

**THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED POLITICAL PARTIES STRATEGIES ON
NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI CITY
COUNTY**

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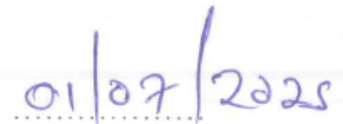
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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented to any other Institution

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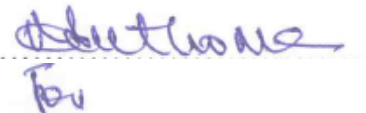
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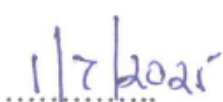
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this proposal to my 2 sons Lee Momanyi Makori and Lance Onsare makori who have supported me throughout my academic journey. I would also like to dedicate it to my academic advisors and mentors, who have inspired me with their passion for research and helped me navigate the challenges of graduate school. Your guidance, encouragement, and expertise have been instrumental in shaping me into the researcher I am today.

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ABSTRACT

The pursuit of national integration in Kenya remains a vital yet elusive goal. While political parties serve as crucial agents of democratic representation, their specific impact on fostering national unity requires empirical investigation. The main purpose of this study was to assess the influence of political parties on the process of national integration in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This study assessed the influence of selected political parties on national integration in Nairobi County, guided by four specific objectives: to evaluate the effectiveness of campaign strategies in promoting national integration, assess the impact of media platforms on fostering unity, determine how leadership structures contribute to integration efforts, and measure the extent of the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties' (ORPP) effectiveness in enhancing compliance with integration mandates. Employing Integration Theory as a theoretical framework, the study utilised a descriptive research design with a mixed-methods approach. Using Yamane's formula with a 6% margin of error, 278 registered members from three strategically selected political parties—United Democratic Alliance (UDA), Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and Jubilee Party (JP)—were sampled through stratified random sampling across Nairobi's 17 constituencies. Data collection combined questionnaires for party members with interviews of 11 key political leaders, including the Registrar of Political Parties and party officials. The study revealed that political parties have a significant influence on national integration, although this influence is often negative. Key findings showed that political parties' campaign strategies prioritized ethnic mobilization over national unity (65.4% of respondents agreeing), media engagement by parties contributed to ethnic polarization rather than cohesion (61.7% agreement), and internal leadership structures failed to support integration efforts, with 62% agreeing that internal conflicts hindered unity promotion. Additionally, the study revealed that 58.4% of respondents disagreed that parties adequately represent all ethnic groups, while 59.2% felt that election campaigns failed to focus on unifying issues. Furthermore, 56.3% of participants expressed scepticism about parties' overall effectiveness in promoting national unity, and 54% disagreed that party policy agendas consider the interests of all Kenyan communities. The research also found that 53.5% of respondents doubted that party manifestos meaningfully address national integration issues. Political parties in Kenya significantly hinder national integration through ethnic-focused campaign strategies, polarizing media engagement, and non-inclusive leadership structures. While some youth programs show promise, widespread public skepticism reflects parties' failure to promote unity. Strengthened regulatory enforcement and genuine commitment to inclusive governance are essential for meaningful integration. Based on these findings, the study recommends that political parties develop truly inclusive manifestos that transcend ethnic boundaries, establish mandatory requirements for leadership positions, and implement comprehensive conflict resolution mechanisms to address internal divisions. The study further recommends that parties invest in responsible media engagement strategies that promote inter-ethnic dialogue, create cross-community youth leadership programs, and collaborate with civil society organizations to build trust and credibility. Additionally, the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) should strengthen regulatory enforcement to ensure compliance with national integration mandates, ensure transparency in policy implementation and establish measurable indicators for assessing their progress. Meanwhile, parties should prioritise transparency in policy implementation and establish measurable indicators to assess their contribution to national unity.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Campaigns:** Refer to organized efforts by political candidates, parties, or interest groups to influence public opinion and secure votes during an election period.
- Internal Structures:** Refer to organizational framework within political parties or groups that dictates how decisions are made, roles are assigned, and activities are coordinated.
- Leadership Dynamics:** This refers to the interactions and relationships among leaders within a political party or organisation, including their influence, decision-making styles, and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Manifestos:** These are formal written statements issued by political parties or candidates outlining their goals, policies, and the actions they propose to take if elected.
- National Integration:** It is the process of creating a sense of unity and integration among diverse groups within a nation, fostering a collective national identity.
- National Unity:** This represents the percentage of the population expressing pride in their national identity and the prevalence of cross-regional cooperation initiatives.
- Party Politics:** It refers to the percentage of seats won by each party in elections and the frequency of partisan conflicts reported in the media.

- Policy Agendas:** Refer to prioritized lists of issues or problems that political parties, candidates, or governments commit to addressing through legislative or executive action.
- Political Parties:** Organized groups of people with similar political aims and opinions, that seek to influence public policy by getting their candidates elected to public office.
- Social Media Engagement:** This refers to the interaction between political entities (candidates, parties, organisations) and the public on social media platforms, aimed at building support and disseminating messages.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPC:	Communist Party of China
EAC:	East African Community
ECSC:	European Coal and Steel Community
EU:	European Union
ICP:	Iraqi Communist Party
JP:	Jubilee Party
MSD:	Theory Media Systems Dependency
NACOSTI:	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
ORPP:	
NASA :	National Super Alliance
PLP:	Parliamentary Labour Party
UK:	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's background. It outlines the problem statement, research objectives, questions, justification and significance, scope, limitations, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and assessment of related literature. The chapter lays the groundwork for understanding how selected political parties impact national integration in Kenya.

1.2 Background of the Study

Political parties, as organised groups seeking political power through electoral processes, have their origins in 18th-century Britain, with the Whigs and Tories emerging as the first modern political parties around the 1760s (Stokes, 2003). The concept spread globally during the 19th and 20th centuries as democratic governance expanded. In Kenya, political parties emerged during the colonial period, with the Kenya African Union (KAU) formed in 1944 as one of the first indigenous political organizations, later evolving into the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in 1960, which became the dominant party at independence in 1963 (Elischer, 2012). Political parties are unique organisational entities that distinguish themselves from other civic organisations through their primary objective of gaining and exercising political power, their role in candidate selection and electoral competition, their function as intermediaries between citizens and the government, and their responsibility for policy formulation and implementation at the national level (Janda, 2005).

Political parties in Kenya function through key pillars that shape their operations and public engagement. These pillars include campaign machinery, media engagement strategies, leadership structures, and policy formulation mechanisms (Cheeseman et al., 2019). Campaign

machinery encompasses resource mobilization, messaging, and voter outreach efforts that political parties deploy during elections (Nyadera et al., 2020). Media engagement strategies involve parties utilising traditional and social media platforms to disseminate their messages and shape public opinion (Nyaura, 2018). Leadership structures determine how decisions are made within parties, reflecting the level of inclusion, representation, and democratic practice (Njuguna, 2022). Policy formulation mechanisms include manifestos and policy documents that outline parties' visions for national governance and development (Mzalendo Trust, 2020). National integration in Kenya rests on several foundational pillars critical to fostering unity within diversity. Ethnic cohesion refers to the establishment of harmonious relationships among Kenya's diverse ethnic communities (Elfverson, 2019), whereas a shared national identity emphasises the creation of a collective Kenyan consciousness that transcends ethnic, religious, and regional divisions (Laurence et al., 2019). Inclusive representation ensures all demographic groups feel represented in governance structures and decision-making processes (Kanyinga, 2016). Policy implementation towards social cohesion involves the enactment and enforcement of policies that promote equal opportunity, equitable resource distribution, and protection of minority rights (Lynch et al., 2019). These pillars of national integration are particularly significant in Nairobi County, where the convergence of Kenya's diverse population creates both challenges and opportunities for building a cohesive national fabric (Olsson, 2021).

Politicians worldwide seek the popular vote to achieve a sense of political legitimacy. According to Haxhiu and Alidemaj (2021), elections serve as the primary means of operating in contemporary representative democracies. Kulachai et al. (2023) aver that politicians use political party to win over voters. However, election results are said to be influenced by a variety of factors in the modern world, including party affiliation, social identity, the national economy's status, religion, geography, ethnicity, and the qualities of the candidates. For

instance, party identity, geography, and religion all have a significant impact on the outcome of elections in Britain. Anglicans have long supported the Conservative Party, as evidenced by the 2017 British general election, in which they registered 58% of the vote against 28% for the Labour Party (Tilley, 2015).

Since parties are the main means of political socialization in developing democracies (Szell, 2018), it has long been acknowledged that parties play a crucial role in engaging individuals. This crucial function of political parties has also been highlighted in recent literature on nascent democracies (Kirmanj, 2021; Nwogu, 2015). According to Deth (2016) political parties can aid in national integration by enticing people to get involved in politics.

The primary aim of national integration is to reduce polarization and divisions among diverse ethnic groups within a society. Recent scholars, such as Kanyinga (2016) and Lynch et al. (2019), emphasise that national integration involves building cohesive political communities while managing ethnic, cultural, and regional differences. According to Cheeseman et al. (2019), successful national integration necessitates deliberate policy measures to ensure that ethnic and cultural identities complement, rather than undermine, national unity.

Elfverson (2019) argues that national integration represents citizens' identification with and commitment to the broader national community, while still maintaining their distinct cultural identities. This perspective is reinforced by Laurence et al. (2019), who define national integration as a political process aimed at fostering shared national identity while accommodating the needs and aspirations of different ethnic and cultural groups in diverse societies. As Kanyinga (2016) notes, this conceptualisation emphasises the vital role of state institutions in fostering and sustaining national integration through inclusive policies and governance structures.

Political parties in the European Union (EU) have been at the forefront of the integration effort. According to a study conducted by Hellstrom (2018), instances of inter-party collaboration and coalition-building bridged ideological and ethnic divides, bringing together 297 political parties from 24 different nations. Even previously, the integration of multiple, sometimes quite heterogeneous, groups of citizens into the political process used to be one of the primary functions ascribed to political parties. In Europe, the parties that have historically achieved this feat were the 'mass parties of integration' that emerged in the early and mid-20th century, in tandem with the advance of mass democracy, as well as the 'people's parties' of the post-war era.

In Britain, Froio, Bevan, and Jennings (2016) argue that within the sphere of governance, parties must navigate a delicate equilibrium between fulfilling their electoral pledges (termed "political agendas") and the imperative to promptly adjust their policy focuses in response to shifts in public concerns, unforeseen events, and the emergence of novel problems (characterized as the "anticipatory agenda"). Thus, political parties serve to advance national objectives, bring people together, streamline government agendas, and maintain peace and order in order to realise their party manifestos (Berat, 2017).

In Pakistan, Fatema, Yanbin and Fugui (2022) notes that social media platforms have not only provided politicians with a direct means of communication with citizens but have also stimulated active political engagement by encouraging citizens to provide feedback through comments on various social networking sites. In this context, the role of political slogans takes on added importance, as they significantly contribute to shaping the image of a specific political entity in the eyes of its citizens. This interconnectedness and participatory nature of social media and political slogans can potentially enhance national integration by fostering a sense of shared identity and collective belonging among diverse communities (Jungherr, Schoen, & Jürgens, 2016).

In Asia and Africa, Obah-Akpowoghaha and Ojakorotu (2021) argue that most countries bought into the concept of democracy and political parties as a viable instrument for political integration and development. However, most of these theories of democracy adopted in many African and Asian states were in conformity with European and Western thought, and contrary to the natural beliefs of African and Asian societies. For instance, democratic governance forcefully takes communal land and hands it over to a political sovereign by force thereby leading to conflicts. However, the author recommends that the path for national integration should be defined within multidimensional theories that would incorporate African and Asian beliefs, traditional culture, and be sensitive to her environmental configurations.

In Nigeria, Orjinta (2021) states that efforts have been made to integrate the country through constitutional means and the adoption of various policies, but these have not really produced the desired effect on the unity of the country. Many national policies and decisions have been ethnically influenced and interpreted thereby hindering successful integration of the country. As a result, political parties have a serious role to play in forging national integration, but over the years, they have not lived up to expectations.

In a study of the East African Community (EAC) member states—Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan—Oduor (2018) examined the role of political parties in regional integration. The findings revealed that political parties across these East African nations have done too little to integrate the region politically, economically and socially. While it had been envisaged that the East African Federation would be established by 2016, this goal remains unrealized. The study found that political parties in these EAC member states face numerous challenges that must be addressed first to achieve full regional integration. Of particular concern were the varying levels of democratic development and institutionalisation of political parties across the member states, which complicated efforts toward regional integration.

In Kenya, political parties have a serious role to play in forging national integration and fostering nation building, but they have not lived up to expectations (Odhiambo, 2021). Over the years, Kenya's political landscape has been characterised by the proliferation of political parties, each with its own distinct ideologies, manifestos, and agendas (Nyadera, Agwanda, & Maulani, 2020). These parties serve as the primary vehicles through which political competition, governance, and policy-making are conducted. However, amidst the competitive nature of politics, questions arise regarding the extent to which these parties contribute to or hinder the process of national integration (Nyadera, Agwanda & Maulani, 2020).

According to Sjögren (2014), the pluralistic political environment in Kenya is characterised by the proliferation of political parties that often draw their support from specific ethnic groups and create personality cults. This ethno-political alignment is partly rooted in historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and regional affiliations. As a result, political parties became vehicles for advancing the interests of particular ethnic communities, leading to a deepening of ethnic divisions within the political discourse. Accordingly, the rivalry between the various political groups has led to national disintegration as witnessed during post-election violence (Lawrence et al., 2022).

Manifestos, campaigns, and policy agendas are central components of political parties' strategies to garner support and mobilize voters. These tools not only outline the parties' vision for governance but also reflect their stance on issues of national importance (Däubler, 2012). Understanding how these elements influence national integration is imperative for assessing the overall impact of party politics on Kenya's unity.

Moreover, the emergence of social media as a powerful communication platform has revolutionized political engagement in Kenya. Political parties can now leverage social media to disseminate information, mobilise their supporters, and shape public opinion (Ate et al.,

2023). However, the influence of social media engagement on national integration in Kenya remains underexplored territory, warranting comprehensive investigation. Furthermore, the internal structures and leadership dynamics within political parties significantly influence their strategies and efforts in promoting national integration (Omodia, 2018). Decisions made by party leaders, party ideologies, and the inclusivity of internal party processes all contribute to shaping the party's approach towards fostering unity among Kenya's diverse populace.

Amidst these considerations, understanding citizen perceptions regarding the effectiveness of political parties in fostering national integration is paramount. Public opinion serves as a barometer for evaluating the impact of political parties' initiatives and policies on the ground, shedding light on the gap between rhetoric and reality (Kirwa, 2018). In light of these factors, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between party politics and national integration in Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Political parties, as fundamental actors in Kenya's democratic system, are constitutionally expected to foster unity by promoting inclusive ideologies, building bridges across ethnic communities, and advancing policy agendas that reflect national interests (IEA Kenya, 2021). However, the practical role of political parties in enhancing social cohesion remains contested. Although parties have been instrumental in mobilizing political participation, their influence on national integration has often been viewed through the lens of ethnic clientelism, elite capture, and exclusionary campaign strategies (Oloo, 2021). This paradox raises critical questions about whether political parties function as instruments of unity or as reinforcers of division within Kenya's socio-political landscape.

Although political discourse and regulatory frameworks emphasise the role of parties in promoting national cohesion, a significant empirical gap remains regarding how party

structures and strategies influence the pillars of national integration—particularly in complex, multi-ethnic urban settings like Nairobi County. Existing studies (Lawrence et al., 2022; Odhiambo, 2021) recognize that political parties may either support or undermine integration depending on how they conduct leadership selection, media outreach, and public engagement. However, these studies lack contextual specificity and do not disaggregate party-level practices or examine institutional dynamics within Nairobi’s unique political environment. Recent reports from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC, 2021) and the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP, 2022) have highlighted the need for strengthened political party accountability in promoting inclusive governance and mitigating ethnic polarisation. Despite these calls, few studies have assessed whether political parties’ internal structures, campaign strategies, and media platforms align with these integration imperatives. This study addresses that gap by examining how selected political parties in Nairobi County contribute to or hinder the core pillars of national integration thus informing the broader discourse on institutional reform and democratic consolidation in Kenya.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of political parties on national integration in Kenya. In the context of Kenya's socio-political landscape, where ethnic diversity and historical grievances have at times strained national unity, this study aims to unravel how political parties, as key participants in the political process, either contribute to or hinder the realization of a cohesive and inclusive nation.

1.5 Main Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the influence of political parties on the process of national integration in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives.

- i. To evaluate the effectiveness of campaign strategies by selected political parties in promoting National Integration in Nairobi City County.
- ii. To assess the impact of media platforms used by selected political parties on fostering National Integration in Nairobi City County.
- iii. To determine how leadership structures within selected political parties contribute to National Integration in Nairobi City County.
- iv. To measure the extent of Office of Registrar of Political Parties effectiveness in enhancing political parties' compliance with National Integration in Nairobi City County.

1.6 Research Questions

- i. How effective are the campaign strategies of selected political parties in promoting National Integration in Nairobi City County?
- ii. What is the impact of media platforms used by selected political parties on fostering National Integration in Nairobi City County?
- iii. How do leadership structures within selected political parties contribute to National Integration in Nairobi City County?
- iv. To what extent has the Office of Registrar of Political Parties been effective in enhancing political parties' compliance with National Integration in Nairobi City County?

1.7 Significance of the study

The implications of this work are significant for both academics and policymakers. Kenyan policymakers, including civil society groups, the president, parliamentarians, and the private

sector, will benefit from exposure to new perspectives and expertise, particularly in developing a potent blend of socioeconomic and political solutions and strategies that will bring the country closer to its long-term goal of national cohesion. The research has the potential to yield important insights that can be used to raise living conditions in Kenya. Those that can be achieved by having a clear picture of the function political parties should play in a democracy. The results could provide light on the roles played by various political actors in the process of national integration.

Furthermore, it will assist modern Kenyan political parties in assessing the relative merits of their predecessors and adjusting their approach to integration accordingly. To better achieve the vision, goals, and objectives of the anticipated integration in Kenya, it is anticipated that the research sheds light on the various aspects and concerns that political parties have not sufficiently addressed. This study was helpful to external funders interested in learning more about the roles they may play in assisting political parties in advancing their integration agendas.

This work is very important from an academic perspective. Academic institutions, researchers, and students interested in learning about the intricacies of political dynamics and nation-building processes in Kenya and elsewhere can find great value in the study's conclusions. The study create a scholarly community committed to advancing inclusive governance and social cohesion by disseminating information through academic journal publications, conferences, and instructional materials.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study focused on examining the influence of political parties on national integration, delimited to Nairobi City County. The research was conducted between March and August 2024, specifically targeting registered members of three major political parties: the United

Democratic Alliance (UDA), the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and the Jubilee Party (JP), comprising a population of 2,415,310 voters from the 2022 IEBC voter register. Access to registered party members was facilitated through collaboration with party headquarters and constituency offices, which provided membership lists and contact information in compliance with data protection guidelines. The sample included 278 registered party members and key political leaders, including the Registrar of Political Parties in Kenya, Secretaries General of four major political parties, a representative from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, and five selected Members of Parliament representing the top three political parties in Nairobi County.

1.10 Assumption of the Study

Assumptions of the study may include:

1. Political parties have a big influence on Kenya's national integration initiatives.
2. Political parties' social media activity has a noticeable impact on national integration.
3. Political parties' internal structures and leadership dynamics influence their strategies and initiatives to further national integration.
4. Opinions held by the public on the parties' contributions to unity fairly represent the parties' efforts and results in this area.

1.11 Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework of a study serves as a conceptual lens through which researchers analyze and interpret their findings. It provides a structured approach to understanding the complex phenomena under investigation by drawing on established theories, concepts, and models from relevant literature. In the context of examining the role of political parties in shaping discourse around national integration in diverse societies, a robust theoretical

framework helps elucidate the mechanisms and processes through which political actors influence societal integration and identity formation. This study is pegged on the integration theory.

1.11.1 Integration Theory

Integration Theory, originally developed by functionalist scholars David Mitrany in the 1940s and later advanced by neofunctionalists Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg in the 1950s and 1960s, provides a foundational lens for understanding how diverse communities can be united into cohesive political entities through gradual and functional collaboration. Rooted in the post-World War II European integration project, the theory has been shaped by key figures such as Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, who emphasized economic cooperation as a springboard for political unity (Troitiño, 2017; Domingo, 2020). The theory rests on several core principles: that integration is incremental, structurally and functionally grounded, driven by both elites and citizen support, and reliant on shared values and identities (Mattli, 2005; Berry, 2011). These principles are directly relevant in the Kenyan context, where national integration has been challenged by ethnic divisions and political fragmentation. Applying this theory to party politics, campaign strategies that emphasize national over ethnic agendas, and policy messaging that speaks to common societal goals, serve as functional tools for integration, echoing Monnet's vision of building unity through practical cooperation.

The theory's emphasis on structural and institutional cohesion can be applied to the internal organisation of political parties. Leadership structures, decision-making frameworks, and mechanisms of representation within parties mirror the institutional arrangements necessary for integration as envisioned in the theory. Where political parties institutionalize inclusive leadership and fair decision-making, they reflect the structural integration required to foster national unity. This is particularly relevant in where multi-ethnic political constituencies

demand inclusive governance models. When party leadership structures reflect ethnic diversity and transparency, they create a functional spillover into broader societal integration, much like the progression from economic to political unity described by Haas and Spinelli (Viola, 2000). Furthermore, Integration Theory aligns with the role of media—both traditional and social—as a mechanism of mass political socialization. Political parties that use media platforms to promote messages of unity, shared identity, and inclusive participation are engaging in functional integration by shaping public narratives and perceptions (Domingo, 2020). Media platforms serve as a conduit for reinforcing national values and reducing internal boundaries among diverse groups, resonating with the theory's stress on common identities and the psychological reorientation of allegiance (Mattli, 2005). In a multi-ethnic urban setting like Nairobi, political messaging disseminated through inclusive and responsible media use can foster a sense of collective belonging, reinforcing the pillars of national integration such as shared identity and cross-ethnic understanding.

However, Integration Theory faces several critiques, including its assumption that economic cooperation automatically leads to political integration (spillover effect), its limited applicability in contexts with deep ethnic divisions where functional cooperation may not overcome identity-based conflicts, and its elitist bias that prioritizes institutional arrangements over grassroots social dynamics (Mattli, 2005). Critics also argue that the theory underestimates the role of external factors and crises that can reverse integration processes, and its European-centric origins may not fully capture the complexities of integration in diverse African contexts where colonial legacies and ethnic politics present unique challenges (Haas, 1975; Rosamond, 2000). Despite these limitations, the theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how political institutions can promote unity through structured cooperation and shared governance mechanisms.

Ultimately, Integration Theory presents national integration as a multi-layered process involving coordinated efforts across structural, functional, and identity dimensions. In the Kenyan political landscape, parties that embody integrationist principles—through inclusive campaign strategies, diverse leadership, and nationalistic media messaging—act as agents of cohesion. Conversely, parties that emphasize ethnic loyalty and exclusion undermine the integration process. As Aybet (2000) and Stein & Valters (2012) suggest, national integration requires a system in which communities, though different, operate based on shared principles and benefit from mutual interdependence. This study therefore uses Integration Theory to critically assess how the organizational and operational pillars of political parties influence the attainment of ethnic cohesion, shared identity, and inclusive representation—core indicators of national integration in Nairobi County.

1.11.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, advanced by Tajfel and Turner (1979), offers a robust framework for understanding how individuals' group affiliations influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. The theory posits that people derive a sense of identity and self-worth from their membership in social groups, including ethnic, religious, or political affiliations. This group-based identification becomes a powerful driver of behavior, especially in multi-ethnic societies like Kenya, where political parties often align with ethnic communities. In such contexts, political campaigns and mobilization strategies by parties may activate in-group sentiments and exacerbate out-group biases, thereby either promoting or hindering national integration depending on how they are structured. Thus, campaign strategies that emphasize ethnic loyalty risk deepening social divides, while those that frame identity around national values can foster unity and inclusive belonging.

A core tenet of Social Identity Theory is that individuals naturally categorise others into social groups, leading to in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination (Stets & Burke, 2014). This process is particularly evident in party politics, where political identification becomes a proxy for ethnic or regional allegiance. In Kenya, political parties often serve not only as vehicles for political participation but also as markers of social belonging. Consequently, leadership structures within parties that fail to reflect ethnic diversity may be perceived as exclusive, reinforcing group-based marginalization. Conversely, inclusive leadership—where party decision-making bodies are representative of the country's ethnic diversity—can help weaken the rigid boundaries between groups and build a shared sense of national identity, directly contributing to the pillars of national integration.

While Social Identity Theory provides valuable insights into group dynamics and political behavior, it faces several critiques that limit its explanatory power. Critics argue that the theory oversimplifies complex identity formations by assuming clear-cut group boundaries, when in reality individuals often hold multiple, overlapping identities that may not always lead to predictable in-group/out-group behaviors (Huddy, 2001). The theory is also criticised for its deterministic approach, which suggests that group membership automatically leads to bias and conflict, thereby underestimating individuals' capacity for rational decision-making beyond group loyalties (Stets & Burke, 2014). Additionally, the theory's focus on cognitive processes may inadequately address structural factors, such as economic inequality, historical grievances, and institutional arrangements, that shape intergroup relations in contexts like Kenya, where ethnic political mobilisation is often driven by resource competition rather than mere psychological identification (Green et al., 2002). Despite these limitations, Social Identity Theory remains a useful framework for understanding how political parties can either exploit or bridge ethnic divisions through their messaging and organisational strategies.

The theory also sees the dynamic and context-dependent nature of social identity, suggesting that individuals can shift their group affiliations in response to prevailing political, social, or cultural conditions (Aalberg et al., 2011). Political parties, therefore, play a pivotal role in shaping these shifting identities through the media platforms they use and the narratives they promote. When media engagement focuses on collective aspirations, national development, and unity across ethnic lines, it activates cross-cutting identities that transcend tribal affiliations. However, if media platforms are used to disseminate divisive rhetoric or ethnic appeals, they amplify identity politics and threaten national cohesion. This aligns with the concern raised in Kenyan political discourse, where the misuse of social media by parties has both integrated and polarized voters, depending on the messaging strategies employed.

Social Identity Theory further explains that strong identification with a political party can result in sustained partisan loyalty and collective political action, particularly when individuals perceive their group's status as threatened (Huddy, 2001). This dynamic can be harnessed positively if political parties build inclusive platforms that align ethnic interests with broader national goals, thereby promoting integration. On the other hand, it can lead to polarization if parties cultivate ethnic victimhood or exclusion narratives. In the context of this study, Social Identity Theory offers a useful lens for examining how the pillars of political parties—such as campaign strategies, leadership representation, and media messaging—influence the broader integration goals of fostering ethnic cohesion, shared identity, and inclusive governance in Nairobi County.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

This study is conceptualized through the lens of Integration Theory and Social Identity Theory. Integration Theory provides a framework for understanding how political institutions foster cohesion through systematic cooperation (Troitiño, 2017), while Social Identity Theory

explains how group memberships shape intergroup relations and collective identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Together, these theories shed light on how political parties shape the key pillars of national integration. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.1.

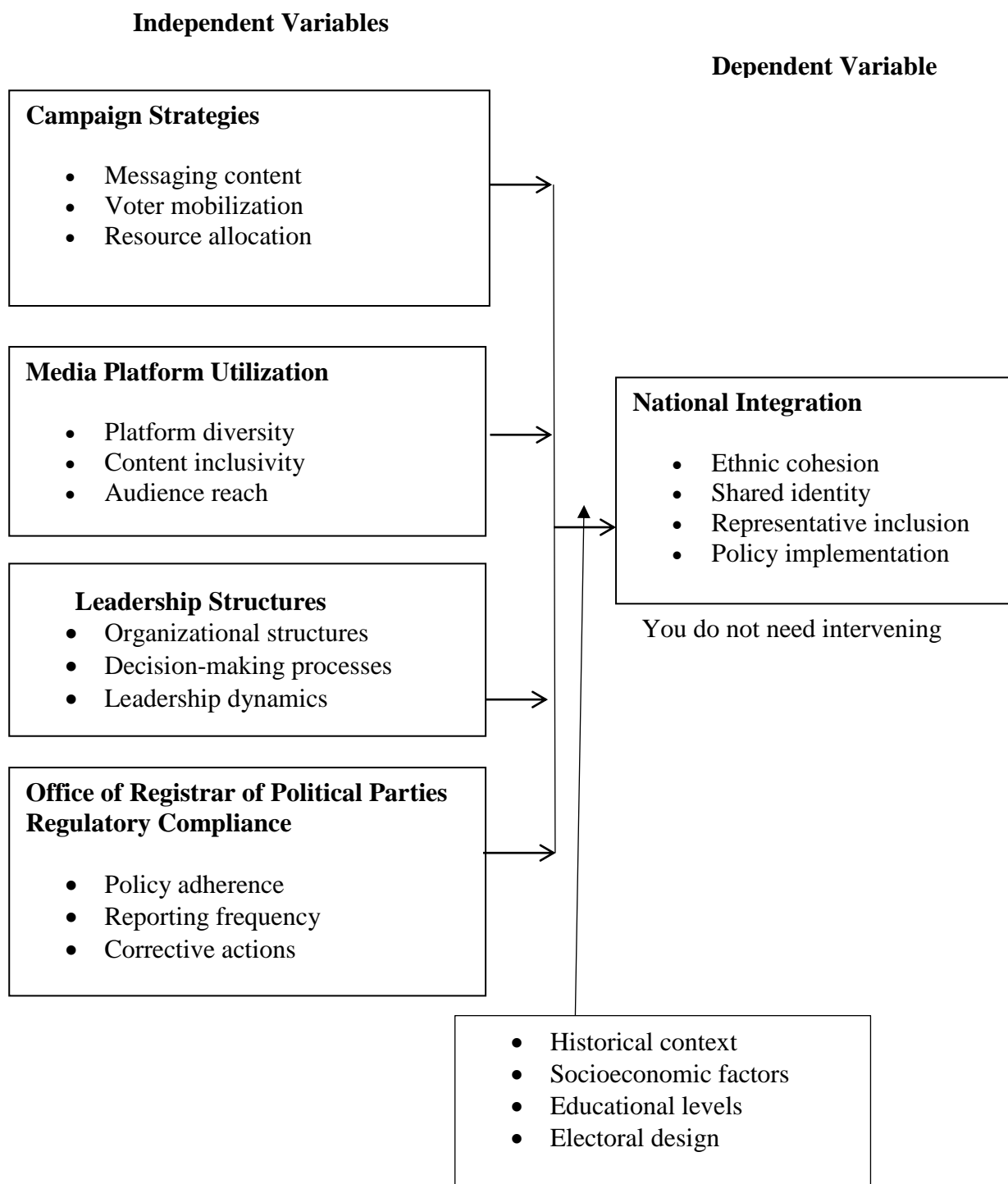


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model illustrates the interaction between four independent variables—campaign strategies, media platform utilization, leadership structures, and regulatory compliance (ORPP effectiveness)—and the dependent variable of national integration. Campaign strategies directly influence national integration through manifesto content, policy messaging, and electoral appeals that either promote unity or reinforce ethnic divisions. Media platform utilization affects integration by shaping public discourse, facilitating inter-ethnic dialogue, or amplifying polarizing narratives. Leadership structures impact integration through inclusive representation, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution mechanisms within parties. Regulatory compliance, measured through ORPP's effectiveness, moderates these relationships by ensuring parties adhere to integration-promoting guidelines.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section presents a review of related studies that help project the literature gaps that this study was addressing.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Influence of Campaigns Strategies on National Integration

Borgesius, Möller, Kruikemeier, Fathaigh, Irion, Dobber, Bodo, and de Vreese (2018) conducted research within the European Union (EU) context, emphasising the role of inter-party collaboration and coalition-building. This study demonstrated that collaborative efforts among political parties can bridge ideological and ethnic divides across EU nations, suggesting that policy agendas emphasizing cooperation can contribute positively to national integration. However, the study primarily focuses on the positive aspects of collaboration and does not delve into potential challenges or drawbacks, leaving room for future research to provide a more balanced perspective.

Flemmen and Savage (2017) in Britain examined the challenges political parties face in balancing electoral pledges with adapting to shifting public concerns. While not directly exploring national integration, the study indirectly highlighted the significance of effective policy agendas in maintaining social and political stability, vital components of national integration. It does not, however, explicitly address how policy objectives contribute to a common sense of identity or cohesiveness within a country, thus leaving room for further research.

Gopal, Verma, and Chandel (2019) conducted a survey on social media involvement by Pakistani political parties, highlighting the importance of social media platforms in facilitating interactions between politicians and the public. Moreover, it also emphasized the need for political slogans in molding the image of political institutions. While the study did not explicitly examine national integration, it implied that social media participation might foster a sense of common identity across heterogeneous populations. It did not, however, investigate any hazards or obstacles related with the power of social media in molding political discourse, leaving room for future research.

In a broader context, Hino et al (2019) argued that adopting Western-style democratic governance and political parties may not align with local beliefs and cultures in African and Asian countries. They advocated for policy agendas that respect and incorporate traditional beliefs and cultures to enhance national integration. While emphasizing the importance of aligning policy agendas with local values, the study does not offer specific strategies for achieving this alignment, leaving an opportunity for future research to explore practical approaches.

Osioma (2016) in Nigeria highlighted the challenges of ethnically influenced policies and decisions hindering successful integration. While not directly focused on policy agendas, the study indirectly highlighted the need for policy agendas that prioritise national unity over ethnic considerations. Future research could delve into specific policy measures and strategies to actively promote national unity and inclusivity.

In East Africa, Odhiambo (2021) examined the challenges faced by political parties in fostering national integration in Kenya, finding that while parties play a crucial role in forging national integration and nation-building, they have not lived up to expectations. The study revealed that

policy implementation gaps and ethnic-based political mobilization continue to undermine integration efforts.

Similarly, Chebii and Kiprono (2020) investigated the role of political parties in national integration and development from a Kenyan perspective. Their findings demonstrated that the policy agendas of political parties often prioritise short-term electoral gains over long-term national integration goals, highlighting the need for reformulated policy frameworks that emphasise inclusive development and national cohesion.

Mzalendo Trust (2020) investigated the promises made in the manifestos of the winning political parties in Kenya's 2017 general election and their subsequent fulfilment. The study assessed whether and to what extent the political parties and coalitions fulfilled the commitments made in their manifestos to advance the three main constitutional ideals of decentralisation, inclusivity, and good governance. The results demonstrate that political parties and coalitions generally disregard the manifestos immediately following elections and do not specifically incorporate them into their legislative agendas. Consequently, the government's priority sectors shaped the ruling Jubilee Party (JP) legislative agenda rather than a critical examination of the manifesto's objectives. With government laws given priority under Kenya's presidential system and their subsequent implementation and fragmentation, the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) found itself in a more disadvantageous position when implementing its 2017 agenda. The study concludes that the weak ideological stance of political parties and coalitions allows them to reject their manifestos.

Campaign strategies employed by political parties serve as critical determinants of national integration outcomes, particularly in ethnically diverse societies where political mobilization often intersects with identity politics. According to Cheeseman, Kanyinga, Lynch, Ruteere, and Willis (2019), political campaigns in multi-ethnic contexts can either serve as platforms for

building cross-ethnic coalitions or as mechanisms that deepen societal divisions through exclusionary messaging and ethnic appeals. The nature of campaign discourse, policy promises, and voter mobilization techniques directly influences public perceptions of inclusion, representation, and national belonging. In Kenya's political landscape, campaign strategies have historically oscillated between inclusive nation-building rhetoric and particularistic ethnic mobilization, with significant implications for social cohesion and democratic consolidation.

Research by Nyadera, Agwanda, and Maulani (2020) demonstrates that political parties often employ dual messaging strategies during campaigns, presenting inclusive national visions to broader audiences while simultaneously engaging in targeted ethnic appeals to secure core constituency support. This strategic ambiguity creates tensions between stated commitments to national unity and practical political imperatives driven by electoral competition. Campaign manifestos, while ostensibly designed to articulate comprehensive policy visions, frequently contain contradictory elements that promise both national integration and group-specific benefits, reflecting the complex challenge of balancing unity and diversity in campaign messaging. The effectiveness of these strategies in promoting genuine integration depends largely on the consistency between campaign promises and post-election policy implementation, as well as the extent to which parties institutionalize inclusive practices beyond electoral cycles.

Furthermore, the language, symbols, and narratives employed in political campaigns play a crucial role in shaping collective identities and inter-group relations. Sjögren (2014) argues that campaign messaging that emphasizes shared national values, cross-cutting identities, and common developmental challenges tends to promote integration, while rhetoric that highlights group grievances, historical injustices, or zero-sum competition for resources can exacerbate ethnic tensions. The choice of campaign venues, coalition partnerships, and public endorsements also sends powerful signals about parties' commitment to inclusivity. Modern

campaign strategies increasingly utilize sophisticated data analytics and targeted messaging through digital platforms, enabling parties to tailor appeals to specific demographic groups while maintaining overall narrative coherence. However, this technological capacity also creates opportunities for divisive micro-targeting that can undermine national unity by reinforcing echo chambers and polarizing communities.

The institutional context within which campaigns operate significantly influences their impact on national integration. Electoral systems, campaign finance regulations, and media ownership patterns all shape the incentives and constraints facing political parties as they develop campaign strategies. In Kenya's devolved system, campaigns must navigate multiple levels of governance and diverse regional interests, creating both opportunities for inclusive coalition-building and risks of fragmented, locality-specific appeals that may undermine national coherence. The effectiveness of campaign strategies in promoting integration ultimately depends on their ability to transcend narrow ethnic calculations and articulate compelling visions of shared prosperity, democratic governance, and social justice that resonate across Kenya's diverse communities while addressing legitimate group concerns within a framework of national unity.

2.2.2 Influence of Media Engagement by the Political Parties on National Integration

According to Voinea (2020), research conducted in the United Kingdom, social media tools have played a vital role in shaping political discourse, fostering greater transparency, and enhancing public engagement. The author noted that political parties, such as the Labour Party, have u elements of their communities, utilising social media platforms to engage with diverse groups. These political parties have facilitated national integration by encouraging open communication and information exchange across linguistic, cultural, and regional boundaries. According to the findings, while difficulties such as disinformation and division persist, social

media has proven to be a helpful instrument in improving national integration in several European states.

A study by McCoy, Rahman, and Somer (2018) on the use of social media by political players in Lebanon frequently polarises society along sectarian and ideological lines. As a result, tools like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have made it possible for political parties to organise their supporters and distribute their ideas, worsening already existing tensions. With their varied ethno-religious landscapes, Middle East countries have seen the amplification of identity politics through social media, leading to increasing societal disintegration. As a result, the impact of social media involvement on national integration remains a highly debated topic in this area, with both negative and positive implications.

Adams (2023) conducted research to examine how social media can support Nigerian national integration. To comprehend the mechanisms through which media influence people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in relation to national integration, the research combined qualitative analysis of pertinent literature collected through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and content analysis. This was done through the lens of the Media Systems Dependency (MSD) Theory. The results of this study offer insight into the various ways national integration can be fostered through the use of media. To encourage inclusive discourse, cross-cultural barriers, and advance a common sense of identity and belonging, the study advises individuals, communities, and policymakers to make the most of social media platforms. The study concludes that social media can be a very effective instrument for promoting national integration. However, it's crucial to remember that social media can also be used to foment strife and division. Consequently, it's critical to use social media in a responsible and beneficial manner.

Hussein (2016) demonstrated how political parties in Ethiopia have effectively utilized online platforms such as WhatsApp and Twitter to engage constituents and transcend geographical barriers. Nevertheless, obstacles related to digital literacy, access to technology, and government regulation continue to exist in the country, impeding social media's full potential for promoting national unity. At the same time, the study focused on the revolutionary potential of social media in Ethiopia, where it continues to redefine political landscapes and contribute to the discourse on national identity and integration.

Recent study has focused on the impact of political parties' social media involvement on national integration in Kenya. In accordance with extensive research conducted during Kenya's 2017 general elections by Nyadera, Maulani, and Agwanda (2020), it was found that political parties actively used online social media platforms to broadcast campaign messaging, interact with voters, and organise their adherents and followers. According to the outcomes, higher social media participation was connected with improved political knowledge and engagement among Kenyan residents. In the same vein, such vigorous political involvement has the potential to promote national integration by cultivating a politically knowledgeable and engaged populace.

Nevertheless, Nyaura (2018) gave a nuanced perception on the role played by social media in Kenya's political scene in a qualitative research. He asserted that while social media tools provided political parties with a direct avenue to promote their policy goals in addition to engaging in public discourses, the survey also underlined a considerable danger. It was noted that social media may amplify controversial narratives and ethnic divisions, thereby hindering efforts at national integration.

Mitullah (2017) conducted a content analysis of the use of social media during Kenya's general elections in 2013, focusing on how political parties extensively utilised web platforms such as

Twitter and Facebook to interact with voters and disseminate campaign messaging. Whereas their investigation did not explicitly address national integration, it did highlight the significant role of online social media in changing perceptions on politics and engaging individuals in the electoral process.

Materu (2015) investigated the effects of social networking sites on political mobilisation and civic participation in Kenya, noting that political parties effectively utilised online social media to reach a larger audience, encourage voter registration, and advocate for political involvement. Their outcomes highlighted that enhanced political understanding and involvement among the Kenyan populace could help promote national integration by cultivating politically active individuals.

The objective of Naituli and Nasimiyu's (2018) survey-based analysis was to examine Kenyan youth's interaction with digital platforms during the 2017 general election period. Their investigation indicated that political parties' active presence on social media influenced young voters' views, perceptions and political choices. By incorporating the younger generation into the political process, this may potentially lead to a more politically aware and active youth population, aligned with national integration aspirations.

At the same time, Mutungi (2019) inquiry on the usage of social media tools in political campaigns in Kenya revealed a significant issue. While political parties efficiently employed social media channels to interact with followers and motivate supporters, there was a possibility that ethnic myths and divisions could be amplified. The results of this study emphasised the need for political parties to engage in responsible and inclusive social media involvement in order to mitigate spiralling tensions that might hinder national integration endeavours.

Media engagement by political parties has emerged as a powerful force shaping national integration outcomes, particularly in the digital age where information flows rapidly across

diverse platforms and reaches previously isolated communities. According to Nyaura (2018), the strategic use of media channels—ranging from traditional radio and television to contemporary social media platforms—enables political parties to construct and disseminate narratives that either promote national cohesion or exacerbate ethnic divisions depending on the content, tone, and targeting of their messaging. The democratization of media access through mobile technology and internet penetration has fundamentally transformed how political parties engage with citizens, creating unprecedented opportunities for direct communication while simultaneously presenting new challenges related to misinformation, echo chambers, and the amplification of divisive rhetoric. In Kenya's context, where linguistic diversity and uneven literacy rates create complex communication landscapes, media engagement strategies must navigate multiple languages, cultural sensitivities, and technological access barriers to effectively promote inclusive national dialogue.

Research by Mitullah (2017) reveals that political parties' media engagement often reflects broader patterns of ethnic mobilization, with parties utilizing vernacular radio stations, community-based social media groups, and culturally specific symbols to appeal to particular ethnic constituencies while potentially alienating others. This fragmented approach to media engagement can reinforce existing social divisions by creating parallel information ecosystems where different communities receive distinct political messages, limiting cross-ethnic dialogue and shared understanding of national issues. However, when political parties adopt inclusive media strategies that feature diverse voices, promote inter-ethnic collaboration, and emphasize shared challenges and opportunities, media platforms can serve as powerful tools for building social bridges and fostering collective national identity. The effectiveness of such strategies depends largely on the consistency of messaging across different platforms and the authenticity of parties' commitment to inclusive governance beyond electoral periods.

The rise of social media has particularly transformed political communication dynamics, enabling rapid information sharing while also creating new vulnerabilities to manipulation and polarization. Ate, Chiadika, Ekene, and Nwadiwe (2023) demonstrate that social media platforms allow political parties to engage in real-time communication with citizens, respond quickly to emerging issues, and build dynamic online communities around shared political values. However, the same technologies that enable inclusive engagement can also facilitate the spread of hate speech, ethnic stereotypes, and divisive conspiracy theories that undermine national unity. The algorithmic nature of social media platforms, which tend to amplify emotionally charged content, can inadvertently promote polarizing political messages over more nuanced, unity-focused communications.

Furthermore, the credibility and reach of different media channels significantly influence their impact on national integration. State-owned media, commercial television networks, community radio stations, and digital platforms each carry different levels of public trust and serve distinct demographic segments, requiring political parties to develop sophisticated multi-platform strategies that maintain message consistency while adapting to diverse audience preferences. The regulatory environment governing media content, ownership structures, and access rights also shapes how political parties engage with different platforms and influences the overall quality of democratic discourse. Ultimately, the contribution of media engagement to national integration depends on political parties' willingness to prioritize long-term social cohesion over short-term electoral gains, requiring sustained commitment to responsible communication practices that strengthen rather than fragment Kenya's democratic fabric.

2.2.3 Influence of Leadership Structures In Promoting National Integration

Herrnson (2020) investigated the role that political party leadership dynamics and internal organizational structures play in promoting national integration. Coalitions across ideological and demographic differences have become necessary as a result of multiparty system and diverse population. Stronger national unity has resulted from the important role political party leadership dynamics and internal organizational structures play in bringing disparate ideologies together and creating common goals. Internal party structures have served as a link between opposing factions, allowing for some semblance of national integration despite persistent concerns about polarisation.

Galiñanes (2023) conducted a research titled "Constructing the Political Framework for Direct Citizen Engagement in a European Union Federation." It is evident from the results that democracy is lacking in the European Union. In response to both internal and external challenges, policy-driven treaties often result in inadequate coordination, speed, and efficiency. Europe needs three fundamental elements to establish a more democratic, efficient, and coordinated policy: 1) the European States' common powers are transferred to the Federation; 2) the legislative, executive, and legal branches of government are strictly segregated; and 3) citizens are directly involved. To achieve robust democratic institutions, increased integration, and productive cooperation among European States, several structural and functional reforms are suggested, all of which are based on these values.

Heppell (2023) conducted research to determine how closely the three patterns described by Uchiyama (2022) in his article on Japanese prime ministers apply to UK prime ministers. The results demonstrate that, in terms of organization, the Conservative and Labour parties have always differed significantly. The Conservatives may be perceived as a top-down, elitist oligarchy, as they have given their party leader considerable authority and discretion. The

leaders of conservative parties enjoy greater discretion when it comes to crafting policies, such as the manifesto, and building their political (electoral) strategy. The Labour Party, on the other hand, is regarded as a bottom-up, pluralist democracy. Power is divided between the parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), which is responsible for implementing policy, and its federal structures, which collectively formulate policy.

Gopal, Verma, and Chandel (2019) conducted research in India, a heterogeneous country with a federal parliamentary system. They demonstrated how coalition-building, an internal party mechanism, has far-reaching consequences for national integration. Similarly, they found that coalition administrations at both the national and state levels have played a crucial role in reconciling the country's diverse linguistic, regional, and cultural identities. The coalitions, which include parties from various communities and regions, have facilitated policy compromises and provided representation for underprivileged groups, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion throughout India's vast population.

Kirmanj (2021) conducted research on the impact of internal structures within political parties on Iraqi integration. The study focused on the contributions to political unification made by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Arab Baath Socialist Party (Baath), both of which had a comparatively national reach. Secondary and sometimes primary sources served as the main sources of the data. The results demonstrate that the main political parties in Iraq throughout the 1950s and 1960s were comparatively broad-based and contributed to the country's process of national integration. Unfortunately, the primary representative groups that could have promoted national integration were lost as a result of the ICP's decline and the Baath Party's sectarianization. The study concludes that any prospect of a unified Iraq or an all-embracing Iraqi identity is wishful thinking until the day comes when middle-class Iraqis are able to band together with ideologically and/or reform-leaning political parties.

Njuguna (2022) examined the impact of party structures and alliances on Kenyan national integration. A mixed-methods strategy was used in the research. The results demonstrate how specific traits of political parties affect intraparty democracy. The majority of parties tend to be primarily supported by their ethnic base; their founders or major funders frequently control them; their activities center around powerful individuals; the majority of them lack registered membership and have not been eager to attract new members; their ideologies are weak and frequently unknown, with little bearing on the formulation of public policy; they struggle to organize events; even party elections are frequently rigged and manipulated by rival parties; and they lack strong links to the general public.

Madsen and Pilditch (2018) conducted a content analysis of political speeches and media coverage during Kenya's 2017 general election. The study found that parties in coalitions frequently emphasised unity, diversity, and collaboration for the common good of the nation. Nevertheless, it did not explore how these rhetorical strategies translated into concrete policy initiatives or actions that contribute to national integration, presenting a gap in connecting discourse to practical outcomes.

Olsson (2021) conducted research to examine nation-building strategies in Kenya and Nigeria, two comparable countries with distinct party systems. It primarily examined internal structures and leadership dynamics in political parties in search of markers of nation-building and assimilation. When considered collectively, the findings demonstrate that, in both situations, national integration and unity take precedence over cultural acknowledgment. Given the similarity between the policies of the two countries, there appears to be little correlation between the architecture of the party system and the type of nation-building programs.

Leadership structures within political parties constitute fundamental determinants of national integration outcomes, as they establish the organizational frameworks through which inclusive

governance principles are either institutionalized or undermined. According to Njuguna (2022), the internal architecture of political parties—including decision-making hierarchies, representation mechanisms, conflict resolution procedures, and succession planning—directly influences how parties approach inter-ethnic relations, policy formulation, and national unity initiatives. When leadership structures reflect ethnic diversity, promote merit-based advancement, and institutionalize transparent decision-making processes, they serve as microcosms of the inclusive governance that parties ostensibly champion for the broader society. Conversely, leadership structures characterized by ethnic exclusivity, personality cults, or centralized control around individual strongmen tend to reproduce patterns of marginalization and division that undermine national integration efforts both within parties and in the broader political system.

The composition and dynamics of party leadership significantly shape public perceptions of political parties' commitment to national unity. Research by Herrnson (2020) indicates that citizens are more likely to trust political parties whose leadership visibly reflects the country's demographic diversity and whose internal processes demonstrate genuine power-sharing across ethnic lines. In Kenya's context, where historical patterns of political exclusion have created deep-seated grievances among various communities, the symbolic and substantive representation of different ethnic groups in party leadership positions carries particular significance for national integration. However, tokenistic inclusion that places ethnic representatives in ceremonial positions while concentrating real decision-making power in the hands of dominant groups can actually exacerbate tensions by creating the appearance of inclusion without delivering meaningful influence. Effective leadership structures must therefore ensure not only demographic representation but also substantive participation in policy formulation, resource allocation, and strategic planning processes.

Internal conflict management mechanisms within party leadership structures play a crucial role in modeling constructive approaches to inter-group relations for the broader society. When party leaders successfully resolve internal disputes through dialogue, compromise, and institutional procedures rather than ethnic mobilization or authoritarian control, they demonstrate the viability of democratic governance principles that can be scaled up to national level. Conversely, leadership structures that consistently resolve conflicts through ethnic appeals, personal attacks, or the marginalization of dissenting voices send negative signals about the party's capacity to manage national diversity constructively. The presence of formal conflict resolution mechanisms, regular leadership rotation policies, and transparent accountability procedures within party structures can serve as important indicators of a party's genuine commitment to democratic governance and inclusive leadership practices.

Furthermore, the mentorship and development opportunities provided by party leadership structures significantly influence the emergence of future political leaders who may either perpetuate or transform existing patterns of ethnic politics. Leadership structures that invest in cross-ethnic mentorship programs, provide equal advancement opportunities for members from different backgrounds, and prioritize ideological commitment over ethnic affiliation in leadership selection tend to produce more integrative political cultures over time. The institutionalization of these practices through formal party constitutions, training programs, and monitoring mechanisms ensures their sustainability beyond individual leaders' tenures. Ultimately, leadership structures that successfully promote national integration must balance legitimate demands for ethnic representation with the imperative to develop shared national identities and policy priorities that transcend particularistic group interests while addressing underlying inequalities and grievances.

2.2.4 Office of Registrar of Political Parties effectiveness in enhancing political parties' compliance with National Integration.

The effectiveness of regulatory oversight in shaping the behaviour of political parties has emerged as a critical determinant of national integration, particularly in ethnically diverse societies. Söderström et al. (2020) emphasised, in their study of voter behaviour and national unity in France, that while identity politics continue to influence electoral preferences, there is a discernible shift toward supporting parties that prioritise national cohesion. This shift reflects not only evolving public attitudes but also the impact of institutional frameworks that demand accountability from political parties. In contexts where regulatory mechanisms ensure compliance with integration policies, political parties are compelled to develop manifestos, leadership structures, and campaign narratives that promote ethnic inclusion and social harmony.

Ma and Cao (2023) examined the Chinese political environment and found that citizens consistently supported government policies that emphasise economic development and social stability as means of fostering national unity. Despite China's limited political pluralism, the state's regulatory role in aligning political communication with integration objectives remains significant. This observation underscores the relevance of state oversight in shaping political discourse, even in more restrictive systems. In a democratic context such as Kenya, institutions like the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) are tasked with ensuring that political parties comply with constitutional and legal provisions related to inclusivity, ethnic diversity, and national outlook. The enforcement of such provisions strengthens the capacity of political parties to serve as instruments of integration rather than division.

Mulabale (2017) reported that voter preferences are increasingly aligned with parties that emphasize unity and national inclusion, rather than those appealing to ethnic loyalties. This

trend is more likely to be sustained when reinforced by institutional mechanisms that require political parties to reflect the nation's diversity in their membership and leadership. Regulatory frameworks that monitor and enforce party compliance with these requirements are essential in translating voter preferences into sustainable political practice. In the Kenyan setting, the ORPP plays a similar role by mandating that parties maintain a national character, avoid ethnic exclusivity, and adhere to democratic governance standards in their internal operations.

Elfverson and Sjögren (2019) demonstrated that Kenyan voters who value inclusivity tend to support parties and candidates who prioritize unity-oriented policies. Ranta (2017) arrived at similar findings, noting that political formations promoting national cohesion tend to gain greater electoral support. However, the long-term impact of such preferences on integration depends on how well regulatory institutions monitor and enforce party compliance with integration-oriented mandates. Horowitz and Klaus (2018), in their analysis of attitudes toward coalition politics in Kenya, noted that while voters may view coalitions positively, their contribution to national integration is contingent upon adherence to legal and regulatory frameworks that guide party formation, coalition-building, and public communication. This highlights the necessity for robust enforcement by oversight institutions such as the ORPP, which are expected to ensure that political parties actively support and uphold the principles of national integration through their structures, conduct, and messaging.

2.3 Summary of Review of Literature and Research Gaps

Despite previously conducted research on ethnic integration in Kenya has been extensive, little is known about the link between Kenya's political party culture and integration among diverse social categories in the country, particularly ethnic tribes. Furthermore, whereas polarising political culture and practices have long been a problem in Africa, particularly in Kenya, relatively few studies have been conducted on how political parties can be utilised to address

the ethnic and social divisions that appear to be associated with ethnicized political contests. In view of these disparities, the purpose of this study was to assess the influence of party politics on the process of national integration in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that was used in this study. It presents the research design, study site, target population, sample, and sampling techniques, as well as data collection instruments, pretesting, and data management procedures. It also presents data analysis and presentation. Essentially, the chapter is critical in showing the methods and tools that was used in this study.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design is a type of research methodology that aims to describe the characteristics of a population, phenomenon, or event (Östlund et al. 2011). It focuses on answering questions about what, where, when, and how aspects of a topic. This type of research design is particularly useful when the researcher aims to understand the current state of affairs or to explore relationships between variables without manipulating them. Additionally, the design may combine both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a more thorough investigation of the research subject. Quantitative techniques was employed to measure the connection between Kenyan party politics and national integration. To gather quantitative data on variables including party manifestos, social media involvement, citizen opinions, and national integration outcomes, surveys or structured questionnaires was sent to a sizable sample of participants. In addition, qualitative approaches offers more profound understanding of the underlying processes and situational elements affecting the connection between national integration and party politics.

3.3 Research Site

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya, a strategic location that serves as the nation's political epicentre, chosen for its unique characteristics that make it an ideal context for investigating national integration through the dynamics of political parties. As the capital city and administrative hub, Nairobi represents a microcosm of Kenya's ethnic and social diversity, hosting the headquarters of major political parties, the national assembly, and critical institutions such as the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP). With a projected population of 4,828,205 (KNBS, 2024), the county offers a concentrated environment where multiple ethnic groups, political ideologies, and social backgrounds intersect, providing rich ground for examining how political parties navigate and potentially influence national integration. The centralized nature of political institutions in Nairobi facilitated comprehensive data collection, enabling in-depth interviews with political leaders and stakeholders, and allowing for a nuanced analysis of the complex interactions between party politics and social cohesion in an urban setting that reflects broader national political dynamics.

3.4 Target Population

The population for this study was carefully selected to provide a comprehensive representation of political party dynamics in Nairobi County, focusing on a targeted approach that goes beyond the initial 2,415,310 voters in the IEBC register. The three major political parties - United Democratic Alliance (UDA), Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and Jubilee Party (JP) – with a total of 843,017 registered members – were strategically chosen based on multiple criteria that define their "major" status. These criteria include: their significant representation in the 2022 national and county elections (UDA won the presidency and majority parliamentary seats, ODM secured substantial opposition representation, and JP maintained considerable legislative presence), their substantial membership base exceeding 200,000 registered members

each in Nairobi County, their documented historical influence spanning multiple electoral cycles, their financial capacity demonstrated through campaign expenditure and operational infrastructure, and their demonstrated diversity in ethnic and regional representation across Nairobi's 17 constituencies. This methodical selection process ensured a nuanced exploration of national integration dynamics, capturing the interplay between political parties and social cohesion in Kenya's capital city. This target population is as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Target Group in Nairobi County	Number	Source of Information
Registered members of UDA	327,451	IEBC Voter Register, 2022
Registered members of ODM	283,672	IEBC Voter Register, 2022
Registered members of Jubilee Party	231,894	IEBC Voter Register, 2022
Registrar of Political Parties in Kenya	1	Official Government Directory
National Cohesion and Integration Commission Representative	1	Official Government Directory
Political Party Secretary Generals	4	Party Official Records
Selected Members of Parliament	5	Purposive Selection Criteria
Total	843,028	

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was methodically determined using Yamane's formula, applied to a total population of 843,017 registered party members from three major political parties in Nairobi County: United Democratic Alliance (UDA) with 327,451 members, Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) with 283,672 members, and Jubilee Party with 231,894 members. By utilising a 6% margin of error, the formula yielded a statistically representative sample size of 278 participants, who were strategically selected through stratified random sampling across Nairobi County's 17 constituencies. This approach ensured a comprehensive

and proportional representation of party membership, capturing diverse political perspectives while maintaining scientific rigor in the sampling methodology.

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where: n = sample size N = 843,017 e = 0.06 (6% margin of error)

Calculation: $n = 843,017 / (1 + 843,017(0.06)^2)$ $n = 843,017 / (1 + 3,034.86)$ $n = 843,017 / 3,035.86$ $n = 277.69$ (rounded to 278)

The sampling stratification for this study was meticulously designed to capture Nairobi County's political landscape, systematically allocating samples across 17 constituencies based on registered party membership. By incorporating criteria of party membership diversity, constituency representation, and demographic variation, the research employed a mixed-method approach that combined stratified random sampling for party members with a census method for political leaders.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Target Group	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Method	Stratification Criteria
Registered Party Members	843,017	278	Stratified Random Sampling	Party membership, constituency, demographic representation
Registrar of Political Parties	1	1	Census	Institutional role
National Cohesion and Integration Commission	1	1	Census	Institutional perspective
Political Party Secretary Generals	4	4	Census	Party leadership representation
Selected Members of Parliament	5	5	Census	Political leadership diversity
Total	843,028	289	Mixed Methods	Comprehensive representation

Data collection methods were carefully tailored to each participant group. Registered party members were surveyed using structured questionnaires designed to systematically explore their perceptions of political party influences. Political leaders participated in in-depth interviews guided by a flexible yet structured interview protocol.

Party membership verification was conducted through multiple mechanisms: respondents were required to present valid party membership cards issued by the respective party headquarters, provide their party membership registration numbers, which were cross-verified with party records, and demonstrate knowledge of party-specific information, such as recent party activities and leadership structures. Party member lists were obtained through formal requests to party headquarters and constituency offices, supplemented by snowball sampling where verified members referred other registered members within their networks.

Gender inclusion was systematically ensured through stratified sampling, which allocated equal representation quotas for male and female respondents within each party stratum. Targeted outreach was conducted to women's wings of political parties to promote female participation. Additionally, flexible data collection schedules were implemented, including evening and weekend sessions, to accommodate diverse work patterns. The final sample achieved near gender parity with 51.9% male and 48.1% female participants, reflecting Kenya's demographic composition and ensuring balanced perspectives on political party influences.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Research Instruments

For data collection, this study utilized several research instruments tailored to gather information from different groups within the Kenyan population.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are structured instruments consisting of a series of questions designed to gather quantitative data from registered party members. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions to facilitate standardized responses and statistical analysis. They were distributed via online platforms and in-person surveys, depending on accessibility and convenience for respondents. This dual distribution method ensures a wide reach and accommodates varying levels of digital access among the voter population. The questionnaires were used to collect information on various aspects such as perceptions of party manifestos, social media engagement, leadership dynamics, and the effectiveness of political parties in fostering national integration.

3.6.1.2 Interviews Guides

Interview guides are qualitative research instruments that involve direct, face-to-face interaction with respondents, including the registrar of political parties in Kenya, the speaker of the national assembly, the speaker of the Nairobi county assembly, political party secretary generals, and MPs. The interview guides was semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring topics in depth while maintaining a consistent framework across interviews. They was conducted in person or via video calls, depending on the availability and preference of the respondents, ensuring maximum participation from these key political figures. This method complements the quantitative data collected from registered party members, providing a comprehensive picture of the research topic.

1.6.1.3 Content Analysis

Content analysis involves systematically examining documents and communication material to identify patterns, themes, and meanings. The content analysis followed a coding scheme developed to identify relevant themes and patterns. This method was crucial for triangulating

data from questionnaires and interviews, providing a comprehensive view of the influence of political parties on national integration. This method was used to analyze the content of political party manifestos, social media posts, and public discourse related to national integration.

3.6.2 Pre- Testing of Research Instruments.

Pre-testing of the research instruments was done using a 10% (27 respondents) in Westlands Constituency, Nairobi County. This location was selected for its demographic diversity while ensuring no overlap with the main study sample. The sample size was based on the research by Kothari (2017), which states that 10% to 30% of the study sample is adequate for pilot studies. The respondents were guided to accurately understand the research questions. The results of the pre-testing are presented in section 3.6.3 and 3.6.4, which cover instrument reliability and validity respectively..

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

Instrument reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the research instrument in measuring the intended variables or constructs over time and across different conditions (Edwin, 2019). In the context of this study, ensuring the reliability of the research instruments, such as questionnaires, is essential to obtain accurate and dependable data for analysis. Techniques such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess internal consistency reliability. High values of Cronbach's alpha (typically above 0.70) indicate good reliability. The coefficient of 0.7, as suggested by Cronbach (1951), was employed. The findings are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Campaign Strategies	9	0.827
Media Platform Utilization	9	0.815
Leadership Structures	9	0.771
Regulatory Compliance	9	0.803
National Integration	9	0.873

The results indicated that the statements under campaign strategies, media platform utilization, leadership structures, regulatory compliance and national integration had a Cronbach alpha of above 0.7 and thus the statement were considered reliable.

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

Pilot testing was conducted to assist in determining accuracy, clarity and suitability of the questionnaire. Content validity was examined to ensure the instrument answers all the research questions in line with research objectives. In addition, the expert validation by the supervisors and other university research experts was used for validation. In this regard, their opinion was used to improve the instruments.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

The gathered data was first be accurately and completely recorded into a structured format that is suitable for analysis. Then, to enhance the dataset's reliability, a comprehensive data cleaning procedure was implemented to address any errors, discrepancies, or missing data. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel to provide a brief summary of the most important aspects of the data, including distributions, variances, and central tendencies. The qualitative data was analyzed to identify

key themes and patterns. Themes was grouped into broader categories to draw meaningful conclusions. The qualitative findings were interpreted in the context of the study objectives, providing in-depth insights into the perspectives and experiences of the respondents. To aid in comprehension and distribution, the results was presented in a clear and thorough manner using tables, charts, graphs, and narrative summaries.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained a research clearance from Africa Nazarene University (ANU). The researcher also obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) before commencing the study. An explanation of the study was given, and the participants chose whether to participate in the study or not. All was administered in a private and confidential manner throughout the study. Respondents was assured of their anonymity (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). This means that they was assured that no identifying information was ascribed to their responses. It is hoped that this boosted their willingness to participate in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the analysis and findings of the research on the influence of selected political parties on national integration in Kenya. The chapter examined respondent characteristics and then delved into four key areas: the influence of political parties' campaign strategies on national integration, the impact of media engagement, how internal structures and leadership dynamics shaped integration efforts, and the effectiveness of the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) in enforcing policies that fostered national integration. This analysis combined quantitative data from voter surveys and qualitative insights from interviews with political leaders. The data was analysed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics for quantitative data, which was presented using figures, charts, and tables. Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis and presented according to the study objectives.

4.2 Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presented the demographic characteristics of the registered party members, providing context for the subsequent analysis and findings. The researcher examined several key attributes of the respondents, including the overall response rate to the study, age distribution, gender composition, highest level of education attained, and occupational status. These demographic factors were crucial in understanding the diversity of the sample and potential influences on the respondents' perspectives regarding political parties and national integration. The data was collected through questionnaires distributed to registered party members and interviews conducted with political leaders in Nairobi County. By analyzing

these characteristics, the study aimed to establish a comprehensive profile of the participants, enabling a more nuanced interpretation of their responses to the research questions.

4.2.1 Response Rate

The response rate is a crucial indicator of the study's success in data collection and the reliability of the findings. Table 4.1 presents the response rates for all categories of respondents in this study on the influence of selected political parties on national integration in Kenya.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Respondent Category	Sample Size	Responded	Response Rate
Registered party members	278	269	96.80%
Registrar of Political Parties in Kenya	1	1	100%
National Cohesion and Integration Commission	1	1	100%
Political Party Secretary Generals	4	4	100%
Selected Members of Parliament (MPs)	5	5	100%
Total	289	280	96.80%

The study achieved an exceptionally high overall response rate of 96.8%. Out of the 289 targeted participants, 280 responded to the study instruments. The registered party members, who formed the largest category of respondents, showed a strong participation rate of 96.8%, with 269 out of 278 sampled members completing the questionnaires. All other categories—including the Registrar of Political Parties, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission representative, Political Party Secretary Generals, and the selected Members of Parliament—recorded a 100% response rate.

This high response rate across all groups significantly enhances the credibility and comprehensiveness of the study's findings. According to Babbie (2007), a response rate of 70% and above is considered very good for survey research. Therefore, the 96.8% response rate achieved in this study is excellent and provides a robust basis for analyzing the influence of political parties on national integration in Nairobi County. The high participation rate can be attributed to the use of both online and in-person data collection methods for party members, as well as flexible interview scheduling for political leaders.

4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

Gender representation is an important aspect of any demographic study, particularly in research related to political participation and national integration. This study sought to capture a balanced perspective from both male and female voters in Nairobi County. The registered party members were asked to indicate their gender and the results are in Figure 4.1.

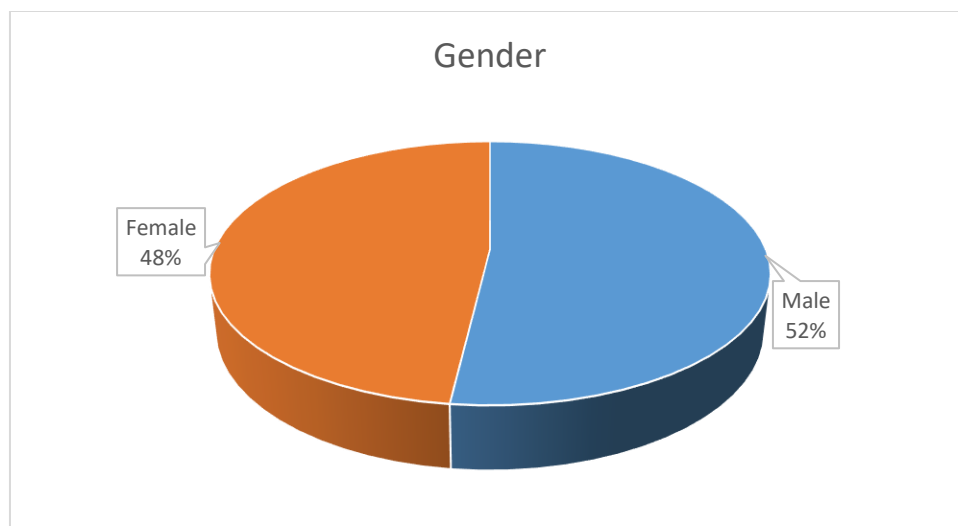


Figure 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

The results show a relatively balanced representation of both genders, with a slight majority of male respondents. Male participants accounted for 51.9% (201) of the sample, while female participants made up 48.1% (186) of the respondents. This near-equal distribution is reflective

of Kenya's overall population gender ratio and suggests that the study captured a balanced perspective from both male and female voters. The slight male majority aligns with common patterns in political engagement studies, where men often show marginally higher participation rates. However, the close balance between male and female respondents in this study ensures that the views and experiences of both genders are well-represented in the findings on political parties and national integration. This gender balance strengthens the study's ability to provide insights that are representative of the broader electorate in Nairobi County.

4.2.3 Age of the Respondents

Age is a crucial demographic factor that can influence political perceptions and engagement. This study aimed to understand the age distribution of registered party members, providing context for their views on political parties and national integration. The registered party members were asked to indicate their age bracket and the results are in Figure 4.2.

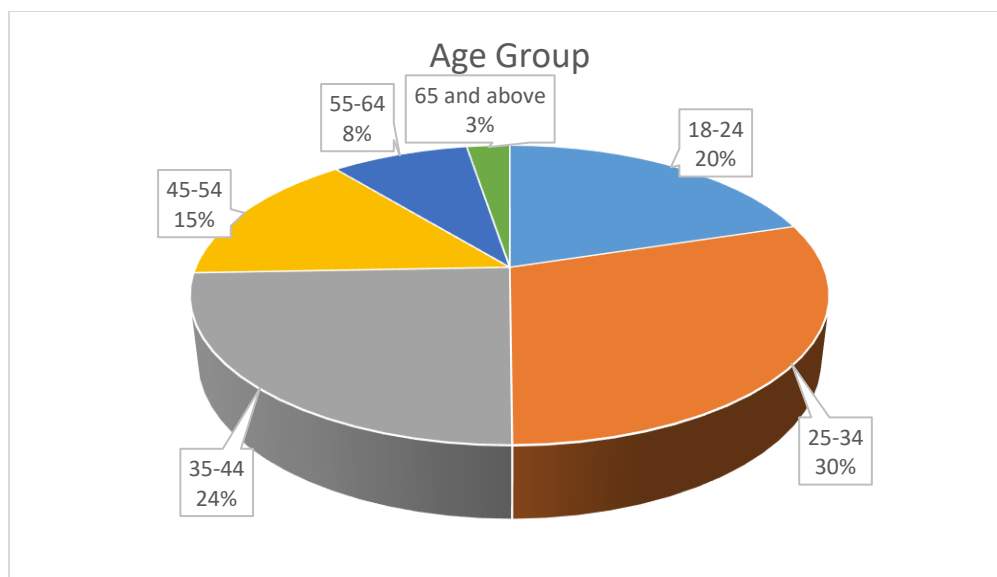


Figure 4.2: Age of the Respondents

The largest age group was 25-34 years, comprising 31.0% (120) of the registered party members, followed closely by the 35-44 age bracket at 27.1% (105). Together, these two groups accounted for more than half of the respondents, reflecting a predominantly young to

middle-aged sample. The 18-24 and 45-54 age brackets were relatively evenly represented at 16.8% (65) and 16.0% (62) respectively. Older age groups had lower representation, with 7.2% (28) in the 55-64 bracket and only 1.9% (7) aged 65 and above. This age distribution aligns with Kenya's demographic profile, which is characterized by a large youth and working-age population. The predominance of respondents under 45 years old (74.9%) suggests that the study captured the perspectives of a relatively young electorate, which is particularly relevant given the significant role of youth in shaping Kenya's political landscape and national integration efforts.

4.2.4 Highest Education Level Attained by Respondents

Educational attainment is a significant factor that can influence political awareness, participation, and perceptions of national integration. This study sought to understand the educational background of the registered party members to provide context for their views on political parties and their role in fostering national unity. Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education and the results are in Figure 4.3.

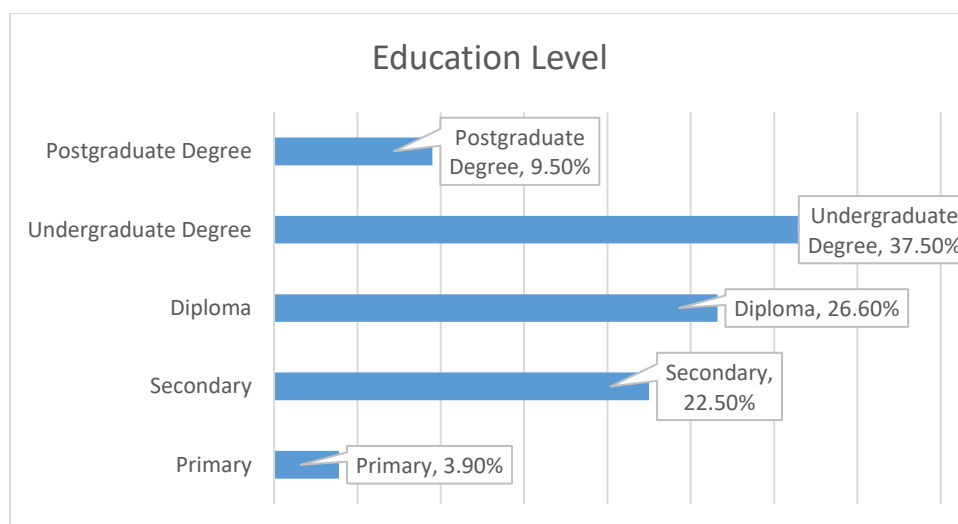


Figure 4.3: Highest Education Level Attained

The results show a relatively well-educated sample, with the majority of respondents having attained tertiary education. The largest group, comprising 40.1% (155) of the respondents, held undergraduate degrees. This was followed by diploma holders at 29.7% (115), representing a significant portion of the sample. Secondary education completers accounted for 18.6% (72) of the respondents, while 8.5% (33) had postgraduate degrees. Only a small percentage, 3.1% (12), reported primary education as their highest level of attainment. This distribution, with 78.3% of respondents having diploma-level education or higher, suggests a sample with a good level of formal education. Such an educational profile suggests that the majority of respondents likely possess the capacity to engage with complex political issues and may hold informed opinions on matters of national integration. The high proportion of tertiary-educated respondents is consistent with Nairobi's status as Kenya's capital and major urban center, where educational opportunities and requirements for skilled employment are generally higher than in other parts of the country.

4.2.5 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupational status is a significant demographic factor that can impact political views, access to information, and engagement with national issues. This study aimed to understand the occupational distribution of the respondents, providing additional context for their perspectives on political parties and national integration. Respondents were asked to indicate their current occupational status and the results are in Figure 4.4.

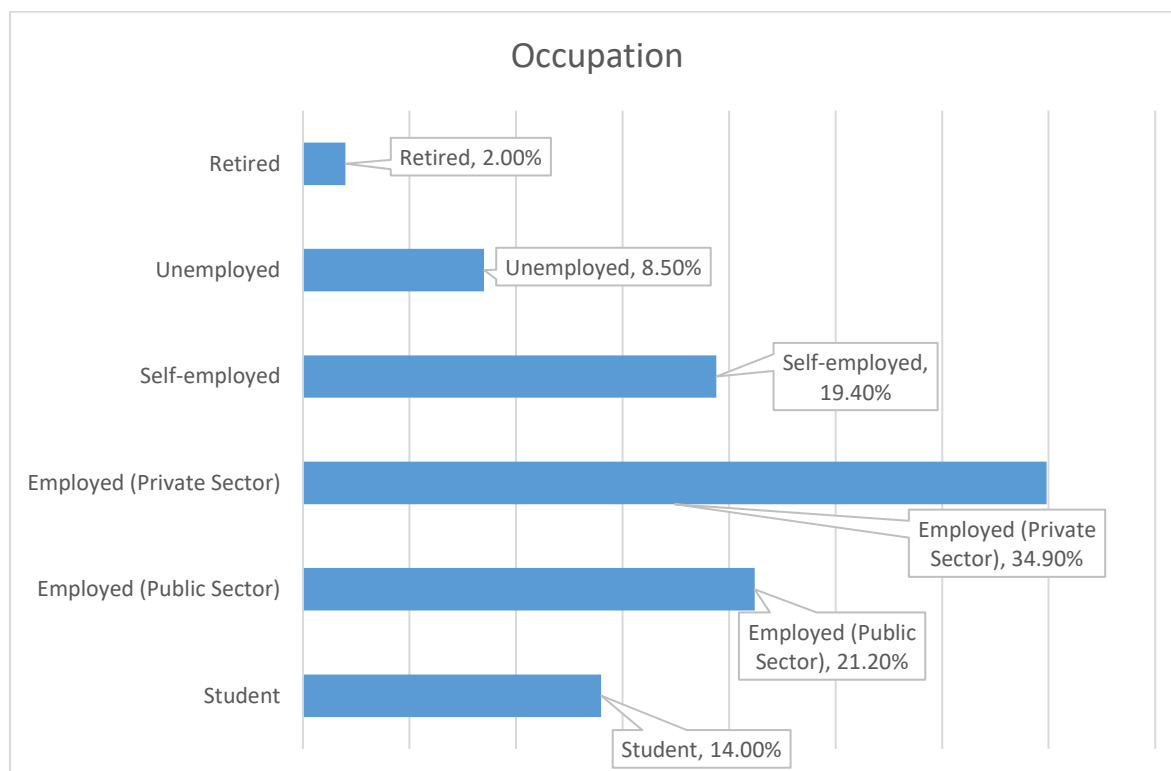


Figure 4.4: Occupation of the Respondents

Table 4.4 presents the occupational distribution of the 387 registered party members who participated in the study. The results show a diverse range of occupations, reflecting the varied economic landscape of Nairobi County. The largest group of respondents, 36.2% (140), were employed in the private sector, indicating a significant representation from the city's commercial workforce. This was followed by those employed in the public sector at 22.0% (85), representing a substantial portion of government and parastatal employees. Self-employed individuals formed the third-largest group, at 20.7% (80), reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit prevalent in Nairobi. Students accounted for 10.9% (42) of the respondents, representing the younger, potentially more politically active demographic. The unemployed made up 8.2% (32) of the sample, while retirees constituted the smallest group at 2.0% (8). This occupational distribution provides a comprehensive cross-section of Nairobi's working population, encompassing both formal and informal sectors. The high proportion of employed respondents (78.9% across private, public, and self-employed categories) suggests a

sample that is likely to be engaged with economic policies and their impact on national integration.

4.3 Presentation of Research Analysis by Objective

This study assessed the influence of selected political parties on national integration in Kenya through four key objectives: evaluating campaign strategies, assessing media platform impacts, determining leadership structures' contributions, and measuring the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties' (ORPP) effectiveness in enhancing political parties' compliance with national integration efforts. The research methodology employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative surveys with 278 registered party members and qualitative interviews with political leaders in Nairobi County. By systematically examining campaign strategies, media engagement, internal party dynamics, and regulatory compliance, the study sought to comprehensively analyze how political parties either contribute to or hinder the process of national integration. The findings were structured into four primary subsections, each corresponding to a specific research objective, and supported by descriptive statistical analysis and in-depth interview insights.

4.3.1 Influence of Political Parties Campaign Strategies on the Process of National Integration

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of political parties' campaign strategies on national integration in Kenya. The table summarizes responses to statements, each addressing a different aspect of campaign strategies and their impact on national integration. Respondents rated their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The mean scores and standard deviations provide insights into the overall sentiment and variability of responses.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for Political Parties Campaign Strategies

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
1. Political party manifestos in Kenya effectively address issues of national integration.	15.5%	32.3%	28.7%	18.6%	4.9%	2.65	1.10
2. Campaign strategies of political parties promote unity among different ethnic groups in Kenya.	18.6%	35.4%	26.1%	15.8%	4.1%	2.51	1.09
3. Policy agendas of major political parties consider the interests of all Kenyan communities.	20.4%	33.6%	25.8%	16.3%	3.9%	2.50	1.11
4. Political manifestos in Kenya often include specific measures to enhance national integration.	16.8%	31.5%	29.2%	18.3%	4.2%	2.62	1.09
5. Election campaigns in Kenya contribute to increased ethnic polarization.	4.7%	12.1%	20.4%	38.5%	24.3%	3.66	1.11
6. The policy agendas of political parties often lead to the marginalization of certain groups.	5.2%	13.4%	22.5%	37.7%	21.2%	3.56	1.12
7. Political campaigns in Kenya focus more on ethnic mobilization than on national unity.	3.9%	11.1%	19.6%	41.1%	24.3%	3.71	1.07
8. Political parties in Kenya are committed to implementing policies that foster national integration.	19.9%	34.6%	26.4%	15.2%	3.9%	2.49	1.09
9. The language used in political campaigns promotes harmony among different communities.	22.5%	35.9%	24.3%	13.4%	3.9%	2.40	1.09
Average						2.90	1.10

The data reveals a generally skeptical view of political parties' campaign strategies in promoting national integration. For the first statement, regarding the effectiveness of party manifestos in addressing national integration, nearly half (47.8%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with a mean score of 2.65, indicating overall doubt about the content of the manifestos. Similarly, 54% of respondents disagreed that campaign strategies promote unity among ethnic groups, yielding a low mean of 2.51. This trend continues with the third statement, where 54% disagreed that policy agendas consider the interests of all Kenyan communities, resulting in a mean of 2.50.

The findings revealed negative perceptions regarding the campaign strategies of political parties. Notably, 65.4% of respondents agreed that campaigns focus more on ethnic mobilization than national unity, yielding the highest mean of 3.71. This was reinforced by strong agreement (62.8%) that election campaigns contribute to ethnic polarization, with a high mean of 3.66. The campaign language used by parties was also viewed unfavorably, with 58.4% disagreeing that it promotes inter-community harmony (mean = 2.40). Overall, the average mean of 2.90 indicates a generally negative perception of political parties' campaign strategies in promoting national integration, suggesting a significant gap between campaign objectives and their actual impact on national unity.

To gain deeper insights into campaign strategies and their influence on national integration, interviews were conducted with key political figures. The interviewees were asked about the role of campaign messages in uniting or polarizing ethnic groups, the effectiveness of their campaign strategies in promoting national unity, and specific campaign approaches that have either supported or hindered national integration efforts. The following responses were obtained from the key informants:

Regarding the role of campaign messages in uniting or polarizing different ethnic groups:

"Campaign messages are a double-edged sword. While we strive to promote unity, the reality is that appealing to ethnic bases often yields more votes. It's a delicate balance between national cohesion and political expediency." (Interview with Political Party Secretary General C, 3/7/2024)

On specific policies that have significantly contributed to national unity:

"The devolution policy, despite its challenges, has been crucial in promoting national unity. It has given previously marginalized regions a sense of inclusion in national affairs. However, we need to address the emerging challenge of county-level ethnic tensions." (Interview with Member of Parliament D, 18/7/2024)

"The introduction of a standardized national school curriculum that emphasizes Kenyan history and civic education has been a positive step. It's helping to foster a shared national identity among young Kenyans from diverse backgrounds." (Interview with Registrar of Political Parties, 2/7/2024)

These responses highlight the relationship between political parties' stated intentions in manifestos, the realities of campaign messaging, and the implementation of policies aimed at fostering national integration.

4.3.2 Influence of Media Platform Utilization by Political Parties on the Process of National Integration

Table 4.3 presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of media platforms used by political parties on national integration in Nairobi County. The responses reflect public sentiment on how political communication—via both traditional and digital media channels—shapes unity, inclusivity, and ethnic cohesion. Participants rated their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The mean scores and standard deviations provide insights into the intensity and variability of these perceptions.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Media Engagement by Political Parties

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
1. Media engagement by political parties promotes national unity in Kenya.	18.6%	34.4%	26.9%	16.0%	4.1%	2.53	1.09
2. Political parties use media platforms to address issues affecting all Kenyans equally.	19.9%	35.1%	25.3%	15.5%	4.2%	2.49	1.10
3. Media campaigns by political parties contribute to increased ethnic polarization.	4.7%	12.4%	21.2%	38.5%	23.2%	3.63	1.11
4. Political parties' media messages often encourage inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding.	17.8%	33.9%	27.4%	16.8%	4.1%	2.56	1.09
5. Media coverage by political parties enhances public awareness of national integration issues.	16.5%	32.3%	28.9%	18.1%	4.2%	2.61	1.09
6. Political parties' media outreach includes strategies to promote inclusivity.	18.3%	34.6%	26.6%	16.3%	4.2%	2.53	1.09
7. Media platforms are effective tools for political parties to reach diverse demographic groups in Kenya.	15.5%	31.5%	29.7%	19.1%	4.2%	2.65	1.08
8. Political party media content often highlights cultural diversity in a positive manner.	17.3%	33.3%	28.2%	17.1%	4.1%	2.57	1.09
9. Media engagement by political parties helps reduce ethnic tensions in Kenya.	19.4%	35.1%	25.8%	15.5%	4.2%	2.50	1.10
Average	—	—	—	—	—	2.67	1.09

The findings reveal general skepticism about the role of political parties' media strategies in advancing national integration. For instance, 53% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that media engagement by political parties promotes unity (Mean = 2.53), while 55% rejected the notion that media platforms are used to address issues affecting all Kenyans equally (Mean = 2.49). Notably, 61.7% agreed that political media campaigns exacerbate ethnic polarization, resulting in the highest mean score (3.63).

Additionally, responses to statements regarding inclusive and intercultural messaging were largely negative. Over half of the respondents disagreed that political media encourages inter-ethnic dialogue (Mean = 2.56), promotes awareness of integration issues (Mean = 2.61), or includes strategies to enhance inclusivity (Mean = 2.53). While there was slightly less disagreement with the effectiveness of media platforms in reaching diverse groups (Mean = 2.65), skepticism persisted. On average, the mean score across all statements was **2.67**, indicating a generally negative perception of political parties' media use in fostering national integration.

To complement these findings, interviews with key political figures examined how various media platforms—ranging from radio and television to social media and party newsletters—are utilised to convey integration agendas.

"We prioritize radio and vernacular stations to deliver unity messages to different communities in their own languages. However, we struggle to ensure the messaging remains consistent across all platforms."(Interview with Political Party Secretary General E, 3/7/2024)

"Our party launched a TV segment highlighting inter-ethnic cooperation projects. It's part of a broader effort to showcase the human stories behind national unity, but audience reach remains limited."(Interview with Member of Parliament F, 7/7/2024)

Despite efforts to use media to promote unity, challenges persist:

"While traditional media gives us structure and reach, it's also slower to respond to divisive rhetoric. Rapid response is often left to digital platforms, where control over narrative is harder."(Interview with Political Party Secretary General G, 5/7/2024)

"Many citizens engage more with news of regional development than messages of abstract unity. This forces us to rethink how we present integration—perhaps linking it more closely with service delivery."(Interview with Member of Parliament H, 17/7/2024)

Overall, these insights confirm the survey findings: while political parties recognise the potential of media in fostering national integration, both the reach and the substance of their messaging require significant improvement to achieve a broader, more positive impact.

4.3.3 Leadership Structures of Political Parties in Promoting National Integration

Table 4.4 presents descriptive statistics capturing respondents' perceptions of how leadership structures within political parties contribute to national integration in Nairobi County. The statements evaluate the effectiveness, inclusivity, and orientation of party leadership in advancing unity. Respondents rated their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Structures of Political Parties

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
1. Leadership structures in political parties support initiatives that promote national integration.	17.3%	34.1%	27.6%	16.8%	4.2%	2.57	1.09
2. Leadership dynamics within political parties positively influence their strategies for national unity.	16.5%	33.3%	28.9%	17.1%	4.2%	2.59	1.08
3. Political parties in Kenya have inclusive leadership that represents the country's diverse ethnic groups.	19.9%	35.4%	24.8%	15.8%	4.1%	2.49	1.10
4. Decision-making by party leaders encourages policies that foster national integration.	18.1%	34.6%	26.9%	16.3%	4.1%	2.54	1.09
5. Conflicts within party leadership hinder their ability to promote national integration.	4.4%	11.9%	21.7%	39.3%	22.7%	3.64	1.09
6. Party leaders often prioritize national interests over ethnic or regional interests.	21.2%	36.2%	24.5%	14.5%	3.6%	2.43	1.08
7. Leadership structures enable effective communication and implementation of integration policies.	17.8%	33.9%	27.4%	16.8%	4.1%	2.56	1.09
8. The leadership culture within political parties promotes values of national unity and integration.	18.6%	34.9%	26.4%	16.0%	4.1%	2.52	1.09
9. Leadership transitions within political parties are managed in a way that maintains focus on national integration.	19.4%	35.1%	25.6%	15.8%	4.1%	2.50	1.10
Average	—	—	—	—	—	2.65	1.09

The findings reveal a generally negative perception of how political party leadership contributes to national integration. Over half (51.4%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that party leadership structures support integration initiatives (Mean = 2.57). Similarly, 49.8% expressed skepticism about the positive influence of leadership on national unity (Mean = 2.59). The perceived inclusivity of party leadership was even lower, with 55.3% disagreeing that it reflects the country's ethnic diversity (Mean = 2.49).

Leadership decision-making was also viewed critically—52.7% disagreed that it encourages policies that foster integration (Mean = 2.54). Notably, the highest level of agreement (62%) was recorded on the statement that conflicts within party leadership hinder integration efforts (Mean = 3.64), highlighting this as a major concern.

Respondents also doubted that party leaders prioritize national interests over ethnic or regional considerations (57.4% disagreed; Mean = 2.43). Over 51% disagreed that leadership structures support effective communication of integration policies (Mean = 2.56), or that leadership culture promotes unity (Mean = 2.52). Finally, 54.5% disagreed that leadership transitions are managed with national integration in mind (Mean = 2.50). These results, culminating in an overall mean of 2.65, suggest that political party leadership structures are perceived as weak contributors to national integration.

To further understand the role of leadership structures, interviews with key political figures explored how party leadership either supports or hinders integration efforts, what successful leadership initiatives have been implemented, and how leadership-related conflicts impact national unity.

“Our party constitution mandates ethnic diversity in leadership positions, which has helped in projecting an image of inclusivity. However, implementing this at the grassroots level remains challenging due to entrenched local ethnic dynamics.”(Interview with Political Party Secretary General I, 3/7/2024)

“The centralized decision-making structure in many parties, including ours, can sometimes hinder integration efforts. While it ensures consistency in messaging, it often fails to accommodate diverse regional perspectives, potentially alienating certain groups.”(Interview with Member of Parliament J, 4/7/2024)

Examples of integration-oriented leadership initiatives were shared:

“We initiated a ‘County Exchange Program’ where party officials from different regions work in other areas for short periods. This has fostered understanding and collaboration across ethnic lines within our party structure.”(Interview with Political Party Secretary General K, 3/7/2024)

“Our party leader’s initiative to conduct town halls in every county, addressing local issues while emphasizing national cohesion, has been particularly effective. It demonstrates commitment to both local concerns and national unity.” (Interview with Speaker of Nairobi County Assembly, 4/7/2024)

However, leadership-related conflicts continue to obstruct integration efforts:

“During our last party primaries, there were accusations of ethnic favoritism in candidate selection. This internal conflict spilled over into the public domain, damaging our credibility on national integration issues.”(Interview with Member of Parliament L, 3/7/2024)

“We’ve faced challenges in balancing regional interests within the party. For instance, disagreements over the allocation of party resources to different regions have sometimes been perceived through an ethnic lens, undermining our integration message.”(Interview with Registrar of Political Parties, 2/7/2024)

These responses reveal that while party leadership structures hold potential to advance national integration—through inclusive practices, outreach efforts, and issue-based representation—this potential is often undermined by centralized control, ethnic favoritism, and poorly managed transitions. The success of national integration depends not only on what party leaders say, but how leadership structures are designed, practiced, and perceived by the public.

4.3.4 Effectiveness of ORPP on Enforcing Political Party Policies Discipline in Fostering National Integration

Table 4.5 presents descriptive statistics on respondents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) in promoting political party compliance with national integration principles in Nairobi County. The statements assess how well political parties—under the oversight of ORPP—promote unity, inclusivity, and cross-ethnic engagement. Respondents rated their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for ORPP's Effectiveness in Promoting Compliance with National Integration

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
1. Political parties in Kenya are effective in promoting national unity.	20.4%	35.9%	24.8%	14.7%	4.2%	2.46	1.10
2. Political parties adequately represent the interests of all ethnic groups.	22.0%	36.4%	23.5%	14.0%	4.1%	2.42	1.10
3. The policies proposed by political parties support national integration.	19.1%	34.9%	26.1%	15.8%	4.1%	2.51	1.09
4. Political parties play a significant role in reducing ethnic tensions.	21.2%	35.7%	24.3%	14.7%	4.1%	2.45	1.10
5. Political party activities often bring together people from different ethnic backgrounds.	16.5%	32.3%	28.4%	18.6%	4.2%	2.62	1.09
6. Political parties promote policies that are inclusive of all communities.	20.7%	35.4%	24.5%	15.2%	4.2%	2.47	1.10
7. The leadership of political parties is committed to national integration.	19.9%	34.9%	25.3%	15.8%	4.1%	2.49	1.10
8. Election campaigns by political parties focus on issues that unite Kenyans.	22.5%	36.7%	23.0%	13.7%	4.1%	2.40	1.10
9. Political parties engage in activities that enhance social integration.	18.3%	33.9%	27.1%	16.5%	4.2%	2.54	1.09
Average	—	—	—	—	—	2.48	1.10

The findings suggest a generally negative perception of political parties' performance in promoting national integration, implying limited effectiveness of ORPP in ensuring compliance with integration-related mandates. For instance, 56.3% of respondents disagreed that political parties effectively promote national unity (Mean = 2.46), while 58.4% disagreed that parties represent all ethnic groups fairly (Mean = 2.42). Similarly, 54% of respondents disagreed that proposed policies by political parties support integration (Mean = 2.51).

A strong negative sentiment was also recorded on the role of parties in reducing ethnic tensions (56.9% disagreed; Mean = 2.45) and in promoting inclusivity (56.1% disagreed; Mean = 2.47). The lowest score (Mean = 2.40) emerged in relation to election campaigns, where 59.2% of respondents disagreed that party messaging focused on uniting Kenyans—highlighting a critical area for ORPP oversight.

The highest mean score (2.62) was noted for party activities bringing people of different ethnic backgrounds together, although 48.8% still disagreed. This, along with the overall low average mean of 2.48, signals a public perception that ORPP has not been fully effective in ensuring political parties promote integration as required by law and national policy.

To assess how ORPP's enforcement is perceived in practice, interviews with political leaders explored citizen views on party integration efforts, perceived impact, and specific compliance strategies encouraged or monitored by ORPP.

“From our interactions with voters, there's a growing skepticism about political parties' commitment to national integration. Many view our efforts as superficial, designed more for public relations than genuine change.”(Interview with Political Party Secretary General M, 6/7/2024)

“Citizens increasingly see political parties as part of the problem rather than the solution. There's a perception that we exacerbate ethnic divisions for political gain, especially during election periods.”(Interview with Member of Parliament N, 10/7/2024)

Regarding the overall impact of ORPP's interventions:

“Honestly, our effectiveness has been limited. While we’ve made some progress in promoting diversity within party structures, translating this into broader societal change has been challenging. We’re often constrained by the need to maintain our core support base.”(Interview with Political Party Secretary General O, 14/7/2024)

“Political parties have been moderately effective in urban areas, where there’s more ethnic mixing. However, in rural areas, where ethnic identities are more entrenched, our integration efforts have had minimal impact.”(Interview with Speaker of Nairobi County Assembly, 17/7/2024)

Some strategies promoted by ORPP have shown promise:

“Our youth engagement programs, which bring together young people from different ethnic backgrounds for leadership training, have been quite successful. They’ve helped create a cadre of young leaders who think beyond ethnic lines.”(Interview with Member of Parliament P, 20/7/2024)

“Unfortunately, our attempts to create ethnically diverse coalition parties have often been unsuccessful. While they look good on paper, these coalitions frequently fracture along ethnic lines when facing political pressures.”(Interview with Registrar of Political Parties, 24/7/2024)

These insights reveal a disconnect between ORPP’s intended oversight role and actual public perception of political party compliance with integration mandates. While some engagement strategies—such as youth initiatives—are seen as effective, there is widespread doubt regarding the consistency and depth of enforcement. The findings point to the need for strengthened regulatory mechanisms, clearer compliance benchmarks, and sustained civic engagement to ensure political parties become active vehicles for national unity.

4.3.5 National Integration

Table 4.6 presents descriptive statistics on how respondents perceive the overall contribution of political parties to national integration in Kenya. The statements reflect four key indicators of integration—ethnic cohesion, shared national identity, representative inclusion, and policy implementation—and assess how political parties influence each through their manifestos, campaign strategies, leadership structures, and public engagement. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for National Integration

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
1. Political party manifestos and policy agendas contribute to a sense of national unity in Kenya.	18.9%	34.6%	26.4%	16.0%	4.1%	2.52	1.09
2. Media engagement by political parties enhances a common sense of identity among Kenyans.	17.3%	33.3%	28.2%	17.1%	4.1%	2.57	1.09
3. Leadership structures within political parties promote representative inclusion across Kenya's ethnic groups.	16.5%	32.8%	28.7%	17.8%	4.2%	2.60	1.08
4. Political parties effectively use campaign strategies and policy agendas to foster ethnic cohesion.	19.4%	34.9%	25.8%	15.8%	4.1%	2.50	1.10
5. Media platforms have helped political parties bridge ethnic and regional divides.	16.8%	32.6%	28.9%	17.6%	4.1%	2.60	1.08
6. Party leadership significantly influences strategies to promote inclusivity and national cohesion.	15.5%	31.8%	29.5%	18.9%	4.3%	2.65	1.08
7. Voter behavior in Kenya is increasingly shaped by parties that advocate for national unity.	17.8%	33.6%	27.6%	16.8%	4.2%	2.56	1.09
8. The ability of political parties to fulfill their policy promises strengthens national integration.	19.1%	34.4%	26.1%	16.3%	4.1%	2.52	1.10
9. Political party platforms contribute meaningfully to a shared Kenyan identity.	18.6%	34.1%	26.9%	16.3%	4.1%	2.53	1.09
Average	—	—	—	—	—	2.56	1.09

The data reveals a moderately negative perception of political parties' overall effectiveness in promoting national integration. On policy implementation, 53.5% of respondents disagreed that

party manifestos promote national unity (Mean = 2.52), and 53.5% also doubted that electoral promises translate into meaningful integration (Mean = 2.52). The sentiment was echoed in the statement on campaign strategies (Mean = 2.50), where 54.3% disagreed that parties promote cohesion through their platforms.

On shared identity, 50.6% of respondents disagreed that media engagement fosters a common Kenyan identity (Mean = 2.57), and 52.7% disagreed that party platforms help build shared national values (Mean = 2.53). Perceptions were similarly negative on ethnic cohesion, with 49.4% doubting that media helps bridge ethnic/regional divides (Mean = 2.60), and 51.4% disagreeing that voter behavior is shifting toward unity-based messaging (Mean = 2.56). Somewhat more favorable was the perception of representative inclusion, with 47.3% disagreeing that leadership structures promote inclusivity—resulting in the highest mean (2.65), though still below neutral. Overall, the average mean score across all items was 2.56, reflecting a consistent skepticism about the impact of political parties on national integration.

To deepen understanding, interviews with a representative from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and other political figures explored perceived gaps between party messaging and genuine integration outcomes.

"From our monitoring at the Commission, we've seen parties include integration messages in their manifestos, but the challenge is translating that into inclusive practice—particularly in nominations, campaign language, and grassroots mobilization." (Interview with NCIC Representative, 11/7/2024)

"Most political parties still operate along ethnic lines despite public claims of unity. Citizens don't feel included unless their ethnic or regional identity is visibly represented, which undermines the formation of a shared Kenyan identity." (Interview with Political Party Secretary General Q, 13/7/2024)

"Some urban-based integration initiatives—like youth forums and cultural exchange rallies—have worked, but in rural strongholds, voters still identify more with ethnic narratives than with national ones." (Interview with Member of Parliament R, 16/7/2024)

These perspectives highlight a critical gap between the intent and impact of political party strategies on national integration. Although some structural and communication efforts have

been made, public perception reflects a lack of trust in their sincerity or effectiveness. This suggests a need for stronger regulatory enforcement, transparent monitoring, and more inclusive grassroots strategies to shift perceptions and outcomes toward meaningful integration.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the research findings, drawing connections between the study results and the existing body of knowledge on political parties and national integration in Kenya. It summarizes the key findings from the data analysis, highlighting the most significant insights and trends. Based on these findings, the chapter draws conclusions about the influence of political parties on national integration in Kenya, addressing each of the study objectives. Ultimately, it provides recommendations for political parties, policymakers, and future researchers, suggesting ways to enhance the role of political parties in promoting national unity and identifying areas for further investigation.

5.2 Discussions

5.2.1 Influence of Political Parties Campaign Strategies on the Process of National Integration

The findings revealed a generally negative perception of political parties' campaign strategies in promoting national integration in Kenya. A significant proportion of respondents disagreed that party manifestos effectively address issues of national integration (47.8%), campaign strategies promote unity among ethnic groups (54%), and policy agendas consider the interests of all Kenyan communities (54%). Furthermore, 62.8% of respondents agreed that election campaigns contribute to ethnic polarisation, while 65.4% agreed that campaigns focus more on ethnic mobilisation than on national unity. The inclusion of specific national integration measures in manifestos was also viewed negatively by 48.3% of respondents. These findings were corroborated by interviews with political leaders, who acknowledged the challenges of

balancing ethnic appeals with national unity messaging and the gap between manifesto promises and implementation.

The negative perception of political parties' campaign strategies in promoting national integration aligns with previous research findings. Sjögren (2014) highlighted how the proliferation of political parties in Kenya often leads to the formation of ethnic-based support and personality cults, deepening ethnic divisions within the political discourse. Similarly, Nyadera, Agwanda, and Maulani (2020) noted that political parties in Kenya frequently draw their support from specific ethnic groups, creating a polarized political landscape that hinders national integration efforts. The current study's findings, which suggest that campaigns focus on ethnic mobilisation rather than national unity, are consistent with these observations.

However, the current study also revealed some divergence from previous research. Borgesius et al. (2018) found that inter-party collaboration and coalition-building in the European Union context could bridge ideological and ethnic divides, contributing positively to national integration. In contrast, the Kenyan context appears to present more challenges in this regard. The interviews with political leaders in this study highlighted the difficulties of implementing inclusive policies and maintaining consistent messaging across ethnic lines, even within coalition parties. This suggests that the dynamics of party politics and their impact on national integration may vary significantly across different political and social contexts.

The findings on the limited effectiveness of party manifestos in addressing national integration issues are particularly noteworthy. Mzalendo Trust (2020) found that political parties in Kenya often disregard their manifestos after elections and fail to incorporate them into their legislative agendas. This aligns with the current study's findings, where a significant proportion of respondents doubted the commitment of parties to implement policies that foster national

integration. The gap between manifesto promises and actual implementation emerges as a critical factor hindering the role of political parties in promoting national unity.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the polarizing nature of election campaigns and their focus on ethnic mobilization are consistent with research by Osisioma (2016), who highlighted the challenges of ethnically influenced policies and decisions in hindering successful integration in Nigeria. The similarities between the Kenyan and Nigerian contexts suggest that the dynamics of ethnic politics and their impact on national integration may be a broader challenge across African nations with diverse ethnic compositions. This underscores the need for political parties to actively address these issues and develop strategies that prioritize national unity over ethnic considerations, as emphasized by Hino et al. (2019). The findings of this study largely align with existing literature on the challenges faced by political parties in promoting national integration in Kenya. The scepticism towards campaign strategies, the gap between manifesto promises and implementation, and the polarising nature of ethnic mobilisation emerge as significant barriers to achieving national unity through party politics.

5.2.2 Influence of Media Platform Utilization by Political Parties on the Process of National Integration

The findings revealed a generally negative perception of political parties' utilization of media platforms—including television, radio, print, and digital channels—in promoting national integration in Kenya. A significant proportion of respondents disagreed that media engagement by political parties promotes national unity (53%), addresses issues affecting all Kenyans equally (55%), and encourages inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding (51.7%). Furthermore, 61.7% of respondents agreed that media campaigns by political parties contribute to increased ethnic polarization. The use of media to enhance public awareness of national integration issues and promote inclusivity was also viewed skeptically by 48.8% and 52.9% of respondents,

respectively. These findings were corroborated by interviews with political leaders, who acknowledged the potential of media as a powerful tool for promoting integration, but also highlighted persistent challenges such as partisan messaging, narrative control, and the uneven reach of content across demographic and regional divides.

The negative perception of political parties' media engagement strategies in promoting national integration aligns with previous research findings. McCoy, Rahman, and Somer (2018) found that the use of social media by political actors in the Lebanese context often polarizes society along sectarian and ideological lines, exacerbating existing tensions. The current study's findings on the perceived contribution of social media campaigns to ethnic polarization in Kenya are consistent with these observations, suggesting that the impact of social media engagement on national integration remains a contentious issue in diverse societies.

However, the current study also revealed some nuances in the role of social media in promoting national integration. Adams (2023) found that social media can be an effective tool for fostering national integration in Nigeria by promoting inclusive discourse and promoting a shared sense of identity and belonging. While the current study's respondents were skeptical about the overall impact of political parties' social media engagement on national unity, interviews with political leaders highlighted some successful initiatives, such as online campaigns promoting inter-ethnic cooperation and the use of multiple languages to reach diverse ethnic groups. This suggests that the effectiveness of social media in promoting national integration may depend on the specific strategies employed by political parties and the broader socio-political context.

The findings on the limited impact of political parties' social media engagement on promoting inclusivity and inter-ethnic dialogue are particularly noteworthy. Hussein (2016) found that while political parties in Ethiopia have effectively utilized online platforms to engage constituents and transcend geographical barriers, challenges related to digital literacy, access

to technology, and government regulation persist. The study's findings on the skepticism towards political parties' use of social media to address issues affecting all Kenyans equally and encourage inter-ethnic dialogue suggest that similar challenges may be at play in the Kenyan context.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the polarising nature of social media campaigns and their perceived contribution to ethnic tensions are consistent with research by Nyaura (2018), who noted that social media can amplify controversial narratives and exacerbate ethnic divisions in Kenya, thereby hindering national integration efforts. This responsible and inclusive social media engagement strategies that mitigate the risk of exacerbating ethnic tensions. The findings of this study largely align with the existing literature on the challenges faced by political parties in leveraging social media to promote national integration in Kenya and other diverse societies. The skepticism towards the impact of social media engagement on national unity, the perceived contribution to ethnic polarization, and the limited effectiveness in promoting inclusivity and inter-ethnic dialogue emerge as significant barriers to achieving national integration through party-led social media initiatives.

5.2.3 Leadership Structures of Political Parties in Promoting National Integration

The findings revealed a generally negative perception of how political parties' leadership structures contribute to national integration efforts in Kenya. A significant proportion of respondents disagreed that party leadership structures support national integration initiatives (51.4%), positively influence strategies for national unity (49.8%), or represent the country's diverse ethnic composition (55.3%). Additionally, 62% of respondents agreed that internal leadership conflicts hinder efforts to promote national integration, while 57.4% disagreed that political party leaders prioritize national interests over ethnic or regional loyalties. Respondents also expressed scepticism regarding the party leadership's ability to communicate and

implement integration policies effectively, as well as to foster a leadership culture that supports unity and cohesion. These findings were supported by interviews with political leaders, who acknowledged challenges in achieving meaningful inclusion within party leadership, managing regional power balances, and sustaining internal harmony—factors that ultimately shape the capacity of political parties to contribute to national integration.

The negative perception of political parties' leadership structures in promoting national integration aligns with previous research findings. Njuguna (2022) found that political parties in Kenya tend to be primarily supported by their ethnic base, controlled by their founders or major funders, and centered around powerful individuals, with weak ideologies and little bearing on public policy formulation. The current study's findings on the perceived lack of inclusivity in party leadership and the prioritization of ethnic or regional interests over national concerns are consistent with these observations.

However, the current study also revealed some successful initiatives and the potential for party structures and leadership to positively influence national integration efforts. Herrnson (2020) found that coalitions across ideological and demographic differences have become necessary in the context of a multiparty system and diverse population, with internal party structures acting as a link between opposing factions and creating some semblance of national integration. Interviews with political leaders in the current study highlighted examples such as mandated ethnic diversity in leadership positions and county exchange programs that foster understanding and collaboration across ethnic lines within party structures. This suggests that while challenges persist, there are opportunities for political parties to leverage their internal structures and leadership to promote national integration.

The findings on the impact of internal conflicts on parties' integration efforts are particularly noteworthy. Kirmanj (2021) found that the decline and sectarianization of major political

parties in Iraq hindered their ability to promote national integration, sing the importance of cohesive and ideologically driven parties in fostering unity. The current study's findings on the perceived hindrances posed by internal conflicts and the lack of commitment to national integration among party leaders underscore the need for political parties in Kenya to address these internal challenges in order to effectively contribute to national unity.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the limited representation of Kenya's diverse ethnic groups within party leadership and the perceived prioritization of ethnic or regional interests align with research by Madsen and Pilditch (2018), who analyzed political speeches and media coverage during Kenya's 2017 general election. While parties in coalitions often emphasized unity and diversity in their rhetoric, the current study suggests that these rhetorical strategies may not consistently translate into practical outcomes or changes in internal party dynamics. The findings of this study largely align with existing literature on the challenges faced by political parties in Kenya in leveraging their internal structures and leadership to promote national integration. The perceived lack of inclusivity, the impact of internal conflicts, and the prioritisation of ethnic or regional interests over national concerns are significant barriers to achieving national unity through party-led efforts.

5.2.4 Effectiveness of ORPP on Enforcing Political Party Policies Discipline in Fostering National Integration

The findings revealed a consistently negative perception of the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties' (ORPP) effectiveness in ensuring that political parties comply with national integration mandates in Kenya. A significant proportion of respondents disagreed that political parties are effective in promoting national unity (56.3%), adequately represent the interests of all ethnic groups (58.4%), propose policies that support integration (54%), or play a meaningful role in reducing ethnic tensions (56.9%). Additionally, many respondents expressed doubt that

political parties engage in activities that enhance social integration (52.2%) or that their election campaigns focus on issues that unite Kenyans (59.2%). These results suggest a perceived gap between ORPP's regulatory role and its ability to enforce meaningful compliance among political parties. This view was corroborated by interviews with political leaders, who acknowledged growing public scepticism regarding the sincerity of political parties' integration efforts and emphasised that, despite policy frameworks, enforcement mechanisms remain weak, allowing parties to continue operating along ethnic lines with limited accountability.

The negative perception of political parties' effectiveness in promoting national integration aligns with previous research findings. Osioma (2016) highlighted the challenges of ethnically influenced policies and decisions hindering successful integration in Nigeria, a context that shares similarities with Kenya in terms of ethnic diversity and political dynamics. The current study's findings on the perceived failure of political parties to adequately represent the interests of all ethnic groups and reduce ethnic tensions are consistent with these observations.

However, the current study also revealed some nuances in citizen perceptions of political parties' effectiveness in fostering national integration. While still viewed negatively overall, there was slightly less disagreement (48.8%) with the statement that political party activities often bring people from different ethnic backgrounds together. Interviews with political leaders highlighted some successful engagement strategies, such as youth leadership training programs that create a cadre of young leaders who think beyond ethnic lines. This suggests that while citizen trust in political parties as agents of national integration remains low, there may be opportunities for parties to build on specific initiatives that have shown promise in fostering unity.

The findings on the perceived lack of commitment among party leadership to national integration and the failure of election campaigns to focus on unifying issues are particularly noteworthy. Söderström et al. (2020) found that voters in France increasingly prioritize national unity themes and social integration, resulting in a shift in political discourse. In contrast, the current study suggests that political parties in Kenya have yet to effectively align their campaigns and leadership priorities with citizens' growing desire for national integration.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the limited effectiveness of political parties in urban areas and minimal impact in rural areas, where ethnic identities are more entrenched, align with research by Ma and Cao (2023), who explored voter behavior and national integration aspirations in China. While the political contexts differ significantly, both studies highlight the challenges of translating national integration rhetoric into meaningful action, especially in regions with strong ethnic or regional affiliations. The findings of this study largely align with existing literature on citizen perceptions of political parties' effectiveness in fostering national integration, particularly in the African context. The perceived lack of commitment to national unity, failure to adequately represent diverse ethnic interests, and the exacerbation of ethnic divisions for political gain emerge as significant barriers to achieving national integration through party-led efforts. However, the study also highlights some successful engagement strategies and the potential for political parties to build on initiatives that resonate with citizens' desire for unity, such as youth leadership programs.

5.3 Summary of Findings

The study on the influence of political parties on national integration in Nairobi County, Kenya, yielded several key findings aligned with the study's four main objectives. Regarding the effectiveness of campaign strategies, a significant proportion of respondents held negative views about the role of political parties in promoting national unity through their manifestos,

policy agendas, and election messaging. Many believed that campaigns contributed to ethnic polarisation and prioritised ethnic mobilisation over the promotion of a shared national identity. These concerns were echoed in interviews with political leaders, who acknowledged the difficulty of balancing ethnic-based political appeals with national cohesion messaging, and noted the disconnect between manifesto promises and practical implementation.

The findings on the utilisation of media platforms by political parties revealed widespread scepticism about the role of both traditional and digital media in fostering national integration. Many respondents felt that media campaigns—particularly during election periods—exacerbated ethnic tensions, failed to address national issues inclusively, and lacked messaging that encouraged inter-ethnic understanding. Nonetheless, interviews with political leaders identified some promising practices, including multilingual broadcasts, cultural inclusivity in media content, and targeted outreach programs aimed at bridging ethnic divides, indicating that the potential of media to support integration depends largely on the quality and intent of the strategies employed.

In relation to party leadership structures, the study found that a majority of respondents viewed political party leadership as insufficiently inclusive and ineffective in supporting national integration goals. There was concern that leadership structures often prioritized ethnic or regional interests and were marked by internal conflicts that undermined unity. The findings also indicated a weak commitment to national priorities among leaders. However, political leaders highlighted specific initiatives—such as mandatory ethnic diversity in leadership, town hall forums, and inter-county leadership exchanges—that had shown promise in bridging divides and fostering internal cohesion within parties.

Finally, the study assessed the effectiveness of the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) in enhancing compliance among political parties with national integration mandates.

Respondents expressed a consistently negative perception, doubting the ability of political parties—under ORPP oversight—to promote inclusivity, reduce ethnic tensions, or unify diverse populations through their activities. Many felt that election campaigns did not prioritize national unity, and that party activities often reinforced social divisions. Interviews supported this sentiment, with political leaders acknowledging public disillusionment with political parties as agents of integration, though they also cited youth engagement and leadership development programs as potential pathways for restoring trust and advancing cohesion.

5.4 Conclusion

Based on the study findings and discussion, the study concludes that political parties in Kenya face significant challenges in promoting national integration through their campaign strategies. The negative perception held by a majority of respondents regarding the effectiveness of party manifestos, campaign messaging, and policy agendas suggests that current approaches fall short of fostering a shared national identity. Instead, many campaigns appear to reinforce ethnic polarization. The observed gap between manifesto promises and policy implementation has undermined public trust in political parties as credible agents of integration. To enhance their impact, political parties must design campaign strategies that emphasize inclusive messaging, reflect the concerns of all communities, and demonstrate a consistent commitment to unity-driven policies.

In relation to media platform utilisation, the study concludes that political parties in Kenya have not fully capitalised on the potential of media—both traditional and digital—as a means of advancing national integration. While a few promising initiatives were noted, such as multilingual broadcasts and inclusive storytelling campaigns, overall public perception remains skeptical. Many respondents felt that media campaigns, particularly during election periods, contribute more to ethnic fragmentation than cohesion. Political parties must therefore adopt

more deliberate, inclusive, and ethically guided media strategies that promote inter-ethnic understanding, civic dialogue, and a unifying national narrative across diverse platforms.

Regarding leadership structures, the study concludes that the leadership frameworks within political parties are critical to the success or failure of integration efforts. A significant proportion of respondents viewed party leadership as unrepresentative, ethnically skewed, and insufficiently focused on national priorities. Internal leadership conflicts further compound this challenge. Although some constructive practices—such as mandated ethnic diversity and inter-regional leadership programs—were identified, these remain limited in scope. Political parties must institutionalise inclusive leadership models, strengthen transparent decision-making processes, and address internal fragmentation to reposition themselves as champions of national unity.

Finally, the study concludes that the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) must play a more assertive and visible role in enhancing political party compliance with national integration mandates. The findings indicate a consistently negative public perception of parties' effectiveness in promoting unity, inclusivity, and ethnic harmony—suggesting that ORPP's current enforcement mechanisms may lack the rigor or reach required to drive meaningful change. While some isolated initiatives—such as youth engagement and cross-ethnic leadership training—were highlighted by political leaders, these efforts remain insufficient in the face of entrenched ethnic politics. ORPP must strengthen regulatory frameworks, monitor compliance more closely, and collaborate with civil society to ensure that political parties align their operations with the national goal of integration. Only through consistent oversight, institutional accountability, and a demonstrated commitment to inclusive governance can political parties begin to regain public confidence and contribute meaningfully to national cohesion in Kenya.

5.5 Recommendations

The study recommends that political parties in Kenya strengthen their campaign strategies to better promote national unity. Specifically, they should develop inclusive manifestos and policy agendas that address the needs and aspirations of all ethnic communities. Campaign messages should consistently emphasize themes of national cohesion and avoid ethnic mobilization or divisive rhetoric. To improve accountability, the study recommends that parties establish internal mechanisms to monitor and publicly report on the implementation of manifesto promises related to integration. Additionally, parties should consider forming collaborative platforms with other political entities to develop and advance joint initiatives that transcend ethnic boundaries and foster a shared national identity.

The study recommends that political parties enhance their use of media platforms—including traditional media (radio, TV, print) and digital channels—to promote national integration. Parties should formulate inclusive media strategies that feature diverse voices, highlight shared national values, and counter polarizing narratives. To do this effectively, the study recommends investing in media and digital literacy training for party leaders and communication teams. Establishing dedicated media units to monitor content and promote inclusive messaging is also encouraged. Furthermore, the study recommends that political parties partner with civil society organizations and media institutions to co-create and distribute content that advances inter-ethnic dialogue, addresses misinformation, and reinforces national unity.

The study recommends that political parties implement internal leadership structure reforms that promote inclusion, equity, and unity. This includes adopting clear guidelines for ethnic and regional representation in leadership roles, institutionalizing leadership exchange programs across counties, and fostering collaborative leadership at all levels. The study also recommends that parties improve internal decision-making processes to ensure they reflect national—not

ethnic—interests, and promote participation from a broad base of party members. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be strengthened, and party officials should receive regular training in inclusive leadership, inter-ethnic engagement, and conflict management practices that support national integration.

The study recommends that political parties work more proactively with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) to enhance compliance with national integration mandates and restore public confidence. To achieve this, parties should scale up successful initiatives—such as youth leadership training programs—and develop new outreach strategies that resonate with citizens’ desire for inclusive governance. The study also recommends that parties consistently prioritize unity in both rhetoric and practice, and engage citizens through town halls, digital platforms, and public forums to gather feedback and build trust. Finally, the study recommends that ORPP strengthen its regulatory role by enforcing integration-related guidelines more effectively, and collaborating with political parties, media, and civil society actors to implement national civic education campaigns that promote unity and social cohesion.

Organize your recommendation based on the objectives of the study

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, further research could explore the specific strategies and best practices employed by political parties in other diverse societies that have successfully fostered national integration. Comparative studies examining the role of political parties in promoting national unity across different political systems and cultural contexts could provide valuable insights and lessons for Kenya and other countries facing similar challenges. Furthermore, future research could examine the long-term effects of party-led initiatives on public perceptions and the sustainability of national integration efforts over time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

My name is Ogendo Evelyn Nyoteyo and I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Governance, Peace, and Security at Africa Nazarene University. As part of my academic requirements, I am conducting a research study titled “The Influence of Political parties on National Integration in Kenya.” The primary objective of this study was to examine how political parties’ dynamics affect national integration within Kenya. This research is particularly significant in understanding the broader implications of party politics on the unity and social integration of our nation. To gather relevant data for this study, kindly assist in filling out the attached questionnaire. Your insights and experiences are invaluable to the success of this research, and I would be grateful for your participation. The information you provide was treated with the utmost confidentiality and was used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

OGENDO EVELYN NYOTEYO

ADMISSION NUMBER: 2J01DMGP041

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Members of Parliament

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age

18-24 []

25-34 []

35-44 []

45-54 []

55-64 []

65 and above []

2. Gender

Male []

Female []

3. Education Level

Primary []

Secondary []

Diploma []

Undergraduate Degree []

Postgraduate Degree []

4. Occupation

Student []

Employed (Public Sector) []

Employed (Private Sector) []

Self-employed []

Unemployed []

Retired []

Section B: Influence of Campaign Strategies

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number. Use the scale where 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not decided.

Statement	1	2	3
1. Political party manifestos in Kenya effectively address issues of national integration.			
2. Campaign strategies of political parties promote unity among different ethnic groups in Kenya.			
3. Policy agendas of major political parties consider the interests of all Kenyan communities.			
4. Political manifestos in Kenya often include specific measures to enhance national integration.			
5. Election campaigns in Kenya contribute to increased ethnic polarization.			
6. The policy agendas of political parties often lead to the marginalization of certain groups.			
7. Political campaigns in Kenya focus more on ethnic mobilization than on national unity.			
8. Political parties in Kenya are committed to implementing policies that foster national integration.			
9. The language used in political campaigns promotes harmony among different communities.			

Section C: Influence of Media Engagement by the Political Parties

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number. Use the scale where 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not decided.

Statement	1	2	3
1. Media engagement by political parties promotes national unity in Kenya.			
2. Political parties use media platforms to address issues affecting all Kenyans equally.			
3. Media campaigns by political parties contribute to increased ethnic polarization.			
4. Political parties' media messages often encourage inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding.			
5. Media coverage by political parties enhances public awareness of national integration issues.			
6. Political parties' media outreach includes strategies to promote inclusivity.			
7. Media platforms are effective tools for political parties to reach diverse demographic groups in Kenya.			
8. Political party media content often highlights cultural diversity in a positive manner.			
9. Media engagement by political parties helps reduce ethnic tensions in Kenya.			

Section D: Internal Structures and Leadership Dynamics of Political Parties

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number. Use the scale where 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not decided.

Statement	1	2	3
1. Leadership structures in political parties support initiatives that promote national integration.			
2. Leadership dynamics within political parties positively influence their strategies for national unity.			
3. Political parties in Kenya have inclusive leadership that represents the country's diverse ethnic groups.			
4. Decision-making by party leaders encourages policies that foster national integration.			
5. Conflicts within party leadership hinder their ability to promote national integration.			
6. Party leaders often prioritize national interests over ethnic or regional interests.			
7. Leadership structures enable effective communication and implementation of integration policies.			
8. The leadership culture within political parties promotes values of national unity and integration.			
9. Leadership transitions within political parties are managed in a way that maintains focus on national integration.			

Section D: Citizen Perceptions Regarding the Effectiveness of Political Parties

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number. Use the scale where 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not decided.

Statement	1	2	3
1. Political parties in Kenya are effective in promoting national unity.			
2. Political parties adequately represent the interests of all ethnic groups.			
3. The policies proposed by political parties support national integration.			
4. Political parties play a significant role in reducing ethnic tensions.			
5. Political party activities often bring together people from different ethnic backgrounds.			
6. Political parties promote policies that are inclusive of all communities.			
7. The leadership of political parties is committed to national integration.			
8. Election campaigns by political parties focus on issues that unite Kenyans.			
9. Political parties engage in activities that enhance social integration.			

Section E: National Integration

10. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number. Use the scale where 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not decided.

Statement	1	2	3
1. Political party manifestos and policy agendas contribute to a sense of national unity in Kenya.			
2. Media engagement by political parties enhances a common sense of identity among Kenyans.			
3. Leadership structures within political parties promote representative inclusion across Kenya's ethnic groups.			
4. Political parties effectively use campaign strategies and policy agendas to foster ethnic cohesion.			
5. Media platforms have helped political parties bridge ethnic and regional divides.			
6. Party leadership significantly influences strategies to promote inclusivity and national cohesion.			
7. Voter behavior in Kenya is increasingly shaped by parties that advocate for national unity.			
8. The ability of political parties to fulfill their policy promises strengthens national integration.			
9. Political party platforms contribute meaningfully to a shared Kenyan identity.			

Thank You

Appendix III: Interview Guide

Objective 1: Influence of Campaign Strategies on National Integration

How do political party manifestos address the issue of national integration?

What role do campaign messages play in either uniting or polarizing different ethnic groups?

Are there specific policies that you think have significantly contributed to national unity?

Objective 2: Influence of Media Engagement by Political Parties on National Integration

How do political parties utilize social media to promote their integration agendas?

What are the positive and negative impacts of political parties' social media engagement on national unity?

How does the content shared by political parties on social media platforms influence public perception of national integration?

Objective 3: Impact of Leadership Structures of Political Parties on National Integration Efforts

How do the internal structures of political parties support or hinder their efforts in promoting national integration?

Are there examples of leadership initiatives that have successfully fostered national integration?

Can you discuss any internal conflicts that have impacted the party's integration efforts?

Objective 4: Effectiveness of Political Parties in Fostering National Integration

How do citizens perceive the role of political parties in promoting national integration?

In your opinion, how effective are political parties in fostering national integration?

Are there specific engagement strategies that have been particularly successful or unsuccessful?

Appendix IV: Introduction Letter

P.O.Box: 53067 – 00200
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 252 7170/1 – 5
Email: vc@anu.ac.ke
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22nd October 2024

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Africa Nazarene University is a private Christian University and an institution of the Church of the Nazarene International, who follows the Wesleyan holiness traditions.

Ogendo Evelyn Nyoteyo (21J01DMGP041) is a postgraduate student at Africa Nazarene University pursuing a master's degree in Governance, Peace and Security Studies. This program entails coursework and research. She has successfully completed her course work and defended her thesis proposal entitled: -

“Influence of Political Parties on National Integration in Kenya”.


To complete her program and graduate, she is required to conduct research. This involves collecting and analyzing data, hence write a report. In that regard, I present Ms. Nyoteyo to you for approval to conduct research.


Any assistance you will grant her will be highly appreciated.




Prof. Orpha Ongiti
Dean of Postgraduate Studies & Director of The Institute of Research

Appendix V: NACOSTI Permit


REPUBLIC OF KENYA
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 Date of Issue: **08/November/2024**

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This is to Certify that Ms. Evelyn OGENDO Nyoteyo of Africa Nazarene University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN KENYA for the period ending : 08/November/2025.

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Appendix VI: Map of Study Area

