

# Great Expectations: Ethnicity, Performance, and Ugandan Voters\*

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## Abstract

When voters vote ethnically, as they do in many African countries, what is the reason? Do voters prefer coethnics because of ethnic pride? Or is ethnicity as a proxy for performance? I use a voting simulation experiment in Uganda to investigate the underlying rationale for ethnic voting. I find evidence that voters anticipate more future goods from a coethnic presidential candidate. Most strikingly, I find that coethnicity matters to voters only when the candidate has a record of prior goods provisions and, similarly, that record matters most when the candidate is coethnic. Furthermore, those types of voters who would be most likely to receive ethnic patronage are those who are most likely to vote ethnically. I confirm this finding by asking respondents to make predictions about the future performance of coethnic and non-coethnic candidates. I find that respondents expect more future goods from coethnics than from non-coethnic candidates.

## 1 Introduction

In Uganda, as elsewhere in Africa, there is an ethnic pattern to voting. Though President Museveni garners support from voters throughout the country, the president's tribe,<sup>1</sup> the Banyankole, vote for him in numbers much higher than the public as a whole. Tribes throughout the Western region,

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<sup>1</sup>I am aware of the negative connotations of the word 'tribe' in Western analysis. I use it in this context because it is the best term for the concept I am trying to convey, and will generate the least confusion for African readers. In East

most of whom are related to the Banyankole, also prefer Museveni at levels approaching or exceeding 80%. The Uganda panel of the Afrobarometer survey finds that ethnicity has a significant, independent effect on vote choice controlling for other candidate characteristics, such as policy or performance.[Bratton et al., 2004] It seems that, in the words of one particularly candid respondent on this project, “I don’t love to elect someone from another tribe. I love the people of my tribe.”

What is the reason for the apparent preference among voters for a candidate of their own tribe? Is voting an expressive gesture based on ethnic affiliation and pride? Or do voters see ethnicity as a proxy for the performance of the candidate? We care about voters’ motivations because they have implications for governance. Of particular concern is whether ethnic cues override more “rational” considerations about the candidate’s performance in office, undermining the ability of voters to hold government accountable. Dowd and Dreissen [2008], for example, find declines in quality of governance as ethnicity becomes more strongly correlated with vote. If this is true, from a normative perspective, we should be pleased with shifts away from ethnic voting. However, without a more precise understanding of voters’ calculus, such conclusions would be premature. Patterns that appear to be “ethnic” voting need not be associated with under-provision of goods; perhaps, for example, voters prefer coethnics because they know that coethnics will be more responsive to them (see Habyarimana et al. [2007] for evidence that coethnics are more able to influence one another than outsiders are.) And perhaps, if ethnic cues are unavailable, voters do not move on to retrospective voting, but select their candidates more or less stochastically.<sup>2</sup>

There are a number of recent studies that address the underpinnings of ethnic voting. All of these studies, however, measure a candidate’s performance in office based on how survey respondents assess him. They then find that those with more favorable assessments are likely to support him. These assessments are endogenous to the extent that voters’ assessments of a candidate’s performance are shaped by whether they already support him,<sup>3</sup> which in itself may be a product of ethnic affiliation. The story we might be tempted to tell based on the correlation between voters’ self-reported retrospective assessments and their votes is thus highly suspect.

My investigation improves on prior studies by exogenously determining candidate performance in an experimental setting. These experiments allow me to directly measure the relative importance of ethnicity and record to voters, as well as determine whether voters see ethnicity as a proxy for future goods provision. I find that voters value ethnicity at least as much as they value prior performance, because they anticipate more targeted future goods from coethnic elites.

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Africa, the term “ethnic group” has a specific meaning than is different from what I intend here - it refers to the larger language family that one’s native tongue falls under (such as “Bantu”.) “Tribe” is the word that implies a hereditary group whose members all speak the same, discrete language (such as “Mutooro”.) Since most theory on ethnicity in Africa relates to the latter categorization rather than the former, I use the word tribe to denote this type of identity group.

<sup>2</sup>Chandra [2004] and Ferree [2004] suggest and Conroy-Krutz [2008] finds that in a low information setting voters rely almost entirely on ethnic cues. In the absence of these cues, it is unclear what is available to replace them.

<sup>3</sup>A particularly robust finding in American politics is that voters’ estimates of the state of the economy are significantly more positive when their preferred party is in power. See Gerber and Huber [2010] for the most recent discussion of the finding.

## 2 Uganda's Political Context

Depending on the means of classification there are between 30 and 80 tribes in Uganda. According to some calculations, it is the most ethnically diverse country in the world.[Alesina et al., 2003] The southern half of the country, comprising 70% of the population, is composed of tribes from the larger Bantu ethno-linguistic group. Kampala and the rest of Central Region are dominated by the relatively large Baganda tribe, whose king, the *Kabaka*, power-shares control of the region with the central government. The West is populated by a closely related group of tribes, including the president's tribe, the Banyankole.<sup>4</sup> Those who live in the North/Northeast are of smaller and more varied tribes, including those more closely related to groups in Kenya and Sudan. No tribe in Uganda forms a majority. The largest tribe in Uganda are the Baganda, who comprise 17% of the population. The president's tribe, the Banyankole, are the second-largest, at 9% of the population.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, leader of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), has been in power since 1986, when he led a coup against General Tito Okello, who had himself deposed President Milton Obote six months earlier. Museveni ruled as a military dictator until 1996, when the country held its first elections in fifteen years. These elections were unique in their "no party" status: parties could not nominate or campaign for candidates, leading to a de-facto one-party competition. The first true multi-party elections were not held until 2006. Despite acknowledgment of widespread fraud and intimidation, both internal and international observers have declared the results of the 2006 elections fundamentally valid: Museveni officially won 59% of the vote. Museveni's support is concentrated in the west of the country, with a firm majority in Central Region (excepting Kampala itself), and pockets of support elsewhere in the country. Museveni's primary challenger of the past two decades has been Dr. Kizza Besigye, of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). Other parties include the United People's Congress (UPC), Obote's former party, which is popular primarily in his home region in the North, and the Democratic Party (DP), which is associated historically with the powerful Buganda Kingdom. In the next section, I provide hypotheses for the ethnic patterns we see in Ugandan elections that have traction both in the literature and in the Ugandan context.

## 3 Theory and Hypotheses

The longest-standing hypotheses on ethnic voting is that voters prefer coethnics out of ethnic pride, or for what Chandra [2004] calls the "psychic benefits" of having someone like them in office. This was the expectation of scholars in the earliest days of African democracy who predicted that elections in Africa and other diverse places would turn out to be "ethnic censuses." [Horowitz, 1985] Recently, Bratton and Kimenyi [2008] find that Kenyans who are most attached to their ethnic identity are those most likely to vote ethnically. In Uganda, ethnicity may be important in and of itself because tribal identity is historically salient. Previous rulers Milton Obote and Idi Amin encouraged attacks on tribes believed to favor other leaders (Obote repressed the Baganda, while Amin massacred two northern tribes that had supported Obote.) Though Uganda under

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<sup>4</sup>Those tribes living in the west speak similar, mutually comprehensible languages. A standardized Western language, Runyakitara, was developed in the 1990s, but is not widely used, perhaps because it is mostly unnecessary.

Museveni is indubitably more stable and ethnically tolerant, ethnic tension has manifested in the ongoing war with the Lord's Resistance Army, which among other things claims to be an Acholi nationalist movement, and in a series of deadly riots in 2009 and 2010 that resulted from perceived insults to the Buganda Kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

#### H1) Voters vote expressively, supporting coethnics out of ethnic pride.

On the other hand, it is possible that, like voters elsewhere, Ugandans vote retrospectively, supporting candidates who have performed well during their tenure. Evidence of retrospective voting has been found in countries throughout the world [Fiorina, 1987, Lohmann et al., 1997, Besley and Burgess, 2001, Kousser, 2004]. Though they each have limitations, there are also a range of studies that find evidence of retrospective voting in Africa. Ferree [2004], Ferree and Horowitz [2007], Hoffman et al. [2007], Bratton et al. [2004] and Lindberg and Morrison [2008] find that African voters, regardless of ethnicity, base their votes primarily on assessments of the candidate's performance. In a situation such as this, we could still ethnic patterns in voting if Museveni provided more to the Banyankole than to other groups. Ethnic patronage, in which the leaders' coethnics receive a disproportionate share of public resources, is a common expectation in the literature, (see Berman et al. [2004], Chabal and Daloz [1999], Horowitz [1985]) and one that is alive and well in Uganda. Scholars and journalists report that President Museveni has built his entire cabinet from his home region [Green, 2010, Habati, 2010, Musoke and Olupot, 2010] and that the Western regions "eat" more than others.[Observer, 2009, Rubongoya, 2007] Analysis of the Ugandan panel of the Afrobarometer survey results confirms that the Banyankole consider themselves to be favored, reporting themselves economically better off and politically more powerful than other groups. Controlling for urbanization, as well education and incumbent party support, Banyankole also report significantly better quality of life.[Carlson, 2008a]

#### H2) Voters vote retrospectively, supporting coethnics because these candidates have given them more.

Another possibility is that voters believe that electing a coethnic provides their best chance of receiving future goods from the government, regardless of his prior provision.<sup>6</sup> Ferree [2004] argues that ethnic voting in South Africa is primarily due to voters' belief that coethnic parties will be more responsive to their needs. Carlson [2008b] found that Ugandan voters are 20% more likely to prefer a coethnic candidate, even if he is less qualified than his opponent, when they are unemployed than when they have a secure job. Since those without jobs are dependent on government largesse, this strongly suggests that coethnicity in a candidate represents hope of future patronage. The belief that Museveni favors his own tribe would tend to reinforce this expectation, even among those who have not experienced ethnic patronage themselves.

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<sup>5</sup>The first of these riots began when Museveni blocked the movement of the Kabaka citing security concerns, the second when Museveni attempted to visit royal tombs that were burned by an arsonist.

<sup>6</sup>Even if a candidate has received nothing from a coethnic candidate thus far, he may believe that his chances of receiving future benefits from this candidate are still higher than the zero percent chance of getting such goods from a non-coethnic candidate.

H3) Voters vote prospectively, supporting coethnics because they anticipate future ethnic patronage.

Finally, it is possible that ethnic voting is not an individual choice, but a response to social pressure. To the extent that bloc voting can increase the influence of members of the bloc, voters, particularly those living in ethnically homogeneous areas, are likely to face pressure to coordinate on a coethnic candidate. Tukahebwa [2003] claims that the extraordinary support that Museveni wins in the Rukungiri district, despite few resources being channeled there, has been due to the efforts of a local group to enforce voting for “their” candidate Museveni.<sup>7</sup>

H4) Coethnics vote socially, voting ethnically due to pressure to vote with their ethnic bloc.

## 4 Methods

I approach the question of voter motivation question using a voting simulation experiment. Despite the necessarily artificial framework of experimentation, it is the best method for the Ugandan context. If we were to rely on election returns we would encounter a number of intractable obstacles. First, there is a degrees of freedom problem. The only public office for which most voters would encounter a candidate from another ethnic group is the office of the president. (Local officials would be expected to be from the locally dominant ethnic group.) However, there are only two major presidential candidates in Uganda – President Museveni and opposition leader Dr. Kizza Besigye. These candidates provide a sample of two – or actually a sample of one, since of the two only Museveni has a record of performance in office. Being real people, however, they also contribute myriad idiosyncratic characteristics that might lead voters to prefer one over the other. Additionally, the two candidates are similar in a very important way: they both are from the western part of the country and are of related tribes. In a model using Uganda’s real presidential candidates, those from many tribes, particularly in the East, would have no option of voting ethnically. Using an experimental approach allows me to provide a large sample of discrete candidates, with necessary variation on all explanatory variables, while reducing noise from the various immeasurable qualities of real candidates.

In the voting simulation, respondents cast votes for candidates whose characteristics - including ethnicity and performance record - were randomly assigned. After completing individual surveys of demographic and welfare indicators, respondents were placed in groups of three to five and read three pairs of candidates; in each pairing they were asked to mark and deposit a paper ballot for the candidate they would most prefer to see in office.<sup>8</sup> The candidate descriptions were short and provided five pieces of information on each candidate: tribe, education, prior office held, record while in the prior office, and a statement of platform. Candidate descriptions were intentionally limited to five dimensions for a number of reasons. First, when choices are read aloud, as these

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<sup>7</sup>There is a great deal of confusion among the Ugandan public, perhaps intentional, about the home district of the president. Rukungiri is one possibility.

<sup>8</sup>To allow illiterate respondents to write a ballot, ballots were pre-printed with a square and circle; respondents were told to tick the square if they preferred the first candidate or to tick the circle if they preferred the second. Only one respondent was unfamiliar with ballots and had to be shown how to tick her choice.

were, there is a limit to how much information people can retain about each choice. [Haab and McConnell, 2003] Finally, actual Ugandan campaign fliers, printed on quarter-sheets, contain a similar amount of information.

In the candidate descriptions, tribe was not mentioned directly, but was proxied by indicating where the respondent was from. Every major tribe in Uganda is readily associated with a particular hometown.<sup>9</sup> Proxying in this way provides the respondents with tribal information without mentioning tribe directly - a condition that would likely to cause respondents to consciously avoid appearing “tribalistic” and therefore unsophisticated. The education dimension included a master’s degree in one of three social sciences or a bachelor’s degree<sup>10</sup> in an unrelated field such as Horticulture or Tourism. Candidates’ prior “office” could include being a businessman, as well as various local elected positions. Candidates who had held public office could have paved a road, created jobs, or brought in a new clinic. Those who had held no prior elected office were not given a record. Additionally, approximately 35% the candidates who had held public office were also given no record, simply by omitting any reference to performance.<sup>11</sup> Platforms included a promise to create jobs, improve health care, or improve free education.

#### Figure 1: Example Candidate Pairing for Voting Simulation Experiment

Candidate One. The candidate is from Hoima. He has a Master’s Degree in African Development. Before running for office he was a businessman. If elected president he promises to improve government health care.

Candidate Two. The candidate is from Busia. He has a university degree in Tourism. Before running for office he was a Member of Parliament. While he was a Member of Parliament he paved the community’s major road. If elected president he promises to create new jobs.

The experiment tests whether Ugandans vote retrospectively: if so, the candidate’s record of service provision should more strongly predict vote than any other characteristic, including ethnicity. Conversely, if voters rely on ethnic cues, candidates should always win the votes of their coethnics, regardless of their other qualities.

The voting simulation experiment has an additional purpose: variations in the conditions under which the simulation occurs allow us to analyze the impact of social pressure on voter preferences. The simulation varied in two ways among respondents. First, the voting groups varied in their ethnic homogeneity, reflecting the ethnic composition of the surrounding community. Groups from homogeneous areas were necessarily homogeneous; those from diverse areas varied in their composition. While waiting to vote with their group, group members mingled and decided on

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<sup>9</sup>Candidates in the experiment could have been from any of the 30 most populous tribes. The draws were weighted so that 40- 50% of the candidates presented to a particular voting group were from the areas’ dominant tribe(s)

<sup>10</sup>All presidential candidates are constitutionally required to have at least a bachelor’s degree

<sup>11</sup>Though candidates were paired randomly, at least one candidate in the first pairing was given a record, so that the lack of a record would be meaningful in comparison.

the language in which they wanted the voting simulation to be conducted; this allowed group members to become familiar with the ethnicities of others in the group.<sup>12</sup> In the second variation, respondents either marked only a “secret” ballot identified by a code written inconspicuously on the back, or were told to cast their ballot and then state aloud to the group how they had voted. If social pressure drives ethnic voting, we should expect to see ethnicity become more predictive of vote when respondents are grouped with coethnics and asked to vote aloud - a coethnic candidate presented to a homogeneous group should serve as an obvious target for coordination, and public voting should provide opportunity for the group to enforce this coordination.

## 4.1 Sample

The sample for the project was 801 respondents from across 32 villages in Central, Eastern, and Western Uganda; approximately 30 respondents were recruited at each site, but attrition varied. The village sites are a sub-sample of the villages sampled in the 2004/2005 Uganda National Household Survey. The sample sites were chosen at random from the master sample list, with a few caveats. First, since we believe ethnic diversity may be relevant to the importance of ethnicity to voting, I stratified the sample based on the ethnic diversity calculated from the 2001 census, with the intention of sampling homogeneous and diverse populations in both urban and rural areas; this resulted in some oversampling of ethnically diverse rural areas, which are uncommon. Second, I was only able to visit sites that could be reached by public transportation. Because of transportation problems, as well as lingering security concerns, I did not visit the north of the country. Due to these restrictions, the sample was less northern and more “accessible” than the country as a whole.<sup>13</sup> Because my methods are experimental, and the treatments randomized within the sample, these imbalances do not threaten the validity of my conclusions as they would in a descriptive study. Additionally, we do not have *a priori* assumptions that there are systematic effects from the underrepresented groups that are not captured in the existing variation in the sample.<sup>14</sup> However, it must be kept in mind that the findings may not be applicable to the entire population of Ugandan voters.

At the sample sites, households were chosen using a geographic sampling method in which enumerators started at a central location and walked in different directions, stopping at every fifth house. Once at the household, the enumerator asked for an individual of a pre-determined gender and age-bracket. This method was chosen, rather than randomly selecting names from the village roster, because it protects anonymity. Selected respondents were asked to provide basic demographic information, including tribe, and told to report to a central location the next day to participate in the longer survey and voting experiment.

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<sup>12</sup>In some particularly diverse urban areas, the voting simulation was read in multiple languages.

<sup>13</sup>In the eastern part of the country, where road networks are under-developed, this also means that the eastern sample is more urban than the region as a whole.

<sup>14</sup>Certainly, northern areas –and presumably inaccessible areas as well– are generally poorer than areas in the sample. Northerners are also the least likely to support Museveni. However, it is unclear whether these factors would change voters’ priorities in a general sense. We are able to test this to some extent: because of migration, there are members of northern tribes in the sample. A “northern tribe” dummy added to relevant models below does not take on significance or change the outcome of the models.

In keeping with the demographics of Uganda, the villages in the sample were primarily rural; only six out of 32 sites were located in urban centers. A solid majority of respondents in the sample (63%) work as subsistence farmers and/or small-scale vendors in the informal economy. Sixteen percent of respondents work for the government, primarily as teachers; the remainder (18%) have permanent jobs in the private sector. The typical respondent completed most of primary school, lives in a mud house with an iron-sheet roof, and eats two meals a day. Most respondents report that their household owns a radio (77%), a mobile phone (60%), and either a bicycle or motorbike (56%). The vast majority of those who voted (78%) claimed that they vote for Museveni. Though is this certainly something of an overestimation (respondents have an incentive to claim they support the ruling party), the sample sites *are* predominantly located in areas that supported Museveni in 2006. This partly reflects the fact that 70% of the districts in the country support Museveni. It also reflects the fact that many of the areas that don't support Museveni are also the most difficult to access and were therefore excluded from the sample. Table 1 provided summary statistics by region and by treatment.

Table 1: Sample Means, by Region and Treatment

|                        | Gender | Age   | Yrs Education | Urban | Voted 06 |
|------------------------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|----------|
| Western region         | 0.52   | 37.81 | 5.79          | 0.15  | 0.86     |
| Central region         | 0.56   | 36.86 | 6.59          | 0.10  | 0.76     |
| Eastern region         | 0.56   | 37.60 | 7.06          | 0.38  | 0.83     |
| Presented coethnic     | 0.54   | 37.03 | 6.24          | 0.18  | 0.81     |
| Not presented coethnic | 0.53   | 37.44 | 6.49          | 0.22  | 0.83     |
| Full sample            | 0.54   | 37.48 | 6.34          | 0.19  | 0.82     |

## 5 Findings

My findings, in their simplest specification, confirm earlier studies on African voting and support the hypothesis that voting, even in ethnically diverse societies, is for the most part retrospective. I use a conditional logit model to determine the impact of each candidate characteristic on the candidate's chance of winning his contest. Conditional logit models are used to predict the probability that a respondent will choose one alternative out of a set of discrete alternatives; in this case, I use it to predict the probability that a candidate won his contest. Because each respondent voted in multiple contests, and a respondent's choices are likely to be correlated with one another, I cluster the standard errors by respondent. Table 2 presents these findings. As in earlier studies, performance variables - record and office held - predict candidate success more strongly than ethnicity. Predicted values from the logit, holding all other variables at their means, indicate that a coethnic candidate is 6% more likely to win than an identical non-coethnic candidate. A candidate with a record of provision, however, is 10% more likely to win than an identical candidate without such a

record. Similarly, a candidate who has held prior elected office, regardless of record, is 10% more likely to win than a candidate who was previously a businessman.<sup>15</sup>

Table 2: Determinants of Candidate Selection - Full Sample

| Variable                    | Coefficient<br>(Std. Err.) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cand. is coethnic           | 0.299**<br>(0.090)         |
| Cand. has record            | 0.515**<br>(0.130)         |
| Cand. held prior office     | 0.494**<br>(0.159)         |
| Cand. holds relevant degree | 0.140<br>(0.114)           |
| Cand. promising education   | 0.358**<br>(0.113)         |
| <hr/>                       |                            |
| N                           | 4524                       |
| Log-likelihood              | -2402.318                  |
| $\chi^2_{(5)}$              | 67.789                     |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Conditional logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent.

DV takes value one if candidate won his contest; zero otherwise.

N represents number of candidates, not number of contests.

These findings indicate that while both coethnicity and performance convey an advantage to a candidate, performance is more important. Prior office and a positive record trump ethnicity. These findings confirm H2, which predicts that voters will vote on performance. The good news of this finding is that it implies that voters, even those who vote ethnically, are holding their elites accountable for performance rather than relying solely on ethnic cues. The finding, however, is not robust. When the sample is separated into those voted in a secret ballot and those who voted aloud, we find that social pressure appears to be driving much of the impact of candidate performance in determining vote. Those who cast secret – and presumably more genuine – ballots are willing to choose a coethnic rather than a candidate with strong performance.

<sup>15</sup>Unlike in other countries, there is no particular tribe associated with business. Rather, the term is a general one for an entrepreneur – anyone who is not a farmer, but who does not work for pay for anyone else.

## 5.1 Social Voting

The findings just discussed, which indicate that retrospection is a stronger predictor of vote than ethnicity, are based on the full sample of respondents, which includes the votes of those who voted silently on secret ballots as well as those (approximately 27% of the sample) who reported their vote aloud after casting a ballot. Hypothesis 4 predicts that ethnic voting is encouraged by social pressure to coordinate on a coethnic candidate. If H4 is correct, and ethnic voting is encouraged by social pressure, we should find that ethnicity is most important to those who vote aloud. Retrospection, on the other hand, should become even more important relative to ethnicity when the sample is limited to those who voted in secret ballots. This would lead to the conclusion that voters' true preference is for retrospection.

Instead we find the opposite: those who voted aloud are *less* likely to elect a coethnic. When the sample is limited to those cast their votes aloud, coethnicity loses its significance in predicting votes. On the other hand, the coefficient on record almost triples (from 0.29 to 0.81), and the candidate's education suddenly becomes a significant predictor of vote. (Table 3) We might expect that the willingness to vote for a coethnic candidate when voting aloud would depend on whether those watching were from one's own group or another group. However, those presented a coethnic in a completely homogeneous group are still unwilling to vote for him. Instead, a candidate presented to a group who all share his tribe is significantly less likely to win his round.<sup>16</sup> (Table 7, later in the paper, demonstrates these findings.)

When we limit the sample to only those votes cast in secret, on the other hand, the coefficient on ethnicity increases in importance relative to the full sample, while the relative importance of record decreases. The two impacts are now equal: both coethnicity and a positive record increase a candidate's chance of winning by 8-9% (Table 4) As before, the uniformity of the group has a significant negative impact on ethnic voting. (See Table 7) This strongly suggests that those who were asked to vote aloud were self-censoring and intentionally avoiding the appearance of ethnic voting. Those who have to present their vote in front of others would have an incentive to act as if ethnicity were not important to them.<sup>17</sup> Those who vote in secret, on the other hand, are free to express their preference for a coethnic. If we believe that the votes on secret ballots are more representative of voters' true preferences, then this finding indicates that being a non-coethnic candidate harms a candidate as much as not having a record, or almost as much as never having held office at all: ethnicity *can* replace performance. The finding also calls into question the findings of studies that require respondents to report their vote aloud to an enumerator. Though these studies find that performance is more important than ethnicity, it is likely that respondents are simply unwilling to indicate to someone else how important ethnicity is to them.

The findings of the social pressure experiment have two implications. First, social pressure

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<sup>16</sup>This is a surprising finding, but might be explained by the increased ability of coethnics to sanction one another via tight social networks. If ethnic voting is considered socially undesirable, respondents may be more concerned about making such a *faux pas* in front of their coethnics than those outside their ethnic group. See Habyarimana et al. [2007] and Miguel and Gugerty [2005] for evidence that in-group sanctioning is far more effective cross-group sanctioning.

<sup>17</sup>Consider the opinion of ethnic voting in the following 2009 headline: [Trade Minister] Otafiire Fires Salvo on Tribalism, Calls its Perpetrators 'Stupid'. [Okumu and Amuro, 2009] Similarly, the President has claimed that tribalism is "backwards"[Jaramogi, 2008] and a recent editorial claims it is something to shed (along with immorality and reckless driving) for a new beginning in the new year.[Vision, 2010]

Table 3: Determinants of Candidate Selection - Votes Cast Aloud

| Variable                    | Coefficient<br>(Std. Err.) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cand. is coethnic           | 0.108<br>(0.171)           |
| Cand. has record            | 0.808**<br>(0.260)         |
| Cand. held prior office     | 0.483†<br>(0.291)          |
| Cand. holds relevant degree | 0.516*<br>(0.228)          |
| Cand. promising education   | 0.629**<br>(0.213)         |
| <hr/>                       |                            |
| N                           | 1246                       |
| Log-likelihood              | -630.169                   |
| $\chi^2_{(5)}$              | 34.016                     |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Conditional logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent.

DV takes value one if candidate won his contest; zero otherwise.

N represents number of candidates, not number of contests.

Table 4: Determinants of Candidate Selection - Votes Cast Secretly

| <b>Variable</b>             | <b>Coefficient</b><br>(Std. Err.) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cand. is coethnic           | 0.386**<br>(0.105)                |
| Cand. has record            | 0.403**<br>(0.148)                |
| Cand. held prior office     | 0.450*<br>(0.185)                 |
| Cand. holds relevant degree | -0.015<br>(0.131)                 |
| Cand. promising education   | 0.242†<br>(0.130)                 |
| <hr/>                       |                                   |
| N                           | 3278                              |
| Log-likelihood              | -1731.815                         |
| $\chi^2_{(5)}$              | 40.078                            |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Conditional logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent.

DV takes value one if candidate won his contest; zero otherwise.

N represents number of candidates, not number of contests.

does not appear to drive ethnic voting, as was predicted in H4.<sup>18</sup> Rather, when exposed to increased social monitoring, respondents become far less likely to choose a coethnic candidate. Additionally, we must revise our earlier statements on the relative importance of ethnicity and retrospection. When in the secrecy of the voting booth, it appears that ethnicity is as important to Ugandan voters as record or prior office held. The question, then, is why? We have two hypotheses remaining. H1 predicts that ethnic voting works as cross purposes to retrospection, replacing utility that could otherwise be gained by performance. Hypothesis 3 predicts that coethnicity implies performance, serving as a proxy for improved future service delivery, regardless of prior provision.

## 5.2 The Origin of Ethnic Voting

The data from the voting simulation experiment provide evidence that ethnicity matters to voters, particularly when they are free from observation and can vote more genuinely. The implications of this finding, however, are different depending on the reasons why voters vote this way. From a normative perspective, we should be more concerned if ethnicity itself provides sufficient utility to voters that they do not require their coethnic elites to provide anything else. If voters use ethnicity as a proxy for development goods, however, then elites may be required to provide these goods, particularly over the long run, in order to retain their advantage among their coethnics.

The following analysis involves only those who voted in secret ballots, as ethnicity is not a determinant in the votes of those who voted aloud. The findings imply that voters vote ethnically because they expect more future goods from coethnic candidates. First, and most strikingly, the effect of coethnicity can be eliminated by controlling for an interaction between coethnicity and record. The interaction between record and coethnicity is strongly significant, while neither coethnicity or record retain their own significance. (Table 5) What this means is that neither coethnicity nor record has a strong impact on its own: each matters only in light of the other. Table 6 provides a candidate's probability of winning his election given his record and ethnicity, when other characteristics are set to their mean. It shows that record has a much greater impact when the candidate is coethnic; similarly, coethnicity has a greater impact on the probability of winning when the candidate has a record. Coethnicity matters when there is reason to think that it will be accompanied by provision of goods (as evidenced by an existing record of goods provision.) Record matters only when the candidate is coethnic – this is strong evidence that voters expect a candidate to channel goods in the direction of his own tribe.

We can get additional traction on the reasons for ethnic voting by investigating *who* votes ethnically. Table 7 presents a model testing the impacts of characteristics that are thought to influence the likelihood of ethnic voting. The dependent variable is an interaction term indicating that the candidate is a coethnic who won a contest in which the other candidate was a non-coethnic; in other words, it indicates that the respondent selected a coethnic candidate over a non-coethnic one. Included among the independent variables the dummy for a uniform voting group, used in the social voting experiment described above. Additionally, I control for the non-ethnic attributes of

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<sup>18</sup>This does not mean that social pressure does not impact voting in a more general way; a fair percentage of the sample reported feeling intimidated or threatened during voting. However, this pressure generally pushes voters toward Museveni specifically, not a coethnic candidate *per se*

Table 5: Determinants of Candidate Selection - Including Interaction

| Variable                    | Coefficient<br>(Std. Err.) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cand. is coethnic           | -0.002<br>(0.151)          |
| Cand. has record            | 0.100<br>(0.168)           |
| Cand. held prior office     | 0.442*<br>(0.185)          |
| Cand. holds relevant degree | -0.007<br>(0.130)          |
| Cand. promising education   | 0.252†<br>(0.131)          |
| Coethnicity*record          | 0.874**<br>(0.230)         |
| <hr/>                       |                            |
| N                           | 3278                       |
| Log-likelihood              | -1720.282                  |
| $\chi^2_{(6)}$              | 56.468                     |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Conditional logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent.

DV takes value one if candidate won his contest; zero otherwise.

N represents number of candidates, not number of contests.

Table 6: Predicted Probability of Candidate Win, Given Characteristics

|              | No record | Record |
|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Non coethnic | 0.601     | 0.601  |
| Coethnic     | 0.625     | 0.794  |

the candidate, such as record and history of prior office, as these factors are likely to increase a candidate's chance of winning, coethnic or not. Then I control for various characteristics of the respondents themselves. Urbanness, education and employment, the components of modernization, have been hypothesized to both decrease and increase the importance of ethnicity in political calculations. I also include two standard measures of ethnic attachment,<sup>19</sup> as well as indicators of the dominance of respondent's tribe and the diversity of the local community. Voters from the dominant tribe in their area<sup>20</sup> should be more likely to vote ethnically. Goods provided by elites are generally community goods (roads, water, schools, etc.); if elites intend to target goods ethnically, they do better to place these goods in communities where their own group predominates – and is not intermixed with members of other tribes. Strategic voters living outside their tribe's traditional home, or in highly heterogeneous areas, likely realize that a vote for their own coethnic will benefit the area where their tribe is concentrated rather than the area where they currently reside.

Table 7 demonstrates evidence that ethnic voting is primarily strategic - i.e. based on expectations of performance - rather than an issue of ethnic pride. We see that by far the strongest predictor of ethnic voting is whether the voter is member of the area's dominant ethnic group. Predicted values indicate that those who are from the locally dominant group are *more than four times* more likely to vote for a coethnic than those who are a minority in their area; setting all other variables at their means, a coethnic candidate has a predicted 0.06 probability of winning his round if he is presented to a respondent who is not a member of the locally dominant group. When presented to a member of the dominant group, this probability is 0.26. Those who come from diverse areas are also significantly less likely to vote ethnically, controlling for the diversity of the voting group itself. This may be a reflection of social conditions: those who live in diverse areas have more exposure to members of other groups and may be more tolerant of them. (This hypothesis is borne out in the fact that community diversity is correlated to willingness to marry outside one's tribe at the 0.000 level of significance. Controlling for residence in an urban area, those in homogeneous areas have a 59% chance of being willing to marry outside their tribe, while those in the most diverse site in the sample have an 89% chance of saying the same.) However, the importance of community diversity is also consistent with a strategic story in which voters realize that a diverse area will not be the first target for ethnic patronage – a finding in keeping with the very strong impact of local ethnic dominance on the propensity for ethnic voting.

This is not to claim that there is no element of ethnic pride in ethnic voting. One of the measures of ethnic attachment - the willingness to marry someone of another tribe - is negatively correlated with ethnic voting at 0.005 level of significance. Not surprisingly, this means that someone who is only willing to marry someone of their own tribe is also more likely to elect someone of their tribe. However, it is possible that both election and marital choices are at least somewhat strategic. In Uganda, marriage implies both a personal and financial relationship: bride price – in the form of cattle, property or cash – is frequently paid by the groom to the bride's family. The Banyankole

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<sup>19</sup>Specifically, we ask, "Would you marry someone who was not [tribe]?" and "If you had to choose between being a [tribe] and being a Ugandan, which would you choose?" These questions were the last on the survey, asked after the voting simulation was completed, to avoid priming ethnicity before the voting experiment.

<sup>20</sup>A tribe is classified as "dominant" if it is the largest group in the area and above 40% of the local population; usually the tribe is also understood to be "from" the area. In one sample site, there are two dominant tribes with equal populations.

Table 7: Determinants of Ethnic Voting

| Variable                        | Coefficient<br>(Std. Err.) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Homogeneous voting group        | -0.369*<br>(0.152)         |
| Cand. has a record              | 0.253†<br>(0.143)          |
| Cand. held prior office         | 0.004<br>(0.163)           |
| Cand. promising education       | -0.010<br>(0.126)          |
| Cand. holds relevant degree     | 0.128<br>(0.119)           |
| Resp. is urban                  | 0.412**<br>(0.152)         |
| Resp. has permanent job         | -0.187<br>(0.128)          |
| Resp. level of education        | 0.008<br>(0.016)           |
| Resp. will marry outside tribe  | -0.367**<br>(0.131)        |
| Resp. prefers national identity | 0.193<br>(0.135)           |
| Resp. from dominant group       | 1.663**<br>(0.216)         |
| Community ethnic diversity      | -0.731**<br>(0.250)        |
| Intercept                       | -2.271**<br>(0.319)        |
| <hr/>                           |                            |
| N                               | 1961                       |
| Log-likelihood                  | -928.044                   |
| $\chi^2_{(12)}$                 | 100.64                     |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent

DV takes value one if coethnic candidate won contest over non-coethnic candidate

are one of the groups most likely to practice this custom and as one respondent explained, the Banyankole are particularly unwilling to marry outside their group<sup>21</sup> because they ‘don’t want to share what they have.’<sup>22</sup> Those who believe they are the recipients of ethnic patronage may be more likely to want to elect a coethnic and also not to want to dilute this wealth by marrying outside the tribe. It is therefore perhaps relevant that the second measure of ethnic attachment, whether the respondent prioritizes his national over tribal identity, is not significantly correlated with his vote.

A final, indirect but nonetheless interesting, piece of evidence is that eastern Ugandans seem to have disassociated ethnicity from politics. Neither coethnicity itself or the interaction term of coethnicity and record remains significant among respondents from the Eastern region of the country. (See Table 8.) This makes sense only if ethnic voting is about performance rather than pride. Easterners are more likely to show ethnic attachment than members of other regions.<sup>23</sup> And they are no less future-oriented than other groups: a candidate’s platform (specifically an education platform) is as important in the East as it is elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> Yet they are less likely to vote along ethnic lines. No member of an Eastern tribe has been in power, or been a serious contender for power, in recent memory. President Museveni and his main rival, Dr. Besigye, are both from the southwest of Uganda; leaders before Museveni were from the North. The recent development in the region, and the fortunes of the people who live there, has been necessarily uncorrelated with any experience with coethnics in power. It is likely that Easterners do not see ethnicity as a signal about future goods provision, because they have had no experience with ethnic favoritism.

## 6 The Prediction Experiment

The voting experiment provided evidence that voters select their coethnics because they anticipate future goods provision from coethnic candidates. With the prediction experiment, I test this directly. Following Rosenwasser and Seale [1988] and other experiments in American politics, I present each of my respondents with the same hypothetical candidate: the only difference between the candidates received by various respondents is the candidate’s ethnicity. I then ask the respondents to predict whether the candidate will accomplish a series of positive tasks if elected, including those that are general - “grow the economy” or “control corruption” - and targeted - “provide more or better jobs for people like me” or “extend more water pipes to this district”. If voters expect future favoritism from a coethnic, they should expect more targeted goods from the coethnic version of the candidate than they do from a non-coethnic one.

I find that, with the exception of Easterners, Ugandan voters do, in fact, appear to expect more targeted goods<sup>26</sup> from coethnic candidates. (As before, Easterners do not seem to be impacted by

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<sup>21</sup>Banyankole are almost 20% less willing to marry outside their tribe than are other groups, at the 0.003 level of significance

<sup>22</sup>In keeping with this hypothesis, a quick look through the personal ads in *The New Vision* will demonstrate (among other things) that men – who are the providers of bride price – are more likely to indicate the desired tribe of their mate than are women.

<sup>23</sup>Controlling for education and urbanness, Easterners show significantly stronger ethnic attachment on both indicators, significant at the 0.01 level.

<sup>24</sup>It is worth noting that in the absence of ethnic cues, platform, not record, is determining the eastern vote.

<sup>26</sup>I create a scale by summing the scores on the three targeted good options, including jobs, water pipes or new free

Table 8: Determinants of Voting - Eastern respondents only

| Variable                    | Coefficient<br>(Std. Err.) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cand. is coethnic           | 0.065<br>(0.367)           |
| Cand. has record            | 0.452<br>(0.355)           |
| Cand. held prior office     | 0.125<br>(0.352)           |
| Cand. holds relevant degree | -0.318<br>(0.253)          |
| Cand. promising education   | 0.560*<br>(0.257)          |
| Coethnicity*record          | 0.698<br>(0.533)           |
| <hr/>                       |                            |
| N                           | 794                        |
| Log-likelihood              | -413.343                   |
| $\chi^2_{(6)}$              | 17.912                     |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

Conditional logit model with standard errors clustered by respondent.

DV takes value one if candidate won his contest; zero otherwise.

N represents number of candidates, not number of contests.

Figure 2: Candidate Description for Prediction Experiment<sup>25</sup>

The candidate is from [hometown]. He has a university degree in Agriculture. Before running for president, he was an LC2 chairman. During this time in office, he brought a factory to his LC2 that employs 30 local people. He promises to improve roads throughout the country.

candidates' ethnicity; though not significant, coethnicity actually takes on a negative sign among the Eastern sample.) I control for urbanness, as those in urban areas are more likely to already have jobs, water and health units, and therefore would be less likely to predict improvements in these areas. I also control for residents of the Central Region, who, for whatever reason, are far more optimistic about the future performance of all candidates – coethnic or not – than are residents of Eastern and Western regions.

Table 9: Coethnicity and Predictions about Candidate Performance

| Variable                  | Coefficient | (Std. Err.) |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Coethnic candidate        | 0.215*      | (0.098)     |
| Urban respondent          | -0.103      | (0.146)     |
| Central region respondent | 0.460**     | (0.110)     |
| Intercept                 | 2.686**     | (0.102)     |
| <hr/>                     |             |             |
| N                         | 600         |             |
| R <sup>2</sup>            | 0.039       |             |
| F <sub>(3,23)</sub>       | 8.590       |             |

Significance levels : † : 10% \* : 5% \*\* : 1%

DV = scaled targeted goods score; range=0-3

It is important to note that this result is not coming about because voters view their coethnics in a generally better light. When asked to predict the performance of coethnics on general tasks that benefit the country as a whole, such as growing the economy, there is no difference between coethnics and non-coethnics among any group of voters. Nor are coethnics expected to be less corrupt or better at keeping their promises.<sup>27</sup> Instead, it is only targeted goods which show an ethnicity effect, making it clear that voters specifically expect patronage from coethnic leaders. This finding is in keeping with the results of the voting experiment and confirms that voters – at least those in the Western and Central region – expect more future goods from coethnics. Given this expectation, it is not surprising that voters would prefer to vote for a coethnic.

health clinics. The range on scale goes from zero - meaning the respondents feels he would do none of the tasks - to three - meaning the respondents predicts he would do all of them.

<sup>27</sup>This is a direct challenge to the literature that claims that in new democracies, ethnic politics are common because coethnicity conveys greater credibility on candidates. See Fearon [1999]

## 7 Conclusion

Using a voting simulation experiment in Uganda, I challenge previous findings that performance is more important to African voters than ethnicity. When we analyze only those respondents who report their vote in secret, rather than to an enumerator, ethnicity becomes more substantively and statistically significant than previously estimated. However, voters do not view ethnicity as a *substitute* for performance, but rather as a proxy. Evidence from the voting simulation and direct test of voters' predictions about future goods reveals that voters expect targeted goods from coethnic candidates. The normative implications of these findings are mixed. On the one hand, they indicate that expectations of future performance, as independent from *actual* performance, are contributing strongly to voting. On the other, it appears that these expectations may be based on actual patterns of provision: coethnicity does not provide much advantage to a candidate who does not also have a prior record, and Easterners seem to have never learned (or unlearned) to associate ethnicity with development. Over the long run, it seems that coethnicity may not convey an advantage on a candidate unless it also conveys an advantage on voters.

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