

The CSIS Hills Program on Governance
&
The CSIS Africa Program

To co-host:

Governance in Kenya: Ethnicity and Performance in the 2007 Elections

Introduction:

Gerald Hyman, President, CSIS Hills Program on Governance

Presentation:

Clark Gibson, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of California,
San Diego

James Long, Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego

Comments By:

Joel Barkan, Senior Associate, CSIS Africa Program

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

2:00-3:30pm

B-1 Conference Center

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

1800 K Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

Please RSVP to telliott@csis.org or (202) 457-8730

This presentation explores the role of ethnicity and government performance in determining Kenyans' vote choices in the December 2007 elections. Policymakers and scholars typically argue that voting in Africa is simply an ethnic head count. But what happens when no ethnic group is large enough to win outright? What happens when a citizen is confronted with candidates that are not from their ethnic group? Does a government's performance enter into a voter's calculations in Africa? And what does this tell us about the nature of political accountability and democratic participation in Africa? Gibson and Long's results demonstrate that voting in Africa may go beyond ethnicity, and thus argue for a more nuanced understanding of African politics.