



Jumuga Journal of Education,  
Oral Studies, and Human Sciences (JJEOSHS)  
[editor@jumugajournal.org](mailto:editor@jumugajournal.org)  
<http://www.jumugajournal.org>  
Volume 7, No. 1, 2024  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35544/jjeoshs.v7i1.73>

## Historical Evolution of Political Coalitions in Kenya Since 1956: A Pragmatism-Research-Philosophy Perspective

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### Abstract

Kenya has witnessed the formation of diverse political coalitions prior to and after the constitutional independence in 1963. This research article explores the different types of political coalitions in Kenya since 1945. The initial research was anchored on the theory of political coalition and based on pragmatism research philosophy. It utilizes historical and descriptive research designs while employing interview schedules, focus group discussions and document analysis guide as methods of data collection. The findings demarcate political coalitions in Kenya as pre-election, post-election, regional based, ethnic-based and issue based. Further, more than 90% of voters agree that political coalitions are instruments by which the chances of winning an election are increased. Although coalitions have been a common occurrence in Kenya's political landscape, possessiveness and competing interests often bedevil them. The research article concludes that political coalitions are crucial drivers of governance, social dynamics and economic policies in Kenya. It recommends to the policy makers and political actors to value the role played by coalitions in securing stable governance while promoting inclusive government, urging for measures that enable effective management of post-election crisis.

**Key words:** Political Coalitions, Pre-election, Post-Election, Coalition-building.

### Introduction

Kenya's political setting has been molded by a series of ever-changing political coalitions since 1945, reflecting the country's complex ethnic, social, and economic fabric. With the rise of nationalism following World War II, movements began to fracture colonial allegiances, leading to the formation of political parties that sought to unify varied groups under common goals.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Kenya African Union (KANU) emerged as a dominant force, advocating for independence and later transitioning

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<sup>1</sup> Assa Okoth, *A History of Africa: African nationalism and the de-colonisation process*. Vol. 2. East African Publishers, 2006.

into a movement for political control under Jomo Kenyatta.<sup>2</sup> This marked the commencement of coalition politics, as various factions coalesced around the shared vision of self-governance, setting the stage for future coalitions.

The nature of political coalitions in Kenya evolved significantly with the transition to independence in 1963. The post-colonial era was characterized by the consolidation of power within KANU, which suppressed dissenting voices and marginalized opposition parties.<sup>3</sup> Never the less, the introduction of multiparty democracy in the early 1990s catalyzed the rebirth of coalitional politics exhibited by the formation of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD).<sup>4</sup> The party united various opposition groups against the authoritarian regime of the then president Daniel Moi, emphasizing the role of political coalitions in challenging entrenched power structures. The volatility of these coalitions underscored the shifting allegiances based on ethnic and regional interests.

Wanyande observes that in the contemporary Kenya, political coalitions have continued to play a critical role in shaping electoral outcomes and governance.<sup>5</sup> The formation of political coalitions such as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in 2002, the Grand Coalition in 2008, the Jubilee Alliance, the National Super Alliance in 2017 and the Kenya Kwanza alliance in 2022 illustrates the strategic choreography of political actors to consolidate power and appeal to a broader electorate. The formations of these political coalitions often prioritize pragmatic interest over ideological uniformity, reflecting a political culture that esteems coalition-building as a means to navigate the complexities of Kenya's diverse society. As Kenya moves into the future, the evolution of these political coalitions remain critical in addressing the challenges of governance, representation and national unity. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to explore the types of political coalition in Kenya since 1945.

## Literature Review

This section comprehensively reviewed literature relevant to the study, aligning it with the specific objective of exploring the types of political coalitions in Kenya since 1945. While writing on the politics of coalition in Europe, Laver and Schofield observe that pre-coalitions are formed in response to electoral systems and political circumstances.<sup>6</sup> They further observe that in multiparty systems, parties may unite before elections to consolidate their electoral strength. Accordingly, in countries like Italy and Germany, pre-election coalitions are formed to help parties secure a greater share of seats in parliament. The study by Laver and Schofield provided the basis and insights on pre-coalition formation in Kenyan context.

In Africa, the nature of political coalitions is majorly influenced by historical and socio-political contexts. Wanyande writing on "The Politics of Transition in Kenya: From KANU to NARC" observes that in Africa, pre-coalitions often emerge from ethnic or regional affiliations as seen in Kenya.<sup>7</sup> According to Chilunjika, post-election coalitions in Africa can be unstable, reflecting the challenges of reconciling diverse political agenda.<sup>8</sup> Kadima and Owour studied Kenya's decade of experiments with political party alliances and coalitions.<sup>9</sup> In this study, they explored the formation, survival and collapse of political coalitions in Kenya and how they have influenced national cohesion. Their study reveals a mixture of outcomes from the formation of these coalitions. They note that these coalitions have helped in uniting polarized political parties in Kenya thus promoting national cohesion. However, they also observe that formation of political coalitions weakens smaller parties in favor of larger parties. Although their study is informative on coalition formation in Kenya, its limited focus on a short span of a decade informs the need of a comprehensive historical study on coalition politics in Kenya, hence the current study.

While writing on "The advent of unholy alliances?" Biegon discusses the Coalition governments in the aftermath of disputed elections and electoral violence in Africa with a keen observation on Kenya.<sup>10</sup> In his work, he lays more emphasis on the historical context, disputed results, electoral violence and the subsequent formation of a coalition government. Accordingly, he underscores Kenya's deep-rooted issues of exclusion and ethnic politics, which had instigated the violence following the

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<sup>2</sup> Okoth, George Odhiambo, and Juliet Akinyi Jagero. "Thinking Through the Crisis of Intra-Party Democracy in Kenya: Reflections on Kenyatta's KANU Leadership (1963-1978)." *Journal of Historical Studies* 2, no. 1 (2021): pp.1-29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Wanyande, Peter, Walter Oyugi, and C. Odhiambo-Mbai. "The Politics of Transition in Kenya: FROM KANU to NARC." (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Etyang, Oita. *The Politics of Coalition Formation in Kenya: 1992-2017*. University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Laver, Michael, and Norman Schofield. *Multiparty government: The politics of coalition in Europe*. University of Michigan Press, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Wanyande, Peter, Walter Oyugi, and C. Odhiambo-Mbai. "The Politics of Transition in Kenya: FROM KANU to NARC." (2003)

<sup>8</sup> Sixpence, Pedzisai, Alouis Chilunjika, and Emmanuel Sakarombe. "Options for post-election conflict resolution in Africa." *International Journal of Law and Public Policy (IJLAPP)*, 2021 (3)1, pp.49-59.

<sup>9</sup> Denis Kadima, and Felix Owuor. "Kenya's decade of experiments with political party alliances and coalitions-motivations, impact and prospects." *Journal of African Elections* 13, no. 1 (2014): pp.150-180.

<sup>10</sup> The advent of unholy alliances? Coalition governments in the aftermath of disputed elections and electoral violence in Africa: a case study of Kenya.

election. His isolation case of the alliances formed after disputed election like the Grand coalition government in Kenya falls short of comprehensive evolution of coalition politics in Kenya. This informed this research article. While the foregoing studies provide insights into formation of coalitions, they often do not explore the full spectrum of coalition dynamics in Kenya across different historical periods. It is against this background that this article sought to explore the types of political coalitions in Kenya since 1945.

## **Methodology**

The study was anchored on political coalition theory and founded on pragmatism research philosophy. Historical and descriptive research designs were used to guide the study. The sample size was 454 respondents who included a sample of 432 ordinary voters, 8 leaders of political parties, 6 respondents from civic organizations, 4 leaders from local intelligentsia, and 4 experts on historical matters. Purposive, proportionate, snowball and convenience-sampling techniques were used in the selection of the respondents. Data was collected using 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 and quantitative research techniques were used in data analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed based on themes and presented through narratives and verbatim quotations. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and results presented in tables and percentages.

## **Analysis and Presentation of Findings**

### **Political Coalitions in Pre-Independence**

Since 1945, variety of political coalitions emerged, reflecting different ethnic, multi-ethnic, and national affiliations. Ethnic coalitions such as the Young Kikuyu Association (YKA), Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) and the Luo Union played significant roles in advocating for the interests of specific ethnic groups within the country.<sup>11</sup> The KCA, originating in the 1920s, focused on issues related to Kikuyu land rights and political representation, while the Luo Union addressed concerns specific to the Luo community, particularly in response to colonial oppression and economic marginalization.

In contrast, multi-ethnic coalitions like KASU and KAU exemplified efforts to unite individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds in pursuit of common goals.<sup>12</sup> KASU, established in 1944, sought to foster unity among different ethnic groups in Kenya to collectively oppose colonial rule. On the other hand, KAU, founded in the same year, aimed to represent the interests of all Kenyan Africans, transcending ethnic boundaries and advocating for independence on a broader national scale.

Furthermore, national coalitions such as the Mau Mau Movement and KANU showcased efforts to mobilize people across ethnic lines towards shared objectives. The Mau Mau uprising, although led primarily by the Kikuyu community, garnered support from individuals of various ethnicities in the struggle against British colonial rule. Similarly, KANU, established in 1960, emerged as a nationalist party advocating for independence and self-rule for all Kenyans, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. These coalitions underscored the diverse nature of political movements in Kenya during this pivotal period of transition towards independence.

The study advances that colonial government in Kenya viewed the emergence of diverse political coalitions advocating for ethnic, multi-ethnic, and national interests as threats to its authority. They perceived these movements as potential challenges to colonial rule, leading to measures like arrests, bans, and propaganda to undermine and weaken their impact. The government exploited ethnic divisions within the coalitions to disrupt their unity and effectiveness in opposing colonial policies, reflecting a strategy of control and suppression to protect colonial interests.

### **Types of Coalitions in Post-Independence**

The study conducted a comprehensive analysis of political coalitions, employing a dual-parameter classification system based on the timing of coalition formation and the nature of the coalition. Notably, the analysis revealed the potential for a specific type of coalition to exhibit characteristics belonging to both clusters. The two primary parameters, timing, and nature, allowed for a refined understanding of the diverse political coalitions observed. In the subsequent sections, the study delved into a detailed analysis of each cluster, shedding light on the intricacies and distinctions that shape these alliances. This approach facilitated a more comprehension of the dynamics within and between political coalitions.

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<sup>11</sup> Laurence Juma. "Ethnic politics and the constitutional review process in Kenya." *Tulsa J. Comp. & Int'l L.* 9 (2001): p.471.

<sup>12</sup> Bethwell A Ogot., and William Robert Ochieng, eds. *Decolonization & independence in Kenya, 1940-93*. Ohio State University Press, 1995.

## Classification of Coalitions in Kenya Based On Timing

### Pre-Election Coalitions

This classification refers to alliances formed prior to electoral contests, where political parties and factions strategically come together to pool resources, ideologies, and support.<sup>13</sup> Pre-election coalitions often emerge as a response to the dynamic political landscape, where the goal is to strengthen collective influence and increase the chances of electoral success. It was found necessary to seek voters understanding on the motivation for formation of pre-election coalition among political parties in Kenya. A positive statement stating "Political parties come together to form coalitions as a way of increasing the chances of winning" was put to voter respondents and scored. The findings are reflected in table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Response on Motivation of forming pre-election coalition in Kenya**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cummulative %
Strongly Agree	190	53.52	53.52
Agree	130	36.62	90.14
Undecided	5	1.41	91.55
Disagree	15	4.23	95.78
Strongly Disagree	15	4.23	100
Total	355	100	

Source: Field Data, 2023

The data presented in table 1.1 shows the responses of voters regarding their understanding of the motivation for the formation of coalitions among political parties in Kenya. From the data, it is evident that majority of respondents (over 90%) either strongly agree or agree that political parties in Kenya form coalitions to increase their chances of winning elections. This suggested a notable understanding among voters regarding the motivation behind formation of pre-election coalition in the political landscape of Kenya.

The study undertook the analysis of some coalitions formed under this category as discussed herein:

Among the coalitions formed in Kenya, NARC serves as the best example of pre-election coalition. It was formed in 2002 during the general elections. Varied political parties and movements united by a shared goal of bringing to an end to the long reign of single-party rule under KANU in the country.<sup>14</sup> It was formed by political parties such as DP, National Party of Kenya (NPK), and FORD-P, NARC which tactically united to merge the opposition against the ruling party.

Commenting on the timing of the formation of NARC, Noah Wekesa commented:

...timing was pivotal when it came to the formation of NARC. It took place just before the elections — a move aimed at magnifying its influence on voter sentiment and on Kenya's political dynamics. In this endeavor, the coalition managed to rally the collective force of all its member parties; standing together as one entity against the ruling regime. This symbiotic collaboration not only widened NARC's support but spoke volumes to Kenyan voters about solidarity within political leadership...the genesis of NARC's pre-election coalition sprang from a common yearning for political metamorphosis, coupled with an understanding that a divided house cannot stand up against oppressive governance. The victory of the coalition in the 2002 polls — which saw Mwai Kibaki ascend to the presidency — served as a clear sign that indeed strength lies in unity before elections are held, especially for Kenya..<sup>15</sup>

However, the study established that as with many coalitions, NARC's unity faced challenges in the post-election period, revealing the complexities of maintaining cohesion once the common electoral goal has been achieved. Internal disagreements and divergent priorities among coalition members eventually led to the fragmentation of NARC. In analyzing NARC within the category of pre-election coalitions, the study gained insights into the strategic advantages and challenges inherent in such alliances. The case study of NARC provides a lens through which to understand the dynamics of pre-election coalitions in Kenya, their transformative potential, and the complexities associated with sustaining unity beyond the electoral moment.

<sup>13</sup> Marisa Kellam. "Why pre-electoral coalitions in presidential systems?." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (2017): pp.391-411.

<sup>14</sup> Walter O. Oyugi. "Coalition politics and coalition governments in Africa." *Journal of contemporary African studies* 24, no. 1 (2006): pp.53-79.

<sup>15</sup> Noah Wekesa, Oral Interview in Kitale on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Similarly, voter respondents in focus group discussion (FGD) argued that pre-election coalitions in Kenya have been ineffective because past political leaders have failed to live up to their commitments within these coalitions. Rather than maintaining the initial partnerships, leaders have abandoned their coalition partners and brought in new political actors who were not part of the original agreements, creating a sense of disorder.<sup>16</sup> This perspective underscores the complexities and challenges associated with sustaining unity and fulfilling promises within pre-election alliances, highlighting the need for strong leadership, clear structures, and mechanisms to navigate post-election dynamics effectively.

The Jubilee Coalition, formed in anticipation of the 2013 general elections, exemplifies another significant pre-election coalition in Kenya's political landscape.<sup>17</sup> Bringing together the political powerhouses of The National Alliance (TNA) and the United Republican Party (URP), the coalition strategically united key political figures, including Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, to pursue a shared electoral agenda. The timing of Jubilee's formation was instrumental, strategically capitalizing on the pre-election period to consolidate support, articulate a unified vision, and present a formidable front against competing political forces.

Charles Matoke, commenting on the formation of the Jubilee coalition in 2013 remarked:

... a common objective of winning the elections motivated the Jubilee Coalition, but this didn't stop them from their varied strengths to play a strategic game in securing victory. In coming together and speaking with one voice, they were able to reach more people with their message; they also got support from different sections of voters thanks to their unity. This formation of a pre-election strategic alliance significantly changed the political terrain during that election period that later saw Uhuru Kenyatta elected as President and William Ruto as Deputy President in 2013.<sup>18</sup>

The study findings revealed that the success of the Jubilee Coalition in the 2013 elections underscored the effectiveness of pre-election alliances in Kenya, demonstrating their ability to sway electoral outcomes through a united and coordinated approach. Challenges emerged within the Jubilee coalition in the post-election period. Internal dynamics and divergent interests among coalition members surfaced, requiring astute leadership to navigate and sustain the coalition's unity throughout its term. In examining the Jubilee Coalition within the category of pre-election coalitions, the study provided valuable insights into the strategic advantages and potential pitfalls associated with such alliances. The case of Jubilee illuminates the transformative impact of pre-election coalitions on Kenya's political landscape, emphasizing both their instrumental role in securing electoral success and the intricate challenges of maintaining unity in the aftermath of victory.

The formation of CORD serves as a noteworthy case study in the realm of pre-election coalitions. Established in anticipation of the 2013 general elections, CORD brought together key opposition parties, notably ODM, WDM, and Ford Kenya party.<sup>19</sup> The coalition strategically united prominent opposition figures, including Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka, and Moses Wetangula, with the shared objective of challenging the Jubilee Coalition. David Burare revealed that:

...CORD's formation was strategically timed to influence the electoral landscape, leveraging the pre-election period to consolidate opposition forces, broaden its support base, and articulate a cohesive vision. By uniting diverse political entities, CORD aimed to present a robust challenge to the incumbent regime, showcasing the potential strength of a united front in Kenya's political arena.<sup>20</sup>

The study observed that the coalition's impact on the electoral dynamics of 2013 demonstrated the transformative potential of pre-election alliances. While CORD did not secure victory in the presidential race, its presence significantly shaped parliamentary and local elections, underscoring the influence of such collaborative efforts on the broader political landscape. NASA formed in 2017 was a coalition of political parties that united to challenge the ruling party, Jubilee Party, in the presidential election.<sup>21</sup> It consisted of five major parties, including the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Wiper Democratic Movement (WDM), Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-Kenya), Amani National Congress (ANC), and Chama Cha Mashinani (CCM).

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<sup>16</sup> FGD in Kitale, Trans Nzoia County on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023

<sup>17</sup> Langat, Patrick. "Election In Kenya: A Public Sphere Analysis." PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Matoke, Oral Interview at UDA offices Nairobi on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>19</sup> George Odhiambo Okoth, and Gordon Onyango Omenya. "New Constitution, Odingaism and the State of Internal Democracy in Orange Democratic Movement and its Effects on the 2013 Elections in Kenya." *Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election* (2015): p.190.

<sup>20</sup> David Burare, Oral Interview at Upper Hill Nairobi on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Patrick Langat. "Election in Kenya: A Public Sphere Analysis." PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2020.

On the formation of NASA, Nyukuri Barasa commented:

...by bringing together multiple political parties, NASA aimed to appeal to a wider range of voters across different regions and ethnic groups. The NASA strategic alliance sought to consolidate opposition forces and increase the chances of defeating the ruling party. Political campaigns require significant financial resources. By forming a coalition, NASA parties could pool their financial and logistical resources, enabling them to run a more effective and coordinated campaign.<sup>22</sup>

The NASA coalition was driven by a shared desire to challenge the ruling party's dominance and address issues such as corruption, governance, and socio-economic inequality.<sup>23</sup> By presenting a united front, NASA aimed to offer a credible alternative to the incumbent government. The coalition lost election and contested the election results in court, which resulted in a historic nullification of the election which they boycotted as they felt that the issues that they wanted addressed by electoral commission prior to repeat had not been addressed. However, the coalition faced challenges in maintaining unity and achieving its intended goals.

Remarking on the timing of the formation of NASA coalition, David Burare had this to say:

... NASA was formed at a time strategically positioning itself to have an influence, on the political scene. By bringing opposition parties NASA aimed to expand its support and offer a viable option to the current ruling party. The coalition's impact, on the 2017 election dynamics highlighted how pre-election partnerships can shake up the established system. Although NASA didn't win the race its presence was felt in local elections underscoring the positive effects of working together in politics.<sup>24</sup>

In examining the case of NASA, the study findings revealed important lessons for understanding the dynamics of pre-election coalitions in Kenya. The study emphasizes the significance of strategic timing, effective communication, and strong leadership in forming and sustaining such alliances. Additionally, the challenges faced by NASA post-election underscore the need for well-defined structures and mechanisms to navigate internal disputes and uphold unity over an extended period.

### **Post-Election Coalitions**

This classification is based on timing, involve alliances that are formed after the conclusion of electoral processes.<sup>25</sup> These coalitions typically arise from the necessity to secure a working majority in the legislature or address power-sharing arrangements in the aftermath of closely contested elections. Unlike pre-election coalitions that are established ahead of the polls, post-election coalitions respond directly to the actual distribution of seats and political power. Reacting on the motivations of post-election coalitions during an oral interview with Bifwoli Wakoli observed:

... the reasons, for forming coalitions after elections are varied and complex. They might stem from a desire to create a government especially when no party wins a majority. Coming together in alliances after elections can be a decision to strengthen authority encourage diversity or tackle doubts, about the fairness of the election results. Furthermore parties could unite to combine resources and skills for governance.<sup>26</sup>

However, the research findings revealed that the post-election coalitions in Kenya often encounter challenges associated with merging diverse political ideologies, managing conflicting interests, and navigating power-sharing agreements. The absence of a common pre-election platform may lead to ideological differences that become apparent in the post-election period, making it challenging to sustain unity. Disagreements over the distribution of ministerial portfolios and policy priorities can further strain the effectiveness of post-election coalitions. Further, the study argues that the success or failure of post-election coalitions has direct implications on governance and political stability in Kenya. A well-functioning coalition can bring about inclusivity and collaboration, potentially leading to governance that is more effective. Conversely, a fragmented or unstable coalition may face difficulties in implementing policies, resulting in governance challenges and, in extreme cases, political instability. The study analyzed examples of post-election coalitions in Kenya as discussed herein:

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<sup>22</sup> Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Oita Etyang. *The politics of coalition formation in Kenya: 1992-2017*. University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2021.

<sup>24</sup> David Burare, Oral Interview at Upper Hill, Nairobi on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Sebastian Elischer. *"Ethnic coalitions of convenience and commitment: Political parties and party systems in Kenya."* (2008).

<sup>26</sup> Wakolil Bifwoli, Oral Interview at Highway hotel, Bungoma on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The Grand Coalition Government in Kenya, spanning from 2008 to 2013, was a focal response to the turbulent aftermath of the 2007 presidential election.<sup>27</sup> The political landscape at that time was marked by contested results, leading to a period of intense post-election violence.<sup>28</sup> Recognizing the need for stability and reconciliation, the formation of the Grand Coalition Government materialized in April 2008 through the mediation efforts of prominent international figure Kofi Annan. A distinctive aspect of this coalition was the agreement between the two major political figures of that election, President Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, to share power. Central to the Grand Coalition Government was a power-sharing arrangement, with President Kibaki retaining his position and Raila Odinga assuming the role of Prime Minister.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, ministerial positions were distributed between PNU, led by Kibaki, and ODM, led by Odinga. This unique collaboration aimed to unite political factions and bridge divides in the interest of national healing.

The primary goals of the Grand Coalition Government were complex. Its foremost objective was to facilitate national healing and reconciliation, addressing the deep-seated issues that had fueled ethnic tensions and contributed to the post-election violence.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the coalition sought to instigate substantive constitutional reforms, recognizing the necessity of addressing longstanding governance and power-sharing concerns. An enduring legacy of the Grand Coalition Government was its successful initiation of constitutional reforms. The drafting and subsequent promulgation of a new constitution in 2010 represented a significant achievement.<sup>31</sup> This constitutional overhaul played a vital role in reshaping Kenya's political landscape, ushering in a more inclusive and accountable governance structure.

Political coalitions that have been in existence in Kenya have assumed two different dimensions. Some have been formal with necessary legal documents deposited with the registrar of political parties/societies with clear definitions of terms of reference while others have operated loosely on gentleman's agreement. Wafula Wakoko commending on whether BBI was a form of political coalition had this to say:

...the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) in Kenya, led by President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, was not a conventional political coalition but a strategic process addressing governance, social, and economic challenges. Initiated after the divisive 2017 elections, the BBI sought to foster national unity. President Uhuru employed the BBI partly as a tactic to navigate political challenges, including containing Raila Odinga, who had contested the 2017 election results and boycotted the re-run due to unaddressed electoral concerns.<sup>32</sup>

The researcher observes that though the formation of BBI was an informal arrangement of a coalition between Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga, sought to resolve the underlying causes of political tension in Kenya and bring about reconciliation among different ethnic groups in Kenya. By bringing political leaders from different divides, the BBI aimed to promote political stability and reduce future electoral disputes.

### **Classification of Coalitions in Kenya Based On Their Nature**

The classification of political coalitions in Kenya based on their nature is a significant aspect of the country's political landscape. These coalitions vary in their composition, objectives, and ideological orientations, and understanding their nature is crucial for analyzing their impact on governance, policy formulation, and political dynamics.

### **National Coalitions**

Political coalitions have been a significant feature of Kenya's political landscape since independence in 1963 and have assumed different characteristics with passage of time.<sup>33</sup> The initial coalitions from 1960-1970 were Nationalistic in nature. These

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew Carotenuto, and Katherine Luongo. *Obama and Kenya: Contested histories and the politics of belonging*. Ohio University Press, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Júlia Battistuzzi Penachioni. "Dealing with Political Violence in Conflicted Democracies: Transitional Justice in Lebanon and Kenya from a Comparative Perspective." PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo.

<sup>29</sup> Cheeseman, Nic, and Christina Murray. "2 Power-sharing in Kenya." *Power Sharing. Empirical and Normative Challenges* (2017): pp.36-62.

<sup>30</sup> John O Oucho. "Undercurrents of Post-election Violence in Kenya: Issues in the long-term agenda." In *Tensions and Reversals in Democratic Transitions: The Kenya 2007 General Elections*, 2010, pp. 491-533.

<sup>31</sup> Jimmy J Kisobo. "The Impact of Coalition Government on Political, Economic and Social Development of Post conflict Societies: case of Kenya, 2008-2012." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Wafula Wakoko, Oral Interview at ORPP offices, Nairobi on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> Denis Kadima, and Felix Owuor. "Kenya's decade of experiments with political party alliances and coalitions-motivations, impact and prospects." *Journal of African Elections* 13, no. 1 (2014): pp.150-180.

coalitions were formed during the pre-independence period to fight for Kenya's independence from British colonial rule.<sup>34</sup> The national coalitions aimed to unite different ethnic groups and regions in the struggle for independence. They also sought to address issues such as land ownership, political representation, and social justice. The nationalist coalitions played a significant role in gaining Kenya's independence in 1963. They also helped to promote national unity and establish a democratic system of government. Noah Wekesa recounts:

...in 1962, the second Lancaster House Conference was convened. Both KANU and KADU agreed to form a coalition to work out details for the Majimbo constitution and to go for general elections in May 1963. Under the coalition government, Oginga became the Minister for Home Affairs.<sup>35</sup>

KANU and KADU were the two main national coalitions. However, despite the fact the two appeared to be nationalistic in nature, they had ethnic element in their formation. Nyukuri Barasa observes that KADU was formed after KANU with Ronald Ngala, Masinde Muliro and Daniel Arap Moi as President, vice chair and president of KADU respectively due to the fear of Kikuyu-Luo dominance in KANU.<sup>36</sup>

### **Ethnic-Based Coalitions**

Since independence in 1963, political coalitions in Kenya have been a major feature of the country's politics. These coalitions are formed along ethnic lines. They are typically created to champion the interests of a specific ethnic group or for power acquisition. An ethnic-based coalition is a political alliance formed on the grounds of shared ethnicity or tribal affiliation. The core agenda of these ethnic-based coalitions was on attaining political power and protecting the interests of their ethnic groups. They achieved this through forming alliances with other ethnic-based parties and also through wooing voters along ethnic lines; politicians used ethnic affiliations to mobilize support and win elections.

The period 1980s-1990s saw the emergence of formation of ethnic coalitions. These coalitions were formed along ethnic lines in the 1980s and 1990s, following the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in Kenya. The Luo-Kamba Alliance was a historical example of political cooperation between the Luo and Kamba ethnic groups in Kenya.<sup>37</sup> Though not a formalized political entity with a specific formation date, it represents a trend that gained prominence during the multiparty era in the 1990s. The alliance aimed to strengthen the political voice of the Luo and Kamba communities, fostering collaboration to increase their influence in national politics. While the specific impact of the Luo-Kamba Alliance on Kenyan politics is challenging to quantify, these alliances sought to contribute to the enhanced representation of these ethnic groups in the country's political landscape.

The Gema Alliance, of the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru communities, emerged as a major political force in Kenya during the multiparty era.<sup>38</sup> Arising as it did in response to the politics of the early 1990s, it served to solidify political power for the Central Kenyan communities. It aimed at protecting the interests of the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru peoples and ensuring their access to power within the government. Its impact on Kenyan politics, in terms of electoral influence, political representation, and presidential politics, is quite notable. The coincidence of its formation in the 1990s with such a pivotal period in Kenyan political history made it instrumental in securing support for candidates from the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru communities. In presidential elections, he owed much of his victory to support from these communities since the alliance played a key role in supporting candidates like President Uhuru Kenyatta with massive backing from the same. In view of this, Herman Manyora observed that:

The Gema Alliance, similar, to groups based on ethnicity has been under scrutiny for possibly deepening ethnic divides and promoting exclusionary tendencies in Kenyan politics. Such alliances could restrict the diversity of the arena and prompt worries about their effects on harmony. The involvement of the Gema Alliance forms a part of a conversation regarding the intricacies of ethnicity driven political affiliations, in Kenya and how they affect governance and social unity.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Newton, Jacob Alexander. "The politicization of difference: nationalism and national unity in pre-independent India, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> Noah Wekesa, Oral Interview in Kitale on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

<sup>36</sup> Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Stubbs. "Ethnopolitics and the Military in Kenya." *Forging Military Identity in Culturally Pluralistic Societies: Quasi-Ethnicity* (2015): pp.69-88.

<sup>38</sup> Rok Ajulu, "Politicised ethnicity, competitive politics and conflict in Kenya: A historical perspective." *African Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): pp.251-268.

<sup>39</sup> Herman Manyora, Oral Interview at Fountain of Knowledge UoN, Nairobi on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.



Similar observations were espoused by the archival information that revealed the Luo-Kikuyu alliance in 1994 attracted general countrywide disapproval as a selfish political move by the large tribes to dominate smaller tribes in the country.<sup>40</sup>

Responding to formation of ethnic based coalitions in Kenya, John Kamande asserted:

... in the year 2013, CORD Alliance was born; it amalgamated political parties like ODM, Wiper Democratic Movement and Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-K). It however did not solely focus on ethnicity but embraced different parties from divergent ethnic backgrounds. The main aim was to garner support from diverse ethnic communities that go beyond individual lines to confront other political groupings. This alliance was an effort to establish a coalition that would cut across Kenya's political field.<sup>41</sup>

The foregoing assertion by Kamande on the formation of the CORD Alliance in Kenya, which brought together political parties with diverse ethnic support bases, illustrates the concept of "vote pooling" from the theory of political coalitions.<sup>42</sup> The researcher observes that by forming a broad-based coalition that transcended individual ethnic lines, the alliance aimed to consolidate support from various ethnic groups and challenge the dominance of other political forces.

Formed concurrently in 2013, the Jubilee Alliance united political entities such as TNA and URP, alongside smaller parties.<sup>43</sup> Although inclusive of members from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the alliance was perceived by some as leaning towards the interests of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities, represented by TNA and URP, respectively. Notably, the Jubilee Alliance played a pivotal role in securing the presidency for Uhuru Kenyatta, reflecting its significant impact on the national political stage. Talking about ethnicity, formation of political parties and democracy, Range Mwita had this to say:

Ethnicity in Kenya has been a major barrier to development of democracy. Political party formation has been tied around tribes and more so around individuals. This has led to development of hard mentality, with members of a community having a tribal leader as their think tank. The decision of the leader in these communities is treated as a command which has to be fully followed without any individual stopping to imagine whether the decision made by the leader is wrong or right...for instance in Luo Nyanza we have the Odinga family, in Western Mudavadi and Moses Wetangula, for the Luyhia Community which of course has been championing competing interests which is traced to Bukusu and Maragoli rivalry, Ruto for rift Valley, Kibaki and Uhuru for the Kikuyu community and the trend continues. Remember, with command of Odinga, Luos had to vote to the last man for Kibaki during 2002 election. However, when the two leaders differed, in 2007 election the Luos withdrew their support for Kibaki on Raila's command.<sup>44</sup>

This research article contends that though the main agenda of ethnic-based coalitions in Kenya has been to protect the interests of a particular ethnic group or to gain political power, these coalitions have played an important role in Kenya's political history. However, the researcher observes that political coalition that are ethnic based promotes ethnicity and therefore perpetuates ethnic divisions in the country. This was witnessed in Kenya in 2007-2008 post-election violence attributed to tribalism. The researcher contends that there is need to move away from ethnic-based politics and focus on issue-based politics that will spur socio-economic development.

### Regional-Based Coalitions

These political coalitions are formed based on regional interests.<sup>45</sup> These coalitions are usually formed to promote development in a particular region or to push for regional autonomy. The coalition's advocate for addressing of a number of issues such as fair distribution of resources, particularly in terms of access to basic amenities such as water, healthcare, and education. In this regard, Nyukuri Barasa observed:

...it should be noted that some regions in Kenya feel marginalized and underrepresented in national politics. As such, regional political coalitions often seek to address this issue by advocating for greater political representation and autonomy for their respective regions. Similarly, land ownership and distribution are significant issues in Kenya, with some regions experiencing land grabbing and displacement of local communities. The regional political coalitions often advocate for land rights and protection of community land. Likewise, there are regions in Kenya that lack basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and

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<sup>40</sup> KNADS/SF.40/21/15. Security Intelligence Fortnightly Report no. 15. 14<sup>th</sup>, August 1994. Accessed on 9/8/2023.

<sup>41</sup> John Kamande, Oral Interview at Uraia offices, Nairobi on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Aline Machado. "Minimum Winning Electoral Coalitions." *LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY* 51: p.3.

<sup>43</sup> Denis Kadima, and Felix Owuor. "Kenya's decade of experiments with political party alliances and coalitions-motivations, impact and prospects." *Journal of African Elections* 13, no. 1 (2014): pp.150-180.

<sup>44</sup> Range Mwita, Oral Interview at CMD offices Nairobi on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2023.

<sup>45</sup> Gilbert M Khadiagala. "Political movements and coalition politics in Kenya: entrenching ethnicity." *South African Journal of International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2010): pp.65-84.

telecommunications. Such shortage is traced to discrimination by political leadership were some regions feel that inability to access such opportunities is due to discrimination by political leadership more so the presidency.<sup>46</sup>

According to Musikari Kombo, a prominent politician and former Minister in Kibaki government and former Chair of Ford Kenya, he observed that despite establishment of devolution, the presidency still plays a critical role in influencing the level of development of any particular region. Kombo observed that:

...not all functions in Kenya were devolved on devolution. Central government retained some functions. Even with devolved functions, there has been no corresponding devolvement of resources. The president, still to a large extent holds the yam and the knife. As such, it is the president who decides largely what and when. This situation obviously brings in the question of shareholders and non-shareholders. It is on this basis that members from non-shareholders community strategize on how to organize themselves through avenues such as formation of coalitions as a way of ensuring that they are not left out in future government.<sup>47</sup>

This study advances that the formation of regional blocks of political coalitions is often viewed as an avenue for bargaining for the development of infrastructure to improve the quality of life for residents in government. However, Hermon Manyora sees a thin line between regional coalitions and ethnic coalitions. According to him, the two are one and the same. He observed that:

...the settlement pattern of Kenya is ethnic based. You find Luyhas clustered in Western Kenya, Kikuyus and their cousins in Central and partly in Eastern, Kalenjins dominate Rift Valley, Kambas in Eastern and so on. Even Nairobi, which is considered as cosmopolitan, you will find a particular community dominating in certain area of settlement, all which is reflected in voting pattern. Therefore, the regional parties formed and the resultant regional coalitions just end up being ethnic parties and coalitions. For one to differentiate between the two, one has to be blind about the ethnic settlement pattern in the country.<sup>48</sup>

The researcher observes that formation of regional based political coalitions are meant for crafting coalitions that aim to promote numerical strength as way of forming a winning formulae to rise to presidency. This has been the trend in Kenya with the seat of presidency associated with distribution of the "national cake" that determine the rate of socio-development of any region in the country. It has become a common practice with the formation of regional-based political coalitions in Kenya usually characterized by the creation of political alliances or partnerships among leaders and parties with shared regional interests and affiliations. In Kenya's political landscape, the mobilization of support often aligns along regional lines, reflecting the diverse ethnic and cultural composition of the country.<sup>49</sup>

The research findings established a noteworthy regional-based coalitions as NASA, which came into existence in anticipation of the 2017 general elections. NASA aimed to consolidate support by bringing together various political parties from different regions, with the unified goal of presenting a formidable challenge to the incumbent Jubilee Party. The coalition comprised prominent figures such as Raila Odinga representing Luo Nyanza, Kalonzo Musyoka from Ukambani, Musalia Mudavadi from Western Kenya, and Moses Wetang'ula representing the Luhya community. The significance of NASA lay in its attempt to bridge regional divides and foster a collaborative approach to national politics. By uniting leaders from diverse regions, the coalition sought to leverage a collective strength that went beyond individual ethnic affiliations. This strategy aimed to resonate with voters across the country and present a cohesive alternative to the ruling Jubilee Party.

Range Mwita contends that:

...The success and impact of regional-based coalitions, such as NASA, depend on their capacity to respond to citizens' concerns and hopes in distinct areas. Furthermore, these pacts are also critical in shaping the political landscape through creating platforms for collaboration between leaders from varied backgrounds, thereby enhancing national cohesion amidst regional differences. The growth of such alliances is an indication that Kenyan politics is dynamic and that efforts are still being made to navigate the intricate relationship between regionalism and national governance.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, during a focus group discussion at Kamungunji the respondents supported the role of regional based coalitions in Kenya in addressing the aspirations of citizens across different regions and fostering a sense of national unity.<sup>51</sup> Citing coalitions

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<sup>46</sup> Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>47</sup> Musikari Kombo, Oral Interview at Lovington, Nairobi on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>49</sup> Raymond Muhula. "Horizontal inequalities and ethno-regional politics in Kenya." *Kenya Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): pp.85-105.

<sup>50</sup> Range Mwita, Oral Interview at CMD offices, Nairobi on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2023.

<sup>51</sup> FGD at Kamungunji in Nairobi County on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

like NASA and NARC, the respondents observed that alliances play the role of navigating the complexities of regional identities and national governance reflecting the ever changing Kenyan politics and ongoing efforts to promote unity in diverse regions of Kenya.

### Issue -Based Coalitions

Issue-based coalitions in Kenya are political alliances formed around specific policy agendas or shared goals, rather than being based solely on ethnic or regional affiliations.<sup>52</sup> These coalitions are centered on addressing specific issues such as governance reform, economic development, social welfare, and human rights. NARC was formed in 2002 as an example of issue-based political coalition that played a vital role in reshaping politics in Kenya. It was formed as a response to widespread discontentment with KANU. Basically, NARC focused on crucial issues like corruption, governance and the need for socio-economic and political reforms. Its formation brought together diverse leaders of political parties who shared a common goal of ending the era of KANU dominance.<sup>53</sup> Its urgent issue was to address rampant corruption in KANU government with the aim of fostering democratic governance and accountability.

During the election campaign, NARC presented itself as a credible alternative to the ruling KANU, emphasizing a reform agenda that resonated with the electorate. The coalition's promises to tackle corruption, improve governance, and stimulate economic growth garnered significant popular support.<sup>54</sup> In the 2002 elections, NARC achieved a landslide victory, with Mwai Kibaki assuming the presidency. This marked a historic moment in Kenya's political history as it was the first peaceful transfer of power from an incumbent government to the opposition.

However, post-election challenges emerged within NARC, including internal disagreements and infighting that eventually led to the coalition's fragmentation.<sup>55</sup> Despite these challenges, NARC's legacy was enduring. Nyukuri Barasa argues that the coalition's success in the 2002 elections demonstrated the influence of issue-based coalitions in mobilizing public support and effecting political change.<sup>56</sup> NARC's victory had a profound impact on Kenyan politics, ushering in a period of significant political and economic reforms, even though maintaining unity and fulfilling all promises proved to be a complex task for the coalition over time. In essence, NARC's role in Kenya's political evolution remains a pivotal chapter in the country's history, showcasing the potential of issue-based alliances in reshaping national narratives.

The study advances that Issue-based coalitions play a significant role in advocating for specific policy changes or addressing particular social, economic, or environmental issues. These coalitions bring together diverse groups, organizations, and individuals who share a common interest or concern related to a specific issue. Political coalitions in Kenya have also played a significant role in advocating for electoral reforms and shaping the country's political landscape. Political parties and leaders with the aim of consolidating their support base, increasing their chances of electoral success, and influencing policy outcomes form these coalitions.

The Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) emerged as a significant political coalition in Kenya ahead of the 2013 general elections. CORD positioned itself as an issue-based coalition, distinguishing its approach from traditional ethnic-based alliances.<sup>57</sup> Comprising key parties such as the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Wiper Democratic Movement, and the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-K), CORD aimed to address pressing national challenges through a shared commitment to key issues.

One of the central pillars of CORD's agenda was electoral reforms.<sup>58</sup> The coalition sought to bring about changes in the electoral system to enhance transparency, fairness, and the overall credibility of the electoral process. This emphasis on electoral reforms was a response to concerns raised during the 2013 elections, with CORD advocating for systemic changes to prevent disputed election outcomes. Beyond electoral reforms, CORD presented a comprehensive economic agenda, prioritizing issues such as job creation, poverty alleviation, and inclusive economic growth. The coalition aimed to tackle socio-economic

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<sup>52</sup> Gilbert M Khadiagala. "Political movements and coalition politics in Kenya: entrenching ethnicity." *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 2010, 17(1), pp.65-84.

<sup>53</sup> Shumbana Karume. "Factional intrigues and alliance politics: the case of NARC in Kenya's 2002 elections." *Journal of African Elections*, 2003, 2(2), pp.1-13.

<sup>54</sup> NARC manifesto 2002

<sup>55</sup> Oita Etyang. "The Formation and Instability of Coalition Governments in Kenya." *The African Review* 49, no. 2 (2022): pp.167-194.

<sup>56</sup> Nyukuri Barasa, Oral Interview at County hotel, Bungoma on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, "Political Parties and Coalition Politics in Kenyan General Election (s): The 2013 Presidential and General Elections." Kenya's 2013 General Election: Stakes, Practices and *Outcome* (2017).

<sup>58</sup> CORD manifesto 2013.

challenges and proposed policies to improve the living standards of Kenyan citizens across the country. To this end, Noah Wekesa observed thus:

A distinctive feature of CORD's approach was its commitment to national unity. Although not explicitly an ethnic coalition, CORD aimed to transcend ethnic lines and bring together leaders and supporters from diverse backgrounds. The coalition sought to unite Kenyans under a shared vision for the nation's future, emphasizing common interests and values.<sup>59</sup>

Among the many coalitions formed in Kenya, the study observes that the CORD coalition laid foundation for the subsequent formation of the coalition of the National Super Alliance (NASA) in 2017. However, the formation and the membership of the coalition evolved the core principles of issue-based politics anchored on socio-economic development and emphasis on electoral reforms centered to CORD's legacy.

### **Electoral Coalitions**

Electoral coalitions are created during election periods in order to secure political power and control. Formation of such political coalitions begun in 2010 with the promulgation of the New Constitution. Electoral coalitions form an important part of the political environment and help in predicting election outcomes. Coalitions are achieved where political parties or candidates gather together to pool their resources and support in a bid for an electoral advantage. Such coalitions can include parties or factions formed with different ideological, ethnic, regional or other themes whose goal is to create a unified front to exploit their electoral success.

The electoral coalitions could be pre-election or post-election coalition. These coalitions have characterized Kenya's political life. They form in the interest of improving electoral chances, administrative effectiveness or responding to claims for recognition, building a sense of national unity and maintaining stability. The requirements by the 2010 Constitution requiring presidential candidates to attain a 50% +1 minimum threshold of the votes cast in an election and at least 25 percent of Votes in more than half of all Counties to be declared a winner have necessitated the formation of electoral political coalitions.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, electoral coalitions have been crafted in view of this arithmetic arrangement of mobilizing electorates during elections to achieve majority and attain the minimum requirement as stipulated by the Independent Electoral Commission the body that is in-charge of elections in Kenya.

Responding on the types of electoral coalitions, Range Mwita observed:

... a good example of an electoral coalition is NASA. The formation of NASA in 2017 before the general elections saw new coalitions emerge that brought together several political parties and leaders...the coalition included Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), among others such as Wiper Democratic Movement, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya and Amani National Congress. NASA was also an attempt to unseat the incumbent Jubilee Party led by President Uhuru Kenyatta and form a strong opposition front. NASA never won the presidency but became a powerful political force and helped define an opposition agenda.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, the research findings revealed another notable example of electoral coalition in Kenya, the Jubilee Alliance. This was a coalition formed between the National Alliance (TNA) led by Uhuru Kenyatta and the United Republican Party (URP) by William Ruto. The coalition gained support from most regions in Kenya and from all ethnic divides. The overwhelming support saw the two leaders ascend to power as president and deputy president respectively. Besides, they acquired majority in the legislature to form the government in 2013. In an oral interview, Wafula Wakoko postulated thus:

In Kenya, several factors drive electoral coalitions; the most sorts after reason is tribalism and regional dynamics while others include ideological alignments among other things. With the diverse population in Kenya, various ethnic groups form electoral coalitions sometimes to bridge ethnic divides and appeal to a larger vote base.<sup>62</sup>

The foregoing observations on the circumstances of the formation of electoral coalitions in Kenya presents a number of challenges that these coalitions encounter in its operation ranging from sustaining unity and managing competing interests within the coalitions. These coalitions have witnessed misunderstanding often leading to the final disintegration of the coalition.

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<sup>59</sup> Noah Wekesa, Oral Interview in Kitale on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Murray, Christina. "Kenya's 2010 constitution." *Neue Folge Band Jahrbuch des öffentlichen Rechts* 61, no. 747-788 (2013).

<sup>61</sup> Range Mwita, Oral Interview at CMD offices, Nairobi on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Wafula Wakoko, Oral Interview at ORPP offices, Nairobi on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024

### Conclusion

Drawing from the findings of the study, it is clear that various political coalitions have been formed in Kenya including pre-election, post-election, issue based and ethnic based which have significantly shaped Kenyan politics and therefore impacting social dynamics, economic policies and governance. The study also concludes that political coalitions in Kenya center on ethnic affiliations highlighting the unique influence of ethnicity on coalition politics. This therefore, underscores the relationship between ethnicity, identity politics and governance in Kenya.

### Recommendation

Based on the foregoing findings, the study recommends to political actors, policy makers and the citizenry to acknowledge the role of political coalitions in Kenya's democratic process. The understanding of the dynamics and motivations behind the formation of these coalitions is vital for fostering political stability, inclusive decision making and effective governance in the country.

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NAME	INTERVIEW DATE	OCCUPATION
Dominic Wetangula	19/11/2023	Retired Politician
Nyukuri Barasa	15/11/2023	Professor/Political analyst
Noah Wekesa	16/11/2023	Coalition Expert/Politician
Musikari Kombo	21/11/2023	Politician
John Kamande	24/11/2023	Civic Educator Manager-Uraia Trust
David Burare	23/11/2023	FORD Kenya-Deputy National Executive Secretary
Bifwoli Wakoli	14/11/2023	Politician
Range Mwitwa	22/11/2023	Program Manager, Centre for Multi-party Democracy-(CMD)
Herman Manyora	21/11/2023	Professor / Political analyst
Wafula Wakoko	3/01/2024	Legal Officer- Office of Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP)
Fred Nyongesa	4/01/2024	Director- Rural Empowerment Development Organization (REDO)
Martin Waliaula	5/08/2023	ANC Chairman Bungoma Branch
Charles Matoke	19/11/2023	UDA-Director Resource Mobilization, Political and Diaspora Affairs
Umi Maloba	25/11/2023	County Secretary Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization
Gladys Wafula	9/15/2023	Executive Director-Community Research in Environment and Development Initiatives (CREADIS)
Leah Lokala	8/07/2023	ODM Political Leader, Turkana County
George Wasilwa	17/7/2023	Retired Telecommunication Engineer
Pius Mutai	12/11/2023	Former Veterinary Officer- Eldoret
Mercy Cherubo	5/01/2024	Chief Executive Officer-Rural Women Peace Link-Eldoret
Japheth Ojijo	8/01/2024	Project Coordinator-Integrated Development facility (IDF)- Homa Bay

### LIST OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RESPONDENTS

S/NO	Respondent	Focus Group Discussion	Date administered
1	Jane Wanambuko	FGD 1 Bungoma- Kanduyi	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
2	John Wanambuko		
3	Pauline Waswa		
4	Peter Mulo		
5	Amos Wafula		
6	Michael Mbiah		
7	Geoffrey Khaemba		
8	David Manyasi		
9	Wicliffe Kimtahi	FGD 2 Trans Nzoia- Kitale	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
10	Beatrice Wefwa		
11	Kizito Hamisi		
12	Leah Walekhwa		
13	Peter Kulo		

14	Benta Keyo		
15	Patience Wakhungu		
16	Zilpah Wetaya		
17	Eric Okelo	<b>FGD 3</b> Kisumu- Kondele	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
18	Tobias Onyango		
19	Tom Owino		
20	Bilha Anyango		
21	Dorothy Nyinga		
22	Barbra Atieno		
23	Protus Sifuna		
24	Mary Juma		
25	Florence Choyo	<b>FGD 4</b> Nairobi- Kamungunji	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
26	Gilbert Otieno		
27	Albert Mutinda		
28	Susan Kamau		
29	Grace Awiti		
31	Dennis Juma		
32	Godwin Faraja		

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#### **Acknowledgements**

The authors acknowledge all the respondents who provided essential information that shaped the research article.

#### **Ethical Pledge**

The researchers confirm that they followed full ethical considerations and acknowledged their sources appropriately without plagiarizing or duplicating other people's works unprofessionally.

#### **Competing Interests**

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships or undue interests that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this research article.

#### **Author(s) Contributions**

The researchers acknowledges that they are the sole authors of this article.

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