MOBILIZING THE FAITHFUL: ORGANIZATIONAL AUTONOMY, VISIONARY PASTORS, AND CITIZENSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ZAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have examined the significant involvement of Christian organizations in national-level politics since the revitalization of democracy in Africa in the 1990s, but few have focused on local faith-based organizations engaged in grassroots citizen mobilization. This article compares two such organizations rooted in local communities in Zambia and South Africa in order to elucidate their role. On the basis of interviews, document analysis, and participant observations conducted in 2011, 2013, and 2014, we find that the greater the autonomy a Pentecostal organization enjoys from external partners and the more independence its leader enjoys in decision making, the more likely it is to engage in local citizenship mobilization. However, while these structural factors may facilitate change, they are unlikely to result in new political strategies being pursued unless they are combined with a form of visionary leadership that seeks to promote citizenship. Our findings explain new forms of Pentecostal political involvement, particularly at the grassroots level, by showing how some leaders have used their churches’ autonomous structures to promote political engagement.

DESPITE THE RISE OF MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY and freedoms in African countries since the 1990s, many new democracies are shackled by corruption and the centralization of power, and have yet to establish the rule of law. Scholars have asserted that these problems at least partially reflect the underdevelopment of citizenship in Africa, where citizens have been

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relatively unwilling to participate in politics with the goal of holding government officials accountable for policies. Only about a third of respondents in Zambia and South Africa, for example, agreed – some strongly – that ‘people should control government’.

In many of Africa’s weak democracies the number of Christian adherents is rapidly increasing and Christian organizations have become more vocal actors in national politics. While scholars have examined the phenomenon of national-level religious political participation, they have generally ignored activities at the local level. This article addresses this omission and asks what explains variation in citizen mobilization by religious organizations at the grassroots level. To answer this question we use a comparative case study of two organizations rooted in local communities: the Jubilee Centre, a Pentecostal organization in Zambia that engages in direct citizen mobilization, and the JL Zwane Centre, a mainline Protestant (Presbyterian) organization in South Africa that has made little attempt to promote citizen activities. We find that organizational autonomy and leadership are crucial factors that foster this variation and help to explain the increased role of Pentecostals in Africa’s political realm, particularly at the grassroots level.

We conceptualize citizen mobilization as including four components: (1) citizen education, such as teaching people participation strategies and demonstrating why participation matters; (2) political advocacy, such as organizing and/or attending community meetings and/or contacting elected officials; (3) leadership training, such as giving leaders the skills to advocate for change; and (4) resource mobilization, such as raising funds for local projects.


4. A grassroots organization has a local, not national, office; individuals in the community serve as its personnel; and its membership, if a formal list exists, consists of people living in proximity to the organization.

5. To clarify terminology, mainline Protestant churches such as Methodists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians were introduced by the colonial missionaries. Pentecostals include Wesleyan holiness conservative churches introduced by Westerners and neo-Pentecostals, which emerged primarily in urban Africa. Pentecostals emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of life and worship. See Amy S. Patterson, The church and AIDS in Africa: The politics of ambiguity (First Forum Press, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2011), pp. 17–24.
and educate others about participation; and (4) electoral engagement, such as supporting candidates for local or national office or demanding campaign promises from all candidates. Citizen mobilization contrasts with community development, which we define as delivery of social services like literacy classes or small business projects intended to improve a specific community.

Our findings expand the literature on religion and politics in Africa, which has tended to focus on religion’s salience in society, churches as ambiguous civil society actors, and conflicts between church and state.6 This literature has only recently begun to explore the complex reasons why religious organizations engage in particular actions in the public realm.7 While scholars have shown that Africans with high levels of religiosity demonstrate greater support for and involvement in the democratic process,8 this finding does not indicate how (or why) Christian organizations might shape that involvement, and it does not elucidate religion’s interaction with political processes at the grassroots level.

Our in-depth analysis reveals how organizational autonomy, which we define as an organization’s independence from external partners and its leader’s independence in decision making, facilitates citizen mobilization. This autonomy intertwines with visionary pastoral leadership to promote citizenship involvement. These factors are a unique function of Pentecostalism, which tends to emphasize charismatic church founders with unique spiritual gifts who may operate in structures of limited accountability.9 Pentecostals’ emphasis on leaders’ power to intercede with the spiritual realm to bring their followers positive benefits and protection from evil enables them to foster citizenship mobilization, as does their access to patronage resources through development initiatives and autonomous decision-making structures. Our findings build on the recognition that pastors are often the most educated, respected, and powerful members in local communities, and that political leadership in traditional societies often had religious dimensions.10


These findings also expand our understanding of how Pentecostals, traditionally thought to shun politics, have begun to engage the political realm.11

Religion and politics in Africa

More than two decades after the “third wave” of democracy arrived in Africa,12 democratic regimes face challenges and citizenship remains underdeveloped.13 While individuals have moved from being subjects of authoritarian regimes to voters, democracy ultimately rests on the need for citizens who ‘regularly claim accountability from leaders’.14 Rates of participation beyond voting are low, and Afrobarometer surveys in 18 countries in 2005–6 showed that 56 percent of adults looked to other institutions such as the executive or political parties to hold elected legislators accountable.15 While studies on fostering citizenship have discussed the obstacles to citizen mobilization,16 none of them have questioned why some local organizations might engage in citizen mobilization. More specifically, why might grassroots religious institutions that traditionally have not focused on such activities develop or shun them?

Studies of religion and politics in Africa, including Robert Woodberry’s recent analysis of conversionary Protestants during the colonial era, illustrate the ambiguous, diverse, and dynamic role of religious groups in African politics.17 This role is often determined by context, timing, and qualities within religious organizations themselves.18 Despite its focus on national politics, the existing literature provides several lessons for our grassroots investigation. In terms of church–state relations, it seems that the more autonomous religious organizations are from the state, the more likely they will be to engage in politics in order to hold the government accountable. For example, mainline Protestant and

13. Larry Diamond, _Developing democracy: Toward consolidation_ (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD 1999); Gyimah-Boadi, _Democratic reform in Africa._
16. Some studies emphasize the value of citizen education programmes and free and fair elections in the development of citizen attitudes, while others find that poverty remains a huge obstacle to citizen activism. See Bratton, _Voting and democratic citizenship in Africa._
Catholic organizations in Zambia mobilized to prevent the late President Frederick Chiluba from running for a third term, an action made possible because they had not been incorporated into the Chiluba government. In contrast, because of its close ties to the Hutu regime, the Catholic Church in Rwanda did not act to prevent the 1994 genocide.

For some scholars, the theological foundations of different religious traditions matter for national political involvement. Paul Gifford argues that within Africa historically, ‘It is the mainline churches that have challenged Africa’s dictators; the newer Pentecostal churches…have provided the support.’ For Gifford, mainline churches are more in tune with structural justice issues, spurred by robust theological traditions, whereas the Pentecostal churches tend to focus on personal and public integrity, as exemplified in Ugandan Pentecostals’ advocacy for abstinence-only AIDS programmes. In their analysis of sermons in Nairobi Pentecostal churches, Gwyneth McClendon and Rachel Beatty Riedl echo this assessment and find that pastors stress individual autonomy and believers’ potential for empowerment. Some Pentecostals also emphasize the ‘prosperity gospel’, or the idea that ‘believers have the right to the blessings of health and wealth won by Christ.’ Pentecostalism’s individualistic, and sometimes triumphalistic, nature may prevent the social change needed for democracy’s consolidation in Africa. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu echoes this view: the Pentecostal focus on spiritually transforming politics may mean they ignore the structural challenges that lead to the very corruption and poverty that they wish to combat.

Yet other scholars provide a more complicated picture. On the issue of mainline church participation, Jeffrey Haynes argues that most leaders within these churches, in an effort to ‘maintain their hegemonic domination

19. Freston, Evangelicals and politics.
21. We use the generic term ‘political involvement’ to denote any engagement in public decision making.
over society’, work with political elites to preserve the status quo. These churches support fundamental political reform not for theological reasons but only if it advances their religious and material interests. When churches pursue such narrow, elitist interests they foster favouritism and contribute to structural violence. On Pentecostals’ political involvement, Harri Englund points to the wide diversity in Pentecostal approaches to the public realm. Increasingly, many Pentecostals (though not all) have moved beyond a focus on holiness in the private realm to assert that ‘the world requires action and transformation’. Many Pentecostals recognize that the public engagement required to bring God’s light to the world is full of dangers and difficulties, but ‘anything can be imbued with the Holy Spirit’, including capitalism, consumerism, and politics. For example, Alessandro Gusman illustrates how two Pentecostal mega-churches in Uganda, the Makerere Community Church and the Kampala Pentecostal Church, became involved in politics because their leaders view such participation as a reflection of one’s experience of being “born again” in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals’ increasingly public role is also evident in greater involvement in social service delivery and economic enterprises.

In support of the role of independent and Pentecostal churches in Africa’s democratization, Haynes asserts that these religious movements may realize that ‘the best way to achieve individual and collective benefits [is] by practising methods of self-help’. Even without an institutionalized role in politics, these churches foster personal-level politicization as they help members develop decision-making, literacy, and empowerment skills. As a result, such organizations may actually offer more in the way of consolidating democracy than the mainline churches.

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32. Ibid.
35. Haynes, *Religion and politics in Africa*, p. 133. Independent churches include those that broke off from mission churches and were founded by a prophet, such as Zionists in Zimbabwe and South Africa and some neo-Pentecostal churches such as Winners’ Chapel in Ghana that emerged in the post-colonial period. See Patterson, *The church and AIDS in Africa*, p. 21.
37. Ranger, *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa*. 
Church structures, too, may influence national-level political involvement. The international, resource-rich, and centralized nature of mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches helped them fill the political vacuum of the 1980s and challenged authoritarianism in the early 1990s.\footnote{Ibid.}

Similarly, Stathis Kalyvas finds that hierarchical and centralized Catholic parties fostered democratization in historic Belgium while decentralized Muslim parties in modern-day Algeria did not.\footnote{Stathis N. Kalyvas, ‘Commitment problems in emerging democracies: The case of religious parties’, 
*Comparative Politics* 32, 4 (2000), pp. 379–98.} The issue of organizational structures also applies to independent and Pentecostal churches. Because their worship styles make these churches inherently participatory in nature, and their bottom-up genesis may make them more aware of local realities, they may have spaces in which individuals who were traditionally excluded from power, such as women and youth, can develop leadership skills.\footnote{Brigid Sackey, 
*African Christianity rising* (James Ault Productions, Northhampton, MA, 2013).} They also may be able to build the social capital necessary for consolidating democracy.\footnote{Isabel Mukonyoro asserts that the Masowe Apostles ‘function as schools of democracy … in the education of otherwise voiceless Zimbabweans in the norms and practices of participatory politics’.\footnote{Isabel Mukonyora, ‘Foundations for democracy in Zimbabwean Evangelical Christianity’, in Terence Ranger (ed.), 

Isabel Mukonyoro asserts that the Masowe Apostles ‘function as schools of democracy … in the education of otherwise voiceless Zimbabweans in the norms and practices of participatory politics’.\footnote{Leonardo Villalón, 
*Islamic society and state power in Senegal: Disciples and citizens in Fatick* (Cambridge University Press, London, 2006).}

Additionally, most Pentecostal churches are not tied to larger denominations, giving their leaders autonomy in setting their own agenda.\footnote{David Maxwell, 
*African gifts of the spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement* (James Currey, Oxford, 2006).} Even though these organizations may have the potential for social capital formation and political equality, the reality may be that, within the organization itself, power is centralized around the leader. Poverty and social expectations may cause believers in these churches to treat pastors as “big men”, or patrons in unequal and hierarchical networks of material exchange.\footnote{McCauley, ‘Africa’s new big man rule’.} This dependent relationship may increase devotion to the leader and make leader-inspired mobilization possible, a pattern Leonardo Villalón also discovered among rural Muslim imams and their disciples in Senegal.\footnote{Leonardo Villalón, 
*Islamic society and state power in Senegal: Disciples and citizens in Fatick* (Cambridge University Press, London, 2006).} Since some of these independent churches are increasingly becoming resource-rich through transnational connections, pastors may bolster their power through access to material resources.\footnote{David Maxwell, 
*African gifts of the spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement* (James Currey, Oxford, 2006).} Yet the leader-centred decision-making structures and
organizational autonomy found primarily among Pentecostal churches give pastors who are interested in citizen mobilization the space in which to act and the devoted members who will follow them. Gusman shows how pastors of autonomous Pentecostal churches in Uganda, for example, have engaged successfully in AIDS policy making and mobilized their followers for AIDS prevention efforts. Similarly, while the personal experiences of Sam Korankye Ankrah drove him to establish the Pentecostal Royalhouse Chapel International in Ghana, it was his autonomy that helped him push the organization to engage in social service provision.47

In sum, the literature highlights the complex place of religion in national-level politics. At the macro-level, Pentecostals are increasingly involved in politics – just as mainline churches are – because of their desire to bring morality to the public sphere, their focus on individual empowerment, and their leadership-centred, autonomous structures. But what might a detailed study of grassroots religious organizations reveal? The African continent contains thousands of such organizations, many of which focus on community development over and against citizen mobilization. Why might grassroots Christian organizations commit to direct citizen mobilization? The following empirical sections point to the crucial role of organizational autonomy and leadership in answering that question, and they assert that Pentecostals’ emphasis on these two factors has contributed to the increase in their political involvement at the grassroots level.

Methodology and case study organizations

Both the JL Zwane Centre and the Jubilee Centre are involved with community development, but the JL Zwane Centre – started in 1994 by the Presbyterian minister Reverend Spiwo Xapile – does not engage in citizen mobilization. The Centre is located in Guguletu, a township of over 130,000 people, approximately 15 kilometres from Cape Town.48 Xapile arrived in Guguletu in 1989 to pastor the Guguletu Reformed Presbyterian Church, later renamed the JL Zwane Memorial Church.49 Xapile’s vision of a ‘community church’ that would reconcile and strengthen the township

led him to create the JL Zwane Centre.\(^{50}\) The Centre is physically located on the grounds of the church, and thus is a vibrant meeting point in the community. JL Zwane’s mission is ‘protecting the dignity of the individual, developing human capital, [and] rescuing hope through Word and Deed with Christ in the centre of our lives’.\(^{51}\) It runs nutritional, home-based care and after-school study programmes, as well as HIV and AIDS support groups and leadership training initiatives. It employs seven staff members. Its biggest constraints are its limited capacity to meet community needs and insufficient financial accountability mechanisms.\(^{52}\)

The Centre’s presence in Guguletu offers stability and hope in a context with a 65 percent unemployment rate, high poverty, steady violence, and inadequate service delivery.\(^{53}\) One respondent said:

> JL Zwane is a constant in the area. There is a lot of poverty, unemployment has increased, gangsterism is worse. … It’s even in our schools! For JL Zwane Centre to have aftercare and soccer clubs, we help these kids. … We are in the poorer zones in Guguletu. … There is a lot of HIV/AIDS. JL Zwane steps in on all of this, and it’s for all.\(^{54}\)

Thus, JL Zwane serves the community, not just the JL Zwane Memorial Church members.

By contrast, the Jubilee Centre engages in citizen mobilization. It was started in 2000 by Lawrence Temfwe, an original founder of the Pentecostal Bread of Life Church. It is located in Ndola, a city in Zambia’s Copperbelt region. Copper mine privatization in the 1990s led to high unemployment and low wages in Ndola, and over 50 percent of residents live in poverty. Residents face high housing prices and food scarcity.\(^{55}\) Jubilee’s mission statement hints at its role in citizen mobilization: ‘to empower churches, communities and their leaders to grow spiritually, flourish physically and have a voice in the world’ (emphasis added).\(^{56}\) Jubilee’s activities are more encompassing than JL Zwane’s.

In addition to assisting home-based care programmes for people living with HIV and AIDS, it builds community schools for orphans and vulnerable children and supports income-generation activities like gardens and small

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51. JL Zwane Centre mission statement, located on lobby sign in JL Zwane Centre, written down by Tracy Kuperus on 18 July 2013, Guguletu, South Africa.
52. Mitchell and Sieff, ‘JL Zwane Centre’; Interview, JL Zwane community member 1, Guguletu, South Africa, 16 July 2013.
54. Interview, JL Zwane staff member 4, Guguletu, South Africa, 18 July 2013.
businesses. It is also different from JL Zwane in that it works through other churches and does not have a church itself. Its partners are 94 individual congregations from all denominations in four slum communities: three in Ndola (Mapalo, Chifubu, and Chibuluma) and one in Lusaka (George). Most of its partner churches are Pentecostal, not mainline Protestant or Catholic, perhaps because the latter two church types have their own social service agencies. Jubilee’s partner congregations are organized into pastoral networks (one in each of the four communities), and Jubilee directly interacts with these pastoral networks; this means most of its community work is mediated by local church leaders. Also, unlike JL Zwane, Jubilee’s office is not situated in the communities it serves. Despite this fact, participants consistently speak with appreciation about Jubilee and its long-term relationship with poor communities. Jubilee has thirteen staff members, and its biggest challenge is insufficient staff and funding to meet community demand for its services.

The organizations share several features. First, they are explicit in their faith background, hiring Christians, incorporating prayer and worship into their activities, and espousing explicitly Christian doctrines. Second, with roughly the same resource base, they work at the grassroots level, not the national level, engaging extensively in community development. Like many African NGOs and FBOs that developed to address community problems, their programmes are rooted in a neo-liberal view of modernity in which individuals are empowered through entrepreneurship and education and moulded into responsible participants in their own sustainable development. Third, they each rely heavily on financial support from international partners to fund service delivery and to build organizational capacity. JL Zwane receives significant contributions from two US Presbyterian congregations, two US secular organizations, and the Richmond Group in the United Kingdom, while Jubilee depends on three congregations in the United States, Tearfund-UK, and the Church Mission Society. Despite this dependence, as we describe below, their leaders have been able to attract donors that support, not challenge, their particular visions.

57. Interview, Jubilee staff member 1, Ndola, Zambia, 24 July 2013.
58. Interview, Jubilee staff member 6, Ndola, Zambia, 10 June 2014.
59. Focus group, community partners of Jubilee, Chifubu, Zambia, 10 June 2014.
60. Interview, Jubilee staff member 2, Ndola, Zambia, 25 July 2013.
Finally, both organizations operate in social settings marked by rampant poverty and unemployment, and both face political challenges. In Zambia, increasingly the government has sought to limit civil society organizations through co-optation and legislation.\(^64\) State officials remain suspicious of individuals who speak against government. Because of its citizen activities, some political and religious leaders have accused Jubilee, Temfwe, and some local pastors of ‘stirring up the people’ for partisan objectives.\(^65\) In South Africa, state–civil society collaboration in the early post-apartheid period emphasized community development, not citizen mobilization.\(^66\) This pattern led Guguletu residents to perceive that socio-economic needs come first, politics second.\(^67\) When new social movements emerged in the late 1990s to address poor social service delivery, government accountability, and human rights,\(^68\) the government tended to ignore, co-opt, or harass them.\(^69\) The rise of effective secular social movements in the 2000s may have discouraged grassroots Christian organizations such as the JL Zwane Centre from citizen mobilization. Examples of such movements are the Social Justice Coalition, which works in the Western Cape townships on issues of security and sanitation, and the Treatment Action Campaign, which has mobilized people living with HIV and AIDS nationally for free AIDS treatment.

In summary, while both organizations serve impoverished communities, they differ in their structures, their cooperation with other churches, and their country context. Zambia and South Africa both face democratic challenges, though civil society is more active in South Africa than in Zambia. This difference provides a gap that the pastor-driven political mobilization evident in the Jubilee Centre can fill.

To collect data on our two cases, we conducted in-depth interviews and analysis of documents from the two organizations. We used a repetitive case study design in which we ask the same questions for each organization. Interviewees were chosen based on their positions in the organizations.


\(^{65}\) Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 24 July 2013.


\(^{67}\) Interview, JL Zwane community leader 8, Guguletu, South Africa, 18 July 2013.


and/or their role as community members. In order to triangulate findings, we also interviewed other NGO or FBO officials, donors, or state officials who worked with the organizations, and we observed organizational events. Conducted in 2011, 2013, and 2014, the Zambian fieldwork included 21 interviews, while the 2013 South African research included 16 interviews. Because Zambian fieldwork was part of a larger project, it also included six focus groups.

Through multiple interactions with the organizations and the use of various data sources, we were able to get a rich picture of the organizations. Because of the sensitivity of some respondents’ comments, we omit the names of interviewees except for those of the organizations’ founders, who gave permission to be cited. The authors’ home institutions provided Institutional Review Board approval for the fieldwork.

**Citizen mobilization in Zambia and South Africa**

The two organizations vary in their involvement with the four areas of citizen mobilization: citizen education; political advocacy; leadership training; and electoral engagement. In the area of citizen education, JL Zwane’s HIV and AIDS programme informs clients about their right to AIDS treatment and anti-discrimination. The organization also introduces Guguletu residents to notions of ‘human rights, service delivery and community participation in local government’ by opening its facility to outside organizations such as Treatment Action Campaign that host workshops in these areas. However, JL Zwane does not have its own independent citizen education programmes.

In contrast, Jubilee has informed school teachers and parents about government education policies, citizens about their rights in police encounters, and pastors and women about inheritance laws. Also, it has linked citizen education to its HIV and AIDS efforts. Jubilee leaders publicly challenge citizens to engage in the political process, as Temfwe did when he preached at a partner church:

> Zambia has a lot of problems, but this is a country that should be rich; there is no need for communities without sanitation or water. Why these problems? Is it just government? We can’t just blame them. Part of the problem is us; we’ve accepted our situation; we need to

70. The authors also interacted with the leaders of both organizations during a week-long seminar on Christianity and citizen mobilization in South Africa during 2014.
72. Iliso Labahlali Community Watch Project (Unpublished workshop document, Cape Town, n.d.).
change our thinking; we need to engage our councillors and our MPs [members of parliament], mayors. Ask them when they are going to fix our roads or bring us water.74

In terms of political advocacy, Xapile has contacted government officials about Guguletu concerns, and he has supported the work of secular advocacy organizations, such as the Treatment Action Campaign and the Social Justice Coalition.75 Though JL Zwane has ‘encourage[d] its members to lobby government around a number of issues’, it has not engaged formally or directly in advocacy or helped its members to advocate.76 Like Xapile, Temfwe communicates with supporters by writing a weekly email newsletter on topics such as corruption, good governance, and development in Zambia, which goes to hundreds of subscribers throughout the world.77 But, unlike JL Zwane, Jubilee has a programmatic emphasis on helping community leaders lobby government. For example, Chifubu leaders worked with Jubilee to lobby the Minister of Health (successfully) to expand the community’s one-room health clinic,78 and Jubilee helped Chibuluma leaders write a letter to the district commissioner to get a CD4 machine at the health clinic.79

In the area of leadership training, JL Zwane’s workshops do not teach advocacy skills or address political processes; instead, they seek to build human capital through giving managerial skills to community members. Jubilee also seeks to build local capacity, but it stresses citizens’ shared responsibility for the community’s development and their political involvement.80 One participant said that Jubilee taught him that ‘we [the church] are relevant in the community … and must be involved in politics. … Politicians often only have their interests, but we are the hope. People look to the church for solutions.’81 Additionally, Jubilee trains community school leaders in ‘best practices’ in advocacy, including the need for accurate information when approaching government officials.82

Finally, the biggest difference between the two organizations is in the realm of electoral engagement. JL Zwane has no programmes to support or encourage members to run for local or national office, or to shape the campaign agendas of candidates. In contrast, Jubilee seeks to build up a cohort

74. Observations, Lawrence Temfwe sermon, Ndola, Zambia, 8 June 2014.
75. Interview, JL Zwane community leader 8, Guguletu, South Africa.
77. Interview, Jubilee staff member 3, Ndola, Zambia, 6 June 2014.
78. Interview, Jubilee staff member 1, Ndola, Zambia.
81. Interview, Jubilee community leader 1, Ndola, Zambia, 24 July 2013.
of Christian leaders who have a record in local office, understand community needs, and eventually can run for district council or Parliament.\textsuperscript{83} For example, Jubilee urged one pastor to run (successfully) for Resident Development Community Chairperson, a non-partisan position that assesses community needs and proposes community projects.\textsuperscript{84} In addition, it supports Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between local communities and candidates. In 2006, Jubilee worked with the Mapalo pastoral network on mobilizing the community to compile a list of needs to present to candidates for district council and national Parliament. The list included building a high school, expanding the health clinic, tarring the main road, building a market shelter, and buying a CD4 machine for the clinic. Church leaders then created an MOU, which all local and national candidates signed in a public ceremony.\textsuperscript{85} After the election, local leaders (aided by Jubilee) reminded officials of their promises. In response, officials bought the CD4 machine, built the market structure, and began the high school and road project, although the school and road remained incomplete in 2014. While not a resounding success, the MOU helped the community ‘to get something from government’, and it provided a concrete way to hold officials accountable.\textsuperscript{86}

When the MOU effort was repeated in the 2011 election, politicians were less willing to participate publicly. Instead, the MOUs became the basis for private discussions between the candidates and the pastoral networks in some communities, though in one, the parliamentary candidates refused to sign the MOU because they perceived it to be ‘too political’.\textsuperscript{87} Yet, it was apparent in 2014 that the MOU experience still shaped local politics. When one author toured the Mapalo market with a pastoral network member, ruling party bosses appeared from nowhere. They were concerned that the pastoral network, which worked with several market committees, would make additional demands. As one community leader said, ‘The politicians are scared.’\textsuperscript{88}

In summary, Jubilee engages in direct citizen mobilization, while JL Zwane does not. This contrast begs explanation because both organizations are situated in communities with significant economic and social hardships.

\textsuperscript{83} Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 9 June 2014.
\textsuperscript{84} Interview, Jubilee community leader 1, Ndola, Zambia.
\textsuperscript{86} Interview, Jubilee international partner 2, Chicago, USA; Interview, Mapalo pastoral network member, Ndola, Zambia, 6 June 2014; Observations, Mapalo community tour, Ndola, Zambia, 6 June 2014.
\textsuperscript{87} Interview, Jubilee staff member 1, Ndola, Zambia; Interview, Jubilee community leader 3, Lusaka, Zambia, 30 May 2011.
\textsuperscript{88} Interview, Mapalo pastoral network member, Ndola, Zambia.
and with limited government attention to community needs. Given these similarities, we now analyse why these organizations have taken different paths in citizen mobilization.

Explanations for grassroots citizen mobilization

In this section we examine how difference in organizational autonomy and leadership led to variation in citizen mobilization. Organizational autonomy has two components. The first is the organizations’ relations with external partners, which may limit independent action. The second component includes the structures within the organization that facilitate or hinder autonomous decision making by leaders. We assert that Jubilee has much more of each type of autonomy than JL Zwane does. We then take up the issue of leadership, focusing on how the distinct backgrounds of Xapile and Temfwe shaped their visions for citizen mobilization. Ultimately, autonomy and leadership are intertwined, with autonomy making it possible for leaders to enact citizen mobilization. Yet leadership also matters, for without a vision for citizen mobilization, autonomy is inconsequential.

Organizational autonomy

In terms of autonomy from external partners, we have already acknowledged that both organizations depend on international donors, but Jubilee is more independent from local community and religious organizations than JL Zwane. Temfwe holds no other position beyond Executive Director of Jubilee (he no longer pastors a church), and Jubilee has its own plot of land, buildings, vehicles, staff members, and fundraising scheme. It does not rely on the 94 community churches with whom it works for financial contributions or labour. Similarly, Jubilee’s membership in the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the Christian Council of Zambia (two national-level ecumenical bodies) has little effect on its priorities, since it receives no resources from these bodies.89 Jubilee’s autonomy gives it considerable discretion to include citizen mobilization in its agenda.

In contrast, even though JL Zwane is registered as a separate non-profit organization, it is inextricably linked to the JL Zwane Memorial Church. It receives finances and manpower from the church and shares physical space with it. Xapile serves as both the pastor of the church and the director of the JL Zwane Centre. JL Zwane’s close ties to the church hinder its ability to mobilize citizens directly, since such actions might threaten the political proclivities of some church members.90 Additionally, JL Zwane receives

89. Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 9 June 2014.
90. Interview, Xapile, Guguletu, South Africa, 18 July 2013.
financial support from the corporate sector (for example, Investec, Sanlam, Spar, and BATSA) and the University of Stellenbosch (via the Africa Centre for HIV/AIDS Management). These institutions will only fund community development projects, not citizen mobilization efforts. If the JL Zwane Centre decided to replace its community development initiatives with citizen mobilization efforts, these entities would probably withdraw their support. JL Zwane belongs to the ecumenical South African Council of Churches, but in the post-apartheid era this organization has not pushed a citizen mobilization agenda for its member churches.

We also assess autonomy in terms of the independence of the organization’s leader in decision making. In both organizations, decision making, programme priorities, and hiring decisions reflect the founders’ goals. For instance, in terms of hiring, most JL Zwane employees are church members, and Jubilee’s employees include Temfwe’s family members, members of churches with which Temfwe has personal relations, and individuals who personally benefited from Jubilee’s programmes. Despite this similarity, Temfwe operates within Pentecostal governance patterns that are shaped by ‘a lack of precedence, structure and ethos and the revered presence of the founder [in a] culture with a strong deference ethos’. As an organization with staff who are Pentecostals and a Pentecostal ethos, Jubilee’s structures exhibit this ‘lack of precedence’ (or a sense of newness) and ‘deference ethos’, making it difficult to urge staff members to utilize governance structures to facilitate accountability and transparency. Temfwe explained:

We [Jubilee] have... the executive board [and they] make decisions regarding my salary, work and everything. It has been a very interesting transformation because I founded it [Jubilee] and I invited a board, and I wrote a board policy. But because of the way we are in Africa, they just think Jubilee is mine. So I had to work very hard to say, ‘I am submitting to you. You rule over me.’ And it is emerging with time. ... We had a situation where I wanted to fire [a staff member], but because of the strength of the board now, I had to just demote [the person]. They said, ‘Let [the person] work.’ And this was nice, because it showed the power of the board.

The vignette illustrates the ‘founder problem’ in which staff and beneficiaries consider an organization’s founder to have sole veto power in decision

91. Mitchell and Sieff, ‘JL Zwane Centre’.
94. Five of seven JL Zwane staff members are church members and four of 13 Jubilee staff members are from the Temfwe family. Interviews, JL Zwane Centre, Guguletu, South Africa, 16–18 July 2013; Observations, Jubilee Centre, Ndola, Zambia, 4–12 June 2014.
96. Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 9 June 2014.
making. For Jubilee, this power is partially rooted in Pentecostal understandings of a biblical ‘lineage’ of esteemed church founders such as Peter (whom Christ called ‘The Rock’) and Old Testament prophets with a calling from God. This religious authority is unique to the specific leader since it is God-given, a fact that reinforces the leader’s central role and the role of those with close ties to him. The quote also shows a struggle between the board’s willingness to follow the founder unquestioningly and its desire independently to defend the employee (though it is unclear if the board uses these processes for reasons related to patronage and/or personal connections). Such a struggle illustrates how participants gradually engage with new institutions, particularly in church cultures unfamiliar with them. Finally, the example shows that organizations can embrace structures of accountability and transparency if the founder is open to such changes. This very process, though, reinforces the centrality of the leader.

While decision making and accountability structures are often nascent in Pentecostal organizations, they are more developed in mainline denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church to which JL Zwane belongs. As Kalu writes, “The polity of mainline churches provides both a social control mechanism and a means of damage control when a scandal exists.” Presbyterian churches operate through elders who are elected by their fellow congregants and who make decisions on staff, programme budgets, and membership. Because power is more dispersed in many mainline churches than in Pentecostal churches, and procedures for decision making are more institutionalized, leaders have less room to manoeuvre. For example, in 2010 there were serious charges of financial mismanagement against Xapile and the JL Zwane Centre; the Western Cape presbytery became involved, recommending that investigations be held if a formal complaint was registered. While no complaint was received, perhaps because staff and beneficiaries felt loyalty to Xapile, the incident shows how bureaucratic structures in mainline churches can check leaders’ actions. More broadly, if the JL Zwane Centre decided to pursue direct citizen mobilization, these same church structures might provide some scrutiny of its activities or perhaps even caution against overt political involvement.

99. Kuperus contacted former staff members and overseas volunteers to obtain information on the sensitive issue of misappropriation of funds. Formal interviews were not granted, although informal meetings with individuals did ensue. Kuperus also obtained one letter (dated 27 July 2010) that was written by a former overseas volunteer and outlined serious allegations of financial mismanagement. JL Zwane and its partners did not formally investigate the allegations. Interview, Western Cape Presbyterian Church leader, Cape Town, South Africa, 25 July 2013.
There are clear implications in terms of our assessment of how varying degrees of organizational autonomy influence citizen mobilization. The autonomy that Jubilee has from external partners and the newness of its internal checks and balances enable Temfwe to promote his vision of citizen mobilization. This autonomy is a function of the organization’s Pentecostal structures. In contrast, the internal and external constraints on JL Zwane’s autonomy mean that, even though Xapile might prefer to engage in more direct citizen mobilization efforts, he is prevented from doing so.100

Leadership

Even though organizational autonomy provides opportunities for pastors to promote their goals, without a clear desire for citizen mobilization these leaders will not utilize autonomy for citizen mobilization. Temfwe views citizen mobilization as central to Jubilee’s mission. In contrast, while Xapile does not oppose the political involvement of individual JL Zwane members (in fact, he encourages it) and while he supports the citizen mobilization efforts of secular community groups, it is his choice that JL Zwane itself should focus on community development. The two leaders’ experiences, visions, and personal ties to external actors lead to these different emphases.

Xapile was raised in a rural Christian household that struggled with educational and socio-economic obstacles.101 One community leader said, ‘There is a lot of integrity in Spiwo. He didn’t come from a privileged background; he knows poverty.’102 He has also pastored a church in a community (Guguletu) where the majority of residents ‘are told they are nothing and they believe it’.103 These experiences led to his specific vision for JL Zwane Centre programmes that seek to restore human dignity and reverse the ‘poverty of being’ found within the mental consciousness of Guguletu residents.104 This vision is situated in the belief that God created and loves all people, and in Black Consciousness, a movement formed during the 1960s and 1970s that sought to reaffirm the value and uniqueness of black identity. Xapile explained:

[People here] believe they are God’s big mistake…. They still want white people to be in charge. They believe that God is white and not black. At JL Zwane, through basic education, we tell them they are God’s creation. They develop some self-worth…. We are about deconstructing a mind-set and restoring confidence.105

100. Interview, Spiwo Xapile, Guguletu, South Africa, 17 July 2013.
102. Interview, JL Zwane community leader 8, Guguletu, South Africa.
103. Interview, Xapile, 18 July 2013, Guguletu, South Africa.
105. Interview, Xapile, 18 July 2013, Guguletu, South Africa.
Xapile’s empowering vision leads to programmes that combat poverty, hunger and poor health. One respondent said:

Churches have a role to play in the suffering around us. They can’t turn a blind eye! [The Gospel of] Matthew said, ‘I was hungry, but you fed me.’ Works must accomplish faith!106

This biblical mandate, rooted in the narrative of Jesus Christ and his Incarnation, has led Xapile to search out donors to facilitate his vision, particularly his desire for JL Zwane Centre to be the first church in the community to welcome people living with HIV and AIDS and to provide them with a meal, counselling, and medical care. He said, ‘It was overseas churches that helped us defeat apartheid, and I believe we can count on them to help us defeat HIV/AIDS too.’107

Temfwe’s experiences are different. He became a Christian while serving a sentence in a Zambian prison for financial crimes against his employer. After his release, he worked for Prison Fellowship, where he became friends with its founder Chuck Colson. As a master’s student at Wheaton College, an evangelical school in Illinois, he was mentored by the British evangelical John Stott, who showed him how the church could be the ‘salt and light’ in Africa. Since then, he has had continued interaction with evangelical thinkers such as Stott, Colson, and Bryant Myers who promote holistic development. He also has worked closely with global evangelical movements, such as the World Evangelical Alliance and the Micah Challenge, an organization that sought to hold governments accountable for their pledges to the Millennium Development Goals between 2004 and 2014.108

Temfwe’s transnational ties and his experiences with evangelical thinkers led him to develop a vision in which Christian believers play a unique role in all aspects of society. Thus, in addition to emphasizing the biblical mandate to care for marginalized people, Jubilee stresses how God uses Christians, regardless of their power or position, to transform all aspects of society. Biblical stories of relatively powerless characters such as Esther, David, and Ruth who went on to lead God’s people illustrate this theme.109 Temfwe asserts that for social transformation to occur, the church must provide leadership at all levels of society, including in politics.110 Echoing Ruth Marshall’s emphasis on material spirituality among Pentecostals,111 Temfwe contrasts with Xapile in that he uses the topic of poverty and the

106. Interview, JL Zwane community leader 8, Guguletu, South Africa.
110. Interview, Jubilee staff member 1, Ndola, Zambia.
111. Marshall, _Political spiritualities_.

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goal of achieving material benefits for specific communities as a rallying cry for mobilization. The above quoted sermon that calls for sanitation, roads, and water illustrates this pattern.\textsuperscript{112}

Temfwe’s personal relationships with US and UK evangelicals and his vision of churches transforming society have opened doors for transnational ties to a variety of Western churches that have found his vision appealing.\textsuperscript{113} In addition to providing Jubilee with financial support, these churches give Jubilee some security to advocate in a somewhat politically hostile environment. One external partner (who is an African working at a US church) explained, ‘I was amazed when I started getting those [email] newsletters [from Temfwe], because I know governments where you’d be shut down pretty quick.’\textsuperscript{114} Assistance from the outside, which is facilitated by Temfwe’s deep connections in the global evangelical community, creates a buffer against such retribution.

Several themes emerge from our examination of these two leaders. First, both tap into important spiritual resources in their engagement with the community. Access to spiritual resources distinguishes them from other types of leaders in Africa. African Christianity emphasizes that the spiritual realm affects the exercise of power on earth and that humans can engage with benevolent spirits.\textsuperscript{115} Because religious leaders are perceived to be intermediaries between the spiritual and physical worlds, Temfwe and Xapile have a unique form of legitimacy. Their spiritual ties enable them to generate charisma, to build a following around the vision of a transformed world,\textsuperscript{116} and to bring together societal factions that might otherwise compete for resources, attention or legitimacy. Highlighting the unique characteristics of these spiritual intermediaries, one Jubilee staff member said that there was no equal to Pastor Temfwe.\textsuperscript{117}

While all pastors tap into spiritual resources, Pentecostals emphasize these assets more than mainline Protestants. This Pentecostal foundation places Jubilee’s leadership in a unique position to promote citizen mobilization. Pentecostals believe that religious leaders can coax the spirits to bring positive outcomes (such as personal empowerment) and to protect

\textsuperscript{112} Temfwe sermon, Ndola, Zambia, 8 June 2014.
\textsuperscript{114} Interview, Jubilee international partner 1, Minneapolis, USA, phone conversation, 21 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{117} Personal conversation, Jubilee staff member 4, Ndola, Zambia, 22 May 2011.
believers from negative events (such as illness). While Temfwe has not emphasized the prosperity gospel, he has relied heavily on spiritual intercession to guide community activities, often preaching at partner churches and spontaneously praying for God’s blessings and strength during the middle of community meetings. For Jubilee participants, Temfwe’s preaching demonstrates the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, as he jumps, sings, shouts, cries, speaks in tongues, and kneels during his sermons.

Additionally, Temfwe emphasizes a common Pentecostal theme: the presence of malevolent spirits that seek to undermine Jubilee’s work and more broadly, God’s plan for His creation. For Pentecostals, faith revolves around the struggle between good and evil, and believers need the strength of an Omnipotent God to protect them in these battles. Believers also need spiritual resources and skills to engage in this fight. Hence, Jubilee leadership training sessions on citizen mobilization often include in-depth worship and Bible study. Temfwe’s ability to utilize these spiritual resources makes him an appealing leader and enables him to promote citizen mobilization, particularly in communities where state-provided order and welfare are absent, and evil is perceived to be rampant, in the form of crime, HIV infection, hunger, domestic violence, and unemployment.

Second, both leaders illustrate aspects of “big man” rule, which revolves around hierarchical and dependent relationships and personalized ties. As John McCauley argues, these patterns continue in local organizations because weak states often cannot meet citizens’ needs and urban inhabitants who lack the support networks present in rural areas often turn to community organizations like FBOs, which are increasingly accessing resources from donors. Personalized decision making and community dependence were evident in each organization, though more so in Jubilee because of its higher organizational autonomy and because of its Pentecostal emphasis on the spiritual power of its leader. Temfwe acknowledged, ‘The community expects resources and direction from Brother Temfwe and Jubilee.’ Pastors and community leaders that Jubilee empowers also face community demands, so that power and dependence exist in hierarchical layers. One of these pastors said, ‘If you could see the number of text messages in my phone every day from people who need something.’

118. Ellis and ter Haar ‘Religion and politics in sub-Saharan Africa’, pp. 191–2; Gifford, Ghana’s new Christianity.
120. Observation, Jubilee Training Session, Chibuluma, Zambia, 11 June 2014.
121. Interview, Jubilee staff member 6, Ndola, Zambia.
123. Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 9 June 2014.
In summary, Jubilee has greater organizational autonomy than JL Zwane in terms of its relations with external partners and its internal decision-making structures. These structures give its leader the space in which to promote citizen mobilization. Yet, organizational autonomy alone cannot explain Jubilee’s citizenship efforts. Temfwe, a leader who emphasizes Christians’ personal responsibility to improve God’s world, uses his spiritual resources and access to patronage to legitimize his call for citizenship involvement.

Conclusion: Lessons regarding Christian grassroots citizen mobilization

Both JL Zwane and Jubilee facilitate community development, but Jubilee extends that involvement to encourage active, direct citizenship through citizen education, political advocacy, leadership training, and electoral engagement. Jubilee’s organizational autonomy – both in terms of its independence from external actors and its leader’s autonomy, backed by Temfwe’s personal experiences, his vision, and his use of spiritual resources – facilitates these efforts. Jubilee is part of a broader tendency among Pentecostals to engage the political realm. Our findings do not necessarily contradict Gifford’s argument that Pentecostals’ “otherworldly” spiritual commitments and their views that politics is “dirty” undermine their political involvement.125 Instead, our findings illustrate how Pentecostalism has matured to reinterpret political engagement in the light of Gospel mandates to bring the Holy Spirit to worldly endeavours. Jubilee also provides evidence of political activism that embraces institution building, pushing significantly beyond social capital formation, which Haynes, Ranger, and Mukonyora seem to suggest is the ‘best’ that independent, charismatic religious actors can do.126

Our findings show that while structures matter in politics, they are intertwined with agency to facilitate mobilization. Centralization within denominational structures limited JL Zwane’s citizen mobilization, while centralization around Jubilee’s autonomous leader facilitated mobilization. These autonomous structures are much more likely to be found in Pentecostal churches than mainline churches. Jubilee confirms trends that other scholars have identified, particularly Pentecostals’ involvement in policy debates not just moral issues,127 their recognition of the linkages between religion and economic development,128 and their ability to capitalize on leadership-centred structures

126. Haynes, Religion and politics in Africa; Ranger, Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa; Mukonyora, ‘Foundations for democracy in Zimbabwean Evangelical Christianity’.
to promote political objectives. Yet the article recognizes that agency also matters. There are thousands of autonomous Pentecostal organizations throughout Africa, but only a small percentage of them have engaged in citizenship mobilization. Leaders can utilize structural openings, but they must have a vision that pushes them to do so. Pentecostals such as those connected to the Jubilee Centre may be uniquely suited to do this because of their emphasis on spiritual power.

Although our analysis focused on only two organizations, its contribution is twofold. First, it illustrates that patterns of increased Pentecostal political engagement are not just national-level phenomena; they are also occurring at the local level. Second, the article brings clarity to the paradox of Pentecostal political involvement in Africa during the last generation. Rather than shunning politics, Pentecostals increasingly engage in the public realm. The article illustrates that this mobilization is possible because some leaders have sought to reshape the movement’s priorities to include political engagement and they have used their churches’ autonomous decision-making structures to act on those priorities. Thus our findings add not only to the research on African Pentecostalism, but also to the scholarship on Pentecostal political engagement in other global regions such as Latin America.

This article raises questions for future research. First, what is the effectiveness of citizenship efforts like Jubilee’s? While citizens may be educated about their rights vis-à-vis the state, one wonders how they assert those rights. Do top-down processes contribute to the building of local democratic norms? Research findings on similar secular efforts are mixed, with some promoting efficacy and knowledge while also having limited impact on participation. Future research should examine if religious organizations have positive effects on citizen attitudes and behaviours.

Second, how might leadership patterns of hierarchy, dependence, charisma and personal relations like those found in Jubilee affect citizen mobilization over the long term? Hierarchy and dependence mean that community members often expect leaders to initiate citizen mobilization, instead of community members taking up such tasks themselves. Mobilization that is centred on leaders raises questions about the longevity of such efforts, since leaders may retire, resign, or develop new agendas. And if organizations mirror the hybrid nature of decision making found in the state, in that they have both personalist decision-making processes and nascent accountability

130. See Freston, Evangelicals and politics; O’Neill, ‘But our citizenship is in heaven’.
132. Temfwe recognizes this problem and is mentoring some staff members to fill his shoes after he retires. Interview, Temfwe, Ndola, Zambia, 9 June 2014.
structures, how do they help communities envision new forms of citizenship rooted in equal participation and citizen efficacy?

Third, while organizations like JL Zwane may not directly engage in citizen activism, it may be possible that the skills they help community members to develop can empower people to engage in politics on their own. As the following quote indicates, in addition to skills development, the spiritual encouragement that JL Zwane provides may help individuals to act politically:

JL Zwane leaders are often the street committee leaders. ... Christians shouldn’t just pray and dress nice and read the Bible. Christians should be groomed spiritually, as we are at JL Zwane, to take our capabilities and help the community!¹³³

More research is needed on the ways in which beneficiaries in religion-based community development efforts might transfer skills to the public realm and might use their spiritual ‘grooming’ to participate in politics.

Finally, how do organizations that seek to promote citizenship fit into a societal context with expectations of hierarchy and dependence? James Ferguson asserts that in economic systems of high unemployment and poverty, ‘it is not dependence but its absence that is really terrifying’, since attachment to a person (or in our cases, to an FBO) brings needed material benefits as well as social, psychological, and spiritual belonging.¹³⁴ Yet these same personalistic and hierarchical relations may undermine liberal democratic norms of accountability, individual autonomy, participation to protect the rights of all, and political equality.¹³⁵ Community organizations like Jubilee may provide one path out of this conundrum. As they mobilize citizens, they capitalize on those citizens’ (somewhat paternalistic) expectations of government. As Jubilee’s mobilization indicates, people want specific, material benefits from the state, demands that reflect the belief that the social contract necessitates care for all.¹³⁶

Mobilization for particular benefits in local communities does not reflect a demand for theoretical rights or individual autonomy but it may give voice to the poor and create the social connections and self-worth that individuals crave in the isolating, hostile urban environment. Time will tell if Pentecostal organizations like Jubilee can successfully negotiate new visions of citizenship that hold governments accountable for their end of the social contract, while also acknowledging the social ties necessary to care for others in an increasingly unequal world.

¹³³. Interview, JL Zwane community leader 9, Guguletu, South Africa, 18 July 2013.
¹³⁶. Ferguson, ‘Declarations of dependence’.