MORE THAN ETHNICITY?
PARTY ALIGNMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract:

It appears to be conventional wisdom that ethnicity is the main determinant of voting behavior and party alignment in sub-Saharan Africa, even though empirical evidence for this claim remains limited. Drawing on data from representative survey polls in eight sub-Saharan countries – specifically conducted to study political parties – a logistical regression analysis of 23 political parties from these countries reveals that ethnicity is not the only and not even the dominant factor explaining voting behavior in the countries under consideration. Overall, there are other social factors besides ethnicity, particularly regional residence and education, and evaluative and attitudinal factors that explain voting behavior to the same or an even greater degree. There is no overall pattern across the 23 political parties or across the eight countries involved in the analysis. The relevance of ethnicity varies across countries and differs from party to party, even within one country. All in all, regional residence and the rational dimensions of evaluative and attitudinal voting independent of social structural factors have largely been underestimated and deserve particular attention in future research.

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1. **Introduction**[1]

Systematic research on voting behavior and political party alignment[2] in Africa's young multiparty regimes – whether democratic or hybrid – is still an under researched topic, although this is a classical field of political science. To explain voting behavior in general, various socio-structural, socio-psychological, or rational choice models are usually applied. For African societies, voting is explained predominantly by factors such as ethnicity, personal ties, and clientelism (Hyden and Leys 1972; Barkan 1979; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Van de Walle 2003; Mozaffar et al. 2003; 2005; Erdmann 2004; Posner 2005; Scarritt 2006). This can be regarded as the 'conventional wisdom' of voting behavior in African studies. The focus of this explanation is in the tradition that can be attributed to Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) social structural model, although ethnicity is not mentioned in that framework. However, the Lipset-Rokkan model has been modified to argue that ethnicity provides the basic social cleavage for voting behavior and the formation of parties and party systems (Erdmann and Weiland 2001; Erdmann 2004). The all-inclusive relevance of ethnicity for an understanding of African politics, in general, has been emphasized in a recent collection on ethnicity and democracy in Africa (Berman et al 2004). However, whether there is really substantial evidence for this claim can be questioned. Recent (and relatively rare) studies find limited and sometimes contradictory evidence (e.g. Basedau and Stroh 2008; Cheeseman and Ford 2007); in focusing on Anglophone Africa, most studies neglect Francophone Africa.

This paper draws on the first ever representative survey polls with a special focus on political parties in eight Anglophone and Francophone countries and tries to systematically test the role of ethnicity in voting behavior and party alignment from a comparative perspective.

The paper proceeds as follows: The following section deals with the current research and formulates the central hypothesis. After presenting the design of the survey polls and the empirical strategy, we then discuss the results of multiple regressions for 23 political parties in eight countries. Looking beyond ethnicity, we examine other pertinent determinants of

[1] We are grateful to the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), which funded the two research projects 'Political Parties and Party Systems in Anglophone Africa – Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia' and 'Political Parties and Party Systems in Francophone Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger'. We owe a lot to our partners: Léonard Wantchékon (Institut de recherche empirique en économie politique, Benin), Augustin Loada (University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), Massa Coulibaly (Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et téchnique, Mali), Mahaman Tidjani Alou (Laboratoire d'études et de recherches sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement local, Niger) and the Institut National de la Statistique du Niger, Gyimah-Boadi and the Center for Democratic Development (Ghana), Neo Simutanyi (University of Zambia), Max Mmuya (University of Dar es Salaam) and Nandini Patel (University of Malawi).

[2] We are aware that the terms 'voting behavior' and 'political party alignment' are not completely synonymous. Nevertheless, they will be used interchangeably in this paper.

voter alignment including regional residence, education, and attitudinal variables such as satisfaction with government. The final section summarizes the findings, draws theoretical and methodological conclusions, and outlines the challenges for future research.

2. State of the Art

Except for some of the first Afrobarometer studies (Mattes and Norris 2003), the claim that ethnicity is a major factor for voting behavior is usually inferred from election results. This is based on the observation that the people of a specific district or region and identified as a specific ethnic group vote for the same party in one election after another. This is also related to the local political discourse which might identify a particular political party with a specific ethnic group, such as a 'Kikuyu-party'. As each scholar of voting behavior might know, this kind of inference might entail an ecological fallacy. While aggregate data from the national level strongly support this link, individual voters might not have been motivated by ethnicity but rather by a different rationale.

More systematic research results on voting behavior based on individual data (Lindberg and Morrison 2007) have recently pointed to this possibility and challenged the 'conventional wisdom' about the African voter. Based on interviews in Ghana, researchers have found that 'clientelistic and ethnic predisposed voting are minor features of the Ghanaian electorate' (2007: 34). Interestingly, based on a similar research design and on individual date from Ghana as well, Kevin S. Fridy comes to an almost opposite conclusion (Fridy 2007: 302). This is cautiously supported by the results of a cross-national study based on individual data (Norris and Mattes 2003).[3] Similar contradictory results have come out of studies, which applied different research strategies, on voting behavior in Zambia. One explains that 'noneconomic motivations' such as ethnic affiliation and social environment (urban/rural) predominate (Posner and Simon 2002), while the other, based on an opinion poll (Erdmann 2007a:29), concludes that 'ethno-political identity is certainly not the only, but one factor that accounts for election outcomes'. Survey findings from Kenya make similar points (Bratton and Mwangi 2008). This is quite in line with the findings of a study on 'party identification' which claims, based on Afrobarometer survey data, that new political parties are not 'forming primarily along ethnic lines' but perhaps 'along more pluralistic lines' (Bratton et al. 2005: 257). Others still take ethnicity more or less for granted as a political cleavage and analyze

[3] According to Norris and Mattes (2003), ethnic voting takes place and proves significant in more than two-thirds of the 12 cases under consideration. However, ethnicity is just one among other significant determinants; they draw cautious conclusions only since their study is based merely on an analysis of the biggest ethnic group in relation to the respective country's biggest ruling party.

'ethnic polarization' and 'ethnic diversity' in the support base of different political parties (Cheeseman and Ford 2007). Others again search for the political source of ethnic identity and find political competition (Eifert et al. 2007). Wantchékon's experiment during Benin's second-last assembly elections shows that clientelistic mobilization appears more successful than policy advocacy (Wantchékon 2003). In principle, this could favor redistributive ethnic politics. However, clientelistic relations are not necessarily built on ethnic linkages (Erdmann and Engel 2007).

To conclude this overview, it should be noted that more recent research is not suggesting that ethnicity is the only factor that explains voting behavior in Africa, but rather that it is the predominant social (or political) cleavage or one important factor structuring party alignment. It has been emphasized that there is no clear-cut pattern of how ethnicity affects party formation (Erdmann 2004: 70-73; Nugent 2005; Fridy 2007; recently Bratton and Mwangi 2008). Moreover, most of the research on voting behavior is related to the countries of Anglophone Africa, while research on this issue in Francophone Africa is still scant (Basedau and Stroh 2008).

This paper aims to contribute to a more differentiated debate about voting behavior by drawing on the analysis of individual data from opinion surveys in eight African countries, four Anglophone and four Francophone: Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The first question to be addressed is as follows: Does the proposition that ethnicity is the major factor for explaining voting patterns hold true? This implies a second question: If ethnicity is not the only factor, what are other possible social structural or non-structural factors, such as the evaluation of government performance, that might explain voting behavior?

Before beginning the analysis, a few remarks on the concept of ethnicity are necessary. We prefer the constructivist understanding of ethnicity that prevails in social science. Ethnic identities derive from differences in a varied set of identity markers such as common history, commonly imagined ancestry, territory, cultural practices, language, and religion. Ultimately, though, they result from external and self-ascription and they are hence principally subject to change and manipulation (Lemarchand 1972: 69; Young 1976; Lentz 1994; Horowitz 1985). However, this understanding does not mean that ethnic identity changes on a daily or an

arbitrary basis. We often find remarkable stability over time in the identification of ethnic groups.[4]

Because of the implied (limited) fluidity, this constructivist understanding of ethnicity comprises a fundamental conceptual problem for empirical research, especially for the use of standardized questionnaires, which we have discussed elsewhere and do not need to go into here in detail (Erdmann 2007b).[5]

Given this caveat and drawing summarily on previous research, our hypothesis is as follows: the relevance of ethnicity varies from (a) country to country, and even within a country it differs (b) from party to party; this entails a third proposition (c) that the relevance changes from one ethnic group to the other as well. The general implication is that ethnicity is one factor among others.

3. Survey Data and Empirical Strategy

To study the link between ethnicity or any other factor that might structure voting behavior and party preferences, individual data are the most suitable. Particularly, individual data are best devised to avoid an ecological fallacy to which studies on the basis of electoral results are prone to. For our study we draw on a number of opinion surveys we have conducted in eight African countries and that specifically focused on the topic of political parties – to the best of our knowledge the first ever representative survey polls conducted on this particular topic and of this scope. The results of these surveys, especially with respect to the relationship between citizens and political parties, provide the data for a binary logistical regression analysis to investigate this relationship.

Eight representative opinion surveys were conducted in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger (all in 2006), representing Francophone Africa, as well as in the four Anglophone countries: Ghana (2003), Malawi (2003), Tanzania (2004), and Zambia (2004).[6] We ensured that the surveys were conducted well before national elections. The surveys were conducted

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[4] Moreover, if ethnicity is conceptualized as a structural variable that explains relatively stable phenomena such as party preference, a principal change in self- or externally ascribed ethnic identity must be limited.

[5] The crucial problem is the different qualities of ethnic identity and the various roles it can play within different political situations and entities.. However, it should be pointed out that these unresolved problems provide a caveat not only for our but for almost all similar kinds of approaches and analysis.

[6] The countries were selected according to several principles. In addition to suitability in terms of practical considerations, the countries had to have held at least three consecutive parliamentary elections and to demonstrate a number of historical and socioeconomic characteristics such as lower income, a historical record of one-party states, and ethnic heterogeneity. In order to allow for comparison between different colonial backgrounds and levels of democratization – which is not the focus of this contribution – we also made sure to include Francophone and Anglophone countries as well as both 'free' and 'partly free' polities.

by national research teams after extensive workshops with the authors and local partner institutions. Each survey sample comprised at least 1,000 respondents of voting age. On the basis of national census data, the relative number of regions and the urban vs. rural population were partly stratified. Every second respondent had to be female. Otherwise, the respondents were selected according to strictly randomized procedures at the regional, district, ward, official enumeration area, household, and individual levels. Which of these 'units' were included depended on the particular situation in each country. The questionnaires, which were partly translated into local languages, consisted of some 50 questions including several items intended to measure the independent variables.

To identify the ethnic background of the respondents we asked them the straightforward question, 'What is your tribe?' ('*Quel est votre groupe ethnique?*' in French). Although this question may be viewed controversial, the survey teams reported no problems at all. The question clearly captures the self-ascriptive dimension of ethnic identity (which is also the result of external ascription). For the analysis we started with single ethnic groups, as identified by the questionnaires. An initial overview and cross-tabulations revealed for some countries that we would not get many meaningful results from an analysis because the number of respondents in some groups would be too small. Therefore, in some cases we aggregated some of the smaller groups and included them within larger groups according to the ethno-political discourse and perception in the particular country. This approach is justified because not all ethnic groups play a role in the national political discourse; in some of the countries this role is confined to a few groups only (see e.g. Zambia; Posner 2005; Erdmann 2007a), which are themselves divided into subgroups which become relevant only if the political debate relates to 'internal' matters.[7]

For the purpose of a meaningful analysis of political party affiliation, the number of political parties had to be limited as well. A first threshold was the political party's representation in parliament (of course, the questionnaire included an open category 'others'), and finally, only those political parties for which at least 50 respondents claimed their intention to vote were included. Hence, only a limited number of parties, much less than the number of registered parties and even less than the number represented in parliament, appear in the analysis below. The respondent's party affiliation was established by the question about their voting intention common to worldwide studies on voting behavior: 'If there were to be parliamentary elections today, which political party would you vote for?' (in French: 'S'il y

[7] For this problem in general see Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999.

avait des élections législatives aujourd'hui, pour quel parti voteriez-vous?'. Other questions were intended to collect various other social and demographic data as well as to establish basic attitudes towards the political regime, the perception of governance performance, and the development of living conditions, in order to include an analysis of possible attitudinal and evaluative voting behavior.

Some of our key variables are nominal by nature. In particular, ethnic affiliation and regional residence cannot be transformed into ordinal scales. Moreover, the categories, such as region, vary from country to country. Nevertheless, we have aimed to compare a variety of parties from several countries without losing touch with the qualitative background of these variables. As a consequence, we have opted for a multivariate solution which is able to integrate many nominal variables, that is, logistical regressions. However, since multinomial logit regressions are difficult to interpret with regard to effects, we have decided to use binary logit regressions with the voting intention for one particular party as the dependent variable. In order to keep the models comparable across countries, we have opted for the 'enter method', that is one comprehensive model including all ten independent variables to which we attributed theoretical relevance according to the state of the art in the study on voter behavior and party alignment (e.g. Erdmann 2007b; Roth 1998).

We have combined socio-structural features such as gender, age, religious affiliation, urban or rural residence, education levels , ethnic affiliation, and regional residence with attitudinal indicators such as 'satisfaction with one's own economic situation', 'satisfaction with the performance of the government', and democratic attitudes[8]. Religion has been aggregated to the main confessional groups, most often Christians and Muslims. This variable was excluded from the Niger models because of the country's quasi-perfect religious homogeneity (almost 100 percent Muslim). Dummies for ethnic groups have been included as long as they were represented by a minimum of 50 respondents. The largest ethnic group in each country serves as the reference group. For 'regional residence' we used the regional unit whose distribution comes the closest to the national average as the statistical reference.[9]

[8] Democratic attitudes are measured by an index which includes six survey questions on basic democratic values such as the acceptance of election results as well as the independence of the press and the judiciary. This results in an ordinal value scale ranging from 0 (very undemocratic) to 6 (very democratic). Further details are available from the authors upon request.

[9] This operationalization is perhaps second best. It would have been more precise to calculate different models for each party by including only one ethnic group per model. However, this would have multiplied the number of models, which is already high since we wish to compare 23 parties with eight different national backgrounds. The same caveat must be made with regard to the variable 'regional residence'.

4. Ethnicity in Regression Results

When we apply the full model to all 23 political parties in the eight countries with a minimal support of 50 respondents in the survey (approximately 5 percent of all), a number of general observations seem possible (for model details, see Appendix), mainly based on the degrees of significance and the overall quality of the models. The regression models for the 23 political parties indicate that, supporting the central hypothesis, the relevance of the variable ethnicity differs from party to party within one country, and overall from country to country as well. Moreover, all the regression result reveal that ethnicity is indeed only one variable among others that might explain voting behavior. In some countries ethnicity is a more important variable, in other countries other factors seem to be more crucial. The same can be concluded from comparing parties within one country (Table 1).

Starting with comparing the political parties, only nine out of 23 show a strong level of significance (0.01) in combination with high values (> 2 for positive B coefficients and < 0.5 for negative Bs) of the odds ratios (effect coefficient Exp(B)) with regard to, at least, one category of the ethnic variable. Even if we would consider weaker levels of significance (0.05), the picture would hardly change, because either the variable's effect is rather weak or there is only one ethnic group which votes significantly less for the party while all the others join the countries largest group, i.e. the statistical reference, in supporting the respective party.

If we also look at Nagelkerke's pseudo-R^2 values[10], we find that these values vary from party to party, confirming again our hypothesis. For only three parties we have high values (Nagelkerkes pseudo-$R^2 > 0.4$); these are NPP and NDC in Ghana, and ANDP in Niger.[11] For another three parties we have still relatively elevated values (pseudo-$R^2 > 0.2$), this is for MMD and UPND in Zambia and for MCP in Malawi. Interestingly, the parties, for which we recorded indicators on an, at least partly, ethnically structured or 'motivated' electorate, are concentrated in three countries only, namely Ghana, Zambia and Niger. In the case of Niger, however, three out of the four models show fairly low values (pseudo-$R^2 < 0.2$) (see Table 1). All this indicates that for some sections of the electorate or some ethnic groups their specific ethnic identity matters more their voting behavior than for others.

[10] We are well aware of the fact that Nagelkerke's R^2 is no measure of "variance accounted for" in a strict sense. However, it is a commonly reported figure. Moreover, it is a measure of the "null deviance accounted for" by the model's set of predictors. As the null deviance expresses the discrepancy from the worst possible to the best possible model, an increase in Nagelkerke's R^2 clearly indicates an increase in explanatory power (cf. Cohen, Cohen, West and Aiken, 2003, p. 501-504).

[11] We use party acronyms in the main text. Full names are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Significance of ethnicity in relation to voting intentions (per party, model, country)

Country (Reference group)	Party	Group[##], Direction and Significance	Pseudo-R^2	Overall-assessment of ethnic factor[###] (country)
Benin (Fon)	Alliance Cauris (≈ Force Cauris pour un Bénin Emergent, FCBE)[#]	Bariba (–)*	0.265	Weak
	RB, Renaissance du Bénin			
	PRD, Parti pour le Renouvellement Démocratique			
	PSD, Parti Social-Démocrate			
Burkina Faso (Mossi)	CDP, Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès	Others (+)**	0.312	Weak
	ADF/RDA, Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération/ Rassemblement Démocratique Africain			
	UNIR/MS, Union pour la Révolution/ Mouvement Sankariste	Others (–)*	0.322	
Ghana (Akan)	NPP, New Patriotic Party	Ewe (–)***	0.489	Strong
	NDC, National Development Congress	Ewe (+)***	0.440	
Malawi (Chewa)	UDF, United Democratic Front	Sena (–)*	0.398	Ambiva-lent
	MCP, Malawi Congress Party	Lomwe (–)***	0.291	
Mali (Barbara)	ADEMA, Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali	Malinke (–)*	0.131	Weak
	PRM, Rassemblement pour le Mali	Others (–)*	0.166	
Niger (Haussa)	MNSD, Mouvement National pour la Société de Développement	Peul (+)***	0.133	Ambiva-lent
	PNDS, Parti pour le Socialisme et la Démocratie au Niger	Songai (–)***	0.177	
	CDS, Convention Démocratique et Sociale	Songai (–)***	0.189	
	ANDP, Alliance Nigérienne pour la Démocratie et le Progrès	Songai (+)***	0.453	
Tanzania (Others)	CCM, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution)	Sukuma (–)**	0.242	Weak
	CUF, Civic United Front			
	CHADEMA, Chama cha Demokrasia na Mandeleo (Party for Democracy and Development)			
Zambia (Tonga)	MMD, Movement for Multiparty Democracy	Chewa (+)***		Strong
	UPND, United Party for National Development	Chewa (–)***	0.210	
	UNIP, United National Independence Party		0.214	

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; (+) positive relationship, (–) negative relationship of this group (B coefficient) with the voting intention compared to the largest ethnic group in the country (reference group)

[#] In August 2006, when the survey poll took place in Benin, FCBE had not been founded, yet. Instead, the 'Alliance Cauris' can be seen as its political predecessor. Both have never been registered political parties, but party alliances which have been political support movements for the President of the Republic.

[##] The given ethnic group showed the largest effect on the highest level of significance which has been found in the respective model. Beyond that, other groups may have shown significant and large effects (c.f. appendix).

[###] 'Weak' indicates few and, if any, weakly significant findings; 'strong' denotes (mainly) highly significant findings in all or the most important cases in one country, with mutually exclusive support groups; 'ambivalent' represents (mainly) highly significant findings but only with regard to minor groups in the party's support base and without a pattern of clear-cut mutually exclusive support groups.

Source: Appendix

More interestingly, those cases with a high significance and strong effects of 'ethnicity' on voting behavior, such as Ghana and Zambia, other variables are significant at the same time and sometimes even with stronger effects. The NPP in Ghana is such a case: 'Satisfaction with government performance', i.e. an evaluative factor for voting behavior, is a stronger variable than ethnicity. In the case of Zambia, the ethnicity variable matters most for UPND, while democratic attitudes are an important variable for this party as well, the ethnicity variable is much weaker for MMD and has basically no effect in relation to the old state party UNIP (see Appendix).

Nevertheless, the concentration of ethnicity as a major factor for explaining voting behavior in a few countries suggests that once ethnicity is mobilized, for example by one party, it instigates or 'infects' the electorate on a larger scale, however without necessarily becoming the dominant factor for voting patterns.

Comparing countries, there are only two cases, namely Ghana and Zambia, for which the models show strong level of significance (0.01) with respect to ethnic group variables. Additionally, the Ghanaian models provide us with the highest of all pseudo-R^2 values in the sample which gives further support to the assessment. In Zambia this applies only to two out of three parties, namely MMD and UPND. (Table 1). We qualify these to countries as 'strong' on the explanatory power of the ethnic variable for voting behavior.

We have labeled all the other countries as either 'ambivalent' or 'weak' as regards the relevance of 'ethnicity'. 'Weak' indicates few and weakly significant findings, while 'ambivalent' represents (mainly) highly significant findings which, however, refer merely to minor groups in the party's support base and without a pattern of clear-cut mutually exclusive support groups (see also Table 1).

Niger and Malawi belong to these 'ambivalent' cases, while Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Tanzania are 'weak' cases. The statistical evidence of the 'weak' cases even suggests that ethnicity has very little explanatory power for election behavior – if any at all. Moreover, it should be pointed out that even in the 'strong' cases, in which ethnicity matters, other variables such as education as well as attitudinal and the other variables are also of importance (see below).

Taking all the statistical evidence from the individual data set together, our findings support our central hypothesis, at least part (a): in none of the countries is ethnicity a variable, or the only variable, that can explain voting behavior on its own. Other factors have to be

considered as well, and in some countries the non-ethnic variables seem to be even more important than ethnicity.

5. Other Factors in the Regression Models

Obviously, ethnic affiliation is only part of the story. This is hardly a surprise given the work cited in the literature review section of this paper. Regarding the 23 full models calculated for parties from eight countries, we find a particular relevance of mainly three further features of the survey respondents which apparently determine their voting intention. These are the regional residence of voters, their satisfaction with the government and formal education (see Appendix).

5.1 Regional Residence

Interestingly, regional residence proves to be a more important predictor of voting intentions in many of our comprehensive models than ethnic affiliation. We find 'region' to be significant at the 0.01 level in 12 cases from five countries compared to nine cases in four countries where ethnicity proved highly significant. Mainly, the party alignment in Burkina Faso, Mali and Zambia is weakly determined by regional residence, while particularly in Benin, Ghana as well as in the Tanzania and Niger region certainly plays a role.
The 12 'regionalist' cases can be subdivided into multi-regional parties, oligo-regional and mono-regional parties as shown in Table 2. Multi-regional parties find support in an unsystematic plurality of geographic units. It appears implausible that the voter could identify them with a particular region. Oligo-regional parties are particularly supported by voters from several regions that differ, on the one hand, clearly from the lack of support in other regions and, on the other hand, from the support pattern of other parties. Mono-regional parties, instead, show pretty clear strongholds in one particular region. Parties which combine strongholds in two neighboring units or show a second stronghold in the capital can be accepted as quasi-mono-regional parties.

Two preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the overall finding from Table 2. Firstly, since only in Ghana the major parties are oligo-regional, voters in most African countries appear to split into some who potentially vote regionally and some who do not. Secondly, only for the voters of several Beninese parties who are oligo- or mono-regional we may say that regional residence produces the main or only significant findings. Since the ethnic composition of Benin's relatively small regional units is more homogenous than in other countries under review, we could deal with a case of statistical interference. In any case,

it follows from the characterization of the leading movement FCBE as being 'multi-regional' that it is neither regionalist nor ethnic in nature. In all other country cases, several additional variables contribute significantly to the model. Thus, the voters appear to be influenced by a combination of social attributes and attitudes.

Table 2: The effect of regional residence in multivariate logit models[#]

	Multi-regional parties[##]	Oligo-regional parties	Mono- or quasi-mono-regional parties
No other highly significant variables	FCBE (Benin)	RB (Benin)	PRD, PSD (Benin)
Some other highly significant variables with lower odd ratios	PNDS (Niger)	ANDP (Niger), NDC (Ghana)	CHADEMA (Tanzania)
Some other highly significant variables with similar or higher odd ratios	MNSD (Niger)	NPP (Ghana)	CUF (Tanzania), MCP (Malawi)

[#] Only cases are considered in which at least one 'regional' variable proved significant at the 0.01 level. Consequently, none of the parties from Burkina Faso (ADF/RDA, CDP, UNIR/MS), Mali (ADEMA, RPM) and Zambia (MMD, UPND, UNIP), nor Malawi's UDF, Niger's CDP, and Tanzania's CCM appear in the table.

[##] Multi-regional implies that regional residence does not appear to be a decisive feature of the party.

Source: Authors' compilation based on the data reported in the appendix

What may we learn from that in theoretical terms? One difficult question to answer is what makes the location of one citizen's domicile in a particular region important for its voting intention? The definition of region which we used was the first sub-national administrative unit. For sure, this is a context-bounded definition which relies much on national laws and administrative traditions. However, we do not see a viable alternative.[12]

The core of what we intend to measure is geographic proximity of people. The argument behind is two-fold. First, if we assume a rather low level of domestic migration between sub-national regions,[13] a person's regional location of residence could serve as an important subjective reference of identity. This could, theoretically, be reinforced by the fact of belonging to an administrative unit that might be present in the form of offices and

[12] All alternatives would demand very complicated procedures. We could try, for instance, the construction of geographic units with a similar geographic size or similar size of population throughout all countries. Therefore, we would need detailed population data which is difficult to get. Still, we could not avoid divergences due to a country's geographic shape or other factors.

[13] Probably with the exception of the capital district.

competences. Thus, we would deal with an identity feature which is directly connected to the voter himself.

Second, the concentration of party activities on certain areas could be rational for institutional or capacity reasons. Small constituencies tend to set incentives for stronghold politics. Limited financial resources may be more efficiently employed for effective political mobilization if a party focuses its activities on a particular geographic region.[14] Thus, we would deal with a feature of the supply side which is the political party. We deal much less with voters intentions from this perspective. At best, the party organization reacts with the choice of its geographic focus on voter features. However, there is no direct link between the voter and his limited factual choice if certain parties do not even seriously compete for votes within his geographical area.

Third, infrastructural projects like road building account for a large part of electoral promises. Although, most often, these promises are not fulfilled, the population of a certain geographic region could collectively benefit from that kind of policy outcomes. Regional parties could be seen as pressing more for direct material advantages within the own area of residence than national parties which could favor far-away regions first.

As we have shown, there are several reasons why it is helpful to take regional residence as a proper independent variable. However, beyond this reasoning, there is a difficult relationship between ethnic ties and regional residence. A reduction of these two variables to one across-the-board would be wrong. Regions are rarely as homogenous as the term 'ethno-regionalism', which is often used in this context of party research (e.g., Crook 1997, De Winter and Türsan 1998), would suggest.[15] But they are often less ethnically heterogeneous as nations. We should keep this in mind for the interpretation of regression analysis.[16]

The voters of Malawi's MCP illustrate this finding. There is highly significant evidence that residents of Central Region are more likely to vote MCP; this is pretty much in line with how country experts view of MCP voters (Posner 2004). However, other variables also play a role. There are several other variables that contribute at least as much as the regional variable to the identification of a MCP voter. It is about equally important that the voter is not a Tumbuka, is a Christian and rather an elderly woman. Furthermore, the probability to prefer MCP is favored by having less democratic attitudes and being dissatisfied with both the

[14] This argument is strongly supported by the results of a study on party financing which show that the cost of transportation is the single most important expenditure item in African electoral campaigns (Bryan and Baer 2005).

[15] On our Francophone cases see Basedau and Stroh 2008 (i.E.).

[16] In particular case studies, we would need to control for ethnic homogeneity of region. However, in this first step of research, we adhere to the general model in order to ensure cross-country comparability.

personal economic situation and the performance of the government. It is no surprise that this description draws the typical image of a supporter of the former one-party regime.

5.2 Satisfaction with Government Performance

Satisfaction with the government's performance is the most important attitudinal variable in our models. Contrary to structural conditions like ethnic affiliation, attitudes are to a greater extend open to change. Hence, the question whether or not a voter is satisfied with the government depends on his perception of its performance. Though we do not know why a voter develops this perception, the multivariate models enable us to evaluate whether and in combination with what other variables a voter's satisfaction with government performance contributes significantly to the explanation of voting intentions.

Strong positive effects of satisfaction tell us that voters act rationally on the basis of their own perceptions if they intend to vote for ruling parties. Reversely, dissatisfaction should lead to a vote for the opposition if we deal with rational voters.

Table 3: 'Satisfaction with government performance': Levels of significance and the direction of the relationship

	Government parties	Opposition parties	Difficult to distinguish between government and opposition
Some other significant variables with lower odd ratios	NPP (+)*** CDP (+)***		
Some other significant variables with similar odd ratios	MMD (+)*** CCM (+)*** UDF (+)*** MNSD (+)***	MCP(-)***	ADF/RDA (-)** *RPM (-)****
Some other significant variables with higher odd ratios	*ANDP (-)* *ADEMA (-)* *CDS (-)**	NDC (-)*** UPND (-)*** UNIR/MS (-)* CUF (-)*** CHADEMA (-)** PNDS (-)***	FCBE (+)** RB (-) PRD (-) PSD (+) UNIP (-)

*p<0.1, **p<0.015, ***p<0.01, (+) positive relationship, (-) negative relationship with satisfaction (B coefficient), *italics* point to an unexpected result; see Appendix for details.

There is evidence that our results are valid: in eleven models, satisfaction with government contributes very significantly ($p < 0.015$) to the explanation of the respective party preference.[17] Indeed, the relationship is positive for virtually all ruling parties and negative for opposition parties (see Table 3), thus supporting the influence of rational voting behavior. In none of the government parties is the explanatory power of this variable (measured through odd ratios) exceeded by any other variables. In contrast, intentions to vote for opposition parties are always influenced by additional variables to an at least equal extent. In the case of these parties, structural conditions usually outperform the contribution of 'satisfaction' to the model.

Three cases deserve special attention because 'satisfaction with the government' is negatively connected to the support of *government* parties. In the case of the Malian ADEMA and the Nigerien ANDP[18] this may not bother us since the relationship is insignificant. The latter does not hold true for Niger's CDS, which forms (together with the ANDP and a number of other parties) a coalition and is significant at the 0.1 level. This level is not very high, but it may be that the likelihood of dissatisfaction rises within larger government camps – which is also true for ADEMA and ANDP.

Three interesting examples of opposition parties are Tanzania's CUF, Zambia's UPND and Burkina Faso's UNIR/MS. CUF voters appear to be, first and foremost, Muslims from Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar who have slightly more democratic attitudes and who are, finally, somewhat less satisfied with the performance of the Tanzanian government. The more educated a Tonga from Zambia is, the more likely (s)he intends to vote UPND. However, this ethnically co-defined probability is still enlarged if (s)he has more democratic attitudes and is, finally, less satisfied with government. Contrary to its UPND counterpart, a typical UNIR/MS voter in Burkina Faso is not affiliated to a particular ethnic group, but lives in the capital district. The higher his education, the more probably he votes for the main opposition party which is, furthermore, modestly supported by his dissatisfaction with the executive.

Regarding ruling parties, the relative weight of satisfaction in the models could be a sign for opportunism. For many voters, it might appear profitable to be with the government – independent from all other concerns one could have. This would explain why the effect of government satisfaction is not exceeded by other variables. Particularly convincing cases in

[17] Applying more rigid conditions (pseudo-$R^2 \geq 0.4$) returns a highly significant effect of 'satisfaction with the government' for three out of six models (NPP, NDC, UDF).

[18] Even this particular case appears less antithetic if we take into account that we are dealing with a renegade party with a strong ethnic support base which plays a rather marginal role in government. Voters could feel the need for the government, which is dominated by other parties, to allocate more direct profits to their ethnic group.

this respect are CCM and CDP. Both are dominant parties whose voters tend to come from all ethnic backgrounds and regions. However, the probability that we have met a CMM or CDP voter is higher if we know of this citizen that (s)he is satisfied with the performance of the government. The effect of the satisfaction variable is one of the largest among all variables within the respective models: A Burkinabè who feels satisfied with the work of his government is 2.7 times more likely to vote for CDP and a Tanzanian is 3.4 times more likely to vote CCM than one of his fellow citizens who are not satisfied.

Only being a resident of Mwanza or Ruvuma regions is similarly effective for a CCM voting intention. Elderly people from these two regions who are satisfied with the government and who confess some less democratic attitudes intend, thus, particularly probably to vote Tanzania's ruling party. Concerning Burkina Faso's dominant party, being satisfied with the government in combination with belonging to the minority of smaller ethnic groups and having enjoyed less formal education has a particularly significant and strong effect on intending a CDP vote. However, this is certainly not the 'typical' CDP voter since there are simply too few citizens with such features.

However, we run the risk of misinterpretation. There could be hidden interactions or endogeneity problems. Akan NPP voters could simply be satisfied with government because it appears to them being an Akan government. Then social identities would overlay rational evaluations. We can hardly know whether this is true for the individuals. What we learn from simple cross-tabs is that four out of five Akan voters are indeed satisfied with the NPP government. However, this is also true for three out of five voters with any other ethnic background.[19] Moreover, we have to keep in mind that ethnic and rational voting behavior are far from being mutually exclusive, something which creates principal endogeneity problems in interpretation. Voters could vote for ethnic kinsmen because they expect, or have experienced, that the latter deliver – particularly to the benefit of their own ethnic electorate.

'Satisfaction with the government' is totally insignificant in four cases. These are three Beninese parties and Niger's ANDP. Besides the ANDP – which we have discussed above. The insignificance of government satisfaction in Benin is consistent with the theoretical idea since, at least at the time of the survey, it was very unclear which party belonged to the

[19] The question was, 'Are you satisfied with the performance of the current government?'; 79.9% of the respondents who identified themselves as Akan and 57.5% of all other respondents answered either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. All other respondents were 'not very satisfied' or 'not at all satisfied'.

government or not.[20] A roughly similar finding refers to the Malian RPM: At the time of the survey it was technically still part of the 'grand consensus', a national unity government comprising almost all parties. However, the RPM subsequently showed signs of declaring itself an opposition party in the run up to general elections some months later.

5.3 Education

One of the advantages of multivariate approaches is that we are principally able to identify the interplay of different variables. Education might belong to those factors where an interaction of features and attitudes becomes most visible. A look at all models in which education levels proved highly significant shows that education is always systematically connected to attitudinal variables. If education is significantly contributing to the model, at least one of the following three features is significant, too. Either – and most often – the party preference is also connected to the person's satisfaction with the work of the government or to his satisfaction with his own economic situation. Moreover the voters of that party often differ from others as to their preference for democratic principles (see Table 4).

Table 4: The interplay of formal education with attitudinal factors

Status	Party (Effect of education)	Pseudo-R^2	Satisfaction with gov.	Satisfaction with own economic situation	Democratic attitudes
Government	CDP (-)	0.31	(+)***	(+)	(-)
	UDF (-)	0.40	(+)***	(+)***	*(+)**
	CCM (-)	0.24	(+)***	*(-)*	(-)***
	MMD (-)	0.21	(+)***	(+)*	(-)
(Opposition)	UNIP (-)	0.15	(-)	(-)***	*(-)*
Opposition	UNIR/MS (+)	0.32	(-)**	(-)	(+)
	UPND (+)	0.21	(-)***	(-)	(+)***

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, (+) positive relationship, (-) negative relationship with satisfaction (B coefficient), *italics* point to an unexpected result; see Annex for details. The table includes cases in which education levels proved significant at the 0.011 level.

[20] Furthermore, the new government – largely composed of technocrats and some opportunists– came into being only some months before our survey of August 2006. We could not expect the voters to have a settled perception of a government's performance at such a stage.

Education is highly significant in seven models if we allow a threshold of $p \leq 0.011$ (which is the value for Tanzania's CCM). These models represent parties from four countries: Burkina Faso, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. Thus, education only appears to play a major role in party systems with strong to dominant government parties and no democratic turn over since the re-introduction of multipartyism.[21] This is a situation in which we may assume a higher level of polarization between the ruling parties and opposition forces. Additionally, all of the four cases suffer from democratic deficits.

By taking these conditions into account, the interplay of education and attitudinal variables produces a highly plausible outcome. It appears that permanent ruling parties benefit from the support of less educated people who are rather satisfied with both the work of the government and their own economic situation and who hold less democratic attitudes. In contrast, well-educated citizens with more democratic attitudes who are dissatisfied with both the executive's performance and their own economic wellbeing are more likely to prefer an opposition party like UNIR/MS or UPND. Deviations from this scheme are related to former unitary parties in Zambia and Malawi. Recalling UNIP's past, the less democratic attitudes of its voters is no surprise. Conversely, UDF's main opponent is Malawi's former unitary party MCP whose voters have less democratic attitudes than those of the current ruling party.[22]

The general outcome is supported by a relative weakness of structural variables within the same models. At the same time, the education gap between party supporters appears to decrease with an increasing democratic competitiveness of the party system.

Finally, the models with the highest pseudo-R^2 show mainly highly significant structural variables. Only six out of 23 regression models produce pseudo-R^2 values very close to or above 0.4, this is for RB and PSD in Benin, for NPP and NDC in Ghana, for UDF in Malawi and ANDP in Niger. For RB, PSD and ANDP structural conditions like region and ethnicity contribute the most significant parts to the explanation of voting intentions. In Ghana, structural and attitudinal factors coincide. However, in this case, factors might mutually reinforce themselves as we discussed above. It is only the Malawian UDF for which non-structural variables dominate over ethnic affiliation and regional residence. Lower education combined with satisfaction with government performance – UDF rules – and personal economic satisfaction is a good predictor of UDF voting intentions. Still, there is a remarkable influence of being a rural Muslim from the south of Malawi on voting UDF.

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[21] For the party systems see Erdmann and Basedau 2008.

[22] In the MCP model, education is not significant. That is why it does not appear amongst the seven models in the appendix.

Conclusion

It appears to be conventional wisdom that ethnicity is the main determinant of voting behavior and party alignment in sub-Saharan Africa, even though empirical evidence for this claim remains limited. Drawing on data from representative survey polls in eight sub-Saharan countries – specifically conducted to study political parties – our logistical regression analysis of 23 political parties from these countries confirms our central hypothesis that ethnicity is not the only and not even the dominant factor explaining voting behavior in the countries under consideration.

Overall, besides ethnicity, there are other social factors, such as education, and, above all, evaluative and attitudinal factors that explain voting behavior to the same degree or are even more relevant. Ethnicity proves (highly) significant in nine cases but is outperformed by 'regional residence' in 12 cases. There is no overall pattern across the 23 political parties or across the eight countries involved in the analysis. The relevance of ethnicitye varies across countries and differs from party to party, even within one country; this is in line with conclusions derived from similar country surveys (Erdmann 2007; Bratton and Mwangi 2008; Basedau and Stroh 2008). In relation to the relevance of the ethnic variable, other factors become more or less important. All in all, the rational dimensions of evaluative and attitudinal voting independent of social structural factors have largely been underestimated. It is perhaps time to think less 'structurally' and more 'rationally' about the African voter.

More radically, it seems rather that there is no 'African voter' in the first place. Do we ever try to discuss in a sensible way a 'European Voter'? Probably not – we know that the different histories, social structures, and party systems of each country will all have an impact on the voter's behavior. Based on this general observation and little evidence that that there is no 'Anglophone' or 'Francophone' African voter– at least we found no sufficient evidence that there is. This applies to the idea of a 'Beninese voter' or a 'Zambian voter', too. What we might say is only that within a particular country one or the other social structural variable matters more or less than other factors.

What we see as a need to break further ground on the issues involved is more refined data collection (a) as regards political identities, because of the 'fluidity' and situational definition of identity and the lack of time series as well as sufficiently large samples of respondents, and (b) as regards other individual socioeconomic data which are so difficult to gather on a comparative and reliable basis. A more differentiated data set might allow for a more finely tuned statistical analysis. A second necessity arises from the stronger explanatory

power of 'regional residence' as compared to 'ethnicity' in several cases. We need to deepen our reflection on the meaning of 'region' as an explanatory factor in voting behavior. Evidently, it is theoretically easy too establish this linkage. The challenge, however, persist to find empirical support for these causal mechanisms. However, our data proves that a simple amalgamation of the two distinct variables into the concept of ethno-regionalism is too unsophisticated for African realities.

As a final note and as a possible explanation for the apparent overestimation of ethnicity as an explanation for voting behavior: It is not only the social science community that has tended to think too structurally about voting behavior – as long as there are no individual data available it is difficult to do otherwise – we have also been too heavily influenced by the behavior of political elites, some of whom appear to think and behave more along ethnic lines than the common voter does.

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Appendix

BENIN (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=650)

Dependent Variable:	Alliance Cauris (FCBE)			RB			PRD			PSD		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	0.189	0.391	1.208	-0.100	0.701	0.905	-0.264	0.315	0.768	0.337	0.391	1.401
Age (> 33)	0.146	0.513	1.157	-0.363	0.157	0.696	-0.608	0.024	0.545	-0.120	0.754	0.887
Religion (ref: Christian)												
Islam	-0.137	0.703	0.872	-2.872	0.008	0.057	0.333	0.463	1.395	-0.692	0.397	0.501
other or none	-0.580	0.063	0.560	-0.190	0.539	0.827	0.354	0.334	1.425	-0.080	0.860	0.923
Urban residence (not rural)	-0.072	0.785	0.930	0.737	0.014	2.089	0.147	0.647	1.158	-0.937	0.086	0.392
Education	0.009	0.937	1.009	0.003	0.981	1.003	-0.273	0.037	0.761	0.028	0.891	1.029
Ethnic group (ref: Fon)												
Adja	-0.106	0.823	0.900	0.134	0.785	1.144	-0.104	0.822	0.901	0.829	0.159	2.292
Yoruba	0.405	0.284	1.499	-0.750	0.286	0.473	-0.091	0.844	0.913	0.250	0.768	1.284
Bariba	-1.539	0.073	0.215				-0.217	0.852	0.805	0.799	0.586	2.223
Ditamari + Yom	-1.036	0.138	0.355				0.713	0.545	2.040	1.487	0.295	4.425
Other	0.848	0.110	2.334	-0.701	0.550	0.496	-0.958	0.289	0.384	-0.434	0.748	0.648
Region (ref: Collines)												
Littoral	1.608	0.010	4.995	2.739	0.001	15.475	1.788	0.015	5.976	0.262	0.809	1.300
Atlantique	0.821	0.215	2.272	3.435	0.000	31.043	0.512	0.492	1.669	0.113	0.905	1.119
Plateau	2.642	0.000	14.035				0.205	0.796	1.227			
Mono	3.220	0.000	25.029	2.227	0.019	9.273	-0.624	0.554	0.536	1.503	0.111	4.497
Couffo	0.288	0.760	1.334	0.307	0.813	1.359	0.086	0.925	1.090	3.964	0.000	52.677
Zou	1.902	0.002	6.701	3.765	0.000	43.150	-1.989	0.100	0.137	-0.130	0.900	0.878
Borgou	1.575	0.037	4.830	2.829	0.003	16.924	-0.566	0.654	0.568	-0.747	0.602	0.474
Alibori							0.326	0.820	1.385			
Atakora	4.369	0.000	78.972				-1.149	0.403	0.317	-1.602	0.325	0.201
Donga	2.814	0.000	16.676				-0.955	0.477	0.385	-0.577	0.683	0.561
Ouémé	1.304	0.029	3.686	0.703	0.457	2.019	2.609	0.000	13.587	0.166	0.852	1.180
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	-0.209	0.436	0.811	-0.215	0.505	0.807	-0.014	0.962	0.986	0.310	0.461	1.363
Satisfaction with the government's performance	0.612	0.013	1.844	-0.224	0.401	0.799	-0.364	0.178	0.695	0.307	0.457	1.360
Democratic attitude (index)	-0.082	0.399	0.9215	0.213	0.063	1.237	0.008	0.941	1.008	-0.113	0.529	0.893
Constant	-3.222	0.000	0.040	-4.415	0.000	0.012	-1.519	0.084	0.219	-3.301	0.002	0.037
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.265			0.399			0.320			0.466		

BURKINA FASO (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=780)

Dependent Variable:	CDP			UNIR/MS			ADF/RDA		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	0.079	0.672	1.082	-0.631	0.062	0.532	0.295	0.361	1.343
Age (> 33)	0.225	0.242	1.253	-0.331	0.336	0.718	-0.057	0.860	0.944
Religion (ref: Christian)									
Islam	-0.025	0.904	0.975	-0.534	0.133	0.587	0.813	0.021	2.254
other or none	0.137	0.785	1.147	0.803	0.287	2.233			
Urban residence (not rural)	-0.592	0.238	0.553	-2.126	0.010	0.119	0.981	0.324	2.668
Education	-0.529	0.000	0.589	0.672	0.000	1.959	0.007	0.969	1.007
Ethnic group (ref: Mossi)									
Gourmatché et apparentés	-0.467	0.489	0.627	1.093	0.272	2.983	0.186	0.873	1.205
Peul et apparentés	0.475	0.458	1.608	0.892	0.331	2.441	-2.407	0.219	0.090
Bobo et apparentés	-0.162	0.694	0.851	-0.653	0.286	0.521	-0.437	0.634	0.646
Samo et apparentés	-0.339	0.481	0.713	0.833	0.247	2.300	-0.457	0.697	0.633
Other	0.781	0.018	2.184	-0.900	0.075	0.407	-0.342	0.594	0.710
Region (ref: Cascades/Sud-Ouest)									
Boucle du Mouhoun	0.488	0.329	1.629	-1.241	0.236	0.289	-1.487	0.216	0.226
Centre	-0.398	0.569	0.672	2.538	0.024	12.655	-0.785	0.525	0.456
Centre-Est	-0.068	0.904	0.934	-1.321	0.310	0.267			
Centre-Nord	0.481	0.372	1.618	-0.512	0.623	0.599	1.057	0.128	2.877
Centre-Ouest	-0.126	0.793	0.882	0.308	0.697	1.360	-0.146	0.855	0.864
Est	1.157	0.148	3.180	-2.036	0.187	0.130	-0.193	0.878	0.824
Hauts-Bassins	-0.021	0.967	0.979	1.234	0.111	3.436	-0.247	0.788	0.781
Nord	0.444	0.419	1.559	-0.974	0.443	0.378	0.672	0.351	1.959
Sahel	-1.458	0.057	0.233	-0.724	0.619	0.485	1.146	0.573	3.146
Centre-Sud & Plateau	-0.119	0.829	0.888	0.245	0.800	1.277	0.790	0.296	2.204
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	0.277	0.183	1.319	-0.540	0.148	0.583	0.088	0.814	1.092
Satisfaction with the government's performance	1.002	0.000	2.724	-0.610	0.089	0.544	-0.807	0.025	0.446
Democratic attitude (index)	-0.072	0.334	0.931	0.092	0.499	1.096	0.042	0.749	1.043
Constant	1.263	0.021	3.536	-3.271	0.001	0.038	-3.245	0.000	0.039
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.312			0.322			0.123		

GHANA (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=911)

Dependent Variable:	NPP			NDC		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	0.051	0.783	1.053	-0.034	0.862	0.967
Age (> 38)	0.296	0.111	1.345	-0.080	0.682	0.923
Religion (ref: Christian)						
Islam	-0.504	0.109	0.604	0.981	0.002	2.668
other or none	0.379	0.067	1.461	0.159	0.474	1.173
Urban residence (not rural)	-0.439	0.037	0.645	-0.102	0.642	0.903
Education	0.023	0.571	1.023	-0.050	0.235	0.951
Ethnic group (ref: Akan)						
Ga	-1.519	0.000	0.219	1.030	0.022	2.802
Ewe	-2.782	0.000	0.062	2.393	0.000	10.944
Dagbani	-0.499	0.326	0.607	0.649	0.199	1.913
Hausa	-1.323	0.024	0.266	1.792	0.002	6.003
Other	-1.106	0.000	0.331	1.090	0.000	2.975
Region (ref: Brong Ahafo)						
Ashanti	0.950	0.006	2.585	-1.347	0.000	0.260
Central	-0.361	0.342	0.697	-0.594	0.156	0.552
Eastern	1.074	0.005	2.928	-1.209	0.002	0.299
Greater Accra	1.016	0.008	2.761	-1.047	0.010	0.351
Western	-0.165	0.661	0.848	-0.679	0.103	0.507
Volta	0.354	0.469	1.425	0.119	0.800	1.126
Upper West	0.076	0.853	1.079	-1.143	0.007	0.319
Northern	0.043	0.918	1.044	-0.505	0.225	0.604
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	0.626	0.001	1.871	-0.624	0.003	0.536
Satisfaction with the government's performance	2.004	0.000	7.418	-1.593	0.000	0.203
Democratic attitude (index)	0.025	0.706	1.025	-0.008	0.903	0.992
Constant	-1.157	0.018	0.314	0.378	0.454	1.460
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.489			0.440		

MALAWI (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=743)

Dependent Variable:		UDF			MCP	
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	-0.264	0.158	0.768	0.313	0.088	1.367
Age (> 35)	-0.133	0.477	0.875	0.337	0.071	1.400
Religion (ref: Christian)						
Islam	1.242	0.004	3.461	-1.300	0.017	0.273
other or none	0.112	0.600	1.119	-0.382	0.074	0.683
Urban residence (not rural)	-1.185	0.000	0.306	0.073	0.786	1.075
Education	-0.185	0.000	0.831	0.025	0.617	1.026
Ethnic group (ref: Chewa)						
Nyanja	0.680	0.167	1.974	-0.963	0.110	0.382
Lomwe	0.487	0.159	1.628	-1.655	0.001	0.191
Tumbuka	-0.104	0.838	0.901	-1.137	0.013	0.321
Yao	0.591	0.184	1.806	-0.343	0.506	0.709
Ngoni	0.333	0.222	1.395	-0.300	0.253	0.741
Sena	-0.964	0.083	0.381	0.529	0.316	1.698
Other	-0.205	0.676	0.815	0.039	0.928	1.040
Region (ref: Central Region)						
Northern Region	-0.221	0.636	0.802	-1.103	0.006	0.332
Southern Region	0.561	0.029	1.752	-1.210	0.000	0.298
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	0.893	0.000	2.443	-0.421	0.038	0.656
Satisfaction with the government's performance	1.201	0.000	3.324	-0.590	0.004	0.555
Democratic attitude (index)	0.119	0.080	1.127	-0.168	0.012	0.845
Constant	-1.137	0.005	0.321	0.984	0.013	2.675
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.398			0.291		

MALI (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=804)

Dependent Variable:	ADEMA			RPM		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	-0.048	0.773	0.953	-0.231	0.290	0.793
Age (> 35)	-0.157	0.350	0.855	-0.091	0.682	0.913
Religion (Islam)	0.597	0.024	1.817	-0.163	0.663	0.850
Urban residence (not rural)	-0.459	0.044	0.632	0.774	0.005	2.168
Education	-0.217	0.048	0.805	0.225	0.026	1.252
Ethnic group (ref: Bambara)						
Peul	-0.578	0.055	0.561	-0.306	0.399	0.737
Songai	-0.714	0.153	0.490	0.316	0.546	1.371
Soninke	0.197	0.517	1.218	-0.372	0.392	0.690
Malinke	-0.584	0.083	0.558	0.636	0.112	1.890
Dogon	-0.025	0.952	0.976	-0.586	0.275	0.556
Senufo	-0.217	0.529	0.805	-0.349	0.420	0.706
Other	0.208	0.438	1.231	-0.816	0.047	0.442
Region (ref: Sikasso)						
Bamako Capital District	-0.888	0.044	0.412	0.403	0.334	1.497
Gao	-0.235	0.739	0.791	0.330	0.638	1.391
Kayes	0.719	0.022	2.052	-0.892	0.062	0.410
Koulikoro	-0.029	0.923	0.971	-0.082	0.851	0.921
Mopti	0.296	0.457	1.345	0.221	0.661	1.247
Ségou	-0.445	0.133	0.641	0.677	0.071	1.967
Tombouctou	0.614	0.199	1.849	-0.711	0.358	0.491
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	0.022	0.900	1.022	0.289	0.206	1.334
Satisfaction with the government's performance	-0.005	0.978	0.995	-0.731	0.002	0.482
Democratic attitude (index)	-0.051	0.465	0.950	0.173	0.064	1.189
Constant	-0.392	0.394	0.676	-2.324	0.000	0.098
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.131			0.166		

NIGER (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=907)

Dependent Variable:	MNSD			PNDS			CDS			ANDP		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (femal)	-0.190	0.205	0.827	-0.078	0.661	0.925	0.234	0.256	1.264	0.114	0.716	1.121
Age (> 35)	-0.184	0.224	0.832	0.046	0.798	1.047	0.076	0.714	1.079	-0.167	0.599	0.846
Urban residence (not rural)	-0.301	0.241	0.740	0.537	0.054	1.710	-0.101	0.777	0.904	-0.222	0.712	0.801
Education	-0.030	0.184	0.970	0.011	0.659	1.011	-0.030	0.385	0.970	-0.051	0.377	0.951
Ethnic group (ref: Haussa & Other)												
Tuareg	-0.369	0.312	0.692	0.889	0.011	2.433	-0.594	0.313	0.552	0.933	0.428	2.542
Songai	0.767	0.002	2.153	-0.969	0.002	0.380	-1.533	0.001	0.216	1.810	0.000	6.111
Kanouri	0.638	0.061	1.892	-0.350	0.448	0.704	-0.277	0.489	0.758			
Peul	1.097	0.000	2.997	-0.567	0.145	0.567	-2.515	0.015	0.081	1.047	0.202	2.850
Region (ref: Agadez)												
Diffa	-0.402	0.527	0.669	2.189	0.004	8.924	-1.405	0.282	0.245			
Dosso	-1.422	0.008	0.241	1.165	0.080	3.205	0.299	0.718	1.348	4.096	0.000	60.111
Maradi	-0.460	0.369	0.632	1.698	0.006	5.463	0.273	0.728	1.314	2.486	0.036	12.008
Tahoua	-0.786	0.106	0.456	2.578	0.000	13.175	-0.260	0.733	0.771			
Tillabéri	-0.251	0.620	0.778	1.565	0.011	4.782	-0.963	0.275	0.382	0.711	0.567	2.036
Zinder	-0.874	0.090	0.417	1.076	0.088	2.932	0.921	0.241	2.512	0.536	0.723	1.709
Niamey	-0.800	0.169	0.449	1.703	0.011	5.490	-0.098	0.916	0.907	2.329	0.086	10.267
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	-0.063	0.702	0.939	0.397	0.043	1.487	0.290	0.207	1.336	-0.066	0.853	0.936
Satisfaction with the government's performance	0.883	0.000	2.417	-0.567	0.004	0.567	-0.389	0.095	0.678	-0.095	0.781	0.909
Democratic attitude (index)	-0.035	0.544	0.966	0.121	0.071	1.129	0.108	0.158	1.114	-0.078	0.556	0.925
Constant	-0.035	0.949	0.965	-3.212	0.000	0.040	-1.971	0.019	0.139	-5.324	0.000	0.005
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.133			0.177			0.189			0.453		

TANZANIA (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=859)

Dependent Variable:	CCM			CUF			CHADEMA		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	0.166	0.344	1.181	-0.274	0.307	0.760	0.155	0.656	1.168
Age (> 35)	0.481	0.007	1.617	-0.670	0.016	0.512	-0.451	0.205	0.637
Religion (ref: Christian)									
Islam	-0.201	0.359	0.818	1.621	0.000	5.060	-0.790	0.077	0.454
other or none	-0.277	0.362	0.758	0.622	0.311	1.864	0.199	0.725	1.220
Education	-0.136	0.011	0.872	0.066	0.416	1.068	0.056	0.612	1.058
Ethnic group (ref: Other)									
Chagga	-0.425	0.188	0.654	-1.035	0.211	0.355	0.519	0.289	1.681
Sukuma	-1.064	0.012	0.345	0.447	0.490	1.564	-0.561	0.539	0.571
Nyamwezi	0.223	0.599	1.250	0.541	0.339	1.718			
Haya	-0.681	0.173	0.506	1.221	0.104	3.390	-0.059	0.945	0.943
Ngoni	-0.855	0.118	0.425				0.643	0.462	1.903
Makonde	-0.009	0.986	0.991	0.886	0.167	2.425	0.826	0.367	2.284
Fipa	0.206	0.642	1.229	1.445	0.114	4.243	0.366	0.787	1.442
Region (ref: Mtwara)									
Arusha	-0.170	0.731	0.843	-1.226	0.284	0.293	2.048	0.002	7.755
Dodoma	0.634	0.218	1.885	0.170	0.824	1.186	0.917	0.231	2.502
Kagera	0.564	0.357	1.757	0.155	0.867	1.168			
Kilimanjaro	-0.139	0.775	0.870	0.595	0.418	1.814	1.734	0.012	5.664
Dar es Salaam	-0.395	0.418	0.673	1.742	0.005	5.708	0.400	0.629	1.492
Mwanza	1.359	0.025	3.892	0.013	0.988	1.013	0.353	0.727	1.424
Rukwa	-0.210	0.694	0.811	-1.407	0.224	0.245	-1.010	0.488	0.364
Ruvuma	1.587	0.012	4.889						
Tabora	-0.332	0.514	0.717	1.145	0.107	3.142	0.876	0.256	2.401
Zanzibar	-0.367	0.457	0.693	1.543	0.013	4.676			
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	-0.009	0.960	0.991	-0.117	0.678	0.889	0.700	0.066	2.013
Satisfaction with the government's performance	1.220	0.000	3.388	-0.991	0.001	0.371	-0.930	0.013	0.395
Democratic attitude index	-0.210	0.003	0.811	0.374	0.001	1.454	0.484	0.002	1.622
Constant	1.638	0.007	5.145	-4.866	0.000	0.008	-5.743	0.000	0.003
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.242			0.334			0.231		

ZAMBIA (Binary logistic regression model for voting for a political party; N=825)

Dependent Variable:	MMD			UPND			UNIP		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (female)	0.031	0.850	1.031	-0.004	0.983	0.996	0.012	0.966	1.012
Age (> 32)	-0.267	0.098	0.765	-0.083	0.637	0.921	0.277	0.318	1.320
Religion (ref: Catholic)									
Protestant	-0.079	0.721	0.924	0.183	0.463	1.201	-0.032	0.923	0.968
other or none	0.067	0.758	1.069	0.157	0.525	1.170	-0.366	0.302	0.694
Urban residence (not rural)	-1.475	0.015	0.229	0.539	0.313	1.714	0.588	0.481	1.800
Education	-0.138	0.000	0.871	0.129	0.003	1.137	-0.169	0.005	0.845
Ethnic group (ref: Tonga)									
Bemba	0.365	0.387	1.440	-1.475	0.000	0.229	0.418	0.588	1.519
Lozi	0.864	0.060	2.374	-1.038	0.018	0.354	-0.239	0.807	0.787
Nyanja	0.532	0.270	1.702	-1.005	0.032	0.366	0.955	0.250	2.600
Tumbuka	0.786	0.130	2.194	-1.841	0.003	0.159	0.521	0.577	1.684
Nsenga	0.656	0.202	1.928	-0.928	0.052	0.395	0.823	0.323	2.278
Chewa	1.541	0.001	4.670	-2.125	0.000	0.119	0.765	0.352	2.149
Ngoni	0.937	0.078	2.553	-1.580	0.013	0.206	1.247	0.149	3.479
Other	0.815	0.043	2.260	-1.003	0.006	0.367	-0.143	0.859	0.867
Region (ref: Lusaka)									
Copperbelt	0.434	0.214	1.544	-0.726	0.060	0.484	0.043	0.936	1.043
Eastern	-0.849	0.180	0.428	-0.088	0.882	0.916	0.704	0.437	2.022
Luapula	-0.761	0.237	0.467	0.305	0.587	1.356	0.331	0.698	1.392
Western	-1.187	0.078	0.305	1.235	0.050	3.439	1.544	0.145	4.681
Southern	-0.114	0.864	0.892	0.628	0.298	1.873	-1.163	0.350	0.312
Satisfaction with one's own economic situation	0.368	0.052	1.445	-0.267	0.229	0.766	-1.134	0.002	0.322
Satisfaction with the government's performance	1.010	0.000	2.746	-0.601	0.006	0.548	-0.205	0.545	0.814
Democratic attitude (index)	-0.058	0.359	0.944	0.190	0.007	1.209	-0.006	0.952	0.994
Constant	0.364	0.634	1.440	-1.877	0.011	0.153	-1.956	0.112	0.141
Nagelkerkes R^2	0.210			0.214			0.154		

Note: Variables

Independent Variable	Operationalization / Reference group	Country specifics
Sex	male = 0, female = 1	
Age	median-split	Median = 32 in Zambia, 33 in Benin & Burkina Faso, 35 in malawi. Mali. Niger & Tanzania. 38 in Ghana
Religion	reference: usually all Christians. some derogations	Derogations: Islam vs all other in Mali, none in Niger (~100% Muslims), Catholic in Zambia
Urban/rural	rural = 0, urban = 1	
Education	range: 1 (no school education) to 9 (graduate)	
Ethnic group	reference: largest ethnic group in the survey	Fon in Benin, Mossi in Burkina Faso, Akan in Ghana, Chewa in Malati, Bambara in Mali, Haussa & small minorites in Niger, Other (minority groups) in Tanzania, Tonga in Zambia
Region	reference: region whose distribution of voting intentions has been the most proportional to the national average (using Gallagher index; including all parties above 2% of voting intentions in the survey)	Collines in Benin, Cascades & Sud-Ouest in Burkina Faso, Brong Ahafo in Ghana, Central Region in Malati, Sikasso in Mali, Agadez in Niger, Mtwara in Tanzania, Lusaka in Zambia
Satisfaction with own economic situation	(very) dissatisfied = 0, (very) satisfied = 1	
Satisfaction with the government's performance	(very) dissatisfied = 0, (very) satisfied = 1	
Democratic attitude index	range: 0 to 6, based on six survey questions which allowed for two answer options of which only one has met normative minimal standards of democracy	