Experimental Tests of Duverger's Law in the Context of Salient Ethnic Divisions

Pre-Analysis Plan

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A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

One of the most consequential decisions countries make as they embark on holding democratic elections for the first time is the selection of an electoral system. A well-established body of literature in political science offers substantial theoretical guidance on the likely consequences of different institutional choices. Broadly speaking, political science identifies two general types of electoral systems: majoritarian systems, which feature "first past the post" or single member plurality (SMP) rules; and proportional systems, which utilize proportional representation. Since the influential early work of Maurice Duverger (1952, 1963), the standard wisdom on electoral system design is that majoritarian systems tend to induce coordination around a few large parties capable of capturing majorities, whereas proportional systems encourage larger number of parties to win office, enabling or requiring coalition governments. These expectations, known as Duverger's Law, represent one of the strongest theoretical predictions in political science.

While Duverger's Law is well established in theory and matches empirical patterns observed in countries around the world, a growing literature documents substantial anomalies to its theoretical predictions, especially in newer and ethnically divided democracies (Ferree, Powell, and Scheiner 2014). African countries, which tend to fall in both categories, frequently defy Duverger's logic. Pre 2017, Kenya represented a spectacular case of this. Its legislative elections operate according to SMP rules, which should constrain the party system and concentrate support in a few large parties. However, twenty parties won seats in the 2013 parliamentary elections, the largest capturing only 28 percent of the vote. Even at the district level, party systems tend to be large and fractionalized. The 2013 election was not at all unique in Kenya and not uncommon in Africa. Since 2013, the party system appears to have stabilized a bit, with Jubilee and ODM persisting to once again be the main competitors in the 2017 election, but it is too early to say whether this truly represents the onset of stable two party democracy in Kenya.

The party system in turn has a large impact on how the Kenyan political system operates: by design, Kenya should have two main parties. Instead it has a large and volatile party system that necessitates frequent coalitions. This pattern marks both national and district level election results and has persisted over five sets of elections.

The widespread incidence of cases like Kenya that contradict Duverger raises important questions and why and when the theoretical logic underlying Duverger breaks down. Duverger's Law is based on several assumptions about voting behavior: 1) voters cannot be indifferent between the first and second place party; 2) there can be no Condorcet winner; 3) voters must be short-term instrumentally rational; and 4) the ranking of the candidates must be common knowledge. When these assumptions hold, voters vote "strategically": they abandon parties that are unlikely to win, inducing coordination around a few large parties.

Ferree, Powell, and Scheiner (2014) articulate several mechanisms through which salient ethnic divisions could induce violations of these assumptions and prevent strategic defection. When ethnicity is salient, voters may be indifferent between first- and second-ranked parties not representing their own group (violating the first condition). Ethnic voters may also not be short term instrumentally rational if, for example, they care more about expressing their allegiance to their ethnic group than influencing the outcome of the election (violating the second condition). Horowitz and Long identify another option, which is that voters do not update information on viability for co-ethnics. In the face of information that the coethnic is non viable, they dismiss or rationalize it. In any of these scenarios, voters might fail to abandon a likely loser, sticking with

parties that have no realistic chance of capturing office, inducing violations of Duverger's Law and creating anomalously large party systems. For the Horowitz and Long option, we might expect voters to respond less sharply to information about viability on co-ethnics versus non co-ethnics.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To date, empirical tests of Duverger have focused on broad patterns and have not tested specific causal mechanisms that might explain breakdowns in the Duvergerian logic. This project will examine how co-ethnicity between a voter and candidate affects the propensity of voters to defect from likely electoral losers. Duverger's Law assumes this kind of strategic behavior, but, as noted above, there are good reasons to expect salient ethnic divisions to interfere with it. In a controlled setting like a survey or lab, co-ethnicity between voter and candidate can be manipulated, as can the probability of electoral success. The most simple 3x2 factorial design would vary co-ethnicity of candidate using surname and provide no information about the electability of that candidate or varying information (from low electability to high electability).

Kenya presents an ideal starting place for the experimental component of the project as its large party system defies the logic of Duverger and ethnicity is highly salient.

C. DESIGN

Survey in Nairobi

The survey and experiment will be conducted in Nairobi, with a sample size of approximately 2400. Restricting the sample to Nairobi greatly reduces the costs. More importantly, Nairobi presents a good political environment to test the theory because, unlike many areas of Kenya, it is ethnically diverse, with no majority group, so candidates from many ethnic groups are electorally viable. In this way, Nairobi is a microcosm of the country as a whole in terms of ethnic demographics. Nairobi also contains within its neighborhoods significant political and socioeconomic variation, making it possible to sample across many different subgroups of the Kenyan population. A drawback is that the sample will be exclusively urban. Given financial constraints, this seems like a reasonable trade-off for an initial study.

The survey consists of approximately 50 questions related to political opinions and behavior as well as a standard battery of demographic questions. It will also implement the survey experiment (described below). The survey experiment comes approximately 1/3 of the way through the survey.

The survey will be conducted door-to-door by a field team of enumerators. Door-to-door surveys are more expensive but are superior to phone surveys for two reasons: 1) in developing countries where not all adults have phones, phone surveys restrict the sample in undesirable ways; 2) respondents may more attention to experimental treatments when delivered in person rather than over a phone.

Survey Experiment

The survey experiment will focus on **county governments and governors.** While the presidential level might ultimately be more politically important, county governments offer some advantages. First, presidential politics and elections have become increasingly fraught affairs, with the 2017 election being annulled by the Supreme Court and the second round boycotted by

the main opposition party. While the experiment deals with a hypothetical, an experiment on a presidential candidate may be very sensitive right now. County elections have drama, but not as much. Second, presidential elections have some complications that make it difficult to keep the experimental design both simple and realistic. Most presidential elections feature parties and coalitions between parties, and these coalitions shift between elections. A survey experiment would either have to address this complexity head on or ignore it. Neither option is great. County elections do not have these coalitional dynamics, making them cleaner. Furthermore, Kenya's presidential elections are majoritarian two round. A second round has never occurred and voters may not factor this into their strategic thinking, but at least theoretically, it could complicate their decision-making. County elections do not have this issue.

Script of Strategic Voting Experiment

I would next like you to imagine a future election for **Governor for Nairobi County.** This is a situation that has not actually happened, but one that could happen in the future.

One of the candidates in this election is Mr. [name randomized to match or not match the respondent's ethnicity].

Mr. [name] previously served as Member of Parliament in a Nairobi constituency for two terms. When MP, he used his constituency development funds to improve roads and schools in his constituency. He promises to do the same for all parts of Nairobi if elected governor.

20. In your opinion how likely is it that Mr. [name] would be an effective governor for Nairobi?: very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or not likely?/*Je, kwa maoni yako, unawezekano wako wa kumpigia kura mtu kama huyu ni…….*

1. Very Likely /*Uwezekano mkubwa*
2. Somewhat Likely /*Uwezekano mdogo*
3. Somewhat Unlikely /*Kunaweza kuwa hakuna uwezekano*
4. Not Likely /*Hakuna uwezekano kabisa*
5. Don't Know RTA

[Randomize: 1/3 do *not* get any version of the following script, and move straight to questions; 1/3 get script with "popular with voters" treatment; 1/3 get script with "unpopular with voters treatment".

Now imagine that TV news and other media are reporting that Mr. [name] is [not] very popular with voters. His speeches and rallies draw large [small] crowds. They predict he will get many more [fewer] votes than other candidates in the race.

[Randomize order of 21 and 22. 21 is first half the time, 22 is first the other half]

21. How likely do you think it is that Mr. [name] will win the election?

6. Very Likely /*Uwezekano mkubwa*
7. Somewhat Likely /*Uwezekano mdogo*
8. Somewhat Unlikely /*Kunaweza kuwa hakuna uwezekano*
9. Not Likely /*Hakuna uwezekano kabisa*
10. Don't Know RTA

22. In your opinion how likely would you be to vote for Mr. [name]: very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or not likely?/*Je, kwa maoni yako, unawezekano wako wa kumpigia kura mtu kama huyu ni……*

11. Very Likely /*Uwezekano mkubwa*
12. Somewhat Likely /*Uwezekano mdogo*
13. Somewhat Unlikely /*Kunaweza kuwa hakuna uwezekano*
14. Not Likely /*Hakuna uwezekano kabisa*
15. Don't Know RTA

23. If you had to guess, which party do you think Mr. [name] represents? [pull down menu]

24a. Do you think that Mr. [name] is a member of your ethnic group, the [fill in].

1. yes [go to 25]
2. no [go to 24.b]
3. Do not know (do not read)
4. RTA (do not read)

24.b If you had to guess, to which ethnic group does Mr. [name] belong? [pull down menu]

Ethnicity randomization

Each respondent will have .5 probability of getting a co-ethnic, and .5 probability of getting a random selection from all members of this set {Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kamba, Kisii, Kalenjin, and Meru} that are *not* co-ethinic.

The ethnic names were based on analysis by Jeremy Horowitz of the top ~75 names in the voter rolls of ethnically homogeneous constituencies. (Thus, the Kikuyu names are the top names in a Kikuyu dominant constituency). In all cases, one of the top ten (and usually the first name) on the list was used. I also consulted with IPSOS field staff to make sure the names made sense and were not associated with any celebrities or major politicians. In focus groups the names were easily and correctly identified by participants. The survey contains a treatment check on ethnicity. The names used are:

Kalenjin: Cheruiyot
Kikuyu: Njoroge
Luo: Onyango

Kamba: Wambua
Kisii: Momanyi
Luhya: Wafula
Meru: Mugambi

Justifications

Why MP. There are 17 MP constituencies in Nairobi. All of them are ethnically diverse, so it is plausible that an MP might come from any ethnic group. Also, there are many one and two term MPs out there, and moving from MP to governor is a plausible career path. The main criteria for evaluating MPs is how well they used their CDFs, which is built into the experiment, but not specified. It is plausible that such an MP would be elected but also plausible that he would not.

Why not randomize party? Will voters not make inferences about party from ethnicity? Is this a confound? Yes, voters may make inferences about party from ethnicity, which is why one of the follow-ups asks about this. Ethnicity should be particularly predictive of party for Luo (ODM) and Kikuyu (Jubilee) candidates, as party and ethnicity are tightly tied together for these groups. For Kalenjin, they should align strongly with Jubilee, and may act like a Kikuyu in response to Kikuyu ethnicity if party is really the driver. For the other ethnic groups, it is less clear what they would infer about party based on ethnicity; the follow-up party question will help tease this apart.

The main alternative is to randomize the party label. While in theory this would allow us to tease apart party and ethnicity, it would do so by generating non-sensical candidates, especially for Luos/Kikuyus, probably also for Kalenjin. A Luo Jubilee or Kikuyu ODM candidate is likely to trigger disbelief in respondents and may poison the rest of what we are trying to accomplish. Randomizing party would also add more complexity to the experiment and strain power. For all of these reasons, it seems like a poor choice.

The third option is to just fix party label (everyone is from Jubilee). While this would not affect power, it generates the same problem with non-sensical candidates.

While not specifying party means that the treatment is a compound of party/ethnicity for some candidates, especially Luo and Kikuyu, it avoids the other problems and seems like the lesser of two evils. Analysis can be restricted to Kisii, Luhya, Kamba, and Meru candidates as a robustness check.

Expectations

H1: Co-ethnic bias: respondents will expect more effectiveness from co-ethnics.

H2: Information updating: "popular with voters" treatment will increase beliefs about p[winning] versus no information; "unpopular with voters" treatment will decrease beliefs about p[winning] versus no information.

H3: Disrputed information updating: respondent beliefs about viability and p[winning] will respond less to "unpopular with voters" informational treatment when it pertains to a co-ethnic. Voters rationalize away or ignore information that suggests their co-ethnic will lose. (Horowitz/Long hypothesis). Note, a null result here could arise one of two ways:

a. Ethnicity really has no effect on information updating
b. The survey experimental prime does not induce the sort of rationalizing of information that occurs in the real world. Respondents take the information at face value and adjust their probabilities in a way that they would not in a real election. Focus groups prior to fielding suggest that people do respond in a variety of ways about news media reports, finding them less credible especially when they report bad things on their candidate of choice. So some degree of rationalizing, even to a survey prompt, seems possible.

H4: Strategic voting: "unpopular with voters" treatment will decrease p[voting for candidate] versus no information. The "popular with voters" treatment should increase p[voting for candidate] versus no information. So the probability of voting should follow this order: unpopular with voters, no information, popular with voters.

H5: Disrupted strategic voting: co-ethnicity will attenuate H4. If information updating is null, but this effect emerges, it suggests that the mechanism underlying the voting is not about information, but perhaps identity voting/loyalty or indifference to non-ethnic alternatives.

H6: Ethnic voting: respondents will prefer co-ethnics.

H7: Rural ties heterogeneous treatment effect: H1/H3/H5/H6 will be most pronounced in respondents with deeper ties to rural areas and more recent migration to Nairobi. Per modernization theory, stronger rural ties may imply stronger ethnic identification. Stronger rural ties may also imply less familiarity with Nairobi politics and less ability to engage in strategic behavior. Rural heterogeneous treatment effects will also be analyzed for observational data in the survey, specifically voting for co-ethnic candidates at presidential, county, and MP levels. The expectation is also that ethnic voting will be highest for rural identified voters.

H8: Ethnic salience heterogeneous treatment effect: H1/H3/H5/H6 will be most pronounced in respondents who identify more strongly with their ethnic group.

H9: Ethnicity as a cue for party: Voters will associate Kikuyu names with Jubilee; Luo names with ODM.

H10: Trust heterogeneous treatment effect: H2 and H4 will be stronger in voters who trust the media.

H11: Information heterogeneous treatment effect: H2 and H4 will be stronger in voters who are better informed/consume more media/talk with neighbors about politics. [Although less informed voters usually respond more to informational treatments, in this case the information is about a hypothetical candidate, so all respondents start with zero information. More informed respondents may be more accustomed to hearing and processing information about viability.]

H12: Education heterogeneous treatment effect: H2 and H4 will be stronger in voters with more education. Better educated voters may be better able to understand and process information about viability. Duverger assumes a degree of cognitive capacity.

H13: Ethnic group size as a signal for electability. For the respondents who do not get an electability treatment, beliefs about the electability of the candidate should correlate with the size of the candidate's ethnic group. Generally, Kikuyu should be seen as the most electable, followed by Lhuya, Luo, Kamba, Kisii, and Kalenjin.

H14: Viability prime. Viability information will have a larger impact on vote choice when it has been primed via question order (when Q22 precedes Q23).

H15: Sincere and Strategic voters. Strategic voters (those who think it is most important to vote for a candidate with a chance of winning, even if he/she is not your favorite) should respond more to the information prime than sincere voters (those who think it is most important to vote for the candidate you like the most, even if he is not likely to win).

Observational Hypotheses

H16: Urbanization. Rural ties (measured through battery of questions about connections to rural areas) should be weaker for people who have been in the city longer (and who have parents who lived in the city). Neighborhood or church ties should be stronger for these people.

H17: Ethnic identification and co-ethnic marriage should be lower for people with lower rural ties and people who have lived less of their life in the Nairobi.

H18: Participating in a multi-ethnic church (one with more than one main ethnic group, with languages mainly in Swahili or English) or living in a multi-ethnic neighborhood should correlate with lower ethnic identification. (Note: hypothesis is not causal). This correlation should be strongest amongst those who say people in their church/neighborhood look out for each other and that they feel close to people in their church/neighborhood.