

Abstract

The objective of this study is to demonstrate that the introduction of state funding of political parties in Kenya is likely to change the political processes in the Kenyan polity. An analysis of the past and current party funding systems in the country, reveal that it is amorphous and unregulated hence the need for reform to level the playing field for healthy and sustained political competition, organisation, mobilisation and accountability. The analysis of the experiences of selected consolidated/established and transitional democracies revealed that there are many challenges facing the implementation of an effective system of party funding that is immune to abuse. Despite the challenges, the study illustrates that public funding of political parties can liberate them to engage in more meaningful ways with the electorate and foster equal opportunity for party competition, organisation, mobilisation and accountability. The study recommends that a comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses the issues of both public and private funding and monitors and limits campaign funding is necessary to combat undue influence of political parties and the corrupting power of money on high-level decision makers. The study also recommends for a well-designed and effective political party/funding system, backed by effective sanctions and appropriate ethics and norms.