

Kenyan General Elections 2022: A game of pledges, promises and service to self-interest

Working Paper

Amos Tirra, Hannah Collins, Jaqueline
McGlade, Henrietta Moore and Arno
Scharl

June 2023



Kenyan General Elections 2022: A game of pledges, promises and service to self-interest

Working Paper

Amos Tirra, Hannah Collins, Jaqueline McGlade,
Henrietta Moore and Arno Scharl

June 2023

Suggested citation:

Zaher, R. 2022. *Embodied Experiences, Troubled Livelihoods: Ethnographic Observations from Ras Beirut*. London: Institute for Global Prosperity.

Layout and design: David Heymann
Formatted by Eva Lamorgese and Amanda Kartikasari

ISBN: 978-1-913041-43-4

About the Institute for Global Prosperity

The Institute for Global Prosperity at UCL (IGP) is redesigning prosperity for the 21st century, changing the way we conceive and run our economies, and reworking our relationship with the planet. IGP's vision is to build a prosperous, sustainable, global future, underpinned by the principles of fairness and justice, and allied to a realistic, long-term vision of humanity's place in the world.

The IGP undertakes pioneering research that seeks to dramatically improve the quality of life for this and future generations. Its strength lies in the way it allies intellectual creativity to effective collaboration and policy development. Of particular importance to the IGP's approach is the way in which it integrates non-academic expertise into its knowledge generation by engaging with governments, policy makers, business, civil society, the arts and local communities.

For further information please contact: igp@ucl.ac.uk

About PROCOL

Prosperity Co-Laboratories (PROCOLs) are innovative collaborations between academia, policy, business, civil society and local communities. They drive experimentation and whole systems change to develop sustainable pathways to prosperity around the world. The research that takes place in the PROCOL sites provides excellent opportunities for collaborative, transdisciplinary research aligned to local needs and stakeholders.

IGP currently has three PROCOLs in the UK, Lebanon and Africa. PROCOL Lebanon works on delivering inclusive and prosperous futures for communities impacted by mass displacement. PROCOL Africa focuses on natural and social prosperity. PROCOL UK investigates past, present and future determinants of prosperity in the UK.

ABSTRACT

The relatively new democratic system in Kenya is complex and often negotiable, further complicated by the shifting landscape and impact of social media. This working paper explores the history of democracy in Kenya and presents the instrumentalisation of ethnic identities by key political figures using Social Cleavage Theory. A web-based analysis of social and news media, and qualitative data collected from focus group discussions with key community leaders are presented to interrogate the drivers of the 2022 election outcome. From the findings we offer recommendations on how the electoral system in Kenya can be further safeguarded to ensure that democracy in Kenya works for the prosperity of the citizens, not just of the politicians.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous five Kenyan election cycles, the months leading up to, and after, the election have been the most violent periods in Kenya's post-independence history (Okatch et al., 2022). In 1992 multi-party democracy was introduced in Kenya contributing to the ethnicization of politics. In the absence of political parties based on a consistent ideology, the instrumentalisation of tribal identities and manipulation of ethnic grievances have been the primary basis of political mobilisation. However, in the lead up to the 2022 election cycle there were some signs that the political discourse based on ethnocentrism and its underlying drivers were changing (Okatch et al., 2022; Saferworld, 2021). This working paper explores the events leading up to and after the 2022 Kenyan general election through a web-based analysis of social and news media paired with qualitative data collected from selected community leaders, to try to understand what made the 2022 elections different and to investigate how the democratic process in Kenya can be further safeguarded and improved upon.

Local politics have historically often been driven by self-interests (NCIC, 2020), which predetermines one's associates, political alignments and affiliations. Since there is no permanent opposition in the political arena, politicians frequently change their party allegiance to gain support across either side of the political divide. A party may enter in an agreement with a certain coalition but later shift their allegiance to another coalition before the initial agreement expires (Omulo et al., 2022). Furthermore, the majority of political parties are formed to participate in a given election but do not last more than one election cycle (UNICEF, 2017).

After a relatively peaceful election in 2002, the 2007 elections marked a significant shift in Kenya's democracy. Society was divided

between those who had benefited from significant economic growth in Kenya and those who had not. In the lead up to election day, those running for office, Raila Odinga and incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, reached a deadlock in the polls. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that there was a well-orchestrated plan to ensure the results were predetermined in favour of Kibaki (IFES, 2008). Tribal loyalties meant that both parties supported politicians, accused of corruption, as worthy candidates who had significant conflicts of interest. The clearest act of electoral violation contributing to the unrest was the use of unchecked negative speech from both sides marked by ethno-political division (IFES, 2008). Voter turnout was large, and voting took place peacefully. However, the counting and tallying of votes was criticised by observers from the EU Elections Observation Mission team, the East African Community Observer Mission, the Kenya Elections Domestic Observation Forum (KEDOF) and the Commonwealth Observer Group, among others, who were concerned with how the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) concluded the presidential election and declared a winner. Days later the ECK Chairman announced a result that was not backed by the required statutory documentation but within minutes, Mwai Kibaki was sworn in as President in a private ceremony (IFES, 2008).

The results from the 2007 election caused serious electoral violence, the deaths of over 1100 people, the displacement of between 300 000 and 650 000 people and left the country deeply divided (OHCHR, 2008; Okatch et al., 2022). As a result, the National Accord was signed establishing the Agenda Four Commissions, including the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) to promote national identity and values, mitigate ethno-political competition and ethnically motivated violence and eliminate discrimination based on ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds

(Okatch et al., 2022).

In 2013 and 2017 polls were marred by electoral fraud and tightly contested between Odinga and Kenyatta (and his running mate Ruto). The Supreme Court ruled for a rerun of the 2017 election due to irregularities. This raised questions about Kenya's ability to hold free and fair elections (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2022). Given the recent history of ethnically incited election violence, as well as the Covid-induced frailty of society, Kenyan citizens were fearful of the 2022 election period (Okatch et al., 2022). In the absence of political party self-regulation, responsibility falls on the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IBEC). In a pre-2022 election study by the NCIC 26% of participants rated the IBEC, security agencies and the judiciary as very likely and 31% somewhat likely to deliver a free and fair election. Despite the fact that 55% of Kenyan's who participated had low trust in the judicial process and 60% feared the police would use violence before, during and after the August election (Okatch et al., 2022).

1.2 The lead up to the 2022 Election

The August 2022 elections involved two main coalitions – Kenya Kwanza and Azimio La Umoja – led by William Ruto and Raila Odinga respectively, who had been allies in the 2007 elections. Both the coalitions were popular throughout the country aligned by their differing ethnicities and regional origin (Okatch et al., 2022). The Rift Valley and Central Kenya regions were Kenya Kwanza strongholds while Western, Eastern and Coastal regions were Azimio La Umoja strongholds. The support for either coalition was near even in the polls, making it difficult to predict the outcome of the election. Different politicians shifting allegiance and joining opposing sides, complicated matters even more (Omulo et al., 2022). Despite

Ruto being the Deputy President at the time, the then President Uhuru Kenyatta decided to support the opposition leader Odinga (Too, 2022).

The leading candidates had been involved in previous elections and associated violence. Raila Odinga, was running for the fifth time (and was prime minister between 2008 and 2013) and had, in 2017, petitioned the Supreme Court against the election result, which were not in his favour, and then subsequently boycotted the IEBC elections citing electoral malpractice. While William Ruto had been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) 2011 for incitement of violence and crimes against humanity in the 2007 elections, but the charges were later dropped due to lack of evidence. After the ICC case was closed, the two leaders parted ways and since then Odinga's Luo ethnic group became the main antagonist to Ruto's Kalenjin ethnic group in the subsequent elections. However, the two ethnic groups had previously worked together and voted as a block in the 2007 elections when Odinga and Ruto were in the same political party.

In Kenya patronage networks are important determinants of electoral outcomes. Odinga courted the Mount Kenya Clan; wealthy business financiers who hold substantial clout among Kikuyu voters in Central Kenya. And Ruto, despite being one of the wealthiest people in the country, worked to mobilise the poor by portraying himself as an average 'hustler' who sold chickens in his youth (Resnick, 2021).

Print media, mainstream media (radio and television), in-person meetings and digital platforms were all used for communication and mobilisation to gain support to a given ideology. The choice of any platform by the candidates differed based on the target group, availability of resources and the kind of message to be shared.

However, regardless of the platform used, the information shared was characterised by misinformation, disinformation, satire, rumours, exaggerations and falsifications (Madung and Obilo, 2021; Madung et al., 2022; Okatch et al., 2022). At times the information circulated contained hate speech – inciting antagonism and violence towards particular groups – but this was rare probably because the perpetrators were aware of the consequences and chances for retaliation.

Social media platforms play a significant role in winning elections around the world today (Petrova et al., 2020). During the August 2022 election contest, time series data was indispensable to monitor and predict events leading up to and following the election. Well-structured and organised time series data could have helped forecast the most likely outcome of the election. However, candidates did not communicate in a structured manner resulting in unorganised and unstructured datasets from multiple sources, making it difficult to consolidate and analyse. Therefore, we employed a platform called WebLyzard to enable analysis and visualization of the unstructured and complex elections data from multiple digital platforms (WebLyzard, 2008).

WebLyzard is a user-friendly platform configured to mine data from multiple sources. It uses web intelligence to merge datasets based on given subjects and generates graphs, maps and word clouds for easy visualisation. Data visualisation in WebLyzard gives a range of outputs including associations, frequencies, hotspot coverage, impact analysis and source entity analysis. WebLyzard enabled us to analyse and compare the influence of different sentiments labelled as positive, negative or neutral (WebLyzard, 2008).

This working paper analyses and presents the results from data related to the August 2022 Kenyan General Election shared on digital platforms – Twitter, Facebook and news websites analysed using WebLyzard – and print media. These findings were corroborated with insights from mainstream media, key informant interviews and focus group discussion. First, we introduce the theoretical framework employed here to help describe the political scene in Kenya, then we present the methods for our analysis and discuss the results and their implications for the future prosperity of Kenya.



2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) Social Cleavage theory describes the social and cultural factors that divide citizens within one society into groups creating political conflict between them. The theory poses that these political cleavages determine a country's party system as well as the voting behaviour of citizens. Politics in Kenya have traditionally been established on ethnic backgrounds using party coalitions to consolidate numbers. The ethnic divide helps political parties to identify their stronghold regions and that of their opponents, so that they can employ social constructs or stereotypes related to each ethnic group as a tool in their political messaging. For example, in the August 2022 general elections the Kenya Kwanza Coalition managed to create a social narrative that rallied the less fortunate in the society 'hustlers' against the rich 'dynasty'.



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study area

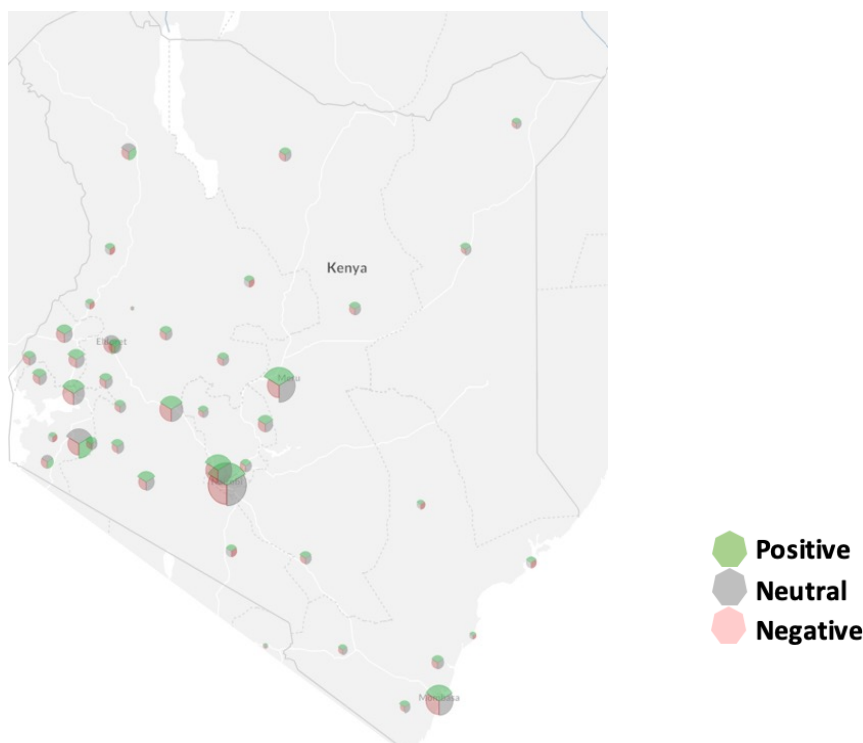
Kenya is located in East Africa and bordered by South Sudan and Ethiopia to the north, Somalia and the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the south, and Lake Victoria and Uganda to the west. Nairobi is the capital and largest city in the country followed by Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru respectively. According to the Government of Kenya (GoK) (2017), there are 44 tribes recognised by law of which the Kikuyu, Maasai, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, and Kamba are the largest. It should be noted that since Kenya gained independence in 1963, and prior to the 2022 elections, all five presidents have come from the tribes of Kalenjin and Kikuyu. The country is undergoing massive population growth with 75% of the population aged below 35 years. According to the 2019 Population and Housing Census, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics estimates

Kenya’s population at about 47.6 million of which 50.5% is female (KNBS, 2019). This study analyses election data from across Kenya. However, the focus was on areas perceived to have high influence on the outcome of the 2022 general elections: the Western, Central, Coastal and Rift Valley regions (Figure 1).

3.2 Data sources

The study utilised data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included a focus group discussion and key informant interviews with selected community leaders, personal social media accounts of key candidates, and the political views and opinions voiced by politicians on mainstream media. Secondary data sources included two leading national newspapers, 19 news websites, 196 Facebook pages, and 260 specified Twitter accounts and those linked to them.

Figure 1: Study area showing hotspot coverage for positive, negative and neutral sentiments. *Source: Generated on WebLyzard by authors (2023)*



3.3 Sample size and sampling technique

The sample size for the WebLyzard analysis included 47 sitting governors, 47 sitting senators, 22 sitting women representatives, 44 senior public servants, 12 political parties, 5 security organs, 3 election oversight institutions (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Judiciary and National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)), 10 ethnic communities, and 90 prominent politicians. Individuals, institutions and communities included in the study were purposively selected because of their large political following and influence. National security organs were included in the sample as they attract a lot of attention when active such as during political gathering and demonstrations. Moreover, the police have previously been accused of using excessive force during election cycles and extrajudicial killings (Parliament of Kenya, 2021). Election oversight institutions were included in the sample since they were viewed as neutral.

The study sampled two newspapers (Nation and The Standard) with a thematic review of 97 political articles. The two newspapers were purposively selected because of their influence on the political scene, their wide coverage of political issues and nationwide reach.

The focus group discussion with selected community leaders was held on 8th April in Nakuru City. The community leaders involved in focus group discussion were selected based on their understanding and knowledge of the hotspot areas and associated social tensions. They later served as key informants for events occurring during and after campaigns, party nominations and general elections. The events leading to and following the 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections were discussed. Hotspot areas that had previously experienced post-election violence and areas likely to experience

post-election violence in 2022 were mapped. Events signalling possibility of violence were discussed and the individuals who had previously been associated with organising and inciting violence listed. This was important to gauge the political climate within hotspot areas and to help forecast political actions.

3.4 Analysis

Data was analysed using WebLyzard and Nvivo software. WebLyzard was configured to mine data related to Kenyan elections. Acquisition of content from the WebLyzard platform followed a two-step process. The first step involved defining the online data sources – news websites, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts – in the configuration spreadsheet. The second step involved setting up filter criteria in the configuration spreadsheet by developing the inclusion and exclusion lists, ensuring high-quality content from the specified source. Using web intelligence, WebLyzard merged the datasets from the specified digital media platforms based on given subjects to visualise output in different dimensions. From the dataset associations, frequencies, hotspot coverage, impact analysis and source entity analysis were visualised and manipulated to generate graphs, maps and word clouds. Web intelligence also enabled analysis and visualisation of different sentiments while characterising them as positive, negative and neutral (WebLyzard, 2008).

A thematic review of related newspaper articles was done in Nvivo. First the articles were imported into Nvivo after which a word cloud was generated to show the general direction of political discourse. Coding was done to identify and analyse key themes. Data from focus group discussion and key informant interviews were used to inform and validate output from software analysis.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characterisation of the August 2022 general election

Figure 2 presents the main thematic areas covered by newspapers during the 2022 election period. Azimio La Umoja – One Kenya Coalition and Kenya Kwanza coalition were the main groups in the political space. Azimio La Umoja – One Kenya Coalition was formed of about 30 political parties with Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Jubilee and Wiper being the anchor parties. Kenya Kwanza Coalition comprised of about

13 affiliated political parties with United Democratic Alliance (UDA), Amani National Congress (ANC) and FORD-Kenya being the anchor parties. The IEBC, Judiciary and NCIC (herein referred to as ‘election oversight institutions’) were the main non-affiliate organisations that received attention in their role of ensuring a fair election process. Azimio La Umoja coalition received more attention from newspapers accounting for 39% of political related articles published. Kenya Kwanza coalition accounted for 28% of newspapers articles while election oversight institutions accounted for 33% of articles published in newspapers.

Figure 2: Description of August 2022 Kenya general elections from analysis of newspapers
 Source: Nvivo analysis by authors (2023)

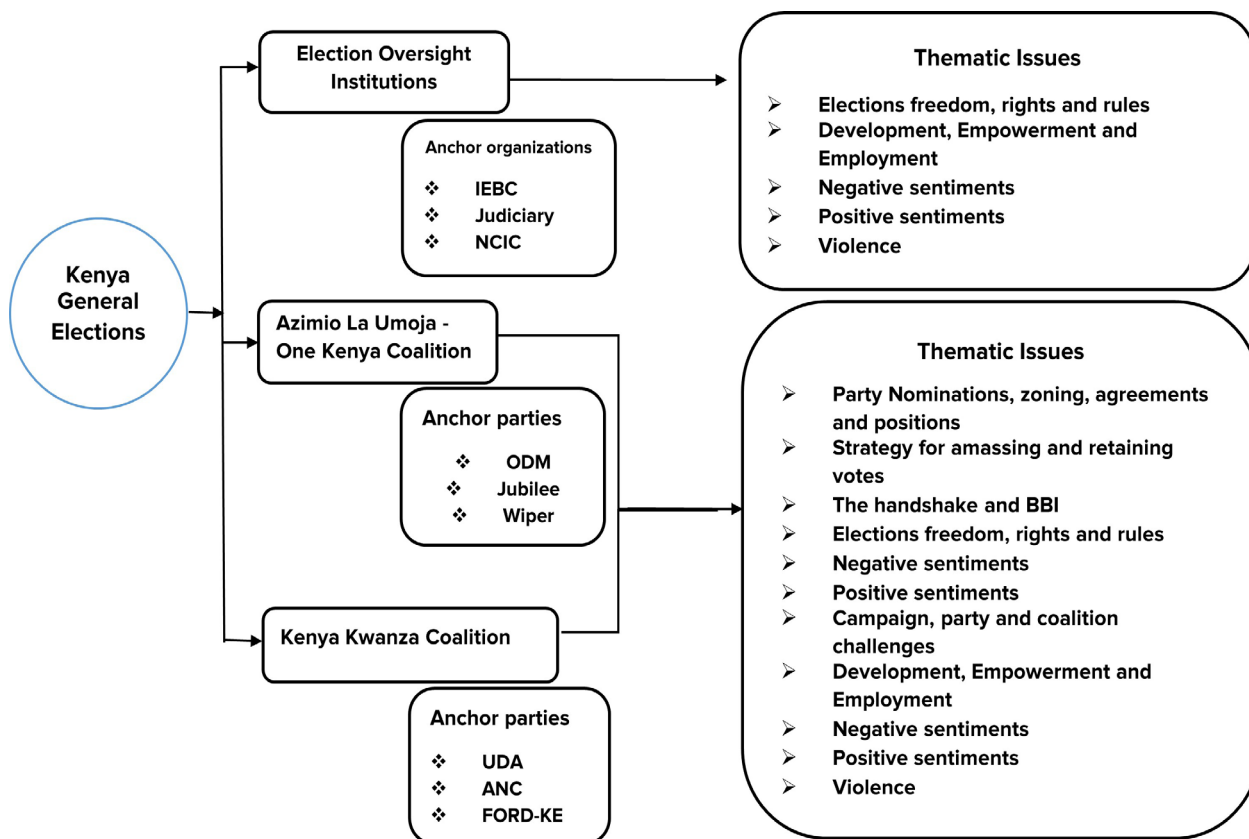


Figure 3: Relation tracker and Word Cloud for Kenya general elections
 Source: WebLyzard analysis (Relation tracker) & Nvivo analysis (Word Cloud)

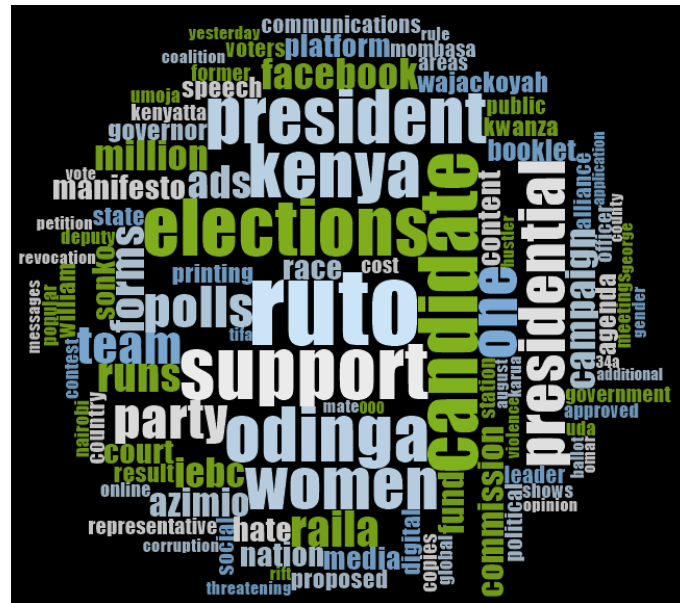
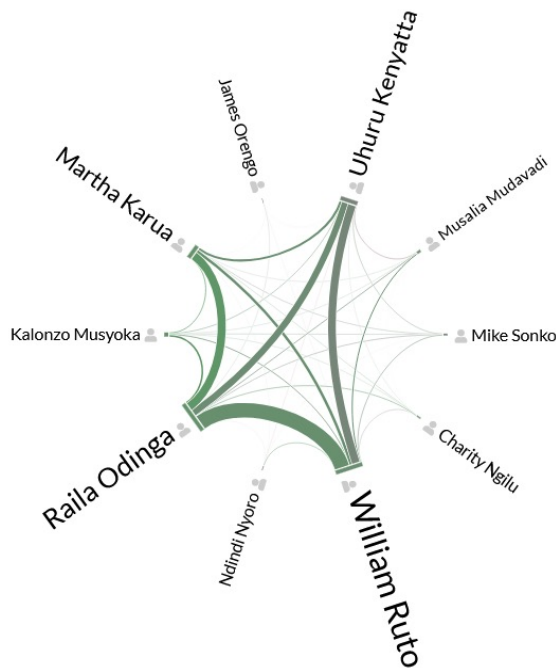
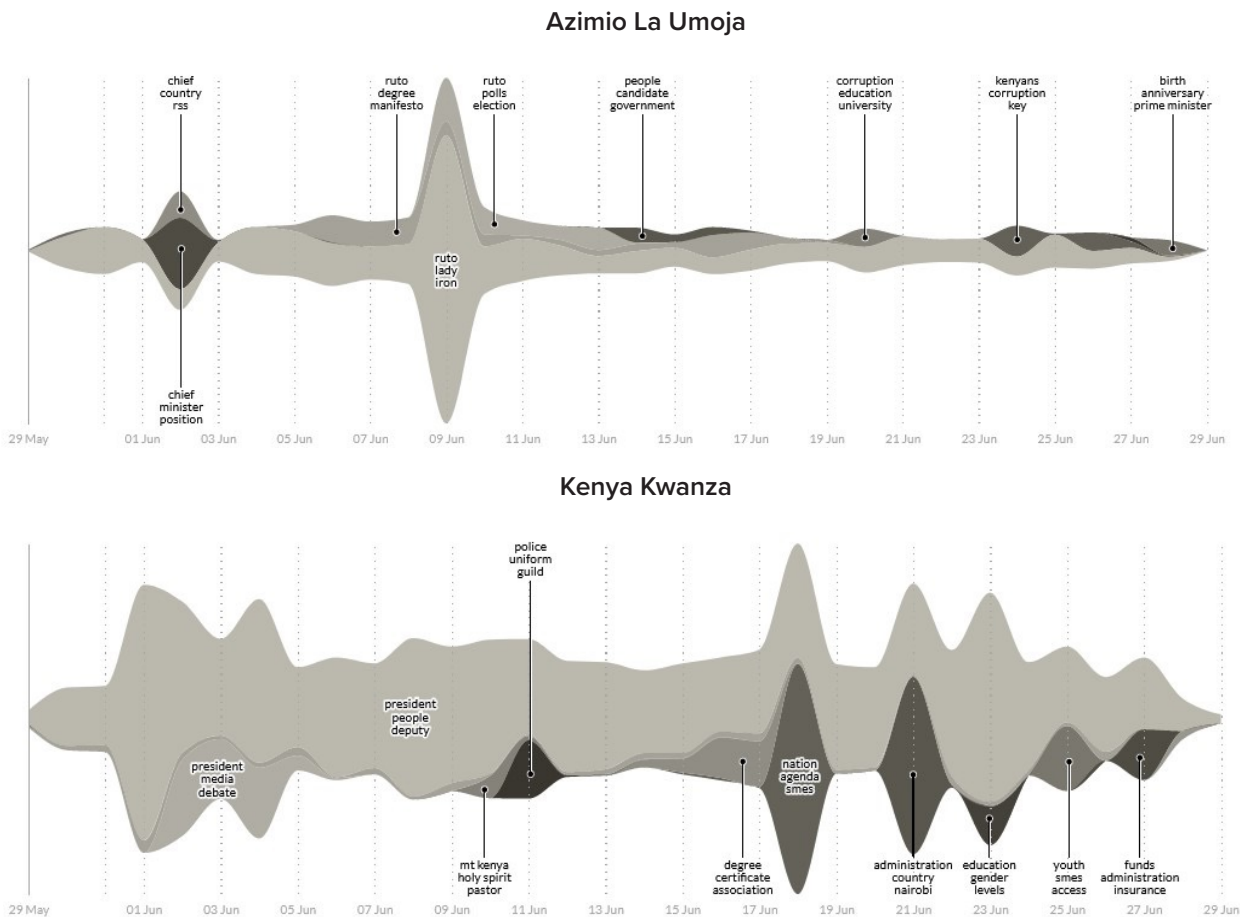


Figure 3 shows interactions and associations among main political players, and main words used in political discussions. As expected, the Presidency dominated the discussions. Raila Odinga and William Ruto were the main personalities discussed with respect to their coalition formations and political parties. Other political seats widely discussed include that of the Governor, Senator and Members of Parliament while other names frequently mentioned were President Kenyatta and Martha Karua. It is important to note that Ruto's running mate, Rigathi Gachagua, barely featured on the relation tracker because at the time he had few followers on Twitter and his account was verified late into the campaign period.

The story graphs (Figure 4) of the Azimio La Umoja and Kenya Kwanza coalitions cover the period from May 29th to June 29th, as political activities escalated as each coalition was presented their manifesto. The graphs show when the stories emerged,

associations across subjects, the dominance of each story, and the period that each story lasted. During the period, Azimio La Umoja Coalition dominantly discussed William Ruto and Raila Odinga's running mate, Martha Karua, also known as the 'Iron Lady'. Other stories discussed by Azimio La Umoja Coalition included; the Chief Minister's position, Azimio's manifesto, degree qualification of all aspiring leaders, opinion poll results, corruption, and the education system in the country. On the other hand, the dominant topic for Kenya Kwanza Coalition was about their suitability of clinching the Presidency, as well as; fairness in media coverage and the presidential debate, the welfare of police officers, degree qualification of the candidates, the national agenda and small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs), the administration of Nairobi County, the education system and gender balance, the youth, and access to funds for business development.

Figure 3: Relation tracker and Word Cloud for Kenya general elections
 Source: WebLizard analysis (Relation tracker) & Nvivo analysis (Word Cloud)



The themes illustrated in Figure 4 show how the Azimio campaigns focussed on praising individuals to elevate opinion poll in their favour and criticising opponents on how they were not qualified to hold office due to corruption records. On the other hand, Kenya Kwanza campaigns focused on convincing different groups in the society (youth, police officers, women and business owners) that their coalition would improve livelihoods and allocate funds to particular issues important to those groups.

The keywords represented in Figure 5 build on the story graph in Figure 4 by showing words that defined main topics

discussed in relation to both Raila Odinga and William Ruto. Figure 5 shows that Ruto’s campaigns revolved around formation of the next administration that would deliver free healthcare services, create jobs and opportunities for businesses, empower youth and women, support small business enterprises, invest in agricultural production, infrastructural development, environmental sustainability, and a bottom-up economic model for economic prosperity. Ruto and his followers discussed why Raila Odinga and Martha Karua should not lead the country. Ruto assured his supporters that despite President Uhuru Kenyatta and Martha Karua supporting Odinga, their votes from Mount

Kenya region were still intact and they were sure of winning the August 9th poll. Figure 5 also shows that Azimio La Umoja camp under Raila Odinga mainly discussed their manifesto, how their team was qualified to hold office and how their opponents were not fit for office. The Azimio team discussed key aspects in their manifesto including free education, plans to revamp local industry and fighting corruption. In doing so, Azimio linked Ruto's faction to corruption scandals. Odinga assured his supporters that he had the best chance of winning the elections

and would defeat Ruto on the ballot. While Ruto directed his promises to solving issues related to and benefiting specified groups in the society, Odinga targeted individuals and issues that affected the whole country and seemed to be overconfident in winning the election following opinion poll results. Ruto invested in creating a personal relationship with the people with whom he had conversations about their specific issues while Odinga mainly employed traditional campaign strategy of organising mega rallies.

Figure 5: Keyword Graph for William Ruto and Raila Odinga Campaigns
 Source: WebLyzard analysis

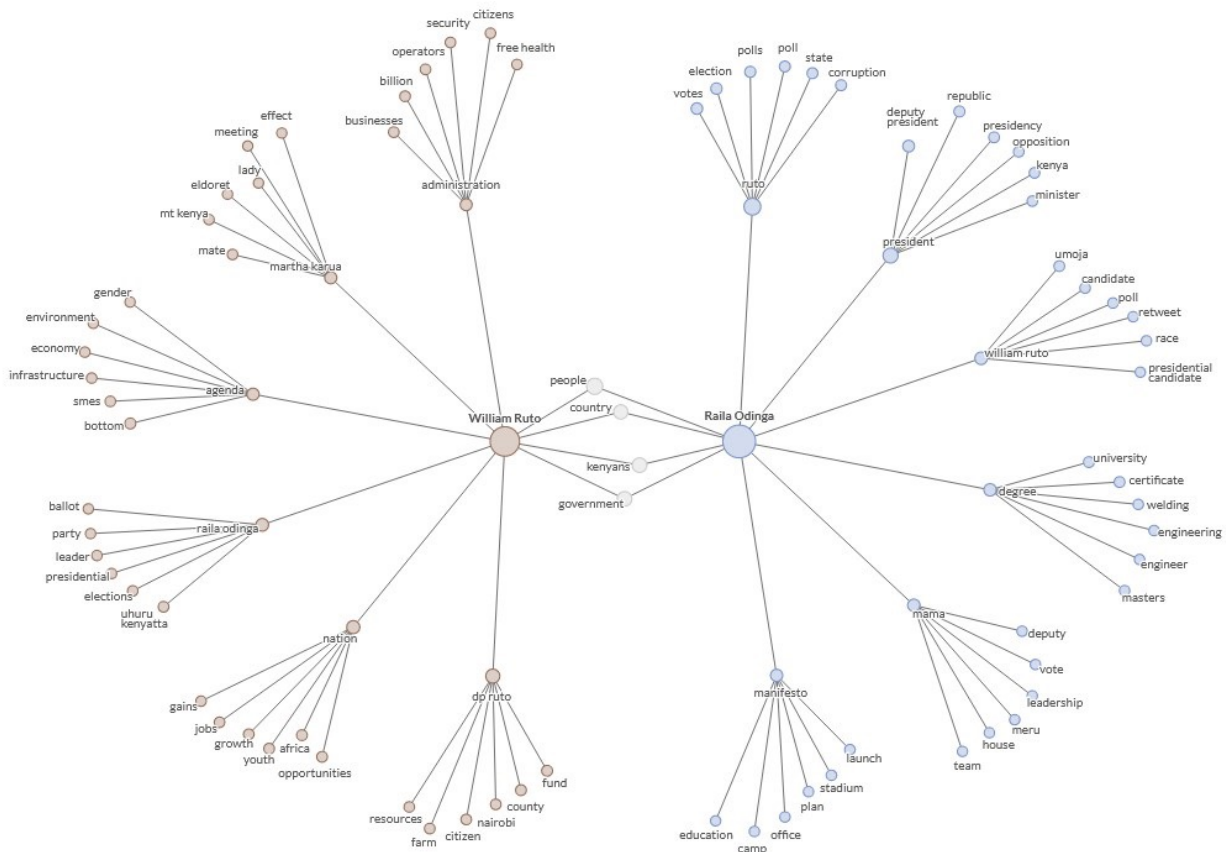
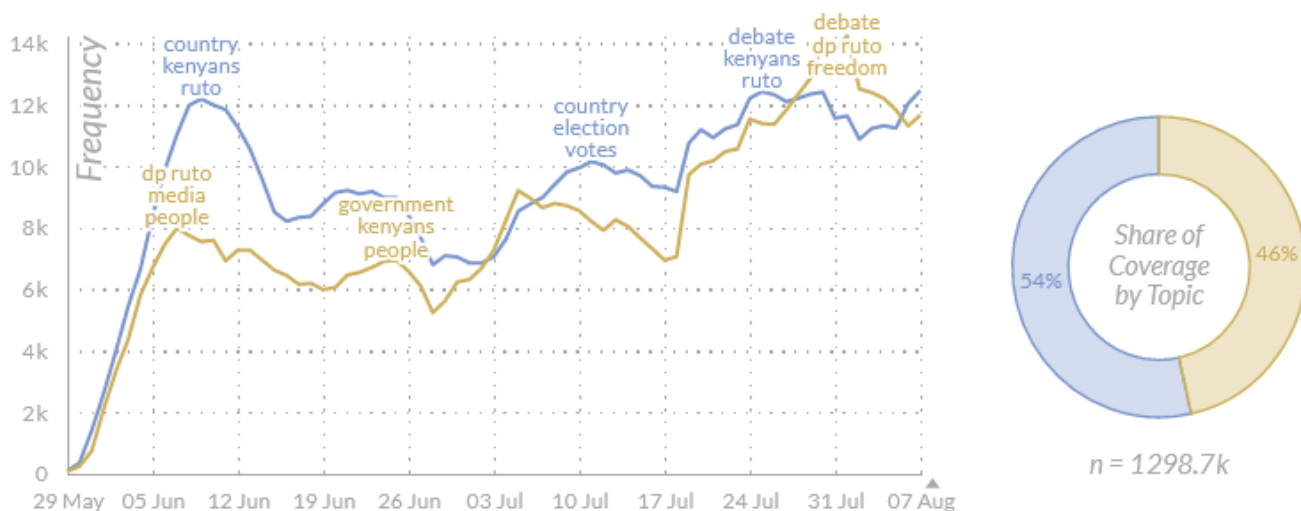


Figure 6 shows the frequency of coverage for Odinga and Ruto from different online sources and platforms over the campaign period. Odinga had a higher coverage frequency throughout the campaign period adding up to 54% compared to Ruto’s 46%. This could indicate that Odinga’s team had an advantage of passing their messages easily through media platforms compared to Ruto’s team. However, Ruto gained more coverage towards the tail end of the campaign surpassing Odinga significantly.

result in the movement of members to other parties and increased opposition. However, since most parties are tribal and command support in specific regions, different parties enter into coalition agreements to enhance their influence across regions where their partners enjoy massive support.

The law requires political parties to present only one candidate to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) for consideration for any elective

Figure 6: Share of coverage of Raila Odinga and William Ruto
Source: WebLyizard analysis



4.2 Thematic review of political newspaper articles for the August 2022 general election

4.2.1 Party nominations, zoning, agreements and sharing of positions

The process used by a party to enter into agreements and select candidates is not only important for creating a positive perception about the party but also helps in attracting new members and retaining others. This goes beyond only the competing candidates, as voters compare the processes used by different parties to choose one party to support. Failed processes of selection can

position. The parties that had more than one candidate for any position held nominations to select the most appropriate candidate as reported on 16 April 2022 in the Nation newspaper ‘...the just concluded Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and United Democratic Alliance (UDA) primaries saw most incumbents clinch tickets to defend their seats.’ Alternatively, parties could ask the competitors to reach a consensus and put forward one name for consideration. ‘Jubilee, in a letter addressed to the electoral agency, said last week that it intended to select its candidates through consensus,’ (The Standard, 16 April 2022).

Different parties agreed to form a coalition to increase their influence and chances of winning different positions *'...the unification of parties under the Azimio la Umoja Movement and One Kenya Alliance, saying it was to ensure that the now monolithic party would secure majority political positions,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). The coalitions formed reached a consensus to front one candidate to be supported by the coalition. Coalitions also agreed to *'zone the country according to spheres of influence among the individual parties,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022).

4.2.2 Strategies for amassing and retaining votes

Candidates and parties used multiple strategies to gain support of voters. The different platforms used for campaigning included the social media, mainstream media and in-person campaigns. Strategies used to amass and retain votes included door-to-door campaigns and mega rallies *'As President Uhuru Kenyatta prepares to roll out a major campaign to recover lost ground in Mt Kenya region, he has laid out a quiet plan to retain votes in the Rift Valley. ...Uhuru strategy in the Rift Valley is to do a door-to-door, Nyumba-kumi type of campaign before he hits the ground in an open campaign,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). Most political parties signed agreements and formed coalitions with other parties to increase influence and stem their opponents' support. One of the newspapers reported that *'[i]n Kajiado, the strategy is slightly different as Azimio intends to combine comparative strengths of ODM and what was the TNA vote to stem UDA tide,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). Politicians, who had been involved with projects such as the construction of classrooms, roads, or water supply, took the opportunity to launch them during the campaign period.

Presidential candidates and governors sought out running mates who could complement their influence of the vote. Another strategy used by candidates was defection to popular political parties within the areas they were seeking votes. It was reported in the newspapers that *'[a]s part of the strategy, Kajiado Governor Joseph ole Lenku last week defected from Jubilee to ODM with an intention of keeping the vote in Kajiado South where he comes and having fingers on ODM strongholds in Central and East,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). Another newspaper article reported that *'[i]n a surprise move, Kinyanjui yesterday afternoon announced a change of heart when he declared that he would defend the seat on a Jubilee ticket, a party that sponsored his election in 2017,'* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). Parties could ask weaker candidates to step down and support stronger candidates *'Makau stepped down to support Wavinya, who is vying for Machakos governor while Allan Sila quit the Kitui senate race to support Senator Enock Wambua,'* (The Standard, 16 April 2022). In most cases, candidates who stepped down were given different roles to play during the campaign period *'ODM leader Raila Odinga said Shahbal had stepped down to back Nassir after days of negotiations. He said Shahbal will be part of his presidential campaign team,'* (The Standard, 16 April 2022).

Politicians invited a diverse group of people (such as lawyers, lecturers, researchers, doctors, women, youth, small business owners, people living with disabilities and pastoral communities), to speak about specific issues in different fora. Promising support towards such groups helped in creating a perception among the electorates that the politicians supported their interests *'...first time that a young person had been introduced at the centre stage of a campaign and I think that is why it became a sensation,'*

(Nation, 16 April 2022). Lastly, handouts of money served as a show of appreciation for the electorates who attended political meetings but created a perception that the politician who gave the highest amount was the most favourable¹. During smaller meetings, candidates to their electorates after the meeting or through their proxies when mobilising crowds at mega rallies.

Social media was a key tool for voter mobilisation. Politicians at different levels assembled bloggers, communication specialists, journalists, and digital experts to help them craft and curate messages. *'Politicians at all levels have heavily invested in digital campaigns, shifting online the race to woo voters... Presidential candidates have been building digital war chests to shape opinions, interact with their supporters and market their manifestos and agenda,'* (Nation, 30 July 2022). According to Apollo (2022), running a successful presidential campaign on social media could cost between 25 million to 30 million shillings. The different social media platforms used in the campaigns were Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Snapchat. However, politicians invested in platforms that created the highest impact *'[o]ur investment has been in areas where the masses are ...our biggest platform with the greatest impact is Facebook'* (Nation, 30 July 2022).

To gain support candidates employed a mix of traditional and newer strategies. Formation of coalitions and moving to parties popular in a given region is a conventional way for candidates to appeal to specific ethnic groups. Careful selection of running mates from different regions was another traditional way of aligning to a given ethnic group. However, investment in social media messaging was used as a tool to appeal to the younger generations.

¹ It is the norm for candidates to give money to electorates in Kenyan politics. Politicians who do not give money are more likely to encounter opposition from crowds and lose elections. However, it is illegal to pay people to attend meetings, therefore, politicians usually claim that the money they give out is to reimburse for time and transport cost.

4.2.3 Development, empowerment and employment pledges

The main strategy to amass votes were campaigns centred on development, empowerment and employment promises, and a future of better livelihoods. Despite not fulfilling previous pledges, politicians promised all manner of things to influence the vote. Some examples of the pledges follow:

'The most ambitious pledge was the building of nine stadia across the country. You must marvel at the political guile and audacity that it takes to make such a pledge having failed to deliver five stadia promised in 2013,' (Nation, 16 April 2022).

'Mr Odinga, while in Iten, Elgeyo Marakwet, underscored the need to increase resources to the devolved units from the current 15 percent to 35 percent,' (Nation, 2 April 2022).

'I am very pleased with his social protection programme. ...Listening to his plans of uplifting the country, region by region, it is very clear that he will be able to do it,' said Peter Kenneth,' (Nation, 16 April 2022).

In a newspaper article Magesha Ngwiri reported that while the narrative used by Ruto pointed towards relieving the less fortunate *'...his [DP Ruto's] "bottom-up" economic model. It is a narrative that promises to free the hustlers from the shackles of poverty, a form of populism with socialist undertones,'*

(Nation, 16 April 2022).

‘Mr Iria pledged to promote investment for ordinary Kenyans. He said his economic framework targets farmers, and said he would donate a cow to each home should he succeed President Uhuru Kenyatta,’ (The Standard, 2 April 2022).

Women and youth were also targeted for empowerment promises, “*Azimio la Kina Mama programme will unlock access to financing for women led businesses and provide support for women on other enabling factors such as access to assets for production, land tenure and proportional representation at all levels of government,*” the manifesto states. ‘*...support women and youth who form the bulk of 2 million poor households with a Sh6,000 monthly stipend,*’ (Nation, 30 July 2022).

‘Unemployment and dwindling economic opportunities have been huge challenges for the Kenyan youth. Young people, must, therefore, carefully interrogate the credentials of various leaders as the election approaches,’ (The Standard, 2 April 2022).

‘[T]he Kenya Kwanza manifesto has prioritised healthcare for women and equity opportunities in leadership, ...implement the two-thirds gender rule. ... half of all Cabinet positions to women. ... provide financial and capacity-building support for women through the ‘Hustler’ fund for women-led co-operative societies, chamas, merry-go-

rounds and table banking initiatives, as well as establish a social welfare fund for Kenyan women working abroad as a safety net,’ (Nation, 30 July 2022).

The promises given by different politicians are important in appealing to the masses and garnering votes regardless of whether they are achievable. For instance, it was unrealistic for any presidential candidate to promise donating a cow to each household in the country or constructing nine stadia across the country given the economic situation. However, since this is what the candidates believe the electorates want to hear to pledge support, they end up giving false promises.

4.2.4 The handshake and BBI

In 2018 President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga reconciled their heated 2017 electoral contest in a symbolic handshake. Thereafter they launched the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) to introduce a range of institutional reforms including amending the constitution to allow for power sharing between the president and a prime minister, abolishing parliamentary approval of presidential appointees and appointing a regulator to oversee the judiciary. Azimio La Umoja and Odinga supported the BBI while the Kenya Kwanza alliance and Ruto opposed it. Proponents of the BBI said it was good for the peace and development of the country: ‘*the constitutional changes in the BBI were supposed to address endemic issues in the country such as ethnic antagonism and divisive politics that have been threat to the nation’s tenuous peace and stability,*’ (The Standard, 2 April 2022). Its opponents were adamant that it did not have the interests of the common citizen, was a waste of resources and was unconstitutional. ‘*Critics of BBI now want its*

promoters ... investigated for wasting public money, ...the constitutional amendment bill that was on Thursday declared illegal by the Supreme Court cost taxpayers Sh10 billion. ...BBI was being implemented at the expense of development plans,' (The Standard, 2 April 2022).

Despite the Supreme Court and High Court ruling the BBI unconstitutional, the proponents of the BBI welcomed the judgement, claiming that it was a win for them as the court gave direction on how the process should be carried out in future. *"The Supreme Court has given us a path to future initiatives," said Mr. Kega'*, (Nation, 2 April 2022). Thus, Azimio La Umoja planned to re-introduce the BBI if they won the general elections. *'Azimio to resume BBI reggae 'after poll win,'* (Nation, 2 April 2022).

The significance of the handshake and the BBI stems down to the personalities and strategic ties of the forerunners. President Kenyatta's support of Odinga rather than his own Deputy Ruto, perpetuates the personalisation of politics over effective policy goals (Ajulu, 2010). More importantly it shows the judiciary upholding its own decisions despite pressure from the President and executives and signifies a growing independence of the courts which may prove vital in the future of Kenya's democracy (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2022).

4.2.5 Elections freedom, rights and rules

IEBC is the body entrusted with the responsibility of organising and ensuring a fair election in Kenya. Its staff gave direction and addressed concerns linked to participation in the August 2022 elections. *"As a commission, we have employed various strategies such as training police officers as well as IEBC staff on election preparedness and providing them with manuals and*

handbooks with the necessary information to help them successfully manage the elections," said Marjan [Hussein, CEO],' (The Standard, 9 April 2022). Collaboration with other relevant institutions was key to ensuring a successful, free, fair, credible and verifiable election. *'It ropes in the National Police Service, Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Registrar of Political Parties, the judiciary, Council of Governors, among other institutions which all yesterday committed to ensuring a flawless electoral process,'* (The Standard, 9 April 2022).

The rights and freedom of Kenyans to participate in the electoral process was emphasised. *'But what I would like to say is that we are all Kenyans, we are all free to share our ideas and we should be free to contest when one has an ambition. ... Democracy is about the choices we make as leaders and the electorate. We are ultimately responsible for shaping electoral and other political outcomes through our collective behavior as citizens; we cannot blame our politicians when we make the wrong choices,'* (Nation, 16 April 2022).

However, during the lead up to the election both Ruto and Odinga complained that the IBEC was unprepared for the election. Notably, the IEBC Chairman, Wafula Chebukati, who was criticised by Kenya's Supreme Court in 2018 for failing to respect constitutional rules, was still the Chairman. There was a concern that the IBEC failures, or appearance of failure, may heighten tensions and be grounds for contesting the result (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2022).

4.2.6 Campaign, party and coalition challenges

Politicians faced different challenges while on the campaign trail especially when visiting

opponent's strongholds. 'ODM accusing him of funding goons to cause chaos and blame it on his supporters... Mr. Amisi said Dr. Mbiti of Jubilee bribed rowdy youth to disrupt his rallies,' (Nation, 9 April 2022).

“The threat came in the form of youths; mobilized, armed and paid to cause mayhem and disorder, destroy property and even take away lives in a bid to create political zones in the country. ...should worry every Kenyan keen to protect the freedom of speech, association and multipartism that we fought hard and long to get,” said Mr. Odinga’ (Nation, 2 April 2022).

Party and coalition formations encountered several challenges when trying to balance member interests with party decisions. During coalition agreements, mistrust and previous unfulfilled agreements came into play. *“We want to get an assurance that what will be agreed upon will be honoured. You know once bitten twice shy. My party leader is not getting any younger and he is seeing that he is being boxed into a corner,” Mr [Robert] Mbui said’ (Nation, 2 April 2022).* Some party principles felt like coalition agreements elevated their juniors to their own disadvantage. *‘Another issue that was causing unease in Mr. Musyoka’s camp was the feeling that Mr. Odinga was elevating Kitui governor Charity Ngilu, Makueni’s Kivutha Kibwana and Machako’s Alfred Mutua at the expense of the Wiper leader,’ (Nation, 2 April 2022).*

Coalitions also faced difficulties accommodating the interests of small parties especially during zoning where small parties felt left out. However, some politicians who felt threatened by missing out of the ballot, resorted to defecting to other political

parties or running on an independent ticket: *‘opponents switched to other parties while some are set to vie as independent candidates,’ (Nation, 16 April 2022).*

The process to guide and regulate political campaigns, formation of political parties and coalitions agreements are stipulated in the Acts of Parliament. However, the electoral system in Kenya is complex and challenging to understand and forecast. Individualism and selfish interests precede both party and society interests making it difficult to drive a given ideology or strive to achieve common goals. Politicians may sponsor rebellion against their opponents, enter into dishonest agreements or even switch camps to form an opposition when decisions do not go their way.

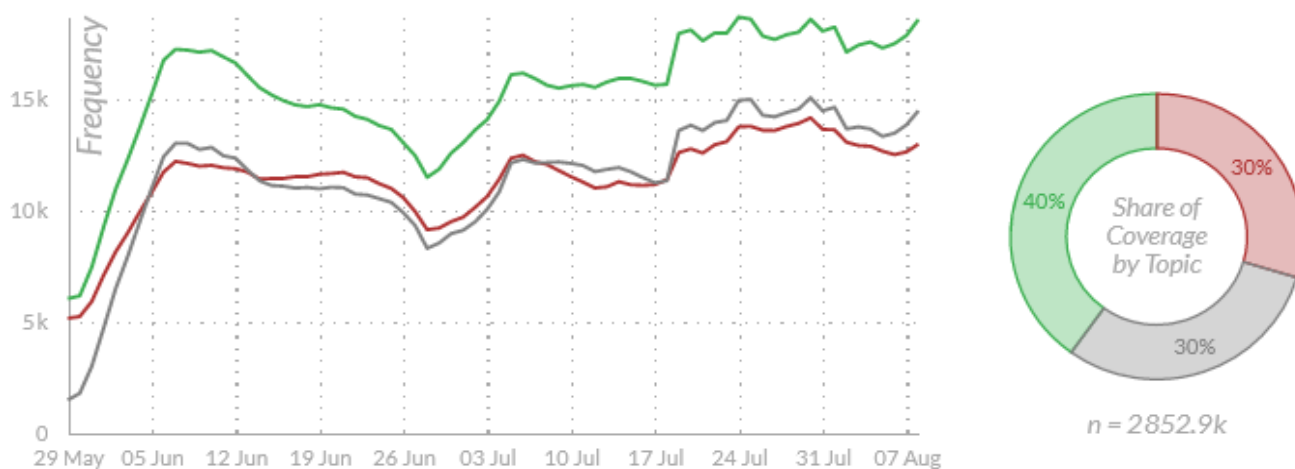
4.2.7 Positive and negative sentiments

The August 2022 general elections saw politicians use both positive and negative sentiments during the campaign. Coordinated efforts, on a very large scale, were made to ensure that information shared on social media platforms spread quickly for most impact. *“I have 10 people per constituency, that is 2,900 people. Then I have 10 managers who manage them at the county level. So am working with about 4,950 to 5,000 people on a daily basis,” said [Dennis] Itumbi’ (NTV Kenya, 26 August 2022).* Unsurprisingly, positive sentiments were used when describing oneself while negative sentiments were used on opponents. Figure 7 summarises the amount of positive, negative and neutral sentiments used to influence the outcome of elections on different media platforms. Approximately 40% of the sentiments shared were positive, 30% were neutral and 20% were negative sentiments.

Azimio La Umoja affiliates used positive sentiments to portray a picture of peacemakers, problem solvers and creators

Figure 7: Frequency of positive, negative and neutral sentiments

Source: WebLyizard analysis



of prosperity. *“This party is the hope of this country and our driving force is to build a country that unites all irrespective of their region of origin. ...We want to reiterate our commitment to the unity, peace, stability and prosperity of this nation as espoused in the vision of this coalition. ...the two-thirds gender rule in Parliament and the creation of employment opportunities for the youth,”* said Professor [Makua] Mutua’ (The Standard, 2 April 2022).

While trying to convince the electorates against voting for Kenya Kwanza affiliates, Azimio La Umoja employed negative sentiments as to why Kenya Kwanza was not fit to hold a public office. *‘He also chided the Deputy President William Ruto-led Kenya Kwanza terming it a consortium of leaders riddled with scandals and questionable characters. On Ruto, first, the true colours of the Deputy President have really come out through his troubled relationship with President Kenyatta,’* (The Standard, 2 April 2022). *“this country requires a person who is not chest-thumping, not arrogant, a person who does not feel entitled or that he is above the rest,”* said Kenneth’ (Nation, 16 April 2022).

Kenya Kwanza Alliance affiliates positively portrayed a picture of constitutional defenders, resource managers and empowerment agents for the underprivileged. *“We, the Kenya Kwanza Alliance, reiterate our commitment to standing with the Judiciary. We salute the women and men who braved the odds of the day and delivered a judgment well coined cwithin the law, and, more specifically, for standing with Kenyans. ...those responsible for it must be held to account for the resources that were put in that criminal exercise,”* said Ruto,’ (Nation, 2 April 2022).

Kenya Kwanza received negativity from its members who had lost in the nomination exercise. The losers claimed that the exercise was flawed with cases of cheating. *“Nobody gave me a chance...even my ardent supporters discouraged such a move, he said. ...Thought UDA was a democratic party but it is unfortunate that they had their own pre-determined candidate for Kiambu seats. ...It was not the people who voted. It was ballot papers that were stashed and counted. We have evidence of those sacks carrying marked ballot papers,”* said an agitated Ms Tobiko,’ (Nation, 16t April 2022). On average, the frequency and the impact

of positive sentiments outweighed that of negative sentiments. This could be one reason why cases of violence were limited throughout the campaign period compared with previous election cycles (see below, Okatch et al., 2022). Figure 8 shows the frequency and impact of sentiments shared on different online platforms. A higher impact² was created by sources with a wider following as well as sources that shared sentiments more frequently. Sentiments shared by Ruto had more impact compared to those shared by Raila Odinga. Figure 8 shows that Twitter created the greatest aggregated impact followed by news websites and Facebook respectively. The aggregate impact shows that all media platforms portrayed Odinga more positively than Ruto. Interestingly, Twitter had the highest disparity in terms of portraying Odinga positively and Ruto negatively.

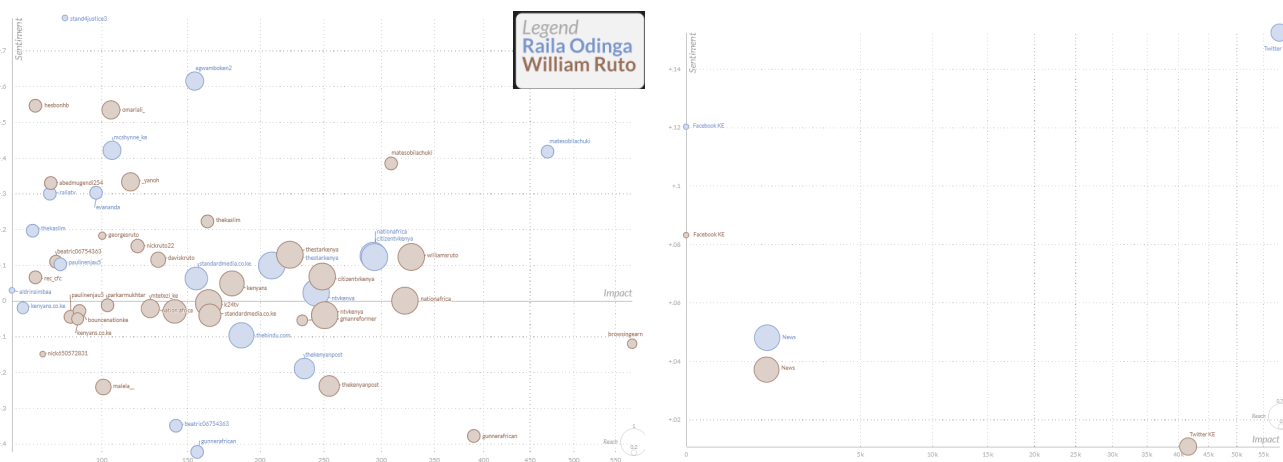
Positive sentiments have been shown to help unite a country while negative sentiments marshal own support and influence risk-averse electorates against voting for a party or candidate (Haselmayer, 2019). Parties and candidates employ the use of negative sentiments when the presumed benefits

outweigh potential costs. However, one study has found that neither negative nor positive sentiments shared on social media reliably predict election outcomes. In fact, use of negative sentiments against opponents in politics lowers the evaluation of those who use them and helps in popularising the opponent (Rita et al., 2023). Voters have been shown to negatively evaluate the parties and candidates who employ negative sentiments about their opponents. Thus, use of negative sentiments does not necessary maximise votes (Haselmayer, 2019).

4.2.8 Violence

During previous general elections in Kenya, violence ending in injuries, deaths and destruction of property were ubiquitous (Okatch et al., 2022). This violence was triggered by lack of trust, ethnic polarisation, structural inequalities, and divisive and selfish politics (NCIC, 2020). According to the focus group discussion, the 2007 post-election violence saw party affiliations play a significant role in identifying individuals, homes and businesses targeted for destruction and looting. Tribal identity and local dialect were used to profile individuals

Figure 8: Description of impact created by sentiments on different media sources
 Source: WeBLyzard analysis



2 Impact is measured by multiplying frequency of mentions (count) by reach of a given information source. Reach is based on a site's average traffic rank.

based on party affiliation. In addition, the post-election violence perpetrators used the opportunity for victimization and extortion. For example, men who did not take part in the violence were asked for monetary compensation from the perpetrators. The perpetrators claimed that they were out to guard the rest of the community against harm, 'if you cannot join us then buy your peace,' (Focus group member N).

There were concerns that the August 2022 elections would also be violent. '[T]he National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) has released terms that should be avoided during political campaigns as they constitute hate speech or are used to incite violence,' (Nation, 9th April 2022). For instance, the term 'madoadoa' has been used as a derogatory term meaning 'blemish or spot' since the 1992 elections and during the 2007 elections helped to fuel ethnic tensions and post-election violence (Agutu, 10 January 2022). However, politicians became defiant on calls to cease using the phrases, arguing that their freedom of speech was being compromised. 'Fury greeted a move by the NCIC to ban usage of popular political jargon in the name of taming rise of hate speech ahead of the General Election,' (The Standard, 9 April 2022). 'In defiance, he [DP Ruto] uploaded a remix of the song "Sipangwingwi" on his official Twitter account,' (Nation, 9 April 2022). Showing the candidates' disregard for the institutions set with monitoring and delivering fair elections free from violence. In addition, the NCIC flagged a '...list of Facebook groups identified by NCIC for propagating hate speech,' (Nation, 9 April 2022).

Different politicians encountered acts of violence while on the campaign trail. During a tour of the Rift Valley (a stronghold of William Ruto) by Raila Odinga the crowd heckled him, chanted anti-Odinga slogans, preventing him from sharing his manifesto.

'The area governor Mr. Alex Tolgos, introduced Mr. Odinga to a roadside gathering but locals started chanting 'United Democratic Alliance (UDA)'. Efforts by police to calm them down proved futile as the youths did not allow the Azimio presidential candidate to continue his speech. ...locals responded 'Ruto;', (Nation, 2 April 2022). Raila Odinga's helicopter was stoned during his visit to Uasin Gishu County. "The windscreen broke... it was a risky affair but then our lives were also at risk, we took the lesser risk and flew low" Junet [Mohamed] claimed,' (The Standard, 9 April 2022). This was later described as an attempted assassination. 'Odinga's 'attempted assassination' case collapsed in court for lack of evidence,' (Nation, 16 April 2022). 'The stoning of Odinga's chopper and other acts of violence we have so far witnessed in the campaign trails should be a cause for worry and reflection,' (Nation, 9 April 2022). The MP for Mount Elgon, Caleb Amisi - a member of the Azimio coalition, also encountered acts of violence blaming it on his main opponent: '...Mr Amisi said Dr Mbitio of Jubilee bribed rowdy youth to disrupt his rallies,' (Nation, 9 April 2022).

During party primaries, acts of violence were experienced in several parts of the country. In Nakuru County, ODM was forced to postpone the nomination exercise: '[t]he National Elections Board yesterday postponed the first round of primaries for fear of violence,' (Nation, 2 April 2022). There were claims of rigging and unfair treatment during the nominations. 'The nominations were also marked with tears and chaos as the losers accused their opponents and UDA party officials of mismanaging the primaries,' (Nation, 16 April 2022). '...vote tallying had been stopped. Tobiko said, "Today is a sad day. It is unfortunate that this exercise has been marred with confusion and claims of rigging."...armed police officers were called in to maintain order' (The Standard, 16 April 2022). However, for

the most part, in comparison with previous election cycles, the levels of actual violence were less, despite the threats of violence.

The focus group discussion anticipated 2022 political inclinations and likely outcomes to differ from those of 2007 due to factors such as Uhuru-Ruto presidency that united the main rival communities in the 2007 violence, the handshake between Raila Odinga and President Uhuru Kenyatta, new campaign issues, and the experience of 2007 post-election violence. *'People are more enlightened such that what happened in 2007 cannot repeat. Uhuru has worked with both Ruto and Raila and it will be hard to victimize anyone based on political affiliation,'* (Focus group member X). However, factors that might increase tensions were discussed and included: 1) a small margin between winners and the losers of presidential election; 2) the losing candidate failing to concede defeat or suggesting the election was rigged; 3) a coalition securing a majority of MPs but failing to secure the presidency; and 4) delayed release of presidential results creating unnecessary speculation about the competency of the democratic system in Kenya. *'There will be high tension in some parts of the country where the losing candidate enjoys enormous support. It will be difficult for supporters and candidates to accept defeat given the closeness in the completion,'* (Focus group member Y).

4.3 Election outcomes

The campaign period came to an end on 6 August 2022 following IEBC regulations that requires campaigns to end two days prior to election day (GoK, 2016). On 9 August 2022, voting went smoothly with few cases of voter registration mix-up reported. *'It is quiet here in Elgeyo Marakwet and other parts of the Rift Valley. People were voting and going home to await the outcome. It has been peaceful throughout the day,'*

(Key informant X, 9 August 2022). The IEBC chair did not announce the presidential results until August 15. Chaos erupted at the national tallying centre, temporarily halting the announcement for about 30 minutes. Four out of the seven IEBC commissioners also released a statement distancing themselves from the results. The four dissenting commissioners, led by IEBC Vice-Chairperson, cited irregularities in the electoral process, claiming that the results did not reflect the will of the people (Nyarangi, 2022). However, the IEBC Chairperson went on to announce William Ruto as the President Elect with 50.49% of the total votes against Raila Odinga's 48.85% (GoK, 2022).

Immediately after the announcement of presidential results key informants reported: *'There is celebration mainly in the Rift Valley and Central Kenya. However, there are protests in Kibera, Mathare and Kisumu,'* (Key informant Y and Z). The protests did not last long and in some parts, protestors dispersed without the influence of police. On 16 August 2022, Odinga addressed the Nation disputing the outcome of the elections and said that his team would pursue all constitutional and legal avenues to protest the results. Odinga petitioned the Supreme Court to declare the election results null and void. However, the judgement ruled to uphold and affirm Ruto's election victory (Judiciary, 2022). Odinga has since said that he will not recognise Ruto as the President and asked his supporters to reject the Kenya Kwanza regime on grounds that the election results were manipulated (Owino, 2023). Beyond this, the transfer of presidency to William Ruto took place with little disruption.

4.4 Review of campaign platforms

Different campaign platforms were used to reach different target groups. According to the focus group discussion, organised rallies, barazas (public meeting place) and

church gatherings had traditionally been used as main campaign platforms. However, with the advancement of technology, digital platforms - WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, media websites, blogs and Twitter - were key campaign platforms in the 2022 general election. *'Politicians are now using many different platforms to reach their supporters. Digital media platforms are now being used to pass messages and counter opponents,'* (Focus group member Z).

Both traditional and modern campaign platforms were utilised in the August 2022 general elections. Figure 6 and Figure 8 shows that Odinga was more effective on digital platforms compared to Ruto. However, while Odinga concentrated on organising mega rallies, Ruto did more caucus meetings where he signed charters for engagement with participants (counties, youths, women, medical personnel, artisans, and teachers) and church campaigns. Ruto's approach was more about being seen interacting with citizens rather than top-down talk. *'Mr Gachagua toured Bomet, Kericho, Nakuru and Baringo counties where he spearheaded economic forums organised by Kenya Kwanza to try and understand the peoples' needs ahead of the launch of their manifesto at the end of June,'* (The Standard, 27 May 2022).

Mainstream media was accused of favouring Odinga (Okoth, 2022) and Figure 8 shows that digital platforms were used to portray Ruto negatively while portraying Odinga positively. Despite the negativity on digital media, Ruto still won the elections, which backs up recent research that shows social media sentiment is not a reliable election predictor (Rita et al., 2023). For this election in-person campaigns compared with digital media campaigns, had a higher contributing factor to the outcome of the election. Despite Kenya having a high population of youth (18-35 years), only 39.84 percent

were registered voters, a decline of 5.17 percent compared to the 2017 elections. This contributes to a picture of voter apathy among the youth who make the largest proportion of the population that consume digital media content (Mungai, 2022).



5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kenya's journey to democracy is still underway. The fact that President Uhuru Kenyatta is the third president in a row to stand down after his two terms, as the constitution requires, is one sign democracy is progressing. But while progress has been made in some areas (such as successful independent judicial oversight) other ingrained issues still took precedent in the 2022 elections, and the leading candidates were both flawed. Ruto's populist narrative of the 'hustlers' versus the 'dynasty' played a critical role in amassing votes in the 2022 elections, and by presenting himself as the voice of the poor, Ruto partially transcended ethnicity to become the first leading Kenyan politician to win support based more on class than tribe (The Economist, 2022). Despite some fears about Ruto's threat to Kenya's progressive constitution, his win means that the tribal kingpins who have dominated Kenyan politics for the last three decades may be over, signalling change for the better. However, the election was still dominated by personality of the candidates and false promises over an honest effort to secure better livelihoods for the Kenyan people.

As in previous elections, development projects, such as roads, dams and water supply, and empowerment opportunities, such as state appointments, agricultural subsidies and business funding, given out along ethnic and regional lines undermined the democratic processes as candidates handed out favours to their own constituencies. However, compared to prior elections, the 2022 election was less violent. Nevertheless, the small percentage margin between the election winner and loser constrained a decisive process of democracy, and the outcome was called into question not only by the Raila Odinga and the outgoing President, but also members

of the IBEC.

Continuous efforts should be made to safeguards and protect democracy. Although the oversight institutions including the IEBC, Judiciary, security organs and NCIC, worked to safeguard the 2022 election to meet minimum expectation there is still room for improvement. All oversight organisations need to be constituted to carry out their duties impartially to enhance 'peace, cohesion and integration' in the country. More work needs to be done to deliver, free, fair, credible and verifiable election results. One way to do this is for the IEBC to enhance accountability and make its processes transparent, easily understandable and verifiable.

Social media platforms have become important tools for election campaigns. However, little is done to hold individuals accountable for what they post on these platforms. To foster fairness in the campaign process, regulation, monitoring and evaluation of social media platforms is required to curb cases of misinformation, disinformation, racism, hate speech, life threats and incitement of violence. Mainstream media needs to be monitored to ensure fairness in the coverage of competing parties. The NCIC should be bestowed more powers to exercise its mandate and enable implementation and enforcement of regulations geared towards enhancing 'peace, cohesion and integration' in the country. Thus, the NCIC should also be allocated enough resources to carry out continuous mass education on the importance of peace, cohesion and integration in the country, to help voters identify cases of mis(dis)information and to judge media sources independently.

Politicians always strive to create a positive perception for themselves and a negative perception towards their opponents. The use of negative sentiments result in a

tension between antagonistic groups and voter apathy. Political parties require internal processes to hold members to account for their actions and messages.

Voter apathy is another contributor to the electoral tensions in Kenya. People below the age of 35 years make up 75% of the population (Ndungu, 2020) but hold little in common with key politicians. Youth unemployment is high while politicians are paid a lot of money in Kenya (Mwakideu, 2022). Young people saw little to show up for during the campaigns in 2022 given the emphasis placed on economic growth. Politicians are incentivised to respond to voters who vote regularly, which biases legislation so young people with less income, are unlikely to find policies that reflect their needs. Young people are tired of seeing the same faces on ballot – political retirement is rare in Kenya. Finally, young people living in cities are less likely to be influenced by ethnic identity in politics (Kineu, 2022). A number of elective seats should be set aside for youth to ensure fairer representation. Voting could take place online, where young people are highly engaged (Iraki, 2022).

The cost of election campaigns in Kenya is notoriously high which limits the choice of candidate to a privileged few – creating an illusion of choice for voters and incentivising candidates to reap financial or social rewards if they are successful (Kimeu, 2022). Research has shown that the more a candidate spends, the greater their chance of electoral victory (Kanyinga & Mboya, 2021). There is the belief therefore that many candidates do not run for office to serve their community, but for self-interest. Costs are also driven up by voters demanding handout from MPs, stemming from a limited understanding of the role of elected officials: of oversight, policy formation and representation, not of direct service provision (Kanyinga & Mboya, 2021).

Finally, in most cases, violence usually erupts in areas that are highly populated and more deprived. Politics in Kenya, like many places around the world, is not set up to deal with ingrained issues of inequality, but long-term thinking and allocation of resource is required to address the cascading impacts of poverty.



REFERENCES

- African Center for Strategic Studies. (2022). Kenyan Elections – Another Test in the Country's Democratic Journey. ReliefWeb. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/kenyan-elections-another-test-countrys-democratic-journey> [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- Agutu, N. (2022, January 10). 'Blemish or spot': Madoadoa phrase explained. The Star. Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-01-10-blemish-or-spot-madoadoa-phrase-explained/> [Accessed 11 April 2023]
- Ajulu, R. (2002). Politicised Ethnicity, Competitive Politics and Conflict in Kenya: A Historical Perspective, *African Studies*, 61(2), 251-268, DOI: 10.1080/0002018022000032947
- GoK (2016). Laws of Kenya. Elections Act No. 24 of 2011. Published by the National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General. www.kenyalaw.org. Government of Kenya (GoK)
- GoK (2017). The Kenya Gazette. Gazette Notice No. 7245. pg 4621 http://kenyalaw.org/kenya_gazette/gazette/volume/MTUzNg--/Vol.CXIX-No.102/. Government of Kenya (GoK)
- GoK (2022). Declaration of Persons Elected as President-Elect and Deputy President-Elect. The Kenya Gazette. Gazette Notice No. 9773. Government of Kenya (GoK)
- Haselmayer, M. (2019). Negative campaigning and its consequences: a review and a look ahead. *French Politics*, 17, doi:10.1057/s41253-019-00084-8
- International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES). (2008). The Electoral Process in Kenya: A Review of Past Experience and Recommendations for Reform. Open Society Initiative, East Africa Initiative (OSIEA). Retrieved from: https://ciaotest.cc.colu.mbia.edu/wps/aps/0016358/f_0016358_14156.pdf [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- Iraki, XN. (2022). Why youth apathy in elections bodes ill for Kenya. The Conversation. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/why-youth-apaty-in-elections-bodes-ill-for-kenya-188662#:~:text=Kenya%20saw%20a%20decline%20in,registered%20to%20vote%20this%20year.> [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- Judiciary (2022). Presidential Election Petition No. E005. Raila Odinga & 7 Others Vs William Ruto & 10 Others. The Supreme Court of Kenya. <https://www.judiciary.go.ke/download/media-summary-pep-e005-of-2022/>
- Kanyinga, K. & Myoba, T. (2021). The cost of politics in Kenya: Implications for political participation and development. Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy. Retrieved from: https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/WFD_NIMD_2021_The-cost-of-politics-in-Kenya-1.pdf [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- Kimeu, C. (2022). 'It's an illusion of choice': why young Kenyans are boycotting the election. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/05/young-kenyans-boycotting-the-election> [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- KNBS (2019). 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Results. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-results/> (Accessed 28 November 2022). Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)
- Lipset, S.M. and Rokkan, S. (1967). "Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction". In Lipset, Seymour Martin; Rokkan, Stein (eds.). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. The Free Press. pp. 1–64
- Madung at al. (2022). Exporting Disinformation: How Foreign Groups Peddle Influence in Kenya Through Twitter. [foundation.mozilla.org. https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/campaigns/exporting-disinformation-how-foreign-groups-peddle-influence-in-kenya-through-twitter/](https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/campaigns/exporting-disinformation-how-foreign-groups-peddle-influence-in-kenya-through-twitter/)
- Madung, O. and Obilo, B. (2021). Inside The Shadowy World Of Disinformation For Hire In Kenya. <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/fellow-research-inside-the-shadowy-world-of-disinformation-for-hire-in-kenya/>
- Mungai, Christine (2022). Disinformation, mudslinging induce voter apathy in Kenyan youth. Kenya's digitally-savvy youth are being exposed to outright disinformation and inflammatory rhetoric on social media. Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/7/1/apaty-and-disinformation-turn-agile-kenyan-youths-to-alooof-voter>
- Mwakideu, C. (2022). Kenya's voters shun registration for 2022 election. DW. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/concern-as-kenyas-voters-shun-registration-for-2022-election/a-59687919> [Accessed 13 April 2023]
- NCIC (2020). A Violence Free 2022. Roadmap to Peaceful 2022 General Elections. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjP-qzk4en7AhVyxYUKHf0cCRwQFn_oECBoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcohesion.



Institute for
Global Prosperity

CONTACT

www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/igp www.seriouslydifferent.org

 @instituteforglobalprosperity

 @glo_pro

 @glo_pro

 igp@ucl.ac.uk

 **PROCOL**
Africa

