Policy Blind Coalitions

-Ethnicity and political coalitions in Kenya under multipartyism

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Abstract

This aim with this paper is to confront existing theories of coalition building with the context of ethnic party systems. Traditional theories offer very limited leverage when trying to understand coalition building in contexts where the spatial model of voting does not apply. It is argued that in the absence of transitive preference orders, voters in ethnic party systems are less likely to defect from their favored candidates and parties will hence not have to coordinate out of the fear of massive voter defection. Instead ethnic parties can remain in the race to consolidate their position as ethnic frontrunners and would only negotiate a pre-electoral deal when senior partners can offer a credible commitment to power sharing. Moreover, the absence of a policy continuum decreases the constraints for choosing coalition partners. As a consequence, parties are able to act more opportunistically when deciding on coalition formation. This theory is applied to the notable case of Kenya, using a new dataset on Kenyan elections and in-depth interviews of Kenyan political stakeholders.

1. Introduction

When a unified Kenyan opposition was able to break the long time KANU party dominance in the 2002 election, this was generally perceived as a turning point in modern Kenyan political history. After two failed attempts in contesting the KANU dominance in 1992 and 1997, the opposition finally managed to come together under one common banner. A newly built coalition named the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), incorporated all the four major oppositional challengers from the 1997 contest. At the ballot box, the coalition turned out to be incredibly powerful. Winning a landslide over outgoing president Moi's handpicked successor Yomo Kenyatta, the coalition's presidential candidate, Mwai Kibaki, became the third president of the independent Kenyan Republic. After this point, Kenyan coalition building has been at the very focus of the political process. After the 2002 election, Kenyans have seen several coalitions come and go. The unity in NARC turned out to be short lived and its eventual demise resulted in increased ethnic tension and eventually large-scale ethnic conflict and political instability.

Seemingly, building a unified coalition against the dominant party was the only way to achieve an electoral turnover. But why did it take so long for the opposition to coordinate? Why was it not possible to keep the NARC coalition together? And how can we understand all the shifting political alliances after the dissolution of NARC?

All these questions are central for scholars of democratization and ethnic conflict alike. The logic place to seek the answers for these questions would be in traditional coalition theory. These classic theories of coalition building are all formulated on the basis of the spatial model, where parties can be placed on a policy continuum. When applied to party systems built on ethnic rather than programmatic appeal, such theories do, however, offer little guidance.

This paper will utilize the case of Kenya to study this phenomenon. Although the paper is essentially a single cases study, the Kenyan case offers several cases of creation and non-creation of pre-electoral coalitions (PECs). These instances will be used to confront existing theories of coalition building with a non-programmatic ethnic context and develop a new theory of coalition building in ethnic party systems. The paper seeks to answer three related research questions;When will parties form pre-electoral coalitions in ethnic party systems? How will coalition partners be chosen? How do the premises of ethnic coalition building affect the stability of government coalitions?

These questions will be answered using a newly compiled dataset of constituency level election data and 24 in-depth elite interviews of Kenyan political stakeholders

and commentators. The paper will argue that voters are likely to act differently and react to electoral institutions in a non-traditional way in ethnic party systems. Lacking transitive preference orders, voters will be less likely to vote strategically and parties will be less likely to experience the humiliation of massive voter defection at the polls when not coordinating. Moreover, parties without a coherent policy interest will not engage in coalition building out of pure policy reasons. Instead, parties would only engage in coalition building if they perceive that the coalition will have realistic chances of winning the election and senior partners can deliver credible commitments to power sharing after the election. Since parties are not located spatially, they are also considerably less constrained when it comes to choosing coalition partners than parties in programmatic party systems. This low degree of constrains will ultimately make political alliances fluid and increase the instability of government coalitions.

1.1 A brief overview of Kenyan coalition building

The Kenyan case offers a multitude of failed and successful attempts of coalition building. This paper is mainly interested in coalition building after the introduction of multipartyism, but it is worth noting that the first successful political coalition was that of KANU, the party that ruled Kenya as a *de facto* one party state from independence in 1963 to the introduction of multipartyism in 1992. Both KANU's first president Jomo Kenyatta and his successor Daniel Arap Moi were skillful coalition builders. Through the successful incorporation of rivaling ethnic groups they managed to avoid regime-threatening opposition (Throup and Hornsby 1998).

After pressure from the international donor community, Moi was forced to open up the country for multiparty elections in 1992 (Barkan 1993). The opposition, however, remained fragmented in the two first elections. Before the 1992 election the previously coherent oppositional party Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) had split into two rivaling political parties along ethnic lines. One under the leadership of Kenneth Matiba, named FORD-Asili (FORD-A), a party that was primarily associated with ethnic Sothern Kikuyu and Luhya interests. The other party, FORD-Kenya (FORD-K), was controlled by political leaders from the Luo tribe, headed by Oginga Odinga. At the same time, former vice-president Mwai Kibaki defected from KANU and started the Democratic Party (DP), mostly lead by prominent politicians associated with the Northern Kikuyu tribe (Stevees 2006).

The opposition was not able to topple the KANU regime in 2002, due to large-scale voter fragmentation. Moi was able to win the election with 36% of the vote, with Matiba being the runner up securing 26%, followed by Kibaki and Odinga with 20% and 18% respectively. This election result was, however, not enough to convince the opposition to coordinate. Instead, fragmentation increased prior to the 1997 election. After the death of Oginga Odinga, a leadership struggle erupted with the consequence that Oginga Odinga's son Raila Odinga defected from FORD-Kenya and built the National Democratic Party (NDP), whereas Michael Wamalwa a prominent Luhya

politican remained in FORD-K as its chairman. Moreover, Charity Ngilu deserted DP and formed the Social Democrati Party (SDP). Once again Moi won the election without a majority of the votes, this time receiving 40% of the vote. Kibaki became the main oppositional contester with 31%, followed by Odinga (11%), Wamalwa (8%) and Ngilu (7%) (Brown 2001).

After the election, Moi was faced with a hung parliament and realized he had to expand his ethnic political basis. As a consequence he invited Raila Odinga's NDP to join government and in March 2002 a full merger between the two parties was executed. Whereas NDP had been co-opted by KANU, the remaining opposition had started talks about an opposition coalition. In the fall of 2002, a coalition named the National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) was formed, including Kibaki, Wamalwa and Ngilu. The coalition chose Kibaki to be its presidential candidate and was gearing up for elections (Brown 2004).

In an unexpected move, Moi (who was constitutionally bared from running for re-election) hand-picked Jomo Kenyatta's son, Uhuro Kenyatta to be his successor. A move that outraged Raila Odinga and others within KANU. As a consequence a big fraction of KANU moved out of the party into the small Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This move was, however, short-lives as the NAK alliance promptly initiated talkes with LDP. After the signing of a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), where Odinga accepted Kibaki as the presidential candidate but where Odinga was designated for a newly designed Prime Minister post, LDP agreed to join NAK. This was the creation of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) (ibid.).

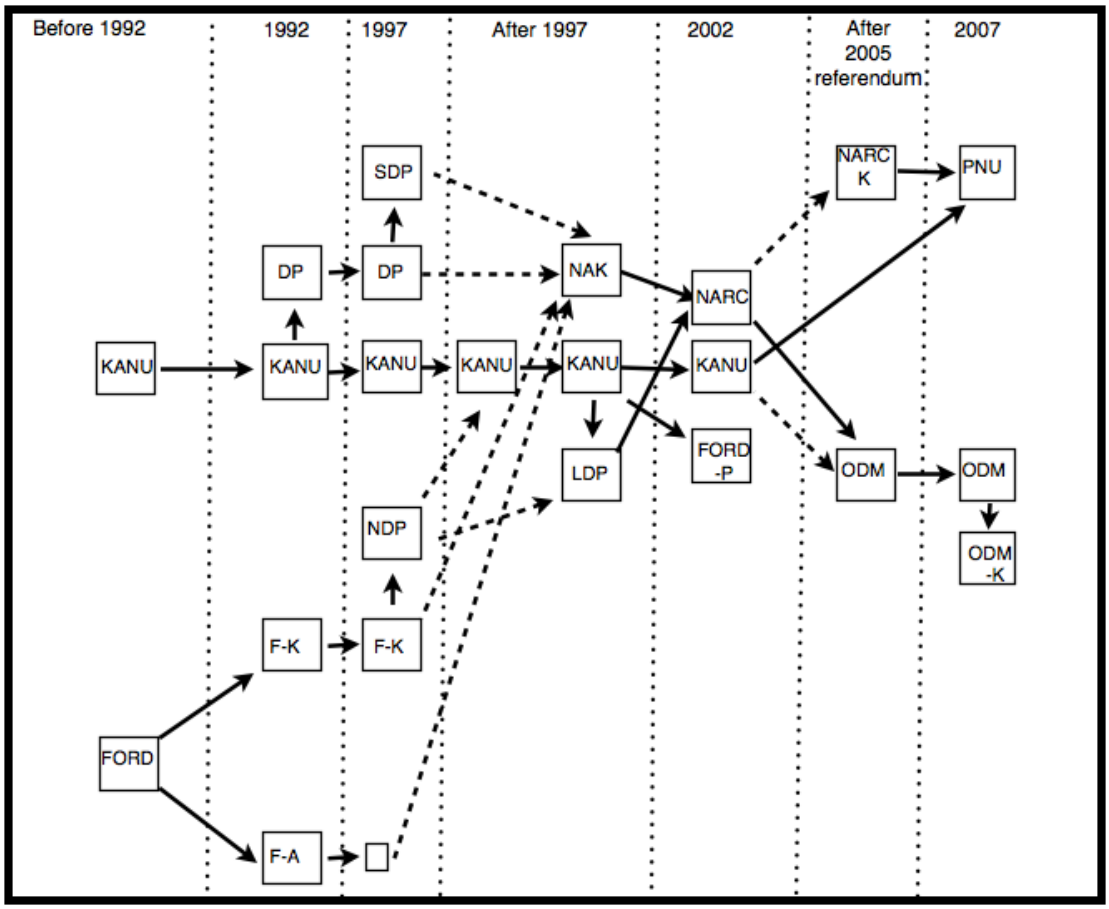
NARC was incredibly successful at the polls, gaining 62% of the presidential vote, against Kenyatta's 31%. The coalition was, however, not long lived. The LDP fraction of the coalition felt discontent with their weight within the government and president Kibaki soon reveiled that the new constitution should not include the Prime Minsiter position, as promised in the MOU. When a new constitutional draft was put up for referendum the NARC coalition was split on two sides. The yes-side was supported by the Kibaki loyalists and most of the old NAK camp, whereas the no-campaign was supported by notable politicans such as Oding, Kenyatta and William Ruto. After a decisive victory for the no-side, Kibaki dismissed all LDP minister from the government and the no-side responded by starting a new party together with KANU, labeled the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) (Chege 2008).

The 2007 election did, however, not become a contest between ODM and the Kibaki loyalists new NARC-Kenya. Instead, ODM split into two parties, where notable Kamba politican Kolonzo Musyoka went on to build ODM-Kenya (ODM-K) and Uhuru Kenyatta and his KANU decided to move back to support Kibaki in a new loosely organized coalition under the name the Party of National Unity (PNU). The election turned out to be a very close race between Kibaki and Odinga. The official results showed a Kibaki victory with 46,4 % of the vote, Odinga gathering 44.1% and

Musyoka finishing third with 8.9%. The election result has, however, been widely disputed both domestically and internationally (IREC Report 2007:x)

As a reaction against the election a massive flood of violence erupted and international negotiators had to be brought in to restore order. Finally, a power sharing agreement was reached and a Grand coalition government was formed with Kibaki as president and Odinga as prime-minister, including all Kenyan political interests. At the next election in 2012, we are likely to see some new political alliances, as Kibaki will not be able to run for re-election. Moreover, with a new constitution adopted in 2010, the rules of the game have changed substantially.

The history of Kenya shows the volatility of political alliances. The figure below illustrates how these alliances have shifted from the introduction of multipartyism until the 2007 election.



Note: Moves are represented by the move of party leadership. Small boxes without label indicates radically decreased support. Vertical arrow shows a party split. Dotted lines show a temporary move that did not last into the next election.

The case of Kenya should be very helpful for studying the creation of political coalitions in ethnic party systems. Although it is a single case study, the short history of Kenyan multipartyism provides the researcher with a large number of data pints (King et al 1994). Interesting cases to study includes the inability to form a unified coalition to challenge Moi in the 1992 and 1997 election, the decision of NDP to join KANU, the creation of the NAK alliance, the decision of LDP to split from KANU, LDP's decision to join NAK and create NARC, the dissolution of NARC, the creation of ODM, the dissolution of ODM and the creation of ODM-K, the decision of KANU to join the Kibaki loyalists and the final decisions to build a loose PNU alliance rather than a formal party. Beside all these cases, Kenyan politicians are now gearing up for the 2012 election, where politicians will have to relate to new institutional provisions. The interviews conducted for this study was done in the formative phases of this process, in the fall of 2010. Through the interviews it will be possible to show how politicians reason about coalition building, not in hindsight, but before we know whether a certain strategy will be successful or not.

1.2 Kenya and other ethnic party systems

According to Chandra (2004:3) an ethnic party is "A party that overtly represents itself as a champion of the cause of one particular ethnic category or set of categories to the exclusion of others and that makes such a representation central to its strategy of mobilizing voters". A reasonable continuation of this definition is that an ethnic party system is a political system primarily made up by such parties. As most African party systems, Kenya is usually describes as such a system, where parties are often described as ethnic blocs, rather than programmatic parties (e.g Fox 1996, Hulterström 2004, Posner 2007). Although parties are not allowed to officially represent exclusive ethnic interests, party leadership and following tend to be associated with specific ethnic groups (Chandra 2011, Moroff 2010). Chandra (2004) argues that ethnic parties are used as an informational shortcut for voters. By observing the ethnicity of a political candidate, voters develop expectations about the patronage it would receive if that particular candidate gained office. Knowing this, politicians will favor their co-ethnics when distributing resources to create a long-term patron-client relationship. Such behavior has also been observed in the Kenyan context, both before and after the introduction of multipartyism (see Haugerud 1995 and Hydén and Leys 1972). When looking at the voting pattern in Kenyan elections, the assumption that ethnicity is a strongly determining factor for vote choice is clearly supported. Presidential candidates tend to be overwhelmingly supported by the people living in their own ethnic heartlands (Ngau and Mbathi 2010).

Interestingly, in the interviews, most politicians and party officials were happy to admit that Kenyan political parties did not have a shared programmatic agenda and that it is very hard to tell the parties apart in terms of policies. Most parties issue policy manifestos. These documents have, however, been very imprecise and do not build on any coherent principles (Oloo 2007). Moreover, the manifestos are suspiciously close in terms of wording, or as jokingly expressed by David Eseli Simuyi, an MP for FORD-Kenya "No, so ideological differences are just there on

paper, but most of these parties if you read their manifestos they are more or less the same. I think they hire the same experts to write them" (Authors interview, Eseli). Similarly, ODM minister Simeon Lesrima admits; "the manifesto is not something that is discussed. It is not something that has been internalized, I guess most of us don't know what our manifesto say. You cannot say the difference between the PNU manifesto and the ODM manifesto." (Authors interview, Lesrima)

It is, however, simplistic to say that policies have no bearing at all for Kenyan politics. The fact that people in the same ethnic group tend to vote similarly does not necessarily mean that policies are irrelevant. To some extent voters might vote along ethnic lines because they share some common interests. Moreover, Chandra's (2004) argument about ethnicity as a shortcut for retrieving information about patronage, could actually also be understood as a shortcut for understanding candidates' policy positions. Just as voters in the West seem to have higher trust in the political judgment of politicians from their own social class, voters in ethnic party systems might reason in a similar vein. In a recent study, Bratton and Kimenyi (2008) show that Kenyan voting behavior is not solely based on ethnicity, but also some degree of retrospective voting. However, as the authors conclude "Although Kenyans resist defining themselves in ethnic terms, their actions in making electoral choices show a country where voting patterns hew largely on ethnic lines. Respondents also show a high degree of mistrust of members of other ethnic groups and consider the behavior of these other groups to be influenced primarily by ethnicity. In general, voting in Kenya is therefore defensively and fundamentally an ethnic census."

Although, politicians and voters might have certain policy interests, parties are not really organized around these political beliefs in the sense that candidates generally create or join parties because of a shared agenda. Instead, candidates of different ideological positions find it necessary to join the same party because of the electoral reality in their home constituencies. Charles Keter, an MP for ODM and previously KANU, described his decision to seek nomination on a KANU party ticket in these terms:

"At the time, there was no opposition to KANU in that area, because basically that was the party where the former president was coming from. [..] I wasn't going in as a party, to carry all the problems which were there, because I was an individual [..] I mean a party is a party, you see parties in Kenya, unlike other countries, they have ideologies, they have missions, but here in Kenya they don't. Their ultimate motive is to win an election, whether they say they will do rose, that is imaginary, they will never do much." (Authors interview, Keter).

2. A Theory of non-programmatic coalition building

What factors affect coalition building before and after elections? A traditional answer to this question would be institutions and policy considerations. Both these factors are usually central in traditional theories of coalition building. In these theories, parties are expected to seek both policy and office gains and act to maximize their utility in terms of these goods. Voters, on their hand, will vote according to their policy preferences, but adapt their behavior in relation to existing electoral institutions to obtain the best possible outcome. Parties, who are aware of these strategic considerations, will develop expectations on how voters will behave when offered a number of different alternatives.

Most of these theories are built on spatial logic, as presented by early pioneers within party politics, such as Duverger (1954), Downs (1957), and Riker (1962). The spatial model assumes that parties can be placed on a policy continuum (usually left-right, but other dimensions would also be possible) and that voters choose among these alternatives to maximize their own utility, based on their own placement on the continuum. Normally, this implies that voters vote for the party that is closest to their own position, but voters could also choose to vote strategically if doing so would increase their expected utility return. To maximize the possibility of office, parties will adjust their policy position to maximize their vote gaining potential, by adopting a position that is optimal considering the placement of other parties and the distribution of the voter's preferences (Riker 1962).

By definition, the spatial model does, however, fall apart when applied to non-programmatic party systems, which should have big consequences for the practice of coalition building (Rakner et al 2007). If parties are not distinguishable on policy, voters cannot choose among parties based on their ideological proximity and parties cannot choose partners based on policy considerations. Moreover, if policy is not a major consideration, parties will not form coalitions for other reasons than increasing their office potentials. This paper argues that these differences between programmatic and ethnic party systems have three implications for ethnic party systems, (i) less strategic voter defection, (ii) parties would only coalesce if there are credible commitments to power sharing and (iii) parties would be less constrained when choosing coalition partners. All these differences should have major consequences for the process of coalition building.

2.1 Small degree of strategic defection

A central argument in this paper is that trailing parties would be less prone to PECs in non-programmatic party systems, because they would not have to face the costs of strategic voter defection. A PEC will be formed when engaging in coalition building would be the dominant strategy for both senior and junior partners in the coalition. It

is important to acknowledge, however, that the two actors (the senior and junior partner/partners) have rather divergent reasons for going into coalitions.

It is widely held that more disproportional electoral institutions, such as the Single Member District (SMD) system, will favor pre-electoral coalition building more than more proportional arrangements with a larger district magnitude (e.g. Golder 2006a: 26; Shepsle and Bonchek 1997 190-191; Strøm, Budge and Laver 1994:213). The logic behind this argument stems from the basic Duvergerian argument that majoritarian electoral systems constrain the effective number of parties. Voters who prefer a candidate with low support and a small chance of securing a seat will strategically defect from their favored candidate to a more popular candidate, in order to affect the outcome of the election more effectively. According to Cox's (1997) development of Duverger's law, an upper limit to the number of effective candidates is set to M+1, where M is the number of seats in a given constituency. In an SMD election (where M=1) this implies that voters who do not support one of the expected top-two candidates will defect from their favorite candidate to the top-two candidate they prefer in order to maximize their expected utility.

As a consequence, Golder (2006a) argues, small parties have little incentive to stay in the game as they will suffer from large-scale defection and have a difficulty to win representation. Instead they would do better to run together with one of the top-two candidates and maximize their utility by striking pre-electoral agreements. The fundamental flaw with this argumentation is, however, that all reasoning is made from the point of junior coalition partners. The question, however, is why senior partners would ever benefit from getting into these deals? Even the earliest contributions to the theory of coalition building acknowledged that parties would maximize their utility by building as small coalitions as possible. In von Neumann's and Morgenstern's (1953) minimal winning coalition it is therefore hypothesized that parties will form coalition with as little surplus support as possible. Through incorporating additional parties into the government, senior partners have to give up more offices and compromise more on policies than necessary.

The implication of this theory is that senior partners should not create PECs with smaller parties. Instead, following Duvergerian logic, they should pursue a strategy of voter coordination rather than elite coordination. If voters really act strategically, they will start to defect from trailing candidates and instead support one of the top two contenders. Moreover, by creating a coalition, the senior partner signals a shift in its spatial position on the ideological continuum (Blais et al 2006). Doing so removes the party from its optimal spatial position and the party might experience losses to its main opponent.

So why then do we see PEC formation in SMD electoral systems? The reason, I argue, is that the degree of strategic voting varies between contexts. As argued by others before me, there are cases where it is possible to find quite non-Duvergerian

electoral outcomes (e.g. Grofman et al 2009; Singer and Stephenson 2009). In these contexts, many voters do for some reason not defect from trailing candidates and non-viable candidates manage to maintain a large share of their support, despite their unfortunate competitive position.

In these contexts, with non-Duvergerian outcomes, the power balance between the potential senior and junior partner shifts quite dramatically. Potential senior partners can no longer expect the voters from the junior partners to defect and increase their electoral support. Junior partners, on the other hand, do not have to fear the most brutal humiliation of voter defection. At this point, both potential senior and junior partners might benefit from creating a PEC.

In a new and important contribution to this debate, Moser and Scheiner (forthcoming) show that the effect of electoral institutions varies substantially between different contexts. First, voters in new democracies have less information to base strategic voting decisions on. In order to vote strategically, voters must know who are the top contenders in the upcoming election. Second, a higher number of cleavages, measured by ethnic fragmentation, are likely to create more parties regardless of political institutions. The second of these arguments is especially interesting for the purpose of this paper. If ethnic diversity tends to increase the number of parties regardless of electoral institutions, this might implicate that voters in societies where ethnic cleavages is the main dimension of political competition exhibit a different kind of voting behavior than in more programmatic political party systems.

When thinking about the logical foundation for Duverger's law, it seems perfectly intuitive that ethnic voters would respond differently to certain electoral institutions than would programmatically oriented voters. Duvergerian logic presupposes that voters have a transitive preference ordering and can rank the available alternatives. In an ethnic party system this argument is, however, much harder to apply. In this setting you would prefer the party or candidate of your own ethnic group, but how would you rank the candidates of the other groups? A voter should hence normally be indifferent between the other alternatives. If this is the case, the voter would not have any incentives to defect from their favored candidate. Since she does not care about which of the other ethnic parties gets elected, she will stick with her favored alternative.

Chandra (2004) delivers a possible counterargument to this claim. According to Chandra, ethnic voters do indeed engage in strategic voting by performing an "ethnic headcount" of the parties in the race. If their own single-ethnic party does not stand a realistic chance of winning they will defect to a multiethnic party with at least some of their co-ethnic within the parties senior rank. This coordination is however more elite than voter driven and if elites do not decide to form these multiethnic parties, there will be no prerequisites for this kind of ethnic strategic voting.

2.3 Credible commitment

According to the theory about strategic defection presented above, the costs of entering an electoral challenge an unviable candidate should be smaller in an ethnic party system. Trailing challengers would not have to face the cost of massive defection and could instead wage their own campaign, obtain a reasonable amount of support and consolidate themselves as the leader of their specific ethnic group.

Whereas programmatic parties are driven by both office and policy goals, the ethnic party has office seeking as its main objective. As Kellam (2011) argues, programmatic parties might hence agree to support presidential candidates from other parties in order to avoid an ideologically undesirable outcome. This, however, is a smaller concern for a non-programmatic party. Accordingly, the junior ethnic party would only agree to form a PEC if it found it likely that doing so would result in office gains.

In a similar vein, Van de Walle (2006) compares the process of coalition formation in Africa with a "tipping game". In this game oppositional parties would only agree to form a unified coalition if they found the prospects of winning sufficiently high. In many of African competitive authoritarian regimes the electoral playing field is, however, severely tilted in favor of the incumbent and the opposition would hence have little incentives to form coalitions (Levitsky and Way 2010). Under these circumstances, oppositional parties who do not have clear policy reasons for coalescing, should instead delay coalition building until after the election when they could negotiate with other oppositional parties as well as the incumbent autocrat (Wahman forthcoming).

Beside a realistic chance of winning the election, a junior partner would also need a credible commitment to some kind of power sharing by the senior partner. When talking about coalitions in front of parliamentary systems this is rather easy, since the government is dependent on the continuous support of the parliament. When creating PECs for presidential elections this is however more difficult, since elected presidents do not need the support of its allies after the election day (Mainwaring and Schugart 1997; Kellam 2011). A programmatic party might be willing to take the risk of violated commitments past the election, since their expected utility would still be higher with the election of a more ideologically proximate president, despite the fact that they did not achieve any office gains. A non-programmatic party on the other hand would receive no utility from this situation and would hence always go into detailed bargaining over portfolio allocation before entering any PEC deal.

2.4 Choosing coalition partners

Traditional theories on pre- and post-electoral coalition building give us little assistance in answering this question. With their ideas about the minimal (or minimum) coalition theory, Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1953) and later Riker (1962) became the pioneers of coalition building theory. These efforts of theorizing have later been labeled the "size-school" and predict that parties will try to build the smallest majority coalition possible (De Winter and Dumont 2006). By creating such minimal coalitions, all parties within the coalition would maximize both their weight within the coalition and their leverage from being in government.

Leiserson (1966) presented the minimal range theory, which is an extension of these earlier theories. According to Leiserson, parties will try to form a minimal coalition with an as small ideological distance as possible. This implicates that the smallest winning coalition (counted as the number of MPs) where the smallest ideological distance is present will be formed, in order to maximize both the expected policy and office gain.

These theories speak about post-electoral coalitions, but as Golder (2006a) argues one would also expect parties to be more willing to form PECs with more ideologically proximate parties. This would be true for two reasons. First, a PEC with ideologically distant parties will decrease the expected policy utility of getting into office. Second, voters could decide to defect to other parties if they do not believe that sticking with their first preference is likely to result in the maximum policy utility return. These theories are also developed to account for parliamentary systems, but as shown by Kellam (2011) parties would also be more likely to endorse a presidential candidate of an ideologically proximate party.

Once again, when applied to a non-programmatic context these theories do not apply. Since parties are not located on a policy continuum there are no real constraints dictating which parties a party can and cannot cooperate with (Wahman forthcoming). Instead, it would be possible to corporate with all parties and would be willing to do so if they can deliver credible power sharing commitments. As noticed by Rakner et al (2007), this lack of ideological commitment might result in highly unexpected coalitions.

2.5 In pursuit of a minimal winning coalition

In sum, it has been argued that parties would not form a coalition with other parties if they cannot deliver credible commitments to sharing power, since they do not need to face the costs of strategic defection if they remain unviable candidates. In unprogrammatic party systems parties also have few constraints when choosing partners. In building coalitions parties should, however, in similar to parties in programmatic systems, try to build minimal winning coalitions. With a minimal

coalition parties within the government maximize their own weight and minimize the number of partners that have to share the spoils (Riker 1962)

Interestingly, when elections are held at several levels simultaneously the spread of the minimal winning coalition might vary considerably. As acknowledged by a number of authors, electoral systems affect the incentives for strategic entrance on the constituency-level, but do not have to affect coordination between constituencies (Chhiibber and Kollman 1998, Hicken 2009). However, in electoral systems where parties fight over several different constituencies the degree of coordination required or even preferred might differ quite dramatically for the different levels. The literature on presidential coattails has suggested that presidential systems tend to reduce the number of national parties (e.g. Filippov et al 1999, Mozaffar et al 2003). This effect is supposed to be even greater if there is a temporal proximity between the presidential and legislative election (Golder 2006b).

In ethnically divided societies, the tradeoff between making a national and local appeal might be an especially hard one. Since ethnic groups tend to be regionally concentrated ethnic parties should normally have their regional strongholds where they control some relatively easy seats. The solution to this dilemma could be as suggested by both Chandra (2004:92) and Posner (2005) to propose an advantageous definition of one's own ethnic category or to show to voters how certain ethnic categories share similar interests. The problem, however, is that voters, like politicians, should seek minimal winning coalitions. They might accept a broader definition of their own identity to match the reality on the national stage, but on the constituency level they might not see the need to share patronage with a more largely defined ethnic groups. The creation of a broad national PEC with the weight to go after the presidency might hence create the opportunity for elites that do not get aspired legislative nominations to defect from the larger coalition and instead conduct a local campaign on a narrower ethnic appeal.

Party leaders must hence evaluate the risk of intra ethnic defection and weight this cost against the probability of getting into government when entering into a given PEC. The incentives to coordinate over electoral districts is dependant on the concentration of power at the national level (Chhibber and Kollman 1998), but for parties with low probability of catching the highest prize, maximizing the number of parliamentary seats might be the best option. Moreover, pursuing this strategy would put a party in the best possible post-election bargaining situation.

3. Data

The paper will utilize different types of data to study this topic. When studying voting behavior, which is the basis for all office-seeking strategies, the paper will use an original dataset of constituency level voting data.[1] Kenya is a competitive authoritarian country and it is not unproblematic to take official election data at face value (Levitsky and Way 2010). Some Kenyan elections have suffered from severe manipulation. For instance the final report of the Independent Review Commission on the 2007 general elections concludes that "The integrity of the process and the credibility of the results were so gravely impaired by these manifold irregularities and defects that it is irrelevant whether or not there was actual rigging at the national tally centre. The results are irretrievably polluted" (IREC Report 2007:x). Although acknowledging these problems, official election data should be the best way to capture broad trends in election behavior. Moreover, however compromised the integrity of these elections might be, parties have to adapt their strategies to these results.

To capture the reasoning of politicians engaged in the game of coalition formation the study utilize a combination of secondary data found in newspaper articles, biographies, journal articles and 24 in depth elite interviews carried out in Kenya in the fall of 2010. The semi-structured interviews were carried out primarily with politicians involved in coalition formation at the national level, but also with other political commentators and national level civil servants. All interviews were tape-recorded and are fully transcribed and available upon request.

4. Empirical evaluation of theory in the case of Kenya

Below, the theory set out in the previous section will be applied to explain the coalition behaviour throughout the history of Kenyan multipartyism. It will go through four different phases, first the phase of oppositional fragmentation (1992-1997), The building of the NARC coalition, the demise of the NARC coalition, coalition building after NARC and lastly some tentative thoughts on the upcoming 2012 election. The first section willevaluate the theoretical claim about the absence of large-scale voter defection in ethnic party systems.

[1] Data is taken from Throup and Thornsby (1998) (for 1992 parliamentary election), the IED National Election Data Book (for 1997 parliamentary and presidential election), European Union Election Observation Mission (2002 parliamentary election), *Daily Nation* 2002- 12-30 (2002 presidential election) and Weis (2008) (parliamentary and presidential elections)

4.1 Strategic defection in Kenya

The first theoretical claim to evaluate is whether the degree of strategic defection has really been limited in the Kenyan case. It does not take much statistical analysis to conclude that Kenya has displayed some rather non-duvergerian outcomes. Both the 1992 and 1997 presidential election showed a large degree of voter fragmentation. In 1992 there were four viable candidates in the presidential race (Moi, Matiba, Kibaki and Oginga Odinga), 1997 had five (Moi, Kibaki, Raila Odinga, Wamalwa and Ngilu). This is somewhat of a puzzle given the institutional setting in Kenya. Given the fact that the country apply parliamentary elections in Single Member Districts (SMD) and until the implementation of the 2010 constitution a one-round system with no threshold for a minimum share of the national votes.[2] Therefore we would not expect more than 2 viable candidates (M+1), neither in the presidential election nor in the parliamentary contests (Cox 1997). Moreover, the remarkably sophisticated Kenyan opinion polls should provide the voters with the information necessary to act strategically, at least in the presidential election (Wolf 2009). However, the 2002 and 2007 elections showed a considerably much higher degree of coordination. This could be explained simply by the fact that this is a case of elite coordination rather than voter coordination, but it might also be a consequence of institutional learning (Moser and Scheiner forthcoming).

Two different measures of voter fragmentation have been used. First Cox's classic SF ratio has been calculated. The ratio represents the ratio between the second and first loser in a constituency. In the case of an SMD election this would represent the ratio between the third and second placed candidate in a constituency. Under Duvergerian equilibrium we would expect this SF ratio to be close to 0, as third place candidates would strategically defect to viable candidates. The problem with this ratio is, however, that it does not take into account extreme fragmentation among trailing candidates (i.e. when "wasted votes" is not concentrated to one third candidate but distributed among several non-viable candidates). Hence the share of votes received by candidates placed third or worse has also been calculated (NV-share). Below, these statistics are displayed.

[2] A second round would only be neede if no candidate won more than 25% of the votes in at least 5/8 provinces (revided 2008 constitution §5(3f)).

	Presidential		Parliamentary	
	SF-ratio	NV-share	SF-ratio	NV-share
1992	.719	.385	.376	.097
1997	.351	.285	.329	.106
2002	.188	.065	.366	.126
2007	.202	.095	.480	.253

Note: In the parliamentary election the mean SF-ratio and NV-share for all constituencies is displayed

The statistics above supports the argument that Kenya do not have a high degree of strategic defection. In the presidential contest, we see the highest SF-ratio and NV-share in 1992, where Kibaki received as much as 72% of the runner up Matiba's vote share, and almost 39% of Kenyan voters wasted their votes on non viable candidates. Although, less extreme, 1992 also had a clearly non-duvergerian outcome, with close to 30% of voters supporting non-viable candidates. The institutional learning argument is supported by the presidential election outcome, but not at the parliamentary level. In fact, although 2002 showed the highest degree of voter-coordination in the presidential election its mean SF-ratio in the partliamentary election is almost as high as the extreme 1992 election and the NV-share actually exceeds that of 1992. An even stronger proof of the fact that institutional learning is not the reason for the increased presidential election coordination is that the 2007 parliamentary election shows some extreme fragmentation, with a mean SF ration of .480 and NV-share of .252. This is caused by the high degree of intra-ethnic competition many constituencies experienced, due to the problems of the big nation-wide presidential coalitions. These numbers also clearly illustrate the dilemma introduced by the multi-level game discussed in the last section.

Another way to measure strategic defection would be to measure the difference in the share of votes received by a presidential candidate in a given electoral district and that of the party that particular candidate represents. Duverger's law would predict that voters would engage in split-ticket voting if they support a party in a district where this particular party is viable, but know that the presidential candidate of the party do not have the national support to be a viable presidential contender. If this is the case, Duverger would predict that voters would stick with their favorite party in the parliamentary election, but vote strategically in the presidential election. Moreover, we would se voters supporting other non-viable parties strategically defecting to the viable party in that constituency. For these two reasons, we would expect that the party of trailing presidential candidates would receive considerable more votes in the parliamentary election than they do in the presidential election, in these constituencies where they have viable candidates. To measure this ,the paper introduces the Presidential-Parliamentary ratio (PP-ratio). The PP-ratio shows the ratio between a presidential candidate's support and that of its party in a given constituency in the two concurrent elections.

Candidate	Party	Year	National vote share	Viable parliamentary constituencies	PP-ratio in viable parliamentary constituencies
Mwai Kibaki	DP	1992	19,5%	79	.855
Oginga Odinga	FORD-K	1992	17,5%	51	.832
Raila Odinga	NDP	1997	10.92%	36	.902
Michael Wamalwa	FORD-K	1997	8.29%	36	.773
Charity Ngilu	SDP	1997	7.71%	15	.953
Simeon Nyachae	FORD-P	2002	5.9%	36	.408
Kolonzo Musyoka	ODM-K	2007	8.91%	29	1.347

The table above shows the PP-ratio of all trailing candidates in Kenyan elections since 1992 (of all candidates with at least one percent of the national support) in all constituencies where that candidate's party had a viable parliamentary candidate (top-two contender). The PP-ratios indicate a certain degree of defection, but a far smaller one than what would be expected. The mean PP-ratio for the seven trailing candidates is .867, meaning that an overwhelming majority of voters stick with their first presidential choice, despite wasting their votes. Raila Odinga and Kolonzo Musyoka show very little, or in the case of Musyoka no defection. The only candidate, where their seem to have been some defection is 2002's Kissi and FORD-People presidential hopeful Simeon Nyachae. This is a unexpected result, but an anomaly in relation to the wider results. It should also be noticed that the data quality in the 2002 presidential election is poorer than in other elections, due to several missing data points in the constituency-level presidential results. Interestingly, if only looking at the constituencies where FORD-P won a parliamentary seat the mean PP-ratio is .750 and only looking at Nyachae's ethnic homeland in Kisii the mean PP-ratio is 1.017.

Altogether, these two statistical tests verify the hypothesis that strategic voting is not a very wide spread practice in Kenya. Interestingly, there is not much mentioning of strategic voter defection in the interviews. When mentioned, this often refers to intra-ethnic competition, where voters would actually have transitive preference orders and might actually defect from its favorite candidate if the voter's tribe has another more viable candidate running for election.

4.2 The 1992 and 1997 election

The 1992 and 1997 election was a formative period in Kenyan politics. This was a time when the opposition was still to find a unifying leader, but they were still facing a strong KANU headed by the skillful and brute Moi.

In the presence of Moi and with the low probability of winning elections as a unified opposition parties did best not to coalesce at this point. Instead, issuing a more narrow ethnic appeal was the best way to maximize the party's influence by getting a large parliamentary basis and promoting the individual party leaders as the ethnic frontrunners. In the absence of large-scale voter defection party leaders could hence heighten their political profile and increase the bargaining status for future possible government coalitions. Intra-ethnic defection would, however, be a real concern for party leaders who choose to subordinate themselves to party leaders from other ethnic groups. Michael Wamalwa's successor as FORD-Kenya Chairman, Musikari Kombo, confirms this; "It all boiled down to ambitions […] And then there was also the capture by the followers so the leader may be willing, but the followers are unhappy because they really want their own person to be the one there, so the leader would be put under tremendous pressure. Part of it is really tribal." (Authors interview, Kombo)

Several of the interviews confirm that it was mainly the dominance of KANU, together with personal ambitions of the party leaders that kept the parties apart in the first two elections. This idea is supported by Simeon Lesrima, now an ODM minister, at the time a permanent secretary in the Moi government, when asked about why the opposition did not form a coalition in 1992 and 1997; "Well, I think of course there is political ambition. I mean in '92, Moi was a master manipulator. He was able to divide and rule. In '97, I think he did similarly. But clearly he was getting weaker and weaker in 2002, and so it was possible." (Authors interview, Lesrima)

Instead of pressure towards more cohesion after the unsuccessful 1992 election, the fragmentation was actually worsened in the 1997 election. According to, Mukhisa Kituyi, the opposition chief whip in the 1992 parliament, the ethnic base of Kenyan politics became even more salient in the 1997 election (Authors interview, Kituyi). The 1992 election, clearly showed the power of ethnic politics and for ethnic leaders trying to consolidate their own power, this was the time to create a narrower electoral vehicle.

The potential power of this strategy was clearly illustrated after 1997, when Odinga's NDP was coopted by KANU to prevent a hung parliament. Instead of going in to a pre-electoral pact without any credible outlooks of getting to office Odinga was able to move into government with KANU. Moreover, the prospects looked bright for the oppositional politican to be the one to eventually succeed Moi and move into the country's highest office (Steeves 2006).

4.3 The creation of the NARC coalition

Moving onto the 2002 election, KANU was about to get significantly weakened with the succession after Moi. Not only would KANU miss Moi's manipulation skills, they would also have to fight a sensitive battle over leadership. Interestingly, Rakner et al (2007) also emphasized the importance of leadership succession in Malawi for parties' cooperation strategies.

In this context of succession, the NAK coalition was born. With a greater chance of winning and with clearly positioned ethnic leaders there were room for negotiation. Wamalwa and Ngilu decided to back Kibaki as its frontrunner, with the hopes of eventually being able to use the vehicle for their own presidential ambitions. Mukhisa Kituyu, one of the chief negotiators for FORD-Kenya in the creation of NAK stated; "Wamalwa had more national appeal than Kibaki, showed more promise as a leader for reconciliation, had a bit more to put on the table as representing the forces of change, but he was organizationally extremely poor. Financially a total wreck and ready to be carried on the shoulders of somebody else and hope then he can make the resources possible for a subsequent bid at the presidency" (Authors interview, Kituyi). Moreover, as argued by Musikari Kombo, also a negotiator for FORD-Kenya "In the end Kibaki pleaded that he was an older person. That in fact he would only go for one term." (Authors interview, Kombo)

When Moi eventually handpicked Kenyatta at his successor the Odinga faction had two possible strategies, either to stay with KANU and play the second fiddle, or to defect and join the increasingly credible challenger in NAK. They chose the second option and could clearly contribute to shape a likely winner. However, crucial bargaining preceded the incorporation of LDP into NAK. As argued in the theory chapter, it would make little sense for LDP to join NAK without any promises of power sharing. Negations did, however, not revolve around policies; "It was basically Kibaki, Wamalwa, Odinga and Nyachae sitting down and saying look, can we agree on how we are going to share power after elections. It was more about job negotiations than about a government agenda. And a lot of it was even secretive Memoranda and the MOUs which were to come back and haunt their relationships [..] There was never an intellectually informed debate on the challenges of bringing LDP on board. It was basically an opportunistic thing" (Authors interview, Kituyi)

4.4 The demise of the NARC coalition

The ultimate success of the NARC coalition might also have been its greatest weakness. Going into government it was clear that NARC was not a minimal winning coalition and that there were considerable room for political entrepreneurs who wanted to elevate their position in the next election. This knowledge created mistrust from the start in the knowledge that there were no long-term commitment between the parties. As conveyed by John Olago Aluoch, an ODM MP; "They knew that although

they had come together for a purpose, they were still rivals when they were looking at the next elections. I would say that most of the leaders were looking forward to five years time when they could be leaders on their own, without forming coalitions. So the struggle to be ahead of each other created mistrust" (Authors interview, Olago).

With this knowledge, there were few incentives for the Kibaki wing of the government to respect the MOU between the parties. This is a theory supported by Mukhisa Kituyi, minister of Industry in the Kibaki 2002 government; "So then the others say that the inevitability of Odinga running against us meant try to give him as little strength from the benefits of being in government as possible, so you confirm him as the opposition from within government and you confirm to him the need to see that this arrangement is short-lived." (Authors interview, Kituyi).

As argued elsewhere, this instability in the ruling coalition might have important consequences for the perspectives for democratization after alternation (Wahman 2011). With a shrinking coalition the NARC coalition's willingness to introduce reforms and level the electoral playing field decreased. According to Musikari Kombo, who succeeded Wamalwa as Chairman of FORD-Kenya in 2003, this was indeed the case: "The click around Kibaki, they did not want to share the spoils. And I guess they also looked at Odinga and said this would be a formidable ambitious man. Wamalwa had died, and therefore pushed him aside, with hope that they will use the state machinery to remain formidable." (Authors interview, Kombo)

4.5 Coalition building after NARC

Coalition building after the success of NARC and the ouster of KANU has been a more open deal, since no party has been able to overtake the role of the dominant KANU party. The first new coalition built after NARC was ODM. Seemingly, this coalition could be used to contradict the theory. Clearly, the parties included into ODM shared the same aversion against the 2005 constitutional draft. However, ODM MP, Charles Keter do not want to describe the original ODM as an ideological alliance; "It was not something which people sat down and said we need to form this party because this party will deliver these things to Kenyans, it was formed after the successful campaign and winning the referendum. People said, then why can't we convert this vehicle to be the vehicle now to win the election? Since we have won the referendum, we will win the election." (Author's interview, Keter)

The eventual split of the ODM coalition shows two important functions of ethnic coalition building. First, the most important parts of KANU, especially the Kikuyu fraction of the party, defected from ODM and came to join the Kibaki-team. This move shows the risk of supporting an ethnic rival, when one's own ethnic group has another candidate standing for election. According to KANU minister Japhet Mbiuki

this was the reason for the KANU defection; ”And you realize, Kibaki has been supported by central Kenya for long by the Kikuyus, the Merus, the Embus, some part of the Kisii’s. And if at all you are not supporting Kibaki, even your own parliamentary seat is not guaranteed at all. So that’s why we had to do our political mathematics, which is the best vehicle for us to use to be able seek even our own survival in an election” (Authors interview, Mbiuki). Although staying with ODM might have brought the highest probability of getting into government, KANU would have risked getting totally erased in the parliament if sticking with this strategy.

With the reduced size of ODM Kalonzo Musyoka had to carefully weight the pros and cons of staying in the ODM coalition. When realizing that Musyoka would not get the nomination, the fraction descided to leave and create ODM-K. As declared by Charles Kilonzo, MP for ODM-K; ”One major community in the rift valley, what we call the Kalenjin, shifted their support from Kalonzo to honorable Odinga, so when we were to go to the party nomination, we realized we were not going to get the support and we were not going to win the party nominations. […] Now we decided if we are going to go to election, we don’t want to be anybodies number two. We decided it would be better for us to negotiate because we knew there can never be a clear cut winner […] We get the maximum number of seats we can get. We got, I think 17 seats. […] Then our party was a key player” (Author’s interview, Kilonzo)

On the Kibaki-loyalist side the political parties had to decide how to organize their challenge, either as a formalized party or a loose coalition. This dilemma clearly shows the complexity of the multi-level game of ethnic coalition building. The final decision was to run as a loose coalition with one presidential candidate, but a rather peculiar arrangement in the parliamentary election. In some constituencies the party fielded one common PNU candidate. In some constituencies the PNU alliance had several candidates, representing different PNU affiliated parties and in many constituencies PNU nomination losers went of to briefcase parties to contest the election. PNU did, however, not choose to form a real unified party. This was a highly contested issue. According to the NARC-Kenya leader of the time, Dr. Kituyi, the decision to run as an umbrella organization, was the “most stupid thing done politically by Kibaki’s team” and a consequence of the smaller party leader’s unwillingness to give up political power (Author’s interview, Kituyi). FORD-Kenya leader Musikaria Kombo, declared that he had “no interest in dissolving his FORD-Kenya” and felt “very uncomfortable” about turning NARC into a party (Authors interview, Kombo). Many of the politicians from the smaller parties feel worried about the fact that they have not fielded parliamentary candidates under their own party label for two consecutive elections and sees it as a priority to do so in the 2012 election and believe that their party have entered into an identity crisis (interviews with representatives of DP, FORD-Kenya, NARC-Kenya and KANU). The clearest stand on this issue has been taken by NARC-Kenya, who has declared that they will field their own presidential candidate in 2012. According to the Parties Excecitive Director, Tabuu Daniels, NARC-Kenya lost several seats because of joining the PNU-alliance and the defection by NARC-Kenya members to small “brief case parties” (Author’s interview, Daniels).

One example of a defector that joined one of these parties is David Ngugi, MP for Sisi Kwa Sisi (a party with two MPs in the current parliament) and Chairman for the Union of Small Parties (a union organizing all MPs from small parties in the parliament without formal affiliation to the major blocs). Ngugi explained his descision to move to Sisi Kwa Sisi as a very pragmatic move after being denied the PNU nomination; "My people told me go to any party. Any other dog party, as long as you are on the box, we will elect you, and sure enough they were true to their word. Because I looked for a party, went to Sisi Kwa Sisi. All I wanted was a ticket" (Author's interview, Ngugi).

4.6 The road to 2012

In the 2012 election, the presidential field is more open than ever, especially with the absence of incumbent president Kibaki. Most interviewees clearly communicates that they see no impossible partners. As declared by DP Chairman Wilfred Machage: "When you are thinking of coalition, you don't begin choosing, centre, right, left what have you [..] You see in Africa, political parties are essentially created for getting power. And you have no business being in politics or in a political party in Africa unless you want power. That's all. Basically that's what it is. And you can get power sometimes from the armpit of the devil. If that political party commands a big population, you will turn to bend here and there to accommodate that political party, so that you have the weight in terms of population, mass following, the votes because democracy is just votes." (Authors interview, Machage).

It seems unlikely that ODM Chairman, Raila Odinga, will not use his strong vehicle to run as president, but his party is about to be severely injured after a quarrel with William Ruto and his Kalenjin fraction of the party. When commenting on the inevitable split of the party and its 2012 prospects, ODM minister, Simeon Lesrima conveys; "Well that will be a blow of a sort, but you never know what may happen. Another party may join the coalition with ethnic groups that have large numbers, like the Kikuyus for example. I cannot rule out the possibility of Kikuyus coming together with the Luos" (Author's interview, Lesrima)

On the other side, the most discussed potential coalition is the controversially labeled KKK (Kikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin) alliance. According to Kenyan newspapers there have been intense talks between Kenyatta, Ruto, and Musyoka to build such a coalition (*Daily Nation* 2011-01-24) and as suggested by Ruto-loyalist and current ODM MP, Charles Keter "Of course they know with the KKK, it will be deal sealed". However, such a coalition should be oversized and it is might be tempting for the leader how do not get a sufficiently good PEC deal to defect and join Odinga. Interestingly, since it has leaked out that the alliance's front-runner would be Kenyatta supported by Ruto as running mate, rumours are giving that Musyoka might

move out of the coalition (*Nairobi Star* 2011-05-11) In an interview with Charles Keter, MP for ODM-K, Musyoka is not prepared to take a subordinate role in a coming coalition; Don't be surprised come '012 you find an alliance between ODM-K and ODM itself. That can happen. It depends on who will be picked to run for presidency. If PNU does not support the vice president, then definitely ODM-K will be willing to form an alliance with anybody, even if it is Raila, because it will be seen as a betrayal by PNU" (Authors interview, Kilonzo).

In an effort to make electoral pacts binding, the new Political Parties act also demands that all pre-electoral deals must be written down and filed with the registrar of political parties. Broken deals will, according to the new act, be cases for a newly established political parties' tribunal. The uniform push for this provision clearly shows how important credible commitments are for parties to engage in coalition building in non-programmatic party systems.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to develop a theory on coalition building in ethnic party systems and apply it to the notable case of Kenya. As the analysis of Kenyan voting behavior illustrated, the low degree of strategic voting defection made it possible for political parties to pursue a strategy of non-coordination in the early Kenyan elections. Since the KANU party was still to strong to be beaten, political leaders instead choose to position themselves as ethnic leaders and create beneficial starting positions for post-electoral agreements and future PEC deals.

When KANU was weekend as a consequence of Moi's retirement in the 2002 election, the senior DP party could offer a credible commitment to power sharing to the other parties of the opposition. NARC was, however, not a policy driven alliance but an opportunistic strategy to maximize the coalition partners office gaining potential. The NARC coalition was, however, short lived once it entered into government. As it became apparent that the NARC coalition was not a minimum winning coalition, strong junior partners of the coalition had no incentives to stay in the coalition onto the next election. Similarly, the senior DP, had no incentive to keep these likely rebellions in central positions within the government.

In the absence of a dominant party after 2002, Kenyan coalition building has become a fluid phenomenon. Without a real policy continuum parties are less constrained in their coalition behavior. As a consequence, parties have shifted their alliances in order to maximize their weight within a given coalition.

The idea that coalition building and electoral institutions function differently in ethnic than in programmatic party systems has important consequences for some of the central theories of institutions and ethnic conflict. For instance Horowitz (1991), argues that electoral systems in ethnically divided societies should encourage intra ethnic coalition building. The theory and results here, however, suggests that disproportional voting systems does not have the same effect on voting behavior in ethnic as in programmatic systems and that we can not expect institutions to have the same moderating and aggregating effect in these societies as in more classic programmatic party systems. Moreover, these results suggest that we should be cautious in prescribing to much importance to coalition building as a decisive factor for democratization (e.g. Howard and Roessler 2006). Instead, oppositional cohesion is a sign of incumbent weakness rather than the cause of turnovers.

More research is needed on this issue, especially using a larger sample of cases. However, this paper and other similar research suggest that some of the old assumptions about the effect of institutions and the behavior of parties are not directly transferable to this class of new democracies.

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