Ethnicity as an Independent variable in African Politics. Lessons learned from the 2017 Kenya Presidential Elections.

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Abstract

The aim of this study[2] *is to examine African voter behavior and the implications of ethnicity in African politics learning lessons from the Kenyan presidential elections of 2017. Other factors structuring voting behavior are explored including income, education, religion and social status. The study was conducted from May 13th to May 18th 2017, i.e., three months before election day. The population surveyed consisted of registered voters in the 49 counties of Kenya. Registration was determined by self-report. The sample frame was a cell telephone sample using a random digit dialing design. The sample was designed to be representative of the country of Kenya. As expected, the results showed that ethnicity is a strong predictor of voter behavior. However, variables like education, income, and age have an impact in mitigating the power of ethnicity. The more people get educated and wealthy the less they vote along ethnic lines. The younger voters are the less they side with their ethnic folks.*

Key words*: Ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, voter behavior, Kenyan elections, identity.*

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner le comportement des électeurs africains et les implications de l'ethnicité dans la politique africaine en tirant les leçons des élections présidentielles kenyanes de 2017. D'autres facteurs structurant le comportement électoral sont explorés, notamment le revenu, l'éducation, la religion et le statut social. L'étude a été menée du 13 au 18 mai 2017, soit trois mois avant le jour du scrutin. La population enquêtée était constituée d'électeurs inscrits dans les 49 comtés du Kenya. L'inscription a été déterminée par auto-évaluation. La base de sondage était un échantillon de téléphones cellulaires utilisant un plan de composition aléatoire. L'échantillon a été conçu pour être représentatif du pays du Kenya. Comme prévu, les résultats

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ont montré que l'ethnicité est un puissant prédicteur du comportement des électeurs. Cependant, des variables telles que l'éducation, le revenu et l'âge ont un impact sur l'atténuation du pouvoir de l'ethnicité. Plus les gens sont éduqués et riches, moins ils votent selon des critères ethniques. Plus les électeurs sont jeunes, moins ils se rangent du côté de leurs membres ethniques.

Mots clés: *Ethnicité, conflits ethniques, comportement des électeurs, Élections Kenyanes, identité*

Introduction

The issue of ethnicity is not new in African political debate or reality. Post-independence decades of African politics are replete with violence driven as it were, by ethnicity. Ethnic politics is a deadly affair evidenced in the civil wars in many African countries. This view was already anticipated among African nationalists at the dawn of independence. But many thought it would fade away with economic development and socio-political consciousness. Radical nationalist leader Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea could thus say: "In three or four years no one will remember the tribal, ethnic, or religious rivalries which, in the recent past, caused so much damage to our country and its population"[3] (Toure 1959: 28). Ethnic groups and communities as social formations were ruled out as obstacles to modern integration and nation-building. Rights to the expression of cultural differences as a sign of political and economic participation were suppressed and banned. At least, this was the goal. After few decades of political experiment this ideology was soon replaced by the acknowledgment that ethnicity in African political dynamics is a reality to be reckoned with. The goal of this article is to assess the impact of this variable on the African voter behavior using as case study of the 2017 Kenyan Presidential Elections[4]. How far does group affiliation influence the expression of public opinion and political choice in an ethnic diverse environment? What are the effects of other sociological factors and markers of identity? I begin with some theoretical considerations on the relationships between ethnicity and politics before assessing the impact of other variables including education, income, economic satisfaction, religion and age.

3 Toure, Sekou. 1959. Toward Full Reafricanisation. Paris: Présence Africaine, 28

4 Kenyan Presidential elections were held on 8 August 2017. Incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta was declared the winner with 54.17% of the vote, while his main opponent Raila Odinga finished second with 44.94% of the vote. The opposition complaint that the government had rigged the elections and appealed to the Supreme Court. In an unprecedented move the Court ruled that the election had not been "conducted in accordance with the constitution", cancelling the results and ordering fresh elections to be held within 60 days. In early October Odinga withdrew from the election. Uhuru Kenyatta eventually won the subsequent election with 98,3% of the vote.

Ethnicity and Politics

Definitions of ethnicity vary, but they all highlight the centrality of the ethnic group and the role it plays in someone's belief system. It is a subjective belief that one belongs to a group with a common ancestor whether or not objective blood ties can be established[5]. This real or imagined shared ancestry is shaped by a sense of distinctiveness arising from group identity and the deep sense of belonging that it inspires. This feeling shared identity is deepened in view of the difference and the supposedly threat presented by communities that lie beyond its boundary[6]. One of the feature that expresses this sense of belonging is the existence of a common language, which provides an instant basis for mutual recognition. But ethnic identity does not always require a distinctive language. For example, one of the defining feature of Kenyan sociolinguistic landscape is pervasive multilingualism. The large majority of the Kenyan population speaks Swahili in addition to a maternal language.

Another important defining element of ethnicity is collective awareness. The existence of a social entity is grounded on a consciousness widely expressed in kinship terms and historicized as a theory of shared ancestry, a mythology that ends up impersonating reality. This consciousness is often manipulated to serve ideological purposes. The third critical element of ethnicity is boundaries. An ethnic group identifies itself not only by certain specific common features but more crucially by what makes the difference with those beyond the cultural border. Otherness becomes an external negative referential for the self. This difference is framed in terms of who is not[7]. Relations are not necessarily hostile, but stereotypical representations of the other can lead to conflicts especially when groups compete for the same resources. And this is what often happens in societies with scarce resources like in many African countries.

The persistence of ethnoregional politics in Africa can be viewed as response to the failure of the post-colonial state to use public goods to unite and build the nation. Most regimes have squandered the opportunity by hijacking the state and its attendant goods such as jobs, healthcare, infrastructure, education and other resources largely to the benefit of their ethnic groups and therefore, making ethnicity the primary cleavage of political life[8]. Under these circumstances, it becomes difficult to trust anybody who was not from their ethnic group, a scenario that strongly influence African voter behavior. In patron-clientele politics public goods and services are distributed through clientele networks. When public interests are presented as ethnic interests in a society like Kenya where ethnicity has been used as a criterion for resource allocation since independence, voters will support élite politicians whose promise is to secure these goods for the benefit

5 Weber, Max. 1968. "Ethnic Groups," in Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds., Max Weber: Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology. New York: Bedminster, 389-390

6 Barth, Fredrik. 1969. "Introduction" in Barth, ed.. Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Boston: Little, Brown, 15.

7 Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley: University of California Press, 76

8 Miguel, E. (2004). Tribe or nation? World Politics 56: 327-362, 328.

of the ethnic group. It has been argued that Kenyatta and Moi ruled Kenya on the basis of patron clientele networks that were dominated by a capitalist clique of Kikuyu and Kalenjin favoring certain regions and people at the expense of others[9].

When confronted with a choice, voters do not act in isolation, because they have distinctly embedded political characteristics anchored on their statuses in the social structure. Voter cast their ballots in response to social environmental stimuli that could guarantee peace and security. The main reference groups in society are our families, friends, neighbourhoods, civil societies, churches, ethnic leaders, the media or state bureaucrats. Majority of voters' partisan decisions at the polls are influenced by the preferences of primary groups they are associated with or their positions in the social structure. For example, it is common for wives to vote for their husbands' preference because of their failure to develop independent perceptions of the political environment[10]. Though group affiliation may play an important role, in the final analysis the decision to vote for a candidate takes place at the individual level. Individuals of a given group experience and perform ethnicity in widely different ways. Not all members of a given group vote according to the dictates of ethnic attachment, nor do all individuals give equal importance to ethnic consciousness, in relation to such other social identities as gender, social status, occupation, generation, or residential unit. Each one of these can have its own political importance. In addition to ethnic consciousness this study also tests several other factors, including education, income, religion, income and age.

The research design

Project Execution

Studies have proven that in Kenyan politics ethno-regionalism can rightfully be considered as a surrogate to political party affiliation. But because of lack of civic education and strong primary social bonds – especially in-group identity – Kenyans are more likely to choose candidates who originate from their regions or their home district[11]. Working on a project based on ethnicity, at the initial step of my research I needed to curve the geography of the ethnic division of Kenya. With this in mind, I visited the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi. During the meeting the director gently declined to provide me with any information about the ethnic composition of the country. He gently explained that ethnicity was banned from public political discourse

9 Adar, K. G. (2000). Assessing democratisation trends in Kenya: A post-mortem of the Moi regime. Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics 38(3): 103-130.

10 Andersen, R. and A. Heath (2003). Social identities and political cleavages: The role of political context. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (Statistics in Society) 166(3): 301-327; 31

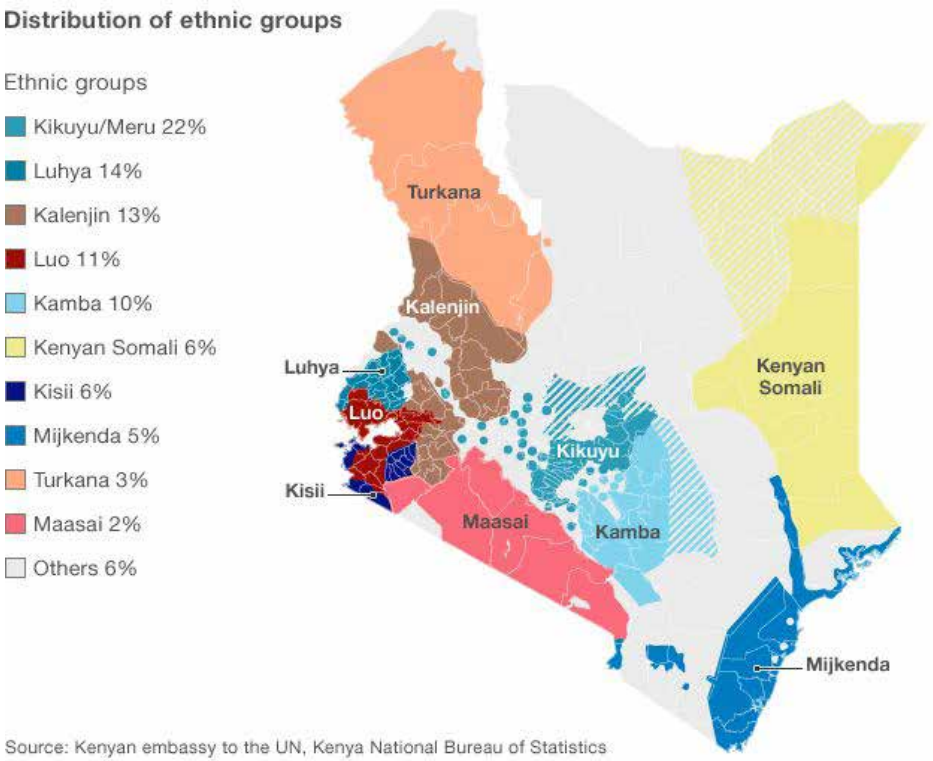
11 Otiato Wafula, J. Voter Behavior in General Elections in Kenya, 1992 – 2007: Implications for the Development of Liberal Democracy. PhD Dissertation: Jomo Kenyatta University, September 2014.

since the events that had led to the indictment of incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta by the International Criminal Court[12]. He even tried to persuade me to stop the research project, a venture that could be dangerous for my own safety. But that was precisely my challenge.

This hurdle was overcome by matching the map of the Kenyan ethnic groups with the corresponding counties. I did this by superposing the ethnic and county maps of Kenya.

Map. 1

12 The ICC had launched a criminal investigation into the responsibility for the 2007-2008 post violence-election violence in Kenya. The opposition candidate Raila Odinga accused the government of electoral fraud and rejected the results. The ensuing violence – mainly along tribal lines – led to an estimated 1,200 deaths and more than 500,000 internally displaced people. Then Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and then Education Minister William Ruto were among those indicted by the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber on charges of Crimes against humanity.



Map. 2

Counties that were selected to represent an ethnic group were those that are comprised of only that single ethnic group. Counties with diverse ethnic groups were put in the category "others". To this latter category I also included Kenya Somali since it is difficult to assess their loyalty to the members of Kenyan inborn tribes. Using Kenyan latest population census[13] and matching ethnic groups to counties we could get with a high level of confidence the following ethnic distribution:

17,15% of respondents came the Kikuyu ethnic group

Counties: Nyeri, Embu, Muranga, Kiambu, Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Taraka Nithi);

13,8% from the Luhya

(**Counties:** Busia, Kakamega);

13 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census Volume IV: Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics". Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

12,8% from the Kalenjin
(**Counties:** West Pokot, Baringo, Marakwet, Kericho, Bomet, Nandi);

10,47% from the Luo
(**Counties:** Siaya, Kisumu, Homabay);

10% from the Kamba
(**Counties:** Machakos, Kitui, Makuemi);
5,7% from the Kisi
(**Counties:** Migori, Nyamiri, Kisii);

5% from the Mijikenda
(**Counties:** Mombassa, Kwale, Kilifi);

4,29% from the Meru
(**County:** Meru);

2,5% from the Turkana
(**County:** Turkana);

2,1% from the Massai
(**Counties:** Narok, Kajiado);

14% from other regions
(**Counties:** Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Taita Taveta, Trans Nzola, Elgeyo, Marsabit, Laikipia, Samburu, Uasin Gishu, Lamu, Tana River, Nyandarua, Nakuru, Bungoma, Vihiga, Mandera).

The population surveyed consisted of registered voters in the 49 counties of Kenya. Registration was determined by self-report. The sample frame was a cell telephone sample using a random digit dialing design. The sample was designed to be representative of the country of Kenya. The project began on 13th May 2017 and concluded it on the 18th day of the same month. It was conducted by a team of 10 interviewers, each handling 30 interviews a day for 5 days[14]. A sampling frame of at least 33000 contacts was generated because of an anticipated rejection rate. In the aggregate, the team managed to do 1500 interviews with a 50-50 male-female gender split. In the course of the data collection

14 Interviews were conducted by Foresight Research Ltd, Piedmont Plaza, Ngong Road, Nairobi

exercise, the team of interviewers made out-bound calls to a randomized sample of respondents from all parts of the country and from all ethnicities. Interviewers had a predefined script from which they probed respondents for about 15-20 minutes.

Besides, each of them had calling lists (new ones on each day) which was a list of randomized samples of respondents who were called and probed on their opinion. Working closely as a team of 5 quality assurance and project management persons, the team undertook spot-checks (call listen-ins) of interviews on a rotational basis, to enhance utmost data quality. Beyond the data collection exercise, we undertook a post-coding exercise to translate the worded data into a numerical form. We are quite confident that research protocol was strictly adhered to. It is the file which we earlier sent you. Accompanying the submission of this article are the raw data and the questionnaire, detailing how the question responses were coded, and the regions covered in the poll. Interviews were carried out in English or Swahili.

Sampling

Because of the ethnic complexity of the Kenyan society, we opted to use stratified sampling as the best method for our analysis. This method consists of separating the elements of the working population into mutually exclusive groups called strata. The stratum of our study was ethnicity represented by home-county. Our sampling was weighed according to the ethnic distribution of Kenya. Within each ethnic group we performed a random sampling.

Sample size, level of confidence and margin of error

The level of confidence is the risk of error I was willing to accept for the study. I could typically choose either a 95% level of confidence (5% chance of error) or a 99% level of confidence (1% chance of error). Given time requirements, budget, and the magnitude of the consequences of drawing incorrect conclusions from the sample, I chose a 95% confidence level.

The confidence interval or the margin of error determines the level of sampling accuracy that I wanted to obtain. For any given sample standard deviation, the larger the sample size is, the smaller is the standard error. Conversely, the smaller the sample size is, the larger is the standard error. A margin of error of ±3 is generally satisfactory. But for my study, I set it at 2.5.

The relationship between the confidence interval, margin of error, and the standard error sample can be expressed by the following equation:

$$ME_P = \pm Z_a ME_P = \pm Z_a(\sigma_p \sigma_p) \quad \textbf{(1)}$$

Where $ME_P = ME_P =$ margin of error in terms of proportions

$Z_a Z_a$= Z score for various levels of confidence (**α**)

$\sigma_p \sigma_p$ = standard error for a distribution of sample proportions

The formula of the true population proportion being:

$$\sigma_p \sigma_p = \sqrt{(p(1-p))/n}\sqrt{(p(1-p))/n} \quad \textbf{(2)}$$

Substituting it into equation (1) gives the following equation:

$$ME_p ME_p = \pm Z_a Z_a \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}\sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

Solving for n yields

$$\mathbf{n} = \left(\frac{Z_a\sqrt{p(1-p)}}{ME_P}\right)^2 \left(\frac{Z_a\sqrt{p(1-p)}}{ME_P}\right)^2 \quad \textbf{(3)}$$

Since we have opted for a 95% confidence interval, p = .5.

We know that when p =.5, $Z_a Z_a$= 1.96

Equation (3) can be further refined:

$$n = \left(\frac{Z_a(.5)}{ME_p}\right)^2 \left(\frac{Z_a(.5)}{ME_p}\right)^2 \quad (4)$$

because $\sqrt{.5(1-.5)}\sqrt{.5(1-.5)}$= .5

Operationalizing (4) gives the following result:

$$n = \left| \left(\frac{1.96\ (.5)}{.025}\right)^2 \right| \left(\frac{1.96\ (.5)}{.025}\right)^2 = 1536$$

I decided to round it down to 1500 respondents.

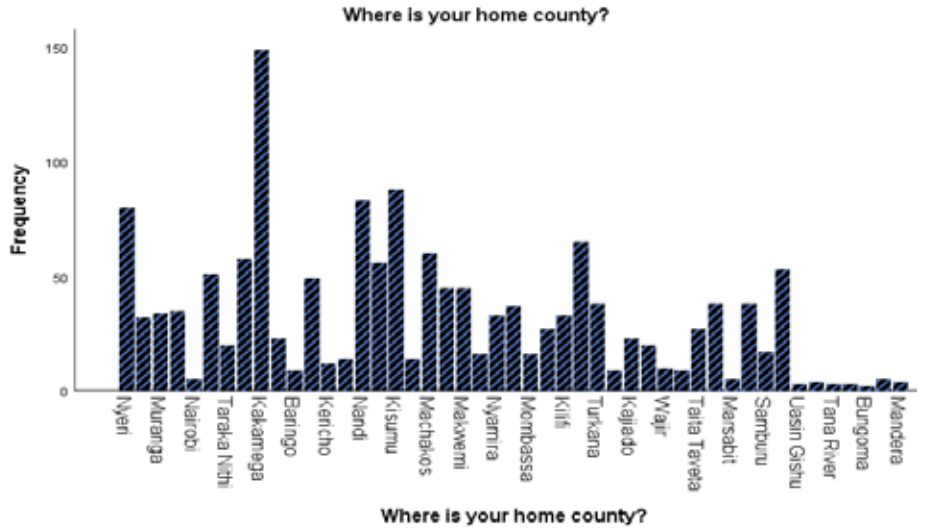
Stratified sampling provided the following distribution:

257 Kikuyu (17.1% of the sample),
207 Luhya (13,8%),
190 Kalenjin (12,7%),
158 Luo (10.5%),
150 Kamba (10,0%),
86 Kisi (5.7%),
76 Mijikenda (5.1%),
65 Meru (4.3%),
38 Turkana (2.5%),
32 Massai (2.1%),
241 "others" (16.1%).

Ethnicity being banned from public discourse we were at high risk of having the police show up at our door if the inquiry was reported to the local authority. This could happen if we had asked upfront the question "what is your ethnic group?". Those who had not called the police would have been very reluctant to answer. And this would have biased the sample. To circumvent this, our questionnaire started with two questions. The first question was: "where do you live?". The second one was: "where is your home county?". There is nothing suspicious about these questions. This question produced the following distribution:

Where is your home county?

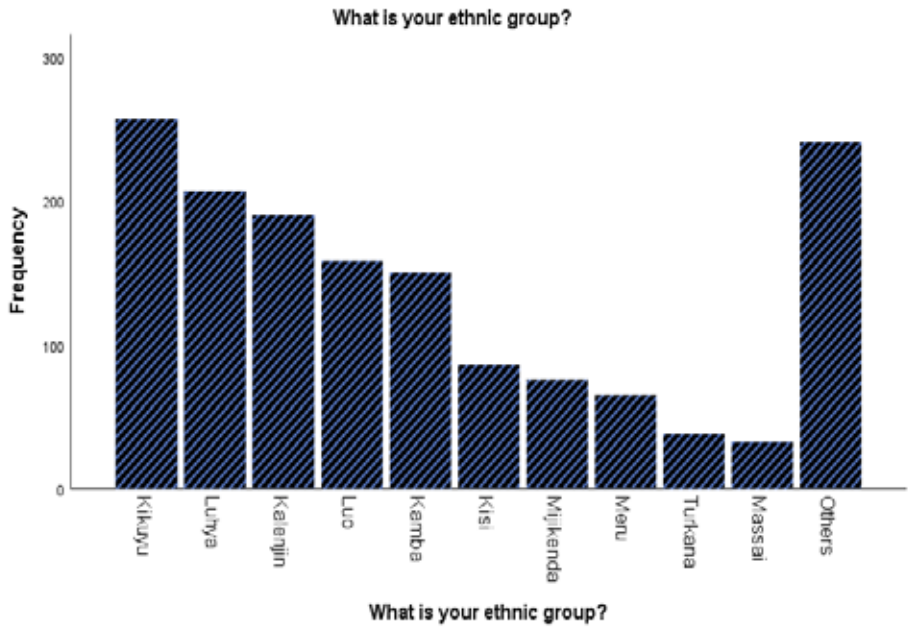
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nyeri	80	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Embu	32	2.1	2.1	7.5
	Muranga	34	2.3	2.3	9.7
	Kiambu	35	2.3	2.3	12.1
	Nairobi	5	.3	.3	12.4
	Kinnyaga	51	3.4	3.4	15.8
	Taraka Nithi	20	1.3	1.3	17.1
	Busia	58	3.9	3.9	21.0
	Kakamega	149	9.9	9.9	30.9
	West Pokot	23	1.5	1.5	32.5
	Baringo	9	.6	.6	33.1
	Marakwet-Elgeyo	49	3.3	3.3	36.3
	Kericho	12	.8	.8	37.1
	Bomet	14	.9	.9	38.1
	Nandi	83	5.5	5.5	43.6
	Siaya	56	3.7	3.7	47.3
	Kisumu	88	5.9	5.9	53.2
	Homabay	14	.9	.9	54.1
	Machakos	60	4.0	4.0	58.1
	Kitui	45	3.0	3.0	61.1
	Makwemi	45	3.0	3.0	64.1
	Migori	16	1.1	1.1	65.2
	Nyamira	33	2.2	2.2	67.4
	Kisii	37	2.5	2.5	69.9
	Mombassa	16	1.1	1.1	70.9
	Kwale	27	1.8	1.8	72.7
	Kilifi	33	2.2	2.2	74.9
	Meru	65	4.3	4.3	79.3
	Turkana	38	2.5	2.5	81.8
	Narok	9	.6	.6	82.4
	Kajiado	23	1.5	1.5	83.9
	Garissa	20	1.3	1.3	85.3
	Wajir	10	.7	.7	85.9
	Isiolo	9	.6	.6	86.5
	Taita Taveta	27	1.8	1.8	88.3
	Trans Nzola	38	2.5	2.5	90.9
	Marsabit	5	.3	.3	91.2
	Laikipia	38	2.5	2.5	93.7
	Samburu	17	1.1	1.1	94.9
	Nakuru	53	3.5	3.5	98.4
	Uasin Gishu	3	.2	.2	98.6
	Lamu	4	.3	.3	98.9
	Tana River	3	.2	.2	99.1
	Nyanarua	3	.2	.2	99.3
	Bungoma	2	.1	.1	99.4
	Vihiga	5	.3	.3	99.7
	Mandera	4	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



Matching the ethnic group with the county and unbeknown to the respondent himself we were able to identify the respondent's ethnic group through his home-county. Depending on the respondent's answer we were therefore able to collapse different counties into one category representing this ethnic block. So everything that was Nyeri, Embu, Muranga, Kiambu, Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Taraka Nithi was transformed into **Kikuyu**; Busia, Kakamega became **Luhya**; West Pokot, Baringo, Marakwet, Kericho, Bomet, Nandi became **Kalenjin**; Siaya, Kisumu, Homabay became **Luo**; Machakos, Kitui, Makuemi became **Kamba**; Migori, Nyamiri, Kisii became **Kisii**; Mombassa, Kwale, Kilifi became **Mijikenda**; Meru remained **Meru**; Turkana remained **Turkana**; Narok, Kajiado became Massai; Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Taita Taveta, Trans Nzola, Elgeyo, Marsabit, Laikipia, Samburu, Uasin Gishu, Lamu, Tana River, Nyandarua, Nakuru, Bungoma, Vihiga, Mandera became **Others**. Collapsing these counties into ethnic blocks gave the following distribution:

What is your ethnic group?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kikuyu	257	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Luhya	207	13.8	13.8	30.9
	Kalenjin	190	12.7	12.7	43.6
	Luo	158	10.5	10.5	54.1
	Kamba	150	10.0	10.0	64.1
	Kisi	86	5.7	5.7	69.9
	Mijikenda	76	5.1	5.1	74.9
	Meru	65	4.3	4.3	79.3
	Turkana	38	2.5	2.5	81.8
	Massai	32	2.1	2.1	83.9
	Others	241	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



The Results

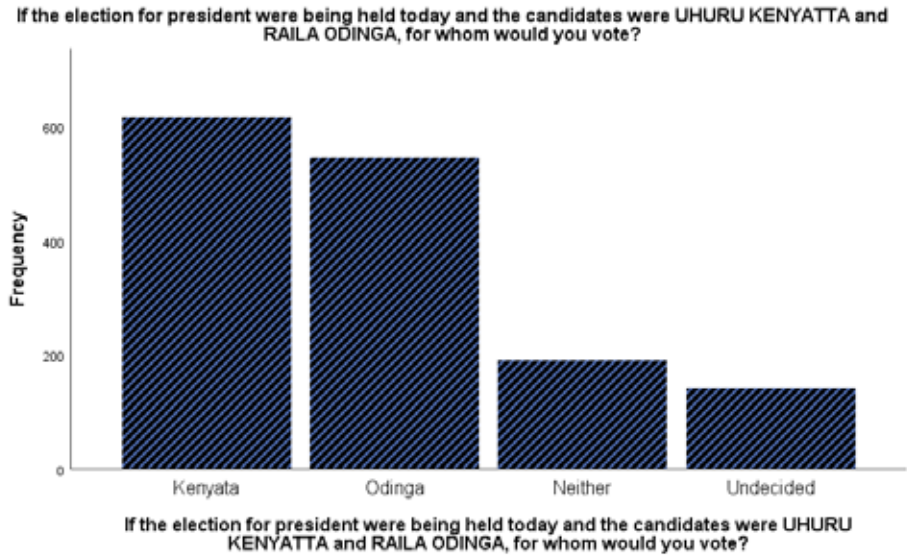
The Presidential Race

The presidential elections basically pitched two opposite sides: The Jubilee Alliance and the National Alliance (NASA). The Jubilee Alliance of President Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) and his deputy William Ruto (Kalenjin) was allegedly backed by the Kikuyus and the Kalenjins while the opposition National Alliance (NASA) was a union of tribes led by Raila Odinga (a Luo from western Kenya), Moses Wetangula (a Luhya from western Kenya) and Kalonzo Musyoka from the Kamba tribe. To evaluate the strength of the different candidates three months before election day, the following question was asked:

> "If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?"

If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kenyata	618	41.2	41.3	41.3
	Odinga	547	36.5	36.5	77.8
	Neither	191	12.7	12.8	90.5
	Undecided	142	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	1498	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

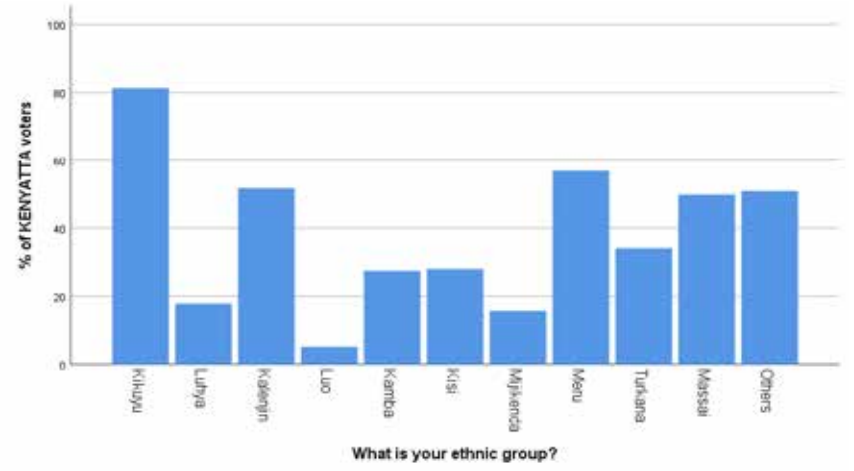


Uhuru Kenyata came out as leading the race at that time, consistent with the first results proclaimed by the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the organ in charge of supervising the electoral process. He had a 5-point lead (41,3%) over his opponent Raila Odinga (36,5%). Here the undecided represent nearly 10% of the registered voters. They represent the median voter, those who sit squarely in the middle of public opinion or the political spectrum of their community. Their political views are located at equidistant point from both the most-right wing and the most left-wing person of their community. They can swing to the right or the left depending on how moderate the respective candidates are in trying to persuade them. They are generally those who tip the election in favor of one candidate or the other. We have to remember that this poll was taken in May 2017, before the electoral campaign was even kicked off.

Ethnicity and Kenyan voter behavior

Uhuru Kenyatta and the Kikuyu vote

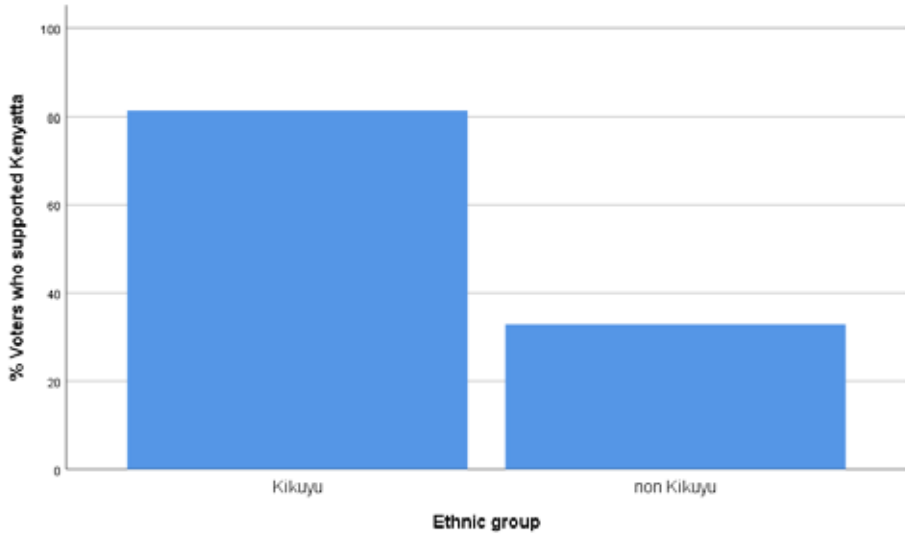
The working hypothesis of the research was that ethnicity is an important predictor of voter behavior. This hypothesis would hold true if the majority of Kikuyu and Luo had voted for their champions, respectively Kenyatta and Odinga. Cross-tabulating the result gives us the following distribution.



As we all know, Kenyatta is a Kikuyu. He has been able to garner 81.3% of the Kikuyu vote against 4.7% for his opponent Odinga. The difference here is 76.6 points.

Voters who supported Kenyatta * Are you a Kikuyu or not? Crosstabulation

			Are you a Kikuyu or not?		Total
			Kikuyu	non Kikuyu	
Voters who supported Kenyatta	KenyattaVoters	Count	209	409	618
		% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	81.3%	32.9%	41.2%
	KenyattaOp	Count	48	834	882
		% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	18.7%	67.1%	58.8%
Total		Count	257	1243	1500
		% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Chi-Square Tests

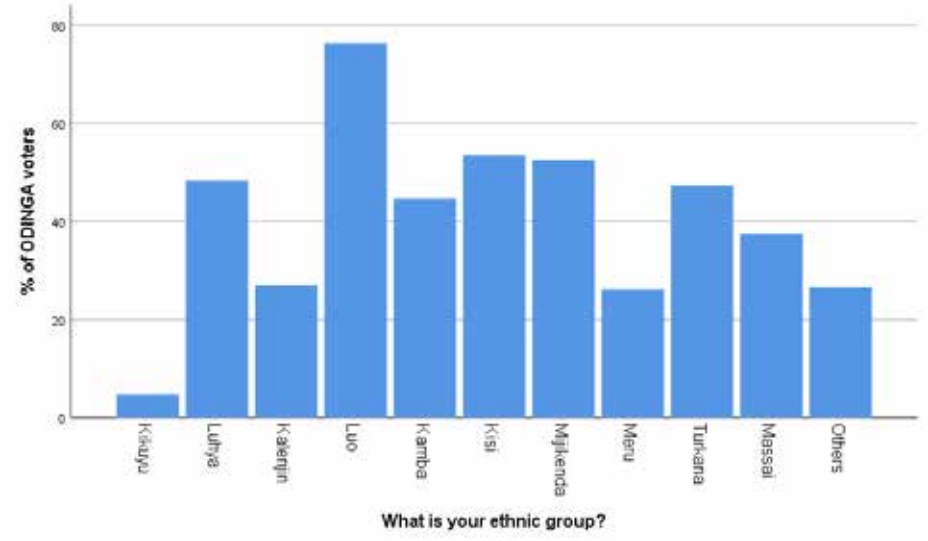
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	206.094a	1	.000		
Continuity Correctionb	204.100	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	210.363	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	205.956	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	1500				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 105.88.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Based on the cross-tabulation analysis, this hypothesis clearly has merit. Among Kikuyu voters, 81,3% voted for Kenyatta, compared with 32,9% of non-Kikuyu, about an 49-point difference. From chi square value χ^2= 206.094 and *p* value = 0.000, we can infer that, in the population from which the sample was drawn, Kikuyu are more likely than non-Kikuyu to vote for Kenyatta.

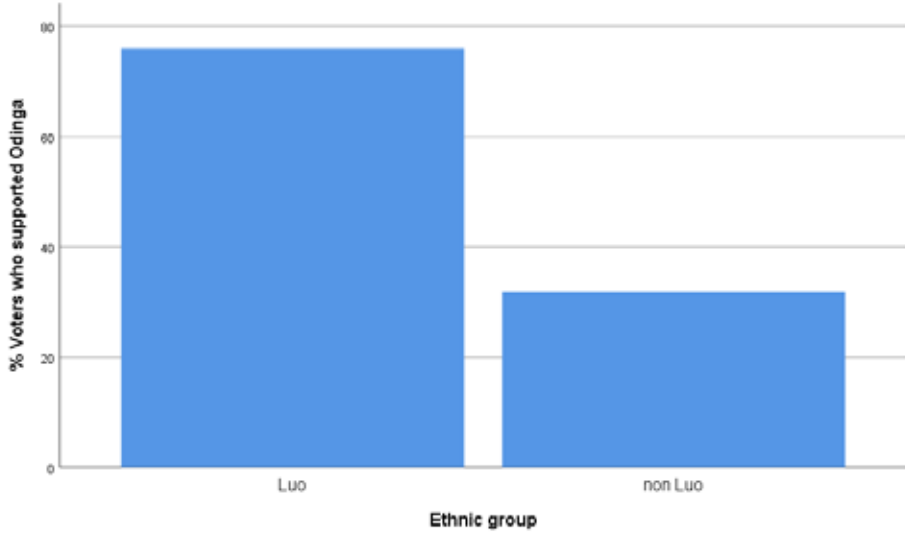
Raila Odinga and the Luo vote



Odinga is a Luo. He has obtained 76,4% of the Luo vote against 5,1% for his opponent Kenyata. The difference is 71,3%.

Voted for Odinga * Are you a Luo or not? Crosstabulation

			Are you a Luo or not?		
			Luo	non Luo	Total
Voted for Odinga	OdingaVoters	Count	120	427	547
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	75.9%	31.8%	36.5%
	OdingaOpp	Count	38	915	953
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	24.1%	68.2%	63.5%
Total		Count	158	1342	1500
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	118.826a	1	.000		
Continuity Correctionb	116.929	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	115.024	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	118.747	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	1500				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 57.62.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Based on the cross-tab, the hypothesis about Luo support for the Luo candidate is also supported by facts. Among Luo voters, 75,9% voted for Odinga, compared with 31,8% of non Luo, about a 44-point difference. According to chi-square (118.826[a], P-value =0.000) we can infer that, in the population from which the sample was drawn, Luo are more likely than non-Luo to vote for Odinga. Our hypothesis is verified. Both

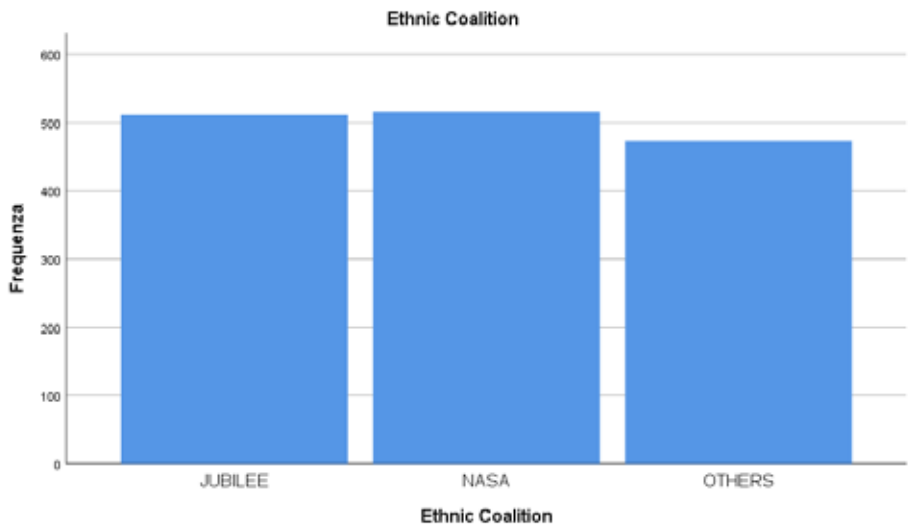
ethnic groups the Kikuyu and the Luo voted overwhelmingly in favor of the ethnic kin. And the connection between the candidate head and the ethnic group is very strong. Support for the candidate of the other ethnic group is evenly distributed, respectively 4,7% and 5,1%, that is, within the margin of error.

Ethnic coalitions and voter behavior

Now let's prove the relationship that exists between ethnic coalitions and their respective group loyalty. As we said in the beginning, the Jubilee Alliance was comprised of President Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) and his deputy William Ruto (Kalenjin) while the opposition National Alliance (NASA) was led by Raila Odinga (Luo), Moses Wetangula (a Luhya) and Kalonzo Musyoka (Kamba). Let's create a variable ethnic coalition with three categories: JUBILEE (Kikuyu, Meru – the Meru are known to be closely related linguistically and culturally to the Kikuyu – and Kalenjin), NASA (Luo, Luhya, and Kamba) and OTHERS (Kisi, Mijikenda, Turkana, Massai, and "others").

Ethnic Coalition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	JUBILEE	512	34.1	34.1	34.1
	NASA	515	34.3	34.3	68.5
	OTHERS	473	31.5	31.5	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



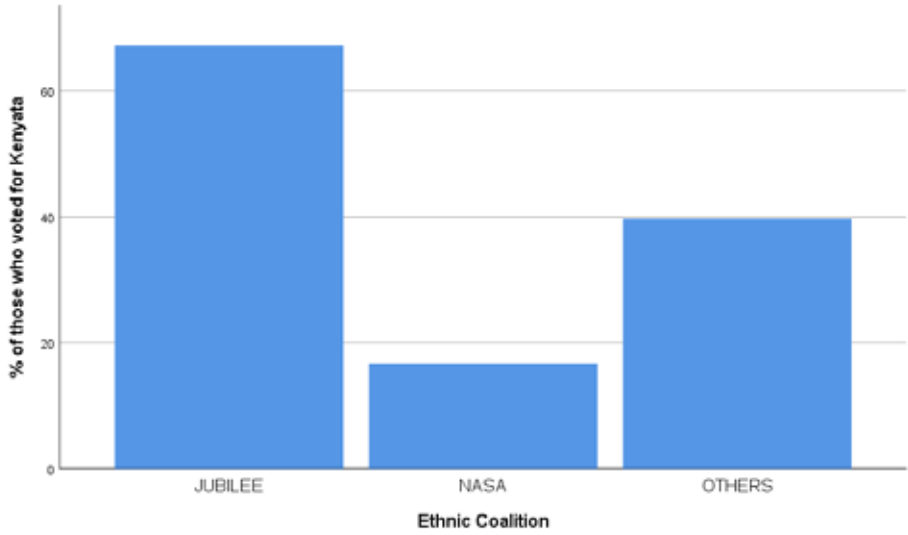
Now let us probe the loyalty of each ethnic block to its coalition.

If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote? * Ethnic Coalition Crosstabulation

			Ethnic Coalition			Total
			JUBILEE	NASA	OTHERS	
If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?	Kenyata	Count	344	86	188	618
		% within Ethnic Coalition	67.3%	16.7%	39.7%	41.3%
	Odinga	Count	80	287	180	547
		% within Ethnic Coalition	15.7%	55.8%	38.1%	36.5%
	Neither	Count	53	80	58	191
		% within Ethnic Coalition	10.4%	15.6%	12.3%	12.8%
	Undecided	Count	34	61	47	142
		% within Ethnic Coalition	6.7%	11.9%	9.9%	9.5%
Total		Count	511	514	473	1498
		% within Ethnic Coalition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

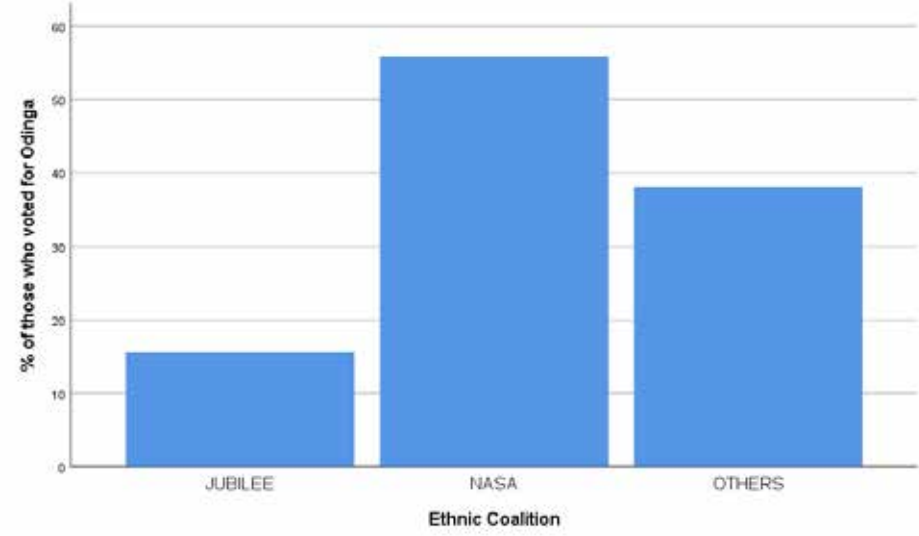
Kenyatta-Ruto ticket

67,3% of the JUBILEE ethnic coalition voted for the Kenyatta-Ruto ticket. It falls down from 81,3% (Kikuyu loyalty to Kenyatta)



Odinga-Kalonzo ticket

55,8% of the NASA ethnic coalition voted for the Odinga-Kalonzo ticket. It falls down from 76,4% (Luo loyalty to Odinga)



Here the ethnic coalition shows loyalty to their group. But this loyalty is weaker. Worth noticing is that support for each candidate is evenly distributed among OTHERS 39,7 for Kenyata and 38,1% for Odinga – within the margin of error. Support for the

candidate of the other ethnic coalition is also equally distributed, 15,7% of the JUBILEE voted for Odinga and 16,7% of NASA voted for Kenyata – within the margin of error.

Voter behavior and education

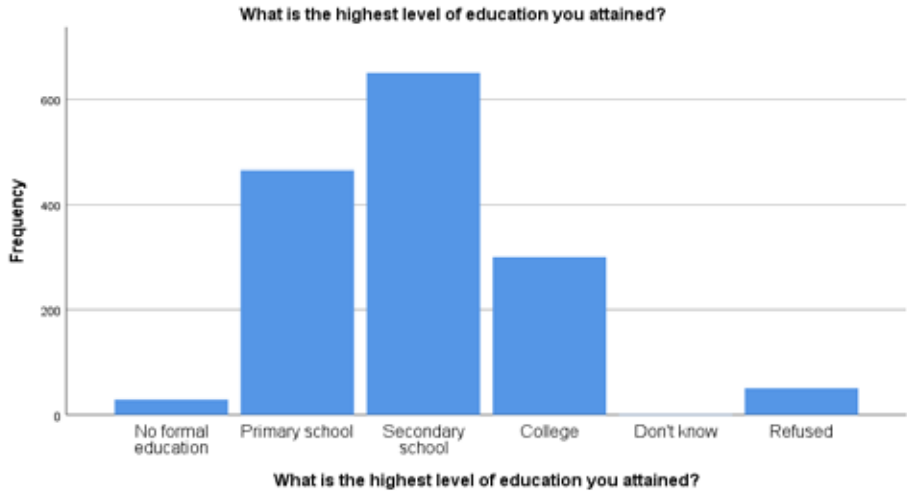
It is conventional wisdom in politics that the level of education has an impact on the voter political choices. Does this assumption hold for the Kenyan voters? To assess the level of education the following question was asked to the respondent:

"What is the highest level of education you completed?"

According to the respondent's answer we were able to divide the level of education in 4 categories: no formal education, primary education, secondary education, and college. The results yielded the following distribution.

What is the highest level of education you attained?

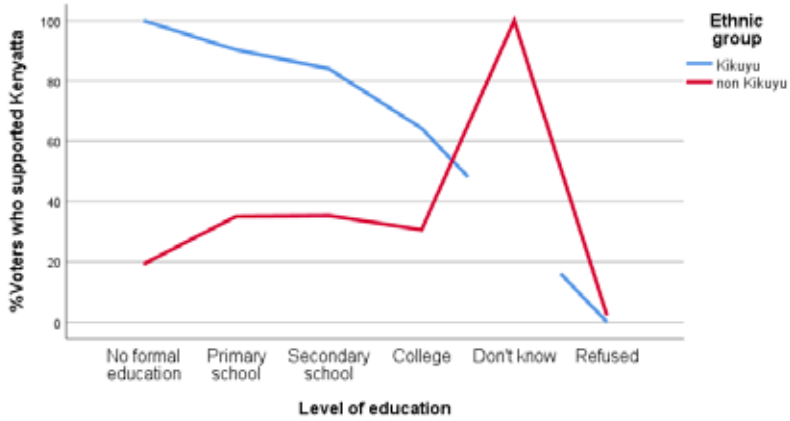
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal education	29	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Primary school	466	31.1	31.1	33.0
	Secondary school	650	43.3	43.4	76.4
	College	300	20.0	20.0	96.5
	Don't know	1	.1	.1	96.5
	Refused	52	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1498	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		



Let's assess the impact of education on voter behavior when the variable ethnicity is controlled. The test gives us the following results:

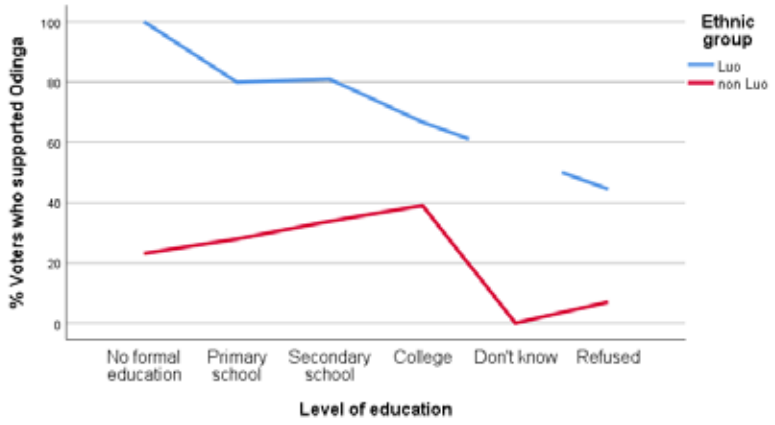
Kenyatta

100% of the Kikuyu with no formal education voted for Jubilee,
90.3% of Kikuyus with primary education voted for Jubilee,
84.1% of Kikuyus with secondary education for Jubilee and
64.3% of those with college education voted for Jubilee.



Odinga

100% of Luo with no formal education voted for NASA and Odinga,
80% Luo with primary and secondary education and voted for Odinga,
while 66.7% of Luo with College education voted for their champion Odinga.



The pattern here is clear. The more one is educated the less he sides with his ethnic group. As the data show, the more voters are educated the less they seem to affiliate with ethnic voting. Conventional wisdom holds true in the case of Kenyan voter behavior. The level of education is inversely proportional to affiliation with ethnic voting.

Voter behavior and social class

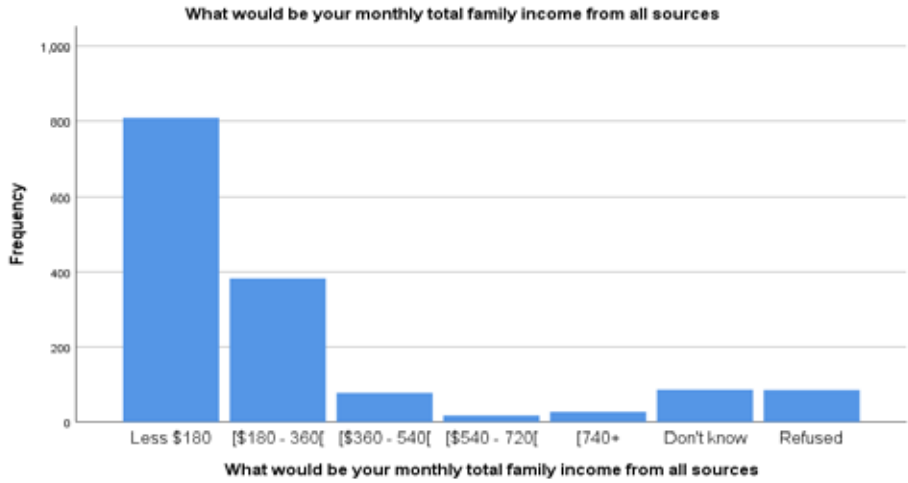
Social class was assessed according to the monthly income of the respondent. This variable was obtained by asking the following question:

"What would be your monthly total family income from all sources?"

According to the living standard of the country, those making less than $180 per month were categorized as poor, those making [$180 - $360[per month as low middle class, those making [$360 - $720[per month as high middle class, and those above $720 per as rich.

What would be your monthly total family income from all sources

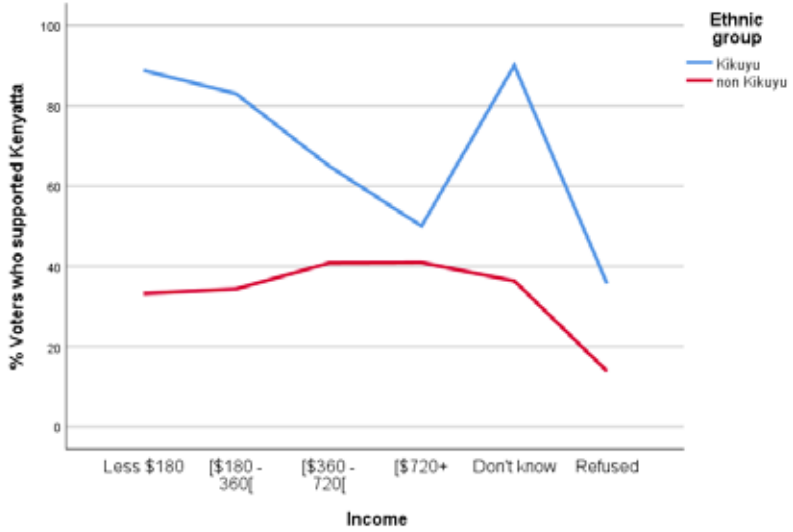
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less $180	809	53.9	54.4	54.4
	[$180 - 360[	382	25.5	25.7	80.0
	[$360 - 540[	78	5.2	5.2	85.3
	[$540 - 720[	18	1.2	1.2	86.5
	[740+	28	1.9	1.9	88.4
	Don't know	87	5.8	5.8	94.2
	Refused	86	5.7	5.8	100.0
	Total	1488	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	12	.8		
Total		1500	100.0		



Conventional wisdom also assumes that wealth influences voter behavior. Is this valid for the Kenyan voter? Let's look at the impact of income and social class when we control ethnicity.

Kenyatta

88% of Kikuyu making less than $180 voted for Kenyatta,
82.9% of Kikuyu making [$180 - 360[voted for Kenyatta
65% of Kikuyu making [$360 - 720[voted for Kenyatta
50% of kikuyus making [$720 +[voted for Kenyatta.



Odinga

80% of Luo making less than $180 voted for Odinga,
82,9% of Luo making [$180 - 360[voted for Odinga,
62,5% of Luo making [$360 - 720[voted for Odinga,
60% of Luo making $720 and above voted for Odinga

Again here the pattern is clear. The higher the income the less one sides with the political views of the ethnic group.

Voter behavior and age

It is assumed that with age, people tend to be conservative with regard to their traditional value system. In this case, voters would be expected to side with ethnic affiliation as they grow older.

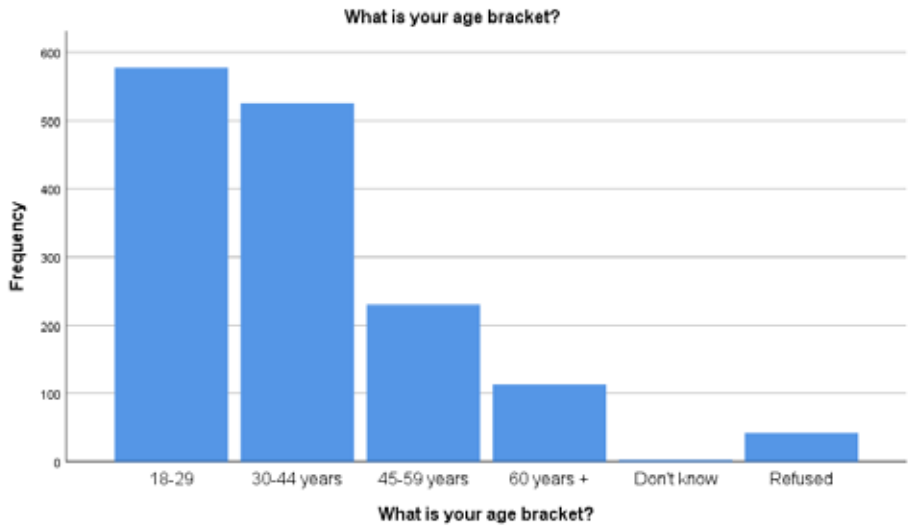
To create the age category respondents were asked the following question:

"What is your age bracket? Are you…"

The variable age was divided into 4 categories: [18-29], [30-44], [45-59], and [60 and above]. The table of frequency gave us the following distribution.

What is your age bracket?

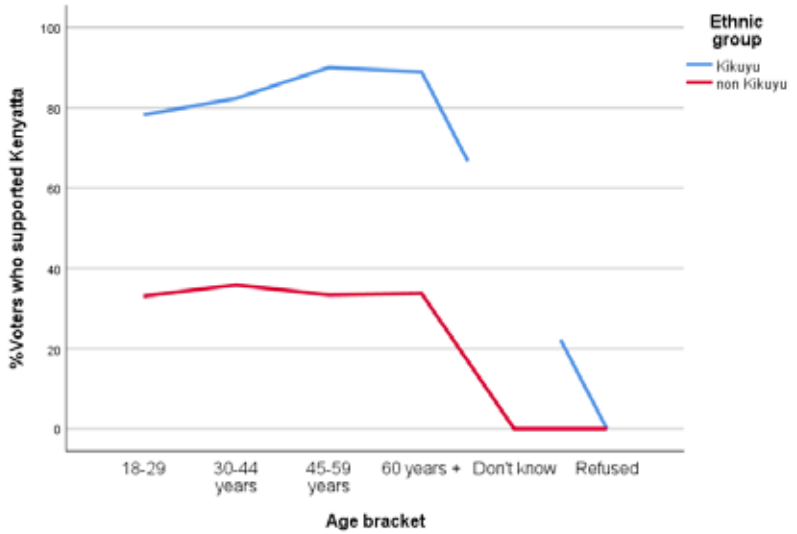
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-29	577	38.5	38.7	38.7
	30-44 years	526	35.1	35.3	74.0
	45-59 years	230	15.3	15.4	89.5
	60 years +	113	7.5	7.6	97.0
	Don't know	2	.1	.1	97.2
	Refused	42	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	1490	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	10	.7		
Total		1500	100.0		



How does age influence voter behavior? Let's look at the impact of age when we control ethnicity.

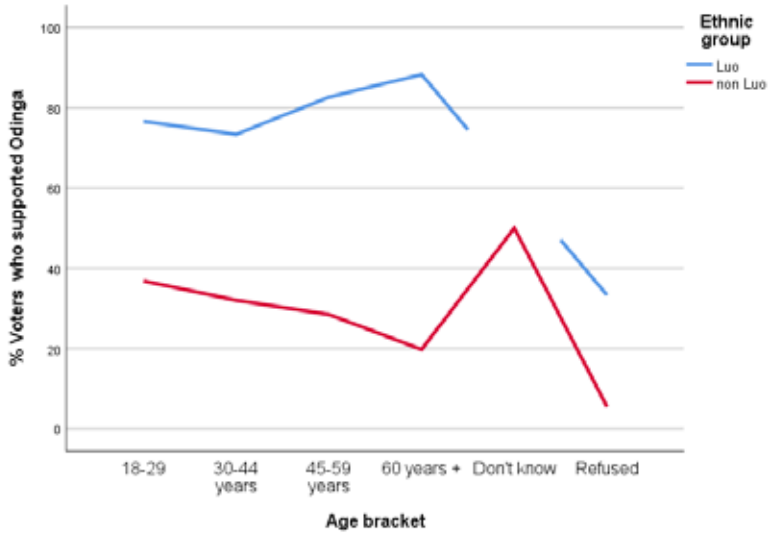
Kenyatta

78.2% of the Kikuyu block aged [18-29] voted for Kenyata,
82.3% of the Kikuyu aged [30-44] voted for Kenyatta
90% of the Kikuyu aged [45-59] voted for Kenyatta
88.9% of the Kikuyu aged [60 and above] voted for Kenyatta.



Odinga

76.6% of the Luo aged [18-29] voted for Odinga,
73,3% of the Luo aged [30-44] voted for Odinga
82.6% of the Luo aged [45-59] voted for Odinga
88.2% of the Luo aged 60 + voted for Odinga.



Age clearly plays a role, even minimal. Here also, there is a pattern, the older the voter grows the more he tends to side with the ethnic group. Young people tends less to side with ethnic rhetoric.

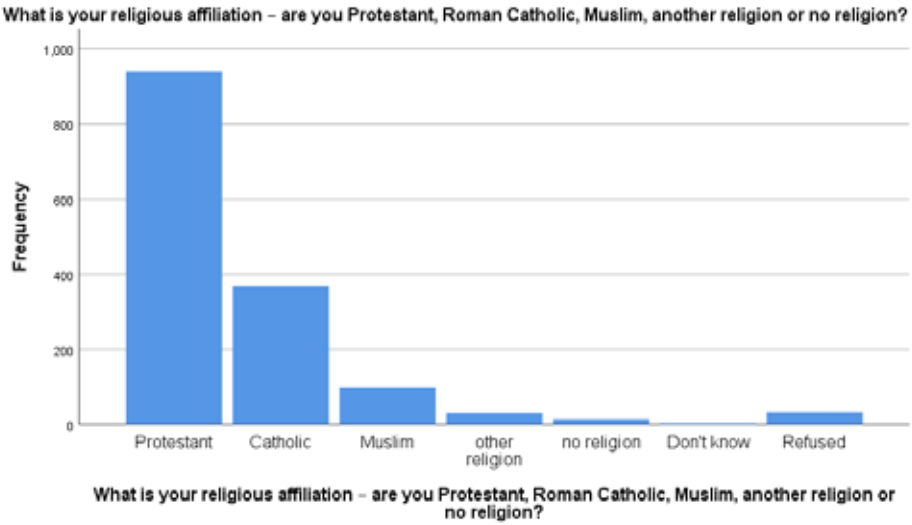
Religion and Kenyan voter behavior

It is commonly admitted that, being a strong marker of identity, religion may play a role in influencing about whom to vote or not. To identify the religious affiliation of the respondent we asked the following question:

"What is your religious affiliation/preference – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, member of another religion or no religion?".

What is your religious affiliation – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, another religion or no religion?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Protestant	939	62.6	63.0	63.0
	Catholic	368	24.5	24.7	87.7
	Muslim	100	6.7	6.7	94.4
	other religion	32	2.1	2.1	96.5
	no religion	15	1.0	1.0	97.5
	Don't know	3	.2	.2	97.7
	Refused	34	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	1491	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	9	.6		
Total		1500	100.0		



Let's assess the impact of religion in voter behavior when we control ethnicity. Kenyatta is a Catholic and Odinga is a Protestant. Protestant Kikuyus voted at 81,7% for Kenyatta. 73,5% of Catholic Luo voted for Odinga. There is no pattern and the result is even counterintuitive. The overwhelming majority of Protestant Kikuyus voted for a Catholic and the overwhelming majority of Catholic Luo voted for a Protestant. So results show that religion does not play a role in influencing Kenyan voter behavior.

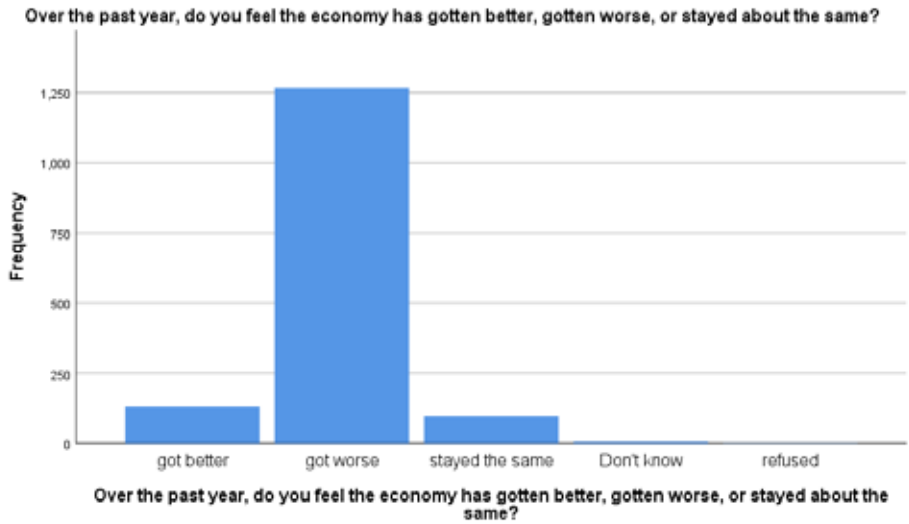
The economic situation of the country and voter behavior

It is commonly agreed upon that the ongoing economic situation of the country is a powerful predictor of who will win or lose the election. A general economic satisfaction among voters will serve the purpose of the incumbent candidate. To feel the thermometer of the economic situation of the country, the following question was asked:

"Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?".

Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	got better	131	8.7	8.7	8.7
	got worse	1267	84.5	84.5	93.2
	stayed the same	96	6.4	6.4	99.6
	Don't know	5	.3	.3	99.9
	refused	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



These results are surprising, to say the least. The deep seated feeling among the people was that the country was heading in the wrong direction economically; and yet they voted for the incumbent candidate, the one responsible for their hardships.

Only 8.7% were satisfied with the economy.

The overwhelming majority, 84.5% of people, answered that the economy has gotten worse.

6.4% said the economy had remained the same.

More surprising is the voting behavior of the Kikuyus who overwhelmingly voted in favor of Kenyatta. 84% of them said that the economy were not satisfied with economic growth and either that things got worse (73,2%) or stayed the same.

Tavola di contingenza Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same? * Are you a Kikuyu or not?

			Are you a Kikuyu or not?		
			Kikuyu	**non Kikuyu**	**Totale**
Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?	got better	Conteggio	41	90	131
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	16.0%	7.2%	8.7%
	got worse	Conteggio	188	1079	1267
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	73.2%	86.8%	84.5%
	stayed the same	Conteggio	28	68	96
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	10.9%	5.5%	6.4%
	Don't know	Conteggio	0	5	5
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
	refused	Conteggio	0	1	1
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Totale		Conteggio	257	1243	1500
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Something is sure, the economic uneasiness had no great impact on the Kikuyu support for their candidate. Here conventional wisdom in politics does not hold true in front of ethnic affiliation.

Conclusion

Ethnicity is a reality in African politics today. Previous Kenyan presidential elections had been fraught with ethnic violence and current President Uhuru Kenyatta was even indicted by the ICC on the motive of fueling ethnic hatred. The data resulting from this study prove that ethnicity has been the most potent predictor of Kenyan voter behavior in the past Presidential electoral contests. Besides ethnic belonging, the study has also identified other sociological factors like income, education, and age. Those at the top of the ticket can almost be sure to garner around 80% support from the ethnic folks, the Kikuyu for Kenyatta and the Luo for Raila. Ethnicity is a factual reality in the social and political life of Kenya and Africa in general. At the outset of this research, I was told by several government officials that Kenyans do not speak about ethnicity. This taboo leaves a void in public life and political discourse. This void is easily filled up by the politicians who take advantage of the silence to manipulate, misinform, and instill fear and division among the people. Ethnicity needs to be taken into account and become a matter of public debate. For example, people should be free to speak – even jokingly – about the contradiction that exists between the negative economic rating of an incumbent candidate and yet the political decision to continue to support him and failed policies. In most advanced democracies voting blocs exist and no one is not afraid to talk about it. Voting is one of the freest acts in political life. Anyone is free to choose one's candidate. The polling booth is meant for that, for privacy and secrecy. Ethnicity becomes an issue of concern only when it is used as a criterion for political choice in public life. Moreover, as the numbers indicate, variables like education, income, and age have an impact in mitigating the power of ethnicity. The more people are educated and wealthy the less they vote along ethnic lines or to say it otherwise, the less people are educated and poor the more they tend to identify with their group. On the contrary the younger people are the less the side with their ethnic folks. Instead of banning the issue from public debate, efforts should be put to raise people's income and education level. Changing the tides of ethnic conflict should also focus on the youth and educate them to values of cultural diversity.

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