Original Article

Mergers and Disintegrations: Political Party Alliance Building in Kenya Between 2002 to 2022

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of political party alliance building in Kenya between 2002 to 2022 following the dissolution of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) as the dominant political entity. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research relies on interviews to gather primary data, providing an in-depth analysis of coalition formation and disbandment patterns in the post-KANU era. The study argues that since 2002, each general election in Kenya has witnessed the emergence of new political parties and alliances, formed primarily to secure electoral victories. However, these coalitions are often short-lived, dissolving soon after elections due to internal disputes, personal ambitions, policy differences, and perceptions of betrayal among members. The paper also contends that political alliances in Kenya are largely transient, driven by immediate electoral goals rather than enduring ideological commitments. The fluid nature of these coalitions indicates that alliances are sustained only as long as they serve the interests of their members. Internal conflicts and personal interests frequently lead to fragmentation, prompting the formation of new alliances aimed at better fulfilling individual ambitions and ensuring political success. This continual cycle of coalition formation and dissolution underscores the dynamic and often unstable nature of Kenyan politics, where alliances survive only until ideological differences and personal interests lead to their disintegration.

INTRODUCTION

"There is a lot of dishonesty in the alliance. A situation that cannot allow us to live up to the aspiration of the NASA dream," (Musalia Mudavadi, 17th, July 2020).

The issues of internal strife and dishonesty within political alliances observed across Africa are mirrored in Kenya's post-KANU regime coalition dynamics. Musalia Mudavadi's statement on July 17, 2020, regarding the dishonesty within the National Super Alliance (NASA) encapsulates the persistent challenges of maintaining unity and trust within political coalitions. This sentiment reflects the broader trend in Kenya politics, where alliances, such as NASA, formed to challenge the ruling party, often struggle with internal conflicts and personal interests, ultimately hindering their ability to achieve long-term political stability and shared objectives. Informed of these issues, this article seeks to answer key questions: What factors have informed political party alliance building in Kenya since the end of the KANU era? How have these alliances evolved from one regime to another between 2002 and 2022?

It is important to note that political party coalition formation is not limited to Kenya. The issue raised by Musala Mudavadi above mirrors the experiences of coalition politics in other African nations. Political party alliance formation in Africa has been a pivotal aspect of political and electoral success. Many of these coalitions are pre-election alliances that tend to dissolve shortly after the elections. For example, in Nigeria, the All Progressives Congress (APC) was formed in 2013 as an alliance of four opposition parties: the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) (Ononogbu, & Okoroiwu, 2019). This strategic coalition aimed to consolidate the opposition vote against the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). The APC's formation marked a significant shift in Nigeria's political landscape and led to the historic victory in the 2015 presidential election (Olowojolu, 2015). However, the coalition has faced substantial internal strife and factionalism since its victory, with disagreements over party leadership, policy directions, and control of the state apparatus.

Similarly, in South Africa, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has frequently formed coalitions with smaller parties to gain control of municipalities, particularly in key urban areas like Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay (Maserumule, 2020). These alliances are often strategic, aiming to oust the dominant African National Congress (ANC). However, these coalitions face significant challenges post-election, with diverse interests and policy priorities leading to disagreements and instability. In Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has formed alliances with other opposition parties in an attempt to challenge the long-standing dominance of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) (Tofa, 2019; Chimedza, 2022) . The MDC Alliance, formed in 2017, brought together various opposition groups to present a united front against the ruling party. Despite these efforts, the alliances have struggled with internal divisions and a lack of cohesion post-elections, weakening their ability to effectively challenge ZANU-PF and push for democratic reforms. Whether this is case in Kenya is among the issues that this article explores.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative methodology with a descriptive research design to explore the dynamics of political alliance building in Kenya's post-KANU regime. The researcher relied on primary data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with politicians, academicians, and political analysts based in Nairobi, Kenya. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure a diverse and knowledgeable pool of respondents. Data collection focused on capturing the participants' insights and experiences regarding political alliances from 2002 to 2022. Secondary sources such as books, articles, reports, theses and dissertation and online sources. The data analysis was done thematically, aligning with the chronological unfolding of events within this period. The findings are presented herein in narrative form, incorporating first-hand quotations from the interviewees to provide an authentic representation of their perspectives.

Findings

Political Party Coalition Formation in Kenya up to 2002

In Kenya before 2002, the political landscape was highly restrictive, with the ruling regime exercising tyrannical control. The first notable political party coalition occurred in 1964 when the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) merged. However, this merger was superficial as KANU quickly assimilated KADU and later banned the Kenya People's Union (KPU) formed in 1969. This resulted in Kenya being effectively a one-party state from independence. In 1982, following an attempted military coup, President Daniel Arap Moi declared Kenya a single-party state, further stifling opposition parties and preventing coalition formation. It wasn't until 1992, under both internal and external pressure, that Kenya amended Section 2A of its constitution to allow multipartyism again.

Despite this, KANU continued to dominate the political scene, and opposition parties remained fragmented.

From 1992 onwards, Kenya's opposition has been characterized by ethnic and personal conflicts, failing to unite effectively against KANU. Various efforts to form coalitions for the 1992 and 1997 elections, aiming to present a united opposition candidate, were unsuccessful (Oyugi, 2006). According to Ngunyi & Katumanga (2014), the opposition's history post-1992 was marred by ethnic divisions and elite infighting, preventing any lasting coalitions and ensuring KANU's continued dominance. The frequent splits in political parties due to personal interests further undermined opposition unity.

Pre – 2002 NDP-KANU Merger 2001-2002

The major opposition political coalition in Kenya emerged with the formation of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in 2002, coinciding with President Moi's retirement. However, it is worth noting that before the 2002 elections and the establishment of NARC, there was an unsuccessful attempt at merging the National Development Party (NDP) and the Kenya African National Union (KANU). The initiative began when Raila Odinga, leader of the NDP, was appointed Minister of Energy by President Moi in 2001. On March 18, 2002, delegates from both NDP and KANU approved the merger, driven by KANU's desire to enhance its prospects in the upcoming elections, given NDP's status as the second-largest opposition party and its significant support from Odinga's Luo ethnic base in western Kenya (IPS, March 18, 2002; The Nation, July 14, 2002; East African Standard, September 2, 2002). However, the merger was contingent on President Moi supporting Raila Odinga as KANU's presidential candidate in 2002. Disappointingly, in July 2002, Moi endorsed Uhuru Kenyatta instead, violating the earlier agreement (The Nation, July 14, 2002). This rift led Odinga and former NDP leaders to join hands with the People's Coalition and the National Alliance of

Kenya to establish the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), a formidable opposition alliance (IRIN, October 15, 2002).

NARC, The First Successful Opposition Pre-Election Coalition in Kenya's History

In 2002, Kenya witnessed a pivotal moment in its political history with the emergence of the first significant pre-election alliance among opposition parties. In March of that year, the ruling party KANU allied with the National Development Party (NDP), with President Moi remaining as chairperson. The alliance saw the election of four vice chairpersons, including Uhuru Kenyatta, Katana Ngala, Musalia Mudavadi, and Kalonzo Musyoka, while Raila Odinga assumed the role of NDP's secretary general (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2002). Concurrently, leading politicians established the National Alliance for Change, comprising DP, FORD Kenya, and NPK, which later merged into the National Party of Kenya along with ten additional parties and two pressure organizations (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2002).

In July 2002, President Moi announced Uhuru Kenyatta as KANU's favored presidential nominee, triggering internal dissent and the emergence of the Rainbow Alliance faction within KANU. Vice President George Saitoti, also eyeing the KANU presidency, faced suppression by Moi. Martha Karua, in a later interview, recalled that in September 2002, the National Alliance declared Mwai Kibaki as their presidential candidate. Amidst these developments, on October 14, 2002, Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka, and George Saitoti split from KANU citing dissatisfaction and a sense of betrayal, forming the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). These events sparked discussions among opposition parties culminating in the formation of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The coalition, composed of opposition political parties, was primarily established to challenge the long-standing dominance of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which faced widespread criticism for corruption, authoritarianism, and economic stagnation. During the 2002 general elections, the NARC alliance signed a significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), pledging Kibaki the presidency and Odinga the position of prime minister. The culmination of these efforts came on December 27, 2002, when Mwai Kibaki, representing the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), decisively defeated Uhuru Kenyatta of KANU with 62.2% of the vote in the presidential election. In the legislative elections, NARC secured 125 seats, establishing a substantial majority, while KANU won 64 seats and FORD-People (Forum for the Restoration of Democracy) secured 14 seats (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2002).

It was anticipated that with their NARC victory, the coalition would stand the test of time and each party would honor the pre-letting MOU. Nonetheless, soon after the elections, divisions emerged within the coalition. Tensions arose when the NAK faction of the alliance failed to fully implement the MoU that had brought them to power in 2002 and Kibaki failed to appoint Raila, the prime minister. According to Ageyo, in an interview in 2016, the NARC government was perceived as reluctant to honor the MoU after assuming power. This led to a contentious debate over whether to incorporate the MoU provisions into the proposed new constitution, with LDP advocating for its inclusion and NAK opposing it.

The divisions in NARC led to the referendum in 2005. In November 2005, Kenya held a peaceful referendum on a new constitution, with supporters divided into Bananas (Yes) and Oranges (No) camps. Raila Odinga and his allies successfully rallied Kenyans to reject the proposed constitution, contrasting with Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta, Kalonzo Musyoka, and Musalia Mudavadi who supported it. The Orange emblem represented the "No" camp, while the banana symbolized the "Yes" camp. This referendum not only sparked violence between supporters but also fractured the ruling NARC alliance further into ethnopolitical divisions

in Kenyan politics (Bosibori 2021). In the referendum, it is worth noting that the major alliances, represented by the orange and banana camps, heavily invested in political advertising to mobilize voters. This substantial spending marginalized smaller alliances that lacked the financial resources to compete effectively. Consequently, the intense mobilization efforts contributed to polarization and fragmentation within the NARC. Instead of focusing on national interests and adhering to their manifestos, political elites prioritized personal ambitions for top government positions. This shift undermined alliance ideologies and cohesion, emphasizing personal gain over collective party goals.

In an interview, Martha Karua pointed out that despite their lack of dedication and experience, alliances have learned to embrace several philosophies that are crucial to political mobilization. The elites of ODM, NARC-Kenya, ODM-Kenya, and KANU, for example, insisted that the goals of their alliances included free education, creating jobs for young people, extending social and health services to all Kenyans living in underprivileged areas, and impartially allocating national resources. But in reality, alliances broke up and new ones emerged when the elite's self-serving goals were not satisfied. On November 21, at least 58% of Kenyans voted against the proposed constitution, favoring Raila's faction over Kibaki (Arias, 2024). President Kibaki then dismissed all of the pro-no Cabinet ministers and high-ranking government officials by dissolving the whole cabinet (Bosibori, 2017). According to a 2005 BBC story, Kibaki dismissed every member of his government to regain political power. President Kibaki, however, acknowledged that in light of his actions, he had a duty to reorganize his administration to make it more effective, cohesive, and able to serve the people of Kenya (All Africa, 2005).

The 2005 referendum gave rise to the ODM political party. Political analyst Mugambi Imanyara

registered ODM as a political party before the 2007 elections, while its leaders were still celebrating a victory perceived as a protest against Kibaki's leadership. Outwitted, Raila's team was forced to register ODM-Kenya under a new name. Barkan (2004) noted that these groups garnered widespread support throughout Kenya, except Kibaki's home region of Central Province, suggesting the emergence of a new political force before the 2007 elections. In addition to causing the NARC Coalition to disintegrate, and the creation of a new political party, the cabinet reorganization caused its members to place a higher value on their party's agendas and allegiances than on coalitions (BBC, 2005). Following protests on November 27, 2005, the opposition started calling for fresh elections. Citing concerns about national security, the Kenyan government declared the pro-election rallies unlawful (BBC, 2005). President Kibaki unveiled the members of his new government on December 7, 2005, and on December 9, 2005, he swore in the group, which was virtually entirely composed of his closest political friends (BBC, 2005).

As a result, Kibaki's NAK isolated Raila Odinga's LDP while it attempted to seize power. NAK tried to undermine the Bomas Constitutional Conference, which was meant to formalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), claiming it was unconstitutional. Political changes were abandoned by the administration due to internal party conflicts. Ethnic divisions at the top and societal levels were revealed and intensified by the NARC alliance's disintegration brought about by the referendum. During an oral interview, Kemuma, a politician in Kenya noted that that despite the deeply ingrained disputes that emerged following the draft constitution, there was a misplaced confidence that violence would not break out during the planned 2007 election. The impending election has left the authorities feeling uneasy.

In the 2007 elections, many coalitions were visible, especially those that had developed before the 2002 elections. During this period, no party could have

won an election on its own (Oloo, 2010). Because of this, well-known parties were forming alliances before elections in an attempt to improve their prospects of winning. In an attempt to win over the majority of LDP and KANU members who had already defected from their mother alliance, ODM attempted to unify as a single party. A segment of the LDP led by Musyoka's ex-members also established ODM-K. On the side of PNU, the following parties came together to form a coalition; Shirikisho, DP, FORD-A, KANU, NARK-K, and the new FORD-K. Saba Saba Asili, Safina, United People's Congress, Vijana Progressive and Workers Congress, the Kenya Republican Reformation Party, Party of Kenya, National Renewal Peoples Party, New Aspirations Party of Kenya, New Generation Party, Republican Liberty Part (Oloo, 2010). Nonetheless, many of these parties broke away before the main election as some opted to present their presidential candidates. In the 2007 election, ODM, PNU, and ODM-K were the key coalitions. The fact that these partnerships all had some degree of ethnic political backing gives them significance. The nation's powerful community leaders supported the ODM and PNU, which is why there were ethnic divisions.

Another noteworthy aspect of the alliance identities was the balance of gender and youth. For example, ODM-K had Julia Ojiambo as their woman representative, while PNU had Martha Karua. This was done specifically to gather the votes of women and youth (Oloo, 2010). In an interview, Mkongo, a political analyst in Kenya noted that Kenya's 2007 general elections were one of the most competitive since the country's independence, which explained the political elite's intense campaigning and the high turnout. In the 2007 general elections, the opposition won the parliamentary elections, surpassing the incumbent coalition. The presidential elections, however, were highly disputed, with Kibaki being declared the winner amidst allegations of vote rigging in his favor. This controversy led to the worst post-election violence in Kenya's history.

Grand Coalition Government: ODM – PNU Merger 2007-2013

The announcement of Kibaki as the winner was met with strong opposition, sparking violent protests across the nation. The Kikuyu ethnic group, particularly those in the Rift Valley, became the primary targets of this inter-ethnic violence. Similarly, an interviewee from the Rift Valley reported that the Luos and Kalenjin were also targeted, especially in the areas surrounding Nakuru and Naivasha. A meeting in Kenya on February 1st, 2008, led by Kofi Annan, discussed the political situation. The ODM and the Kenyan government agreed on four main agenda items: stopping violence, restoring freedoms, addressing the humanitarian crisis, encouraging healing, restoration, and reconciliation, and addressing constitutional reforms (Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), 2008; Independent Review Commission (IREC), 2008). The Grand Coalition, a coalition formed in 2008, was a result of negotiations between Kenyan President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga. The agreement, negotiated under the guidance of former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, allowed the prime minister (Raila Odinga) to coordinate and supervise government functions, even if the president remained head of state. The National Accord and Reconciliation Act outlined the agreement's requirements, including portfolio balance consideration. The deal was known as the Government of National Unity, with Kibaki and Odinga as its principals.

With the 2008 National Accord and Reconciliation Act (NARA) becoming part of the constitution, a semi-presidency within the PNU-ODM grand coalition government was officially established. The Act created the post of prime minister as part of a power-sharing arrangement based on portfolio balance. This led to the establishment of a dual or semi-presidency (Sihanya & Okello, 2010). Although this power-sharing concept existed at independence, it was not implemented until after the

post-election unrest. Consequently, the power-sharing agreement legally altered the institution of the presidency in two ways: First, by sharing power between the President and Prime Minister, and second, between the two coalitions the PNU and ODM (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2009).

With the establishment of the grand coalition government, a series of political changes and dynamics happened in the country that laid the ground for the formation of new political party alliances before the next general elections. For instance, the ECK was replaced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The Independent Review Committee (IREC) and the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) were later established on March 4, 2008. They were non-judicial Organisations with the responsibility of looking into the specifics and circumstances surrounding the post-election violence and formulating recommendations (GoK, 2008). These gave rise to the Ocampo Six- a group of six Kenyans who were accused as the organizers of the post-election violence in Kenya and were wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the Hague. They included; Uhuru Kenyatta, Henry Kosgey, William Ruto, Francis Muthaura, Joshua Arap Sang, and former police commissioner Mohammed Hussein Ali (Daily Nation, 2008).

Efforts towards constitutional change culminated in the endorsement of a new constitution on August 27, 2010, replacing the independence constitution and marking the end of a lengthy journey for constitutional reforms (Shiundu, 2011). The new constitution established 47 counties, each with its government headed by a county governor. These reforms focused significantly on the electoral system. According to the 2010 constitution's electoral rules, the winning presidential candidate must receive at least 50 percent plus one of all votes cast and at least 25 percent of the votes cast in more than half of the country's 47 counties (Oita Etyang & Otele, 2015). Additionally, voters were required to cast ballots for a greater number of elective posts than in previous elections.

The broad view was that some sobriety needed to be applied to the management of Kenya's political parties and coalitions. Among the problems parties were facing were democratic internal nomination in political parties, discriminatory employment practices, and personalization of party or alliance leadership. They also had to ensure that procedures for settling disagreements related to nominations had been established and that the political party nomination process was impartial and transparent. The 2011 Parties Act made clear that supporting political parties was meant to support democracy, encourage public engagement, and pay for election costs (Shiundu, 2011). The Political Parties Act of 2011 prohibited politicians from holding leadership positions inside political parties and required political organizations to conduct countrywide recruiting. Political Parties Act of 2011 regulated how political parties and coalitions conduct their business and fulfill their legal and constitutional obligations. In addition, it witnessed the funding and management of political parties, as well as the registration of political parties and alliances (CoK, 2010). The Political Parties Act of 2011 essentially served as a hinge for Kenya to institutionalize political parties.

By 4 December 2012, the law mandated that all political parties in Kenya register any coalition agreements with the Registrar of Political Parties. To build pre-election alliances before the deadline, this led to multiple publicized meetings between important political figures and their respective parties (Mérino, 2013). A decrease in the pool of potential applicants was another result of the agreements that were anticipated to occur

It is under this 2010 constitution that the 2013 general elections were held.

New Political Party Alliances in The 2013 General Elections

The 2013 generation elections were significant in Kenya's political landscape in two ways. First, the elections were conducted under the 2010 constitutional dispensation, which came into effect in August 2010, and secondly, had been hailed as revolutionary. After the 2013 elections, there was a calm transition that restored the nation's prior reputation as one of the few stable democracies in Africa (Chege, 2008; Mueller ,2008). Of significance was the fact that William Samoi Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta who had pending trials at the International Criminal Court (ICC), formed a coalition ahead of the 2013 elections. This alliance was called the Jubilee Alliance, which included the TNA, URP, and UDF Parties. Later, UDF abandoned the alliance due to internal disagreements. Another major coalition was the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), which included the ODM, Wiper Party, Ford-Kenya, and other parties. The Eagle Alliance is constituted of KNC and POA Parties (Mérino, 2013). Other alliances included the Pambazuka Coalition comprising New FORD Kenya, National Vision Party, Federal Party of Kenya, and KADU (Mérino, 2013). The alliance disintegrated on December 29, 2012. UDF, New Ford Kenya, and KANU Parties made up the Amani Coalition after the UDF left the Jubilee Coalition. However, the two main coalitions were Jubilee, led by Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee Coalition, and CORD, led by Raila Odinga of the Coalition of Reform and Democracy (CORD).

Coalition formation in 2013 introduced new dynamics. The ICC factor played a key role in bringing together Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto under the Jubilee Coalition as president and running mate, respectively. The 2007/2008 post-election violence had left the country ethnically polarized, and the 2013 election served as an ethnic reconciliation agenda, especially between the Kalenjins and Kikuyus. Ruto switched from ODM's

Pentagon to the Jubilee Alliance. In an interview on November 16, 2016, respondents such as Kemboi, Chelagat, and Cherono explained that this switch was driven by feelings of betrayal by Raila Odinga. During the post-election violence, Ruto had supported Raila, which led to his indictment by the International Criminal Court while Raila was not, causing political differences.

Similarly, many Gikuyu respondents believed that Kenyatta felt betrayed by Kibaki for not protecting him against the ICC accusations. Lynch (2014) contends that the alliance between Ruto and Kenyatta in 2013 was more about their ICC cases than promoting ethnic reconciliation since neither was on the ballot in 2007 when the violence erupted. Before the 2013 election, Uhuru and Ruto joined the Jubilee Coalition, comprising the TNA and URP, and agreed to share power almost equally. According to Maupeu (2013), the ICC involvement led the two opposing political elites, divided by ethnicity, to join forces in the 2013 election, promoting the slogan of ethnic reconciliation.

The Jubilee alliance was created by the later merger of TNA and URP along with other affiliates. After Uhuru and Ruto refused to band together and support Kalonzo as the presidential candidate, Kalonzo was forced to leave the alliance and join CORD (Mwangangi, 2020). This indicates that Kalonzo joining the CORD coalition was motivated by the desire to get a ticket for either the presidential or running mate position. The Jubilee Coalition garnered support by focusing on issues of racial harmony and the presence of the ICC in Kenya. According to Mahmud Mamdani in the Daily Monitor 2013, the ICC had the greatest impact on the 2013 election. The author noted that the Jubilee Party successfully mobilized sympathetic support around the themes of peace and opposition to the ICC's involvement in Kenya, driven by the court cases against Kenyatta and Ruto.

There were also ethnic aspects in the coalition formed. Oloo (2010) notes that the 2013 general election was dominated by carryover alliances

based on ethnicity like in the previous elections. For example, the 2013 Jubilee coalition was formed by parties loyal to the president and his deputy, William Ruto. Many of their supporters were Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups (Oloo, 2010). A coalition of parties loyal to the president and his deputy, William Ruto, formed the 2013 Jubilee coalition. On the other hand, the CORD coalition drew much support from the Luo ethnic group and western Kenya. The coalition consisted of ODM, WDM, FORD-Kenya, KSC, KADU-Asili, PDP, Mkenya solidarity movement, CCU, MDMPK, UDM, CCM, and FPK. Raila's coalition running mate was Kalonzo Musyoka. It is significant to remember that Kalonzo originally belonged to the G7 alliance, which he thought may have helped him win the 2013 presidential election (Mwangangi, 2020). Maina Njenga, a former Mungiki leader and founder of the Mkenya Solidarity Party, joined CORD to weaken Kenyatta's support within the Kikuyu ethnic group (Burdige, 2013). His campaign received more media attention due to his alliance with CORD. Njenga also announced his intention to run for Nairobi senator, demonstrating his commitment to central Kenyan interests.

Ideally, the elite who formed coalitions in 2013 had their vested interests. Each party leader involved in the coalition was assured a position if their coalition won, or could leverage the coalition's popularity to secure political positions in the elections. There were many coalition shifts by individual politicians, all aiming to align with groups where their interests would be met and their chances of winning were higher. For example, a political analyst explained that the combination of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, known as "Uhuruto," under the Jubilee alliance was confident that if they won the election as president and deputy president, they would likely avoid the ICC cases against them. True to this prediction, after winning the 2013 elections, the cases against Uhuru and Ruto were dropped in 2014 and 2016 due to a lack of evidence (Leithead, 2016). Raila Odinga, leader of CORD, was defeated by Uhuru Kenyatta, leader of Jubilee, In an interview, Kipruto a citizen in Kenya asserted that the Kalenjin rallied behind William Ruto as they felt like sacrificial lambs at the ICC. The election results were declared on March 9, 2013. Uhuru Kenyatta received 5,831,000 votes, while Raila Odinga received 4,887,000 votes (IEBC, 2013). Kenyatta, the Jubilee Alliance candidate, won the presidential election in the first round with 50.1% of the total votes (IEBC, 2013).

Splits and Mergers: Jubilee Coalition, Dissolution of CORD, and Formation of NASA Coalition; 2014 To 2018

After the 2013 general election in Kenya, the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) went to the Supreme Court to challenge the results but lost (Mwangi, 2023). Following this electoral transition, political party coalition building continued to shape the landscape through the 2017 and 2022 general elections, marked by various formations and splits influenced by several factors. After the 2013 election, the Jubilee Coalition, led by Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, maintained its alliance, leveraging their joint electoral success and shared interests, particularly in legal matters related to the International Criminal Court (ICC). This coalition was pivotal in consolidating power and managing ethnic dynamics, especially between the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities. Conversely, CORD, led by Raila Odinga, transformed. By 2017, CORD had evolved into the National Super Alliance (NASA), expanding its coalition to include additional parties such as the Wiper Democratic Movement, Ford Kenya, and the Amani National Congress (Etyang, 2021). The NASA Pentagon consisted of the five Super Alliance principals: Raila Odinga (ODM), Kalonzo Musyoka (Wiper), Musalia Mudavadi (ANC), Moses Wetang'ula (Ford Kenya), and the newest member, Bomet Governor Isaac Rutto (CCM) (Etyang, 2021). This shift reflected strategic realignments aimed at broadening electoral appeal and leveraging regional strengths.

On the other hand, President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto registered the Jubilee Coalition as a party in September 2016 (Khadiagala, 2021). There was a dissolution of eleven affiliate political parties to merge and form one major party. These parties included The National Alliance (TNA), the Jubilee Alliance Party (JAP), the Alliance Party of Kenya (APK), the New Ford People, the United Republican Party (URP), the Republican Congress Party of Kenya, the Party of National Unity (PNU), Saba Saba Asili, The Independent Party (TIP), and GNU, among others (Masterson, 2021). Additionally, the new party received 30 legislators who had decamped from the opposition to join the newly formed party.

In the 2017 general elections, NASA (a coalition) and Jubilee (a political party) were the major rivals, with Raila Odinga and President Uhuru Kenyatta as leaders, respectively. The results of the 2017 elections were again contested in court and eventually nullified. This called for new elections, which the NASA coalition boycotted. The Jubilee Party won and thus proceeded to form the government.

Crossovers and Breakups: Azimio One Kenya Coalition, and Kenya Kwanza Coalitions 2018 to 2022

After the disputed elections, the swearing-in of Raila Odinga as the "People's President," and eventually the handshake between Raila and President Uhuru Kenyatta, the coalitions began experiencing internal wrangles. These conflicts were caused by the personal ambitions of party leaders, ethnic considerations, and strategic calculations regarding electoral outcomes. For instance, the fallout within NASA in the lead-up to the 2017 elections, where there were disagreements over the presidential candidate and the distribution of key positions, highlighted internal power struggles and differing visions among coalition members (Chege, 2018). As a result, three affiliate parties (ANC, Wiper, and Ford-Kenya) sought to dissolve the coalition after disagreements with the

ODM party and announced the formation of a new alliance called the One Kenya Alliance.

On the side of the ruling party, President Uhuru Kenyatta disagreed with his deputy, William Ruto, on governance issues, succession politics, and the sudden friendship that ensued between Raila Odinga and the ruling party. Consequently, the two broke apart, and William Ruto unveiled the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) in 2020, a political party he used for his presidential candidacy in 2022. This party challenged the traditional coalitions. The formation of UDA signaled a shift towards more individual-centered politics, focusing on personal leadership narratives rather than traditional party affiliations (Francis, 2022). However, nearing the elections, UDA joined hands with other political parties to form the Kenya Kwanza Alliance. The affiliate political parties included the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), Amani National Congress (ANC), Ford-Kenya, Chama Cha Kazi (CCK), Communist Party of Kenya (CPK), Devolution Party of Kenya (DPK), Democratic Party (DP), Economic Freedom Party (EFP), Farmers Party (FP), The Service Party (TSP), Umoja Maendeleo Party (UMP), and the Ugenya People's Development Party (UPDP) (Francis, 2022).

On the other side, President Uhuru Kenyatta, under his Jubilee Party, joined the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition. Okwany (2022) notes that the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition was led by Raila Odinga and included a diverse range of political parties such as the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Jubilee Party, Wiper Democratic Movement, Kenya African National Union (KANU), Narc-Kenya, Maendeleo Chap Chap, Party of National Unity (PNU), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K), Devolution Empowerment Party (DEP), Pamoja African Alliance (PAA), and the National Liberal Party (NLP).

It is important to note that while Mudavadi, under ANC, was initially in the One Kenya Alliance, he later moved out to join the Kenya Kwanza Coalition due to disagreements on the presidential flag bearer of the coalition. These two coalitions were pivotal in shaping the electoral competition and political dynamics during the elections. In the election that followed in August 2022, the Kenya Kwanza Coalition, led by William Samoei Ruto, won the elections, while the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition emerged second. Despite the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition contesting the results in the Supreme Court and staging several protests across the country, the Supreme Court upheld Ruto's victory, and thus the Kenya Kwanza Coalition proceeded to constitute the government.

CONCLUSION

The study of political alliance building in Kenya in the post-KANU regime reveals a pattern of pre-election coalitions that typically disband shortly after the elections. Since the Kenya African National Union (KANU) dissolution as the dominant political force, each general election in Kenya since 2002 has been marked by the emergence of new political parties and alliances. These coalitions are often formed to unite diverse political entities with the primary goal of securing electoral victory. However, they tend to disintegrate due to internal disputes, personal ambitions, policy differences, and feelings of betrayal among coalition members.

These splits underscore the transient nature of political alliances in Kenya. The constant formation and dissolution of coalitions illustrate that political alliances are primarily driven by immediate electoral objectives rather than long-term ideological commitments. This fluidity implies that in coalition formation, there are no permanent enemies or friends; alliances are maintained only as long as they serve the interests of their members.

Internal disputes arising from personal interests and policy differences frequently lead to the fragmentation of these coalitions. Betrayal, perceived or real, further exacerbates these splits, prompting the formation of new alliances with the hope that they will better meet individual ambitions and ensure political success. The recurrent emergence of new political parties and coalitions before each general election highlights Kenyan politics' dynamic and often unstable nature. As such, political alliances in Kenya survive only until ideological differences and personal interests drive them apart, necessitating continually reshaping the political landscape.

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