

# **Ethnic Groups and Campaign Strategy in Kenya's 2007 Election**

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## **Chapter Summary:**

This chapter examines campaign targeting across ethnic communities in Kenya's 2007 presidential election. Data on the location of campaign rallies shows that the leading candidates spent relatively little time courting co-ethnic voters. Instead, the candidates spent the bulk of their time on the campaign trail courting "swing" communities – those ethnic groups that did not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race. To account for this pattern, I argue that the parties faced a trade-off between mobilization (seeking to increase turnout among co-ethnic supporters) and persuasion (seeking to attract new supporters outside their ethnic strongholds). Much of the existing literature suggests that parties invest only in persuasion or mobilization. I argue that in Kenya parties have incentives to invest in both. Further, I argue that parties divide labor between different types of actors: presidential candidates delegate the job of mobilizing co-ethnic supporters to lower-level actors, leaving them free to allocate the bulk of their time on the campaign trail to courting potential swing voters in out-groups.

## 1. Introduction

It is frequently assumed that during elections in African countries and other multi-ethnic settings candidates rally voters around shared ethnic identities.<sup>1</sup> Snyder, for example, argues that “political entrepreneurs who want to seize or strengthen state power find that traditional cultural networks based on a common religion or language provide convenient channels to mobilize backers” (Snyder 2000: 271). Similarly, Chandra argues that in multi-ethnic countries where elected leaders have discretion over state-controlled resources, “we should see a self-enforcing equilibrium of ethnic favouritism, in which voters mainly target co-ethnic politicians for favours, and *politicians mainly target co-ethnic voters for votes*” (Chandra 2004: 64, emphasis added). These claims resonate with a long-standing tradition in the ethnic politics literature that views politicians as representatives for their own ethnic communities in competition with other groups for control of valuable state-controlled resources (Horowitz 1985, Lijphart 1977, Rothschild 1981). By these accounts, the electoral game is about “mobilizing your own,” not reaching across ethnic lines to attract support from other communities.

Despite these powerful claims, few empirical studies of campaign dynamics in multi-ethnic settings exist, particularly in Africa’s new democracies. This chapter looks at campaign targeting in Kenya’s 2007 presidential election. The race included three main candidates, each from a different ethnic community. The incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, headed the Party of National Unity (PNU). The main challenger, Raila Odinga, a Luo, ran under the banner of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). And Kalonzo Musyoka, a Kamba, headed the Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya (ODM-K). This chapter seeks to understand how the candidates allocated campaign time across ethnic communities. Did they mainly court co-

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<sup>1</sup> “Ethnicity” is used here to encompass a variety of ascriptive (i.e., given by birth) categories, such as race, tribe, language group, religion, clan, and so forth.

ethnics, or did they also pursue voters from other communities? Contrary to expectations in much of the existing ethnic politics literature, I find that the candidates spent relatively little time in their home ethnic areas during the campaigns. Instead, each of the main presidential candidates spent the lion's share of his time on the campaign trail courting out-groups, specifically those groups that did not have a candidate in the race. This finding suggests that campaigns in multi-ethnic settings like Kenya are not solely about mobilizing co-ethnic support bases; courting voters from other ethnic communities is also a critical part of the campaign. Indeed, based on the data presented here, one might conclude that attracting out-group support was the *most* important aspect of the campaigns in 2007.

It is not hard to see why candidates in Kenya seek support from outside their own ethnic communities. As in most parts of Africa, ethnic groups are relatively small; the largest group, the Kikuyu, make up only about 21% of the total population. Recent works in the “constructivist” vein suggest that because ethnic identities are multi-dimensional, a candidate whose “own” ethnic community is not sufficiently large to serve as a winning coalition may be able to benefit from shifting the axis of political competition to a different identity dimension (Chandra 2004, Posner 2005). Yet, “dimension shifting” is often not a practical strategy, particularly in the short-term. As I will argue below, candidates in Kenya typically have limited ability to alter strategically the salience of ethnic categories during the course of a single election cycle. Candidates must therefore attract support from multiple ethnic communities if they are to be competitive in the presidential race.

The need to garner support from multiple ethnic groups presents presidential candidates (and their parties) with a basic dilemma: how much time (and resources) to devote to courting co-ethnics and how much to allocate to out-groups during the campaign? This can be seen as a

choice between mobilization (seeking to increase turn-out among core supporters) and persuasion (seeking to attract new supporters from swing voters). In Kenya “core” and “swing” are defined by ethnic identities. Voters who have a co-ethnic candidate in the race typically form ethnic voting blocs around their communal leader, providing candidates with a strong core support base at the start of the election. Voters who do not have a candidate in the race are often less attached to any of the candidates; it is these voters who are likely to be the swing. The choice then is between using campaign resources to try to mobilize co-ethnic core supporters, or attempting to gain vote share among non-co-ethnic swing voters.

Much of the existing core/swing literature suggests that parties ought to engage in *only* mobilization *or* persuasion. I argue instead that in Kenya parties typically have incentives to invest in both. In Kenya the more interesting question is not whether parties invest in mobilization or persuasion but how they multi-task to accomplish both. I argue that parties in Kenya divide labor between the two activities. Presidential candidates delegate the job of mobilizing co-ethnic supporters to lower-level actors in their ethnic strongholds. This leaves them free to devote the bulk of their time on the campaign trail to hunting for votes among out-groups.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The next section reviews related literature on campaign strategies. The third section develops my argument about how parties make campaign targeting decisions in Kenya. I then turn to data on the location of campaign rallies, providing evidence of a consistent pattern of ethnic targeting during the 2007 race. Next, I draw on survey data on campaign contact at the household level to show that while the presidential candidates spent relatively little time in their home ethnic areas, their parties did not neglect the important job of mobilizing co-ethnic voters. The final section concludes.

## **2. Related Literature**

Candidates and parties work hard to reach particular sub-groups during campaigns. Accounts from campaign strategists frequently note that the first step in any campaign is to divide the electorate into groups – those who are solidly on your side, those who you have little or no chance of reaching, and those who are somewhere in the middle. Based on this, strategists then decide which groups to court and which to avoid. As one scholar of campaigns notes, “Campaigns are not designed to reach everyone. Targeting involves categorizing different groups of voters, identifying their political preferences, and designing appeals to which they are likely to respond. It [targeting] is the foundation of virtually every aspect of campaign strategy” (Herrnson 2000: 189). How do parties make targeting decisions in ethnically diverse settings like Kenya? While there have been a number of excellent studies of campaign targeting in mature democracies (particularly the U.S.), much less is known about emerging democracies. This section briefly reviews three sets of related literature: the comparative literature on ethnic mobilization, the formal literature on distributional politics, and studies of campaign targeting across U.S. states in presidential elections.

### **2.1 Ethnic Mobilization**

In the comparative literature on ethnic politics, it is frequently argued that in multi-ethnic settings parties will focus on mobilizing co-ethnic support bases, rallying voters around ethnic identities. In a number of seminal works, parties are seen as akin to interest groups that advance the cause of particular segments of society in competition for scarce resources with other groups (Horowitz 1985, Lijphart 1977). By this logic, parties, whose very reason for existing is to represent some communities and not others, have no incentive to seek support from outside their

core ethnic bases or to share resources across ethnic boundaries. Similarly, Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) argue that in plural societies “outbidding” leads all politicians to favor their own communities. Any politician who fails to offer her own group a maximal share of state resources will quickly be replaced by a more extreme competitor. In this way electoral competition compels all candidates to favor their own groups, making cross-ethnic coalitions and resource sharing impossible.

More recent works build on the “constructivist” insight that ethnic identities are multi-dimensional and fluid (Kasfir 1979, Fearon 1999, Chandra 2004, Posner 2005). Candidates (and voters) may simultaneously identify in terms of their tribe, race, religion, language group, and other ethnic cleavages. Given this multi-dimensionality, a candidate whose “own” group on one ethnic dimension is too small to serve as a winning coalition may be able to improve her electoral chances by organizing voters around a different ethnic dimension. For example, Posner’s (2005) study of Zambia shows that candidates identify both in terms of their tribal community and their language group. Because language groups are larger than tribal groupings, candidates for national office can benefit by defining their “own” ethnic communities in terms of language, not tribe. Further, Posner argues that because promises to share resources across group lines are not likely to be seen as credible, cross-ethnic coalitions will be “very difficult, if not impossible to build” (Posner 2005: 106). As a result, politicians in multi-ethnic settings will find it difficult to attract voters from outside their own ethnic categories; they will be better off seeking to redefine how their “own” group is defined. Chandra similarly argues that, “a politician whose ‘own’ category is initially too small to confer an electoral advantage has an incentive to manipulate the correspondence between markers and categories in order to produce a more advantageous definition of who her ‘own’ people are” (Chandra 2004: 63).

Redefining one's "own" ethnic group, however, is often not a practical strategy, particularly within the span of a single election cycle. The Kenyan case illustrates this point. In Kenya it is primarily tribal categorizations that have political salience in national politics (indeed the terms "tribe" and "ethnic group" are used interchangeable in Kenya).<sup>2</sup> A candidate seeking a more advantageous ethnic categorization scheme might look to linguistic grouping instead of tribal identities. Kenya's tribes can be grouped into three broad language families – Nilotic, Bantu, and Cushite – based on their ancestral origins.<sup>3</sup> Consider a candidate who simultaneously holds a tribal identity as a Kikuyu and a language group identity as a Bantu. While Kikuyus make up only 21% of the population, Bantus comprise approximately 65%. In principle, the Kikuyu candidate could improve her electoral chances by organizing political competition around the Bantu-Nilotic-Cushite divide, presenting herself as the representative of all Bantus, not just Kikuyus.

However, divisions between the tribal groups that comprise the larger Bantu language community stand in the way of a Bantu alliance. Historically, relations between some Bantu tribal groups have been antagonistic. For example, in the run-up to independence in the 1960s, leaders from the Mijikenda and Kamba (both Bantu groups) broke off from the Kikuyu-led party, KANU, to form Kenya's first major opposition party, KADU (Kyle 1997). Central to KADU's electoral appeal was the notion that Kikuyu leaders favored their own *tribe* at the expense of other *tribes*, including other Bantu tribes (Bennett and Rosberg 1961). In the post-independence

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<sup>2</sup> Sub-tribe and clan divisions are also politically salient within some ethnic communities, particularly in local-level races for parliamentary and local government seats. However, because these categories are smaller than tribal groupings, they do not provide an advantageous categorization scheme for national-level political competition.

<sup>3</sup> The Nilotic category comprises several ethnic groups (Kalenjin, Luo, Maasai, Pokot, Samburu, Turkana) that originated in the Nile Valley and are thought to have migrated south into modern-day Kenya through the Rift Valley. The Bantu encompass several ethnic communities (Kikuyu, Meru, Embu, Mbeere, Kisii, Kamba, Kuria, Luhya, Mijikenda, Pokomo, and Taita) that are thought to have entered Kenya from the west and south. The Cushites encompass a number of smaller communities (Borana, Burji, El Molo, Gabbra, Merille, Orma, Rendille, Somali) that came to Kenya from the northeast and now reside primarily in Kenya's arid North. (Source: Nelson 1984).

era, the organizing principle for ethnic favoritism remained the tribal cleavage, not the linguistic cleavage (Throup 1987). Moreover, in the 2007 race, the potential for building a Bantu alliance that brought together the disparate Bantu tribes would have been limited by the widespread belief among members of several Bantu groups that the incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, favored his own Kikuyu tribal community at their group's expense.<sup>4</sup> Given this history, it would have been difficult for a Kikuyu candidate to convince other Bantus that he would act as the representative of the broader Bantu community. Promises to look after the interests of other Bantu tribes are likely to lack credibility with many non-Kikuyu Bantu voters who have come to expect that a Kikuyu candidate will favor his own tribal group, not the larger language group.

A second problem arises from the volatility of electoral competition in Kenya. While it might be possible to strengthen the salience of the Bantu-Nilote-Cushite categorization scheme over time, politicians may be hesitant to invest in the costly work of doing so because the payoff is typically uncertain. The problem is that candidates have little ability to predict the ethnic identity of their competitors in future electoral rounds. If a Kikuyu candidate knew that she would be facing a Luo (non-Bantu) in the next electoral round, then building the Bantu alliance would be a beneficial strategy. However, doing so would be a wasted effort if the Kikuyu candidate were to wind up facing a Kamba or a Luhya opponent (both Bantus), in which case the Bantu alliance would confer no advantage. The problem of uncertainty is compounded by time constraints. In Kenya's 2007 race, for example, it was well known that the incumbent president intended to run for re-election. However, the identity of his challengers was not known until the

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<sup>4</sup> Survey data collected in July 2007 (about six months before the 2007 election) show that many voters from Bantu groups thought that President Kibaki favored his own tribe at the expense of other tribal groups. The survey asked, "In your view does Kenya's government serve the interests of all ethnic groups, or does the government favor certain ethnic groups over others?" Among Kibaki's own ethnic community, the Kikuyu, only 12% of respondents said that the government favored some groups over others. Among other Bantu communities, the results were as follows: Kisii: 59%; Kamba: 43%; Luhya: 48%; Mijikenda: 52%; Taita: 61%; Meru/Embu: 4%. Among those who thought the government favored certain groups, the vast majority (92%) said it favored "Kikuyus." Source: survey conducted by the Steadman Group, July 2007 (n=2,025).

opposition parties held their nomination conventions, about three months before the election. This left the candidates with precious little time to affect change in the ethnic axis around which competition would occur in the race.

For these reasons, the possibility of dimension shifting is frequently unavailable to political aspirants in Kenya. Constrained in their ability to alter the salience of ethnic cleavages strategically (at least in the short term), Kenyan candidates must seek support from multiple ethnic communities if they are to be competitive at the national level. This observation, however, tells us nothing about how presidential candidates will divide their time on the campaign trail, nor which groups the candidates will court and which they will avoid.

## **2.2 Models of Distributional Politics**

The formal literature on distributional politics is also relevant to campaign strategies in Kenya. This literature offers two basic and opposing models of how parties ought to invest resources. In Cox and McCubbins' core voter model (1986), parties develop ties to particular groups within society. These groups may be defined by ideological preferences, racial/ethnic identities, or other attributes. Parties have a high degree of certainty about the return on investment from targeting resources to core supporters – groups that are well known to the party. Targeting swing voters is a riskier proposition because parties are less able to predict how voters in these groups will respond. The authors posit that if politicians are risk-averse, the preferable strategy is to favor one's existing coalition, maintaining durable ties to one's core support base over time.

An opposing view is offered by Dixit and Londregan's swing voter model (1996). The inspiration for their approach is the notion that it is a waste of time to allocate resources to core

groups, whose support is already assured because of ideological proximity. In their model parties hold fixed ideological positions and must decide which groups to target with material transfers. Groups are distinguished by the share of ideologically-moderate voters contained in each. The Dixit-Londregan model predicts that parties will target resources to groups that have a large share of moderates – voters who are relatively indifferent between the two parties on ideological grounds. It is these voters who can be swayed by a monetary transfer, and the return on investment is greater from targeting swing groups rather than core voters, whose support is already secured because of ideological beliefs.

Stokes' vote buying model (2005) similarly predicts that parties will target swing voters. In her model two parties that hold different ideological positions must decide whether to spend campaign resources on core or swing voters. Core supporters are not targeted because they cannot credibly threaten to defect. A liberal party, for example, knows that liberal voters will not support the conservative party. Only voters who lean toward the conservative side can credibly threaten to vote for the conservative party. The liberal party therefore targets *weakly opposed* voters who would otherwise vote for the conservative party and whose support can be bought relatively cheaply. The vote-buying transaction, however, is subject to a prisoner's dilemma problem. Conservative voters would prefer to get the money from the liberal party and nonetheless vote for their preferred ideological choice. Likewise, the liberal party would prefer to get the votes from the conservative voters but avoid having to pony up the cash. Stokes' solution to this problem is to envision the interaction as a repeated-play game with an infinite time horizon, making cooperation preferable to defection.

Less attention has been devoted specifically to multi-ethnic settings. One important study (Kasara 2007), however, argues that in Africa leaders have incentives to *disfavor* their own

ethnic communities in the distribution of material resources. Like Cox and McCubbins (1986), Kasara draws on the notion that leaders have superior information about their core support groups. However, while Cox and McCubbins argue that this informational advantage inclines parties to favor core supporters, Kasara suggests that the informational advantage allows leaders to neglect their core ethnic groups. The difference is that while in Cox and McCubbins resources are deployed to buy and maintain electoral support over time, in Kasara resources are used to co-opt local intermediaries whose support helps maintain the leader's grip on power. By her account, superior knowledge of their own ethnic communities means that leaders are better able to limit the emergence of rival candidates within their home ethnic areas, relative to other ethnic regions. Because fewer powerful intermediaries emerge in rulers' home ethnic areas, fewer resources are targeted to these areas. It is important to note, however, that Kasara's main empirical findings are from a period (1966 to 1995) when single-party rule was the norm in Africa. It is less clear whether and how her findings may be relevant to campaign targeting decisions in contemporary African states, in which multi-party competition is now the norm. While the desire to co-opt emerging leaders may still be relevant in multi-party systems, the need to attract and maintain electoral support is likely to figure prominently in distributional decisions in multi-party systems. Whether electoral incentives conflict with or reinforce the incentives generated by the need to co-opt powerful local intermediaries remains an open question.

The distributional models described here are poorly suited for explaining campaign targeting decisions in Kenya for at least two reasons. First, they do not distinguish between short-term and long term-goals. For example, both Cox and McCubbins (1986) and Dixit and Londregan (1996) assume that during the campaign parties announce how they will distribute resources across groups; these pledges are then honored after the election. Stokes' work

addresses the credibility problem inherent in such promises. Yet, by modeling the transaction between parties and voters as a repeated-play game with an infinite time horizon, her model allows for no distinction between how parties target resources during campaigns and after the election. However, as Diaz-Cayeros et al. (2007) point out, parties often have incentives to differentiate between short-term and long-term goals. The authors argue that over the long-term, parties will want to direct resources to core supporters in order to maintain their existing electoral coalitions. Failure to reward loyal supporters will lead to an erosion of the party's core base. However, during an election campaign targeting decisions may be driven by the desire to pick up swing voters. Moreover, if a party has done a good job of building and maintaining a strong coalition over time, it will enter the election with a secure base, knowing that some voters are already in the bag. Thus, in some cases the greatest return during the campaign will come from targeting swing voters and neglecting core supporters. After the election, though, parties may use the spoils of victory to reward their core supporters. In short, the authors argue that is important to distinguish between the logic of campaign targeting and the logic of resource allocation.

Second, most existing distributional models treat turn-out as a constant (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1986, Dixit and Londregan 1996, Stokes 2005, Hirano, Snyder and Ting 2009). Yet in campaigns parties often devote considerable effort to getting existing supporters to the polls. While some recent vote buying models have allowed turnout to vary (e.g., Nichter 2008, Stokes and Dunning 2007), the results of such models are driven in large part by the transactional nature of the vote-buying exchange, particularly the problem of observing voter behavior in the voting booth after the introduction of the secret ballot. Such concerns, however, are less relevant to

decisions about how allocate campaign time (or other resources) that are not transactional in nature.

### **2.3 Campaign Targeting in U.S. Presidential Elections**

Finally, a third set of literature comes from studies of the allocation of campaign time and advertising resources across states in U.S. presidential races. One early formal study (Brams and Davis 1974) argues that presidential candidates ought to spend a disproportionate amount of time in large states that have a higher number of Electoral College votes. Colantoni, Levesque and Ordeshook (1975) argue instead that the allocation of campaign resources ought to reflect the closeness of races within states. More recent works (Snyder 1989, Stromberg 2008) have argued that how much time a candidate spends in a state depends both on how close the race is and the likelihood that the state will be pivotal in the outcome of the overall race. However, from a comparative perspective the main limitation of these models is that the U.S., unlike most other countries, uses an indirect method (the Electoral College) to elect presidents. The Electoral College has the effect of increasing the value of campaigning in pivotal states and reducing the incentives to campaign in candidates' strongholds. Democratic candidates, for example, have little incentive to use campaign resources in states like New York where the Democratic nominee is virtually assured to carry the state's vote. Moreover, existing models of campaign strategy in the U.S. typically hold turnout constant, like many models of distributional politics. For these reasons, such models are not easily exported to other settings. Yet, the core intuition of these works does provide a valuable starting point for thinking about campaign strategy in other settings. The key insight, on which I build below, is that if the goal of campaigning is to increase vote share, candidates ought to target areas where there is likely to be a large number of marginal

voters who may be swayed by the persuasive effects of campaigning. If, on the other hand, the goal is mobilization, then candidates ought to target areas where their existing supporters are concentrated.

### **3. Campaign Strategy in Kenya**

This section offers an argument about how parties allocate campaign time between their core ethnic communities and out-groups in Kenya. The starting point is the observation that in Kenya voters generally hold strong preferences for co-ethnic candidates, much like voters in many other multi-ethnic settings (this claim is developed more fully in the previous chapter). Following other recent scholarship, I note that the preference for co-ethnic leaders inclines voters to look to the ethnic identities of candidates (and their parties) for clues about how they are likely to behave once in office – which groups they will favor and which groups they will neglect (Chandra 2004, Posner 2005, Ferree 2009). Thus, when Kenyan voters face a choice between a co-ethnic and a non-co-ethnic candidate, they often choose the co-ethnic simply on the basis of the candidates' identities. This means that voters who have a co-ethnic candidate in the race typically rally around their ethnic leader once the field of candidates becomes clear.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, presidential candidates generally enter the campaigns already having secured the support of their own ethnic communities. A candidate's own ethnic group can therefore be seen as her core support base – those voters who are most steadfast in their support for the candidate. It is

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<sup>5</sup> I leave aside the case in which two or more candidates from the same ethnic community compete in the election both because this introduces an additional element of complexity and because the empirical section of this paper examines a case in which the main candidates each came from different ethnic groups. It is important to note, however, that the existence of competitors from a candidate's own ethnic community would in all likelihood alter the candidates' campaign strategies, increasing the incentives to spend time courting co-ethnic voters during the race.

unlikely that these voters will abandon their co-ethnic leader during the campaign, and there is little that an opponent will be able to do or say to entice these voters to change their vote.

Voters who do not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race, however, are often more up-for-grabs. A central feature of presidential elections in Kenya is that some communities invariably have a co-ethnic candidate in the race and others do not. In the 2007 race, for example, only the Kikuyu, Luo, and Kamba communities (who collectively make up about 44% of the population) had a co-ethnic in the race. For the other 56% of the population, the choice was between three non-co-ethnics. One way that these voters may decide between the alternatives is to examine the broader “ethnic profiles” of the candidates’ parties in order to determine which party is more inclusive of their own group (Chandra 2004, Ferree 2009). This process of “counting heads” across parties, however, is not always a simple one. If one party has a clear monopoly on leaders from a voter’s group, it is relatively easy to determine which party is the better choice. However, in Kenya parties compete vigorously to attract the best talent from across ethnic communities, and leaders from groups that do not have a co-ethnic in the race often divide between the main parties.<sup>6</sup> Voters from communities that do not have a co-ethnic in the presidential race, therefore, often face greater uncertainty about which party will better represent their community, relative to voters who have a co-ethnic in the race. As a result, voters from these communities are potentially more subject to campaign persuasion than voters who have a co-ethnic in the race. For this reason, such voters can be considered the “swing” groups.

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<sup>6</sup> In the 2007 election, for example, the main parties included top leaders from the major ethnic groups that did not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race. All three parties, for example, chose vice presidential nominees from the Luhya community, the largest ethnic group that did not have a candidate in the race (for PNU the nominee was Moody Awori, for ODM it was Musalia Mudavadi, and for ODM-K it was Julia Ojiambo). Top leaders from the Kalenjin community were also divided between the parties, particularly the two leading parties, PNU and ODM. Several top Kalenjin leaders (e.g., William Ruto, Henry Kosgei, and Sally Kosgei) sided with the main opposition party, ODM, while the former President, Daniel arap Moi endorsed Kibaki and several of Moi’s protégés chose to affiliate with the PNU coalition (e.g., Nicholas Biwott, Nick Salat, Jimmy Choge, Kipruto Kirwa, and three of Moi’s sons). Leaders from other communities, such as the Mijikenda, Meru/Embu, Kisii, and the Masaai, were also divided between the main parties.

While candidates can rely on their own ethnic communities for electoral support, as noted earlier, ethnic groups are too small to serve as winning coalitions on their own. Table 1 shows the main ethnic groups in Kenya. The largest group, the Kikuyu, make up only about 21% of the population. In practice, the Kikuyu often act in concert with the Meru and Embu, two closely related ethnic groups found near the Kikuyu in the Mount Kenya region. Yet, the Kikuyu/Meru/Embu bloc collectively makes up only about 27% of the total population. The average group in Kenya (excluding those communities that are less than one percent of the population) is a mere eight percent of the total population.<sup>7</sup> In short, for presidential candidates the strategy of “mobilizing your own” is a losing proposition.

[Table 1 here]

While the small size of ethnic groups leads candidates to seek support outside their own communities, the candidates also care about making sure that their most steadfast supporters (co-ethnics) turn out in large numbers at the polls. Electoral outcomes are of course determined both by the distribution of support within the electorate and by turnout rates across groups. In competitive elections parties must therefore decide how to divide resources between getting core supporters to the polls and attracting new partisans. In Kenya, where core and swing are defined in ethnic terms, the choice is between mobilizing co-ethnics and seeking to convert voters from out-groups. If the goal is to increase vote share (persuasion), parties ought to hold rallies in locations where there is likely to be many potential swing voters. Given that the candidates enter

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<sup>7</sup> Figures for other African countries are similar. Data compiled by Fearon (2003) provides information on 332 distinct ethnic groups larger than one percent of the population within 43 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Across Africa the average group size is 13% of the national population. Only 12 groups (4% of the total) make up 50% or more of a nation’s population. This means that for most candidates, in most countries, co-ethnics will not provide a sufficient base for national-level electoral contests.

the race with strong support from co-ethnic voters, there will be few potential swing voters available for conversion in their ethnic strongholds, nor in opponents' core ethnic areas. This means that if the goal of the campaign is to attract new supporters, the parties ought to hold rallies in areas primarily inhabited by out-groups that do not have a candidate in the race. If, on the other hand, the goal is mobilization, then the parties ought to hold rallies in areas where there is a high density of strong supporters, and the highest concentration of existing supporters at the start of the race is likely to be in their core ethnic areas. Because campaign time is limited, candidates must choose between using rallies for persuasion and mobilization, and if they are strategic they will allocate campaign effort according to the relative return on each type of activity.

Much of the existing literature argues that parties will invest only in persuasion or mobilization (Cox and McCubbins 1986, Dixit and Londregan 1996, Stokes 2005, Nichter 2008). I argue by contrast that parties in Kenya have incentives to invest in both. While in some cases, it may be advantageous to use rallies only for persuasion or mobilization, such conditions are likely to be rare in Kenya. For example if a candidate expects that turnout rates will be low in his party's home ethnic area and few swing voters will be available in out-groups, then the greater return on investment will come from holding rallies in the party's ethnic stronghold. Alternatively, if the candidate expects that turnout rates will be very high in his party's core ethnic area and the number of potential swing voters in out-groups will be large, then the party will be better off holding rallies outside its ethnic stronghold. However, in most elections there will be potential gains to be had both from persuasion and mobilization. Usually at least half of the electorate will not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race, making persuasion a viable strategy. At the same time, turnout rates in Kenya have historically been relatively low, meaning

that mobilization may also yield positive returns.<sup>8</sup> And because rallies are likely to have diminishing marginal returns, parties will rarely want to invest only in one type of activity.

Parties are also likely to face considerable uncertainty regarding the relative return on persuasion and mobilization. Within the scholarly literature on campaigns, there are important on-going debates about the effectiveness of mobilization and persuasion (for example, on mobilization see Gerber and Green 2000, Imai 2005, Gerber and Green 2005; on persuasion, see Finkel 1993, Hillygus and Shields 2008, Vavreck 2008). These debates attest to the fact that even in mature democracies considerable uncertainty exists regarding the effectiveness of campaign activities, the extent of possible returns from each type of activity, and when such activities are likely to yield the greatest return. In emerging democracies, uncertainty is likely to be compounded by the fact that parties are often younger and have less experience and data on which to draw. Given this uncertainty, I argue that if parties are risk-averse they ought to invest in both persuasion and mobilization. In sum, because persuasion and mobilization are both likely to be characterized by diminishing marginal returns and the yield on each type of investment is likely to be uncertain, parties will generally seek to invest in both.

In Kenya, then, the interesting question is not whether parties will focus their attention only on co-ethnics or out-groups during the campaign, but how they will use their time and resources to reach both. I argue that parties divide labor between persuasion and mobilization. Presidential candidates delegate the job of mobilizing core co-ethnic supporters to a variety of lower-level actors within their home ethnic areas. The first is lower-level candidates – those running for parliamentary and local government seats – within their parties. The dominance of

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<sup>8</sup> In the three elections since the re-introduction of multi-party elections in 1991, the official turnout rates have been 69% in 1992, 67% in 1997, and 57% in 2002. It should be noted, however, that the 1992 and 1997 contests in particular were marred by electoral manipulations, meaning that these numbers are probably imprecise estimates of actual turnout.

the presidential candidates within their ethnic strongholds means that their parties are able to attract the best local candidates for lower-level races. This gives each party a significant campaigning advantage within their home ethnic area, as the presidential aspirants have the best funded and most popular actors working on their behalf in these areas. In addition, the parties can rely on interest groups to campaign on their behalf within their ethnic strongholds. In 2007, for example, a number of loosely-affiliated groups formed to support President Kibaki's re-election drive. The main group, *Kibaki Tena*, was primarily made up of wealthy co-ethnic Kikuyu businessmen, who operated largely in the candidate's home ethnic area, the Central Province. The parties can also tap strong social networks in their home areas. The main opposition party in 2007, ODM, for example, employed a mobilization strategy in its core Luo area in which voters were called upon to ensure that other members of their networks made it to the polls on election day.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in PNU's core ethnic area, there was an organized effort – “operation *filibi* (whittle)” – to wake up voters early on election day and make sure they made it to the polls, and many business owners closed their shops and bars until everyone had voted (Kagwanja 2009: 375). The strength of these local actors allows the parties to send their “big guns” – the presidential candidates and other top leaders – off to work on converting voters in the swing communities while leaving the job of mobilizing co-ethnic supporters to others.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, the argument presented here suggests that in Kenya presidential candidates will spend relatively little time in their own ethnic areas, given that they enter the race with strong support from co-ethnics and can delegate the job of mobilizing these supporters to other actors.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with ODM senior campaign strategist, Nairobi, September 27, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> This division of labor may also reflect a comparative advantage held by national and local actors. Anecdotal accounts of campaigns in Kenya suggest that it is within the parties' ethnic strongholds that they use the most divisive and nasty appeals. It may be that lower-level actors are better suited for communicating such messages because they rely only on support from co-ethnics, unlike the presidential candidates who must attract support from multiple communities and typically seek to avoid being tarnished by engaging in divisive campaign tactics.

At the same time, they will spend little time campaigning in each other's home ethnic areas, since they have little chance of garnering support in these areas. If these claims are correct, then the candidates should spend the bulk of their time on the campaign trail courting those groups that do not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race.

#### **4. Data**

On December 27, 2007 Kenya held national elections for the presidency, parliament, and local-government seats, the country's fourth multi-party contest since the reintroduction of competitive politics in 1991. The presidential race was a tightly-fought contest between the incumbent president, Kibaki, and the main challenger, Odinga. Polls conducted throughout the campaign routinely showed the two to be within a few percentage points of each other. The third-place candidate, Musyoka, was never a viable contender; his share of the vote hovered around 8-10% throughout the campaign period. In the last weeks of the campaign, polls found that the two front-runners were locked in a statistical tie, and commentators declared the race "too close to call."<sup>11</sup> The final results, announced on December 30, showed the incumbent president, Kibaki, winning by a narrow margin. Irregularities in the vote counting process, however, led to widespread claims of fraud, and disputes over the outcome sparked a wave of violent ethnic clashes in which at least 1,000 people were killed and another 300,000 displaced (Throup 2008, Anderson and Lochery 2008).

Data collected prior to the start of the 2007 campaigns shows that the two leading candidates – Kibaki and Odinga – entered the race with near-universal support from co-ethnic voters. Table 2 shows voting intentions by ethnic community from a survey conducted in September 2007, about three months before the election and before the main period of

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<sup>11</sup> *The Standard*, November 10, 2007, p. 2. *The Daily Nation*, December 19, 2007, p.1.

campaigning. The data show that 90% of Kikuyus intended to vote for their co-ethnic candidate (Kibaki) and 94% of Luos similarly intended to vote for their co-ethnic leader (Odinga). For the third-place candidate, Musyoka, support within his own community was less secure, but the majority (59%) of Kambas nonetheless expressed an intention to vote for him. Table 2 also shows that at the start of the 2007 race, most of the larger “swing” groups that did not have a co-ethnic in the race leaned toward one of the main candidates. Most Luhyas, Kalenjins, and Kisiis registered an intention to vote for Odinga, while Merus and Embus leaned toward Kibaki. The Mijikenda were more evenly divided between the two candidates. The data also show that the race was shaping up to be a relatively close one; the spread between the two leading candidates was estimated to be about 9%.

[Table 2 here]

Campaigns in Kenya are conducted mainly through direct contact with voters. In the months prior to the election, the presidential candidates and their parties organized large rallies, impromptu road-side meetings, “town hall” gatherings, and other public events. Survey data shows the extensive reach of these activities. An Afrobarometer survey conducted shortly before the election asked respondents if they had attended an election rally within the last year.<sup>12</sup> In total, 65% of respondents reported having attended at least one rally, with many (44%) saying they had attended two or more.

To examine how the presidential candidates allocated their campaign time across ethnic communities, I collected information on the location of rallies held by the three main presidential candidates in the months prior to the election, following an approach used in studies of U.S.

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<sup>12</sup> Afrobarometer survey (n=1,206), conducted in mid-December 2007, about two weeks before the election.

campaigns (West 1983, 1984; Shaw 2006; Althaus et al. 2002; Jones 1998; Herr 2002). Because ethnic groups are geographically concentrated in Kenya, data on the location of campaign rallies provides a useful indicator of which groups the candidates were courting. I collected all articles about campaign events from Kenya's two largest daily newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Standard*, during the four months prior to the election (August 27 to December 27, 2007).<sup>13</sup> In total 280 articles were collected, yielding a dataset with information on 279 individual rallies. I counted a rally as any public event attended by a presidential candidate in the four months prior to the election. All events in which the candidates spoke to the public, regardless of the size of the audience, were included. Church attendance and funerals were not included, unless the candidate addressed the crowd. Press conferences were not included, since these were addressed to the media, not a local audience. All rally events were treated as equivalent despite the fact that they varied considerably in size and duration. Some were massive events that attracted many thousands of people; others were impromptu road-side visits that drew a few hundred. Some lasted for several hours, others for less than 30 minutes. While it would be preferable to code the rallies in some way that accounted for differences in size and duration, the newspaper coverage did not provide sufficient information to allow for this.

Potential sources of bias are worth addressing. One concern is that the papers might have covered rallies in urban areas more extensively than in hard-to-reach rural locations. This was not the case. Throughout the race, media personnel frequently traveled with the candidates. Given their desire for media coverage, the candidates had incentives to bring the journalists with them when they travelled outside the urban centers. Moreover, the newspapers relied on an extensive network of freelance writers who were stationed throughout the country and could be

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<sup>13</sup> I was able to obtain nearly every edition of each newspaper during this period. On a few rare occasions, however, it was not possible to obtain one of the papers due to irregularities in their supply.

called upon to cover rallies in remote areas. For these reasons, coverage of rallies in outlying areas was on par with coverage of rallies in urban centers. Nonetheless, despite the papers' extensive coverage of the rallies, not all rallies were reported. In particular, when the candidates held multiple rallies on the same day, the newspapers did not always list the location of every individual event. In such cases the newspapers typically noted the general area where the candidate spent the day and indicated some of the specific locations where rallies were held. Drawing articles from two separate news sources considerably reduced this problem, however, as details that were omitted in one paper were often provided by the other. Further, because all candidates maintained busy travel schedules, particularly in the last weeks of the race, the missing data is likely to have been randomly distributed across the three, not biased in any systematic way.

Determining which ethnic groups the candidates targeted in their rallies requires demographic data at the sub-national level. Unfortunately, Kenya's census data is not sufficiently detailed. The most recent census from which ethnic information is available was conducted in 1989 and provides data only at the district level, a relatively large administrative unit. I therefore used survey data to create estimates of the ethnic composition of parliamentary constituencies, a smaller geographic unit. Data from 12 nationally-representative surveys conducted between November 2006 and January 2009 was merged, yielding a total sample of 39,065 respondents.<sup>14</sup> This data was then used to estimate constituency-level ethnicity profiles for each of Kenya's 210 parliamentary constituencies. The mean number of respondents per constituency was 186. To validate this approach, I compared the survey estimates to the 1989

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<sup>14</sup> The data came from surveys conducted by Strategic Research on behalf of the International Republican Institute (November 2006, March 2007, September 2007, December 2007), Steadman (October 2007, mid-November 2007, late November 2007, early December 2007, mid-December 2007, December 2008), Afrobarometer (December 2007), and Research International (December 2008-January 2009).

census data at the district level.<sup>15</sup> Because parliamentary constituencies are nested within districts, it was possible to create district-level estimates from the survey data and then compare these to the 1989 census figures. The table in Appendix 1 shows the largest group and its share of the total population for all districts, taken both from the census and the survey estimates. Given that the survey data was collected nearly 20 years after the 1989 census, I do not expect a perfect match. The table shows, however, that the survey estimates match the census data surprisingly well. In 40 out of 41 districts, the survey data correctly identified the largest group. And in most districts (32 out of 41), the difference between the size of the largest group in the census data and the survey estimates was less than 10%. The relatively close fit between the survey estimates and the census data suggests that it is reasonable to use the survey data for estimating sub-national ethnic demographics.

## 5. Results

Figure 1 maps the location of all rallies held by the presidential candidates over population density data (from the 1999 census). The map shows that the candidates not surprisingly spent most of their time in the densely-populated areas in central and western Kenya, and to a lesser extent on the coast. Much of Kenya's North is sparsely populated desert. The candidates occasionally held rallies in the larger towns in the North, but spent relatively little time there.

[Figure 1 here]

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<sup>15</sup> At the time of the 1989 census, there were 41 districts in Kenya. The number of districts has increased considerably in recent years.

Figures 2-4 map the campaign rallies held by each of the three candidates individually. The maps show the candidates' core ethnic regions, which were defined as all parliamentary constituencies in which a candidate's own community made up 75% or more of the population.<sup>16</sup> For Kibaki, this included 32 constituencies in the Central Province;<sup>17</sup> for Odinga, 20 constituencies in Nyanza Province;<sup>18</sup> and for Musyoka, 17 constituencies in Eastern Province.<sup>19</sup> The maps suggest that an ethnic logic was at work during the campaigns. The maps show that the candidates tended to avoid their own ethnic areas and each other's ethnic strongholds. Instead, the candidates held most of their rallies in areas inhabited primarily by out-groups that did not have a candidate in the race, particularly targeting the populous areas in western Kenya, around the capital city, Nairobi, and along the coast.

[Figures 2-4 here]

Table 3, which summarizes the data presented in the maps, provides greater detail. Starting with Kibaki, the Kikuyu candidate, the data show that most of the president's rallies (79%) were held in areas inhabited predominantly by out-groups that did not have a candidate in

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<sup>16</sup> The 75% cutoff point was chosen in order to ensure that candidates' core ethnic areas included only those constituencies with an overwhelming majority of co-ethnic voters. While the 75% cutoff is somewhat arbitrary, the analysis presented here is not sensitive to this definition. An alternative approach would be to define each candidate's core ethnic area as those constituencies within which the candidate's own community made up a majority of the population, rather than 75%. However, using the 50% cutoff would increase the number of constituencies included in the Kikuyu core ethnic area by only two (from 32 to 34) and would not increase the number of constituencies included in the Luo or Kamba core ethnic areas.

<sup>17</sup> Kinangop, Kipipiri, Olkalou, Ndaragwa, Tetu, Kieni, Mathira, Othaya, Mukurweini, Nyeri Town, Mwea, Gichugu, Ndia, Kerugoya/Kutus, Kangema, Mathioya, Kiharu, Kigumo, Maragwa, Kandara, Gatanga, Gatundu South, Gatundu North, Juja, Githunguri, Kiambaa, Kabete, Limuru, Lari, Laikipia West, Laikipia East, Subukia.

<sup>18</sup> Ugenya, Alego, Gem, Bondo, Rarieda, Kisumu Town East, Kisumu Town West, Kisumu Rural, Nyando, Nyakach, Kasipul Kabondo, Karachuonyo, Rangwe, Ndhiwa, Rongo, Migori, Uriri, Nyatike, Mbita, Gwasi.

<sup>19</sup> Mwingi North, Mwingi South, Kitui West, Kitui Central, Kitui South, Mutito, Masinga, Yatta, Kangundo, Kathiani, Machakos Town, Mwala, Mbooni, Kilome, Kaiti, Makueni, Kibwezi.

the race. Kibaki held only 11% of his rallies in the core Kikuyu ethnic area.<sup>20</sup> The president completely avoided Odinga's core ethnic area, failing to visit the Luo section of Nyanza Province even once during the campaign. Kibaki did, however, hold a number of rallies (10% of the total) in Musyoka's home ethnic area in Eastern Province. As noted earlier, Musyoka's standing among co-ethnics at the start of the race was less secure than for the leading candidates. Because of this, Kibaki may have reasonably thought that he might have been able to pick up some votes in the Kamba area.

[Table 3 here]

For Odinga the pattern was similar. The candidate carefully avoided areas that had a co-ethnic in race, including his own Luo region. Like Kibaki, Odinga held most rallies (95%) in parts of the country mainly inhabited by groups that did not have a candidate in the race. He spent relatively little time in his own ethnic area, holding only 4% of his rallies in the core Luo area. Odinga also carefully avoided his opponents' ethnic areas, visiting the Kikuyu core area only once and the Kamba core area not at all.

Finally, for Musyoka, the Kamba candidate, the general pattern was similar. However, Musyoka, who entered the race with less universal support among his co-ethnic community, allocated a larger portion of campaign time to his own ethnic area, holding 29% of all rallies in the Kamba core area. Like the other candidates, though, he avoided his opponents' core ethnic areas, visiting the Kikuyu area only once and the Luo area not at all. As with the frontrunners,

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<sup>20</sup> This data somewhat exaggerates the amount of time that Kibaki spent in his home region. Almost all of Kibaki's campaigning in the Kikuyu area of the Central Province occurred on a single day, December 14, on which Kibaki held 10 small, roadside rallies in his home area. Aside from this day, Kibaki visited the core Kikuyu ethnic area only four times in the four months prior to the election.

Musyoka spent the lion's share of his campaign time (70%) in areas primarily inhabited by voters who did not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race.

While the results presented so far suggest that ethnic consideration influenced the candidates' decisions about where to hold rallies, there is a danger that these findings may be spurious. It is possible, for example, that other factors may be correlated with ethnic demographics and that these factors – not ethnicity – may have been at work. For example, it could be the case that the parties sought to hold rallies in densely populated areas and that the communities that did not have a co-ethnic candidate in the race happened to reside in higher-density parts of the country than groups that did.

To examine the candidates' campaign strategies more carefully, I estimate regression models for each candidate. I use negative binomial regression models, which are appropriate for event count data characterized by overdispersion (Long and Freese 2006). The models take the parliamentary constituency as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is the number of rallies held by the candidate in each constituency during the four months prior to the election. The key independent variables are the share of Kikuyus, Luos, and Kambas in the constituency. As noted earlier, because census data is not available at the constituency level, I use survey data to estimate the ethnic composition of the constituencies. The models control for the number of voters per constituency, which varies considerably between constituencies in Kenya, in order to control for the possibility that candidates target more populous areas (this data comes from the Electoral Commission of Kenya). I also include a measure of population density (voters per square kilometer) for each constituency in order to control for the possibility that candidates target areas of high concentration. I include a measure of the margin of victory in the previous parliamentary election, held in 2002, to control for the possibility that presidential rallies were

used to help lower-level candidates who might be facing tight elections. Finally, I include a dummy variable for Starehe constituency, which contains the central area of Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. Starehe may be an outlier because it contains Uhuru Grounds, the city park where the candidates often held rallies geared for broadcast on national television and radio, not local consumption.

The results of the three regression models, shown in Table 4, confirm the findings presented above. The models show that, after controlling for relevant demographic factors, the ethnic composition of constituencies was consistently related to the candidates' campaign strategies. Kibaki was significantly less likely to hold rallies in constituencies with large Kikuyu or Luo populations, though he did not avoid Kamba areas. Likewise, Odinga was less likely to hold rallies in constituencies where any of the three groups were found, including his own Luo community. For Musyoka the strategy was different, as noted previously. While he did avoid his opponents' ethnic areas, he was more likely to hold rallies in constituencies dominated by his own ethnic group, the Kamba.<sup>21</sup> The models show that constituency size was highly significant in the way expected: all three candidates were more likely to hold rallies in constituencies with larger populations. Population density, however, only mattered for one of the three candidates, Kibaki, who held a larger share of rallies in the dense urban areas in and around Nairobi than his competitors. The competitiveness of previous parliamentary races was not significant, nor was the dummy on Nairobi's central area, Starehe constituency.

While it is clear from the analysis presented so far that the candidates spent considerable time courting out-groups, one question that remains is whether they converged on the same set of

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<sup>21</sup> After estimating each model, I conducted a test for the joint significance of the three ethnicity variables that measure the share of Kikuyus, Luos, and Kambas in each constituency. In each model, the three variables were jointly significant at the .01 level. These tests indicate that the three ethnicity variables, taken together, were associated with the location of campaign rallies, relative to all other ethnic areas of the country.

groups or targeted different out-groups during the campaign. For parties seeking to build a winning coalition, one plausible strategy might be to assemble a support base made up of several distinct ethnic voting blocs. Indeed, looking at distribution of support in the 2007 race (Table 2), one might view PNU as essentially a coalition of the Kikuyu, Meru, and Embu; ODM as a coalition of the Luo, Kalenjin, and Luhya; and ODM-K as a Kamba party. Moreover, it is possible that when deciding where to hold rallies outside of their ethnic strongholds, candidates may chose to focus on particular out-groups that they expect to be most responsive to campaign persuasion for whatever reason. It is therefore interesting to ask whether the parties targeted different swing groups, or whether they actively competed for the same sets of voters when they traveled outside their ethnic strongholds.

To answer this question I examine the share of the candidates' rallies held in the core ethnic areas of each of Kenya's eight largest ethnic communities (these groups collectively account for about 86% of the Kenyan population, according to the 1989 census). Each group's core ethnic area was again defined as those parliamentary constituencies in which the group made up 75% or more of the population.<sup>22</sup> Figure 5 shows that outside the parties' home ethnic regions, the candidates did by and large converge on the same communities. This can be seen by looking at the Luhya, the largest ethnic community that did not have a co-ethnic candidate in the presidential race. Figure 5 shows that the three candidates devoted similar shares of campaign time to the Luhya core area; Kibaki held 10% of all rallies there, Odinga 9%, and Musyoka 8%. The same is true for the Kalenjin, Meru, and Kisii areas, in which all three candidates invested

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<sup>22</sup> I exclude constituencies that do not have a dominant ethnic group (>75%) for the practical reason that when a candidate visits more diverse constituencies it is difficult to determine which group or groups the candidate is targeting. While the 75% cutoff is arbitrary, as noted earlier, the analysis presented here is not sensitive to this choice. An alternative approach would be to define each group's core ethnic area as those constituencies in which the group makes up a majority of the population, rather than 75%. This has little effect, however. Doing so would increase the number of constituencies included in the Kikuyu ethnic area from 32 to 34, the Luhya area from 21 to 22, the Kalenjin area from 18 to 23, and the Mijikenda area from 7 to 9. The number of constituencies included in the Luo, Kamba, Kisii and Meru core areas would not change.

relatively similar shares of their campaign time. In the Mijikenda area on the Coast, Kibaki and Odinga held a similar share of rallies, though Musyoka held none. In sum, the data suggest that the parties did not court unique, non-overlapping coalitions; outside of their ethnic strongholds they actively competed for the same sets of voters.

[Figure 5 here]

## 6. What about Mobilization?

One might conclude from the results presented so far that the presidential candidates – particularly the two front-runners – simply chose persuasion over mobilization. I argued earlier that rather than neglecting mobilization, the candidates delegated the job within their core ethnic areas to other actors. To test this proposition, I turn to survey data on campaign contact by the parties at the household level. The data comes from a national opinion poll conducted between December 2008 and January 2009, about a year after the 2007 election.<sup>23</sup> Survey respondents were asked the following question: “Did a candidate or agent from any party come to your home during the campaign before last year’s election?” The survey found that 52% of respondents had been contacted by one or more party during the election. In total, 37% of respondents were contacted by PNU; 41% by ODM; and 13% by ODM-K.

To examine contact rates across ethnic communities, I estimate a logit model for each of the three parties, PNU, ODM, and ODM-K. The dependent variable in each model is a

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<sup>23</sup> This data come from a survey that was conducted as part of an evaluation of Kenya’s national civic education program. The sample frame for the survey was all participants in the civic education program, not the overall Kenyan population. For this reason, it was necessary to weight the sample to approximate a sample of the Kenyan population. To determine how the sample should be weighted, I compared the data to a recent random-sample survey, conducted by the Afrobarometer in 2005. I found that it was necessary to weight by province, urban/rural location, and gender. On other variables – age, education, and community group membership – the data closely resembled the Afrobarometer sample, and no weighting was necessary.

dichotomous variable that takes on a value of 1 if the respondent indicated that the party had visited his/her home. The main independent variables relate to the ethnic identity of the respondents. I include dummy variables for each ethnic group larger than 5% of the population, and a dummy for “other” that includes all other ethnic communities. As controls, each model includes basic demographic variables – gender, age, and education. I also control for the number of community groups that respondents belong to and whether respondents serve as leaders within these groups. I do so to account for the possibility that the parties may have sought out influential community leaders and that group membership might not have been randomly distributed across ethnic groups. Table 5 shows the results. In each case, the party’s core ethnic group is the omitted category for the ethnicity variables.

[Table 5 here]

Because logit results are difficult to interpret directly, I *Clarify* to generate predicted probabilities of being contacted for members of each ethnic community, holding all control variables at their means (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000). The results, shown in Figures 6-8, demonstrate that the parties did not neglect their core ethnic communities: *each of the three parties contacted co-ethnic voters at rates equal to or greater than other communities*. In sum, while the presidential aspirants spent relatively little time in their own ethnic areas during the race, the parties did not ignore the need to mobilize co-ethnics. This job was left to lower-level candidates and other agents acting in support of the parties.

[Figures 6-8 here]

## 7. An Alternative Explanation?

Contrary to the account presented above, it is possible that campaign decisions in the 2007 race may have been driven by a unique aspect of Kenya's electoral institutions. Kenya's constitution stipulates that to win the presidential race candidates must gain at least 25% of the vote in five of Kenya's eight provinces. If the leading candidate does not satisfy the "five of eight" rule, then a second round run-off is held between the top two candidates. It is therefore possible that it is the need to satisfy this requirement that leads candidates to spend such a larger portion of their time on the campaign trail outside of their home ethnic areas.

I argue, however, that the "five of eight" rule was not a binding constraint in the 2007 election. Table 6 shows voting intentions by province in September 2007, before the main period of campaigning started. The table shows that Kibaki had already cleared the 25% mark in at least five provinces by the start of the campaign. Likewise, Odinga had cleared the 25% mark by a wide margin in six of the eight provinces well before the campaigning got under way. To be sure, the candidates would not want to see their support erode in these provinces, but it seems unlikely that campaign targeting decisions for these candidates would be driven by concerns about falling below the 25% threshold, given that both held relatively secure positions at the start of the race. Musyoka's strategy is more puzzling. Earlier I showed that Musyoka started the race with little support outside his own ethnic area. Why then did he spend the majority of his campaign time and energy outside his home region? One possible explanation is that Musyoka simply overestimated his ability to attract support during the race. Another possibility is that Musyoka realized he would not win the 2007 race but sought to build a base for future contests.

[Table 6 here]

## **8. Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that in Kenya's 2007 election the leading presidential candidates spent relatively little time on the campaign trail courting their own ethnic communities. I argued that given the need to garner support from multiple ethnic communities, candidates in Kenya must choose how to allocate their time (and resources) between co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics during the campaign. Because of the preference for co-ethnic candidates among many Kenyan voters, the candidates generally enter the race already having secured the support from within their own communities. This means that to the extent they seek to increase their vote share, the candidates must focus their efforts outside their own ethnic groups. Yet, candidates also care about making sure that their core supporters (co-ethnics) turn out in large numbers on election day. I suggested that rather than investing solely in persuasion or mobilization, parties in Kenya have incentives to invest in both. Further, I claimed that the parties divide campaign duties between different types of actors: presidential candidates delegate the job of mobilizing co-ethnics within their ethnic strongholds to lower-level candidates, interest groups, and social networks, leaving them free to allocate the bulk of their time on the campaign trail to hunting for votes among potential swing voters outside their own ethnic strongholds.

The argument offered here raises a number of intriguing questions. First, readers may be skeptical about the ability of Kenya's parties, which typically have little institutional structure and tend to form and dissolve between election rounds, to implement any such coordinated campaign strategy. Indeed, in interviews I conducted during the 2007 race, parliamentary candidates frequently made the point that they received little instruction or support from party leaders. These candidates are by and large left to their own devices to organize, fund, and manage their campaigns. I argue, however, that the division of labor between national-level and

local-level actors requires no great coordination. Within the parties' home ethnic regions, lower-level actors have incentives to mobilize voters for their own purposes and require little direction from above. Lower-level candidates understand that in exchange for being affiliated with their party leader, they are expected to campaign on behalf of their presidential nominee. In addition, because of coattail effects, lower-level candidates understand that when their leader does well, they benefit. Party leaders can therefore be confident that local-level actors require little supervision or direction. Moreover, because the parties monopolize the best local talent within their home ethnic areas, party leaders are assured that local actors will be working on their behalf, and that opponents will have little presence within these areas.

Second is the question of why the third-place candidate, Musyoka, spent more time in his home ethnic area than the two leading candidates, Kibaki and Odinga. One plausible explanation may be that local networks are good at mobilization but less good at persuasion. Given that presidential elections in Kenya are highly personalized, it may be that winning over voters is best accomplished by the presidential candidates themselves, while getting supporters to the polls requires less personal attention from the candidates. If true, then Musyoka, who started the race with less universal support among co-ethnics, might have felt compelled to devote more time to his home area than the front-runners. Another possibility is suggested by Ferree (2009), who argues that parties retreat to protect their home bases when their ethnic strongholds come under attack. Thus, because Kibaki actively pursued Musyoka's core ethnic support base, Musyoka may have felt a greater need to defend his home turf. By contrast, the leading candidates faced little competition within their respective strongholds and may therefore have felt less need to stay home to tend to the core.

Finally, this chapter found that when the main candidates pursued out-groups, they by and large courted the same communities. One might expect that when courting out-groups, the parties would focus their efforts on particular groups with which they expected to have an advantage over their opponents for whatever reason. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a definitive explanation, I point to two factors that may help explain why the parties converged on the same sets of voters outside their ethnic strongholds. First, as noted, there is likely to be considerable uncertainty about how voters will react to the parties' campaign efforts – which groups will be responsive and which will not. Because of this uncertainty, the candidates may prefer to cast a wide net, rather than limiting their appeal to certain groups. In addition, each candidate's campaign decisions may reflect expectations about where opponents are likely to go. For example, if Kibaki expected that Odinga would target the Kalenjin during the campaign, he might also hold rallies in the Kalenjin area in order to attempt to negate the effect of Odinga's efforts. To the extent that the candidates seek to counteract each other's moves, they may be compelled to allocate campaign time across many out-groups, rather than focusing only on certain communities.

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**Table 1. Ethnic Groups in Kenya (percentages)**

Kikuyu	21
Luhya	14
Luo	12
Kalenjin	11
Kamba	11
Kisii	6
Meru	5
Mijikenda	5
Masai	2
Turkana	1
Embu	1
Other (each < 1%)	9

Source: The 1989 Kenya National Population Census

**Table 2. Voting Intentions by Ethnic Group in September 2007 (percentages)**

	Kibaki	Odinga	Musyoka	Other / Undecided
Kikuyu	90	6	1	4
Luo	4	94	0	2
Kamba	24	9	59	8
Luhya	22	68	3	6
Kalenjin	13	76	2	9
Kisii	26	68	0	7
Meru/Embu	88	5	1	5
Mijikenda	33	52	5	10
Other (each < 5%)	35	57	0	8
TOTAL	39	48	8	6

Source: Survey conducted by the Steadman Group, September 8-20, 2007 (n=2,020).

Note: Some rows do not add to 100% because of rounding.

**Table 3. Location of Presidential Rallies (percentages)**

	Kikuyu core area	Luo core area	Kamba core area	Other areas
Kibaki (Kikuyu)	11	0	10	79
Odinga (Luo)	1	4	0	95
Musyoka (Kamba)	1	0	29	70

**Table 4. Negative Binomial Regression of Rally Locations**

	Kibaki	Odinga	Musyoka
Kikuyu share	-0.675+ (0.057)	-2.636** (0.000)	-3.244** (0.002)
Luo share	-3.267* (0.011)	-1.267* (0.031)	-5.600+ (0.068)
Kamba share	0.380 (0.211)	-2.986* (0.022)	0.967** (0.002)
Size (number of voters)	1.350** (0.000)	1.402** (0.000)	1.109* (0.013)
Population density	10.273+ (0.072)	6.245 (0.443)	5.578 (0.653)
Nairobi (Starehe constituency)	1.132 (0.190)	1.632 (0.196)	2.421 (0.177)
MP margin of victory in 2002	0.101 (0.808)	0.574 (0.277)	0.707 (0.163)
Constant	-1.445** (0.000)	-1.662** (0.000)	-1.736** (0.000)
Observations	210	210	210
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.17	.14	.18

p values in parentheses

+ significant at 10%; \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

**Table 5. Logit Models of Campaign Contact by Major Parties**

	PNU	ODM	ODM-K
Kikuyu		-1.834** (0.000)	-1.052** (0.000)
Luo	-0.255 (0.185)		-1.183** (0.000)
Kamba	-1.247** (0.000)	-2.116** (0.000)	
Luhya	-0.061 (0.730)	-0.744** (0.000)	-0.495* (0.046)
Kalenjin	-0.690** (0.000)	-0.324 (0.119)	-0.623* (0.018)
Kisii	0.783** (0.001)	-0.055 (0.837)	0.474 (0.058)
Mijikenda	0.150 (0.546)	-0.478 (0.090)	-0.563* (0.050)
Meru/Embu	-0.865** (0.000)	-2.892** (0.000)	-2.002** (0.000)
Other	-0.005 (0.969)	-1.126** (0.000)	-0.569** (0.005)
Female	-0.127 (0.179)	-0.066 (0.513)	-0.197 (0.156)
Age	0.002 (0.675)	0.001 (0.820)	0.009 (0.104)
Education	-0.006 (0.789)	0.007 (0.770)	0.034 (0.233)
Group membership	0.096** (0.003)	0.102** (0.003)	0.183** (0.000)
Group leader	0.240* (0.018)	0.131 (0.215)	0.240 (0.073)
Constant	-0.708** (0.003)	0.226 (0.410)	-2.417** (0.000)
Observations	3593	3593	3593
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.04	.11	.06

Robust p values in parentheses

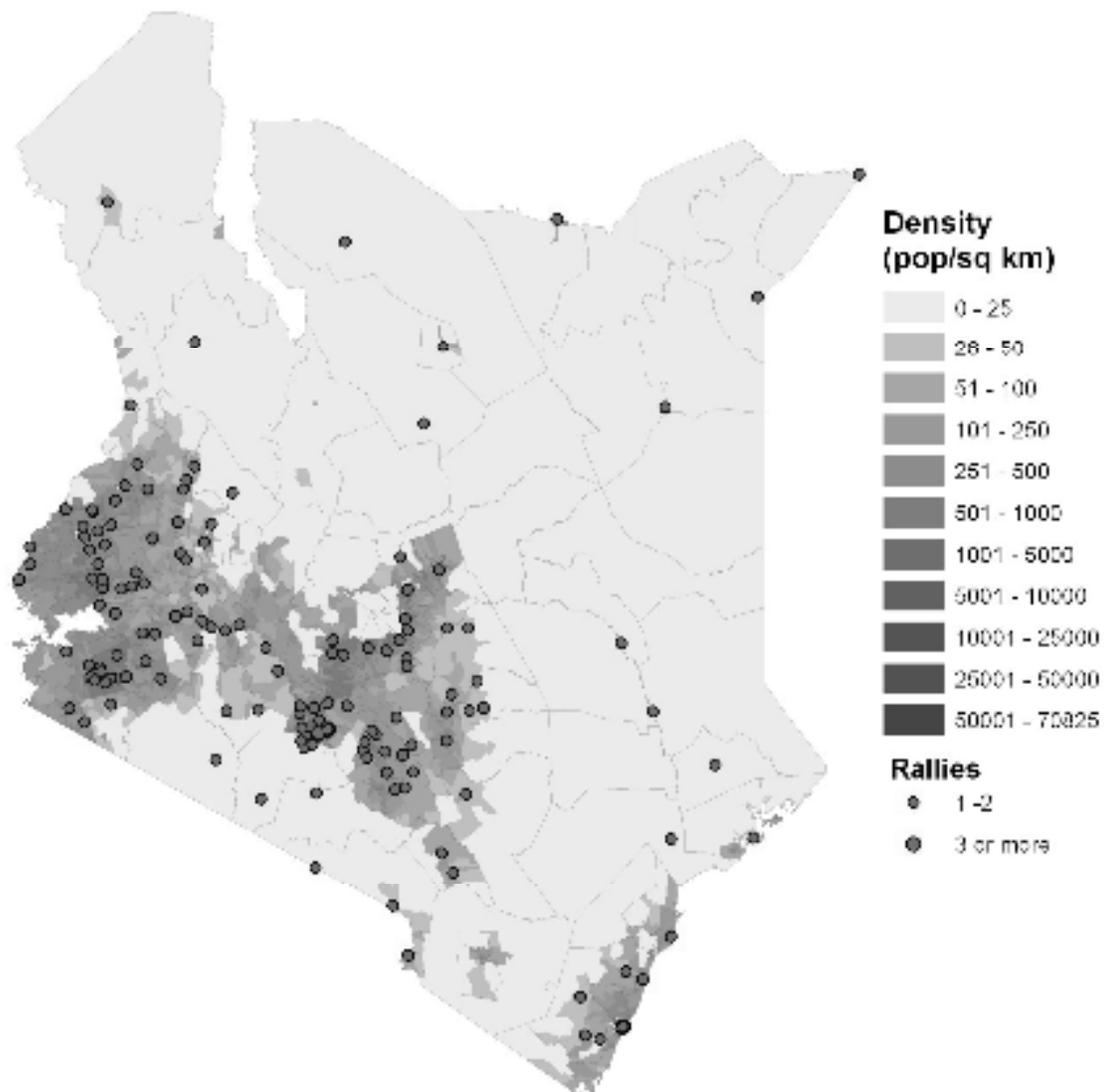
\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

**Table 6. Voting Intentions by Province in September 2007 (percentages)**

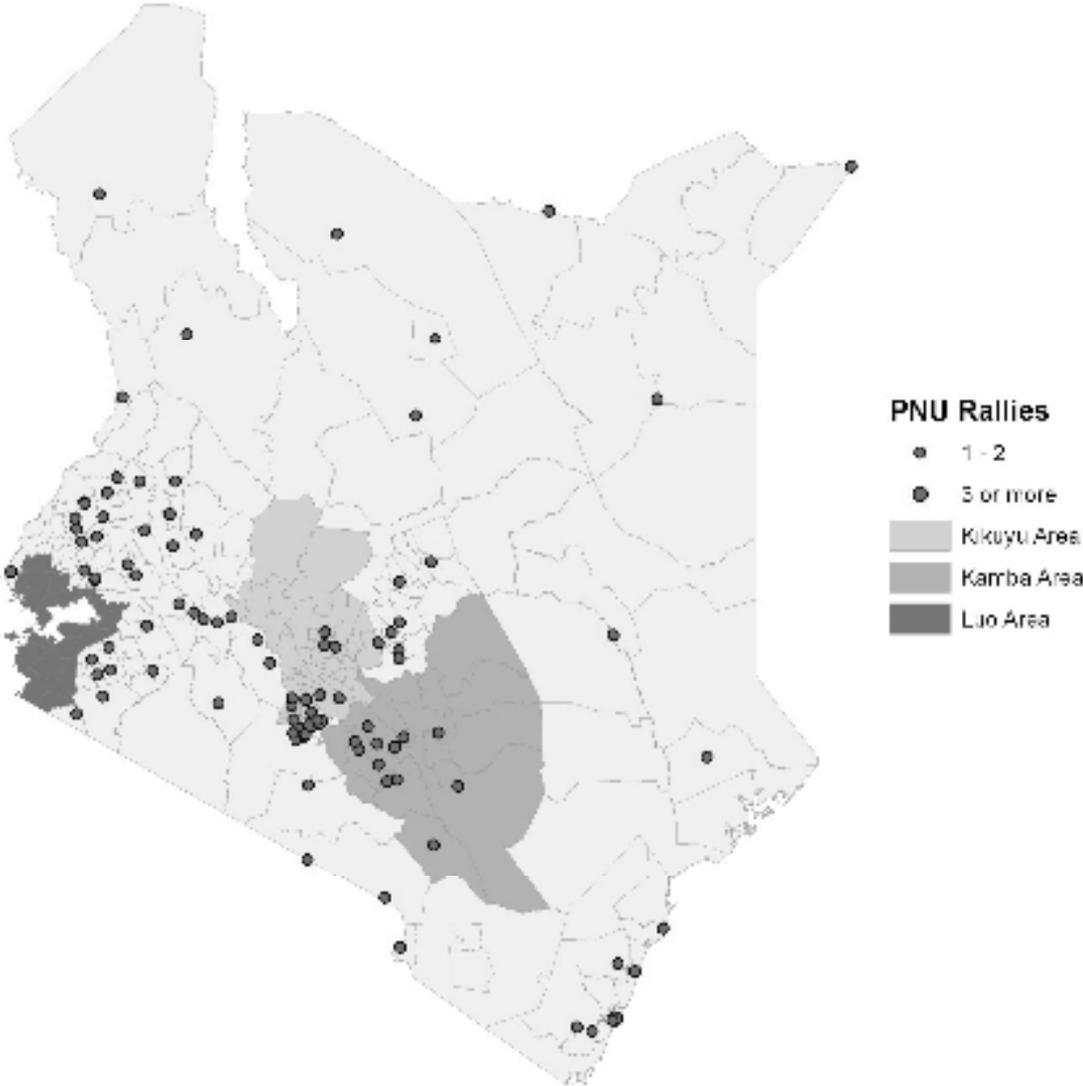
	Kibaki	Odinga	Musyoka	Other/ Undecided
Nairobi	38	52	5	4
Central	82	12	1	4
Coast	36	50	6	8
Eastern	51	7	35	7
Nyanza	8	90	0	2
Rift Valley	35	54	3	7
Western	26	67	4	3
Northeastern	27	70	3	0

Source: Survey conducted by the Steadman Group, September 8-20, 2007 (n=2,020).

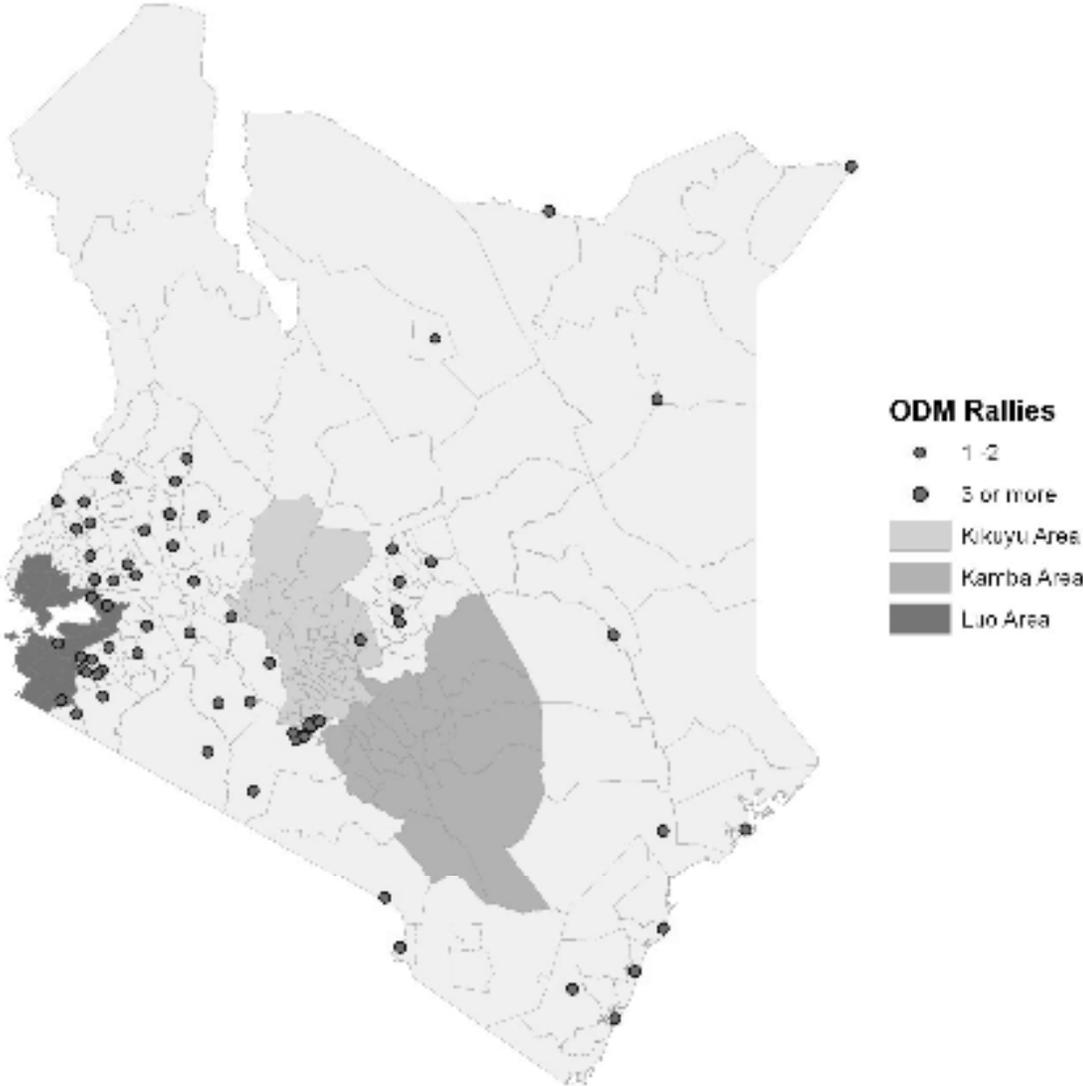
**Figure 1. Presidential Rallies and Population Density**



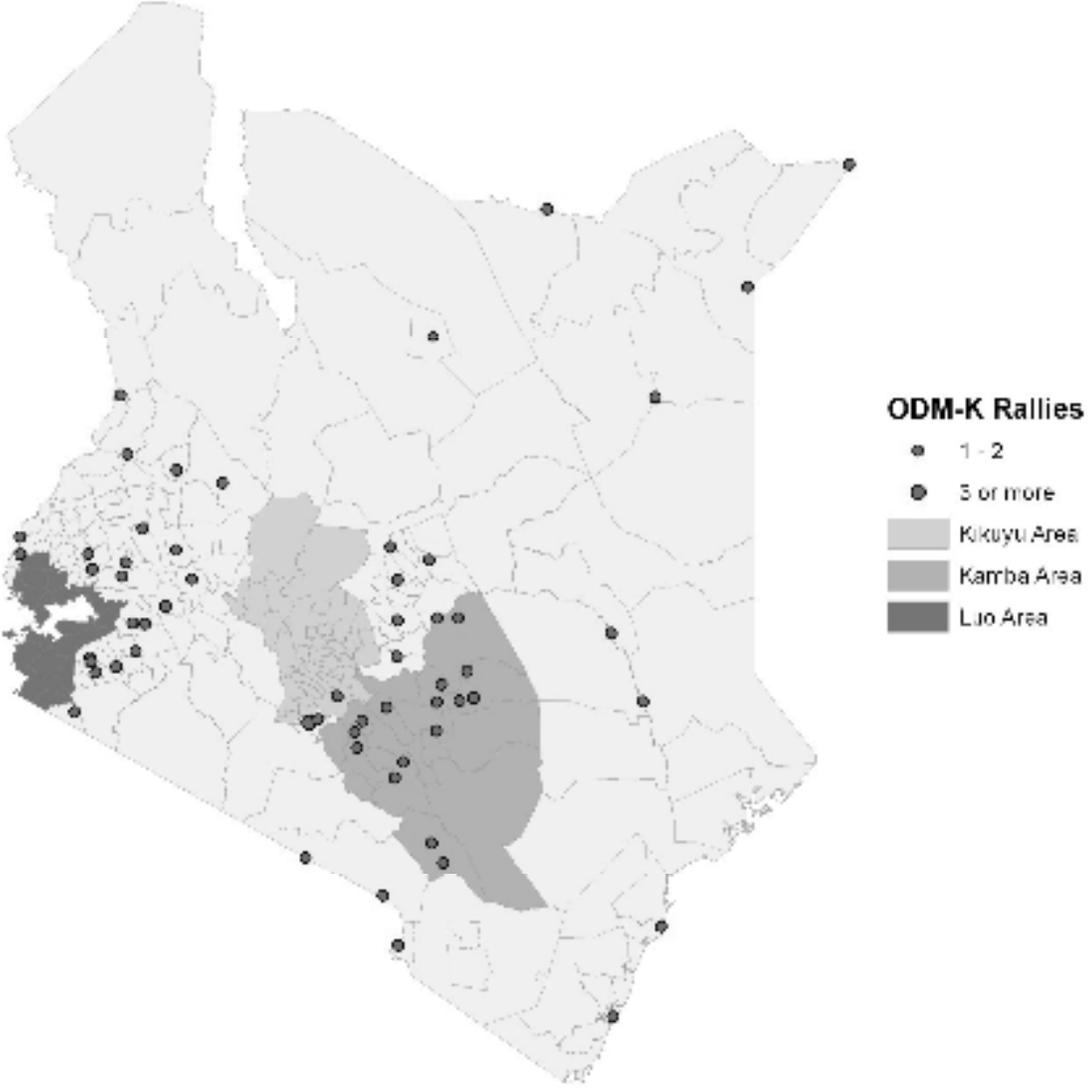
**Figure 2. Kibaki / PNU Presidential Rallies**



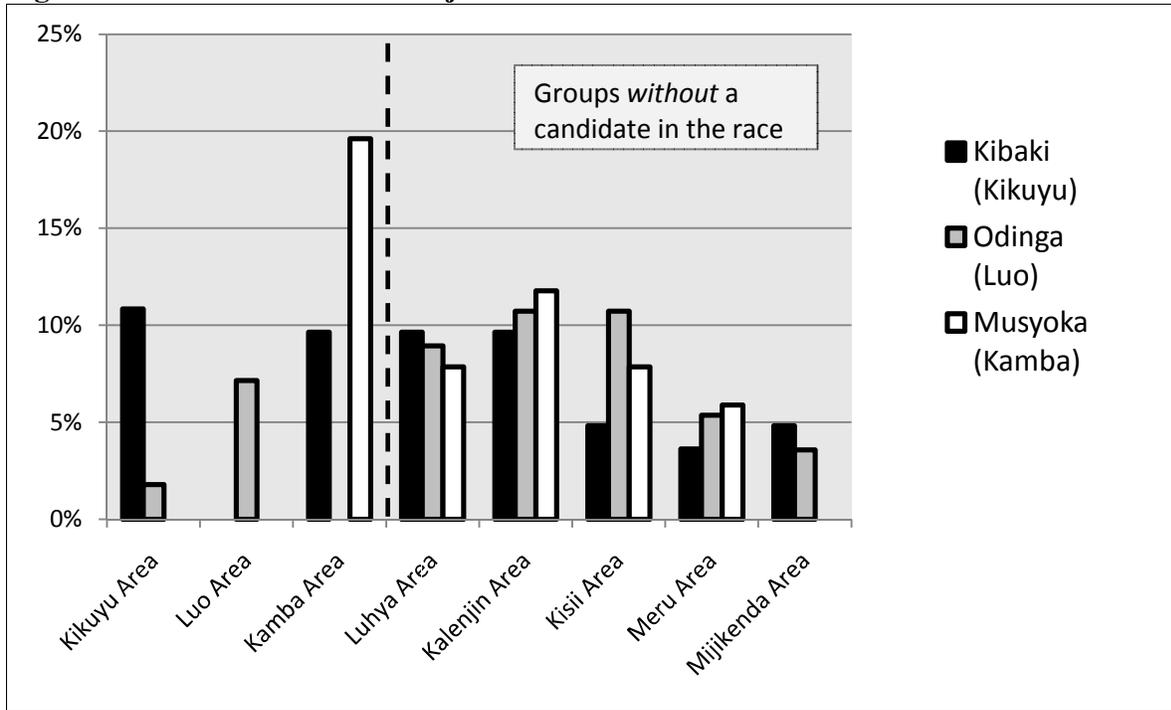
**Figure 3. Odinga / ODM Presidential Rallies**



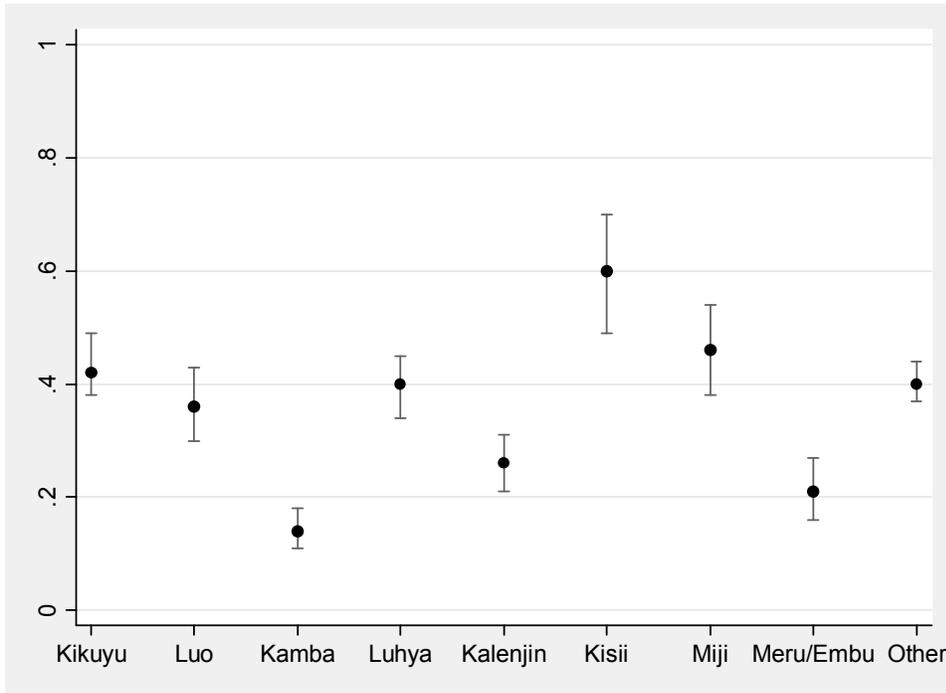
**Figure 4. Musyoka / ODM-K Presidential Rallies**



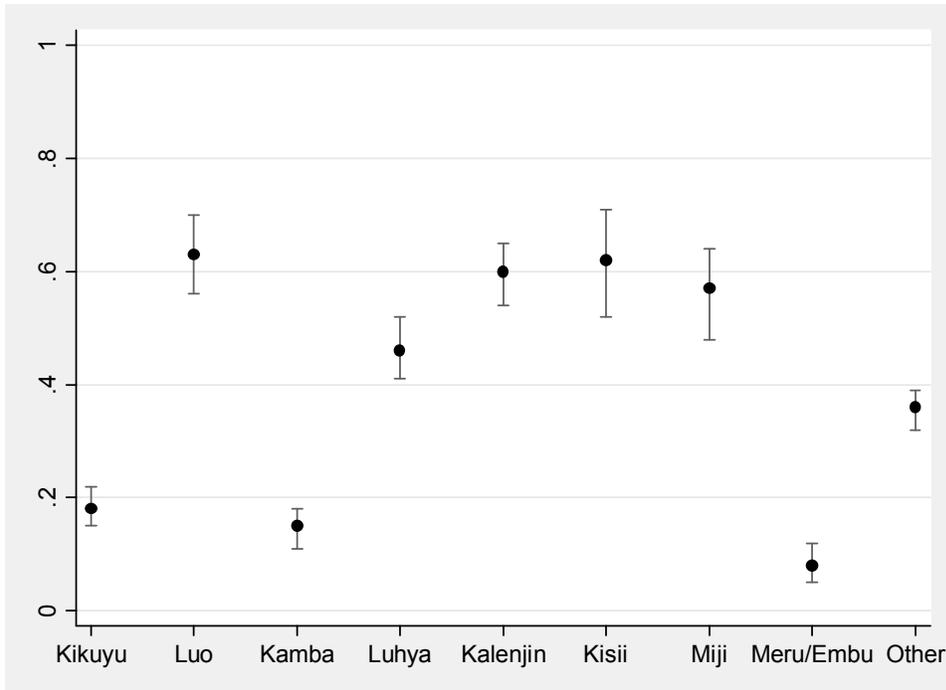
**Figure 5. Share of Rallies in Major Ethnic Areas**



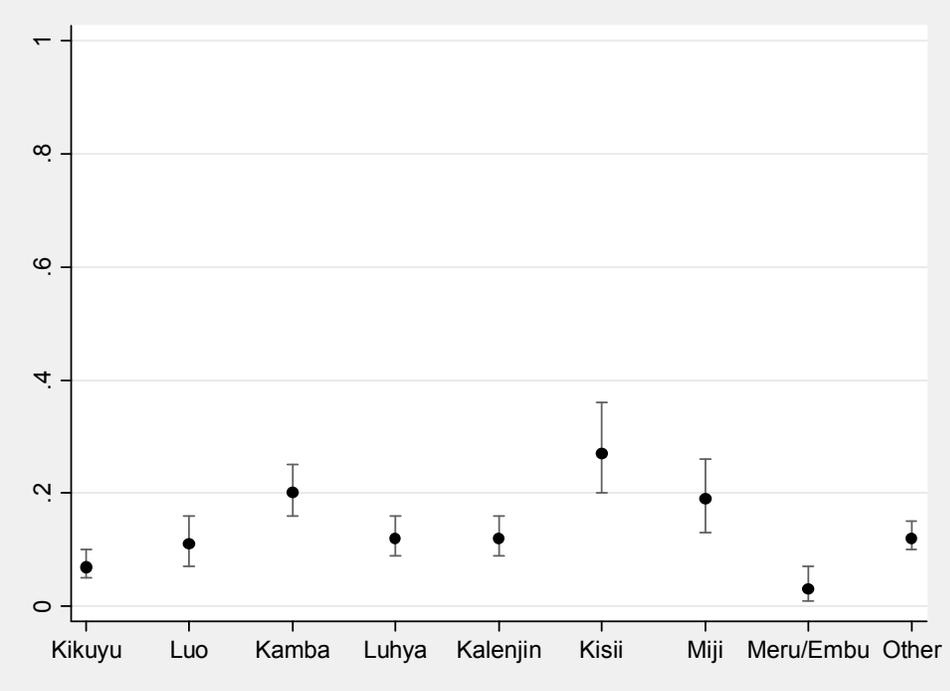
**Figure 6. Predicted Probability of Campaign Contact by PNU (with 95% CI)**



**Figure 7. Predicted Probability of Campaign Contact by ODM (with 95% CI)**



**Figure 8. Predicted Probability of Campaign Contact by ODM-Kenya (with 95% CI)**



## Appendix 1. Comparison between Survey Estimates and Census Data at the District Level

District	1989 Census		Survey Estimates			Difference	No match
	Largest group	Size	Largest group	Size	Sample size		
Baringo	Kalenjin	.84	Kalenjin	.78	529	.06	
Bungoma	Luhya	.83	Luhya	.74	1,113	.09	
Busia	Luhya	.61	Luhya	.65	793	.04	
East Marakwet	Kalenjin	.91	Kalenjin	.90	488	.01	
Embu	Embu	.61	Embu	.61	865	.00	
Garissa	Somali	.91	Somali	.91	682	.00	
Isiolo	Boran	.34	Boran	.43	291	.09	
Kajiado	Masai	.57	Maasai	.36	588	.21	
Kakamega	Luhya	.95	Luhya	.90	2,424	.05	
Kericho	Kalenjin	.83	Kalenjin	.86	1,330	.03	
Kiambu	Kikuyu	.88	Kikuyu	.84	1,478	.04	
Kilifi	Mijikenda	.90	Mijikenda	.78	1,056	.12	
Kirinjaga	Kikuyu	.97	Kikuyu	.96	641	.01	
Kisii	Kisii	.98	Kisii	.96	1,708	.02	
Kisumu	Luo	.89	Luo	.73	1,113	.16	
Kitui	Kamba	.97	Kamba	.95	1,111	.02	
Kwale	Mijikenda	.83	Mijikenda	.85	677	.02	
Laikipia	Kikuyu	.68	Kikuyu	.77	548	.09	
Lamu	Bajun	.40	Bajun	.31	150	.09	
Machakos	Kamba	.97	Kamba	.95	2,120	.02	
Mandera	Somali	.97	Somali	.95	303	.02	
Marsabit	Boran	.28	Boran	.58	358	.30	
Meru	Meru	.89	Meru	.94	1,846	.05	
Mombasa	Mijikenda	.28	Mijikenda	.29	1,249	.01	
Muranga	Kikuyu	.96	Kikuyu	.95	1,535	.01	
Nairobi	Kikuyu	.32	Kikuyu	.34	3,267	.02	
Nakuru	Kikuyu	.60	Kikuyu	.54	1,428	.06	
Nandi	Kalenjin	.74	Kalenjin	.86	628	.12	
Narok	Masai	.47	Masai	.64	742	.17	
Nyandarua	Kikuyu	.96	Kikuyu	.94	619	.02	
Nyeri	Kikuyu	.97	Kikuyu	.95	822	.02	
Samburu	Samburu	.75	Samburu	.55	164	.20	
Siaya	Luo	.96	Luo	.96	1,016	.00	
South Nyanza	Luo	.86	Luo	.8	1,792	.06	
Taita Taveta	Taita	.72	Taita	.73	452	.01	
Tana River	Pokomo	.37	Mijikenda	.35	279	.04	X
Transzoia	Luhya	.52	Luhya	.42	767	.10	
Uasin Guishu	Kalenjin	.53	Kalenjin	.47	882	.06	
Turkana	Turkana	.95	Turkana	.87	282	.08	
Wajir	Somali	.97	Somali	.73	544	.24	
West Pokot	Kalenjin	.85	Kalenjin	.84	385	.01	

Note: "Difference" equals the absolute value of the difference between the size of the largest group from the 1989 census and the estimated size of the largest group from the survey data.