Kenya is gearing up for general elections in a little over two months. This election cycle is shaping up to be a show of titanic promotions on at least two accounts: first, it is perceived as the ultimate zero-sum dynastic competition for power. The incumbent, Uhuru Kenyatta, is pitted against the veteran opposition leader, Raila Odinga, in what is seen by some as a do or die election. And second, this year’s elections will also serve as an appraisal of the devolved system of governance, which was formally launched with the 2013 general elections.

In the last general elections the concept of ‘Tyranny of Numbers’ was introduced into Kenya’s political lexicon, whereby an ethnic arithmetic was highlighted as the basic formula to capturing and securing power.

Now more than ever demography is deemed to be a significant factor in any effort of political mobilization in Kenya. This was particularly highlighted recently in the just concluded electoral registration process. This exercise enjoyed the exuberant support of the so-called kingpins of Kenya’s politics who made every effort to encourage new voter registrations in their so-called strongholds. It would seem that each and every vote in the August election will more than count -- far much less can be said about what is to be voted for.

Political campaigns are now steadily taking an unashamedly overt ethnic bend with little or no interest in making a case for policy.

This prevailing political culture coupled with a lack of faith in the system is consequently leading to a growing voter apathy -- the general feeling is that representative democracy is anything but representative, where elections are merely deluded empty symbolic dramas.

It is at this point that Pambazuka News invites analyses on the nature of Kenya’s liberal representative democracy, which is strongly predicated on elections cycles.

The objective of these analyses is to draw attention to discourses of national, inclusive and equitable transformation as opposed to a mere exercise of power transfer between political elites.

**Some themes**

Pambazuka News is seeking contributions/articles around the following areas:

1. Ethnicity and political mobilization

2. Institutional preparedness
3. The peace narrative

4. The role of the religious establishment in politics

5. Political parties, manifestos and visions

6. The independent candidates phenomenon

7. Analysis of party nomination processes

8. Money in Kenya’s elections

9. Gangs and violence in elections

10. Kenya’s election in the regional context

11. Media (mainstream/alternative/social) in the electoral processes

12. Alternatives to liberal democracy

13. Women in politics

14. The youth’s place and politics

15. Devolution

**Deadline**

Articles (preferably of 3,000 words) with the author’s short bio should be sent to editor@pambazuka.org by 20 July 2017.

**Tags:** [Kenya 2017 elections](https://www.pambazuka.org/tags/kenya-2017-elections) [Democracry in Africa](https://www.pambazuka.org/tags/democracry-africa) [politics](https://www.pambazuka.org/taxonomy/term/76)

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**Article-Summary:**
The objective of the special issue is to examine the discourses of national, inclusive and equitable transformation as opposed to a mere exercise of power transfer between political elites.

**Category:** [Announcements](https://www.pambazuka.org/category/announcements)

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