
The Impact of Primordial Social Bonds on Electoral Participation in Uasin Gishu County-K

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Abstract

In liberal democracies, the choice of political leaders through a free, fair and regular election is an unfringeable right of the voter provided for by the Constitution and international law. However, the outcome of elections globally has been shaped by multiple factors. This research interrogated the impact of primordial social bonds on electoral participation in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, with a specific focus on the election of the President, Governor, Members of National Assembly and Members of County Assembly under the Constitution of Kenya-2010. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and targeted all 450,055 registered voters in Uasin Gishu County as per Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission statistics of 2017. A sample of 384 respondents participated in the study and was drawn from 12 selected Wards in all the sub-counties in Uasin Gishu County. Questionnaires, interview schedules and Focused group discussions were used as key research instruments in the collection of primary data which was corroborated with the existing secondary data. Data analysis was carried out using a comparative parallel mixed method for presentation. From the study, it was established that ethnicity, history, gender, social class and religion of political candidates, as well as the voter's characteristics significantly shaped voters' choice of candidates during elections. The study concluded that the constitution of Kenya providing for citizens' free will to vote, primordial social bonds constitute significant determinants of electoral participation and outcome. The study recommended that the established Constitutional commissions such as Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, National Cohesion and Integration Commission and Kenya National Human Rights Commission should develop a civic education training framework that incorporates and inculcate liberal democratic values as opposed to primordialism in elections. Comparative national studies on primordial based politics with other African countries are recommended for further studies to enrich the existing literature gap.

Key Words: Primordial Social Bonds, Electoral Participation, County, Kenya
