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**The Power of Proximity:
Strategic Decisions in African Party Politics**

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Abstract

Recent publications suggest that exclusively ethnoregional parties are as rare in sub-Saharan Africa as elsewhere. At the same time, the idea that ethnicity is a very special feature of African party politics persists. The paper acknowledges the general relevance of ethnicity in party competition but emphasizes the level on which it becomes important. It develops a microbehavioral approach which pays particular attention to the strategic choices of party elites in order to supplement the dominant structuralist thinking in party research on Africa. An in-depth evaluation of detailed election data from Burkina Faso shows that strategies which rely on personal proximity between the voter and the candidates influence the parties' success to a great extent. Parties maximize their chances of winning seats if they concentrate their limited resources on the home localities of leading party members. Hence, African party politics are less dependent on ethnic demography than is often implied but more open to change through elite behavior.

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Zusammenfassung

Die Macht der Nähe:

Zu strategischen Entscheidungen in afrikanischen Parteien

Die neuere Literatur legt nahe, dass exklusive ethnoregionale Parteien im subsaharischen Afrika ähnlich selten sind wie andernorts. Zugleich besteht die Vorstellung fort, dass Ethnizität für afrikanische Parteiensysteme besonders wichtig sei. Dieser Beitrag stellt deshalb nicht die grundsätzliche Bedeutung von Ethnizität im Parteienwettbewerb in Frage, sondern widmet sich der spezifischen gesellschaftlichen Ebene, auf der Ethnizität wichtig wird. Der hier entwickelte mikrobehaviorale Ansatz, der strategischen Entscheidungen von Parteieliten besondere Beachtung schenkt, soll die vorherrschende strukturalistische Herangehensweise der Parteienforschung zu Afrika ergänzen. Eine exemplarische Untersuchung detaillierter Wahldaten aus Burkina Faso zeigt, dass Strategien, die auf der persönlichen Nähe zwischen Wähler und Kandidat aufbauen, den Parteierfolg stark beeinflussen. Parteien maximieren ihre Wahlchancen, wenn sie ihre begrenzten Ressourcen auf die Heimatorte führender Parteimitglieder konzentrieren. Infolgedessen ist der afrikanische Parteienwettbewerb weit weniger an die ethnische Demographie gebunden als häufig unterstellt wird, sondern durch Elitenverhalten wandlungsfähig.

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Alexander Stroh

Article Outline

1   Introduction[1]

Due to the improved availability of adequate survey data, several recent publications have challenged the most popular approach to African party politics, one which assumes that ethnic structures play a determining role in party success. However, the degree of rejection of the ethnic argument varies significantly (see Lindberg and Morrison 2008 vs. Fridy 2007,[2] Basedau and Stroh 2008a, Erdmann 2007a, Erdmann 2007b, McLaughlin 2007). Thus, ethnicity is not being abandoned as an influential factor; yet, the way it is looked at must obviously be refined. The observation that people are more likely to vote regionally than ethnically, as discussed in detail elsewhere (Basedau and Stroh 2008a), has inspired a review of the idea that African voters act parochially rather than tribally (Bienen 1971: 200, similarly Bailey 1963: 136-157).[3]

[2]   Analyzing the Ghanaian case, Lindberg and Morrison conclude that ethnically predisposed voting is a minor feature, while Fridy insists that ethnicity is an extremely significant factor (Lindberg and Morrison 2008: 34; Fridy 2007: 302).
[3]   The term is borrowed from Almond and Verba's definition of parochial political culture (Almond and Verba 1963).

What is an appropriate approach to African party politics? How can we better explain party success in order to counterbalance the weaknesses of macrostructural ethnoregionalism? The article proposes to draw on actor-oriented approaches to party politics such as electoral clientelism (Weingrod 1968, Lemarchand 1972, Barkan and Okumu 1978, Wantchékon 2003), the personalization of parties (Sandbrook 1996, Monga 1999, Chabal and Daloz 1999, Manning 2005), and rational behavioralism (Strøm 1990, Harmel and Janda 1994). The idea here is that the strategic exploitation of personal proximity between voters and politicians in rural Africa is of supreme importance. This implies the need for an approach which links candidates' individual features with a more "micro" perspective on the geographic space of operation. The hypothesis reads that strong incentives push political party elites in Africa towards selective local mobilization in order to successfully attain assembly seats—or even executive office. The most resource-efficient way to do so is by concentrating activities on particular geographic units. Regional concentration is, thus, not necessarily a sign of eth-noregional interest promotion, but rather of rational success maximization by goal-seeking parties (cf. Strøm 1990). The use of ethnic appeal on the microsocial level expresses, thus, more of a strategic elite decision than a sociostructural automatism.

Research on the ethnic character of African party systems is inspired by macrosociological cleavage theory on voting behavior (Lipset and Rokkan 1967b). The affiliation to one social group is connected to a preference for one particular party. This implies a certain stability and automatism between the macrosociological structure of societies (e.g., ethnic demography) and the emergence of parties which, presumably, defend the interests of *their* social groups, even though scholars would rarely claim a one-to-one translation of social structures into the political party system.

Most often, structural approaches assume that ethnic groups mainly settle in one geographic region and that ethnoregional belonging determines support for political parties. While some countries seem to confirm this approach, in a number of African countries macrostructural approaches cannot sufficiently explain voting behavior. In some countries, empirical findings demonstrate that, first, region and ethnic affiliation are not congruent and, second, voting intentions are better explained by regional residence than ethnic self-ascription. Thus, geographic proximity also appears to be a crucial determinant of voting behavior. However, this article will argue that geographic regions as defined in most studies depict overly large entities. Or, conversely, proximity matters on a more local level. Ethnicity cannot be abandoned as a political factor in Africa. But given the structurally heterogeneous voting behavior which we measure in some states, such as Burkina Faso, we need to ask what exactly the mechanism is which makes ethnic appeal relevant for voting behavior.

Hence, I propose an approach which focuses on the strategic microbehavior of African parties. It concentrates on the proximity of candidates to their voters. Empirical evidence from Burkina Faso, where cleavage theory cannot explain apparently unsystematic voting patterns, supports the utility of this approach.

The paper proceeds in four sections. Firstly, the discussion of three common approaches (macrostructuralism, electoral clientelism, behavioralism) leads to the development of a fourth, microbehavioral, approach. Subsequently, a four-stage analytical framework operationalizes the theoretical idea of this last approach. Thirdly, the selection of Burkina Faso as an adequate case study is justified, before empirical evidence from the Burkinabè example is used to test the utility of the approach. The utility test, which consists of a multistep analysis, is based on a comparison of detailed election data and information on the behavior and features of party leaders. The article concludes, fourthly, with comments on the generalizability of the findings and some theoretical implications.

2 Four Approaches

Macrostructuralism and Ethnoregional Cleavages

Political scientists and the general public commonly approach the success of political parties in sub-Saharan Africa using sociostructural explanations. Besides the structuralist view which is discussed in this subsection, there are at least two other mainstream approaches which are relevant in the African context. These focus less on greater social structures than on the relationships and behavior of individuals. They are discussed in the following subsections and finally consolidated into a fourth approach. This last model is subsequently applied to the case of Burkina Faso.

The central idea of a macrostructuralist approach is that voters gather in common macrosociological groups which are structured by social cleavages. According to the classical cleavage theory, these historically grown structures of society determine voting behavior. Due to the socioeconomic development and religious history of African societies, European cleavages such as "workers vs. employers/owners" or "church(es) vs. government" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967a: 14f) cannot contribute significantly to the explanation of voting preferences across Africa. Early perceptions of post-colonial Africa influenced the analysis of multiparty competition in African societies for a long period of time, leading to an emphasis on "ethnoregional" cleavages instead (Erdmann and Weiland 2001). Mainly based on crucial examples of ethnic parties—sometimes explicitly referring to their ethnic basis[4]—and ventures of ethnoregional separatism, as in Biafra and Katanga, influential contributions stress the dangers of "tribalism," articulated in multiparty elections as a result of ethnic cleavages (Emerson 1966, Wallerstein 1967).

The ethnoregional approach to African party politics is therefore a subset of cleavage theory, but one strongly influenced by conflict research and not by scholars of party politics

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[4] Giving only two prominent examples, I refer to the parties of Dahomey's first president, Hubert Maga, called Groupement Ethnique du Nord-Dahomey (GEND, cf. Staniland 1973), and of Rwanda's first president, Grégoire Kayibanda, called Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (Parmehutu, cf. Philipp 1978).

(Horowitz 1985, Calhoun 1993). Ethnic groups living predominantly in particular regions have continuously been promulgated as a typical determinant of African party systems (Widner 1997, van de Walle and Butler 1999, Ottaway 1999, Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005). Interestingly, the most elaborate concept of ethnoregional parties is based on the European experience (cf. De Winter and Türsan 1998, Schrijver 2004). This concept relies on two criteria: First, ethnoregional parties are basically supported by one ethnic group which is concentrated in one geographic region, such as Spain's Basque country or Belgium's Wallonia. Second, ethnoregional parties are policy-seeking parties which represent the minority interests of their ethnoregional group within the political arena. Both conditions cause severe problems with regard to an application to sub-Saharan Africa.

On the one hand, sub-Saharan populations today are often ethnically mixed. Incomplete, old databases impede systematic control.[5] Regional election data, which are often employed for relevant studies (e.g., Crook 1997, Scarritt 2006, Elischer 2008), cannot prove the congruence of ethnic population shares (as far as they are available) or assumed ethnic majorities (which is rather the rule) with voting behavior. But recent empirical findings based on national survey polls confirm the incongruence of regional residence and ethnic affiliation and give rise to doubts about the general importance of ethnic affiliation for party support (Lindberg and Morrison 2008, Erdmann 2007a, Basedau and Stroh 2008a, McLaughlin 2007). Nobody would deny some degree of geographic concentration of members of ethnic groups within ethnically heterogeneous countries. However, this often occurs at a level lower than that of politically relevant geographic units. In other words, while ethnic homogeneity in a particular village can be the rule, it may be the exception at the level of electoral constituencies. Moreover, subnational administrative units are often better predictors of voting intentions than ethnic affiliations (Basedau and Stroh 2008a). Thus, many Africans tend to align with their local neighbors rather than with their fellow "tribesmen" in other parts of the country. Nonethnic regional cleavages are usually difficult to justify theoretically, particularly if there is no obvious divide such as, for instance, the north/south rivalry in West Africa's coastal states.

On the other hand, ethnic or regionalist parties are legally banned in most African countries in order to avoid ethnic conflicts (Becher and Basedau 2008). Thus we cannot expect parties to openly conduct their electoral campaigns on the basis of ethnoregional interests, either because the elites who established the relevant rules really value the prohibition of ethnic campaigning or because they conceal it.[6] Both problems suggest the necessity of a search for alternative explanations.

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[5]   The lack of data is often a consequence of a deliberate political decision. Many African countries avoid statistics on ethnic affiliations due to the risk of conflict presumably related to the topic.

[6]   Systematic studies on actual campaigning methods are very rare. One exception is Mayrargue's study exploring the electoral rhetoric in the case of Benin (Mayrargue 2004).

Microsociological Alignment and Electoral Clientelism

A second approach is based on a microsociological phenomenon: clientelism. Lemarchand distinguishes clientelism from ethnicity by describing the first as a (microsociological) individual linkage and ethnicity as a (macrosociological) group phenomenon (Lemarchand 1972: 83). This distinction is only loosely connected to the microsociological approach in Western party research, also known as the Columbia School, which argues that a person's social characteristics determine his or her political preference (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968: 27). Individual ethnic identities—which are subject to ascription and change (Lemarchand 1972: 69, Lentz 1995)—are one possible feature in this sense. However, a simplistic nexus between ethnic affiliation and party preferences has already been rejected, regardless of whether it is micro- or macrosociologically justified.

Instead of being a one-sided examination of voters, electoral clientelism is a theory of networking and individual dependencies. Clientelism establishes a mutual commitment between two individuals. Scholars thus emphasized this feature when they conceptualized the ideal-typical "big man" (Mines and Gourishankar 1990, Médard 1992, Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Weingrod 1968). The motivations which produce this special dyadic relationship between patrons and clients can build on various incentives. Some scholars emphasize the continuous and asymmetric dependency which favors the patron (Rouquié 1978). Others promote the idea of a basically voluntary relationship (Spittler 1977). The more elections become competitive, the more relevance voluntariness gains in electoral clientelism, since the voter has the opportunity to change his patron at the ballot box (cf. Barkan and Okumu 1978).

Only if clientelistic relations become communal—in other words, a reciprocal relationship between a committing person and a specific group (of voters)—do Erdmann and Engel call it "patronage" (Erdmann and Engel 2007).[7] Consequently, participation in patronage networks may be very rational in the eyes of a voter who has mainly parochial material interests due to his personal limits in time, space, and imagination. This voter would evaluate the candidate's political potency by weighing his earlier performance (especially direct material service delivery) and his capability to put pressure on higher political levels to support the local sphere. Since information is usually incomplete, rational evaluation may be supplemented by factors such as trust in a person who is socially close to the group to which the voter himself belongs (Erdmann and Engel 2007: 107).

In a less systematic understanding of patronage, political parties are seen as mere power vehicles for individual members of the elite (Monga 1999, Manning 2005, Sandbrook 1996, Randall 2005) or simply "extensions of individual politicians" (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 151). This concept of political parties implies similar relations of politicians to the electorate: clien-

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[7]   I prefer their differentiation to other definitions of the term which emphasize an exploitation of state resources in defining patronage (Warner 1997).

telism and electoral corruption (direct material benefits, vote buying) are widely inter-woven. However, this approach does not sufficiently clarify the durability of the connection (Beck 2008: 3-11).

In contrast to macrostructural approaches, these microsociological approaches, which use the paradigm of clientelism, conceive of sociological group identities such as ethnic affiliations as a means to an end and not as an original cause of voting behavior. However, this approach also bears two main problems. First, while the conception of electoral clientelism in its classical form (long-term dependencies, fixed pyramids of patron-client networks) is much too static to explain the relatively high volatility of voting behavior in many African countries (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005, Bogaards 2008), the conception of political entrepreneurs who build and buy their clientelistic networks of voters is too random to explain the long-standing success of an important number of party organizations on the continent (Bogaards 2008, Basedau and Stroh 2008c). Second, individual clientelism excludes collective coordination or cooperation within a party organization. However, we will see later that smaller parties can particularly benefit from strategic collective action. This method is far from incompatible with electoral clientelism. Collective actors may circumvent the arduous promotion channels for individuals in ideal-typical clientelist networks and more rapidly attain a direct link to the top "big man" (chief patron), who is usually the president of the republic in Africa's political systems (van de Walle 2003, cf. Figure 1). At the same time, we must pay attention to the fact that not every pyramidal hierarchy is necessarily a clientelistic network. The possibility of circumventing the pyramid weakens the concept and demands theoretical alternatives or supplements.

Figure 1: Electoral Clientelism and Collective Party Strategies
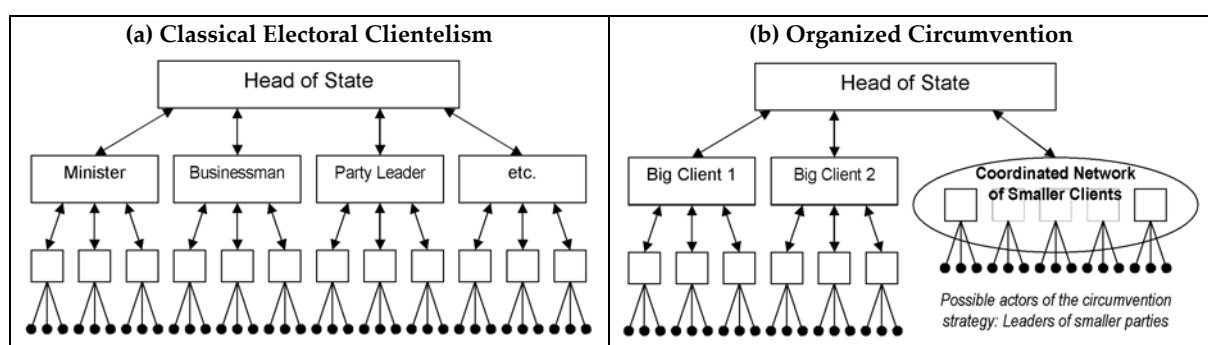
Source: Figure (a) based on Barkan and Okumu 1978, p. 98; Figure (b), author's adaptation.

Behavioralism and Party Organizations

The modern behavioralist theory of party success takes the existence of collective actors for granted. Accordingly, political parties are expected to develop rational strategies: they evaluate and concentrate their powers in order to achieve particular goals. The canon of goals includes policies, offices, and votes (Strøm 1990, Harmel and Janda 1994). This ap-

proach is theoretically very compatible with concepts of ethnoregionalism as well as clientelism. If the main objective of a party is the promotion of the interests of one ethnic group or an exclusive ethnic alliance, we are dealing with a primarily policy-seeking party. The preferred policy is namely one of ethnic privilege. According to an electoral clientelism approach, parties are mainly office-seeking.[8] Office and seats promise access to resources which voters (clients) expect will be redistributed individually.

The behavioralist theory emphasizes the rationality of collective action in order to attain the respective goal. The focus on organizations certainly risks underestimating the relative weakness of political parties and the power of individual linkages in African contexts. However, it brings organizations back into the analysis and suggests the need for a closer examination of party strategies. So, how do parties deal with the structural conditions they face?

Moreover, the focus on organizations on the supply side of elections (political parties) distinguishes this rational approach from rational choice models outlining the voting decisions of individual voters. The basic idea of political economists such as Downs and Key is that "voters are no fools" and that they therefore evaluate which political competitor best corresponds to their own interests (Downs 1957, Key 1966). Almost needless to say, this general assumption is easily acceptable with regard to the demand side (voters), though within some structural boundaries (e.g., level of education and information). However, contrary to party behavioralism, it neglects the supply side. A voter cannot choose among options which have never been available. The political offering can be restricted due to a lack of freedom of competition or due to deliberate decisions of political competitors. The latter point is emphasized in the following, fourth approach.

Microbehavioral Strategies of Localization

This fourth approach attempts to consolidate the microsociological and behavioral approaches in order to supplement the macrostructural approach. Since it is obviously the supply side of sub-Saharan party politics which has been widely neglected in the past, this approach focuses on the options voters have rather than on the choices they make.

Since there is no adequate data on strategy-making procedures within African parties, we need to predict the most likely strategy. The theories of electoral clientelism and behavioralism help in developing the central hypothesis of the approach, which reads as follows: African political parties are collective actors in which party elites develop and coordinate strategies of localization. The emerging pattern of local mobilization largely depends on a party's financial and human resources. Thus, the geographic concentration of party success becomes mainly a question of resource efficiency, and appeals to ethnic kinship become a question of the locally exploitable features of the individual candidates available to the party. Consequently, the regional patterns of the national party system depend significantly

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[8]   Deviating from Strøm and others, assembly seats are included in the definition of "office."

on elite decisions (supply side of competition) and are less determined by ethnic interests (demand side) than macrostructuralism suggests.

The contribution of actor-oriented approaches is the following. Clientelism points to the importance of individual relations between voters and candidates. Leaving the feudal connotation of clientelism aside, we may say that it appears rational if voters support a patron-like politician who is an honorable member of the local community. Since voters have the opportunity to exchange this "elected patron" with the next ballot, a concept which stresses the qualifications of the candidate more than permanent dependency is needed. This is what Bako-Arifari described for Benin by using the popular French term "*fils du terroir*" (literally "son of the soil," Bako-Arifari 1995, cf. also Weiner 1978).[9] Two circumstances support this kind of rationality. Firstly, rural voters in Africa usually have limited access to information about political alternatives. Secondly, precarious living conditions push people to focus on their basic local needs. In other words, they are more inclined to rational behavior which follows parochial material interests instead of accentuating abstract ethnic affiliation (Bienen 1971: 200, Bailey 1963: 136-157). Moreover, party candidates must possess the capacity to campaign in a very practical manner: they should speak one or more of the local languages. Since there is virtually no systematic training for intra-national "alien" languages in most sub-Saharan countries, being a "son of the soil" significantly facilitates this task. The first lesson for political parties should thus be to run "*fils du terroir*" as their candidates in order to meet the parochial interests of the electorate.

Clientelism defines the requirements for an individual candidate; behavioralism then brings in the party organization. African parties have long been described as electoral machines (Bailey 1963, Bienen 1971) which virtually disappear between elections (Fomunyoh 2001: 48). Seen in a positive way, this at least means that they *appear* as collective actors *during* electoral periods. However, due to their apparent and sometimes obvious weakness, a systematic analysis of their strategic behavior has not been seen as relevant. Behavioralist theory suggests classifying electoral machines as office-seeking parties which try to win assembly seats and offices through minimal efforts during election periods. Accordingly, the second lesson for political parties is that success largely depends on an efficient allocation of financial and human resources during election periods.

In consideration of these lessons, the most rational strategy for parties is one of localization based on a mixture of assessments of the chances to win seats, an efficient allocation of financial resources, and studiously fielded "*fils du terroir*." This contribution will concentrate on the aspect of personal proximity in order to test the overall utility of the approach. We will keep the other factors in mind and use them in the case of inconsistencies with regard to

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9   Bako-Arifari, himself obviously a connoisseur of the art of localizing political competition, was elected to parliament in 2007. However, since he avoided systematic inquiry and international comparison, he blamed this mechanism for being at the root of the weakness of political parties in Benin instead of discussing its general effects on party competition in Africa.

the proximity feature. Many parties, for instance, are not capable of engaging in territory-wide competition due to human and financial resource scarcity. Thus, they need to concentrate their activities on selected constituencies.[10] Besides the availability of "sons of the soil" (human resources), for instance, the amount of funds for travel expenses can influence a party's localization strategy.[11] Geographic concentration on particular regions or where there is good transport infrastructure avoids the inefficient use of financial resources.

3   Analytical Framework

How can we systematically test the utility of the microbehavioral approach? First of all, we need to detect the geographic positioning of party success and failure. Are there "regionalist" parties? Do parties concentrate on one particular region and willfully neglect others in order to represent (ethno)regional interests? Do parties follow a strategy of localization by seeking office in a resource-efficient way? How do they incorporate their human resources? All these questions are addressed using a four step analytical framework which relies on disaggregated electoral results. The framework includes the development of some requirements which a suitable case for an exploratory utility test should meet.

First Step: "Regionalization" or Uneven Distribution?

Jones and Mainwaring measure the "nationalization" of political parties (Jones and Mainwaring 2003). In their understanding a "nationalized" party is a party with a support base which is equally distributed across the country. They imply that the opposite of their understanding of nationalization is "regionalization,"[12] which appears to be a good proxy for comparing the overall level of regionalization of different parties. However, the actual opposite of the nationalization score is uneven distribution. The score neglects the geographic positions of electoral strongholds, whereas the term regionalization intuitively suggests the concentration of a party in one particular geographic region. A true regionalist party is not expected to possess strongholds in totally different corners of a given country, but to defend regional interests. This is why the distribution score must be supplemented with a mapping

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[10]   A large majority of African electoral systems provide for single-member or small-sized constituencies (see Nohlen 2007).

[11]   A study of party financing practices recently showed that African party officials most often declare transportation as the single largest item in campaign expenditures (Bryan and Baer 2005: 15).

[12]   Jones and Mainwaring calculate the Gini coefficient of votes in geographic regions, that is, the degree of unequal distribution of party support across a given country, in order to identify the nationwide rooting of parties (Jones and Mainwaring 2003, for an application to an African case see Elischer 2008). Since the coefficient varies between zero and one, with rising values indicating increasing inequality, they subtract it from one in order to reach a value of one indicating the highest degree of nationalization. I will simply use the Gini coefficient to measure "non-nationalization"; that is, the higher the Gini value, the higher the degree of uneven distribution of support across the country.

of strongholds. For this purpose, a stronghold is defined as a constituency (or relevant vote-counting unit) where a party receives more than double its average vote share.

High distribution scores plus geographic concentration would indicate regionalist parties and therefore support the macrosociological approach. High scores plus geographic deconcentration would, in contrast, support the microbehavioral approach. High nationalization scores for all major parties would challenge both approaches. In order to make the distribution score more precise, a suitable test case should thus be one with geographically small electoral constituencies. Additionally, an ideal test case would be one in which ethnic groups are clearly geographically mixed in order not to confound ethnic affiliation with geographic residence.

Second Step: Refining Concentration Patterns with Local Electoral Data

With the help of electoral data from the communal level, the analysis should identify more confined strongholds, record their geographic distribution, and compare the results with the constituency level. While data from parliamentary elections serve best for the first step, this refinement procedure can employ locally disaggregated legislative results or data from municipal elections.[13]

A concentration of local strongholds in specific regions where the regional support is generally above average would tend to support the macrosociological approach but not necessarily contradict the emphasis on proximity. An apparently unsystematic dispersion of local strongholds across the country would contradict macrosociological expectations and, thus, further strengthen the utility of a microbehavioral approach, while evenly distributed local support bases would challenge both approaches.

Third Step: Deliberate Electoral Participation and Nonparticipation of Parties

The assessment tools used in steps one and two are ex post evaluations of voting decisions. Only by examining the pattern of geographic positioning are we able to come to any conclusions about parties' localization strategies. However, it is difficult to determine the precise degree of influence party action has on the vote, particularly without detailed data on the allocation of campaign resources (frequency and location of rallies and canvassing, expenditures for gadgets, etc.). The best alternative is to highlight electoral participation in the sense of the running of candidates. The data on where certain parties stand and do not stand for election is objective and officially available. Collective party action is assumed as long as a decision not to participate was taken deliberately. Given resource scarcity, the willful neglect of particular areas and a resource-efficient concentration of activities should lead to a

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[13] If employing municipal ballots, we should pay attention to significant deviations in turnouts in order to minimize the danger of incorrect conclusions from totally different electorates. However, a comparison with legislative results should help in avoiding this trap.

greater success ratio. The more precisely localities appear to be selected, the more the findings support the microbehavioral approach. On the contrary, ethnoregional parties should run their candidates across the main settlement area of their affiliated group without concern for the balance of success.

Accordingly, the third step evaluates the patterns of nonparticipation and their correlation with relative party success in those electoral districts where candidates have been nominated. A suitable test case should provide for the legal option of the selective running of candidates. That is, nominating candidates in several constituencies while not standing for election in several other constituencies must be allowed. Otherwise it would be necessary to attain a great deal of complex data on the scope and allocation of party resources; these are usually unavailable.

Fourth Step: Measuring a Strategy of Personal Proximity

Finally, we want to know more about the reasoning of parties. The previous steps can identify whether, at what level, and with what effect parties utilize a geographic focus. This last step detects the systematic decision making behind apparently unsystematic regional distributions of party action and success. The microbehavioral approach suggests personal proximity as the most efficient strategy in a parochial context.

Thus, do voters appreciate "honorable local people"—in the sense of "sons of the soil"— running for a party? This aspect of a strategy of localization is best evaluated by looking at the home localities of leading party representatives. Do parties focus on areas where they are able to run "*fils du terroir*"? Are parties more successful if they do so? Are other strategic factors capable of explaining deviations from the expected strategy of localization?

The following scenario would again support the utility of the microbehavioral approach: A party is particularly successful where it manages to run important "sons of the soil," while it deliberately neglects competition or fails in other constituencies—independent of their geographic position or of similar ethnic structures. By recalling electoral clientelism, which serves as one influential starting point of this approach, we would expect that a candidate's relative importance in the political scene (level within hierarchy, office incumbency, access to resources, etc.) broadens his geographic range of appeal (cf. Barkan and Okumu 1978). In other words, the higher a "*fils du terroir*" rises in the clientelist pyramid, the larger the geographic area he is able to cover. Accordingly, the quality of this step's results is highly dependent on the availability of very detailed data on individual politicians, such as information about their home districts, particular social roles, and public standing.

4   Applying the Approach to Burkina Faso

Why Burkina Faso?

Burkina Faso is a very suitable case since it fulfills the demands defined above, which are required in order to test the utility of a microbehavioral approach vis-à-vis structural ethnoregionalism. There is no consistent information on the number of ethnic groups; however, the Mossi account for approximately half the population. They are still associated with the central part of Burkina Faso, although migration has led to the dispersal of many group members across the country, particularly to towns. Several other groups, roughly equal in size, come next. Their classical settlement areas encircle the central Plateau Mossi (mainly Lobi, Volta, Mandé, Fula, and Gurma peoples; roughly from the southwest to the east in a clockwise direction; cf. Ben Yahmed 2005: 76, Krings 2006: 32-48, Morrison et al. 1989: 680). Since different economic and social incentives for individual migration intersect with the different cultural histories of sedentary and nomadic groups, we should handle this general pattern with care.

The 45 constituencies in the 2007 legislative elections were predominantly small (median = 2). Their geographic size permits a clear distinction from potential ethnoregional units. The necessary data for the proposed multistep analysis is available through results from the municipal elections in 2006. Turnout at the local polls was not particularly low.[14] Furthermore, multivariate regression analyses using individual data show that in the case of Burkina Faso the regional variable is significant, while ethnic affiliation is virtually disqualified as a predictor of voting intentions (Basedau and Stroh 2008b). Most notably, there is no significant link between the Mossi majority and the electoral predominance of the Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès *(*CDP*)*. Party-specific analyses point to a comparably moderate regional effect, but regional residence still contributes much more to the explanation of party preferences than ethnic affiliation (Basedau and Stroh 2008a). That is to say, in Burkina Faso a general mechanism of localization should be clearly distinguishable from the macrosociological effects of ethnoregionalism, which appear to be inconclusive.

Since the multistep analysis proposes tools that deal with individual parties, I have selected the most relevant parties from the Burkinabè party system. They include in each case the three largest parties in the 2002 and 2007 national assemblies as well as in a 2006 representative survey poll.[15] This selection procedure generates a sample of five parties. These are the dominant ruling party CDP, the smaller presidential-movement party Union pour la République (UPR), the moderate opposition party Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération/ Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (ADF/RDA), and two parties from the so-called ra-

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[14]   About 1.9 million people cast their votes, which is the same level as for parliamentary elections in 2002 and not too much behind the 2.26 million who participated in the 2007 parliamentary elections.

[15]   Key data in Table A1 in the annex. The survey was conducted by the GIGA Institute of African Affairs and local partners in October 2006. Its 1,003 respondents were randomly chosen on the basis of a countrywide regional stratification and gender equity.

dical opposition, namely, Parti pour la Démocratie et le Progrès / Parti Socialiste (PDP/PS) and Union pour la Renaissance / Mouvement Sankariste (UNIR/MS).

CDP and ADF/RDA have always been among the three largest parties. PDP/PS was the country's third-largest force in the last parliament (2002–07). UPR was founded during the last legislative term by ambitious MPs from the presidential camp and is the third-largest party in the current national assembly. UNIR/MS came out with respectable results in the last two elections, placing second in the 2005 presidential elections and ranking third in the survey poll.[16] Because of the large power gap between the dominant CDP and its four selected competitors, I will call the latter "major secondary parties."

First Step: Legislative Regionalization?

At present, the electoral system of Burkina Faso provides for 45 provincial constituencies which proportionally attribute one to nine seats (an average of 2.1) to closed party lists with substitute candidates.[17] Fifteen constituencies are single-member districts, which implies that the actual electoral system is equivalent to a simple plurality system. The degree of uneven geographic distribution of votes calculated on the basis of provincial results varies across parties. Roughly, the Gini coefficient decreases considerably with an increase in a party's national success. The dominant CDP shows the lowest degree of uneven distribution, at 35.2, followed by the country's second political power, ADF/RDA, with 49.2. The remaining parties place as follows: 61.4 for UPR, 64.2 for PDP/PS, and 75.3 for UNIR/MS.

However, the mathematically uneven distribution does not correspond to a geographic concentration of strongholds. Accordingly, we are not dealing with regionalization. I reiterate the definition of a stronghold: a district where the party wins at least double its average share of votes in all contested constituencies. According to this definition, the parties under review possess three to five provincial strongholds—except the CDP, which would need a 120 percent share in a given province to fulfill the criteria. By joining the high measure of nationalization (even distribution) with the general difficulty of identifying clear-cut strongholds, we can identify the dominant CDP as a true national party. This does not ignore the fact that the microbehavioral mechanism also works with CDP, but the secondary parties will be more helpful for the utility test.

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[16] There are several possible explanations as to why the survey results differ to a certain degree from the 2007 election results. One is the strong effect of concentration of the Burkinabè electoral system used in 2007; a second is the short-term mobilization strategies which lower the predictive potential (which has never been a target) of chronologically distanced surveys; and a third might be a reluctance to vote even when citizens are clearly able to define their political will. If we estimate half of Burkina's national population to be of legal age, turnout in the May 2007 polls was about 30 percent, while freely uttered voting intentions were measured at 78.2 percent in the survey.

[17] Burkina Faso has changed its electoral law at each election. Due to discontent from the opposition, the electoral law is again under discussion and will probably be amended before the next election in 2012.

Figure 2 locates the strongholds. It clearly unveils geographic dispersion independent from the degree of uneven distribution as measured before. Only two UPR stronghold constituencies share a common border. Due to the effects of the electoral and party systems, parties do not necessarily win a seat in their stronghold. However, following the logic of macrostructural ethnoregionalism, we should not expect parties to win seats in localities scattered across the national territory. PDP/PS and UNIR/MS won all of their few provincial seats within their strongholds, while UPR won half of its (few) provincial seats outside its strongholds. Finally, ADF/RDA won only two out of 12 seats within strongholds, and was not able to win a seat within its remaining three strongholds. The maps equally capture an obvious geographic deconcentration of any elevated vote shares (above-average provincial results), as well as provinces in which the parties did not stand for election at all. Moreover, the areas of strength of the different parties overlap. The national territory is not regionally divided between the parties, and there is no ethnic divide either (Basedau and Stroh 2008a, supported by a large number of expert interviews in Burkina Faso, realized in October and November 2006 as well as in April and August 2007).

In sum, although abstract distribution scores indicate a low level of nationalization of party success, in political terms there is no systematic macroregional division of the national territory. However, parties do possess strongholds which appear to scatter unsystematically.

### *Second Step: Municipal Concentration*

The territory of Burkina Faso is divided into 358 municipalities (districts or in French "*communes*"), each of them pooling several villages or urban quarters. The size of the council assemblies ranges from 16 to 226 seats, with an average size of 50 councilors. Councilors are elected in small village constituencies. However, the generally large assembly size creates realistic chances for smaller parties to win seats. In order to get even closer to the concept of office-seeking parties[18] and due to the large number of electoral units, this step uses seat shares instead of vote shares to define strongholds.

Again, CDP is not represented since its general dominance obstructs any meaningful identification of strongholds. The average CDP seat share is 74.3 percent and it achieves above-average results across the entire country. Thus, a focus on secondary parties' strategies contributes much more to the utility test. Even at first glance, Table 1 contraindicates clear-cut regionalism. The success of all parties is dispersed across the country, except for a certain concentration of UPR in the east (Boulgou, Gnagna, Kouritenga). This is, however, counterbalanced in the greater west of Burkina Faso.[19]

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[18]   Strictly speaking, step one comes closer to the vote-seeking model. However, votes and office are not independent from each other. This paper basically focuses on the difference between immediate resource-seeking goals (votes, seats, office) and abstract policy-seeking goals.

[19]   For more detailed figures and a reference map see Figures A1 and A2 in the annex.

Figure 2: Mapping Legislative Strongholds and Nonparticipation of Secondary Parties in Burkina Faso
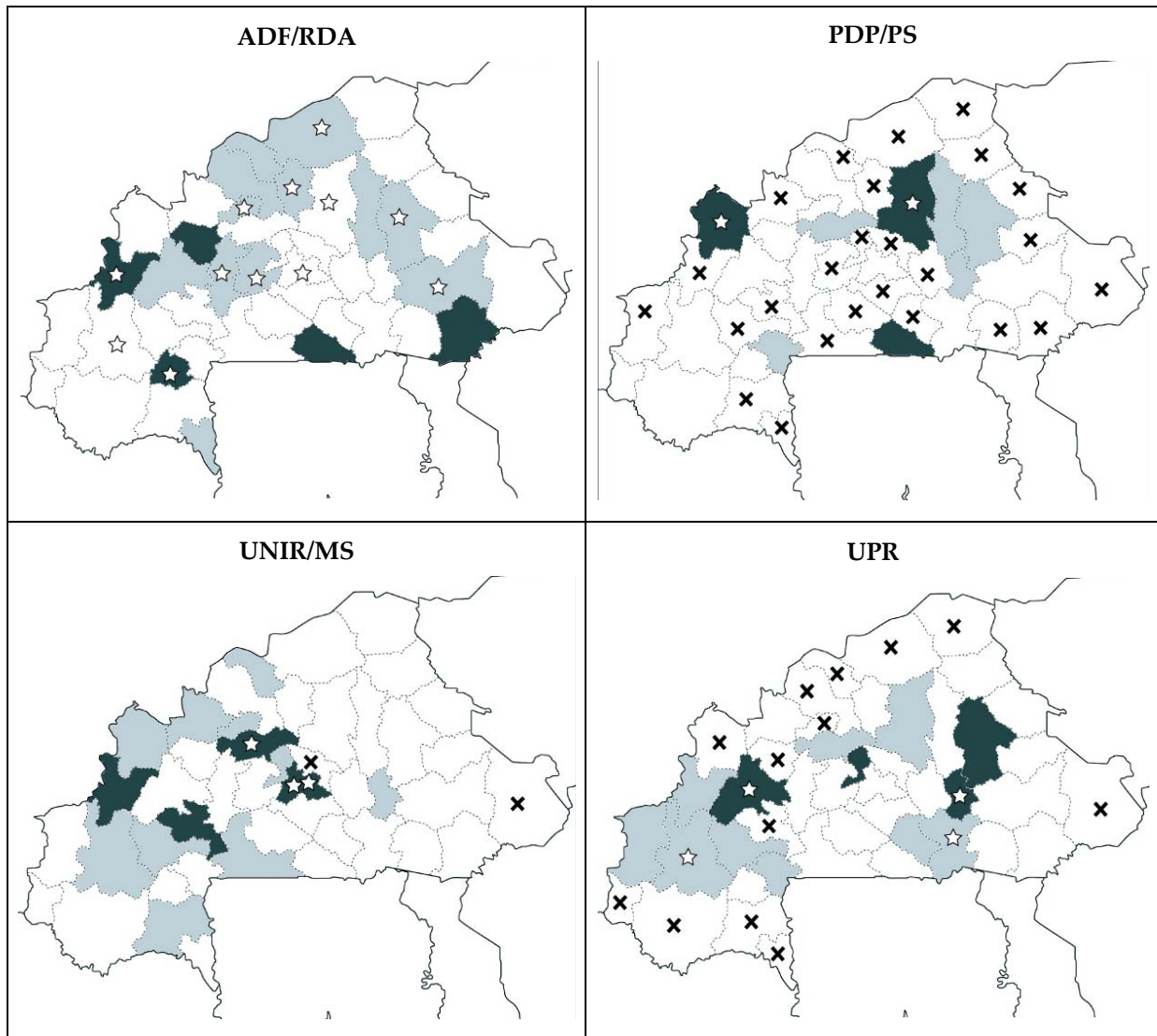
Key: Dark grey = provincial stronghold
        Light grey = result above the average for all contested provinces
        ☆ = Member of Parliament (provincial constituencies)
        ✗ = province not contested

Note: CDP excluded due to its dominant position (cf. p. 17)

Source: Author's representations (cartographic execution by Florian Weisser) on the basis of detailed electoral results from the 2007 legislative polls provided by CENI Burkina Faso (independent electoral commission).

Table 1: Electoral Performance of Secondary Parties by Province

Administrative Region	Province	ADF/RDA		PDP/PS		UNIR/MS		UPR	
		Munic. 2006	Parl. 2007	Munic. 2006	Parl. 2007	Munic. 2006	Parl. 2007	Munic. 2006	Parl. 2007
Boucle du Mouhoun	Bale				o	1/10 --	x		o
	Banwa	1/6 -	x		o		x	o	>
	Kossi				x	o	>		o
	Mouhoun	1/7 -	>					1/7 +	x
	Nayala	1/6 -	x	1/6 +		o		o	o
	Sourou				o	o	>	o	
Cascades	Comoe			o				o	o
	Leraba			o		o		o	o
Centre	Kadiogo					2/11 +	x		
Centre-Est	Boulgou			1/13 -				4/13 ++	>
	Koulpelogo			o	o	o		o	
	Kouritenga			2/9 -	>	1/9 -	>	2/9 +	x
Centre-Nord	Bam	4/9 -	>		o	1/9 --		o	
	Namentenga	4/8 -	>	1/8 +	>	o			
	Sanmatenga	2/11 -	>	1/11 --	x	o			>
Centre-Ouest	Boulkiemde	2/15 -	>		o				
	Sanguie	2/10 -	>	1/10 -		o		o	
	Sissili			o	o		>	o	
	Ziro	1/6 -		o	o	1/6 --		1/6 --	
Centre-Sud	Bazega		>	o	o				
	Nahouri		x	1/5 -	x	o		o	
	Zoundweogo	4/7 -	>	o	o	o			>
Est	Gnagna	2/7 -	>	2/7 +	>			2/7 ++	x
	Gourma	1/6 --	>					o	
	Komondjari			o	o	o		o	
	Kompienga	1/3 +	x	1/3 -	o	o		o	
	Tapoa			1/8 --	o	o	o	o	o
Hauts-Bassins	Houet	7/16 -					>	1/16 +	>
	Kenedougou			o	o	o		o	>
	Tuy				o	o	>		>
Nord	Loroum	1/4 ++	>	o	o		>	o	o
	Passore			2/9 -	>	2/9 +	x	o	>
	Yatenga	6/13 ++	>			1/13 --		o	o
	Zondoma	4/5 --	>				>	o	o
Plateau Central	Ganzourgou			o	o	o		o	
	Kourweogo			o			>	o	x
	Oubritenga			o	o	o	o	o	
Sahel	Oudalan			o	o	o		o	o
	Seno			o	o	o		o	
	Soum	2/9 -	>	1/9 --	o			o	o
	Yagha			o	o	o		o	
Sud-Ouest	Bougouriba	2/5 +	x	o		o		o	
	Ioba	1/8 -	>	2/8 --	>				
	Noumbiel	1/5 -	>			o		o	o
	Poni	3/10 -		o	o	1/10 --	>		o
Lower stronghold margin		20.8 %	24.2 %	10.1 %	9.8 %	10.8 %	6.2 %	31.7 %	11.0 %
Absolute number of strongholds		53	5	17	3	10	4	11	4

Key: Munic. = municipal elections
         Parl. = parliamentary elections
         n/m = n municipal strongholds out of m districts in a given province
         x = stronghold in parliamentary elections
         o = no electoral participation (in none of the provincial districts or no provincial list at the parliamentary polls)
         ++ = average seat share in non-stronghold districts of the same province above the average of all contested districts
         + = above the national average
         - = below the national average
         -- = at best one seat won in surrounding districts of the same province
Source: Author's compilation based on data from CENI Burkina Faso.

Municipal strongholds are scattered across a large number of administrative regions. They are not totally congruent with legislative strongholds. Depending on the party, the areas of strength overlap to a variable degree. The most nationalized secondary party according to step one, ADF/RDA, maintains the highest consistency. In three out of 22 cases only, those provinces where it had municipal strongholds in 2006 failed to yield above-average results in the 2007 parliamentary polls. The same is true of three out of eight provinces as regards UNIR/MS and one of six provinces for UPR. However, PDP/PS alone accounts for half of all similar cases in this sample, which means that the party failed to maintain strongholds in six out of 13 provinces. PDP/PS is also the only party in the sample which abandoned provinces (three) in the parliamentary elections although it had achieved stronghold results in local polls one year before.

So far, data from different geographic levels confirm the utility of going more local with the analysis, since party success is neither concentrated macroregionally nor evenly distributed in the sense of true national parties. Step three must deepen the discussion on participation strategies in order to generate a better understanding of the persistence and dynamics of party success patterns.

Third Step: Patterns of Strategic Participation and Neglect

The approach implies that a party which is implementing a strategy of localization consciously chooses particularly promising localities for competition and willfully neglects others. Possibly, the most promising constituencies are situated within one larger region.

Still drawing on information from the previous step, we find that all selected parties are represented in councils across the country. There is no strong pattern of regionalization in Burkina Faso (again, see Table 1 and cf. Figure A1 in the annex). Accordingly, ballot participation is obviously scattered across the country. ADF/RDA and CDP contested 280 and all local council elections, respectively, in all 45 provinces. PDP/PS concentrated on 106 municipalities in 29 provinces across 12 of 13 regions. UNIR/MS competed for 65 councils—that is, less than 20 percent of all municipalities—but scattered across 23 provinces in all administrative regions. UPR contested 70 local ballots in 17 provinces of 9 regions (see Table 2). Hence, UPR employed the most concentrated strategy, but still dispersed competition and success to very different areas.

Table 2:   Concentration of Competition

	ADF/RDA	CDP	PDP/PS	UNIR/MS	UPR
Number of local council entries vs. contested elections	175/280	356/358	51/106	37/65	50/70
Ratio participation against entry	62.5 %	99.4 %	48.1 %	56.9 %	71.4 %
Share of contested districts	78.2 %	100.0 %	29.6 %	18.2 %	19.6 %
Local council entry vs. electoral participation in n provinces	41/45	45/45	24/29	18/23	15/17
Local council entry vs. electoral participation in n administrative regions	13/13	13/13	10/12	12/13	9/9
Average seat share where part of the council	16.7 %	74.3 %	10.5 %	9.5 %	22.2 %
Number of seats in local councils	1,546	12,843	310	155	600
Number of absolute majorities in local councils	6	311	0	1	8

Source: Author's compilation on the basis of data from CENI Burkina Faso.

Generally, we find 91 municipal strongholds of secondary parties in total. A large majority of strongholds (63 units or 69.2 percent) are situated in provinces where the respective party's average results in all remaining non-stronghold districts is below its national average. Hence, more than two-thirds of all strongholds are located in political environments of below-average performance.

The effect of the party's deliberate decisions becomes most visible in those 16 strongholds which are situated in provinces where the given party is (virtually)[20] nonexistent outside the stronghold district(s). To run there was a deliberate, and presumably strategic, choice by the respective parties, since they did not even present themselves in 69 out of 79 surrounding districts, that is, in other non-stronghold districts within the same province. Thus, we may call these 16 cases "island strongholds."

Indeed, we apparently are not dealing with geographic concentration in the sense of interest representation, but rather in the sense of a rational party strategy of office-seeking elites. However, the visibility of this effect certainly decreases with the increasing nationalization of a party and with increasing resources. This is why this type of examination does not work with CDP (all districts contested) and remains less clear with ADF/RDA (78.2 percent of districts contested). Still, the analysis recognizes different concentration strategies between the parties, particularly between the three smaller secondary parties. UPR has only one island stronghold as it concentrated its energy on fewer provinces and, therefore, often established several strongholds in one province with above-average results in surrounding districts (see Table 1). However, the party is not macroregionally concentrated since the six provinces in which it won its 11 strongholds are distributed over five administrative re-

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[20]   The limit is set at one local council seat won by the party in the same province but outside its stronghold(s).

gions, reaching from southwestern Hauts-Bassins to the Est region. UNIR/MS appears to form the opposite strategy pole with half of its strongholds being "islands" and none situated in above-average surroundings. Its ten strongholds are spread across eight provinces in seven regions. PDP/PS appears somewhere in the middle with 47.1 percent of its 17 stronghold districts within below-average surroundings, plus five island strongholds and four strongholds in above-average surroundings. The party's strongholds are also spread broadly across the country.

Compared to the legislative ballot, PDP/PS is the only party which actively reduced the scope of its participation, from 29 to 20 provinces. UNIR/MS and UPR increased their involvement from 23 to 43 and 17 to 32 provinces, respectively. This met with varying success; at best, with the acquisition of new strongholds (see Kourweogo for UPR). This is consistent with the institutional incentive for office-seeking party elites to expand electoral participation geographically since the electoral law provides for an additional national party list. Fifteen parliamentary seats are allocated according to the parties' national vote share, which is determined by totaling all votes from those provinces in which a party presented a provincial list. PDP/PS officials reported that they deplored the unintended decline, which emerged due to a failure of internal procedures. The party's electoral loss was, thus, not a sign of strategic concentration—or even of macrosociological determination—but rather of organizational deficiency. The procedural difficulties even included the lack of a national list which the party president was supposed to head.[21] ADF/RDA contested elections in all provinces on both occasions.

Relative to its investment, UPR achieved the greatest success. The party entered 71.4 percent of the local councils which they competed for and won double the number of seats of PDP/PS and about four times the seats of UNIR/MS. UPR's seat share averaged 22.2 percent wherever it entered a council, and—even more important for power relations—the party achieved absolute majorities in eight councils, giving them a ranking of second behind CDP among all Burkinabè parties.

An important caveat should not be concealed: UPR belongs to the presidential movement and is thus close to the government. The work of opposition parties may be complicated and made more difficult due to the inchoate democratization of the political regime (see Stroh 2008). However, even this should have an impact on relational voters with parochial interests who believe they will benefit more—in the short term—from closeness to government. This is, by the way, a plausible reason for the ongoing dominance of the presidential party CDP. However, the more nationalized ADF/RDA, which is even taking part in the cabinet, works significantly less efficiently. Interpreting UPR's performance advance as a result of strategic decisions *ceteris paribus* is therefore justified.

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[21]   Personal conversation with campaign managers at PDP/PS headquarters, Ouagadougou, May 2, 2007.

In sum, there is further evidence for the utility of a microbehavioral approach, since a macroregional approach would lead to the expectation of a stronger homogeneity of regional—and, even more so, provincial—success patterns. However, the existence of island and non-island concentration of party performance already challenges structural ethnoregionalism. Still, without the theoretical underpinning which links the stronghold analysis to localized clientelism in the form of the "*fils du terroir*" leitmotiv, previous findings do not yet validate the approach's utility to a fully satisfactory extent.

Fourth Step: Benefits of "Fils du Terroir"

The article aims to test the utility of a microbehavioral approach as a complementary alternative to structural determination. The approach emphasizes the human resources of political parties. Without a doubt, other possible factors such as organizational failure (see PDP/PS above), financial resources, or institutions may distort party decisions. Consequently, I continue to concentrate on the four secondary parties, further excluding CDP as its extensive financial resources and political dominance obstruct adequate testing.

Following the logic of proximity, the most efficient option is for leading party personnel to campaign first and foremost within their home areas and to recruit capable candidates from there. An analysis of candidates and campaigns in all strongholds could be one way into the examination of the strategy. "Island strongholds," for instance, should point to restricted resources that had to be further concentrated. This requires data from deeper field work on these particular districts which is not currently available in a comprehensive manner. We thus have to content ourselves with another access path which reverses the logic of examination and looks at the effects of party leaders on their home districts. Does their personal proximity to local voters make a significant difference to a party?

I identified the five to seven highest-ranking party officials[22] for a correlation of human resources and success balances. I then compared the individual places of origin (home districts) with the party's legislative and municipal strongholds. The leaders' origins provide an initial insight into the party's (non)interests: None of the leadership circles is exclusively composed of people from one specific region or ethnic group (cf. Table 3). Again, we find evidence which counters exclusive ethnoregionalism. However, the argument is that parties use candidates' local affiliation, which may include a strong ethnic factor due to communication needs (campaign language) and enhanced trust ("one of us"). The significant differences from an ethnoregional approach are exclusiveness, policy aims, and political scope. Strict structuralism asks for an exclusive representation of macrosociological group interests. A strategy of localization is only about proximity to the parochial voter. It includes the potential competition of candidates from various parties.

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[22]   The number of officials depends on the internal structure of the respective party.

Table 3: Human Resources, Home District Election Results, and Strongholds of Selected Secondary Parties in Burkina Faso

Human Resources (December 2006)		Municipal Elections (2006)								Legislative Elections (2007)			
Office, name	District of origin (province)	Seat share in this district (%)	Quality of seat share	Number of strongholds among the other districts of the respective province	Number of districts where the party ran for seats	Number of districts of the respective province	Average provincial seat share (%)	Quality of provincial performance	Vote share in this province (%)	Quality of vote share	Official lead this provincial list	Seats won in this province
ADF/RDA												
PP, Gilbert N. Ouédraogo	Ouagadougou-Baskuy (Kadiogo)	6.82	below NA	0	11	11	4.22	below NA	6.3	below NA	no, national	1
HP, Gérard K. Ouédraogo	Ouahigouya (Yatenga)	27.68	strong-hold	5	13	13	18.95	well above CA	21.2	well above CA	no, retired	0
VP, Diao M. Koné	Banfora (Comoé)	0.00	failed	0	5	9	0.00	failed	1.6	below NA	no	0
SG, Fahiri J.F. Somda	Zambo (Ioba)	21.43	strong-hold	0	6	8	1.59	below NA	11.0	above NA	no	1
HMP, Sidiki Ou Belem	Djibo (Soum)	3.23	below NA	2	9	9	13.08	above CA	16.1	above CA	no, Yatenga	1
PDP/PS												
PP, Ali Lankoandé	Fada-N'Gourma (Gourma)	7.37	above CA	0	3	6	2.64	above NA	4.5	above NA	no, (national)	0
HP, Joseph Ki-Zerbo (late)	Toma (Nayala)	6.52	above CA	1	6	6	5.08	above CA	2.0	below NA	no, late	0
HP/HMP, Th. S. Ouédraogo	Boussouma (Sanmatenga)	0.00	not contested	1	1	11	4.08	above NA	11.2	strong-hold	yes	1
VP1, O. François Ouédraogo	Yako (Passoré)	0.00	failed	2	9	9	4.35	above NA	7.1	above CA	yes	0
VP2, Sébastien B. Zabsonré	Tenkodogo (Boulgou)	2.19	above NA	1	9	13	1.81	above NA	2.5	above NA	yes	0
HPF, Etienne Traoré	Bomborokuy (Kossi)	9.38	well above CA	0	3	10	1.77	above NA	15.0	strong-hold	yes	1
UNIR/MS												
PP, Bénéwendé S. Sankara	Samba (Passoré)	40.43	strong-hold	1	9	9	8.42	well above CA	13.3	strong-hold	no, national	1
	living Ouaga-Bogodogo (Kadiogo)	15.63	strong-hold	1	7	11	1.15	above NA	15.7	strong-hold	no, national	2
SN, Adama Dera	Koudougou (Boulkiemde)	0.00	failed	0	3	15	0.00	failed	2.1	below NA	no, national	0
SN, Meng-Néré Kientega	Samba (Passoré)	40.43	strong-hold	1	9	9	8.42	well above CA	13.3	strong-hold	yes	1
SN, Malick Sawadogo	Nanoro (Boulkiemde)	0.00	failed	0	3	15	0.00	failed	2.1	below NA	no, Kadiogo	0
SN, Massadiamou Sirima	Soubakanié-dougou (Comoé)	0.00	not contested	0	2	9	0.56	below NA	1.5	below NA	no, national	0
SN, Fidèle Toé	Toma (Nayala)**	0.00	not contested	0	0	6	0.00	failed*	1.5	below NA	no, national	0
SN, Alphonse Z. Tunya	Yaho (Balé)	75.00	strong-hold	0	2	10	7.50	above CA	8.1	strong-hold	yes	0

Human Resources (December 2006)		Municipal Elections (2006)								Legislative Elections (2007)			
Office, name	*District of origin (province)*	*Seat share in this district (%)*	*Quality of seat share*	*Number of strongholds among the other districts of the respective province*	*Number of districts where the party ran for seats*	*Number of districts of the respective province*	*Average provincial seat share (%)*	*Quality of provincial performance*	*Vote share in this province (%)*	*Quality of vote share*	*Official lead this provincial list*	*Seats won in this province*
UPR												
PP, Toussaints Abel Coulibaly	Dédougou (Mouhoun)	40.66	stronghold	0	7	7	11.64	above NA	32.9	stronghold	yes	1
VP, Sébastien Ouédraogo	Ouaga-Boulmiougou (Kadiogo)	7.14	above NA	0	5	11	1.15	below NA	3.2	below NA	no, national	0
SG, Yénignia Bangou	Piéla (Gnagna)	10.39	above NA	2	7	7	19.23	above CA	14.1	stronghold	yes	0
SN, Saïdou L. Gouem	"Pays Bissa" (Boulgou)***	79.55	stronghold	3	10	13	9.21	above NA	6.7	above CA	yes	1
SN, Saïdou Kaboré	Andamtenga (Kouritenga)	58.18	stronghold	1	9	9	21.03	above CA	15.0	stronghold	yes	1

Key: PP = Party President
HP = Honorary President
VP = Vice President (1 = 1st, 2 = 2nd)
SG = Secretary General
SN = National Secretary
HMP = Head of Party MPs
HPF = Head of Party Faction
CA = average of all contested districts/provinces
NA = national average
failed = contested, but no seat; not more than one additional seat outside the home district;
contested, but less than 0.1%

Notes: *   FDS won 1 seat in Tome; Toé was FDS official until its merger with UNIR/MS shortly after the 2006 municipal elections
**   estimated [Y.B.]
*** presumably Zabré [A.S.]

Source: Author's compilation on the basis of field research, using data from CENI Burkina Faso. Some information has been completed with the help of Augustin Loada and Yacouba Banhoro, both from the University of Ouagadougou.

Now, to what extent is the microbehavioral application of the "*fils du terroir*" strategy traceable? At the 2006 municipal polls, the selected parties won above-average seat shares[23] in roughly half of the home districts of their leading representatives. Nine out of 23 home districts became party strongholds, including the rural homes of three party presidents.[24] However, the parties failed to win seats in four home districts and three home districts were not contested.

The opposition party UNIR/MS accounts for the largest number of failures and cases of nonparticipation in leaders' home districts and their surroundings (a total of four). Party

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[23] That is, above the average seat share of all districts in which the party competed for seats.

[24] In the case of ADF/RDA, party president Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo was born and lives in Ouagadougou, which is not a stronghold of his party. However, his family is originally from Ouahigouya in northern Yatenga Province. Gilbert's father, Gérard Kango Ouédraogo, who is the honorary president of the party and an ex-prime minister, still resides there. Therefore, this is commonly seen as his home district.

leaders explained to the author that they had to follow a strategy of concentration on the capital province Kadiogo, where most of the principal representatives live, and Passoré, which is the home province of the two highest-ranking party representatives, in both municipal and legislative elections due to resource scarcity.[25] Consequently, some of the leaders' home districts had to be neglected for the sake of resource efficiency. UNIR/MS opted for nonparticipation in the remote home districts of two national secretaries. On top of saving travel expenses, the decision was based on the fact that the respective provinces are reputed to be strongholds of competing parties. The nine municipalities of Comoé, for instance, are characterized by a provincial two-party system. CDP and a smaller secondary party, namely Rassemblement pour le Développement du Burkina (RDB), which largely concentrates its activities in the southwest, ultimately shared 453 of 459 seats, with CDP accounting for 63.2 percent and RDB for 35.5 percent of all local councilors in the province. While UNIR/MS didn't even run candidates in this area, the home of national secretary Massadiamou Sirima, all candidates run by ADF/RDA failed, despite the fact that the party's vice-president, Diao M. Koné, is a son of the soil. Such doubtful prospects can incite parties not to invest in campaigning—either through proactive nonparticipation or through less campaign spending.[26] Thus, there is evidence that parties take complex strategic decisions which include the possibility of neglecting home districts under apparently unfavorable conditions. However, we need to allow for deviations from the rule because of poor strategic analysis and wrong party decisions.

The legislative elections of 2007 serve as a test of additional evidence. A majority of electoral results from 23 home provinces of selected party officials support the strategy of localization: 15 provincial outcomes exceeded the national average of the respective party. At the same time, ten out of 23 selected party officials led their home province's electoral list. All of them achieved above-average results, with seven results qualifying as a party stronghold. Additionally, two of the selected officials led provincial lists other than those at their place of origin, with one province becoming a party stronghold (Kadiogo, UNIR/MS) and one achieving a result well above average (Yatenga, ADF/RDA[27]).

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[25] Interviews with Bénéwendé S. Sankara, president of UNIR/MS, November 2006 and May 2007, and Malick Y. Sawadogo, secretary national for organization and campaign coordinator of UNIR/MS, Ouagadougou, October 2006.

[26] However, data on the intensity of party campaigns in those home districts, where they ultimately failed to win seats despite their high level of *fils du terroir*," is not available. In other words, much more field research has to be done to determine whether parties strategically minimized their efforts or whether they were competitively defeated. It is also unknown why PDP/PS totally concentrated on far-off Pensa in Sanmatenga Province while leaving Boussouma uncontested to CDP although the party's honorary president, Théodore S. Ouédraogo, is the Naba Sonré, the traditional king of Boussouma. Again, research falls victim to data scarcity.

[27] The head of the ADF/RDA's parliamentary party, Sidiki Ou Belem, himself from the Sahel region, led the Yatenga list. However, the Yatenga Province is the home of ADF/RDA's "grey eminence" and honorary president, Gérard Kango Ouédraogo, who is the father of today's party president (cf. fn. 22). Being a minister, the latter, Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo, led the party's national list, leaving the Yatenga stronghold to Sidiki Ou

Generally, a strategic concentration of all parties on the home provinces of their highest representatives—thus, a strategy of localization—is measurable. The chance that one of the four selected secondary parties contested the municipal polls in one district which was part of a leader's home province was 62.7 percent, while the nationwide likelihood was only 36.4 percent. Again, UPR proves to have had the strongest concentration strategy with respect to the provincial level: 38 out of 70 contested districts belonged to the home provinces of UPR's five leading representatives. This party competed for seats in 80.9 percent of the districts in home provinces, while their national engagement remained restricted to 19.6 percent of all districts. The concentration was lower for ADF/RDA (88.0 percent against 78.2 percent), PDP/PS (56.4 percent against 29.6 percent), and UNIR/MS (41.7 percent against 18.2 percent), but still ostentatious.

There are only two cases of (near) island strongholds among the leaders' home districts. In other words, concentration by the highest-ranking party officials on their home district only is rather rare. Spillover effects appear to be the rule. Yet, the two exceptions tell instructive stories.

Alphonse Tunya, UNIR/MS, led the campaign within the region of Boucle du Mouhoun, which is virtually disconnected from transport infrastructure and where a scarcity of human and, reportedly, financial resources hindered UNIR/MS from contesting more than five out of 47 local councils.[28] The strategic choice to concentrate on Tunya's home district Yaho was successful. UNIR/MS won a 75 percent seat share in the municipal council, and Tunya became the sole mayor of UNIR/MS.

The other story took place in neighboring Kossi Province, where Etienne Traoré campaigned in his home district. Being rather a newcomer in PDP/PS, he has drawn his prominence from having been the supplementary candidate of late honorary president Joseph Ki-Zerbo in the 2002 elections. In 2005, a considerable but still inadequate number of party members wanted Traoré to succeed Ki-Zerbo as party president. His takeover of the leadership of a reformist party wing in the same year further increased his intra-party importance and visibility: he criticized the elected party leadership but remained loyal to the party structures (Traoré et al. 2005).[29] However, Traoré did not replace Ki-Zerbo in the national assembly until the latter's retirement in August 2006, that is, after the municipal election. This and his controversial role within the party probably restricted his resources.

Nevertheless, Tunya and Traoré led the respective provincial lists in the 2007 parliamentary elections and managed to expand the provinces to party strongholds.

Belem, whose home province of Soum was not to be expected a safe electoral haven for institutional reasons (small two-seat constituency with a competing dominant party).

[28] Some additional UNIR/MS candidates were presented on joint opposition lists under the colors of the party Front des Forces Sociales (FFS). I draw my information about the state of the party in the Boucle du Mouhoun region from conversations with Gaston Bonkian, UNIR/MS, provincial party president of Mouhoun Province, Dédougou, November 2006, and Alphonse Tunya himself, Ouagadougou, August 2007.

[29] In between, Traoré did leave the party.

In sum, the findings support an approach which focuses on parties' rationalized strategies of localization, based on resource efficiency and personal proximity, in Burkina Faso. The choice of the districts where a party participates in the municipal polls thus appears to comply largely with a combination of four microbehavioral factors. First, a strategic confidence in the local spillover effects of honorable sons[30] on neighboring districts. Second, the efficient concentration of restricted resources in order to avoid greater geographic distances. Third, the efficient mobilization of candidates and party workers through existing local social networks, including ethnic and linguistic linkages. Fourth, the strategic neglect of particular home districts due to intervening factors. The more a party deliberately commits to following this rational logic, the better it performs at the polls.

5   Conclusion: Theoretical Implications

The deficiencies of macrosociological approaches to African party politics have necessitated research on alternative approaches. By adhering to the debate on personalization and clientelism on the one hand and to the rational decisions of collective actors on the other hand, this article has opted for a microbehavioral approach. A utility test using the example of Burkina Faso has supported a perspective on African party politics which emphasizes the rational decisions of party elites who follow a strategy of localized competition.

Burkinabè parties obviously have campaign strategies which are adapted to their human and financial resources. Their primary goal appears to be the maximization of chances to win seats. Borrowing a familiar term, we may characterize them as being mainly office-seeking parties. An important parameter for their strategy design is the "*fils du terroir*" principle, which builds upon personal proximity to voters with basically parochial material interests. A network of leading party officials (and presumably of other, less prominent "*fils et filles du terroir*")[31] concentrates on home districts and provinces. This is a pattern common to all parties under review and pays well, although to varying extents. Since the geographic distribution of strongholds is spread unsystematically across the country, it cannot be the result of ethnoregional structures, but, instead, of the localized advantages of party elite members. Consequently, geographic concentration or dispersion is the results of deliberate elite decisions rather than the predetermined results of social structures. They are, thus, mainly the results of a rational strategy of localization.

Though based on a certain range of plausible but not systematically tested assumptions, the empirical evidence of this article supports the utility of a microbehavioral approach and,

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[30]   There are no women among the 23 selected officials.

[31]   Due to data and expenditure restrictions, I could not test the human resource background of all candidates. Incidentally, this could provide for a very good opportunity for fruitful interdisciplinary research including social anthropologists and political scientists.

therefore, has several theoretical implications. Considering the exemplary character of the selected case study, the following theses ought to be examined through further research.

First, the key mechanism of party politics in Africa might actually be rational decision making, which means the localized mobilization of people with parochial interests, and not so much the structural mobilization of exclusive ethnoregional identities. Ethnic mobilization happens, but only within a confined space. Ethnic affiliation to a candidate is often a resource-efficient and comparably simple means of mobilization. However, if all parties rely on this strategy in overlapping areas of competition, it is not sufficient in explaining success.

Second, decision makers at the top of the parties have the power to balance their organizations' human and financial resources against several national and local context variables such as local social demography, infrastructural accessibility, electoral institutions, advantages of incumbency, and the strongholds of other parties.

Third, cleavages and open conflicts between ethnic groups are, independent from their genesis, reduced to *ex ante* incentives for party elites who decide whether they concentrate their mobilization on exclusive ethnoregional identities or not. Since it is hard to imagine that discrete parochial interests pose a serious threat, the main responsibility lies in the hands of the elites.

Fourth, change becomes, *ceteris paribus*, more likely from a microbehavioral perspective than with socio-structural approaches which expect deeply rooted determinants of party politics. In other words, the behavioral approach—being a top-down approach—affects fewer people and decisions, while the structural approach—being a bottom-up approach—implies slow and difficult opportunities for change.

Fifth, the more a party is centered around one individual "big man," the more it becomes likely that the party is regionally concentrated in his home region in order to control the network and protect his self-interest. Coalitions of several "big men" can obviously bridge the ethnoregional dimension and overlap geographically with other parties' zones of interest in an unsystematic manner due to opportunity structures. Finally, divergence in party behavior underlines the fact that we need to think of African party systems in a less one-dimensional manner.

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Annex

Table A1:   Key Data on Selected Parties (in %)

	Vote share National Assembly elections 2002	Seat share National Assembly 2002	Vote share presidential elections 2005	Share of voting intentions (survey 2006)	Vote share National Assembly elections 2007	Seat share National Assembly 2007
ADF/RDA	12.6	15.3	supported incumbent president	6.2	10.7	12.6
CDP	49.5	51.4	80.3	68.6	58.9	65.8
PDP/PS	7.0	9.0	1.7	1.7	2.5	1.8
UNIR/MS	2.5	2.7	4.9	6.7	3.9	3.6
UPR (registered in 2004)	—	—	supported incumbent president	0.4	4.3	4.5

Source: Author's compilation based on data from CENI Burkina Faso (independent electoral commission) and a
         GIGA survey poll (October 2006, N=1,003).

Figure A1:   Geographic Distribution of Seat Shares and Strongholds in the 2006 Municipal Elections

The following graphs report on an interim stage of research and may help to clarify the argumentation through visualization. In the absence of detailed maps, a two-dimensional coordinates system per party indicates seat shares on the y-axis, while the x-axis covers all 358 municipalities (third subnational level). Administrative regions (first subnational level) determine the order of the municipalities on the x-axis, starting from the southwest and advancing to the northeast. The bold line indicates the lower stronghold margin, defined as double the average share of all councils contested by the respective party. In other words, each data point above the bold line represents a municipal council stronghold of the respective party as defined in this paper. The further up the position of the point on the vertical axis, the larger the party's seat share. Geographically neighboring municipalities are also located close to each other on the horizontal axis. The more the pattern of data points is scattered, the less the party is regionally concentrated.
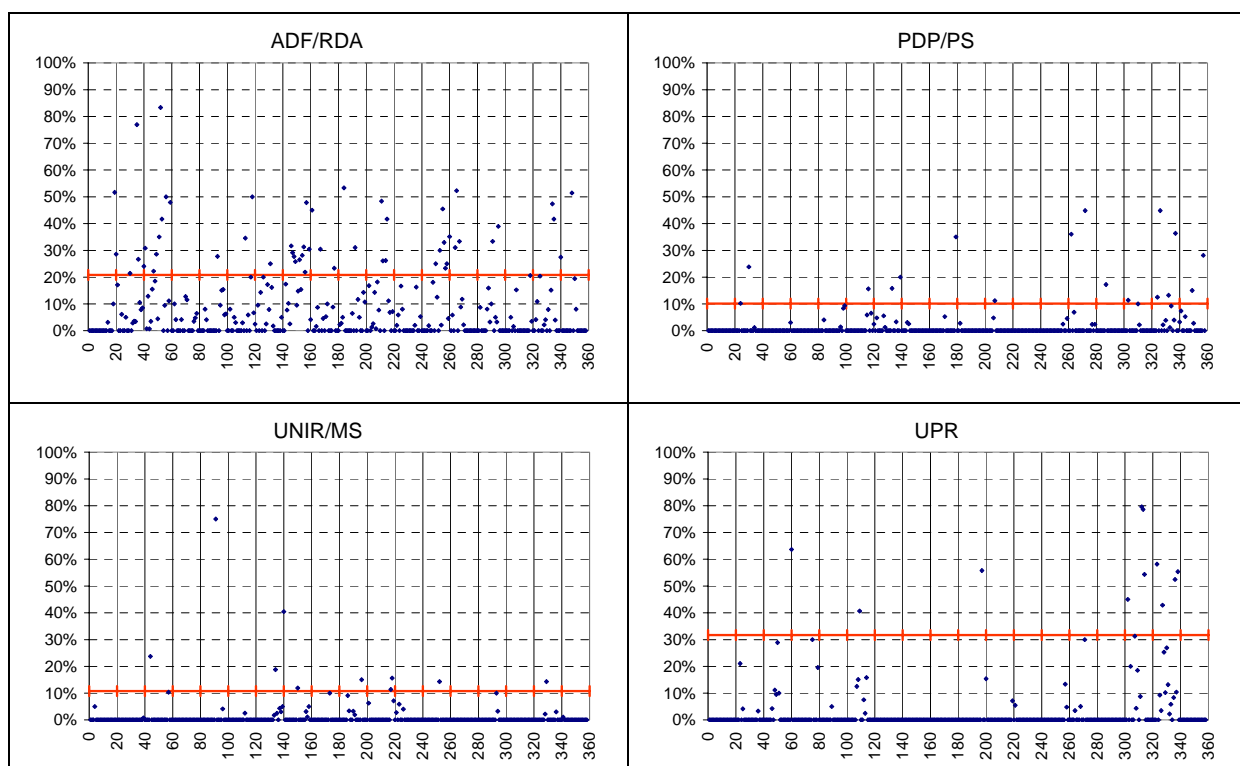
Notes: Detailed geographical allocation: Municipalities of the administrative region Cascades on positions 1-17; Sud-Ouest, 18-45; Hauts Bassins, 46-81; Boucle du Mouhoun, 82-128; Nord, 129-159; Centre-Ouest, 160-197; Centre-Sud, 198-216; Centre (Ouagadougou), 217-227; Plateau Central, 228-247; Centre-Nord, 248-275; Sahel, 276-301; Centre-Est, 302-331; and Est, 332-358.

Source: Author's representation based on data from CENI Burkina Faso (independent electoral commission)

Figure A2:   Reference Map of Burkina Faso

Source: Open internet resource (http://english.freemap.jp/, accessed on 1 July 2008).

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