was arrested in the Members Room afterwards, where he was spotted waving to his colleagues and was then driven off. Peter Omurunga indicates that Shikuku was afraid he would get killed in Ngong Forest, as J.M. Kariuki did. Nevertheless, he was rather assigned to the maximum-security detention in four institutions,

⁴²²Musila, Grace A. *A death retold in truth and rumour: Kenya, Britain and the Julie Ward murder*. Vol. 2. Boydell & Brewer, 2015., p.74.

⁴²³Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral interview in Irechea on 4/1/2025.

Manyani, Kamiti, Shimo la Tewa, and Naivasha. Arrest was supposed to ruin an individual physically, psychologically and economically. The prisoners were used to live in solitude and their cells were often dark and with constant lighting, which had an adverse effect on their vision. Books, letters, visits were not given to them. Food was forced through a tiny orifice such as feeding a dog. A large number of them emerged out of detention poor and defeated.⁴²⁴ Archival records corroborate these harsh conditions, documenting how political detainees suffered psychological and physical torment.⁴²⁵ Amnesty International reports from the 1970s highlight how Kenya's detention system was designed to break political dissidents.

As a scholar, it is evident that Daniel Moi made a tactical move in the years 1978 when he decided to release Shikuku and other political prisoners as a political consolidation move and not a democratic ideology change. Moi, who assumed power following the death of Kenyatta, aimed at creating a more conciliatory and tolerant image and reduced the tensions, which had accumulated throughout the last years of the reign of Kenyatta. The release of Shikuku was a symbolic gesture to win the goodwill of the people and the country was a divided nation that had to be brought together. Nevertheless, the history of archives indicates that this liberalization was not to last long and Moi returned to repressive methods when his power was put to the test.⁴²⁶

Shikuku, on his release, has gone to seek medical attention in a foreign country because of his ill health. He later on regained his seat in the parliament in Butere in 1979 after being

⁴²⁴Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral interview in Irechea on 4/1/2025.

⁴²⁵KNA/DET/1975/08.

⁴²⁶FGD held at Butere Lower Market on 1/2/2025

defeated by Opembe Eshikhati, an appointee of the Kenyatta administration. When the demand of multiparty democracy continued to heighten in 1991, Shikuku was again arrested on November 14-16 along with Oginga Odinga, Gitobu Imanyara, Pius Masinde Muliro, Paul Muite, advocate Japheth Shamalla, and James Orengo. They had planned the pro-democracy rally at Kamukunji Grounds which the government had banned.



Plate 5: Martin Shikuku and other opposition leaders marching to Kamukunji grounds

Source⁴²⁷

All the detainees were transported to their respective home districts using a Helicopter.

Shikuku was imprisoned in Kakamega, where he faced charges according to the Public Order Act, because of publishing an illegal meeting. One of the political agitators at Kakamega recollected:

This was an arrest that was supposed to make them shut up, but failed. The government was underestimating the will of the people to democracy. The case was dismissed since Moi had no choice, but to embrace multipartyism..⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷<https://web.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2160979524043408&set=a.1010999705708068>

⁴²⁸Robert Makambo, Oral interview, in Kakamega, on 15/2/2025.

Historical documents affirm that the pressure exerted by the global community compelled the government of Moi to back down on arresting the opposition leaders.⁴²⁹ The case against Shikuku and his counterparts eventually collapsed and it was a revolution in the transition of Kenya to multiparty democracy.

The threat, arrest and killing of political leaders underscores the oppressive post-independence leadership in Kenya. Those leaders who insisted on democracy such as Shikuku were confronted systematically by being arrested, harassed and imprisoned. The Pluralist Theory of Government is focused on the significance of different political voices in the governance process, but in Kenya the leadership has traditionally tried to suppress the voice of dissent.



Plate 6: A frail Martin Shikuku leaves detention on crutches on his release following the death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978

*Source*⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹KNA/POL/1991/11

⁴³⁰https://nation.africa/kenya/life-and-style/dn2/mps-hit-by-executive-crackdown-889982#google_vignette

The fact that Shikuku stood up to the political oppression highlights the sacrifices that were made on Kenyan democratic achievements. The events he underwent are a part of a larger battle that saw political leaders who opposed rulers with authoritarian rule being put into prisons, exiled, or assassinated. The severe measures he arrived at in jail explain how the government utilized incarceration as a mechanism of undermining the members of the opposition not only physically but also economically. Shikuku was still involved in the politics even with repression and he was central to the shift to multiparty democracy. His legacy is a hymn to the strength of political tenacity, and the necessity to always be on guard against the excesses of the government.

Finally, the Kenyan state resorted to political assassinations, intimidation and imprisonment as the means of political control. The fact that Shikuku survived and went ahead to continue his activism in spite of it establishes him in Democratic history of Kenya. His political justice remains a source of hope to new generations of leaders and activists who support the principles of transparency and accountability as well as the reform of the system.

4.6 Economic Development

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was a man of integrity who believed that the central government was the sole entity that would be responsible in the national economic development and not the individual Members of Parliament (MPs). He always stressed that MPs were not agents of development, but it is their mandate to represent their constituents, express their needs, and check the executive. This perception became most eminent when he became one of the most vocal figures on how economic mismanagement and corruption was perpetrated in government during Parliamentary budget debates in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Shikuku condemned the misappropriation of government funds by senior government officials mentioning them as tumbocrats—a word that he coined to refer to corrupt members of the bureaucracy who were robbing the citizens without considering the plight of common men.⁴³¹ Shikuku said on June 17, 1975, in the Hansard:

Such government is stuffed with tumbocrats who stuff their guts as wananchi queue to get sugar and cooking oil. What is there in a budget that makes the few fat and the rest of us skinny?⁴³²

He questioned the increasing prices of the basic commodities such as maize flour, kerosene, and sugar, saying that the state subsidies were either being channeled out of line or stolen off. His criticism went as far as the government procurement where he accused the ministers of collusion with the foreign firms to overcharge their contracts at the cost of national priorities.

During the 1982 budgetary session, Shikuku moved against the government on its economic priorities in which he complained that the administration had been spending heavily on military and administrative build-up at the expense of rural infrastructure, education and healthcare. He underlined that parliamentarians must not be turned into mere beggars in their constituencies, when it comes to seeking development money at the hands of ministers who embezzled government treasuries.⁴³³ His arguments even predicted the subsequent emergence of Constituency Development Funds (CDF) a model which he would have probably excoriated as failing in centralized planning.

⁴³¹Kenya National Assembly Hansard, 17 June 1975, p. 2312.

⁴³²Ibid

⁴³³Kenya National Assembly Hansard, 23 June 1982, p. 1784; Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 101–102.

In his philosophy on economic justice, Shikuku relied on structural reform and parliamentary accountability. He felt that without being able to hold the executive accountable to the way in which national resources were raised and distributed Kenya would continue to languish in the rut of elite enrichment and mass impoverishment. His economic agenda conformed well to his political philosophy, in general: a democratic, anti-corruption, and pro-equity vision of government.

One of the respondents remembered that Shikuku was an un-fearing protector of the ordinary mwananchi(citizen). On one occasion when the government intended to raise the price of unga following a budget reading he opposed it and the government had no other option but to rethink the decision.⁴³⁴ This view aligns with archival records from the National Assembly Hansard Reports, which document his parliamentary debates on budget allocations and taxation.⁴³⁵

Western Kenya played a major role in agricultural raw material like coffee, tobacco and cotton. Nevertheless, the government is said to have bribed a number of the Luhya MPs to discourage them to support industrial growth in the area. Shikuku was greatly against this practice and opposed the setting up of industries in Nakuru and Thika at the peril of Western Kenya which was also a major producer of raw materials. This persistence saw him establish Kisumu Cotton Mills (KICOMI) so that the locally produced cotton could be processed locally. A FGD perceived that; Shikuku opposed economic marginalization. The factories would be established in other places, but to him, it did not make sense to have the raw materials being located elsewhere when we had them in our land. This point of view is

⁴³⁴John Wanyama, Oral Interview in Butere, 14 February, 2024.

⁴³⁵NA/EC/1974

consistent with secondary sources, including Munyando A., who said that the industrial policy in post-independent Kenya was usually biased toward benefiting some regions at the expense of others.⁴³⁶

The reason why Shikuku was against industrial discrimination was based on his pluralism that is one of the major tenets of the Pluralist Theory of Government claiming that power should be shared between several groups, as opposed to a few individuals holding power. This principle was evident in his advocacy since he opposed a centralized model of industrial development and advocated economic fairness among all communities. Archival sources at the ministry of commerce and industry have shown his word in Parliament where he made deplorable comments about tribalism in the investment of industries.⁴³⁷

Shikuku joined the extreme parliamentarians in the 1979-1983 Parliament, titled; The Seven Bearded Sisters, which comprised; Chelagat Mutai, Mwashengu wa Mwachofi, Lawrence Sifuna, Abuya Abuya, Koigi wa Wamwere, Dr. Chibule wa Tsuma and James Orengo. One of the interviewees stated that; Shikuku belonged to a vocal group in the Parliament that was fighting the rights of the ordinary Kenyans, shouting against the economic injustices. This opposition to government economic policies is already in history where Gertzel C., examined the impact that opposition politics had on the economic policies of Kenya in the 1980s.⁴³⁸

Among the issues that Shikuku was extremely concerned about was over-taxation which according to him had been the case since Kenya got independence. He strongly opposed

⁴³⁶Munyendo, Adah. "The relationship between politics and economic development: a case study of Kenya since the introduction of multiparty politics (1992-2008)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, Kenya, 2010., p.93.

⁴³⁷MCI/IND/1980.

⁴³⁸Gertzel, Cherry J. "[BOOK REVIEW] Uganda, an annotated bibliography of source materials (with particular reference to the period since 1971 and up to 1988)." *African Studies Review* 36 (1993): 155-156., p.163.

taxation of livestock and houses and said that collection of revenue should be done on a basis of trade and not on a blanket basis. Another respondent highlighted that; Shikuku was not in favor of unfair taxation. He believed that individuals could only be taxed on what they made as opposed to what they possessed. This is the argument that can be echoed by the greater discussion of economic justice as expressed in Hornsby J., who discussed how the Kenya taxation system was structurally unequal.⁴³⁹

The need of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) amongst the Kenyan legislators was necessitated by the mounting pressure by the electorate to achieve visible and instant development results by their constituency members. Motions in Parliament that suggested the distribution of development funds to parliamentary constituencies were made as early as 1974 by Isiolo North MP Mohamed Abdul Kadir. The most formidable supporters of this motion were Joseph Martin Shikuku who thought that decentralization of development funds would not only enhance equity but also, curb the tendency of the MPs to rely on the Executive when implementing projects.⁴⁴⁰ Shikuku insisted that the MPs should be allowed to contribute more in the local development planning as this would make them more accountable and responsive to the needs of the grassroots. Even though the movement did not lead to the instant alteration of the laws, it sowed the seeds of the subsequent reforms. Almost 30 years later, the concept was formalized under the administration of President Mwai Kibaki when the CDF Act of 2003 was passed and the official inception of the CDF model in Kenya was seen. The fund aimed to enhance the development gap at the constituency level whereby a part of the national revenue flow was passed down to the MPs

⁴³⁹Hornsby, Jennifer. "Actions and activity." *Philosophical issues* 22 (2012): 233-245., p.239.

⁴⁴⁰Kenya National Assembly Hansard, July 1974; Gikonyo, Wanjiru. *The CDF Social Audit Guide: A Handbook for Communities* (Nairobi: Open Society Initiative for East Africa, 2008), 5.

where they could execute projects expected to be in form of classroom, clinics, roads, and system of water supply. This early championing by Shikuku in 1970s is therefore an important ideological antecedent of institutionalization of localized development financing. In his comments to parliament, a transcript of which is published in *Memoir NGCDF Two Decades of Progress of 2022*, he wrote:

Some of us, of course, who believe in practicability would feel as though the time had come when we need to ask ourselves whether centralization is actually doing the job. The issue here is that at the headquarters in Nairobi, there is so much work that these people here have no time to implement even what this House has voted; and the consequence is that some of the money--even money which is planned to be used in the development--is sent back to the treasury because the people here had no time to implement even what this House voted... Were we not due this executive power decentralization to the point of handing money to the people in the provincial level so that they might initiate the development at that level instead of waiting until they had sat down in the District Development Committee and sent whatever they found to the Provincial Development Committee which would send the same to Nairobi?⁴⁴¹

FGD participant remarked that, Shikuku was ahead of his time. He saw the need for decentralization long before the CDF was established.⁴⁴² This aligns with Oyugi M., who analyzed the history of decentralized funding in Kenya and the role of early campaigners like Shikuku.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹Memoir NGCDF Two Decades of Progress, 2022.

⁴⁴²Focus Group Discussion held in Butere, 1st February 2024.

⁴⁴³Oyugi, Maurice Onyango. "Towards sustainable shelter provision in Africa: Kenyan experience." *Discovery and innovation* 17, no. 1/2 (2005): 27-53., p.34.

Although Shikuku expressed himself vehemently on the issues of economic development, his work in Butere Constituency was mostly theoretical and not practical. His development of Butere was national in nature and he frequently got involved in debates without any actual projects in his hometown. One of the respondents noted that Shikuku was a good speaker and a bright thinker but Butere did not see much as regards straight development. His influence on the women voters was remarkable, he made them believe that the building of the tarmac roads in the villages would result in more accidents since the vehicles will be moving at very high velocities. This gave rise to the widespread saying amongst the women, Mwana wa Oyondi uboye (the son of Oyondi has said). His strategy consisted primarily of benchmarking, the researcher studied different models of development and presented his results in Parliament instead of introducing his projects directly in his locality. He therefore influenced a lot of his ideas, which other politicians used in their constituencies. The records of the Butere Constituency Development Reports depict minimal development projects that are directly associated with the leadership of Shikuku regarding the extending of the town of Butere, tarmacking of a road, building of school and health care centers.⁴⁴⁴

The style of politics that Shikuku embraced, which was characterized by eloquence and great rhetoric, saw him being labeled as Parrot since he was one who would argue vehemently but never actually work on direct execution. One of the respondents said that Shikuku was a wordsmith yet as far as economic development was concerned, he did not do much in Butere.⁴⁴⁵ Nasong'o claim that such leaders as Shikuku were instrumental in the development

⁴⁴⁴BCD/1985.

⁴⁴⁵Calson Atenya, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 18th December 2024.

of the economic discourse of Kenya but could not often turn their advocacy into the action on the grassroots.

In the view of the Pluralist Theory of Government, the idea of decentralization, equal taxation, and industrial equity that Shikuku advocated made him a leader of power redistribution. But the fact that he has failed to bring development to the constituency level indicates one of the shortcomings to the pluralist politics where advocacy might not necessarily translate into a tangible and immediate payoff to the constituents. His contribution to the national economic debates is however important in the political history of Kenya.

4.7 Education

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was a firm believer in formal education especially among the needy students in his constituency. His faith in education was based on the fact that he believed that an enlightened community was in a better position to accept political pluralism. Shikuku suggested the systematic nature of the placement of students in secondary schools, according to him students should be placed in institutions according to their subject performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) as this would match their career potential. One of the respondents said, Shikuku used to believe that those students who excelled in Mathematics and Science would be taken to institutions that would develop them into technical and scientific professionals.⁴⁴⁶ This point of view demonstrates his belief in the educational planning as a national development instrument.

⁴⁴⁶Makambo Robert, Oral Interview in Butere, on 15th December 2024.

Even though free education was not to be actualised until several years later, according to the archives, Shikuku had already thought of the idea but had not been in an executive capacity to carry out the idea. In 1970, he put forward controversial ideas in Parliament regarding how revenue generation could be used to finance education. He proposed levying of miniskirts and alcohol to increase the education budget. His parliamentary statements are recorded in the archives of the National Assembly Hansard Reports where he said:

I believe that it is the time to make all women who wear miniskirt pay an additional tax of Sh5. By doing so we shall be in a position to earn some money... This country should educate its future generation even at the expense of taxing the devil.⁴⁴⁷

Moreover, one of the respondents said, Shikuku was a man of his age. He was of the firm opinion that government had the role to play in helping bright but needy children but he did not have the political might to bring about free education.⁴⁴⁸

This is in line with Ochieng W and Robert M. who opined that the early post-independence legislators saw the need to have free education but because of the budget constraints and political opposition, the implementation of the policy was not possible.⁴⁴⁹

In addition to the formal education, Shikuku was an excellent orator, a role which helped him to inform his constituents about the political issues. He could dismantle parliamentary laws and policies by his subjects because he was fluent in English, Kiswahili, and the Luhya language. He would also hold meetings with the people after legislative sessions so that he could translate and interpret new legislations in a language that his constituents could

⁴⁴⁷NA/EDU/1970.

⁴⁴⁸Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Mumias, 6th January 2025.

⁴⁴⁹Ochieng, William Robert, and Robert M. Maxon, eds. *An economic history of Kenya*. East African Publishers, 1992., p.45.

understand easily. One of the respondents would remember that after each sitting of the parliament, Shikuku would summon the villages to clarify new laws and the implication in language that even the illiterate ones could understand. This is in line with Nasong S.W., who mentions that political awareness amongst the marginalized communities was commonly instigated by leaders who assumed the initiative to educate their populace in other means than education systems.⁴⁵⁰

Educating voters is a major activity that Shikuku was involved in by the time the election years came about; complementing activities of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). He also educated his constituents on the ways of voting properly and the need to vote intelligently. His strategy was especially successful with women whom he hoped would diffuse his teachings to those not attending political meetings. In his political education process, one of the respondents noted that Shikuku was strategic in targeting women as women would be able to influence other people in the community. This is in line with Oyugi W. who emphasizes on the importance of grassroots political mobilization in determining voter behavior.⁴⁵¹ Shikuku was among the most compelling politicians in Kenya who mastered the art of speaking in front of the crowd. In campaigns, he used to entertain and entertain crowds through humor and satire and in most cases, would, through his own humor, satirize his opponents in terms of height or mannerisms. His authority in Western Kenya was as great as that of Peter Kibisu, Francis Obongita and Masinde Muliro. One scholar remarked,

There was no one who could match Shikuku in oratory. He lived on political platforms as fish on water. He would show his points with

⁴⁵⁰Nasong'o, Shadrack Wanjala. "Political transition without transformation: The dialectic of liberalization without democratization in Kenya and Zambia." *African Studies Review* 50, no. 1 (2007): 83-107., p.87.

⁴⁵¹Oyugi, Walter O. "Coalition politics and coalition governments in Africa." *Journal of contemporary African studies* 24, no. 1 (2006): 53-79., p.57.

the help of sticks (ebisala) which is a very traditional practice in the Luhya tradition.⁴⁵²

The speeches and comments of the Western Kenya Political Campaigns Records preserved by the archives reveal him employing the traditional way of negotiation and throwing down sticks after a point with the characteristic style of inviting an answer.⁴⁵³ Shikuku equally advised his constituents to look outside Butere and especially in acquisition of land. He was encouraging them to buy the land in the Trans-Nzoia County since there were many people in Butere. But there were numerous ones who opposed the notion and wanted to stay on ancestral land. One respondent noted,

Shikuku encouraged people of Butere to purchase land in Trans-Nzoia but they hesitated. He was a leader who led by example as he did not go out seizing the land of his neighbors but he bought it himself.⁴⁵⁴

This is in line with E sese D.P.L. who writes of the issues of the land redistribution and settlement in post-colonial Kenya, especially the legacies of the colonial ownership patterns of land and the inability of the post-independent state to resettle landless citizens equitably. E sese states that, instead of addressing the past wrongs, political favors, ethnic favors, and the capture of land reform programs by the elite hindered the initiatives to right the historical wrongs. In his analysis, redistribution of land served as an instrument of accumulating political endorsement as opposed to creating socioeconomic justice which then caused massive disappointment among the underprivileged communities who had expected significant reforms after independence.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵²Sharald Madanji, Oral Interview in Nairobi, on 3rd February 2025.

⁴⁵³WK/PC/1982.

⁴⁵⁴Peter Omurunga, Oral Interview in Butere, on 4/1/ 2025.

⁴⁵⁵E sese, Danson P. Lumumba. *The changing system of land ownership and its socio-economic effects in Lugari Division, western province of Kenya, c. 1880-2000*. Michigan State University, 2009., p.73.

In a Pluralist Theory of Government, Shikuku was exercising his views about an informed and politically mindful citizenry in his educational endeavors. The use of decentralization of knowledge and empowerment of electorate can be found in his positions in favor of systematic student placement, free education and voter education. But as influential as he was, his suggestions like taxing to fund education were not welcomed, and it shows the intricacies of applying the pluralistic concepts in a centralized system of governance.

4.8 Effects of Corruption

The family of Oyondi was not pleasant to those who are corrupt, as one of the respondents commented, and the values instilled in the family by generations determined the political beliefs of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. His experience as a growing boy instilled in him a high degree of integrity which is supported with a strong sense of education. Truth was a pillar in the political career of Shikuku, which made him a maverick politician.

In 1967, amendments put forward in the Prevention of Corruption Act generated controversy as to what should be considered a gift. Shikuku claimed that the leaders of the people ought to accept no gifts whatsoever since even the best intentions by giving a gift might affect the decision. To demonstrate this, he said, that, when two individuals sought a loan, one of them had already given a bribe to a government servant, he would be more likely to be approved the loan. Shikuku claimed that abolishing gift-giving amongst the people in office was very instrumental in the administration of justice. His contribution in parliament on this issue is recorded in archives where he said:

A bribe need not be necessarily instantaneous. What may be a gesture of generosity to-day, may be an unofficial duty to-morrow.⁴⁵⁶

His interests are similar to Kanyinga K., who states that corruption in Kenya tends to be covert, including patronage networks and favors that are returned, and it is hard to enact laws against it.⁴⁵⁷

In 1971, the Ndegwa Commission Report pointed out some problems with respect to the structure of the public services and their remuneration. It covered the matters like the civil service responsibilities, ethics, grading and salaries, other terms of service, civil service structure and management training, education and teaching service and local government.⁴⁵⁸

Shikuku was a critic of 1971 Ndegwa Commission Report that allowed civil servants to do private business. He said that this policy was institutionalizing corruption since it allowed the government players to misuse state resources to enrich themselves. One respondent noted,

Shikuku considered the Ndegwa Commission to be the pillar of contemporary corruption in Kenya. He felt that it was indifferent to the distinction between the service of the people and personal profit.⁴⁵⁹

Notably, The Ndegwa Commission Report published in 1971 was the first significant report to be commissioned in Kenya to investigate into the structure and management of the public service. The then Governor of the Central Bank, Duncan Ndegwa, chaired a controversial commission that recommended that the civil servants be given the freedom to engage in private business activities. People criticized this as a dangerous precedent, whereas the report

⁴⁵⁶Hansard Reports, File No. NA/COR/1967.

⁴⁵⁷Kanyinga, Karuti. "Devolution and the new politics of development in Kenya." *African Studies Review* 59, no. 3 (2016): 155-167., p.162.

⁴⁵⁸ Report of the Commission of Inquiry, *Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission*, May 1971, pp. 1-400

⁴⁵⁹Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/ 2024.

put this policy in perspective as a way of promoting national development and economic empowerment.⁴⁶⁰ Shikuku claimed that the advice fused the boundaries of the public service and the interest of the people, and gave the public officials a chance to misuse the office to benefit their own financial interests.⁴⁶¹ To him, this institutionalized the merger between state resources and individual venture therefore forming the foundation of what would come to be entrenched institutionalized corruption in Kenya. He was afraid allowing civil servants to operate businesses under the office would destroy accountability, undermine transparency and eventually, taint the integrity of business operations in the government. His widespread ideological practice of clean government and honest leadership was implied by his higher denunciation of the report.

Consequently, it should be mentioned that, Martin Shikuku was among the loudest critics of Ndegwa Commission Report of 1971 that controversially suggested that the civil servants be permitted to conduct a business privately. He was not the only person to condemn the report though. When Shikuku protested in Parliament that the public should be allowed to employ their office as long as they have their own business, he claimed that it would entrench corruption and lack of ethics in serving the people and increase inequality.⁴⁶² He cautioned that one could not build a nation on the two occupations that were on the public and the private by the same individual on greed. Likewise, J.M. Kariuki denounced the report and

⁴⁶⁰ Maphaka, Dominic. "An Examination of Mugabe's Look East Policy, 2003-2017: An Afrocentric Perspective." Master's thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2024., p.60.

⁴⁶¹ Maloba, W. O., and W. O. Maloba. "Toward the End: Corruption, the Family, and Struggles for Succession." *The Anatomy of Neo-Colonialism in Kenya: British Imperialism and Kenyatta, 1963–1978* (2017): 215-303., p.223.

⁴⁶²Kenya National Assembly Hansard, July 1972; Murunga, Godwin R., and Shadrack W. Nasong'o. *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 89–91.

stated that it will make a few elites rich and will marginalize the masses in foreseeable results of a Kenya with ten millionaires and ten million beggars. Jean-Marie Seroney also condemned the report and said that it was the beginning of a comprador bourgeoisie who will take state offices to enrich themselves. Bildad Kaggia, a former Mau Mau combatant, interpreted the suggestions as betrayal of the struggle of independence saying that it increased social disparity and benefited those who had access to power. The Objections were echoed by earlier criticisms of capitalist penetration of post-independence governance by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga though they were already politically marginal at the time. Their combination all signified a deeper ideological divide between leaders who believed in redistribution that was equitable and those who believed in accumulation of the elite. The Ndegwa Report had consequently turned into an icon of the increasing gap between the rhetoric and actual practice of development in the state as an economic favorite.

Other than policy criticisms, Shikuku was in a position to denounce the evolving life of the post independence politicians, who focused on amassing wealth more than serving. According to the archives, at one parliamentary session, he mentioned a conversation between President Kenyatta and Bildad Kaggia, in which Kenyatta is quoted saying: So and so has this, Mr. X has that, you, you have nothing.⁴⁶³ The fact that Shikuku invokes the Kenyatta-Kaggia exchange does not just have anecdotal worth as a researcher but it is a brilliant criticism of how the post-independence leadership was disgraced through moral disregard. By this moment, he meant not just to point out the hypocrisy of individuals, but to reveal the new culture of politics in which material wealth was a measure of credibility in a leader. To Shikuku, the remaking of the liberation heroes into the elites who are self-serving

⁴⁶³Hansard Reports, File No. NA/COR/1971.

was a tragic twist on the ideals of the independence movement that had inspired Kenya. Through this exchange, he was indicating the ideological shift towards nationalist sacrifice to individual aggrandizement and he felt that this shift undermined the confidence of people and further created social imbalances. His criticism was not only a moral indemnity but also a political warning- that until there was integrity and accountability in Kenya, the Kenyan democratic project was essentially undermined.

As Shikuku notes, this materialism was the bane of corruption as politicians tried to get rich at the altar of serving people. Nasong'o S.W. among others share a similar concern asserting that there was a transition to an elitist accumulation in post independence Kenya which increased economic inequality.⁴⁶⁴

Corruption was aggravated during the rule of President Moi. Moi had a philosophy of development that in many instances equated to displaying wealth and thus forcing politicians to get involved in corrupt transactions to fund the visibly sponsored projects. One FGD participant noted,

Being an MP during the era of Moi meant money to distribute. Were you not useless, you would have lacked it.

This view is congruent to the counter argument of Kanyinga K., who claims that Moi centralized the practice of corruption through institutionalizing patronage as a condition of survival in politics.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴Nasong'o S.W. (2007). *Op. Cit.*, p.78.

⁴⁶⁵Kanyinga, Karuti, (2016)., *Op. Cit.*, p.165.

Shikuku tried to combat corruption and in 1971, he proposed a parliamentary anti corruption work group. The project, however, did not succeed since most of the MPs were afraid of being exposed. He was also one of the first of his kind to announce his money publicly and challenge others to do the same. We have archival records of his speech: When we are indeed serving the people, let us show them how we got our richness.⁴⁶⁶ The fearless Shikuku was observed by one of the respondents. The reason was that he made it known he was rich so that they could ascertain that there was nothing to hide but other MPs opposed this as they were afraid. In 1971, Shikuku suggested to the parliament the creation of an anti-corruption committee in the parliament, a radical step that had never been made before in a political context that was becoming more and more shrouded in secrecy and patronage. His open display of riches a political frankness unprecedented in his time was a direct attack on the emerging impunity culture of legislators. According to the archives, Shikuku was convinced that leadership should initiate integrity and he called upon his fellow leadership to do the same.⁴⁶⁷ The majority of the MPs, however, opposed the motion and were afraid of their people questioning them on how they had amassed wealth very fast after independence. His campaigns highlighted one of his fundamental principles in his politics that moral leadership and accountability to the people were fundamental in the democracies.

Shikuku resumed his anti-corruption campaign after getting out of the detention. His most famous quote is, "Corruption can only be effectively reeled by Parliament, or, in other words, they needed to legislative reforms in order to enforce transparency. But the Parliament was not ready to enact anti-corruption legislation because most MPs had dubious financial

⁴⁶⁶Hansard Reports, File No. NA/COR/1971.

⁴⁶⁷Kenya National Assembly Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, March 1971, p. 1423.

transactions. This is indicative of the argument by Ochieng W and Robert M., that the legislative system of Kenya has always been opposed to the anti-corruption reforms because the political elites are trying to protect themselves.⁴⁶⁸

In 1991, Shikuku was the FORD Secretary-General when he cautioned voters against electing leaders who had increased their wealth under Kenyatta and Moi. He supported the idea of wealth statements and fines on corrupt officials. Shikuku informed us that we were never going to change as long as we continued to elect thieves, and this is one of the things the FGD member remembered. This is echoed in his opinions by Oyugi W.O., who outlines how political recycling of corrupt leaders has been a problem to governance reforms in Kenya.⁴⁶⁹

He was so committed to transparency to the point of election campaigns. Other politicians use handouts to secure votes but unlike many he did not use such tactics, he kept handouts away and demanded votes through his ideology and not through bribes. Shikuku never purchased votes and, because of it, one of the respondents noticed that he never owed anybody anything. He never served without a clear conscience.⁴⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the anti-corruption attitude of the Shikuku and his vocal anti-authoritarianism stance led to him being a victim of politics. During the 1988 general elections, he was cheated off the Butere seat of parliament by massive ballot stuffing, bribery and the notorious mlolongo (queue voting) system. Between the Electoral Commission of Kenya records and

⁴⁶⁸ Ochieng, William Robert, and Robert M. Maxon, eds. *An economic history of Kenya*. East African Publishers, 1992.

⁴⁶⁹ Oyugi, Walter O. "Politicized ethnic conflict in Kenya: A periodic phenomenon." *African Conflicts: Their Management, Resolution, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Addis Ababa: DPMF/OSSREA (2000).

⁴⁷⁰ Peter Omurunga, Oral Interview in Butere, on 4/1/2025.

current press articles, it is evident that there were gross irregularities in his constituency. Moses Mudamba Mudavadi, a former senior cabinet minister, power broker in Western Kenya, KANU, is largely thought to have been behind-the-scenes in sabotaging the campaign of Shikuku. Even though there was no official account to hold Mudavadi guilty, verbal accounts and political analysis indicate that he used his influence in the provincial government to ensure regime supporters were selected in office, and also silenced critics such as Shikuku, using political positions.⁴⁷¹ Shikuku did not only suffer a political loss by being barred out of Parliament but also demonstrated how the Moi government had used the same tactic of silencing dissenting voices by manipulating elections and using the executive to suppress them.⁴⁷²

The most debatable moment of his career was the controversy of the ugali incident of 1992 when he was called to State House by the President Moi. This aroused doubts that he betrayed the opposition. He retaliated by explaining himself, saying that he was used to meeting Moi, and there was nothing wrong with him inviting me to dine on ugali. His assertion is in line with the Mutua M., argument that Kenyan opposition politics have in most cases been marred with distrust and internal differences.⁴⁷³

According to Pluralist Theory of Government, the anti-corruption campaign by Shikuku showed that he believed in open government and equal political access. He was against policies that promoted the elite culture, instead demanding that the rich be responsible and the people included in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, it was so frequently

⁴⁷¹*Weekly Review, "KANU Power Brokers and Western Kenya Politics,"* April 1988.

⁴⁷²ECK/1988.

⁴⁷³Mutua, Makau W. "The International Criminal Court in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities." Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre NOREF Working Paper, September (2010): 2011-003.

thwarted by the old patronage networks that it is possible to see how hard it is to apply pluralist ideals to a political system in which vested interests are dominant. The legacy of Shikuku as the President of the Poor was based on his struggle against corruption, which he held as the main source of poverty and inequality. One of the FGD respondents concluded,

Shikuku was of the opinion that corruption was even worse than the colonial rule. The British at least developed infrastructure, but the leaders of our country simply looted everything.⁴⁷⁴

This sentiment aligns with Wanyama *et al.*, who argues that post-independence corruption has stifled economic progress and deepened social inequalities.⁴⁷⁵ Finally, the political life of Shikuku highlights the challenge of fighting corruption in the system where the elite gathers power. His bribery opposition, support of wealth statements and crony capitalism made him a real hero of integrity. Yet, as history has demonstrated, institutional change cannot be achieved by the single efforts of individuals, but on the one hand, the system needs alterations, and on the other hand, the political will.

4.9 Legacy and Continuing Influence

The works of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in politics of Kenya are still relevant in the modern political discourse. He remained true to his ideas of democracy, social justice, and right-based leadership, which has continued to influence the younger generations and political activists. The need to write on his legacy was stressed by the respondents in various locations so that the future generations will not ignore his contribution in the history of democracy in Kenya. A Mulambo political analyst remarked:

⁴⁷⁴FGD held in Kakamega, 5th December 2024.

⁴⁷⁵Wanyama, Kadian W., and S. N. Mutsotso. "Relationship between capacity building and employee productivity on performance of commercial banks in Kenya." (2010)., p.8.

The involvement of Shikuku in the history of democracy in Kenya can not be denied. The narration of his life should be done in such a way that the youth should learn the lesson of political courage.⁴⁷⁶

The political boldness of Shikuku especially in rising against the dictatorship is an inspiration. According to the archival records of Kenya National Archives, he was among the handful of leaders who constantly campaigned the need to expand democratic space despite the state repression. His initiative in speaking against state extravagance in parliamentary sessions was a precedent of how the future resistance leaders would be addressing the state.⁴⁷⁷ A Kakamega FGD underscored the role that his work still has in the mind of younger activists:

Fearlessness of Shikuku is admired by many young leaders nowadays. He demonstrated that being a leader does not mean making money but battling on behalf of the people.⁴⁷⁸

According to the researcher, the legacy of Shikuku conforms to the tenets of the Pluralist Theory of Government that pays attention to multiple voices that influence the governance. The political culture that he built through his demand to have a participatory democracy even when things were going wrong was one that did not allow the suppression of divergent opinions easily. Even his attempts to incorporate the voices of the marginalized in governance are still felt in the modern discourse of representation and political inclusiveness. Peter Lutta oral interview in Mumias observed:

When we study political science, we talk about such leaders as Shikuku as he was not simply a politician; he was also a reformist. His address at Parliament is still applicable in the present times.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶Hosea Opala, Oral interview in Mulambo, on 31/1/2025.

⁴⁷⁷KNA/LEG/1977/09

⁴⁷⁸FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/12/2024.

⁴⁷⁹Peter Lutta, Oral Interview in Mumias, 12/2/2025.

This point of view is supported by secondary sources. Such scholars like Throup and Hornsby have written of the contribution of Shikuku to parliament and how the unique level of honesty and the concern that he showed to the well being of the common Kenyan had dominated his contribution to parliament.⁴⁸⁰ His arguments on the issue of governance, democracy, and accountability still serve as points of reference in academic and political debates. One of the respondents of Mulambo highlighted the necessity of national recognition:

Kenya has lost most of its heroes and Shikuku is one of them. It should also work towards ensuring that his memory is not forgotten by writing books about him and making documentaries and even naming institutions after him.⁴⁸¹ According to archaeological records of the Kenya Heroes Recognition Committee, even though some of the leaders during the Kenya independence period have been honored, the individual contribution of Shikuku has not been given the same institutional recognition. His legacy is not well appreciated in the government circles unlike his contemporaries who were honored by the government through national awards and state commemoration. One FGD in Shikunga suggested that his legacy could be obtained:

His speeches are to be provided in schools. In history books, students should be made aware of him given the fact that he was a significant figure in influencing the democracy of Kenya.⁴⁸²

The researcher noted that the absence of organized initiatives aimed at ensuring the memory of Shikuku is a gulfing gap in the history writing of Kenya. Numerous political leaders that heavily influenced the formation of the governance systems of the country have not been

⁴⁸⁰Throup, David, and Charles Hornsby. "Multi-party politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta & Moi States & the triumph of the system in the 1992 election." (*No Title*) (1998), p.93.

⁴⁸¹Hosea Opala, Oral interview in Mulambo, on 31/1/2025.

⁴⁸²FGD held in Shikunga, on 6/1/2025.

sufficiently documented in the official history. Such a lack of knowledge leaves an information gap in the knowledge of future research. One of the political activists of Mumias stated:

The leadership approach of Shikuku can be an example to the current politicians. He told the truth to power without intimidation an aspect that is uncommon in our politics today.⁴⁸³

This perception is in line with available sources of literature on political honesty. According to some academics like Branch D., in most cases, leaders in Kenya in the post-independence era lacked the ability to match personal interests with national concerns. The peculiarity of Shikuku was that he never cared about himself but cared about the people. His leadership style is used to determine the level of dedication of modern politicians towards the principles of democracy.

The legacy of Shikuku is a great example of the timeless strength of ethics in leadership. He did much in the democratic process in Kenya and his contribution is not overestimated, but he is not well known. His life shows how difficult a political reform can be in a place where the critics of the state are marginalized most of the time.

The results indicate that there is a dire necessity of documenting and institutionalizing his contributions. The lack of systematic attempts to document his memory point to an even bigger vacuum in the discourse about Kenya history, in which the main political participants are often dwarfed by more politically convenient accounts. The future research ought to cover the means of ensuring the leaders such as Shikuku are not forgotten.

⁴⁸³Lawrence Kisaka, Oral Interview in Mumias, on 20/2/2025.

Furthermore, his legacy has remained in the political activism, especially among the younger generations. His speeches, parliamentary speeches, and the firmness in his position against corruption are an example of ethical leadership. According to the study, it will be important to note that keeping his contributions open to people will be of critical importance in raising the level of political awareness in the citizens.

To sum up, Shikuku served as a very successful politician, but his legacy has shown the importance of having high standards in leadership. His impact on the democracy of Kenya is still applicable, and addition of more studies is necessary in understanding how his legacy can be successfully passed on as a legacy to the upcoming generations.

4.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter Four focused on the contributions of Joseph Martin Shikuku to the political scene in Kenya and the importance of the development of the democratic rule, the constitutional changes, and the social justice. The chapter was divided into major subthemes which put emphasis on his influence and challenges and legacy on the political life of Kenya.

The discussion started with Championing Multi-Party Democracy, where Shikuku came out strong to oppose one-party system. His activism, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, was able to place him at the front of the fight against political pluralism. The paper has then delved into the Shikuku and His Part in Constitutional Reforms where he tried all his best to spearhead legislative changes that fostered democracy and empowered political institutions.

The chapter also observed Advocacy for Marginalized Communities where Shikuku had promoted the rights of marginalized communities, workers, minority ethnic groups, and the

poor. His political life was not smooth though. In the Under Challenges Faced in His Political Career section, the research paper has talked of repressions, betrayals, and resistance he faced in the hands of state machineries and political elites. Intimately related to this was Political Assassinations and Intimidations which highlighted the fear that he was under and forms of harassment and detention were among the attempts to ensure that the voices of dissent were silenced.

In addition to politics, Shikuku also helped in Economic Development by proposing policies that helped in favouring local businesses and economic empowerment of the grassroots. His contribution to Education was also notable, since he encouraged access to good education especially to the deprived communities. Yet another aspect that was discussed by the study is Effects of Corruption and how Shikuku continued to criticize corruption, although at some point he was bound by the highly ingrained culture of political patronage.

This chapter ended with the chapter of Legacy and Continuing Influence in which the authors highlighted the manner in which the political ideologies and contributed democracies by Shikuku remain inspirational in contemporary political activism in Kenya. His consistent approach to democracy, justice, and accountability is still topical in the world of the modern political discussion, which proves him as a substantial figure in the history of Kenya. The following chapter appraises the effects of political pluralism in the Kenyan History since 1960.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACTS OF JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI TO POLITICAL PLURALISM IN KENYAN HISTORY SINCE 1960

The last chapter revealed the works of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to the political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. This chapter examines the legacies of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to Kenyan politics pluralism since 1960. In the study, the following subthemes were conceived; Democratic Governance, Ethnic-Based Politics, Electoral Violence, Government Accountability and Responsiveness, Evolution of Civil Liberties and Human Rights, Political Participation and Inclusion, and lastly, Media Freedom and Political Expression. Therefore, politics pluralism in Kenya has had both negative and positive effects as discussed below:

5.1 Democratic Governance

Since 1960, political pluralism in Kenya has played a major role in democratic governance and it has been shaping the political landscape in the country. The desire to have an inclusive political system, whereby various parties and interest groups are involved in the governing system has been central to the democratic development in Kenya. One of the personalities who facilitated this change was Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who was an excellent proponent of democracy and political freedom. His contribution to the governance system of Kenya is highlighted by the fact that he was against one party rule and supported the idea that there should be a system that accommodated the various political views. The struggle against political oppression by Shikuku began in the early 1960s, as the country began to leave the colonial regime and enter the independent world. Being a young politician he soon gained a reputation of a vocal critic of government extravagance. They say that during his

early years in the Parliament he was consistent in his demands of transparency, accountability and political freedom. Robert Makambo, in recollection of the political situation after the independence, observed:

Shikuku was one of the first leaders to caution about the risks of concentration of the power in one party. The arguments he put forward were that a nation which failed to embrace political competition would end up being in dictatorship.⁴⁸⁴

His disparagement of one-party rule stood out more in the 1970s as President Jomo Kenyatta, through his KANU administration attempted to silence the voices of critics. Shikuku confronted the authoritarian inclinations of the administration in Parliament and highlighted the reduction in the democratic space. The harsh attitude he displayed caused him to be targeted by government cracks. Kenneth Kaunda, one of the most important respondents, looking back upon this time, has remarked:

Many leaders avoided confronting the government, but Shikuku was different. He spoke openly about the need for democracy, knowing well that he could face detention or worse.⁴⁸⁵

The reaction that the government had towards the activism of Shikuku was fairly rapid. According to archival sources, he was in 1975, arrested and tried without trial on account of talking against the increasing intolerance of the government to the voices of opposition. According to a Special Branch security report dated then, it can be said that Shikuku has been a thorn in state stability because of his unrelenting demands on political reforms. He was defiant even when he was detained and he still increased influence among the pro-democracy activists. President Daniel arap Moi, who established KANU as the sole party of law in 1982,

⁴⁸⁴Robert Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 15th December 2024.

⁴⁸⁵Kenneth Kaunda, Oral Interview in Mumias, on 15th December 2024.

was an era of greater state repression experienced during the 1980s. Shikuku also sided with other leaders in the opposition who were also advocating the reinstatement of multiparty politics by this time. Testimonies, oral and written demonstrate his important part in opposing the one party system. Calson Atenya, in an interview concerning the activities of Shikuku in underground opposition activities, remarked:

Shikuku was colluding behind the scenes to organize the leaders and activists to oppose the dictatorship. He urged the citizens to insist on their rights regardless of the danger.⁴⁸⁶

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) from Kakamega Town and Butere Market further reinforce Shikuku's legacy. FGD participants in Kakamega remarked:

Shikuku was one of the few voices of reason during the darkest days of single-party rule. His persistence eventually contributed to the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1991.⁴⁸⁷

Equally, an FGD at Butere Market stated that his resistance sparked off future opposition leaders: "The resistance of Shikuku led to coming of opposition leaders, such as Matiba, Rubia, and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who later spearheaded the second push against the Moi rule."⁴⁸⁸

These oral and archival records are supported by secondary sources. Nasong'o W., underlines that the input of Shikuku into the issue of democratic governance played the decisive role in the establishment of the opposition forces in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Makokha A.W., says that his parliamentary speeches were a kind of resistance literature, which influenced the masses with regard to democracy and governance. Oyugi W., notes that the demand of

⁴⁸⁶Calson Atenya, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 18th December, 2024.

⁴⁸⁷FGD held in Kakamega Town, on 5/12/ 2024.

⁴⁸⁸FGD held in Butere Market, on 1st February 2025.

political pluralism by Shikuku put pressure on the state which resulted in the subversion of multiparty elections in 1992. Such academic views bring to the fore the issue of agency in the building of national governance and substantiate the thesis that democratic transitions tend to be the result of continued advocacy and political resistance. The most memorable quote by Shikuku, Kenya iko na wenyewe (Kenya belongs to a few elites) turned out to be a slogan of political reform. The term was mainly construed to mean a criticism of the monopoly of power in the ruling elite. According to the archival records this statement resulted into increased monitoring of his activities. A 1978 intelligence report noted:

The speeches made by Shikuku are stirring up dissatisfaction among the people towards the government. Close attention will have to be paid to his rhetoric.⁴⁸⁹

Despite such menaces, Shikuku was firm in his demand of democracy in government. Pluralist Theory of Government is highly manifested in the attempts of Shikuku. This theory claims that the governance should be influenced by a variety of political players, and not a centralized state. His criticism of one-party system is also in keeping with the ideas of pluralists which focus on dispensing of power among competing groups. The initiative of keeping an open political system by Shikuku was a practical idea of the pluralist democracy model by Robert Dahl, according to which democracy is enhanced when different political groups are able to compete to gain power.⁴⁹⁰ Through his promotion of pluralism, Shikuku strengthened the importance of the checks and balances, which could not allow a single entity control the political arena.

⁴⁸⁹Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/SEC/1978/08, *Intelligence Brief on Anti-Government Agitators*.

⁴⁹⁰Robert Dahl (1971), *Op. Cit.*, p.33.

The researcher concludes that the reintroduction of the multiparty democracy was a significant step but the democratic governance practice still has weaknesses in Kenya. Irregularities still persist in the process of electing and the issue based politics are usually sabotaged by the ethnic based political alliances. Nevertheless, the example of such leaders as Shikuku proves that political pluralism is still one of the most important guaranties against authoritarianism. His works emphasize the role of political activism that is persistent and demonstrates that democracy is not a winning game, but a constant battle.

The modern political turmoil in Kenya has the trace of reformists such as Shikuku who resisted political repression in the country to establish the pathway to more inclusive political governance. His obsession with political competition and accountability is an example of how pluralism has remained strong in the governance process. Going forward, his experience as an activist must be used to shape policies that can empower democratic institutions and make the political culture more participatory.

5.2 Ethnic-Based Politics

Since it gained independence, the Kenyan politics has been characterized by ethnic based politics. Political pluralism was to support and improve democracy and inclusiveness yet ethnicity has remained a significant factor that affects political orientation, election campaigns, and governance. The role played by Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in addressing the issue of ethnic-based politics is crucial in elucidating the manner pluralism has been approaching ethnicity in Kenyan politics. His one of the most significant actors to challenge the ethnicization of governance was the national unity that he promoted which was issue based politics in contrast to ethnic mobilization.

Shikuku led the way in the struggle against the democracy of multiparty and she aired her opinion on the ethnic segregation of political parties. His anti-ethnicism and pro-nationalism singled him out among majority of the politicians of that era who leveraged ethnic affiliations to accumulate power. On behalf of Shikuku, Newton Kataka saw:

Unlike other politicians who appealed to their ethnic communities for support, Shikuku spoke for all Kenyans. He was never confined to one region or one tribe.⁴⁹¹

The Shikuku ideology was determined by the politics of early years of independence particularly the KANU and KADU conflict. The archival records show that he opposed the ethnic based organization of these parties since he felt that this organization would only end up dividing the country rather than uniting them. According to a memo of political party alignments by the government in 1963:

Shikuku criticizes parties that are ethnically oriented. To him this will cause the national unity to come down and the political instability will be long lasting.⁴⁹²

His forecasts were to be fulfilled later when ethnic affiliations became a considerable element in the competition within the elections.

During the Moi period the ethnic patronage took deeper roots. The rule of Moi was marked by divide-and-rule approach of appointing political positions and state resources to stay in power along ethnic lines. Shikuku was heavily critical of this type of model and he often disparaged the application of the concept of ethnicity as a political instrument. Stanley Mate, who remembered about the political situation of the 1980s, said:

⁴⁹¹Newton Kataka, Oral Interview in Ebukhokoro, on 21st January, 2025.

⁴⁹²Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/POL/1963/07, Internal Government Brief on Political Parties.

Shikuku saw ethnicity as a major obstacle to democracy. He repeatedly warned that unless Kenyans voted based on ideas rather than tribes, the country would remain divided.⁴⁹³

In the early 1990s, with multiparty campaigns, Shikuku still espoused the idea of issue-based politics as the new trend where opposition parties were largely ethnic-based was being promoted. Speaking of the power of Shikuku, Beatrice Mukolwe wrote: When all other individuals were forming their party according to the tribal calculations, Shikuku was insistent that ideology and policies should be at the forefront of political movements instead of ethnic identity.⁴⁹⁴ Despite his efforts, ethnic-based mobilization remained the dominant strategy in electoral contests.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) from Mumias Market and Shikunga reinforce the persistence of ethnic-based politics. One participant in Mumias Market noted:

Even after the return to multipartyism, politics in Kenya has remained largely ethnic. Leaders like Shikuku tried to change this narrative, but most politicians still rely on their ethnic groups for support.⁴⁹⁵

Similarly, an FGD in Shikunga observed: The problem is not just politicians; voters also think in ethnic terms. Shikuku's message was progressive, but many people were not ready to abandon tribal affiliations.⁴⁹⁶

Scholars have extensively analyzed ethnic-based politics in Kenya, corroborating these findings. Nasong'o S.W., argues that ethnicity remains the primary determinant of voting

⁴⁹³Stanley Mate, Oral Interview in Irechea, on 8th January, 2025.

⁴⁹⁴Beatrice Mukolwe, Oral Interview in Eshisebu, on 7th January, 2025.

⁴⁹⁵FGD held in Mumias Market, 10th January, 2025.

⁴⁹⁶FGD held in Shikunga, 6th February, 2025.

patterns, with political elites exploiting ethnic identities to consolidate power.⁴⁹⁷ Oyugi W., posits that Kenya's pluralism has not fully matured because political parties continue to serve as ethnic vehicles rather than national institutions.⁴⁹⁸ Makokha P.R., highlights that despite efforts by leaders like Shikuku, the electorate remains deeply influenced by ethnic narratives.⁴⁹⁹ These scholarly perspectives demonstrate that while pluralism theoretically promotes inclusivity, its practical application in Kenya has been hindered by ethnic mobilization.

The role of ethnic alliances in shaping election outcomes is evident in the 1992 and 1997 multiparty elections, where parties largely aligned along ethnic lines. Archival reports from the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) reveal that; ethnic-based parties performed significantly better in regions dominated by their ethnic group, demonstrating the persistence of tribal voting patterns.⁵⁰⁰ The trend has been extended to later elections and this further establishes the fact that ethnicity is a strong political instrument.

The Pluralist Theory of Government can be used to explain ethnic-based politics in Kenya. Although pluralism encourages the involvement of various groups in the government, it is based on the assumption that the various groups are not ethnically, but ideologically motivated. Shikuku saw the vision through the principles of pluralism, which suggested the issue-based and not ethnic-based political competition. The political parties in Kenya however, being weakly institutionalized has resulted in a scenario where the political

⁴⁹⁷Nasong'o, Shadrack Wanjala. "Political transition without transformation: The dialectic of liberalization without democratization in Kenya and Zambia." *African Studies Review* 50, no. 1 (2007): 83-107., p.103.

⁴⁹⁸Oyugi, Walter O. "Ethnicity in the electoral process: The 1992 general elections in Kenya." *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique* (1997): 41-69., p.53.

⁴⁹⁹Makokha, Pamela R. "The effect of privatisation on financial Performance of firms listed at the Nairobi securities exchange." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2013., p.94.

⁵⁰⁰Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/ECK/1997/12, Election Assessment Report.

affiliations are not based on policy or ideology, but the ethnicity. This is against the pluralist democracy model developed by Robert Dahl that presupposes an even playing field among different interests in politics.⁵⁰¹ Rather, ethnic clientelism has influenced pluralism in Kenya whereby political leaders gain support by patronizing other leaders instead of using democracy.

The scholar discovered that although political pluralism was devised to bring in competition on the basis of ideas, the fact is that ethnic based politics are still deeply rooted. This affects the governance because this promotes the politics of winner takes all where the majority ethnic group is rewarded and others in the society feel marginalized. The continuance of ethnic affiliations is a negation of national cohesion and the emergence of a robust and issue-oriented political culture.

In spite of these, there are examples of such figures as Shikuku who illustrate the possibility of another political model. His emphasis on the idea of national unity and ideological involvement implies that ethnic-based politics does not necessarily imply the necessity of such a reality but is a challenge that can be surmounted through years of civic education as well as institutional changes in this respect. In the future, Kenya should reinforce its political institutions to make sure that the parties are formed around policies as opposed to ethnic identities. This should not only take legal changes but also change of consciousness of the voters who must recognize the need to have leadership with vision and not tribal affiliations.

The history of ethnic based politics in Kenya has shown that pluralism is not the answer to democracy. In the absence of considerations of ethnic relations, political competition can

⁵⁰¹Robert Dahl (1971), *Op. Cit.*, p.92.

become a zero-sum game, with power being struggled against based on ethnic not ideological premises. The Kenya democracy can only live in the future when there is a deliberate de-ethnicization of politics, and both political will and grassroots mobilization is needed. The examples of the leaders such as Shikuku provide a road map into alternative political participation, as Kenyans are reminded that the key to a fully democratic government is one that will go beyond ethnic lines, and adopt a pluralist democracy based on policy, vision, and inclusion.

5.3 Electoral Violence

Electoral violence is an issue that has been there in the political history of Kenya especially after the adoption of multiparty democracy. Although political pluralism was supposed to promote democratic competition, it has been marked by incidences of electoral violence, which are most times incited by ethnic, political feuds as well as power struggles. The contribution that Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi made to promoting peace in the election process and calling attention to political violence is significant in delineating how the political leaders have tried to restrain the electoral conflicts. Shikuku was one of the few leaders who always denounced electoral violence since he believed that democracy could only be practiced in a peaceful setting. He had even cautioned during the early multiparty elections in 1990s against violence as a political instrument and the political campaigns should be issue based and not based on intimidation and coercion. Peter Omurunga Oyondi thought upon the attitude of Shikuku, and said:

Shikuku never encouraged the leaders to use force in getting votes, but persuasion. He was aware that violence was going to cement the country even more.⁵⁰²

With these appeals of peace, electoral violence has remained a form of the Kenya elections. According to the record of the archives, political motivated violence particularly in the Rift Valley and sections of Western Kenya increased sharply in 1992 with the resurgence of multipartyism. According to a secret government report of the time it was observed: The 1992 elections were marred by rampant violence most of which was sparked off by ethnic militias organized by political actors and aimed at intimidating the opposition.⁵⁰³ This pattern repeated in subsequent elections, with major outbreaks of violence occurring in 1997, 2007, and 2017.

Shikuku's advocacy for non-violent elections was echoed by civil society organizations and religious leaders who called for peaceful political processes. However, as Rosemary Makambo noted, many politicians ignored voices like Shikuku's. Instead, they continued to use violence as a strategy to secure votes and eliminate competition.⁵⁰⁴ This reliance on violence not only undermined democracy but also deepened ethnic divisions, making post-election reconciliation difficult.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Kakamega and Butere provided further insight into how electoral violence has shaped political participation. A participant in Kakamega town observed:

⁵⁰²Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview in Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on 4th January, 2025.

⁵⁰³Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/SEC/1993/11, Post-Election Security Report.

⁵⁰⁴Rosemary Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 15th December, 2024.

Whenever elections approach, politicians start mobilizing youth to act as their enforcers. This culture of election violence has made it difficult for genuine democracy to take root.⁵⁰⁵

Another participant in Butere Market stated; many voters fear elections because of the violence associated with them. Instead of being a democratic process, elections have become moments of tension and uncertainty.⁵⁰⁶ These sentiments highlight the long-term effects of electoral violence, including voter apathy and distrust in the democratic system.

Scholars have extensively documented the impact of electoral violence on Kenya's democracy. Kanyinga K., argues that electoral violence is often premeditated, with political elites using it as a means of securing power.⁵⁰⁷ Mueller S.D., describes how violence has been institutionalized within Kenyan politics, with politicians mobilizing ethnic militias and criminal gangs during election periods.⁵⁰⁸ Cheeseman N., suggests that weak institutions and the failure to prosecute perpetrators of electoral violence have allowed this trend to persist, eroding public confidence in democratic governance.⁵⁰⁹ These scholarly perspectives reinforce the argument that without structural reforms, electoral violence will remain a key obstacle to Kenya's democratic consolidation.

Archival evidence from the 2007-2008 post-election violence provides further proof of how political pluralism, when mismanaged, can lead to instability. A government commission report on the crisis stated: The violence that erupted after the 2007 elections was fueled by

⁵⁰⁵FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/ 12/2024.

⁵⁰⁶FGD held in Butere Market, on 1/2/ 2025.

⁵⁰⁷Kanyinga, Karuti. "Stopping a conflagration: The response of Kenyan civil society to the post-2007 election violence." *Politikon* 38, no. 1 (2011): 85-109., p.91.

⁵⁰⁸Mueller, Susanne D. "Dying to win: Elections, political violence, and institutional decay in Kenya." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2011): 99-117., p.104.

⁵⁰⁹Cheeseman, Nic. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, failures, and the struggle for political reform*. Vol. 9. Cambridge University Press, 2015., p.36.

deep-seated ethnic grievances, economic inequalities, and political manipulations by key actors.⁵¹⁰ The report further recommended electoral reforms and accountability for those involved in inciting violence, but the implementation of these recommendations has been slow.

Shikuku's efforts to prevent electoral violence extended beyond public speeches. He actively engaged in mediation efforts during contested elections and constitutional reforms, urging communities to reject political incitement. Habil Mukolwe recounted Shikuku's role in diffusing tensions during a local election dispute in the 1990s:

Shikuku personally visited areas prone to violence, speaking to both sides and urging them to uphold peace. He believed that Kenya's democracy would collapse if elections continued to be violent.⁵¹¹

The Pluralist Theory of Government, which underpins this study, asserts that democracy thrives when multiple interest groups engage in open and peaceful competition. However, electoral violence undermines this principle by restricting political participation through fear and coercion. Dahl R., emphasizes that in a true pluralist system, political competition should be based on persuasion rather than force.⁵¹² Electoral violence in Kenya does not reflect this ideal because it reveals that political pluralism is not without well-developed democratic institutions and political tolerance culture.

The researcher established that electoral violence has continued to be a major setback to the democratic developments in Kenya. Although such players as Shikuku were important in pushing peaceful elections, they were also constantly compromised by the vested political

⁵¹⁰Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/COI/2008/04, Post-Election Violence Inquiry Report

⁵¹¹Habil Mukolwe, Oral Interview in Eshisebu, on 7th January, 2025.

⁵¹²Dahl R., (1971)., *Op. Cit.*, p.42.

interests who thrived on electoral violence. The Kenyan elections where violence has become the norm raises a lot of structural issues, such as the inability to enforce the laws of elections, political participation that is ethnicized, and a lack of accountability among those who committed violence.

In order to progress, Kenya requires a lot of reforms that will see to it that the elections in the country are free, fair and peaceful. This involves empowering the institutions like the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), enhancing the prosecution of individuals engaged in the electoral violence and creating political education to the citizens. Electors should also not tolerate leaders and politicians who resort to violence as a tactic of acquiring power. Elections are not about bloodshed, as Shikuku used to say, they are all about ideas. His ideas of creating a peaceful democratic Kenya is still applicable in the present day, helping the country to remember that only under the condition of violence-free and intimidation-free electoral processes peaceful democracy is a possibility.

The electoral violence in Kenya and its history highlights the difficulties of the application of political pluralism in a society that is highly divided. Elections will remain crisis situations instead of a time of rejoicing democracy unless the political leaders and electorate address to non-violence. Kenya needs to draw lessons out of the past and strive to achieve an electoral process where power is not fought with intimidation and war. This will need the concerted efforts of politicians, civic society, judiciary and common citizens so that the issue of electoral violence is washed out forever.

5.4 Government Accountability and Responsiveness

In Kenya, political pluralism has been significant in the determination of the accountability and responsiveness of the government. The governance structures have noticeably changed to a more questioning attitude towards the people in office, and some penchant toward active civic participation and transparency in the respective government activities, since introduction of multiparty democracy. Nevertheless, though pluralism has offered a check and balances mechanism, problems still exist, because institutions of the state have been slow in addressing citizens grievances, and corruption has still been in deep roots. One of the few political leaders who always insisted on government accountability was Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who inspected the importance of opposition parties and civic participation to hold the leaders accountable on their activities.

Shikuku strongly believed in the principle of serving the people and not be serving oneself as was the case in government. In his political life, he was speaking out on the abuse of government funds, failure to deliver services and government institutions that failed to respond to the concerns of the citizens. A long time serving politician, Lwali Oyondi, remembered how Shikuku demanded accountability:

Shikuku never had any fear of attacking the government when it comes to matters of corruption and inefficiency. He would openly challenge budgets, government spending and seek to know why funds are not being spent.⁵¹³ Archival records reinforce this assertion. A parliamentary record from 1975 captures a heated debate in which Shikuku accused

⁵¹³Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on 6th January, 2025.

government officials of misappropriating funds meant for development projects. He famously declared:

The government is dead! What we have is a system that serves the interests of a few while the majority suffer.⁵¹⁴

His remarks were met with resistance, but they sparked national conversations on financial accountability. Despite his efforts, corruption continued to thrive in Kenya, undermining governance and development. Robert Makambo, reflecting on contemporary governance, noted:

Corruption is still a major issue. Even with multiple political parties, leaders prioritize personal gain over service delivery. The accountability mechanisms that Shikuku fought for remain weak.⁵¹⁵

This observation aligns with existing research, which highlights Kenya's struggle with corruption despite constitutional reforms aimed at increasing transparency. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Kakamega, Mumias, and Butere provided further insight into the impact of political pluralism on accountability. A participant in Kakamega town observed:

We vote for different parties expecting change, but leaders rarely deliver on their promises. Multipartyism alone does not guarantee accountability.⁵¹⁶

Another participant in Butere Market added: There are watchdog institutions like the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), but they have little power because top government officials often interfere with their work.⁵¹⁷ These discussions reveal that while

⁵¹⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/PAR/1975/07, Parliamentary Debates on Government Expenditure.

⁵¹⁵Robert Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

⁵¹⁶FGD held in Kakamega, on 5/12/2024.

⁵¹⁷FGD held in Butere Market, on 1/2/2025.

political pluralism has introduced mechanisms for accountability, enforcement remains a significant challenge.

Scholars have extensively debated the relationship between political pluralism and government accountability. Hope Sr and Kempe R., argues that pluralism strengthens democratic oversight by providing alternatives to power, thereby preventing authoritarian rule.⁵¹⁸ However, Cheeseman *et al.*, cautions that without strong institutions, political competition alone does not guarantee responsiveness.⁵¹⁹ Barkan *et al.*, suggests that effective accountability requires both civic engagement and a legal framework that enforces ethical governance.⁵²⁰ These scholarly perspectives align with the collected data, highlighting the gap between political competition and actual government responsiveness.

Archival evidence from the early 1990s further illustrates how political pluralism influenced government responsiveness. A report from the Controller and Auditor General noted:

With the reintroduction of multiparty democracy, public scrutiny of government expenditures has increased, but institutional weaknesses hinder full accountability.⁵²¹

This finding underscores the paradox of pluralism: while it fosters scrutiny, the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms remains limited. Shikuku's role in promoting government responsiveness extended beyond parliamentary debates. He engaged directly with citizens, encouraging them to demand better services from their leaders. Beatrice Mukolwe recalled

⁵¹⁸Hope Sr, Kempe Ronald. "Kenya's corruption problem: causes and consequences." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 52, no. 4 (2014): 493-512., p.498.

⁵¹⁹Cheeseman, Nic, Gabrielle Lynch, and Justin Willis. "Digital dilemmas: The unintended consequences of election technology." *Democratization* 25, no. 8 (2018): 1397-1418., p.1406.

⁵²⁰Barkan, J., H. Kutiel, P. Alpert, and P. Kishcha. "Synoptics of dust intrusion days from the African continent into the Atlantic Ocean." *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres* 109, no. D8 (2004)., p.90.

⁵²¹Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/AUD/1993/05, Report on Government Accountability.

how Shikuku would travel to rural areas, urging communities to hold their representatives accountable: He told us that as voters, we had power. If leaders failed us, we had the right to remove them through elections.⁵²²

His emphasis on civic engagement was ahead of its time, as it predated Kenya's later constitutional reforms that sought to institutionalize citizen participation in governance.

The Pluralist Theory of Government asserts that democracy thrives when multiple interest groups have the power to influence policy and governance. In Kenya, this has been evident in the rise of civil society organizations, independent media, and opposition parties that challenge government inefficiencies. However, as Dahl Robert notes, pluralism only functions effectively when institutions support transparency and public participation.⁵²³ This ideal has been eroded by laxity of laws and interests of the elites, which have done so in Kenya.

The researcher discovered that political pluralism has been associated with opening opportunities to accountability but these have not necessarily been translated to any actual changes in governance. Transparency and civic empowerment were championed by leaders such as Shikuku but the weaknesses in the system have enabled corruption and lack of efficiency to continue. The researcher also points out that pluralism has sometimes resulted in discontinuous governance where political parties are more interested in competition as opposed to the provision of services.

⁵²²Beatrice Mukolwe, Oral Interview in Eshisebu, on 7/1/2025.

⁵²³Dahl Roberts (1971). *Op. Cit.*, p.36.

Pluralism in politics should not be the only way Kenya can improve accountability of the government. The institutions such as the EACC, the Controller of Budget and Auditor General, and the judiciary have to be strengthened in the process of making leaders work within ethical governance. Moreover, civic education ought to be increased to enable citizens to be active participants in the governance as opposed to waiting to be changed. According to Shikuku, the government, according to him, that fails to serve the people, had nothing to do in existence. His legacy is that Kenyans should never forget that democracy is not all about elections, but also making sure that leaders are answerable to the population.

The topic of accountability and responsiveness of governments brings forth the multifaceted combination between political pluralism and the structure of governance along with the effectiveness of the institutions. Multi party democracy has brought system of checks and balances but their effectiveness has been hampered by corruption and laxity in enforcing them. Whether Kenya leaders and citizens adopt a governance model that focuses its efforts on service delivery rather than on political maneuvering will determine how successful the Kenyan democracy will be in future. In the absence of this change, accountability will continue being an unattainable dream and not a reality.

5.5 Evolution of Civil Liberties and Human Rights

Political pluralism since 1960 has played a major role in the evolution of the civil liberties and human rights in Kenya. The change of the one-party state to a multi-party system granted a platform of more freedoms but they have not always been realized, and the periods of freedom have been interspersed with state repression. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi became one of the loudest civil liberties defenders who opposed usurping the government and insisted

on the preservation of key freedoms. He was a major figure in the struggle of human rights in Kenya due to his unstoppable activism against autocracy in his political career. The ideology of politics as pioneered by Shikuku was based on the notion that Kenyans had the right to freedom of expression, association and a right to participate in politics. He even disagreed with the ruling party, KANU as early as in the 1970s, because it oppressed the voice of the opposition. His strong belief in human rights usually made the government retaliate against him, such as lock-up without trial. Lwali Oyondi, an old politician, remembered:

Shikuku never feared telling the truth to power. He was not afraid to call out the excesses in the government because he was fully aware that it would cost him his liberty. He was of the opinion that a nation lacking civil liberties was a jail.⁵²⁴

The Africa National Archives of Kenya records reveal that Shikuku was struggling to champion civil liberties. In 1975, the government was concerned about his speeches which criticized political repression according to a security report issued by his government. The report said: Hon. Shikuku still has the people against the government, challenging the validity of detentions and on the freedom of media.⁵²⁵ This document points out how political pluralism, despite its emergence was met with opposition by an authoritarian regime that aimed at silencing any form of dissent.

Although the civil liberties were curbed, they slowly grew along with the growing political competition. The transformation of the constitutional changes in 1990s was a turning point because multiparty democracy provided an environment where citizens could demand their

⁵²⁴Lwali Oyondi, Oral Interview in Nakuru, on 6/1/2025.

⁵²⁵Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/SEC/1975/12, Internal Security Report on Political Dissent.

rights in a more open manner. But that was not the end of struggle. Rosemary Makambo observed:

Pluralism, we believed, would bring to an end human rights violations. However, until 1992, politicians did not stop employing police brutality and harassment of their opponents.⁵²⁶

Her statement reflects the reality that while legal reforms were enacted, enforcement remained inconsistent.

Discussions in focus groups across Kakamega, Mumias, and Butere revealed varied perspectives on the state of civil liberties in Kenya today. FGD participants in Mumias Market noted: We now have more freedom to speak out, but journalists and activists still face threats when they expose corruption or government failures.⁵²⁷ Other FGD participants in Butere Market added: People are free to form political parties and express their views, but police brutality remains a serious problem, especially during protests.⁵²⁸ These views indicate that while political pluralism has facilitated progress, systemic issues continue to hinder full realization of human rights.

Scholars analyzing Kenya's human rights trajectory agree that political pluralism has had mixed results. Branch D., argues that while multiparty democracy expanded freedoms, it also led to heightened political violence, sometimes undermining human rights.⁵²⁹ Ghai D., states that the changes in the constitution enhanced the legal protection, but there is still a low level of enforcement because of the institutional corruption. At the same time, Nasong S.W.

⁵²⁶Rosemary Makambo, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 15/12/2024.

⁵²⁷FGD held in Mumias Market, on 10/1/2025.

⁵²⁸FGD held in Butere Market, on 1/2/ 2025.

⁵²⁹Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between hope and despair, 1963-2011*. Yale university press, 2011., p.89.

argues that the civil liberties have been enhanced since 2002 when the government welcomed reforms that would facilitate enhanced human rights protection. These academic approaches support the data of the field and underline the eternal conflict between the legal progress and oppression by the state.

Documents by the archival sources recorded after 1992 give more information about the development of human rights in Kenya. In a parliamentary discussion in 1995, there is a discussion on police reforms where legislators confirmed that the security forces were still in the habit of conducting random arrests and cold-blooded murders. One of the MPs said: We cannot say that we are a democracy when our police are going on violating human rights impunity.⁵³⁰ This reinforces the view that legal reforms alone have not been sufficient in guaranteeing civil liberties.

Shikuku's contributions to human rights extended beyond parliamentary debates; he was also involved in grassroots mobilization. Beatrice Mukolwe recalled: Shikuku would visit communities and educate people on their rights. He told us that if we don't demand our freedoms, they will be taken away.⁵³¹

His ideology of civic empowerment was the basis of subsequent human rights movements in Kenya. According to the Pluralist Theory of Government, democracy is best served by the accommodation of many voices and by having many voices. Political pluralism in Kenya has presented a platform where different interests are represented indeed. Nevertheless, according to Dahl R., pluralism works only in circumstances when the freedoms are ensured

⁵³⁰Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/PAR/1995/03, Parliamentary Debate on Police Reforms.

⁵³¹Beatrice Mukolwe, Oral Interview in Eshisebu, on 7/1/2025.

by the powerful institutions.⁵³² Political pluralism in Kenya has increased human rights on paper, but poor institutions remain allowing abuses.

The researcher discovered that Kenya has been making progress in promoting civil liberties but usually, political instability, state repression and institutional weaknesses have reversed the progress. The human rights struggle is still a process and political pluralism is its facilitator and obstacle. The researcher also observes that grassroots activism like those spearheaded by Shikuku was significant in demanding reforms, a fact that highlights the significance of civil society in the process of winning human rights.

To achieve the full potential in Kenya in the context of human right, additional institutional reforms are required. It is also important to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, increase the accountability of the police and promote the culture of political tolerance to make sure that not only the civil liberties are written in the law but are also being effectively enforced. A state that silences its citizens is not any different than a dictatorship as Shikuku once said. His legacy is used as a reminder that civil liberties struggle can never be over in fact, it needs continuous monitoring, activism and institutional change.

The analysis of development of civil liberties and human rights underscores the role played by political pluralism in influencing the governance environment in Kenya. As much as multiparty democracy has increased the freedoms, state repression and poor enforcement systems have usually derailed development. As we proceed Kenya will thrive in its

⁵³²Dahl Roberts (1971), *Op. Cit.*, p.104.

democratic achievement as the nation builds its institutions and advances a political culture that has genuine regard to human rights.

5.6 Political Participation and Inclusion

Political participation and inclusion in Kenya since 1960 has been largely affected by political pluralism as diverse voices are heard and more people marginalized by the government would get an opportunity to participate in governance. The shift in the single party system to the multiparty democracy raised the competition and the participation of the people in the governance. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was a very critical figure who supported inclusivity especially to the ordinary citizenry, young people, and women in the process. Shikuku, as one of the most prolific advocates of the grassroots democracy, thought that democracy could not work unless all the Kenyans had a say in the decision making.

Shikuku was a great activist especially in the breakdown of the ranks that had long alienated some groups of people in politics. He repeatedly criticized the supremacy of the elite politicians who tried to make power a monopoly. His political participation and inclusiveness were based on the principle that democracy was not to be enjoyed by the small percentage of the citizens but to be a system that accommodated the citizenry irrespective of their social or economic backgrounds. Peter Omurunga Oyondi remembered:

Shikuku was not just about speeches in Parliament; he went to villages and markets, urging young people and women to get involved in politics. He would tell us that democracy is not for the few but for all.⁵³³

⁵³³Peter Omurunga Oyondi, Oral Interview in Irechea/Ebukhokoro, on 4/1/2025.

This testimony underscores his belief in mass participation as a cornerstone of democratic governance.

Archival records provide evidence of Shikuku's advocacy for inclusive politics. A parliamentary debate from 1974 documents his push for broader political representation, particularly for women and youth. He is recorded stating: This Parliament must not remain a club of the privileged. The youth and women must find space to serve and lead in our democracy.⁵³⁴

Despite his calls for inclusivity, Kenya's political landscape remained dominated by elite figures, with structural barriers limiting broader participation. Political pluralism in Kenya has indeed expanded participation, but challenges remain. Focus group discussions in Kakamega, Mumias, and Butere markets revealed mixed reactions regarding the level of inclusivity in contemporary politics. A participant in Kakamega town observed: We now have more women and youth contesting for seats, but the political parties still favor the rich and influential.⁵³⁵ Another participant in Mumias Market noted: "Pluralism has made it easier for different groups to form parties, but ethnic favoritism and financial constraints still lock out many qualified candidates."⁵³⁶ These views reflect the persistent structural inequalities in Kenya's political system. While more candidates from marginalized groups are seeking political positions, they often face financial hurdles and political patronage that disadvantage them against wealthy and well-connected competitors.

⁵³⁴Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/PAR/1974/08, Parliamentary Debates on Political Representation.

⁵³⁵FGD held in Kakamega Town, 5/12/2025.

⁵³⁶FGD held in Mumias Market, 10/1/2025.

Scholars analyzing political participation in Kenya argue that while multiparty democracy has improved inclusivity, deeply entrenched political patronage continues to limit genuine representation. Nzomo M., observes that women's political participation has increased since the return of multiparty democracy, but they still face systemic discrimination.⁵³⁷ Macedo S., notes that youth involvement has expanded, yet financial barriers prevent them from fully competing with established politicians.⁵³⁸ Meanwhile, Barkan S.E., argues that pluralism has led to increased political engagement at the grassroots level, though elite domination remains a challenge.⁵³⁹ These views are in line with the field data which indicates that despite the increased opportunities brought about by political pluralism, there are still big challenges.

All these notwithstanding, political pluralism has resulted in a shift in policy, which has increased the inclusivity. In 2010, there were constitutional changes that came up with affirmative action, whereby parliament and county seats were set aside to women, youth and the marginalized groups. Nonetheless, this has not been enforced and parties have tended to brush aside these groups by favoring established political personalities. Calson Atenya wrote: The Constitution opened the door to an increased inclusion, but the fact is that party politics remains in the hands of those who have money and influence.⁵⁴⁰ This feeling explains the discrepancy in legislation and reality. Although the constitutional framework has provided the basis of inclusiveness, the practices are poor owing to the internal party politics and socio-economic factors.

⁵³⁷Nzomo, Maria. "The 2002 general elections in Kenya." *Wajibu* 18, no. 1 (2003): 14-17.

⁵³⁸Macedo, Stephen. *Democracy at risk: How political choices undermine citizen participation, and what we can do about it*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006., p.73.

⁵³⁹Barkan, Steven E. "Explaining public support for the environmental movement: A civic voluntarism model." *Social Science Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (2004): 913-937., p.921.

⁵⁴⁰Calson Atenya, Oral Interview in Eshirembe, on 18/12/2024.

The political history of Kenya explains how the political participation and inclusion have changed over the years. The 1950s and early 1960s independence struggle was fuelled by the desire to have more political representation especially the Africans who were left out during the colonial rule. Political pluralism was a move in the right direction when the Lancaster House Conferences resulted in the independence of Kenya in 1963 since it offered a constitutional system that could accommodate a multiparty system. In the post independence era however, the ruling elite dominated in political participation. This changed to a de facto single party government in 1969 under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) which curtailed the amount of political competition thus narrowing the margins of participation.

The restoration of multiparty democracy in 1991 was a defining moment to the Kenyan politics. Civil society groups, religious organizations, and politicians such as Shikuku were the instigators of the push to make political reforms because they viewed the one party state as an impediment to a democratic administration. Political pluralism increased the political participation as the various political parties had a chance to contest an election resulting in increased representation of different groups in society. Nevertheless, it did not go away without fighting because the ruling elite tried to preserve its power by using legal and institutionalistic manipulations. The 1992 election and the 1997 elections were marked by ethnic violence and electoral malpractices thus disheartening the participation of the marginalized groups.

The involvement of women in politics is also a very crucial subject in the Kenya politics. Even though the new Constitution came in 2010 with some provisions that would facilitate gender equality, women in leadership roles are still minimal. According to Nzomo M., women are not participating in politics due to the presence of legal frameworks that help

women to participate in politics, but many women are not participating in politics due to the attitudes of patriarchy, financial constraint and violence in politics.⁵⁴¹ Focus group discussions in Butere and Shikunga revealed that while more women are seeking elective positions, societal attitudes remain a significant barrier. A female participant in Butere remarked: Even when we try to campaign, people still believe politics is for men. We are not given the same respect as male candidates.⁵⁴²

These perceptions depict the incessant gender prejudices in the Kenyan political system. Pluralist Theory of Government proposes that democracy will best operate in the condition that various groups are represented in the process of making decisions. Political pluralism in Kenya has opened up and enhanced competition and participation, but structural inequalities have not been resolved. Dahl R., opines that a fully pluralist democracy should not merely permit a plurality of voices but also consequently, all groups should have an equal opportunity to affect governance.⁵⁴³ As it was in the case of Kenya, political pluralism has opened up opportunities but more institutional reforms are necessary to guarantee healthy competition and actual inclusiveness.

Economic constraints also contribute greatly in restriction of political participation. In Kenya, elections usually demand hefty amounts of money, and the candidates would need to fund their campaigns with amounts of money. Women, youth, and people in marginalized communities face this financial burden disproportionately because all of them do not have economic resources. Burnell P., and Allan W., claims that commercialization of politics has

⁵⁴¹Nzomo Maria (2003). *Op. Cit.*, p.16.

⁵⁴²FGD held in Butere, on 1/2/2025.

⁵⁴³Dahl Roberts (1971)., *Op. Cit.*, p.43.

made elections to be a contest of the rich and only those endowed with money are able to campaign effectively.⁵⁴⁴ A participant in Shikunga noted: If you do not have money, you cannot win elections in Kenya. People expect handouts, and campaigns require huge resources.⁵⁴⁵

Such a fact locks out most qualified candidates who are unable to meet the expensive price of political contests.

The researcher concludes that, even though political pluralism has played a great role in the increase of political participation in Kenya, the issue of elite control, limited finances, and party consideration still curtails the actual inclusiveness. Although this has been tried in legislative reforms, the implementation of this has been poor. In the future, the reinforcement of electoral legislation, allocation of more funds to marginalized candidates and improvement of civic education will play a crucial role in making political pluralism bring meaningful participation among all Kenyans.

The legacy left by Shikuku in promoting grassroots democracy is an added reminder that political participation should not be limited to a simple vote in elections but should be an active involvement in the making of decisions. His philosophy of empowering ordinary citizens is still pertinent in the modern days, Kenya is still struggling to cope with the issue of political inclusiveness in a multiparty system. Participation and inclusion in politics is still a key element to democratic consolidation and continuous reforms should be implemented

⁵⁴⁴Burnell, Peter J., and Allan Ware, eds. *Funding democratization*. Transaction Publishers, 2006., p.13.

⁵⁴⁵FGD held in Shikunga, 6/1/2025.

to attain the desire that every citizen has just and equitable opportunity to take part in governance.

5.7 Media Freedom and Political Expression

Political pluralism has played a significant role in shaping media freedom and political expression in Kenya. The transition from a single-party state to a multiparty democracy provided a framework for a more open press and greater political discourse. However, the state has often responded with repression whenever media houses and political activists push the boundaries of free expression. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was among the politicians who consistently advocated for press freedom, recognizing that an informed citizenry was crucial for democracy. His belief in free speech and access to information was rooted in the conviction that democracy could only thrive in an environment where political discourse was not stifled by state control.

Shikuku's confrontations with the government over media freedom were well-documented. He believed that the press played a fundamental role in holding leaders accountable and ensuring transparency in governance. Newton Kataka recalled:

Shikuku would fearlessly criticize the government's attempts to silence journalists. He argued that suppressing the press was the first step towards dictatorship.⁵⁴⁶

His advocacy for press freedom often put him at odds with the government, leading to threats and intimidation. Despite the risks, Shikuku remained committed to his ideals, frequently

⁵⁴⁶Newton Kataka, Oral Interview in Ebukhokoro, on 21/1/2025.

using parliamentary debates, political rallies, and public forums to call for the protection of journalists and the liberalization of the media industry.

Archival records highlight the government's attempts to control political expression. A 1985 directive from the Office of the President instructed media houses to refrain from publishing articles critical of the ruling party. The directive stated: All media outlets must align their reporting with national interests and refrain from giving space to opposition voices that seek to destabilize the government.⁵⁴⁷ This document illustrates how political pluralism, while legally recognized, was met with state resistance. The period of the 1980s and early 1990s was marked by a pattern of state repression, with journalists frequently arrested, publications banned, and radio broadcasts censored whenever they aired content deemed hostile to the government.

Discussions in focus groups in Kakamega, Mumias, and Butere revealed mixed views on the state of media freedom in contemporary Kenya. Participants in Kakamega Town stated: Pluralism has allowed more media voices, but journalists still face threats when they expose corruption.⁵⁴⁸ Another participant in Butere Market added: The media is freer today, but the government still influences what can and cannot be reported.⁵⁴⁹ These sentiments indicate that while political pluralism has expanded media freedoms, restrictions persist. The persistence of state influence over the media suggests that while legal reforms have improved press freedom, political and economic factors continue to shape what is published and broadcasted.

⁵⁴⁷Kenya National Archives, File No. KNA/MEDIA/1985/02, Government Directive on Press Regulation.

⁵⁴⁸FGD held in Kakamega Town, 5/12/2024.

⁵⁴⁹FGD held in Butere Market, on 1/2/2025.

Scholars analyzing media freedom in Kenya argue that while pluralism has facilitated a more open press, the government continues to exert control through legal and financial means. Nyabuga and Booker, note that media ownership remains concentrated among political elites, limiting true independence.⁵⁵⁰ This has created a paradox where, despite a diverse range of media outlets, the ownership structure ensures that critical reporting remains constrained. Mogekwu M., argues that state intimidation and restrictive laws hinder investigative journalism, with many journalists resorting to self-censorship to avoid government reprisals.⁵⁵¹ Meanwhile, Makali D., observes that despite constitutional protections, journalists still face harassment when covering sensitive political issues.⁵⁵² Such views concur with the field data, which indicated that Kenya has limited freedom of media yet there is political pluralism.

Media freedom has been fought by both legal and extra-legal methods of repression. The state has been given the excuse to intervene into the affairs of media through the introduction of restrictive acts like the Official Secrets Act, the Kenya Communications Act, and the Media Council Act. One was the raid of the Standard Media Group in 2006 when security officers raided the offices of the newspaper, seized its equipment, and closed its operations on the basis of national security issues. According to critics, these measures have regularly been used to curb dissent instead of safeguarding the interest of the people.

⁵⁵⁰Nyabuga, George, Nancy Booker, Marius Dragomir, Mark Thompson, Aboubakr Jamaï, Yuen-Ying Chan, and Christian S. Nissen. *Mapping digital media: Kenya*. Nairobi: Open Society Foundations, 2013., p.40.

⁵⁵¹Mogekwu, Matt. "Conflict reporting and peace journalism. In search of a new model: Lessons from the Nigerian Niger Delta crisis." *Expanding peace journalism: Comparative and critical approaches* (2011): 239-260., p.246.

⁵⁵²Makali, David, ed. *Media law & practice: The Kenyan jurisprudence*. Phoenix Publishers, 2003., p.80.

Political pluralism has also provided an opportunity to the independent media and alternative channels of political expression as well. With the liberalization of the media industry during the early 2000s, the number of private radio stations, television stations increased and the news and political discussion became more diverse. Social media has also transformed the mode of political expression whereby, ordinary citizens are no longer subjected to censorship by traditional media; hence, they are able to discuss politics directly. Consequently, online activism has emerged as an effective advocacy tool and bloggers, journalists, and regular citizens have taken the digital platforms to attract attention to governance failures and to mobilize in order to bring about political change.

Although there have been such developments, there are still problems. The freedom of the press remains to be compromised by political forces in the media regulatory agencies. The Kenya Media Council that is mandated with regulating the industry has been accused on many occasions of being biased where decisions made seem to be in favor of the state and the media owners who are politically affiliated. Moreover, financial strains have compelled most of the autonomous media houses to depend on the government advertisement revenue, which has been tactfully used to manipulate editorial judgments. Media houses have been caught up in this economic stranglehold such that individual media houses cannot risk publishing news that could affect their financial sustainability.

The Pluralist Theory of Government is based on the view that democracy can only be achieved through a free press that guarantees the expression of different ideas and increased accountability. Political pluralism in Kenya has increased media space, but the problem of state control still exists. When Dahl R. states that democracy can only work, he means that

the political discourse must be free.⁵⁵³ Although Kenya has improved on media freedom, more reforms should be implemented to safeguard the journalists and give them actual independence. The success of a pluralist system lies in the fact that it has strong institutions that protect freedom of the press and ensure that journalists are not intimidated by the politics.

The presence of the civil society in the protection of the media freedoms is also important. Organizations like Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and Media Council of Kenya have been instrumental towards championing rights of journalism, training of media professionals and also offering legal advice to journalists who are being persecuted. They have helped to make the press stronger, although their influence can usually be curtailed by state interference and financial limitations. Also, external forces, including reporters without borders and committee to protect journalists have continually pointed out cases of press freedom oppression in Kenya and this has put the government under pressure to adhere to democratic ideals.

The researcher discovered that political pluralism has increased the media freedom in Kenya, yet legal constraints, political interferences and economic control of media houses remain in control to full expression. It is important that legal safeguards against journalists should be strengthened, that media independence is enforced and that the media ownership is diversified in order to protect the freedom of the press. The government should support the spirit of the 2010 Constitution that ensures the right to speech, information and independence of the media. Media freedom will still be prone to political manipulation unless these constitutional guarantees are put to full practice and honored.

⁵⁵³Dahl Roberts (1971)., *Op. Cit.*, p.34.

The idea of free expression that Shikuku promotes is still timely since Kenya is still in the process of balancing state power with democracy in the media industry. His legacy is a theme to remind the world that media freedom does not merely pertain to an individual being able to publish information, but it also pertains to the overall political climate in the sense that multiple voices can be heard without fear of censorship. His work highlights the struggle that is still on to establish a democratic system that sees the media in its rightful place as the fourth estate which can check power and give power to the citizens through information.

Going forward, the culture of media independence can only be developed through a multipronged approach. Reforms in the law should be supported with the institutional protection so that media control mechanisms are independent. The media houses must be empowered financially through pursuing various revenue streams such as public funding models that will not affect editorial integrity. Moreover, investment in training of journalists and security will have to increase in order to ensure that media practitioners are not threatened and intimidated.

The development of the media freedom in Kenya depicts the intricate connections between the political pluralism and the state control. Although there is a lot of progress to be made, there is a continued challenge of the influence of the state, limiting laws, and economic constraints. These problems will be resolved through consistent advocacy, solid laws and dedication towards ensuring the principles of free expression and democracy are observed. The struggle against press freedom as it has been proved by Shikuku and other proponents of media freedom is part and parcel of the struggle of democracy, openness and responsive governance.

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the author assessed the effects of the Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi on political pluralism in the history of Kenya since 1960 in terms of its contribution to the governance, political practices as well as civic political participation. The chapter has been divided in terms of major sub themes that came out of the findings of the study giving an in-depth analysis of both advantages and disadvantages of political pluralism.

It started with Democratic Governance where introduction of multiparty politics significantly contributed towards political competition, institutional checks and balances and democratic practices. That it also exposed situations of political instability due to pluralism, however. It is worth noting that Joseph Martin Shikuku was one of the key personalities in promoting the idea of democracy even before the restoration of multiparty democracy in the 1990s. His initial demands to the government to be accountable, to provide political transparency and uphold civil liberties made him one of the foremost developers of political pluralism in postcolonial Kenya.

The paper then examined Ethnic-Based Politics by using Kenya as an example of how political parties and elections have tended to be influenced by ethnic affiliation, hence, causing divisions and establishing exclusionary politics. The chapter also looked at the Electoral Violence whereby multiparty elections, especially since 1992, were marked by violent clashes, displacement and malpractices in elections.

This was then succeeded by Government Accountability and Responsiveness which showed how political pluralism forced the successive governments to be more open and responsive to the people concerns even though corruption and political patronage were still rife. Even

the actions of Shikuku himself such as his proposal in 1971 of a parliamentary anti-corruption committee and his declaration of wealth to Kenya is in itself a historical standard against which the fight against institutional integrity has been fought.

The paper also evaluated the Evolution of Civil Liberties and Human Rights and the role of political pluralism led to the growth of the freedoms of speech, association and press although there were some periods of state repression. The numerous arrests and detainments of Shikuku after speaking out and the general hostile attitude of the state towards opposition voices in the Kenyatta and the Moi regimes.

The Political Participation and Inclusion was another theme, which looked at how the marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities eventually became represented in the political processes. Finally, the topic of Media Freedom and Political Expression was discussed, with the central role of the independent media and digital platforms in the creation of political speech strongly emphasized and the leaders kept accountable.

Concisely, this chapter critically assessed the role of political pluralism in shaping the Kenyan politics incorporating both oral interviews, archival documents and academic opinions to offer a very subtle identification of the effects of the same. The role of principled political actors in the creation and protection of democratic space during various periods of history is intensified by the inclusion of figures like Joseph Martin Shikuku. The successive chapter highlights summary of major findings, conclusion, reference and recommendation of the further research.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter unraveled the impacts of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. This chapter discusses a summary of key findings, main conclusions, recommendations and ends with a suggestion for further research. They are pointed out as follows;

6.1 Summary of Key findings

The initial purpose examined the life of early 1932-1960 of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi. The most important discoveries included the following: Joseph Shikuku was born on Christmas day in the year 1932 at Magadi. He was of the Aberecheya clan of the Marama. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi grew up in the colonial and the early-post colonial Kenya with his early life being closely connected to social, cultural, religious and political life.

The education and the background of the home environment pre-conditioned the pluralism of politics in Shikuku. His parents were staunch Catholics and this made him send him to St. Peters Primary school in Mumias. Shikuku went to secondary school after the primary school. Shikuku began this level of education life as a seminarian in St. Peters Seminary in Mukumu where he was being trained to become a priest. He was only trained over a period of seven years. The training focused on being truthful at all costs which trained him to be a maverick politician.

When Shikuku left the seminary in 1952, he got his first employment as a laboratory assistant at Magadi. He found material satisfaction in this posting but his greatest problem was that

Magadi was in the remote regions and he was an expressive man who believed that people were important to him. This saw him resigning in the chemical company. In quitting as the laboratory assistant he had got employment as a train guard by the East African Railways in Nairobi. The fact that he was serving in the railways made him to be active when he ended up supporting Mau Mau rebellion by concealing guns to the rebels.

The outstanding communication and the skill of Shikuku to move in the traditional and modern realms of influence. His abilities in learning the local languages and education in the colonies made him a point of contact between the population and the government. In 1959, he was invited into the Nairobi People convention Party and shortly thereafter, he was appointed as the secretary general of the party. He left Nairobi People Convention Party in the year 1960 and joined Kenya Africa Democratic Union where he was elected as the youth leader.

Overall, the life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi in the early years of his life could be characterized by a set of interrelated aspects of spiritual background and educational success, political insights, and social trust. He was socialized in a family that focused on the importance of integrity, a society struggling with the injustice of colonization and his temperament that was conducive to leadership roles. His childhood experiences were not just stray cases but the steps of a national icon who will decisively emerge to represent the people of Kenya as the People Watchman in Kenyan politics.

The second aim followed the history of political pluralism in Kenya with regard to Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since 1960. The most important findings that come out are as

follows: The Lancaster House Conference of 1961, and 1962 defined the struggle of political pluralism and were the foundation of the transition of Kenya to independence.

Although independence had at first led to political pluralism, the years of 1963-1969 was characterized by the intentional destruction of political pluralism. Constitutional amendments, political blackmail, and security apparatus were some of the measures that the government used to stamp out opposition and they could not harness democratic governance.

The 1970s was the time of heightened political suppression in Kenya during presidential regimes of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi. Although the country had previously preserved the aspects of political pluralism, the period was associated with intentional attempts to oppress the opposition and establish the domination of KANU. Outspoken leaders and political activists including Joseph Martin Shikuku were victimized by the state repression because they were critical of the increasing authoritarianism of the government.

The 1980s experienced the state using tough methods to deal with opposition individuals such as arbitrary arrests and use of state security agencies to muzzle critics. The situation of the opposition leaders only deteriorated, yet the struggle of the pro-democracy activists kept the idea of the political pluralism on the move.

There was no doubt that the resurgence of multiparty democracy in Kenya was accompanied by hope and chaos. The initial multiparty elections in the year 1992 marked a vital political modification, however, it was surrounded and accompanied by extensive electoral malpractices, ethnic violence and government intimidation of alternative characters. Despite the fact that the elections were a breakthrough, they were marred by irregularities and ethnic

violence which left many citizens with the question of how credible the democratic process is.

The 2002 General Elections was a landmark change in the political arena in Kenya, as the KANU rule was over after close to 40 years. The post-2002 was a new dawn in Kenya as the opposition leaders could not be persecuted due to their opinions anymore.

Finally, the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution was a turning point in the political arena in Kenya, which brought legal mechanisms that increased political pluralism. Although political rivalry was transformed by coalitions, they did not always enhance democracy because most of the coalitions were formed along ethnic lines and not necessarily grounded on ideological principles.

The third aim was regarding an evaluation of Joseph Shikuku input in political pluralism in Kenya since 1960. Based on its results, the following were considered as the key; Shikuku had no fear to voice against oppression. He was among the rare few that were able to rise to the government and remind them that Kenya was not a one-party state but rather forced.

Shikuku especially spoke out in support of repealing Section 2A of the constitution which had enshrined Kenya as a one party state legally as a result of the ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU). Together with other oppression leaders, Shikuku was lobbying constitutional changes that would see the introduction of registration of more than one political party. His campaign was also a wider campaign that involved civil society organizations, lawyers, and international the second aim considered the effects of political pluralism in Kenyan History since 1960. These sub themes were discovered in the study. The demonstration of political repression by Shikuku began in the early 60s when the period

of colonization was replaced by the era of independence. Being a young politician, he soon demonstrated himself a vocal opponent of government profligacy.

The 1980s saw more state oppression as President Daniel Arap Moi deepened the roots of KANU as the sole legitimate party in 1982. Shikuku associated himself with the rest of opposition leaders at this time who were agitating to revert to multiparty politics. Shikuku organised under the scenes to enlist leaders and activists to fight the dictatorship. He urged the citizens to insist on what they want as long as their rights are not compromised.

In the fight to have multiparty democracy, Shikuku was a strong voice condemning the ethnic division of political parties. His focus on the national unity rather than the ethnic affiliation was one of the markers that distinguished him among the quotient number of modern politicians who had used the ethnic affiliation as a tool to consolidate their power. Shikuku represented the Kenyans as opposed to other politicians who could be seen appealing to their ethnic communities to support them. He did not belong to a single territory or tribe.

Shikuku was also one of the select few leaders who never failed to denounce the electoral violence on the ground that democracy could not prosper in a manner other than a peaceful atmosphere. In the early multiparty elections in 1990s he cautioned against using violence as a political weapon and pointed out that issues should be used in campaigns contrary to intimidation and coercion.

As a result of the introduction of multiparty democracy, the changes in the form of governance have steadily moved towards scrutiny of government officials, civic involvement and demand of transparency in government activities. Nevertheless, despite the fact that pluralism has offered a point of check, there are still hurdles as the institutions of the state

have been very slow in addressing the grievance of the people and corruption has been deeply rooted. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was one of the very few political leaders who insisted on accountability of the government system, including the role played by the opposition party and the civil society in keeping the leaders accountable of their actions.

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi became one of the most outspoken people who would defend the civil liberties by oppressing the government overreach and supporting the safeguarding of basic freedoms. He was one of the major players in the human rights struggle in Kenya, having been an active crusader against autocracy in his political life.

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was instrumental in championing inclusivity especially to the ordinary citizens, youth, and women in the political process. Shikuku being among the strongest advocates of grass-root democracy felt that without each Kenyan bearing a say in the decision making process, democracy would not have any meaning.

The much open press and more political discussion came in the form of transitioning to a multi-party democracy instead of being left as a one-party state. One of the politicians who never compromised with press freedom was Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who realized that an informed citizenry was very essential to democracy. His philosophy of freedom of speech and access to information was based on the notion that democracy could only succeed whereby the political discourse was not stifled by the state control manner of accessing information.

The fourth objective measured the effects of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenyan History since 1960. The main conclusions were as follows: Shikuku began his struggle against political repression in the early 1960s, when the colonialist power

gave way to the independence. He was an outspoken critic of government excesses and this came within a short period as a young politician.

Increased state repression came in the 1980s under the presidency of Daniel arap Moi who in 1982 entrenched KANU as the sole legal party. Shikuku together with other opposition leaders were also agitating to bring about a re-introduction of multi-party politics and this time, Shikuku was on the same side. Shikuku was operating in the background to bring together leaders and activists to fight the dictatorship. He urged individuals to fight to get what is theirs even at their own risk.

As multiparty democracy was fought, Shikuku made numerous complaints on the ethnic divisions of political parties. His highlighting of the national unity rather than ethnic affiliation made him stand out of the crowd of the day politicians who used ethnic affiliations to secure power. In contrast to other politicians who tried to seek the help of their ethnic groups, Shikuku was representing the whole of the Kenyans. He never belonged to one region or ethnic group. Shikuku was also one of the leaders who had continuously denounced acts of electoral violence saying that democracy would only prosper in a peaceful setting. In the early multiparty elections that took place in the 1990s, he cautioned against violence as a political weapon and stressed on issue based campaigns instead of intimidation and coercion.

With the advent of multiparty democracy, the form of governance has been slowly transformed to that of higher scrutiny of the government officials, higher civic participation and more people requiring to be given information on how the government is being run. Nevertheless, even though pluralism has offered a platform of oversight, issues have prevailed, with state institutions in most cases being sluggish to deal with the concerns of the

populace, and corruption is deeply rooted. Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was one of the few political leaders that had always insisted on government accountability where the opposition parties and the civic society played their parts in ensuring that leaders are held accountable to their actions.

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi became one of the loudest proponents of civil liberties, questioning governmental expansion and promoting the ideals of the defense of the basic freedoms. He was relentless in his fighting against autocracy and this aspect made him a central figure in the struggle of human rights in Kenya.

Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was instrumental in championing inclusiveness, especially to the common citizens, young people, and women, in politics. Being one of the most vocal supporters of the grassroot democracy, Shikuku thought that in order to make democracy count, each Kenyan needed to count in the making of decisions.

A shift of a single-party state into a multiparty democracy gave a platform of a more open press and the ability to have more political discussion. One of the politicians who were unswerving in supporting freedom of the press was Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi who was a proponent of the idea that an educated citizenry was paramount to democracy. The idea behind his free speech and access to information was based on the idea that democracy could only succeed in the environment where the political discourse was not suffocated by state control.

6.2 Conclusion

The conclusions were based on every specific research objective made by the researcher. The following are the conclusions:

Based on the first objective, which was on the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, the research arrives at conclusions that shed light on the origins of his political awareness and leadership performances. To begin with, the early years of Shikuku were strongly affected by the potent combination of the religious rigor with the traditional African principles and anti-colonial consciousness. He was brought up in a family of strict Catholics in a culturally diverse community of Luhya, therefore he got the Christian ethics, as well as the Luhya culture. This amalgamation of spiritual and cultural doctrines instilled a great sense of justice, truthfulness and service-values, which would later characterize his political ideology and life in general. The moral and philosophical experience in his early life provided the roots of his subsequent nationalist and reformist character as an upright man.

Exposure to missionary education and personal experience with colonial wrongs were instrumental in helping Shikuku to develop a political awareness at a very young age. The formal education that he got in the missionary schools gave him literacy and oratorical skills that would be utilized in his future career in the world. Better still, he felt a sense of urgency to address the oppression after observing the discriminative nature of colonial rulers and other general movements to resist them, including Mau Mau. These early experiences helped him develop a critical consciousness and offered the ideological building blocks in his future participation in the liberation struggle in Kenya.

The results indicate that both his community and teachers identified the leadership ability and intellectual potential in Shikuku at the young age, and thus, he is an automatic transition between the old African systems of authority and the new modern political frameworks. He was also reputed to be eloquent, precocious and self-confident and capable of holding his peers as well as the seniors on a serious conversation. This early acknowledgement made him a voice of the people even at an early age. His ability to enlist the oral tradition and formal education enabled him to express African desires both locally and nationally. It is clear that all these experiences set the stage of an emerging leader who was to take center stage in leading the country towards independence and democratic leadership.

The second specific research objective that followed the history of political pluralism in Kenya concerning Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since the year 1960 found that at the time of independence, there was room of opposition but after 1964, the opposition to the government was labeled as traitors. Shikuku was one of the leaders to openly criticize the one party rule and he was arrested on many occasions due to the same. His indomitable opposition to autocratic consolidation was not only to turn him into an enemy of the ruling elite, but also a symbol of opposition. The arrest of political dissidents turned out to be a very usual policy of the state to eradicate the opposition. Records show that Shikuku was arrested in 1975 when he claimed that KANU was murdering democracy in Kenya. His voice was perceived as sub-versive and his unwillingness to adhere to party orthodoxy turned out to be seen as a danger to authoritarianism.

His rebellion against state oppression made Shikuku respectable to pro-democracy activists but at the same time resulted in constant confrontations with the government. His narrative is a case study of how political pluralism, despite being usually stifled, was still maintained

by the dedication of brave people. It is also a mirror of the general trend of repression which characterized the post-independent administration scene in Kenya.

The third specific research objective that evaluated the contribution of Joseph Shikuku to political pluralism in Kenya since 1960 shows that the researcher concluded that Shikuku was not afraid to speak against oppression. He was among the few who could rise against the government and openly state Kenya was not a one-party state out of choice, but by force. His proclamation in Parliament, which made him well-known, when he said that KANU was dead, was rather provocative, but it highlighted the general disillusionment of the people with the regime. His arrest and imprisonment after that were even another strength to his memory as a brave political fighter. This action showed his sincerity to the truth and democratic responsibility.

Throughout the early 2000s, Shikuku was one of the politicians who argued to have a new constitution. Democracy was not just about elections at a period of time, he always maintained that it to have strong institutions and legal frameworks that guaranteed the rights of the citizens. The advocacy by Shikuku did not take place in vacuum. Other scholars and historical books state that opposition leaders like Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenneth Matiba and Raila Odinga were the others who played huge roles in reforming the constitution alongside such leaders as Shikuku to compel the state to rectify oppressive laws.

Finally, Shikuku could never be the type of leader to ride the wave. He was resolute when people were on the wrong side of those in power to achieve personal gain. That costed him politically. He did not fit in with political expediency and that is the reason why he was not influential in his later years but his integrity was not compromised. His unwinding adherence

to his principles won him the status of a political outcast in a system where being flexible usually equals being long-lived. Consequently, other people were making more power and Shikuku was making a principle legacy.

The fourth specific research objective, which considered the effects of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi on political pluralism in Kenyan history since 1960, has made the researcher to conclude that Shikuku was one of the first leaders to caution on the risks of consolidation of power under a single party. He stated that, when a nation lacks the freedom of political contestation then it is on a slippery slope towards dictatorship. He was right to forecast this because during the regimes of Kenyatta and Moi, Kenya was under repression as witnessed during these years.

Shikuku was a national leader compared to most of his peers who were seeking the support of ethnic constituencies. He never belonged to one tribe or region. These politics were rooted in a pan-Kenyan ideology that had been influenced by the politics of the early independence era, in which KANU was pitting KADU. The only characteristic of Shikuku was his strong stand against corruption and inefficiency. He often questioned governmental budgets, highlighted on unnecessary spending and demanded answers to misused government funds. An example is a parliamentary debate of 1975 in which Shikuku tells off: The government is dead! It is a system that is conducive to the interests of some and at the expense of the majority.

Finally, the activism of Shikuku was aimed at breaking the systems of exclusion that had rendered many Kenyans in politics in the fringes of political spheres. He was continually fighting against elite domination and demanded an inclusive, accountable, and just political

system. His policy was based on the notion that democracy must be beneficial to every citizen, irrespective of his/her status in society, ethnicity, and place of residence. To sum up, the legacy of Shikuku is an example of the transformational power of political pluralism in case pursued in as principled, courageous, and consistent manner as possible.

Thus, based on all the conclusions made above, the major conclusion of the research is the following: Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi was an unafraid activist of the political pluralism, who opposed the authoritarian inclinations of Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi. His rebelliousness, which was shown by denouncing the excesses of KANU, spearheading the historic Saba Saba protests, and so on, was the greatest definition of democracy, open power contestation. However, he did not earn wealth in his lifetime and his legacy was not much remembered unlike his contemporaries. This study is based on the Pluralist Theory, which holds that democracy is sustained by the voice of such bold people like Shikuku. His fearless approach to corruption and dictatorship provides a roadmap on how to restore the lost parliamentary integrity in Kenya, it shows that leadership is counted by virtue and not riches.

6.3 Recommendations

The researcher implies the following recommendations according to every specific objective of the study. According to the first specific research objective, which was to investigate early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi, it was found that the ministry of education through the ministry of youth affairs and arts, should introduce integrated mentorship and civic education program in the primary and secondary schools of Kenya. Religious and cultural institutions that ought to be used in this program in order to instill the values of integrity,

critical thinking and civic responsibility at such an early age- just as Shikuku was brought up with the same values. Mentors should be recruited in a systematic model that focuses on the coordination of moral growth, historical consciousness, and leadership. These include teachers, religious leaders, and other elders in the community. This is based on the realization that early exposure to Christian ethics, indigenous wisdom, and political curiosity that Shikuku had made him to have a spirit of nationalism and lifelong service to the country. Through institutionalization of such a program, Kenya will be able to produce future leaders the likes of Shikuku who although rooted in their respective communities can still participate in the national discourses thus enhancing democracy, good governance and national cohesion.

According to the second specific objective, which was to identify the history of political pluralism in Kenya concerning Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi since the year 1960, it is advisable that; to facilitate the continuation of political history in Kenya, a national archival and a digital repository on political pluralism ought to be started. The Kenya National Archives in coordination with the universities and historians ought to computerize and record major political events, interviews, and records concerning political pluralism since 1960. A research center should also be established through collaboration with partners like the National Museums of Kenya as a place to archive, research and publish past information. The project will achieve this by offering the historical records that are accurate to scholars, policymakers and the general population encouraging deliberate debate and action in governing democracies.

The third specific objective that was to evaluate the contributions of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi on the political pluralism in Kenya since the year 1960, the researcher suggests that;

The role of Oyondi in the development of democracy in Kenya should be incorporated in the history curriculum of Kenya so that people can become more aware of his contribution. KICD needs to include information on the work of Shikuku in the secondary and higher education curricula, and universities ought to promote research and dissertations on his politics. Also, the country should celebrate him through national commemorations and lectures with the aim of reminding people that he contributed to the development of political pluralism. The effort will help keep historical memory alive, motivate future leaders, and support the importance of individual contributions to the democracy development of Kenya.

The fourth specific objective that was to assess the influences of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenyan history since 1960, the researcher suggests that; Civic education programs ought to be intensified to create awareness of citizens on the role and the impacts of political pluralism in Kenya. The civil society organizations, media houses, and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) should come together to carry out regular civic education campaigns to guarantee that the citizens are aware of their democratic rights and responsibilities. At the grassroots level, training sessions and workshops need to be conducted to ensure that people can be tolerant to politics and can engage in the political process in an informed manner. This initiative will decrease misinformation and build democratic stability and curb electoral violence by enriching citizens with information on how to achieve political pluralism.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher proposes the following issues to subsequent researchers after discussing the findings of the study;

- i. Evaluation of the importance of Grassroot Movements in forming the political pluralism in Kenya between 1960 and 2020. This paper will particularly focus on how political pluralism in Kenya has grown with influence of political activism among the grassroots to the year 2020. It will gauge the role played by the civil society organizations, mobilization of communities, and informal political frameworks in promoting democracy.
- ii. Relationship between political pluralism and electoral violence in Kenya 1992- 2022. In this project, the research problem will be on the role of political pluralism in electoral violence in Kenya since the birth of multi-party politics in 1992 to the 2022 general elections. The study will quantify the cases of electoral violence, inter-party and mediation policies implemented in past years.
- iii. Comparison of the works of Joseph Martin Shikuku and other political reformers in Kenya between the years 1960 and 2010. The study will compare the contribution of Joseph Martin Shikuku to political pluralism with other important political leaders of the same period, including Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Kenneth Matiba between the years 1960 and 2010. It will gauge their contributions towards the reforms in legislation, party building, and promotion of democracy in governance.

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Oral Interviews

S/NO	NAME	DATE OF INTERVIEW	PLACE OF INTERVIEW
1	Holiness Omurunga	12/12/2024	Ebukhokoro
2	Robert Makambo	15/12/2024	Eshirembe
3	Rosemary Makambo	15/12/2024	Eshirembe
4	Kenneth Kaunda	15/12/2024	Mumias
5	Calson Atenya	18/12/2024	Eshirembe
6	Peter Omurunga Oyondi	4/1/2025	Irechea/Ebukhokoro
7	Lwali Oyondi (veteran politician)	6/1/2025	Nakuru/ lanet
8	Habil Mukolwe	7/1/2025	Eshisebu
9	George Mukolwe	7/1/2025	Eshisebu
10	Beatrice Mukolwe	7/1/2025	Eshisebu
11	Esther Mukolwe	7/1/2025	Eshisebu
12	Alexander Mukolwe	7/1/2025	Eshisebu
13	Everlyne Shikanda	8/1/2025	Tsalwa
14	Stanley Mate	8/1/2025	Irechea
15	Richard Shisoka	16/1/2025	Butere
16	Carolyne Omuka	15/1/2025	Lunza
17	Violet Mwema	15/1/2025	Lunza
18	Evans omuka	15/1/2025	Lunza
19	Francis Omuka	15/1/2025	Lunza
20	Mary Ndanje	15/1/2025	Lunza
21	Suleiman Kombo	18/2/2025	Imanga
22	Benard Anangwe	18/2/2025	Imanga
23	Newton Kataka	21/1/2025	Ebukhokoro
24	Benson Misiko	21/1/2025	Shatsiala
25	Milton Mutachi	21/1/2025	Shikulu
26	Leah Olanga	21/1/2025	Manyala

27	Mark Ongulu	21/1/2025	Eshinamwenyuli
28	Sharald Madanji	3/2/2025	Nairobi.
29	Benjamin Omubandia	23/1/2025	Ebukolwe
30	Douglas Neondo	24/1/2025	Butere Lower market
31	Habil Nanjendo	24/1/2025	Eshinamwenyuli
32	Frida Mwale	31/1/2025	Eshilunyire
33	Hosea Opala	31/1/2025	Mulambo
34	Mary Nasimiyu	16/2/2025	Mumias
35	Samuel Litunya	31/1/2025	Lufumbo
36	John Wanyama	14/2/2025	Butere
37	Amos Eshikhati	10/2/2025	Eshianini
38	Dorcas Inyundo	18/2/2025	Shikunga
39	Edward Amwayi	13/2/2025	Muluknji
40	Francis Mukanda	10/2/2025	Luanda
41	Alice Litunya	19/2/2025	Emanyulia

Focus Group Discussion

An FGD of Political Analysts in Kakamega town on 5th December, 2024.

S/NO	NAME	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1.	Frankline Oriedo	Logistics Officer	Kakamega Town	5/12/2024
2.	Allan Mukabane	Boda boda rider		
3.	Litunya Osanya	Matatu driver		
4.	Alice Masakhwe	Trader		
5.	Joyce Kafuna	Accountant		

6.	Kokoti Mtembula	Logistics Officer		
7.	David Kweya	Journalist		
8.	Lydia Baraza	Clergy		

An FGD of Teachers of History in Mumias Town on 10th January 2025

S/NO	NAME	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1.	Argwings Munyendo	Teacher	Mumias Town	10/1/2025
2.	Bilal Eshikumo	Teacher		
3.	Kweyu Salasya	Teacher		
4.	Noel Anangwe	Teacher		
5.	Anne Rehema	Teacher		
6.	Bonface Ambunya	Teacher		
7.	Dennis Olwichi	Teacher		
8.	Alice Kimeu	Teacher		

An FGD of Residents of Butere Lower Market on 1st February 2025

S/NO	NAME	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE

1.	Makomere Linus	A farmer	Butere Lower Market	1/2/2025
2.	Mwanahawa Anekea	Trader		
3.	Olunga Etale	Boda boda rider		
4.	Anthony Opunga	Trader		
5.	Peter Tulesi	Security Officer		
6.	Moses Wambani	Farmer		
7.	Victor Malala	Accountant		
8.	Michael Nambwaya	A pastor		

An FGD of Business People in Shikunga on 18/2/2025

S/NO	NAME	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1.	Arnold Opembe	Trader	Shikunga	18/2/2025
2.	Rehema Anangwe	Farmer		
3.	Mwanaidi Opembe	Trader		
4.	Harun Mwanza	Teacher		
5.	Clarence Eshikhati	County Security Officer		
6.	Amos Osundwa	Trader		
7.	Margaret Manyasa	Farmer		
8.	Samwel Lijodi	Trader		

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

My name is Okoba Pascalia, a student at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, pursuing Master of Arts in History. I am expected to undertake a research on **“JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI AND POLITICAL PLURALISM IN KENYA, 1932-2012”** Your cooperation and assistance is required to enable me complete the exercise. This information will be strictly used for the intended academic purpose.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX II: CONSENT FORM FOR THE RESPONDENTS

Consent form to allow the use of photographs and verbatim from the respondents.

I am requesting for your permission to use your photos and verbatims in this study.

If Yes

I.....(Respondents name) allow the use of my photographs and verbatim in this research/study on this day(Day and Date).

If No

I.....(Respondents name) do not allow the use of my photographs and verbatim in this research/study on this day(Day and Date).

Signature of the Respondent.....

APPENDIX III: SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDES

Objective 1: To interrogate the early life of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi,

1932-1960.

- i. When and where was Shikuku born?
- ii. How did traditional values, culture and traditions lead to his political life?
- iii. How did Shikuku's childhood events contributed to his political career?
- iv. What role did education and religion contributed to his political journey?
- v. How did he navigate the colonial period?
- vi. What role did his early career play towards decolonization process and political pluralism?

Objective 2: To trace the history of political pluralism in Kenya since 1960

- i. What was the political landscape like in Kenya during the 1960s?
- ii. What were some key events or policies that influenced political pluralism during this period?
- iii. What role have constitutional changes and legal reforms played in enhancing or hindering political pluralism?
- iv. How would you assess the current state of political pluralism in Kenya?
- v. What do you see as the future challenges and opportunities for political pluralism in Kenya?

Objective 3: To assess the contributions of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to political pluralism in Kenya since 1960

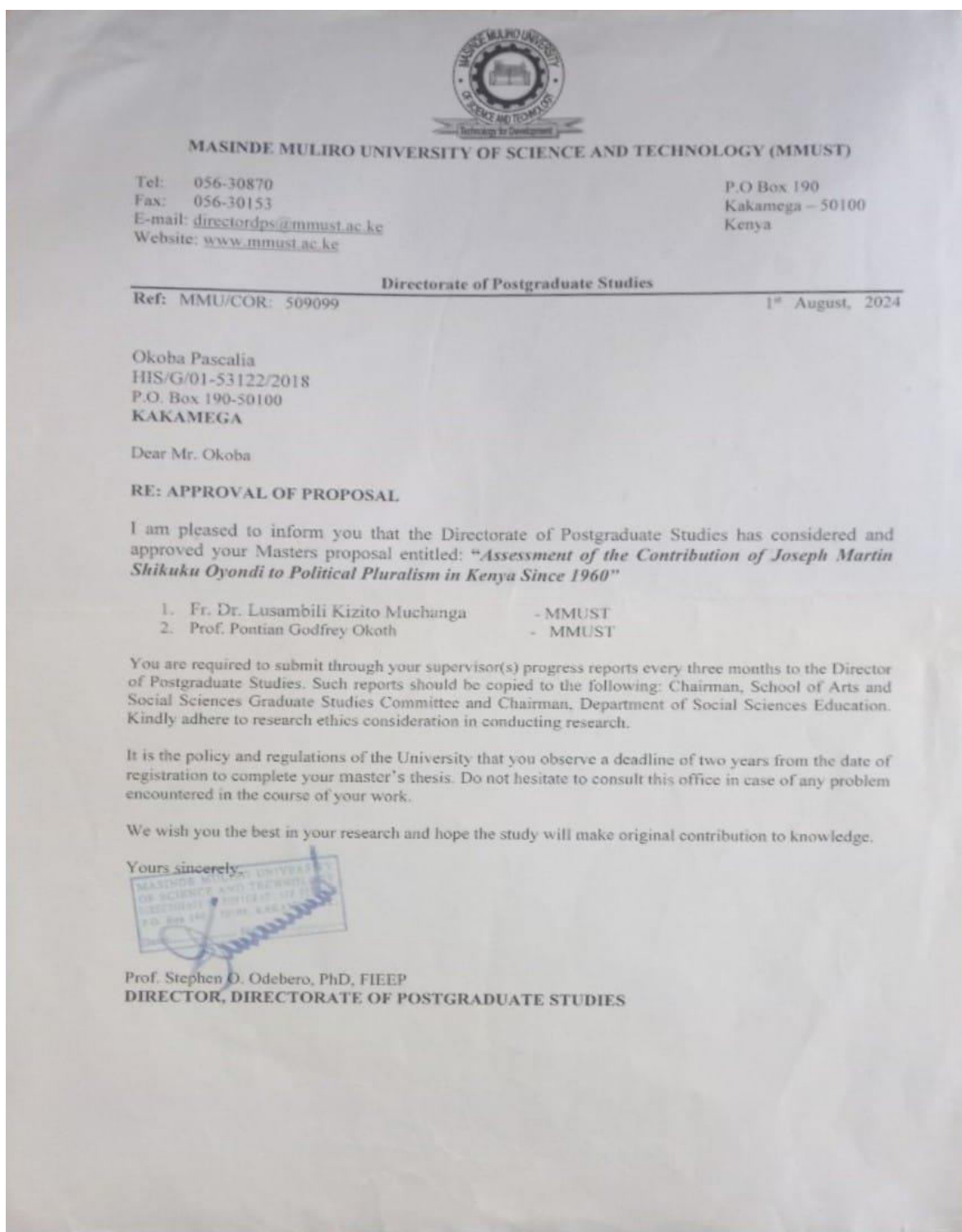
- i. How did Martin Shikuku help in the establishment of political pluralism towards independence?
- ii. What were the significant impacts of Martin Shikuku on the transition to multi-party politics in the early 1990s?
- iii. How did Martin Shikuku strengthened Kenya's positive impacts of political pluralism while mitigating any negative effects?
- iv. Can you share specific campaigns or initiatives that were particularly influential during the transition to multi-party democracy that Martin Shikuku was involved?
- v. What do you see as the main challenges and opportunities for political pluralism in Kenya today, and what impacts do you anticipate?

Objective 4: To evaluate the impacts of political pluralism in Kenyan history since 1960

- i. How did the establishment of political pluralism after independence affect governance and political participation?
- ii. What were the positive and negative impacts of political pluralism during this period?
- iii. How did political pluralism influence the relationship between the government and opposition parties?
- iv. What role has political pluralism played in shaping policy and legislative reforms?

- v. How can Kenya strengthen the positive impacts of political pluralism while mitigating any negative effects?

APPENDIX IV: APPROVAL LETTER FROM DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRAGUATE-MMUST



APPENDIX V: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM THE COUNTY

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

Telephone: 056 -31131

Email: cckakamega12@yahoo.com

When replying please quote:

Ref. No. ED.12/I/VOL.VII/ 137

County Commissioner
Kakamega County
P O Box 43 - 50100
KAKAMEGA

Date: 16th June, 2025

Ms. Okoba Pauline Pascalia
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
P.O Box 190- 50100
KAKAMEGA

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your authorization vide License Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/24/42307 dated 22nd November, 2024, by NACOSTI to undertake research on "*Assessment of the Contribution of Joseph Martin Shikuku Oyondi to Political Pluralism in Kenya since 1960, Kakamega County*" for the period ending 22nd November, 2025. You are hereby informed that you have been authorized to carry out the research on the same in this county.

P.K. KEMEI


FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER

KAKAMEGA COUNTY

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

cc: All Deputy County Commissioners
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

APPENDIX VI: PERMISSION LETTER FROM EDDUCATION OFFICE

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Telephone:
Fax:
E-mail: wespropde@yahoo.com
When replying please quote our Ref.

County Director of Education
Kakamega County
P. O. BOX 137 - 50100
KAKAMEGA

REF: KAKA/C/GA/29/17/VOL.VI/

13th June, 2025

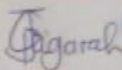
MS. OKOBA PAULINE PASCALIA
MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to a letter from NACOSTI Ref No:
NACOSTI/P/24/42307 dated 22nd Nov, 2024 concerning subject matter.

This is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out
research on **'Assessment of the contribution of Joseph Martin
Shikuku Oyondi to Political Pluralism in Kenya since 1960,
Kakamega County'** the period ending 22nd November, 2025.

Please accord him/her any necessary assistance he/she may require.

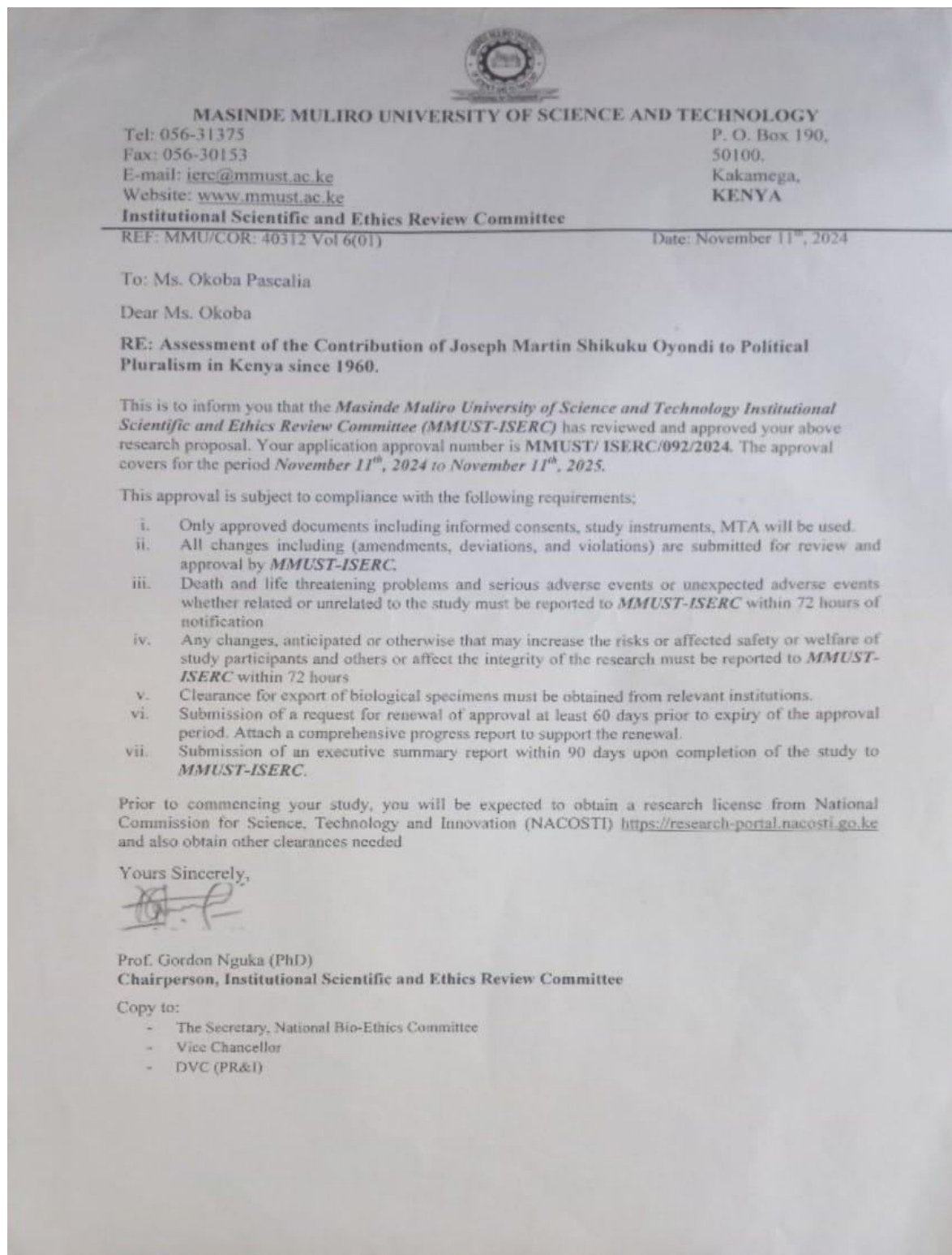

FOR
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

P.P HELLEN NYANG'AU
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

Copy to:

Regional Director of Education
WESTERN REGION

APPENDIX VII: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM ISERC-MMUST



APPENDIX VIII: PERMISSION FROM NACOSTI

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 537606	Date of Issue: 22/November/2024
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Ms. Okoba Pauline Pascalia of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega, Nairobi on the topic: ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF JOSEPH MARTIN SHIKUKU OYONDI TO POLITICAL PLURALISM IN KENYA SINCE 1960 for the period ending : 22/November/2025.</p>	
License No: NACOSTI/P/24/42307	
537606 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
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