

Navigating Coalition Politics in Kenya: A Historical Journey Since 1945

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ABSTRACT

Kenya is among the global nations where formation of political coalitions has molded her socio-economic and political development. The period preceding and after independence in 1963 have seen Kenya experience shifting political setting denoted by various political coalitions. Employing the theory of political coalition and historical research design, the study traces the evolution of coalition politics in Kenya. The results reveal that the ground for formation of political coalitions in Kenya was laid by pre-independence movements traced back as early as the period before 1945 where pre-independence movements emerged to have joint struggle against oppressive colonial regime. The period between 1963 and 1990 saw Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi who were presidents embrace authoritarian affinities and suppressing any dissenting opinion. Pressure groups and civic organizations exerted pressure and with the backing of donor nations saw multiparty politics in 1991. This led to mushrooming of many political parties, a situation that saw opposition parties loose to Daniel Moi in 1992. The opposition parties united in 2002 under NARC, albeit without a structure to guide their operations. The 2010 New Constitution elicited operational changes, underscoring policy-oriented coalition structure that guides the formation and operation of political coalitions in Kenya to date. Reasons such as ethnic diversity and electoral arrangements molded coalition undercurrents. The study concludes that political coalitions have played an important role in influencing the setting of Kenyan politics, influencing governance, social dynamics, and economic policies.

Key Words: Coalition Formation, Democratic Institutions, Policy Influence, Power Negotiations, Socio-Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

Historical evidence spanning right from ancient civilization to modern democracy attest to the fact that political coalitions are majorly shaped by political landscape of any country (Zibblatt, 2017). For instance, coalition formations in ancient Greece and Rome, were anchored on personal affiliations, backing, and mutual benefits. The alliances like Triumvirate in Rome and Delian League exerted substantial impact over governance and decision making. According to Bayly (2001), the era of current political structure assumed its form during the 17th and 18th centuries, though with loose organizations and narrow cohesion. This was demonstrated by parties such as the Whig and Tory factions in Britain, which reflected erratic degrees of loyalty and freedom among members (Clark, 1978).

Walt (1985), postulates that more structured political coalition formations started emerging after the First World War and Second World War. The aftermath of World War I and II brought about significant shifts in European governance, with coalitions more so in states that faced post-war restoration challenges. This period also saw endeavors to strengthen party discipline that was meant to promote durability and order in governance. For instance, the historical journey of Indian election throughout formation of political coalitions, most political coalitions have always been on and off with varied lifespans of such government, with most of them having short lifespan, a situation that has majorly been linked to ideological difference and party discipline (Gautam, 2018)

There are several Cases of formation of political coalitions across Africa. These cases have witnessed in countries

such as South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya. The reasons for their formation have been driven by varied social, cultural and interests. For instance, in South Africa, formation of political coalitions has been linked to the need to promote unity by taking care of interests of diverse groups (Kadima, 2014).

However, effective operations of coalitions as well as the durability of established coalitions is anchored on the extent to which coalition partners confine and operate within the set terms of engagement. This situation calls for party discipline. According to Bowler, Farrel and Katz (1999), party discipline is a critical element in ensuring order in operation, a product of internal cohesion among coalition partners. Party cohesion is critical element in promotion of legislative effectiveness as well as organizational behavior. Absence of internal cohesion in coalition governments hinders ability of coalition governments to fulfill their obligation due to resultant struggles that may arise in passing policies that may be critical in enhancing operation of the government (Meenu, 1999).

Kenya has had formation of political coalitions ranging from pre-coalition to post-coalition with majority of them having ended up in disintegration safe from Grand Coalition government of 2008 (Amadi, 2009). Though the historical narrative of coalition politics the importance of comprehending the relationship between coalition undercurrents, governance outcomes, and party discipline, available scholarship on Kenya's state reveal scanty information on the same. This study sought to fill the lacuna by tracing Kenya's political formation since 1945.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dahl and Schattschneider (2017), undertook a study on coalition politics that was centered on the dynamic forces of coalition development, power-sharing activities, and the impact of interest groups on policy formation within the American political system. Their study examined the intricacies of multi-party politics, coalition administration establishments, and the role of local and philosophical features in influencing coalition changes within states such as Thailand and India. Their study provided, critical insights into the understanding of coalition politics in varied Asian perspectives, leading to a deeper awareness into advantages and disadvantages of multi-party governance in these countries.

Etyang (2021), studies the politics of coalition formation in Kenya from the period spanning 1992 to 2017. His work delves into the accomplishments and encounters of key political coalitions like the Jubilee alliance. He lays more emphasis on the difficulties of balancing personal interests with collective goals within the coalition as well as the influence of internal strife and tribal tensions on coalition stability. However, his work is limited by its thin focus that fails to articulate the historical development of coalition politics in Kenya prior to 1992, thus creating a lacuna that the current study aims to fill by tracing both the earlier and recent political coalitions in Kenya

In another study Cheeseman and Lynch (2014), examined coalition politics in emerging economies as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. This study evaluated the historic paths of coalition regimes, the effect of ethno-regional forces, and the effects such formations on democratic control in the region. The study found that coalition formations are mainly based on ethnicity and personal interests of party leaders as opposed to attractiveness of ideologies. These findings are further supported by study undertaken by Kanyinga & Mboya (2021), who carried out a study that sought to establish the extent to which party ideologies had influenced coalition formation in Kenya's past coalition out fits.

Wanyande's research work examined the politics of alliance building in Kenya (Wanyande, 2003). His work explored the challenges of realizing opposition unity against KANU during the era of single-party rule in Kenya and emerging opposition parties in the country. Wanyande points out factors like ideological differences, resource challenges and internal rivalries within political parties. According to him, these factors limit alliance building in Kenya. However, his focus on opposition unity limits the analysis of coalition formation and this gap underscores the need for further research hence the current study.

Despite having various studies on coalition politics in Kenya, there is a missing link in coverage more so in the historicity of coalition politics, especially from 1945. Most studies tend to lean towards recent political happenings, creating a missing link in the tracing of the historical path of coalition operations in Kenya's setting.

Problem Statement

Under ideal situation, political coalition has several benefits that accrue on their formation such as addressing competing interests of diverse groups and enhancing political stability. However, the effectiveness and durability of political coalitions in Kenya has recorded mixed outcome. The responsiveness of coalitions to the needs and concerns of citizens has varied, with some coalitions facing criticism for prioritizing political interests over the public interest. The ability to negotiate and compromise on contentious issues has also been tested, at times leading to internal dissent and instability within coalitions. Though there are various scholarship on political coalition formation in Kenya exist (Kadima, 2014; Elischer, 2008, Etyang, 2021.), a notable gap has been identified in terms of insufficient coverage of the historicity of coalition politics, particularly from 1945. It is against this background that the study sought to trace the history of coalition politics in Kenya since 1945.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on the theory of Political Coalitions advanced by William Riker in 1962. The theory provides a framework for understanding how political actors strategically form alliances to achieve their goals, such as winning elections or passing legislation. Central to this theory is the concept of "minimum winning coalitions," where parties seek the smallest alliances necessary for success while considering their preferences and policy payoffs. Riker highlights the role of preference intensity, where parties with strong policy priorities are more likely to collaborate, and introduces "veto players," whose agreement is crucial for policy changes. The theory emphasizes the instability of coalitions due to shifting preferences and external factors, underscoring the dynamic nature of coalition politics and the importance of overcoming coordination challenges. This theory was therefore, relevant for studying the historical development and dynamics of political coalitions in Kenya since 1945.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was grounded in the pragmatism research philosophy. Historical research design was used to guide the study. The target population included ordinary voters, leaders of political parties, leaders of civic organizations, the local intelligentsia, and experts on historical matters. The sample size of 454 respondents was reached upon content saturation. The study used various sampling techniques such as purposive, proportionate, snowball and convenience used in the selection of respondents. Data collection methods included questionnaires, focus group discussion guides and interview schedules. Document analysis guide was used to collect both archival and secondary data. Archival data was collected from Kenya National Archives whereas secondary data was sought from official reports, published and unpublished theses, books, journal articles, newspapers, library sources and online sources. Qualitative research techniques were used in data analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed based on themes and presented through narratives and verbatim quotations.

FINDINGS

An overview of the political landscape in Kenya before 1945

Before 1945, Kenya's political landscape was marked by the pervasive influence of British colonial rule, which exercised dominant control over the country's affairs (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002). According to Berman, the colonial administration-imposed policies that led to the dispossession of land from indigenous African communities, causing social and economic disruptions (Berman, 1990). This period was characterized by a stark imbalance of power, with limited political representation for the local population, as governance was primarily in the hands of British colonial officials and a minority of European settlers (Ogot, 1995).

Though the colonial government had created restrictions on formation of political organizations in Kenya, the same could not deter emergence of various political out fits. For instance, during this period political entities, such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), the Young Kikuyu Association (YKA) and the East African Association (EAA) evolved, all advocating for the rights of the natives (Ochieng', 1989). During the colonial period, particularly the period prior to 1945, ethnicity deeply grounded among various communities. This was evident in competition for resources such as land, a situation that was one of the major drivers of ethnic tension

and barrier to collective political action (Lonsdale, 1992). As such the various movements that were established laid the foundation for political mobilization that came later during the struggle for independence (Maxon, 1993).

Kenya's Political Environment (1945-1952)

The period ranging from 1945 to 1952 denoted a critical period in Kenya's history. It was during this period that the country experienced early political movements that provided a foundation for the country's eventual liberation from the colonial rule. This period saw formation of the Kenya African Study Union (KASU) in 1944 (Simiyu, 1990). This organization created a pioneer platform that created structured political engagement among Africans, creating room for a voice for the downgraded native population in the colonial context. This was the avenue through which African leaders and intellectuals started to use in the articulation of their issues where they advocated for better representation, and laid the ground for wider political enlistment in the pursuit for independence.

Tamarkin (1978), advances that the advent of political engagement among natives in Kenya during this era marked a momentous shift in the political terrain. The start of early political organizations such as KASU signaled a advancement in awareness and boldness among the indigenous population, tilting the dominance of the colonial administration. Political activism formed a basis for social change, endowing individuals to advance for equal representation, equal rights, and political involvement. The enhanced momentum of political activism culminated in Mau Mau rebellion in 1952, a situation that made the colonial government to declare state of emergence (Wright, 2022).

The influence of early political entities on the glamour for Kenya's independence cannot be exaggerated. Through advocacy exertions and mobilization crusades, the movements such as KASU played a critical role in spurring sustenance for the nationalist foundation and the setting of the basis for bigger confrontation against imperial rule. The political arousal nurtured by these movements opened the way for imminent leaders and common activists to bond for a common cause of freedom and self-rule. The kernels propagated by the early political establishments during the period 1945 and 1952 would continue to sprout, stimulating the impetus towards Kenya's ultimate liberation and influencing the course of coalition government in the later years.

State of Emergency and Political Repression (1952-1957)

The period 1952-1957 marked the climax of Kenya's colonial heightened repression and uproar (Maloba, 1994). It was during this period that Kenyans resorted to armed struggle in what was termed as Mau Mau to fight for their independence, particularly after having learned lessons and on the return of members of Kings African Rifles (KAR) who had taken part in the second World War (Kung'u & Waweru, 2016). Therefore, Mau Mau was a product of the frustration experienced by native Africans in redressing their grievances within the framework of structure of the settler arrangement of colonial authority (Kariuki, 2015). This period saw the colonial government declare state of emergency as a way of containing the armed struggle against the natives (Maloba, 1994). The battle against colonial governance and the determination for self-governance spurred a unified movement, drawing support from diverse ethnic groups. Grassroots movements like the Mau Mau gained momentum, while political organization such as the Kenya African Union (KAU) played crucial roles in articulating demands for independence.

As if to affirm this position, Dominic Wetangula, a key informant had this to say during an oral interview:

...the repercussions of the state of emergency marked the trepidation of nation leaders like Jomo Kenyatta who later came to be the first president of Kenya. The torture of these leaders through arrest and detention was meant to instill fear to subdue the natives and have them abandon their agitation for freedom. However, this is what indeed heightened the determination to fight for independence. It was this crackdown that acted as a unifying force for the movements that initially pursuing this course separately, enabling various entities to see colonialists as the common enemy who needed joint force to be fought. (Dominic Wetangula, Oral Interview at Mukhweya, Bungoma on 19th November 2023)

Therefore, while the thinking by colonial authority in Kenya was that implementation was firm repressive measure was the solution to African arising; it acted as fuel that ignited the spirit of self-determination among

the local populace. This era provided a fertile ground in which the seed for the need for a unified struggle against colonial authority, described by nationalist thoughts, struggle, and the involvement of leaders who designed Kenya's route to liberation in 1963. The period opened eyes of leadership of various movements to see the need to have conceptual convergence through the shared desire for self-governance and independence.

The era of coalition formation and the path to independence (1957-1960)

The period from 1957 to 1960 saw emergence of political parties as opposed to political movements that had been witnessed in prior periods. This period saw parties such as Kenya African Nation Unions (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Alliance (KADU) emerge. These parties were representatives of diverse ethnic interests and were used in spurring support in the struggle for independence (Khadiagala, 2010). Besides carrying out the fight for different interest groups, the two parties had structural difference in governance. KANU, which was led by Jomo Kenyatta, advanced for centralized authority, while KADU, that was led by Ronald Ngala and Masinde Muliro, vouchered for federal governance as a way of ensuring that minority interests were protected. These ideological differences were the source of polarization of political environment and became a basis for the debates that emerged on the best structure to be adopted in order to enhance best governance on attainment of independence (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2021).

As a way ensuring that polarization triggered by ideological difference was addressed, various stakeholders-initiated measures that were aimed at enhancing collaboration and unity between KANU and KADU in order to have them present a united approach to the struggle for freedom (Maxon, 2011). The differences between KADU and KANU was extended to the Lancaster House Conference in London in 1960 that set stage for the negotiation of Kenya's path to independence. At the conference, a stage was set for deep political discussion between KADU and KANU. KADU advanced for a federal system with steady regional administrations, as KANU advanced for a unitary state with centralized governance (Barkan & Chege, 1989). However, a concession was later struck where it was agreed that central structure was to be adopted with some allowance for regional representation (Porter, Stockwell, Porter, & Stockwell, 1989).

These efforts reveal endeavor that was aimed at sealing loopholes created by philosophical divergence that was likely to threaten transition to independence. The drive for the unified approach in the struggle for freedom led to initiatives to bridge the ideological divide between the two parties, with the goal of offering a solid front that for effective negotiation of independence.

Advent of political parties (1960-1963)

As the glamour for Kenya's independence reached climax during the period running 1960 to 1963, two major political parties KANU and KADU emerged strongly each trying to grasp the opportunity to ascend to power. These parties therefore played a key role in shaping its path to independence. The political variances between the two parties led to arguments on the ideal governance arrangement for an autonomous Kenya. Determinations were made to promote relationship and harmony between KANU and KADU as a way of ensuring presentation of a united front in the fight for liberation (Maxon, 2011). The first general election was won by KANU in 1961. Despite this win, KANU party refused to form the government demanding for the release of Kenyatta, its party leader. Kenyatta was eventually released eventually released on 21st August 1961. This was when a coalition government was formed as a way of strengthening African unity and hastening peaceful independence.

According to Kariuki (2015), the Lancaster House conferences that took place in London between 1960 and 1962 played a key role in establishing the terms for Kenya's independence, settling the divergent ideological differences between of KANU and KADU. The resultant negotiations during this period led to concessions that cemented the path for Kenya's independence, creating a framework for a central rule while addressing issues such as land distribution and representation that were original fears that had been voiced by KADU. The philosophical convergence and divergence that took place during this period mirrored the intricacies of merging varied political dogmas and interests, shaping subsequent political developments in Kenya's political space.

Post-independence era (1963-1978)

After independence, the period between 1963 and 1978 had KANU led by Jomo Kenyatta as the dominant party.

This position was achieved through solidification of its hegemony through charismatic leadership of Jomo Kenyatta and inclusivity stand. According Widner (2023), KANU under the leadership of Kenyatta restricted freedom of speech and restricted political diversity, as a way of solidifying its supremacy. The party further fused power through regulatory control of critical institutions, such as the civil service, security services, and the judiciary.

1. KANU initiated a merger with KADU, her main rival in 1964, a merger that was aimed at fostering national unity, seen by some as a "tactic employed by Jomo Kenyatta to eradicate the opposition" as opposed to genuine obligation to inclusivity. According to the Weekly Review (KNADS: The Weekly Review, December 7, 1990, "Saitoti Report". P.40.) "Upon assimilation of KADU, KANU embarked on another operation of eliminating radicalism within its ranks," a situation that led to the relegation of individuals such as Oginga Odinga. Dominic Wetangula observed during an oral interview that this approach "led to an organized destruction of opposition, fusing power within KANU and restraining the democratic space."

This era ended with Kenyatta's death in 1978, leaving the scene for Daniel arap Moi's long-lasting presidency, a leader would further advance and shape Kenya's political setting. The changeover of power within KANU underlined the party's mechanism over the partisan procedure and its capacity to regulate internal undercurrents to safeguard continuity in governance.

Single- Party rule and opposition dynamics (1978-1991)

2. The era running from 1978 to 1991 saw Kenya administered under a single leadership under KANU with Daniel arap Moi as the president (Nasong'o, 2023). The reversion to a single party rule could be traced to an amendment to Kenya's 1982 Constitution which led to outlawing of multiparty politics in Kenya, leaving KANU as the sole political party. This occurred after 1982 attempted coup. When the bill for a amendment was introduced in parliament to make Kenya a de jure one-party state, the bill was adopted without a single voice of opposition (KNADS: The Weekly Review, June 11, 1982. "Kenya Becomes One-Party State by Law" p.4). It was this amendment that embedded KANU's control, as "Every presidential candidate was to be adherent of the KANU was to be nominated as such by that party."

Adar & Munyae, (2001) in their study observe that upon ensuring that KANU was the sole party without any opposition constitutionally, Moi's administration resorted to oppressive strategies, demonstrated by the "clampdown of dissenting voices of political figures, journalists, and activists through chance detentions, censorship, and persecution. "This suppression was meant to silence opposition of any leader to Moi's leadership. The dissenting voices were marginalized with opposition voices being steadily quieted." Capitalized on ethnic divisions and to consolidate power in the hands consolidated power in the hands of a cycle of a loyalist.

Despite the suppression of dissenting voices, pockets of opposition resilience continued. Civil society and pro-democracy activists were an unrelenting to test the regime, while global density continued. This situation ended in increasing calls for autonomous changes, this made Moi to unwillingly cancel the ban on resistance parties in 1991, marking the end of single-party rule and the beginning of a more pluralistic political landscape in Kenya.

Advent of multiparty Democracy and coalition building

The reinstatement of multiparty democracy in Kenya in 1991 was the start of a major shift in the country's political environment. The repeal of the ban on opposition parties was a response to domestic and international pressures for democratic reforms. According to Throup and Hornsby (1998), the transition to multiparty politics enabled the appearance of numerous political parties, such as the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and the Democratic Party (DP), parties that played a key role in challenging the dominance of KANU as the sole political party.

However, the breakup of the opposition into FORD Kenya and FORD Asili highlighted the complexities involved in forming coalitions within Kenya's party system. As discussed by participants in a focus group session

in Kitale this division was partly fueled by the KANU government led by President Moi, who aimed to sow discord among opposition groups. Despite these hurdles coalition politics have played a role in Kenya's evolution with changing alliances, mergers and realignments, among political parties influencing the country's governance and electoral landscape.

In the 1992 and 1997 elections, KANU was the dominant party in Kenya because the opposition parties were not able to come together and present a united front. However, things changed in the 2002 elections. The opposition parties, realizing the need to work together, formed a coalition called the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) (Kadima, & Owuor, 2006). This coalition included the National Alliance for Change (NAK) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Together, they were able to secure a historic victory, ending KANU's long-standing rule. The formation of NARC was a result of the growing dissatisfaction among Kenyans with KANU's governance. People were unhappy with the corruption, authoritarianism, and economic mismanagement that characterized KANU's rule. They wanted change and saw the need for a unified front to challenge KANU's entrenched power.

Several key figures played important roles in bringing together different political factions under the NARC banner. Mwai Kibaki, Charity Ngilu, and Raila Odinga were among these influential leaders. They worked hard to rally support and bring diverse groups together for a common cause. Just like different colors coming together to form a beautiful rainbow, the opposition parties united under the NARC coalition to bring about a significant political change in Kenya. This victory marked a turning point in the country's history and showed the power of unity and collective action. On interviewing Noah Wekesa about the formation of NARC coalition, he reiterated;

NARC was not just a marriage of convenience, but a strategic alliance with a purpose. It combined the strengths and resources of several parties in order to exploit their collective support base as well as expertise. The unity and cooperation within the coalition were crucial for rallying voters countrywide and offering an alternative to KANU's long dominance (Oral Interview, Noah Wekesa in Kitale 16th November, 2023).

The NARC alliance was a significant political group that formed in Kenya before the 2002 general elections. It brought together different opposition parties and influential leaders who were determined to remove the ruling party, KANU, from power. Some of the notable parties in the NARC coalition were the National Party of Kenya (NPK) led by Charity Ngilu, Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and the Democratic Party (DP) led by Mwai Kibaki, who became the coalition's presidential candidate. Alongside these parties, others like the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy - Kenya (FORD-Kenya) and the Shirikisho Party of Kenya (SPK) also joined the diverse coalition, representing a wide range of political ideologies and interests.

Coalition dynamics under the 2010 Constitution and devolution

According to Gathii (2016), the 2010 Constitution in Kenya brought about some big changes in how the country is governed. One of the major impacts was on how political parties work together to form alliances. Before 2010, Kenya had a history of coalition governments because no single party could get enough seats in parliament to have a majority. But the new constitution changed things. It made it necessary for parties to come together before the elections and work out agreements to make sure they had enough support in parliament to form a government.

During an oral interview with Wafula Wakoko, he observed how important it became for parties to strategically align themselves with others in the post-2010 constitutional era. This meant that parties needed to form broader coalitions and alliances to have a better chance of getting enough votes to win. An example of this was the Jubilee Alliance, which was formed before the 2013 elections. It brought together different political parties under one united front. This helped them appeal to a wider range of voters and win both the presidency and a majority in parliament.

The success of the Jubilee Alliance showed that building strong coalitions and working together strategically could make a big difference in elections and in forming stable governments under the 2010 Constitution. The era between 2002 and 2013 was a big chapter in Kenya's political history, marked by transitions, realignments and coalitions (Cheeseman, 2008). This period started with the end of KANU's long rule and the birth of multi-party democracy. Before 2013 elections, the law required all political parties to register their coalitions by

December 4, 2012 (Daily Nation, December 5, 2012 p4). This led to a lot of debate among politicians and parties and the formation of pre-election coalitions like CORD and Jubilee. The Daily Nation also reported that CORD was formed by ODM, Wiper, Ford-Kenya and other parties while Jubilee was formed by TNA, URP and UDF (Daily Nation, December 5, 2012 p4). The political landscape was shaped by the emergence of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto who were facing charges at the ICC over 2007 post-election violence. Despite having separate parties, Kenyatta and Ruto joined forces to form Jubilee Coalition, leveraging on their shared predicament and to consolidate the Kikuyu and Kalenjin vote (Cheeseman & Willis, 2014). The Jubilee Coalition was a response to the ICC charges, a convergence of interests to present a united front against the allegations (Fromet, 2013).

The ability of Jubilee Coalition to attract support of basic ethnic bases of Kikuyu as the ethnic tribe of Kenyatta the then presidential candidate and William Ruto's Kalenjin community the then running mate of Kenyatta and with backing of smaller ethnic communities is what ensured its success during the 2013 general elections. The attraction of other communities was driven by promises development and political positions in government worked as a strategic for national unity, stability, and inclusive development acted as a source of attraction to voters.

The 2017 general elections in Kenya witnessed a realignment of political parties, with the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) alliance from 2013 forming the National Super Alliance (NASA), while the Jubilee coalition transformed into the Jubilee Party (Cheeseman, et al., 2017). The Jubilee Party, led by incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta, emerged as the major coalition, formed from the merger of The National Alliance (TNA) and the United Republican Party (URP). This merger aimed to consolidate support from different regions and ethnic groups under one unified party umbrella.

The formation of the Jubilee Party was driven by a core objective to unify diverse factions, ethnic groups, and regions under one political entity (Daily Nation, August 10, 2016. p.1) The merger of TNA and URP sought to transcend ethnic and regional divides, presenting a more inclusive and united front for the electoral contest. By consolidating various support bases, the Jubilee Party aimed to create a more formidable and broad-based coalition that could appeal to voters from different regions and ethnic backgrounds, emphasizing a sense of national unity and collective progress.

During an oral interview with Nyukuri Barasa, he remarked that the formation of NASA in January 2017 marked a significant juncture in Kenyan politics, bringing together prominent opposition figures and their respective political parties to challenge the ruling establishment led by President Uhuru Kenyatta. Led by veteran opposition leader Raila Odinga, along with key figures like Kalonzo Musyoka, Musalia Mudavadi, and Moses Wetang'ula, NASA aimed to present a unified front against the incumbent government. Their coalition included parties like the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Wiper Democratic Movement, Amani National Congress (ANC), and Ford-Kenya, among others, consolidating diverse support bases and regional strengths.

Opalo postulates that the 2017 presidential election was marked by controversy, with incumbent Uhuru Kenyatta emerging as the winner after opposition leader Raila Odinga and the NASA coalition boycotted the re-run election (Opalo, 2018). During an oral interview with the political activist Nyukuri Barasa, he observed that the 2017 elections witnessed intense political maneuvering and strategic alliances, as the Jubilee Party sought to maintain its hold on power while NASA presented itself as a robust opposition alliance aiming to challenge the status quo.

Concerning the 2022 general elections in Kenya, different political parties maneuvered and formed strategic pre-election coalition as party leaders sought to consolidate support from interested parties to increase their chances of winning the elections (Tirra et al., 2023). Leaders sought support from from different parts of the country, giving way to regional politics to play a crucial role with political leaders seeking to form coalitions that could switch votes in their favor. Four presidential candidates only had been cleared to take part in the election that is William Ruto of United Democratic Alliance and Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Alliance candidate Raila Odinga and two others.

Kenya's general elections in 2022 marked a great shift in politics, with narrative emerging of "hustlers" against "dynasties," this contrasted the long-standing history of dominance of families associated with Kenyatta and

Odinga (Opalo, 2022). This shift challenged the historical leadership patterns in Kenya, which had often been drawn from the Kikuyu or Kalenjin ethnic groups. The Jubilee Party, which had been in power since 2013, also experienced internal divisions, with factions aligning with Ruto's presidential bid or Kenyatta's preferred successor. In the end, William Ruto of the UDA party was declared the winner of the 2022 presidential election, securing 50.49% of the vote. Raila Odinga, Ruto's main rival from the Azimio la Umoja coalition, challenged the results in the Supreme Court. His petition was dismissed by the court which affirmed William Ruto's Victory.

Drivers of Coalition Formation in Kenya

Formation of political coalitions has been driven by various factors. The factors can be broadly classified as political social and legal. This section presents various determinants that have shaped formation of political coalitions in Kenya.

Ethnicity and Voting

With over 40, communities, Kenya as Country is highly ethnicized country. With such high-level ethnicity, the Country has diverse demands anchored competing interests. This situation could be traced to party formation which either assumes the dimension of ethnicity or regional blocks keeping in mind that even the settlement is ethnic. According to Elischer (2013), ethnicity is a critical component in Kenya's political space, as evidenced in its role in influencing various spheres of communal life such political affiliations, resource distribution as well as social interactions.

Attesting to the role of ethnicity in matters, Malik (213) observes that voting pattern is majorly on basis of ethnic affiliation. This is demonstrated by voting patterns of tribes like Kikuyu who voted for Uhuru Kenyatta who is a kikuyu in large numbers in 2013, same to Luos for Raila Odinga who is a Luo, an indicator that voting alignment was pegged on ethnic consideration. This could be a pointer that the level of democracy in Kenya's political environment was not driven by ideological issues, a state that was like to compromise the quality of candidates chose. When voting is ethnic based, the situation is like to lead to political balkanization of the Country, as well as polarization.

Talking on ethnicity and politics in Kenya, one an informant stated:

Political leaders always strive on ethnicity, capitalizing on party ethnic roots to sprout as well as amalgamate their power and leadership. This occurs through strategic alignment grounded on ethnic identities to gain support as well and allegiance. This is majorly achieved through creation of patronage linkages, with leaders promising representation and resources to ethnic constituencies in exchange for political allegiance.... William Ruto, the current president from Kalenjin community, leveraged on ethnic backing to Marshall support. He anchored his strong political setting in rift valley, marshaling the Kalenjin background and fortifying their commitment through promises of representation and development (Fred Nyongesa, Oral Interview at REDO offices, Bungoma on 4th January 2023)

Based on the above observations it may be reasonably concluded that, that political leaders in Kenya have always capitalized on ethnic backing in order to consolidate their power. The informants acknowledged the existence of this tactic, where leaders develop interactions with definite ethnic groups, advancing representation and resources in exchange for political loyalty.

In an earlier study carried out by Bedasso,(2015), it was established that despite the positive side of ethnicity in terms robustness in cultural heriage, ethnicity has been a great threat in political formation and generally countries stability. The formation of political outfits such as political parties and the resultant coalitions has majorly been a amalgamation of different tribes. This situation has seen even distribution of resources and appointment of various leaders to different parties evaluated in political lens. The study ethnicity has been one of the major causes of political upheavals that have so far been witnessed in Kenya such as post-election violence of 2008.

As if to confirm the above position, during interview one informant David Burare had this to say:

...the multiplicity of Kenya's ethnic clusters and non-ideological voting patterns leaning on ethnically formed

political parties make it difficult for a single political party to have outright win of an election. This situation is further complicated by electoral law which demands that a candidate beside just having highest votes must garner at least 25 percent of votes cast in at least half of the Counties. This is what has been driving the coalition formation to advance for formation of coalitions based on ethnicity, in view of ethnic settlement patterns in order to meet this for instance the NASA coalition of 2017 n ethnic amalgamation was ODM (Luo-dominated) and Wiper (Kamba-dominated), and other ethnically related parties. The same could be attributed to Jubilee Alliance who were major competitors-Kikuyu, Kalenjin and other tribal groupings. These coalitions sought to attract ethnic support from different regions to. (David Burare, Oral Interview, at Upper Hill, Nairobi on 23rd November 2023.)

Burare's views demonstrate the position of coalition politics in Kenya and how it has been used to shape Kenya's political environment. It is a reflection of actually what works in Kenya, this situation has been one of the major causes of tension as the eventual winners of election has demonstrated some regions have ended up being discriminated by winning coalition on argument that they are not "Shareholders" based on previous voting pattern

Winner-takes-all system

Kenya's winner-takes-it-all electoral arrangement denotes to a system in which the candidate or party with the largest number of votes emerges as the winner, irrespective of the margin of win (Cheeseman et al., 2019). This arrangement has seen political coalitions formed among political parties to pool votes and win, especially where no solo party has had outright win.

During 2002 elections, National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) crafted a powerful coalition that set out to challenge Kenya African National Union's (KANU) long time rule. The alliance brought together various political parties such as Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), National Party of Kenya (DP) and many others. NARC would therefore integrate all kinds of political groupings and ethnicities against KANU's hegemony by fronting for Mwai Kibaki as its Presidential flag bearer thus leading to NARC winning landslide election victory. With this coalition, NARC was able to secure both the presidency and parliamentary majority.

Nyukuri Barasa, a key informant during interview had this to say:

3. The 2017 election saw the setup of the National Super Alliance (NASA), a union made up, Kalonzo Musyoka's Wiper Democratic Movement (WDM) which was for Kamba community, Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) for Luo community, Ford Kenya of Moses Wetangula's for Bukusu, and Musalia Mudavadi's Amani National Congress (ANC) for Maragoli and other Luyha communities in Kakamega, all meant to Marshall ethnic support to garner votes that were meant to meet the threshold of winning an election.(Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15th November, 2023).

This approach confirms the observations of focus group discussion who advanced the notion that the partnership between Ruto and Uhuru in 2013 was mainly driven by their collective ICC case as opposed a common political philosophy or vision. They advanced that:

...the eventual separation of Ruto and Uhuru after the 2017 election, revealed t that their collaboration was mainly tactical and incidental rather being grounded on candid association of benefits. (FGD at Kitale in Trans Nzoia County on 8th December 2023)

The preceding show how the winner takes it all mentality has been key drivers of Kenya's political coalition. Considering that highly ethnic Kenya's community and tribal voting pattern make it necessary for parties to forge coalition for as a positioning strategy in government formation, with anticipated material gain that accrue with the win in election.

Legal Frameworks and Coalition Formation

Although party coalitions and mergers had been around for some for some time introduction of multiparty

politics in 1991, there was no proper legislature that was meant to govern their operation till the proclamation the proclamation of the Constitution in 2010. The constitutional changes led to rebirth of for multiparty democracy in 1991 only cancelled Section 2A of the old Constitution that had banned multiparty politics, there was no change that had addressed the regulations and recognized framework that had conserved single-party rule. As such, the 1963 and 1991 multiparty politics in was not pegged on resolute pillars fostering the institutionalization and development of political establishments for an operative and useful democracy.

Therefore, proclamation of constitution 2010 came along with statutory framework supported coalition formations (Oyaya, 2013). Numerous legal outlines in had a substantial impact on coalition formation in Kenya. The framework came with distinctive the rules, procedures, and actions that are meant to control political entities, elections, and power, thereby inducing the establishment and working of alliances. Before promulgation of constitution of 2010 constitution, coalition formation was majorly under registration of political parties was under the Societies' Act with the management of coalition, regulation and procedure resting within the general necessities of the Constitution, the Societies' Act, Presidential Elections Act (CAP 7) and the National Assembly.

The Constitution of Kenya

Kenya adopted its new Constitution in 2010 and ever since it came into effect, the constitution has stood as a transformative document that significantly affected the political realm of coalitions within the nation (Murray, 2013). One of its notable contributions was the establishment of a multi-party system that recognized and protected rights of individuals to form join or participate in the political parties. This provision at its core changed how politics worked; it allowed many different parties to exist which then paved way for coalitions and collaborations among these political entities thus ensuring more vibrant politics.

Chapter seven of the Kenyan Constitution 2010 defines the rules of representation, such as requirements for political parties and coalition pacts; Chapter Eight, details the structure and operations of Parliament, critical in establishment and control; while Chapter Nine, addresses the formation of the executive, involving the provisions for the creation of coalition governments.

Additionally, the composition introduced the notion of decentralization, a key change in Kenya's authority structure. It assisted the formation of county governments, defining their powers, tasks, and organizations (Hope, 2014). This devolved system of authority compelled coalition structure at the county level, as several parties joined to secure places within county governments and successfully effect decision-making procedures. Decentralization led to a more devolved and various political setting, convincing political actors to occupy in tactical alliances to gain standing and effectually wield impact at the grassroots level.

Talking about coalition development at county level as devolved unit, Wafula Wakoko an informant state:

...the dawn of county governments took forth a situation where alliance undercurrents befitted vital for authority and policymaking...with diverse powers conferred in county regimes, coalition politics became influential in assisting cooperation, compromise, and consensus-building amongst numerous gatherings to oversee and ensure efficiency in operations at the county level. Political entities assumed the prominence of pacts and alliances in achieving governance objectives, leading to the formation of coalitions aimed at fusing power and leveraging varied viewpoints for more broad and wide-ranging authority. (Wafula Wakoko, Oral Interview at ORPP offices, Nairobi on 3rd January 2024).

The study advances that that Kenya's constitution, through establishment of a multi-party structure, recognition of political privileges, and the creation of regionalized county administrations, considerably influenced the setup of coalition government. The constitution has promoted a more diverse political setting, created the need for coalition establishment at the county level, and underscored the significance of strategic alliances for effective administration and decision-making, thereby influencing Kenya's political scene in reflective ways.

Political Parties Act

The promulgation of 2010 constitution led to formulation of various Acts, which were meant to promote its operationalization (RoK, 2010). Among the Acts that were enacted was the Act that was meant to guide the

overseeing the formation and operational of political parties-the political parties Act. The Political Parties Act was set in 2011. This Act presents a broad legal structure meant to guide dynamics of political parties in Kenya.

Among the contents of the Act are detailed sections which address the procedure and principles concerning establishment of coalitions among political parties. With Section 10 giving detailed procedure for key requirements, Section 15 procedure of registration, 16 clarifies implications of coalition formation among the partners (Murray, 2013).

Administration of Electoral Election in Kenya

The exercise of Administration of election in Kenya is carried out by a body called Independent Electoral commission. This body has developed a set of laws that guide the election process as outlined known as Independent Electoral and Boundaries ACT 2011(IEBC). With 14 sections, Election ACT, defines its duties and responsibilities in the election process as well as definition of various procedures to guide the whole process of election right from nomination of candidates up to actual election, including counting, announcement of results as well as appeals with clear stipulation of timelines for the various process. Similarly, financing aspect has been addressed with set budgetary limits as well as disciplinary measures for non-compliance for the candidates.

Judicial Precedence

Judicial patterns and court pronouncements have had significant influence on coalition government in Kenya by creating legal standards that influence the creation, tasks, and disbanding of alliances (Bevelhmyer, 2021). Such precedence includes one case that led to nullification of 2017 presidential election. This case involved Raila Odinga and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission & others, where it was alleged that the 2017 presidential election had violated electoral rules due to various irregularities that had been witnessed during the elections. The Supreme Court was in agreement with the case as had been presented by the complainant, a situation that led to nullification of the presidential results in which Uhuru Kenyatta had been declared as the winner. (Kanyinga & Odote, 2019).

This ruling by the Supreme Court judges highlighted the significance of conducting free, and fair elections by ensuring that all electoral laws were fully adhered. This ruling considerably swayed the way political coalitions and alliances organized and operated sequential elections, enlisting a greater importance on electoral openness and devotion to legal measures.

Another legal precedence could be traced to the legal indulgent and guidelines relating to coalition pacts. This case involved United Republican Party (URP) v. Registrar of Political Parties & others that was handled by the High Court of Kenya. The case involved ruling on the legality relating to coalition covenant between parties, on issues relating to the submission to the Political Parties Act and the recognition of coalition pacts (Makokha, 2019). The ruling entered provided transparency on the legal standards and processes for the registration and acknowledgement of alliances under the regulation. It highlighted the need for openness and observance of legal standards when establishing alliances for political commitments. Such judicial pronouncements not only direct the behavior of political entities entering into alliance bargains but also set a yardstick for legal compliance and responsibility within Kenya's political landscape, swaying how associations are shaped, sustained, and dissolved.

Political Tensions

According to Cheeseman, (2008) formation of coalition in Kenya in the past has been influence by instances of antagonistic elections and assertions of election indiscretions. This has situation has pointed to a lack of confidence in the electoral procedure. In reaction to disputed election results and apparent voting malpractices, coalitions have commonly arisen as a tactical reaction to contest these outcomes and build stronger resistance against parties in power. For instance, the outcome of 2007 general had results fiercely by Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). This resulted into posit election violence, attracting international community whose intervention saw the formation of Government of National Unity with Mwai Kibaki of Party of National Unity and Raila Odinga of ODM being Co-principals, President and Prime minister respectively.

One such example is a resource-driven coalition. The 2013 and 2017 elections were similarly competitive and marred by accusations of irregularities. In the aftermath of the 2013 elections, the opposition coalition —

Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), spearheaded by Raila Odinga — rebuffed the outcome citing electoral malpractices and took the case to Supreme Court on allegations that Jubilee Alliance led by Uhuru Kenyatta had manipulated the election; even though the highest court in the land upheld the election, formations like CORD underscored opposition parties' reaction to come together against perceived electoral injustices with an aim of solidifying their stand against ruling party.

Asymmetrical Resource Distribution

A study done by (Kisobo, 2013) established availability and access to resources such as budgetary provisions, development projects among other benefits are some of the major forms of attraction for formation of political coalitions. It is the lure of ability to access these benefits that make parties to forge coalitions in order to secure access to these benefits and influence decision-making process. For instance, the parties that formed Jubilee coalition in 2013 entered pre-election coalition which had documented the sharing of various political coalitions on assumption of power.

One key informant noted,

One of the remarkable resource-driven coalition politics took place in sharing government positions between the partners involved. After the 2013 elections, Jubilee Alliance that consisted of The National Alliance (TNA) and United Republican Party (URP) came into being as a coalition government. This alliance led to the attainment of the presidency by Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto. The partners in the coalition discussed among themselves to come up with a formula for how different ministerial positions plus other key roles within the government structure would be allocated so as to ensure each partner had a say in decision-making at the government level. It was evident from how they shared out these positions that formation of alliances by political parties was influenced by access to power and resources, which then enabled them to drive policy issues on the table and have a hand in state decisions. (Fred Nyongesa, Oral Interview at REDO offices, Bungoma on 4th January 2023.)

Likewise, the regulation of county-level budgets and appropriation of funds for improvement projects acts as incentives for entities to participate in coalition government. Coalition's entities purpose to amalgamate power, reach resources, and sway the path of expansion moves. The pursuit for control of resource sharing and authority is a key drive at the crafting of coalition in Kenya. (Khadiagala, 2010).

International Pressure

Kanyinga and Walker, (2013) advances that establishment of multiparty democracy in Kenya was pressured upon Kenya through International influence and the contribution of external actors. This pressure was exerted through various avenues such as diplomatic relations, and foreign aid cut, where release of funds to Kenya in form financial Aid was pegged on the extent to which the political regime embraced specific demand reforms, among them being the opening up of political space (Musila, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, it is evident that the advent politics of coalition formation in Kenya since 1945 has been driven by historical occurrences, political movements, and power struggles among political class, leading to multifaceted and dynamic coalition setting.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that there is need for political coalitions to promote culture of inclusive decision-making within political coalitions by ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are taken into account, leading to more representative and effective governance.

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