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EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S NOTE

Staffan I. Lindberg, V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg



None of us have failed to note the challenging times for democracy we live in. Freedom House just came out with its annual report "Democracy in Crisis", in which the USA is downgraded on political rights for the first time, and they noted the 12th year of decline in the global average of political rights and civil liberties. Varieties of Democracy's annual report 2017 "Democracy at Dusk?" noted significant backsliding in a number of countries even if there are also advances. The debate on backsliding – its extent, nature, and future prospects – goes on, and should go on.

We cannot but note, however, that democracy is challenged from religious extremists, right-wing nationalists, and populists of various inclinations. It may be the beginning of a "third wave of reversals", but it may also turn out to be a temporary setback of less global significance than we perhaps fear right now.

In this situation, our section's members have a special duty I believe to assess the best we can how democracy works and does not, what the trends are, and to engage actively in the public debate. Many of you certainly do. But if we believe in the good of democracy and the role of social science in advancing towards better societies, I think many of us could do more.

We need to base our public engagement on science, naturally. Therefore I am very proud of the current issue of the APSA CD Newsletter, pulled together by Ruth Carlitz, Adam Harris, Kristen Kao, and Ellen Lust. After a series of books and articles have challenged whether the core of democracy – the accountability mechanism between voters and their representatives – works at all, this is a very welcome and important set of contributions. I hope the authors will bring the results and their implications to the public debate in the coming months.

I also wish to encourage, indeed urge, everyone to shoulder our responsibility as intellectuals. We cannot just speak with each other and admire our peer-reviewed articles. Engage at this time. The world needs to hear you.

INTRO

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Adam S. Harris, University College London

Kristen Kao, University of Gothenburg

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A core assumption of democratic accountability is that citizens elect representatives to make public policies and other decisions on their behalf. It follows that voters should choose candidates whose policy positions most closely reflect their preferences, and whom they believe have the capacity to deliver. Yet, there is evidence that voter choice in many developing democracies is driven by non-programmatic considerations. That being said, it is rarely so simple that voters in low-income countries just sell their votes to the highest bidder.

This issue of the APSA-CD newsletter examines varied logics of vote choice beyond the canonical model of democratic accountability. The essays that follow consider how ethnic identities, social ties, and information on performance affect voters' expectations of candidates' responsiveness, and corresponding choices when voters go to the polls. They also show that the factors that drive voting may depend on the office at stake. These studies are characterized by a range of methodological innovations that permit the authors to identify causal effects.

In the opening article, Eric Arias presents emerging findings from EGAP's Metaketa initiative on Information and Accountability. He highlights the importance of thinking about voters' prior beliefs, while also examining the ways in which social networks can moderate the effects of informational interventions.

Next, Adam Harris, Kristen Kao, and Ellen Lust provide additional insights into the role of social ties, presenting evidence that partisanship and ethnicity play different roles in local and national elections. Their analysis of a conjoint experiment implemented in Malawi reveals that ethnicity is not a significant predictor of vote choice in local elections. Rather, such voters prefer candidates who are co-partisan. However, in both parliamentary and presidential elections ethnicity is the only significant predictor of vote choice.

The following two essays deepen our understanding of how voters process information and make decisions. Luis Schiumerini considers why incumbency provides an electoral advantage in some settings and a disadvantage in others. He combines a regression discontinuity design with panel data on the performance of subnational incumbents in Latin America to show that the size of the electoral differential between incumbents and challengers hinges on how much incumbents improve public goods spending relative to their predecessors.

Karen Ferree then highlights the challenges of information processing and decision-making in situations of complexity and uncertainty. She presents the findings of a survey experiment implemented during the 2013 national elections in Kenya, which suggests that voters resort to ethnic shortcuts when mixed outcomes (poor performance in some areas but not in others) raise the complexity of evaluating incumbent performance.

Finally, Kristen Kao, Ellen Lust, and Lise Rakner challenge the conventional wisdom that poor voters prefer electoral hand-outs. They examine voter preferences in Malawi and find that candidates who seek votes through short-term, self-interested incentives (i.e., vote buying) may actually lose support among the poor. Rather, Malawian voters respond most favorably to promises of community goods.

These essays take important first steps in answering a number of important questions in the burgeoning literature on elections. Still more remains to be done to understand fully how voters prioritize different allegiances, when information about candidate performance results in electoral sanctioning, or the extent to which the factors that drive vote choice depend on the office at stake. Nevertheless, we hope these essays provide insights and inspiration, fostering further studies on elections and clientelism.

PROMISES AND PERILS OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVENTIONS FOR ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Eric Arias, Princeton University



Canonical models of electoral accountability suggest that incumbent performance information is essential for voters to identify and elect desirable politicians. Electoral accountability is not only a cornerstone of democracy, but is especially important in developing contexts where weak political institutions may otherwise fail to constrain corruption and its pernicious consequences. However, the extant experimental and quasi-experimental literature provides mixed findings as to the extent to which informing voters of poor performance results in electoral sanctioning: some studies show that good performance is indeed rewarded and bad performance is punished, whereas others observe little effect of information provision, or even suggest that bad performance is actually rewarded.

A series of ongoing research efforts have tackled such puzzling mixed-findings. A leading example is Evidence in the Governance and Politics (EGAP) Metaketa initiative on Information and Accountability, where seven projects coordinated similar interventions across six countries to experimentally analyze (and meta-analyze) the influence of information about politician performance on electoral accountability.¹ In this article, I draw on my experience and ongoing research from one of these seven projects – along with Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín – to discuss new findings and lessons surrounding the informational sources of electoral

accountability.² In particular, I aim to illustrate newfound nuances in our theoretical arguments, briefly outline novel discoveries, and highlight the challenges and limitations ahead for further understanding the promises and perils of informational interventions.

Information and Accountability: Evidence from Mexico

It is useful to describe the informational intervention underlying many of the results described below. We teamed up with a local, non-partisan, and transparency-focused NGO, Borde Político, and conducted a large-scale informational campaign during the 2015 Mexican elections. Specifically, we provided voters with leaflets describing information from official audits revealing the way in which municipal governments had spent earmarked funds.³ All informational

treatments were randomized at the electoral precinct level, Mexico's lowest level of electoral aggregation. This allows us to examine voting outcomes at the precinct level while also complementing them with survey data.

Mexico is an informative case as its key political features, such as legacies of authoritarian rule, weak, prone to capture institutions, and widespread clientelism, are commonly shared across the world. Indeed, it is such clientelistic nature of political transactions that hinders accountability, which in turn makes informational interventions of this kind so relevant.

Evaluating Performance: What Do Voters Do with Political Information?

How do voters process and react to receiving political information? Broadly speaking, one can think of two related, but separate dynamics, namely (i) individual-level and (ii) social or community based processes. Below I highlight new findings that shed light onto how one can think about each one.

Individual Dynamics: The Role of Individual Beliefs

A core insight from our research is that thinking about voters' prior beliefs can help us to rationalize the mixed findings in the literature. The logic is powerfully simple. If voters already believe that their incumbent party is malfeasant, even the provision of information about what would seemingly be relatively severe malfeasance (e.g., 20% of mismanaged funds) can actually increase incumbent support as long as these revelations are less serious than expected (thus representing "good news"). This can explain why well-intentioned interventions can sometimes produce

¹ Thad Dunning, Guy Grossman, Macartan Humphreys, Susan Hyde and Craig McIntosh, *Metaketa I: The Limits of Electoral Accountability* (Cambridge University Press Forthcoming).

² This work consists of: Eric Arias, Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín, "Does the Content and Mode of Delivery of Information Matter for Electoral Accountability? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Mexico," Working Paper (2017a); Eric Arias, Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín, "Priors rule: When do malfeasance revelations help or hurt incumbent parties?" Working Paper (2017b); Eric Arias, Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín, "When Does Information Increase Electoral Accountability? Lessons from a Field Experiment In Mexico," in Thad Dunning, Guy Grossman, Macartan Humphreys, Susan Hyde and Craig McIntosh (eds.) *Metaketa I: The Limits of Electoral Accountability* (Cambridge University Press Forthcoming); Eric Arias, Pablo Balán, Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín, "Malfeasance Revelations, Coordination Through Social Networks and Electoral Sanctioning: Experimental Evidence from Mexico," Working Paper (2017).

³ For each municipality, the leaflet focused on either the proportion of spending that does not benefit the poor, or unauthorized spending.

Arias

perverse consequences in terms of supporting malfeasant politicians.

Our research in Mexico pushes forward this argument and leverages a rich set of measures to test it. We find that Mexican voters – who, like voters in many contexts, possess low expectations about politicians' use of funds – on average actually reward municipal incumbent parties revealed to have wrongfully acted while in office. However, such average increase in incumbent party vote share masks an important heterogeneity. In particular, information increased support for the incumbent in places where low malfeasance was revealed, where voters already believed that their incumbent party was highly malfeasant, and favorably updated their beliefs regarding incumbent party performance. Conversely, voters punished their incumbent party at the polls in cases of outstandingly high malfeasance (i.e., above 50% of mismanaged funds) and in places where voters updated most unfavorably about their incumbent's malfeasance.

Beyond supporting politicians that are arguably malfeasant, some informational interventions have also identified a disengagement effect – i.e., a suppression of turnout. Once again, considering the role of individual prior beliefs can provide a way to reconciling evidence of both engagement and disengagement. We do so with a novel non-linear argument. Consider the case where voters are bimodally distributed in supporting one of two parties. Information that induces voters to update their beliefs, but not by much, can then motivate voters around one mode to abstain as their relative preference between the parties no longer exceeds the costs of turning out. In contrast, surprising revelations might actually increase turnout by inducing voters who previously

abstained (or even support the other party) to now turn out to vote for the party shown to be less malfeasant.

Indeed, we find support for this prediction: relatively unsurprising information – i.e., 20-30% of funds misspent – depresses turnout by around 1 percentage point. Conversely, extreme cases of malfeasance – both 0% and above 50% – mobilize turnout by around 1 percentage point.

This demonstrates the importance of voter prior beliefs in understanding when political information might influence voting behavior, and in which direction.

Social Dynamics: The Role of Social Networks

The process through which voters incorporate newly provided information into their political behavior does not take place in a social vacuum. We know that social interactions matter for behavior in general, and for political behavior in particular, such as turnout or protests.⁴ As such, one should conjecture that social dynamics can moderate the effects of informational interventions.

Social networks could moderate the link between information and accountability in two main ways. Networks can facilitate voter learning through information diffusion. Additionally, networks can also induce people to coordinate on voting for the better candidate. However, we know surprisingly little about which of these is more prevalent. As these dynamics often reinforce each other, disentangling them can be difficult.

Our intervention in Mexico actually provides a fertile ground to empirically

separate these two mechanisms. Crucially, in our context voters generally believed the incumbent to be more malfeasant than challenger parties. That is, despite the fact that the informational intervention led some voters to believe that the incumbent party was better than they had expected, it did not change the fact that, on average, voters still believed the incumbent party to be more malfeasant than challengers. This context allows us to distinguish whether coordination or diffusion is the driving force behind any moderating role of social networks: while networks' coordinating role should decrease support for the incumbent after information is provided (as voters coordinate on the less malfeasant party, namely the challenger), the diffusion mechanism should instead increase support for the incumbent (as voters diffuse the "good news" about how the incumbent party is better than previously thought).

Using several approaches that aggregate individual-level networks within precincts, we find that the structure of social networks indeed moderates the link between political information and electoral accountability. While, as noted above, information increased incumbent party vote share on average, this effect was smaller in more socially connected precincts. This suggests a coordination effect rather than a diffusion one. To further support such interpretation, where social networks facilitated tacit and explicit voter coordination against the incumbent party, we turned to survey data. Supporting this argument, voters in more socially connected precincts engaged more with the information provided, were more likely to know that others in their community received the information, and importantly, were also more likely to report that discussion with others about the information changed the way they and others voted.

⁴ See, e.g., David Nickerson, "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence From Two Field Experiments," *American Political Science Review* 102.1 (2008): 49-57.

The coordination emphasis of social networks is not only important for policy reasons, but also for interpreting the extant mixed findings in the literature. One could imagine that coordination dynamics help explain why the effects of information provided by the media or in public settings are notably larger than interventions that privately distribute leaflets to voters.⁵

Unpacking Political Information

Thinking about how voters internalize and share political information naturally leads to analyzing political information per se. This is an issue of crucial importance as we know that not all political information is the same. Across studies political information relies on different content, it is drawn from different sources, with different methods of delivery – and all these features might even have differential effects across contexts. These are both theoretically and policy relevant considerations. As such, shedding light on the mechanisms underlying them has been the focus of recent research.

Here, I discuss evidence from two of these aspects, namely the type of information and the method of delivery. First, to examine the effect of providing voters with a benchmark against which to compare their municipality's malfeasance, we supplemented the leaflet by providing the average performance of mayors from other parties within the state. Intuitively, this is important

because in order for information to be effective, individuals should believe that a better option is feasible.

Second, to vary the extent to which the distribution of the leaflets is common knowledge among voters within the precinct, we also varied whether leaflet delivery was accompanied by a loudspeaker informing voters that their neighbors would also receive the information and encouraging them to share and discuss it. As public signals have the potential to induce tacit or explicit coordination, this could have strengthened the responses to information through mechanisms often attributed to mass media.

Overall, we find little evidence that either variant of the information treatments differentially affected voters. This finding, however, merits further consideration. With respect to the benchmark condition, it is unclear if the treatment overloaded voters with information, or simply they did not believe it to be relevant. With respect to the loudspeaker, despite increasing common knowledge, it did not significantly enhance voter coordination.⁶ This insight is relevant as the largest documented effects of information on electoral accountability include a role for broadcast media or public settings. On one hand, this might reflect the comparatively limited reach and salience of leaflets relative to radio or television, as well as the media's greater potential to facilitate common knowledge.⁷ On the other hand, the

nature of updating associated with media dissemination may also be qualitatively different. Future research is required to determine what underlies the different effects induced by mass media (e.g., credibility, facilitate common knowledge, etc.) Similarly, and specially relevant for a media-abundant context, an open question remains as to how repeated exposure to information can shape long-run belief formation. For instance, future research might actually disseminate political information in actual media outlets.

Nevertheless, these are only two of many characteristics that define political information. Moving forward, it is also important to shed light on the extent to which other features might influence the information – accountability nexus.

First, the *source of information* might matter. Across studies, the source of information varies widely. For instance, using publicly available data vis-à-vis using information exclusively created for a given intervention. These are not trivial elements as it is likely the case that citizens do process information differently depending on the source, be it because of trust or other issues.

Similarly, the *source of delivery* might matter. That is, who is the 'face of the intervention' could have non-trivial consequences. We had an extraordinary, well-suited partner in the non-partisan NGO Borde Político. Other studies have, understandably, been implemented with a more partisan color. In a similar fashion, interventions can be more or less linked to foreign actors, for instance, USAID.

⁵ Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and James Snyder, "Publicizing Malfeasance: How Local Media Facilitates Electoral Sanctioning of Mayors in Mexico." Working Paper (2017); and Alberto Chong, Ana De La O, Dean Karlan and Leonard Wantchekon, "Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope? A Field Experiment in Mexico on Voter Turnout, Choice, and Party Identification," 77.1 (2014): 55-71.

⁶ Voters in the loudspeaker treatment were more likely to correctly recall that the leaflets were delivered accompanied by a loudspeaker (but it was somewhat low at about 10%) and were significantly more likely to believe that a large fraction of their community received the leaflets.

⁷ See, e.g., Eric Arias, "How Does Media

Influence Social Norms? Experimental Evidence on the Role of Common Knowledge" *Political Science Research and Methods*, (Forthcoming).

Finally, the *political* characteristics of the accountability link at hand might also matter. For instance, different studies analyze different levels of analysis, where accountability is tested sometimes at the local level whereas in other cases is tested at the national level (e.g., local mayors vs national legislators). Importantly, accountability may operate very differently for local politicians who have executive responsibilities and whose actions are potentially more observable to voters, than for national politicians.

Researchers should not only be cautious when interpreting evidence in light of these considerations, but should also keep exploring the 'black-box' of information. By so doing we will undoubtedly better understand how these features mediate, if at all, the link between information and accountability.

Challenges & Implications

Partial vs General Equilibrium: Political Responses

Another important lesson from these projects is to further account for the role of strategic political responses. Such responses can take the form of obstacles and intimidation in order to prevent the intervention from continuing (or even beginning in the first place). They can also take the form of strategic actions to counteract it, or even exploit it for an advantage. While the former is common and fully intuitive, the latter aspect is not raised often.

For instance, our staff and implementation team faced political pushback from political-party operatives in a handful of locations. When leaflet distribution began, Borde Político started receiving both complaints about the leaflet as well as inquiries about producing additional leaflets so as to engage in negative campaigning. On

other occasions, party operatives took actions sabotaging or neutralizing our intervention. For example, in Cuatiltlán Izcali, Estado de Mexico, local police detained our team and also confiscated the leaflets they were distributing. Days later, forged versions of those leaflets, attacking another party were falsely distributed on behalf of Borde Político. Beyond specific cases, our survey asked respondents whether the incumbent or opposition parties reacted to our intervention – that is, if they made reference to our leaflets via different means (e.g., as flyers, campaign rallies, media outlets, etc.). Respondents in treated precincts recalled that both incumbent and challenger local party organizations discredited or incorporated malfeasance reports into their campaigns.

Crucially, this suggests that researchers should consider the general equilibrium effects of their interventions – examining the conditions under which incumbents and challengers engage with informational interventions in different ways, and the extent to which that influences the estimands of interest.

External Validity is Dead, Long Live External Validity

Another important lesson comes from the joint effort lead by EGAP's first Metaketa initiative. It is arguably the case that only by coordinating and harmonizing interventions across different contexts we can begin to address the well-known issues of external validity. This approach of 'cluster' or 'linked' interventions is not only being advocated by EGAP but also by other funding initiatives such as the Economic Development and Institutions (EDI) research programme. Of course, such progress comes with important challenges. Above all, a key take-away from harmonizing efforts is that context is king. As such, it might be hard – and even not possible – to

achieve the level of harmonization secured by, say, laboratory experiments where the same game is replicated across settings. In a way, this only further emphasizes the importance of enhancing our understanding about how differences in the types of information, methods of delivery, and so on, affect how we think about voter responses.

Going Forward

While informational interventions are no panacea to improve governance, there are reasons for optimism. A clear reason is that we see voters who process performance information and incorporate it into their voting behavior. A cautionary point, however, is that we also see pervasive low expectations – e.g., in Mexico, the fact that up to 40% of misused funds implies good news is worrying for good governance. Thus, a key challenge for moving forward is not only to further understand the origins of voter prior beliefs, but to design interventions aimed at increasing voters' expectations and demands on politicians; these might well be a prerequisite for other interventions to produce the desired effect. Pushing towards a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of how voters process information – i.e., more nuanced theoretical arguments as well as opening up the black-box of information – will allow us to better understand the information–accountability nexus, and as a result, we will be better equipped to inform policies to improve governance.

THE DETERMINANTS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL VOTE CHOICE: EVIDENCE FROM A CONJOINT EXPERIMENT

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Kristen Kao, University of Gothenburg

Ellen Lust, University of Gothenburg



Scholars have spent enormous

energy studying the politics of elections in developing countries but have paid little attention to differences between local, legislative, and presidential elections. While scholars study politics across the electoral cycle, they pay little attention to distinguishing between the politics of local, parliamentary or presidential elections. Moreover, local elections are particularly understudied, even in the West. When local elections have been examined, results are often presented as findings that are generalizable to other elections.¹ But to what extent is this true? Are the dynamics of elections at different levels similar, and are the same drivers relevant to voters' choices?

In this essay, we argue that there are reasons to believe the answer is "no". First, local representatives, parliamentarians, and presidents have very different roles and responsibilities. Second, national level politicians generally have better access to resources, while local level politicians need their counterparts at the national level in order to gain access to resources. Consequently, voters should weigh candidate characteristics differently as they head to the polls to elect representatives at each level of government.

Examining the drivers of voting across electoral levels is important for several reasons. First, local elections are significant in their own right. Local election results can have important implications regarding access to resources, and they are often viewed as stepping stones for higher level offices. Moreover, the outcomes of local elections affect center-periphery relations. For example, if the local council is dominated by the opposition, the national-level ruling party could easily obstruct their ability to perform by withholding resources. If partisanship has such effects on the ability to govern, then local elections also likely present fertile ground for the development of partisan politics and likely the deepening of democracy in newly democratizing contexts. Finally, understanding the differences in drivers of voting for local and national elections provides insight into scope conditions for electoral studies. When theories fail to hold across elections, we are prompted to consider the underlying conditions that shape dynamics and, consequently, the limitations of our findings.

We focus on two key drivers of voting: co-ethnicity and partisanship. A large body of research illustrates that co-ethnicity is an important factor in African elections.² However, recent research

has also shown that partisanship also matters, and that ethnicity and partisanship are interrelated and often conditional on one another.³ Both co-ethnicity and co-partisanship offer signals to voters concerning shared interests and commitment to campaign promises, offer cues that are particularly important in information-poor environments, and are likely to reinforce motivated reasoning.⁴

³ Michael Bratton, Ravi Bhavnani, and Tse-Hsin Chen, "Voting intentions in Africa: Ethnic, economic, or partisan?" *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 50.1 (2012): 27–52; Elizabeth Carlson, "Finding partisanship where we least expect it: Evidence of partisan bias in a new African democracy," *Political Behavior*, 38.1 (2015).

⁴ Leonard Wantchekon, "Clientelism and voting behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin," *World Politics*, 55 (2003): 399–422; Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (Cambridge University Press 2004); Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2005); Jóhanna Birnir, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics* (Cambridge University Press 2007); Karen Ferree, and Jeremy Horowitz, "Ties that bind? The rise and decline of ethno-regional partisanship in Malawi, 1994–2009," *Democratization*, 17.3 (2010): 534–563; Karen Ferree, *Framing the Race in South Africa: The Political Origins of Racial Census Elections* (Cambridge University Press 2011); Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz, "Information and ethnic politics in Africa," *British Journal of Political Science*, 43 (2012): 345–373. Elizabeth Carlson, "Ethnic voting and accountability in Africa: A choice experiment in Uganda" *World Politics* 67.2 (2015): 353–385; Elizabeth Carlson, "Finding partisanship where we least expect it: Evidence of partisan bias in a new African democracy," *Political Behavior*, 38.1 (2015); Claire Adida, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon, and Gwyneth McClendon, "Overcoming or reinforcing co-ethnic preferences? An experiment on information and ethnic voting," 2016, available at http://cega.berkeley.edu/assets/miscellaneous_files/AGKM_Ethnicity_revised.pdf.

¹ Melissa Marshall, Paru Shah, and Anirudh Ruhil, "The study of local elections: Editor's introduction: A looking glass into the future," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44.1 (2011): 97–100; and Christopher Berry and William Howell, "Accountability and local elections: Rethinking retrospective voting," *Journal of Politics*, 69 (2007): 844–858

² Matthias Basedau and Alexander Stroh, "How ethnic are African parties really? Evidence from four francophone countries," *International Political Science Review*, 33.1 (2011): 5–24; Raphael Frank, and Ilia Rainer, "Does the leader's ethnicity matter? Ethnic favoritism, education, and health in sub-saharan Africa," *American Political Science Review*, 106.2 (2012): 294–325; and Jeremy Horowitz, "Ethnicity and Campaign Effects in Africas Multiethnic Democracies: Evidence from Kenya," *British Journal of Political Science*, (Forthcoming).

Further, recent research questions the ethnic census characterization of elections in the developing world,⁵ but it does not examine how the importance of ethnicity varies between local and national levels. Indeed, most studies of partisanship and ethnicity in Africa investigate national-level elections. We need to move the debate over ethnicity and partisanship forward by considering the relative importance of ethnicity and partisanship in local, parliamentary, and presidential elections.

Specifically, we argue that partisanship and ethnicity play different roles in local and national elections. Partisanship will play a more important role in determining vote choice in local elections because local officials need to access resources and, as national officials tend to reward co-partisans, party affiliation is a better signal of ability to tap into the reserves of the central state. In contrast, co-ethnicity is more important for national level elections, as these officials are able to access resources directly and expected to channel resources to co-ethnics.

⁵ Karen Ferree, Clark Gibson, and Barak Hoffman, "Explaining the African vote," Working Paper (2009), University of California San Diego; Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz, "Who are Africa's (non) ethnic voters? Evaluating theories on the salience of ethnicity in African electoral politics," Presented at the APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting; Nahomi Ichino, and Noah Nathan, "Crossing the line: Local ethnic geography and voting in Ghana," *American Political Science Review*, 107.2 (2013): 344–361; James Long and Clark Gibson, "Evaluating the roles of ethnicity and performance in African elections: Evidence from an exit poll in Kenya," *Political Research Quarterly* 68.4 (2015): 830–842; Kristen Kao, Ethnicity, electoral institutions, and Clientelism: Authoritarianism in Jordan, Working Paper (2015); and Adam Harris, Misfit politics: Identity construction and racial block voting, Working Paper (2015), University of Gothenburg.

Ethnicity and Partisanship in Local, Parliamentary, and Presidential Elections

Let us begin by considering the distinctive features of local, parliamentary and national elections. The resources, power, and roles of local councilors, members of parliament, and the president varies widely. These factors should affect the strategic calculations of voters as well as how different candidate attributes affect their ballot choices. In much of the world, local representatives are weak, with little control over budgets and limited ability to tax. Given this, if local councilors are to have influence, they need to have good relations and political connections with more powerful central actors.⁶ Parliamentarians, in contrast, have more financial latitude, particularly in many countries in which they control Constituency Development Funds (CDFs). Presidents are arguably the least financially constrained and exercise greatest power and influence. Politicians elected at the national level have greater resources, but given resource constraints, they tend to focus their efforts on certain communities. At the national level, co-ethnicity with a politician has been shown to increase the likelihood of receiving services.⁷

⁶ This logic resonates with research in Zambia, which finds that voters consider the strength of the relationship between local elites and parliamentary candidates when making decisions at the ballot box. See, Kate Baldwin, "Why vote with the chief? Political connections and public goods provision in Zambia," *American Journal of Political Science*, 57.4 (2013): 794–809.

⁷ Eric Kramon and Daniel Posner, "Who benefits from distributive politics? How the outcome one studies affects the answer one gets," *Perspectives on Politics*, 11.2 (2013): 461–474; Raphael Frank and Ilia Rainer, "Does the leader's ethnicity matter? Ethnic favoritism, education, and health in sub-saharan Africa," *American Political Science Review*, 106.2 (2013): 294–325; and Simon Ejdemyr, Eric

Therefore, ethnicity is likely a key driver of national vote choice.

Partisanship not only offers cues to voters concerning relationships between the elected officials and voters, but also between political actors. We expect these cues to be particularly important in local elections because local officials rely on more powerful political actors to serve as their link to central government resources. In this case, we should expect partisanship to signal that the local official can obtain resources through political party members in power at the central level. If voters have greater assurance that the candidate will be connected to networks of power, they are more likely to support the candidate. Co-partisanship, particularly with strong parties, provides such hope. Such cues are much less important for high office-holders, where gaining the office alone affords the necessary power and resources to make good on campaign promises, govern, or provide patronage.

Further, in line with extant literature, we anticipate that voters will prefer co-ethnic candidates, but we argue that they are more likely to do so in national elections.⁸ While much of the literature posits that candidates are obligated to provide services to their co-ethnics once in office,⁹ we argue that the expectation

Kramon, & Amanda Robinson, "Segregation, Ethnic Favoritism, and the Strategic Targeting of Local Public Goods," Paper presented at American Political Science Association Annual Conference 2015. <http://bit.ly/2aqMCy3>.

⁸ Of course, we recognize that there is some overlap between ethnicity and partisanship are highly inter-related [see Elizabeth Carlson, "Finding partisanship where we least expect it: Evidence of partisan bias in a new African democracy," *Political Behavior*, 38.1 (2016): 129–154]]. However, this overlap is far from perfect, particularly in places like Malawi.

⁹ Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics*

that they prioritize co-ethnics is predicated on the expectation that they control resources. Importantly, given that national-level politicians control resources, once a local politician accesses them, s/he is likely obliged to benefit the co-ethnics of the higher authority and thus ethnicity of the local candidate is not of primary concern.

The preceding discussion leads to two key expectations. First, we expect that voters will prefer local candidates who are their co-partisan (rather than co-ethnic), given that they will see them as having the necessary links to the party structure and being capable of delivering patronage, good governance, etc. Second, voters in parliamentary and presidential elections are significantly more likely to prefer their co-ethnic (but not co-partisan) candidates. In sum, given that access to resources and power vary across elections, we anticipate that the importance voters place on ethnicity and partisanship in each election will also vary.

An Empirical Test in Malawi

We test the relative importance of ethnicity and partisanship on vote choice across election types using a conjoint experiment that presents each respondent with two candidates with randomly assigned attributes and asks the respondent to choose their preferred candidate.¹⁰ The experiment

in *Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2005); and Simon Ejdemyr, Eric Kramon and Amanda Robinson, "Segregation, Ethnic Favoritism, and the Strategic Targeting of Local Public Goods," Paper presented at American Political Science Association Annual Conference 2015. <http://bit.ly/2aqMCy3>.

¹⁰ Jens Hainmueller, Daniel Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto, "Causal inference in conjoint analysis: Understanding multidimensional choices via stated preference experiments," *Political Analysis*, 22.1 (2013): 1-30.

was embedded in the 2016 Malawi Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI) survey. The survey was conducted on over 8,100 Malawians although only a subset of the respondents (1,470) received the conjoint experiment. We asked respondents to choose between two candidates with randomly varied attributes (ethnicity, partisanship, gender, village of origin) and platforms (targeted, club, or public goods) for either local, national legislative, and executive office. After viewing the two candidates, we asked each respondent which of the two candidates she would most likely support. Responses to this question then constitutes our dependent variable.

Each respondent saw two elections (evaluated two pairs of candidates) of the same type. We randomly assigned respondents to local, parliamentary, or presidential elections, and in order to avoid confusing respondents over the type of election in question, each respondent participated in two elections of the same type. This experimental set up allows us to analyze the extent to which these factors affect respondents' assessments of candidates differentially across election types.

The results from OLS regression analysis reveal that in local elections voters prefer candidates who are co-partisan. Ethnicity is not a significant predictor of vote choice in local elections at conventional significance levels. However, in both parliamentary and presidential elections the only significant predictor of vote choice is ethnicity: voters prefer co-ethnicscandidates. These findings support the argument presented above and are robust to a number of specifications.

We also conduct additional analysis to more directly test the role of political

connections across officials as well as to determine if ethnicity does not matter in local elections because localities are not diverse, and in both cases the results support our main argument.¹¹

Conclusion

The results from the Malawi experiment suggest that partisanship is more important in determining vote choice than ethnicity in local elections, in contrast to much of the extant literature on voting in developing democracies. In local elections, co-partisanship likely acts as a better cue as to whether or not an individual is likely to benefit from a candidate's election to local office. This is the case because while the office itself lacks power and resources, a connection with a larger political party, offers added influence to the office. While few studies of elections in the developing world explore the role of ethnicity in local elections,¹² these results suggest that we cannot easily apply findings from national-level elections to local elections. Importantly, while the national election results ring true with the findings in much of the literature, when combined with the local elections results suggest that the portrayal of African politics as highly ethnicized may be overstated by the extant literature.

These findings have important implications. First, they suggest that conclusions drawn from studies of elections at one level - local, parliamentary or presidential - cannot simply be generalized to elections at

¹¹ For complete and additional analysis please contact the authors for the full working paper.

¹² A notable exception would be Gao's study of ethnic diversity in local elections in Jordan. See Eleanor Gao, "Tribal mobilization, fragmented groups, and public goods provision in Jordan," *Comparative Political Studies*, 49.10 (2016): 1372-1403.

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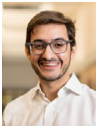
other levels. Simply because co-ethnicity with the candidate is an important predictor of vote choice in parliamentary and presidential elections does not necessarily indicate that it is equally important or operates in the same way at the local level. Further, partisanship arises as a key predictor of vote choice in local elections, suggesting that local elections could be fertile ground for the development of partisan politics in newly democratizing contexts. That said, the results also bring to light an important relationship between ethnicity and partisanship. Not only, as past studies have acknowledged, are partisanship and ethnicity interrelated,

but the ethnicity of a party and the ethnicity of an individual candidate may have distinct and often countervailing effects that vary by election type.

Finally, the findings of this paper demonstrate the need for further investigation of the differential effects of election type on electoral behavior and a move away from generalizing from one election type to another. This study is an important step toward this goal. While Malawi is representative of an African country in many ways, studies that further establish the external validity of these results are needed.

INCUMBENCY EFFECTS AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

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Officeholding politicians bear widely different electoral fortunes across the world. Incumbents enjoy a sizable electoral advantage in Argentina, Chile, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. But incumbents also suffer from an electoral disadvantage in other countries, such as Brazil, Ghana, Mexico, Peru, India, Romania and Ghana. This variation in incumbency effects has prompted a vibrant comparative research agenda. While earlier work focused on incumbency advantage in the U.S. Congress, recent studies zero in on incumbency disadvantage in subnational elections in the developing world. Why does incumbency provide an electoral advantage in some settings and a disadvantage in others? Why would voters prefer or oppose politicians by sole virtue of their incumbency status?

In this brief entry, I report on my ongoing research on incumbency effects in subnational elections in Latin America. I propose a theoretical argument and summarize evidence from Argentina, Brazil, and Chile that suggests that incumbency effects are the outcome of how citizens carry out electoral accountability in low information environments.

Incumbency Effects: What they are and why they matter

Let us begin with a working definition: an incumbency effect is the difference in the electoral success of incumbents and challengers that arises because incumbents hold office. This definition clarifies the normative problem that incumbency effects pose for democracy. Electoral accountability works because incumbents anticipate that voters will reward them for providing good representation. But this electoral

incentive diminishes if incumbents know that their electoral fortunes are influenced *ex ante* by holding office.

Incumbency effects thus represent an imperfect political equilibrium that weakens the quality of democratic accountability. The extent of this negative effect depends on why incumbency effects come about. In what follows, I present a critical review of the answers provided in the literature, and then offer an alternative interpretation.

Existing explanations

The dominant explanation for incumbency advantage in the U. S. Congress stresses the perks of office. These are institutional resources – including franking privilege, staff, media access, pork-barreling amendments – that allow incumbents to earn name recognition and signal their accomplishments to voters. Because challengers have no access to them, these perks provide incumbents with structural electoral advantage. But the perks of office cannot fully explain why voters would confer incumbents with a systematic advantage over challengers. Research on retrospective voting has shown that voters evaluate incumbents by benchmarking their performance against the past. If voters behave in this way, they should discount any accomplishments solely based on the perks from office and, as a result, not necessarily favor the incumbent. US-based explanations thus fail to account for the microfoundations of incumbency effects.¹

¹ This is a simplified version of the voluminous literature on incumbency advantage in the United States. For some key contributions see *inter alia* Robert Erikson, “The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections,” *Polity* 3 (1971): 395-405; David Mayhew, “Congressional Lections: The Case of the

Explanations of incumbency effects in the developing world pay more attention to voters. A well-established research tradition argues that incumbents can defeat the opposition by distributing targeted handouts and strategically allocating public employment to voters in exchange for support. Clientelism and patronage can produce an advantage to the officeholder pervasive enough to lead to the creation of subnational authoritarian enclaves.²

Vanishing Marginals,” *Polity* 6.3 (1974): 295-317; Stephen Ansolabehere, James Snyder Jr, and Charles Stewart III, “Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44.1 (2000): 17-34. For theory with clear microfoundations see Anthony Fowler, “A Bayesian Explanation for Incumbency Advantage,” Working Paper (2015), University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. On retrospective voting see for example Raymond Duch and Randolph Stevenson *The Economic Vote: How Political and Economic Institutions Condition Election Results* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008).

² See *inter alia* Beatriz Magaloni, Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, and Federico Estévez, “Clientelism and Portfolio Diversification: A Model of Electoral Investment with Applications to Mexico,” in *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (eds.), 182–205 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007); Susan Stokes, “Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina,” *American Political Science Review* 99.3 (2005): 315-325. On subnational authoritarianism see Edward Gibson, “Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Democratic Countries,” *World Politics* 58.1 (2005): 101-132; Carlos Gervasoni, “A Rentier Theory of Subnational Regimes: Fiscal Federalism, Democracy, and Authoritarianism in the Argentine Provinces,” *World Politics* 62.2 (2010): 302-340; Agustina Giraudy, *Democrats and Autocrats: Pathways of Subnational Undemocratic Regime Continuity within Democratic Countries* (Oxford University Press 2015).

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Motivated by the puzzle of incumbency disadvantage in places like India and Brazil, several studies stress the role of corruption. Klašnja develops a theory in which the over-supply of corrupt politicians leads to the election of rent-seeking incumbents, leaving voters with little choice but to oust them from office. This punishment may become an incumbency disadvantage equilibrium if voters have reasons to believe that rent extraction increases with time in office. In another piece, Klašnja exploits exogenous variation in the salaries of Romanian mayors to show that incumbency disadvantage increases with incentives for corruption.³

Beyond bad governance

Arguments that stress clientelism and corruption as sources of incumbency advantage and disadvantage suggest that incumbency effects emerge due to bad governance. The implications for democratic accountability are worrisome. If clientelism is so widespread that voters sell their votes or if corruption is so endemic that voters oust incumbents as a matter of course, incumbency effects represent a bad expectations equilibrium. Bad governance reproduces over time and voters cannot use the ballot to change the incentives of politicians.⁴

³ See Marko Klašnja, "Corruption and Incumbency Disadvantage: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of Politics* 77.4 2015: 928–942; Marko Klašnja, "Increasing Rents and Incumbency Disadvantage," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 28.2 (2016): 225–265; Marko Klašnja and Rocio Titunik, "The Incumbency Curse: Weak Parties, Term Limits, and Unfulfilled Accountability," *American Political Science Review* 111.1 (2017): 129–148; Toke Aidt, Miriam Golden and Devesh Tiwari, "Incumbents and Criminals in the Indian National Legislature," Paper presented at Yale Comparative Politics Workshop 2011.

⁴ Milan Svolik, "Learning to Love Democracy: Electoral Accountability and the Success of

There are, however, good empirical reasons to believe that incumbency effects may not be as detrimental as these theories suggest. The emerging consensus in studies of new democracies indicates that the electoral fortunes of incumbents are tightly linked with good governance in a variety of settings, including Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe.⁵

Building on this research, in my book project I develop a theory that reconciles incumbency effects with electoral accountability by stressing voters' imperfect evaluations of incumbent performance. This research combines case studies of municipalities, analyses of aggregate electoral results, and original survey experiments from Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

My point of departure is that voters use performance in office as a signal of the competence of the incumbent in contexts where political parties do not carry programmatic information. Voters focus on public goods provision when evaluating subnational incumbents. Yet,

Democracy," *American Journal of Political Science* 57.3 (2013): 685–702.

⁵ See, respectively, Ryan Carlin, Matthew Singer and Elisabeth Zechmeister, *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2015); Jaimie Bleck and Nicolas van de Walle, "Valence Issues in African Elections: Navigating Uncertainty and the Weight of the Past," *Comparative Political Studies* 46.11 (2013): 1394–1421; Marko Klašnja and Joshua Tucker "The Economy, Corruption, and the Vote: Evidence from Experiments in Sweden and Moldova," *Electoral Studies* 32.3 (2013): 536–543. Kao and co-authors present experimental evidence that the poor prefer public over particularistic goods. See Kristen Kao, Ellen Lust, and Lise Rakner. "Money Machine: Do the Poor Demand Clientelism?" Working Paper (2017), Program on Governance and Local Development, University of Gothenburg.

the public goods that voters observe do not depend solely on incumbent competence, but rather on funding by fiscal transfers from upper levels of government. These transfers hinge on exogenous factors, such as tax-sharing agreements, national policies, and international economic cycles. Voters, however, seldom have detailed knowledge about policy-making to fully discount these exogenous factors from their evaluations. These national-level exogenous factors systematically affect voters' performance evaluations making incumbency, on average, an advantage or a disadvantage.⁶

But voters can partially discount unprecedented shocks by comparing the performance their incumbents deliver against the performance delivered by other incumbents.⁷ This correction reduces incumbency effects and allows voters to partially discern competence from performance amidst exogenous

⁶ On how partisanship shapes retrospective voting see Mark Kayser and Christopher Wlezien, "Performance Pressure: Patterns of Partisanship and the Economic Vote," *European Journal of Political Research* 50.3 (2011): 365–394. On voting in multilevel settings see inter alia Cameron Anderson, "Economic Voting and Multilevel Governance: A Comparative Individual-Level Analysis," *American Journal of Political Science* 50.2 (2006): 449–463. On the impact of exogenous shocks on vote choice see inter alia Andrew Healy and Neal Malhotra, "Random Events, Economic Losses, and Retrospective Voting: Implications for Democratic Competence," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 5.2 (2010): 193–208; Daniela Campello and Cesar Zucco Jr, "Presidential success and the world economy," *The Journal of Politics* 78.2 (2016): 589–602.

⁷ Mark and Michael Peress, "Benchmarking across Borders: Electoral Accountability and the Necessity of Comparison," *American Political Science Review* 106.3 (2012): 661–684; Selim Aytaç, "Relative Performance and the Incumbent Vote: A Reference Point Theory," *The Journal of Politics*, (Forthcoming).

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shocks. As a result, incumbency effects should be heterogeneous within countries: incumbents who satisfy voters' expectations should defeat challengers and obtain an incumbency advantage, while those who disappoint voters will obtain an incumbency disadvantage.

Public goods provision and incumbency effects

I examine heterogeneity of incumbency effects across subnational units combining a regression discontinuity design to estimate the causal effect of incumbency, with panel data on the performance of subnational incumbents in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Consistent with my expectations, across the three countries, I find that the size of the electoral differential between incumbents and challengers hinges critically on how much incumbents improve public goods spending relative to their predecessors.

The case of Brazil is striking in this regard. As other scholars have shown, Brazilian mayors suffer from an overall incumbency disadvantage in the period between 2000 and 2016.⁸ On average, they are 6 percent less likely to win an election than an opposition candidate. But this incumbency disadvantage masks wide heterogeneity. Once we disaggregate across electoral cycles, we observe the relevance of national external shocks. While the typical mayor had a disadvantage in years where

fiscal constraints reduced public goods spending, incumbency produced an advantage in years of fiscal abundance. Yet, independent of national trends, public goods delivery is the key to an incumbent's electoral fortune: high performing mayors obtain an incumbency advantage, while low performing mayors obtain an incumbency disadvantage. My analysis also reveals that public goods spending is a stronger predictor of incumbency effects than measures of corruption and patronage.

How voters discount external constraints

I argue that incumbency effects are heterogeneous because voters can partially benchmark incumbent performance. I provide two pieces of evidence for this claim.

First, using aggregate data from Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, I decompose subnational changes in public goods that respond to national trends from the component that is specific to the subnational unit. If voters fully discounted external shocks, they would only respond to the subnational component, which captures how much a given mayor outperforms the trend within a state. To the extent that voters respond to the national component, they would be not fully discounting. Across the three countries, I find that voters benchmark performance, but only partially. The results are very similar across Argentina, Brazil, and Chile: a standard deviation in national trends has an impact just as large as a standard deviation in the subnational component.

To dig deeper into voters' evaluations, I take advantage of original survey experiments conducted in Argentina and Brazil. In both cases, I randomly exposed voters to information on public goods spending and fiscal windfalls affecting subnational incumbents in order to

assess whether these factors shaped their vote intentions or competence evaluations. Consistent with my expectations, I find that voters reward incumbents for increased spending, but do not update their vote choice or competence assessments when they learn that mayors benefited from a fiscal windfall.

Political parties and incumbency effects

One of the reasons why voters use incumbent performance as a shortcut is that political parties do not provide them with reliable information. This suggests that informative party labels could attenuate the relationship between performance and incumbency effects. Brazil offers a useful context to evaluate this claim. While most parties do not cultivate programmatic reputations, the center-left Workers' party is an exception. I exploit this variation in two complementary ways. First, I find that while public goods spending only weakly affects the electoral performance of mayors from the Workers' Party, it is highly consequential for other parties. I also examine the role of party labels in the previously mentioned survey experiment. In half of the electoral scenarios, I randomly assigned voters to mayoral candidates with real party affiliations. The results show that voters cease to respond to incumbent spending when one of the hypothetical candidates is randomly assigned to belong to the Workers' Party.

Theoretical and policy implications

My ongoing research suggests cautious optimism about the implications of incumbency effects for democratic representation. Incumbency advantage and disadvantage are no panacea. If incumbents bear different electoral fortunes simply because they hold office, elections may not encourage

⁸ See Thomas Brambor and Ricardo Ceneviva, "Reeleição e Continuidade nos Municípios Brasileiros," *Novos Estudos*, 93 (2012): 9-21; Leandro De Magalhães, "Incumbency Effects in a Comparative Perspective: Evidence from Brazilian Mayoral Elections," *Political Analysis* 23.1 (2014): 113-126; Marko Klačnjak and Rocio Titunik, "The Incumbency Curse: Weak Parties, Term Limits, and Unfulfilled Accountability," *American Political Science Review* 111.1 (2017): 129-148.

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incumbents to maximize effort on behalf of citizens. But my argument implies that incumbency effects do not render the ballot an ineffective instrument of accountability. On the one hand, I have reported evidence from three developing democracies that suggests that incumbency effects emerge because citizens reward incumbents for delivering on outcomes that improve their welfare, such as spending on health and education. These findings contrast with recent arguments that attribute incumbency advantage to clientelism and incumbency disadvantage to corruption. On the other hand, I discussed evidence suggesting that voters can use the information available to correct their evaluations and partially attribute competence from observed performance. These findings contrast with studies of the United States, which depict voters as responding to the perks of office without scrutinizing the record of incumbents in office.

These theoretical contributions carry policy implications. A growing body of research examines whether providing voters with information about incumbent performance improves accountability.⁹

⁹ An emblematic and extremely ambitious informational intervention is the MetaKeta initiative organized by the Evidence in

Though the evidence is clearly mixed, some studies find that information increases the quality of performance evaluations. My research identifies avenues for refining these interventions. While none of these avenues are entirely new, taken together they suggest that performance information alone might be insufficient to influence the quality of accountability.

The first implication of the research I reported is to suggest shifting the performance metric from bad governance to good governance. Indeed, a significant

Governance and Politics network of scholars. This project funded common informational interventions to assess the impact of providing voters with information about politician performance in Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, India, and Mexico, and two in Uganda, with funding ranging from \$175,000 to \$300,000. See <http://egap.org/metaketa/metaketa-information-and-accountability>. On the effect of corruption on voting see, for example, Claudio Ferraz and Frederico Finan, "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123.2 (2008): 703-45. On the effectiveness of interventions targeting benchmarks and authority information see Jessica Gottlieb, "Greater Expectations: A Field Experiment to Improve Accountability in Mali," *American Journal of Political Science* 60.1 (2016): 143-157.

share of existing interventions focus on incumbent malfeasance. The evidence I discussed indicates that voters are more sensitive to the delivery of public goods than to information about corruption or particularistic spending. My research suggests, as a second implication, that providing voters with information on the performance of other districts would greatly improve their ability to identify competent representatives. Besides improving the quality of performance information, the research discussed also identifies other kinds of information for improving accountability. In fact, I have shown that voters are willing to incorporate candidate platforms and party affiliations in their evaluations. Informational campaigns would thus benefit from helping voters associate candidates with party reputations and future-oriented policy objectives. The last implication of the findings reported is that voters would benefit from interventions providing voters with knowledge about the institutional environment in which decisions are made. Benchmarks might help voters correct their evaluations ex post, but understanding what falls within the scope of incumbent authority may prevent voters from making errors ex ante.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE VOTING IN AFRICA

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Beginning in the late 1980s a wave of democratic experimentation brought elections in one form or another to most of sub-Saharan Africa. A core group of African countries have held five or more repeated competitive elections for the highest branches of government, satisfying at least minimal procedural definitions of democracy. Models of accountability suggest that competitive elections improve governance by enabling citizens to remove poorly performing politicians.¹ The threat of sanction improves outcomes, either by motivating politicians to curb selfish impulses or by inducing higher quality politicians to enter office in the first place. These models rest on a core behavioral assumption: citizens condition votes on incumbent performance. Do African voters, in fact, behave in this fashion?

Social scientists studying Africa have contemplated the performance orientation of African voters since the recent wave of democratization began thirty years ago. Unfortunately, this research has yet to render a clear answer to the question. While studies document persistent correlations between subjective performance evaluations or objective performance records and either reported vote choice or actual election outcomes, it is also

true that co-ethnicity strongly predicts African voting behavior, complicating a pure performance narrative. Moreover, field experiments testing accountability models have produced null results or highly contingent findings.

In this essay, I review the debate about performance voting in Africa. I then suggest that future work should reconsider the behavioral assumptions of accountability models and whether they apply to African electorates. Voters confront significant challenges related to information and complexity when evaluating performance in the real world. Moreover, as suggested by a long line of research in psychology and behavioral economics, low information and complexity induce human beings to rely on heuristics like ethnicity to make voting decisions. As a result, ethnic voting may emerge as a response to the challenges of assessing performance in elections.

I conclude by discussing a survey experiment that I conducted with Clark Gibson and James Long during the 2013 Kenyan election. We implemented this experiment in a large, nationally representative exit poll of voters. The experiment examined the effect of a particular form of complexity: mixed performance records, which are very common in Africa, where incumbents typically perform well on some outcomes but poorly on others. We hypothesized that mixed records induce higher reliance on ethnic cues, and the results of the experiment strongly support this intuition. Our findings highlight the benefits of coupling future field experimental work with lab or survey experiments that tease out particular mechanisms. Our findings also suggest the value of further work exploring the role of information and complexity in performance voting.

Performance Voters?

Studies across African countries document robust correlations between subjective performance evaluations and reported vote choice in public opinion surveys. Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi, for example, use data from the multi-country, multi-round Afrobarometer survey to demonstrate a systematic relationship across a wide set of countries between how African respondents evaluate the performance of the president and vote choice. Later studies continued this line of research, examining particular countries in greater depth or expanding analysis to other datasets. Bolstering these findings, a smaller but growing set of studies show correlations between objective indicators of performance and election outcomes. Perhaps most persuasively, African politicians behave as if they believe voters care about performance. Campaigns regularly feature credit claiming by incumbents for delivery of a wide range of goods, from narrow and private to broad and public. Challengers, in turn, dispute these claims. Indeed, claims about performance and delivery dominate the narrative of many elections, deepening the plausibility of a performance orientation of African voters.²

¹ Robert Barro, "The control of politicians: an economic model." *Public Choice* 14.1 (1973): 19-42; John Ferejohn, "Incumbent performance and electoral control." *Public choice* 50.1 (1986): 5-25; James Fearon, "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance," in *Democracy, accountability, and representation*, Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999: 55-97); and Timothy Besley, *Principled agents? The political economy of good government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006).

² For systemic relationships, see Bratton, Michael, Robert B. Mattes, and Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2005); Jeremy Youde "Economics and Government Popularity in Ghana." *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005): 1-16; Leonardo Arriola, "Ethnicity, Economic Conditions, and Economic Support: Evidence from Ethiopia." *Northeast African Studies* 10.1 (2008): 115-144; Mwangi Kimenyi and Roxana Gutierrez Romero, "Identity, Grievances, and Economic Determinants of Voting in the 2007 Kenyan Elections." University of Connecticut Economics Working Paper 38 (2008); Karen Ferree and Jeremy

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At the same time, two persistent findings contradict the performance voting narrative. First, although Africans seem to reward politicians whom they believe have performed well, their behavior also suggests a strong revealed preference for co-ethnic candidates. This preference is not universal. In some countries (e.g., Uganda, Tanzania), ethnicity appears to drive voting less than in others (e.g., Benin, Kenya). It is also true that not all voters have the choice of co-ethnic candidates, while others have only co-ethnics on their ballots. Thus, a preference for co-ethnics does not always provide a clear choice. Nonetheless, co-ethnicity frequently predicts voting behavior.

Early studies either pitted performance and ethnic voting or asserted the preeminence of one while ignoring evidence of the other. Later work acknowledged that African voters engage in both types of voting but

offered few clues about when and how they interact. More recently scholars have begun to explore these interactions more fully. Long and Gibson suggest voters are more likely to forgive poor performance by co-ethnic politicians than by their non co-ethnic counterparts. Carlson argues that voters only reward good performance by co-ethnics because they believe good performance by non co-ethnics will not benefit them. Adida et al. extend and reinterpret motivated reasoning arguments for Africa, positing that African voters discount negative and overweight positive performance information about co-ethnics but do the opposite for non co-ethnic candidates. Voters thus act to align performance evaluations with ethnic preferences, generating a spurious correlation between subjective evaluations and voting. Taken as a whole, these studies cast dim light on the prospects for elections to induce accountability in Africa. If co-ethnicity trumps performance and voters select poorly performing co-ethnics over better performing non-coethnics, then the accountability logic breaks down.³

³ Classic pieces from the first and second generations of performance and ethnic voting work include, Robert Mattes, *The Election Book: Judgment and Choice in South Africa's 1994 Election* (Cape Town: Idasa 1995); Bratton, Michael, Robert B. Mattes, and Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2005); Lindberg, Staffan I. and Minion K.C. Morrison, "Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic?: Survey Evidence from Ghana." *Political Science Quarterly* 123.1 (2008): 95-122; and Michael Bratton and Mwangi S. Kimenyi, "Voting in Kenya: Putting Ethnicity in Context," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2.2 (2008): 272-89. See James D. Long and Clark C. Gibson, "Evaluating the roles of ethnicity and performance in African elections: Evidence from an exit poll in Kenya," *Political Research Quarterly* 68.4 (2015): 830-842. See Elizabeth Carlson, "Ethnic Voting and

A second persistent finding strikes more directly at the heart of performance voting. Accountability models typically take the following form: Voters receive information about the performance of an incumbent politician. If this information suggests performance above a particular threshold, then voters support the incumbent; if not, they vote him out. A direct test of the accountability model would therefore deliver information about incumbent performance and then observe whether voters respond as expected. Casey provides a partial test with observational data from Sierra Leone, showing that voters with greater exposure to information are more likely than voters in information-poor environments to depart from ethnic voting, presumably to support higher quality candidates. Field experimental tests in Africa directly randomizing information about performance have produced either null results or highly contingent ones, however. An early and influential experiment by Humphreys and Weinstein randomized provision of performance scorecards for Members of Parliament to Ugandan voters. Surprisingly, voters did not alter their voting behavior in response to the information. Lieberman et. al conducted a randomized intervention in Kenya that provided villagers with information about test scores of local school children and strategies for holding local officials accountable for education outcomes. The intervention produced no clear changes in either private or public political behavior. Most recently, a large, coordinated effort to evaluate information and accountability through linked field experiments in

Horowitz, "Ties That Bind? The Rise and Decline of Ethno-Regional Partisanship in Malawi, 1994-2009." *Democratization* 17.3 (2010): 534-563; Barak Hoffman and James D. Long, "Party Attributes, Performance, and Voting in Africa." *Comparative Politics* 45.2 (2013): 127-146; Karen E. Ferree, Clark C. Gibson, James D. Long, "Voting behavior and electoral irregularities in Kenya's 2013 Election." *Journal of East African Studies* 8.1 (2014): 153-172. For correlations between indicators of performance and election outcomes, see Robin Harding, "Attribution and Accountability: Voting for Roads in Ghana." *World Politics* 67.4 (2015): 656-89; Michael Bratton, Ravi Bhavnani, and Tse-Hsin Chen, "Voting intentions in Africa: ethnic, economic, or partisan?" *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 50.1 (2012): 27-52. For performance and delivery, see Karen Ferree, *Framing the Race: the Political Origins of Racial-Census Elections* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Nathan Combes, *Preventable Deaths: Children, Diarrhea, and the Politics of Oral Rehydration Solution in Kenya*. Dissertation. University of California, San Diego 2016.

Accountability in Africa: a Choice Experiment in Uganda," *World Politics* 67.2 (2015): 353-85. See Claire Adida, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon, and Gwyneth McClendon, "Breaking the Clientelistic Voting Equilibrium: The Joint Importance of Salience and Coordination," Unpublished manuscript (2017).

several African countries – the Metaketa initiative – produced a convincing null effect in meta-analysis across cases, although contingent effects were found for some experiments. Given the rigor, large scale and sophisticated implementation of these experiments, their null or contingent findings draw into question earlier observational studies.⁴

In sum, African voters tell us they care about performance and African politicians behave as if they believe performance matters, but the persistence of ethnic voting and the apparent immunity of African voters to information about the performance of elected leaders raise many questions about performance voting in Africa. Are correlations between performance evaluations and outcomes spurious? Are they conditional? If the latter, under what conditions does performance voting emerge and when do other factors like ethnicity supersede it?

⁴ See Katherine Casey, "Crossing Party Lines: The Effects of Information on Redistributive Politics." *American Economic Review* 105.8 (2015): 2410-2448. See Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein, "Policing Politicians: Citizen Empowerment and Political Accountability in Uganda Preliminary Analysis," International Growth Centre Working Paper S-5021-UGA-1 (2012). See Evan S Lieberman, Daniel N. Posner, and Lily L. Tsai, "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya." *World Development* 60 (2014): 69-83. For information and accountability, see Anirvan Chowdhury, Thad Dunning, Guy Grossman, Susan Hyde, Macartan Humphreys, Craig McIntosh, and Gareth Nellis, "Does Information Shape Electoral Choices? A Meta-Analysis." Chapter Three in Thad Dunning, Guy Grossman, Susan Hyde, Macartan Humphreys, and Craig McIntosh, *Metaketa I: The Limits of Electoral Accountability* (Cambridge University Press Forthcoming).

Complexity, Uncertainty, and Ethnic Shortcuts

To understand how and when performance voting breaks down and ethnic voting emerges, it is useful to return to accountability models. These models present performance voting as a relatively simple task, but voters confront numerous challenges to evaluating and acting on performance information. In previous work Lieberman et al. identified challenges related to motivation, capacity, and collective action, suggesting that voters who do not care about performance or do not believe they have the ability to influence politicians through their votes are less likely to use their votes as a sanctioning device.⁵ I focus instead on a different set of challenges: those posed to information processing and decision-making in situations of complexity and uncertainty. These challenges arise frequently in Africa, where incumbents deliver mixed records, information is often discounted as not credible, and it is not always clear how much control incumbents actually have over policy outcomes. I suggest here that voters respond to complexity and uncertainty in predictable and well-known ways: by falling back on informational shortcuts. In Africa, these shortcuts are frequently ethnic in nature. Hence ethnic voting emerges as an instrumental response to the challenges of assessing performance in complex or information poor situations.

We can begin by considering the concept of "performance." Models of accountability envision voters evaluating a single dimension of politician performance, usually macroeconomic

⁵ Evan S. Lieberman, Daniel N. Posner, and Lily L. Tsai, "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya," *World Development* 60 (2014): 69-83.

in nature (in sociotropic models) or related to personal financial fortunes (in egocentric models). Yet, as noted by Stokes and Adida et al., politicians perform on multiple dimensions, from the delivery of private economic benefits, to the provision of public goods like security, nation building, and institutional reform. Politicians mend fences and build bridges, both physical and metaphorical.⁶ Moreover, real and perceived performance across dimensions is often inconsistent: roads and schools are developed, while security deteriorates. Long desired institutional reforms are implemented, while corruption within their own party remains rampant.

The dimensionality of performance creates cognitive challenges for voters. To arrive at a single evaluation of performance, voters must focus on one dimension while ignoring the others, or figure out how to aggregate across them. When all arrows point in the same direction, such calculations may not be difficult. When performance is mixed, however, the task gains complexity. It requires voters to weigh different dimensions against each other: the politician delivered good economic growth but also spiraling crime levels. Do they cancel each other out, or does one count more than the others? The more dimensions there are, and the more mixed the performance, the more complex this aggregation process becomes. Furthermore, as suggested

⁶ Susan C. Stokes, "Introduction: Public Opinion of Market Reforms: A Framework," In *Public Support for Market Reforms in New Democracies*, Susan C. Stokes (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001, pp. 1-34); and Claire Adida, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon, and Gwyneth McClendon, "Overcoming or Reinforcing Coethnic Preferences? An Experiment on Information and Ethnic Voting," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, (Forthcoming).

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by Adida et al., voters may perceive negative complementarities between dimensions. Good performance on one (eg., performance in the national legislature) could auger poor performance on another (eg., local constituency service). If true, then the aggregation task facing voters again gains complexity. Models of accountability generally ignore the challenges generated by complex choices, yet such complexity may hinder the ability of voters to behave in ways consistent with model assumptions.⁷

⁷ See Claire Adida, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon, and Gwyneth McClendon, "Breaking the Clientelistic Voting Equilibrium: The Joint Importance of Salience and Coordination," Unpublished manuscript (2017). Prior work on complexity and choice has primarily examined how the *number* of options in the choice set affects behavior but not the challenges introduced by aggregating across dimensions. Complexity due to choice set size has been studied in economics and psychology (Sheena S. Iyengar and Emir Kamenica, "Choice Proliferation, Simplicity Seeking, and Asset Allocation," *Journal of Public Economics* 94.7-8 (2010): 530-539; Sheena S. Iyengar, and Mark R. Lepper, "When Choice is Demotivating: Can One Desire Too Much of a Good Thing?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79.6 (2000): 995-1006; Alison P. Lenton and Marco Francesconi, "How Humans Cognitively Manage an Abundance of Mate Options," *Psychological Science* 21.4 (2010): 528-533; Barry Schwartz, Andrew Ward, John Monterosso, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Katherine White, and Darrin R. Lehman, "Maximizing versus Satisficing: Happiness Is a Matter of Choice," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83.5 (2002): 1178-1197) and political science; Marco R. Steenbergen, Dominik Hangartner, and Catherine E. de Vries, "Choice under Complexity: a Heuristic-Systematic Model of Electoral Behavior," Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, March 31-April 3, 2011; Saul Cunow, "Vote Choice in Complex Electoral Environments," PhD dissertation, University of California, San Diego 2014; Rosario Aguilar, Saul Cunow, Scott Desposato, Leonardo Sangali Barone, "Ballot Structure,

Voters also face challenges of attribution. If factors outside of a politician's control drive performance outcomes, then these outcomes may reveal little about his true characteristics. Political institutions, such as coalition government, divided government, and federalism, may diffuse responsibility in ways that make it difficult to assign blame or credit for outcomes. Open economies also complicate attribution by diluting the impact of national level policy decisions. Stokes argues that incumbents use these ambiguities to create narratives exempting themselves from responsibility for policy outcomes. We can think of attribution as generating problems of uncertainty (if voters do not have enough information to reach a decision) or complexity (if they have the information, but putting it altogether is difficult). In all of these instances, voters may struggle to reach a conclusion about a politician's performance record.⁸

Candidate Race, and Vote Choice in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review*, 50.3 (2015): 175-202.

⁸ For challenges of attribution, see Raymond M. Duch and Randy Stevenson, "Context and the Economic Vote: a Multi-Level Analysis," *Political Analysis* 13.4 (2005): 387-409; Robert C. Lowry, James E. Alt, and Karen E. Ferree, "Fiscal policy outcomes and electoral accountability in American states," *American Political Science Review* 92.4 (1998): 759-774; Christopher J. Anderson, "Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective," *Electoral Studies* 19 (2000): 151-170; and, G. Bingham Powell and Guy D. Whitten, "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (1993): 391-414; Raymond M. Duch and Randy Stevenson, "Context and the Economic Vote: a Multi-Level Analysis," *Political Analysis* 13.4 (2005): 387-409. Susan C. Stokes, "Introduction: Public Opinion of Market Reforms: A Framework," In *Public Support for Market Reforms in New Democracies*, Susan C. Stokes (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001, pp. 1-34).

We can also ask how voters incorporate incoming information with prior beliefs. Lieberman et al. suggest that information must be understandable for voters to utilize it, and that it must also be "new," which presumably means it contradicts prior beliefs. However, the literature on motivated reasoning suggests that voters discount information that contradicts their prior understanding of the world. If true, then even new information may not have much of an effect. Voters may also discount information if they do not trust its source. Furthermore, even when they share common prior beliefs, voters may interpret a shared informational signal differently. In sum, information alone may not alter beliefs. If information does not alter beliefs, it is unlikely to reduce uncertainty or alter behavior.⁹

New information may also introduce greater complexity, if, for example, it is difficult to reconcile with prior information. Perhaps prior information about a politician suggested uniformly positive performance across a number of dimensions, but new information suggests negative performance on a different, previously unconsidered, one. The voters' task has multiplied

⁹ See Evan S. Lieberman, Daniel N. Posner, and Lily L. Tsai, "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya," *World Development* 60 (2014): 69-83. For motivated reasoning, see Ziva Kunda, "The Case for Motivated Reasoning," *Psychological Bulletin*, November 108.3 (1990): 480-498; and Milton Lodge and Charles Taber, *The Rationalizing Voter* (Cambridge University Press 2013). For discounted information, see Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins, *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* (Cambridge University Press 1998). For information interpretation, see James Andreoni and Tymofit Mylovannov, "Diverging Opinions," *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics* 4.1 (2012): 209-232.

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in complexity. Incorporating the new information requires them to aggregate and weigh dimensions against each other.

Problems of complexity, attribution, and information arguably arise commonly in African elections. African incumbents – like incumbents everywhere – rarely deliver unambiguously good or unambiguously bad performance records. Obtaining objective, high quality information about politics remains challenging for many African voters, inducing them to discount information if they do not know or trust the source. And attribution is difficult in situations where incumbents can realistically portray themselves as victims of either history or wider geopolitical and economic forces. In short, a wide variety of factors impede the ability of African voters to arrive at clear conclusions about the performance records of their politicians.

The large literature on heuristics in psychology and behavioral economics provide insight into how human beings behave in situations of uncertainty and complexity: they shift from slow thinking, a careful weighing, calculating, and aggregating of information, to fast thinking, which utilizes informational shortcuts or heuristics to move more quickly to an estimation of best choice. Useful heuristics take the form of factors that can be appraised quickly that reliably predict qualities that are either unknown or difficult to evaluate. Political scientists have incorporated these insights into studies of voting, arguing that voters fall back on informational shortcuts to make decisions in situations of uncertainty. These shortcuts typically take the form of party label for American voters. In other contexts, where party labels are less developed and informative, voters likely use other types of information.

Studies of African politics suggest that candidate ethnicity frequently operates in this capacity for African voters. Although ethnic identities can be challenging to detect in day-to-day exchanges with other citizens, voters can often deduce the ascriptive identity of candidates for office, in part because candidates and parties publicize this information. Moreover, beliefs about ethnic favoritism pervade many African contexts, and not unreasonably, as delivery of government outputs has been shown to follow an ethnic logic in a variety of places. Candidate ethnicity thus frequently fulfills the key qualities of a useful heuristic: voters can ascertain it easily and believe it predicts future outcomes. Previous work on African voting has focused on the use of heuristics in the face of policy or distributional uncertainty, but these same insights also apply to uncertainty about performance.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a review of the literature from psychology and behavioral economics, see Gerd Gigerenzer and Wolfgang Gaissmaier, "Heuristic Decision Making," *Annual Review of Psychology* 62 (2011): 451-82. For informational shortcuts, see Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter* (University of Chicago Press 1991). For candidate ethnicity, see Robert Mattes, *The Election Book: Judgment and Choice in South Africa's 1994 Election*. (Cape Town: Idasa 1995); Karen Ferree, "Explaining South Africa's Racial Census," *Journal of Politics* 68.4 (2006): 803-815; Karen Ferree, *Framing the Race: the Political Origins of Racial-Census Elections* (Cambridge University Press 2011); Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2005); Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz, "Information and Ethnic Politics in Africa," *British Journal of Political Science* 43 (2012): 345-373; and Claire L Adida, "Do African Voters Favor Coethnics? Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Benin," *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2 (2015): 1-11. For ethnic favoritism, see Eric Kramon and Daniel N. Posner, "Ethnic favoritism in Education in Kenya," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 11.1 (2016).

Drawing together the strands of this section, when faced with information scarcity and complex evaluations of incumbent performance, we might expect African voters to rely more on a tried and true form of quick thinking: using candidate ethnicity to make vote choices. We might expect these behaviors to emerge most commonly when challenges of attribution make it difficult to assess responsibility for outcomes; voters discount information about performance records due to biases in processing or source credibility problems; or multidimensional and mixed performance records increase the complexity of evaluating performance. In the following section, I present the results from an experiment designed to test the effects of one hypothesis generated from this discussion: that voters are most likely to utilize ethnic shortcuts in situations of mixed performance records.

A Kenyan Survey Experiment

One hypothesis that flows naturally from the discussion of the behavioral foundations of accountability models is that multidimensional and mixed performance records, by adding to the complexity of evaluation, induce voters to use information shortcuts. In Africa, these shortcuts likely center on candidate ethnicity as party labels tend to be less developed. Co-ethnicity between voter and candidate should therefore matter most when voters face incumbents who have performed well on some dimensions and poorly on others.

Clark Gibson, James Long and I tested the link between mixed performance records and reliance on ethnic shortcuts through a survey experiment we implemented in an exit poll conducted during the 2013

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national elections in Kenya.¹¹ The experiment asked voters to evaluate the performance of a hypothetical presidential incumbent and to indicate whether they would vote for him. We manipulated two components of the hypothetical candidate: his ethnicity, as conveyed through surname; and his performance record, as conveyed by a short description of his performance across six dimensions we believed were salient to Kenyan voters: unemployment, growth, child mortality, corruption, institutional reform, and security. In the ethnicity arm, we had two treatments: Luo and Kikuyu. We picked these ethnicities because they represent the two largest ethnic groups in Kenya and typically are the ethnicities of the front-running presidential candidates. For Luo and Kikuyu respondents, randomizing candidate ethnicity between these groups also randomized the theoretical treatment of interest: co-ethnicity between voter and candidate. In the performance arm, we had three treatments: a pure positive record (all dimensions described in positive terms); a pure negative record

(all described in negative terms); and a mixed record (some positive, some negative).

We expected the co-ethnicity treatment to have the largest effect in the mixed performance scenario, and our results support this hypothesis. Under mixed performance, co-ethnicity has a substantial impact on voting, shifting the probability of supporting the incumbent by about 12 percentage points (significant at $<.01$ level) in the pooled Kikuyu/Luo sample of respondents. In contrast, the average effect of co-ethnicity across the two other categories (pure positive and pure negative) is indistinguishable from zero.

Our experiment suggests that voters resort to ethnic shortcuts when mixed outcomes raise the complexity of evaluating incumbent performance. As mixed outcomes arise frequently in African elections, voters who prioritize performance may find themselves nonetheless voting on the basis of ethnicity. Moreover, if providing information merely makes evaluation more difficult, as it may when performance across different indicators is mixed, then counter-intuitively, more information may not break, but rather reinforce, the pattern of ethnic voting.

Conclusion

Africanists have often contrasted performance voting with ethnic voting, painting the former as the more sophisticated, rational, evaluative mode of behavior. Closer examination reveals that ethnic voting may emerge as a reasonable response to the challenges of evaluating performance common in African elections: mixed records, low reliability of information, and diffused responsibility for outcomes. These same challenges may explain why experimental evaluations of accountability models have for the most part produced null results, in spite of widespread agreement that performance matters to voters in Africa. Future work should further examine behavioral barriers to performance voting, and couple large field experiments with microanalysis of behavior enabled by lab and survey experiments, as well as more qualitative techniques aimed at uncovering process and motivation.

¹¹ For more details on the experiment and the election, see Karen Ferree, Clark C. Gibson, and James D. Long, "Half Empty or Half Full? African Voting in Conditions of Performance Ambiguity," Paper presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco CA.

MONEY MACHINE: DO THE POOR DEMAND CLIENTELISM?

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The literature on

democracies in the developing world paints a picture of rampant vote-buying. The poor, in particular, are expected to vote for candidates in exchange for direct, tangible benefits in elections, rather than campaign promises of public goods or national legislation.¹ In large part, this view is based on an argument that candidates target such vote-buying efforts to the poor because the poor sell their vote at a lower price, are more likely to act reciprocally, and are less likely to see vote-buying as morally unacceptable. Yet, it does not follow that the poor prefer such offers. The lack of a correlation between campaign expenditure and electoral outcomes² suggests, at least indirectly, that vote-buying may not impact balloting to the extent believed. Money may flow freely at election time, but is the exchange of goods for votes what citizens prefer?

In this essay, we examine voters' preferences and find evidence that candidates who seek their votes through short-term, self-interested incentives may actually lose support among the poor. We employ a rating-based, conjoint analysis³ embedded in the 2016 Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI) survey of over 8,100 Malawians.⁴ The research design is novel and--we believe--the first attempt at applying conjoint analysis to understand vote-buying. Employing a conjoint survey experiment in which respondents are asked to rate the likelihood of voting for a candidate with randomly varied clientelistic appeals, provides an opportunity to examine the poor's 'pure' preferences over vote-buying. In the real world, of course, candidates present a bundle of appeals -- declaring that they will deliver roads, water, and health clinics as they pass out bags of sugar and rice. The conjoint experiment allows us to weigh the relative importance of such appeals in determining voters' choices.

Malawi is particularly useful for examining the assumptions that the poor welcome vote-buying. Malawi has one of the poorest populations in the world. If poverty prompts individuals to accept voter-sellers' offers, Malawian voters should respond favorably to these incentives. The Malawian case

can spur our thinking about vote-buying and poverty elsewhere, advancing the literature on clientelism in developing democracies by explicitly considering the demand-side of clientelism.

We find evidence that voters are driven by community interests, not short-term, targeted incentives. Malawians respond most favorably to a promise of community goods, followed by a promise of future, personal assistance. They respond less favorably to those who promise immediate exchanges of tangible goods for votes, as emphasized in much of the current literature. In short, Malawians find vote-buying much less appealing than scholars often assume; rather, they support candidates who promise public goods for their area.

Literature

The literature on clientelism overwhelmingly anticipates that candidates target the poor because their votes are 'cheaper' and they are more likely to display norms of true and caring, allowing vote brokers to capitalize upon this to solve the commitment problem.⁵ These studies

¹ See Avinash Dixit and John Londregan, "The determinants of success of special interests in redistributive politics," *Journal of Politics* 58.4 (1996): 1132-1155; Susan Stokes, "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina," *American Political Science Review* 99.3 (2005): 315-325; Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge University Press 2010); Peter Jensen and Mogens Justesen, "Poverty and Vote Buying: Survey-Based Evidence From Africa," *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 220-232; Herbert Kitschelt, "Popular Dissatisfaction With Democracy: Populism and Party Systems," In *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Springer 2002 pp. 179-196); and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, *Curbing Clientelism in Argentina: Politics, Poverty, and Social Policy* (Cambridge University Press: 2014).

² Lisa Björkman, "You Can't Buy a Vote: Cash and Community in a Mumbai Election," MMG Working Paper (2013).

³ Jens Hainmueller, Daniel Hopkins and Teppei Yamamoto, "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices Via Stated Preference Experiments," *Political Analysis* 22.1 (2013): 1-30.

⁴ Ellen Lust, Adam Harris, Kristen Kao, Pierre Landry, Boniface Dulani, Atusaye Zgambo, Asiyati Chiweza, Happy Kayuni, Ragnhild Muriaas, Lise Rakner, Vibeke Wang, Lindsay Benstead, Felix Hartmann and Sebastian Nickel, "Malawi Truncated Dataset," Program on Governance and Local Development 2016, available at www.gld.gu.se.

⁵ Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Federico Estevez and Beatriz Magaloni, *The Political Logic of Poverty Relief: Electoral Strategies and Social Policy in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press 2016); Daniel Corstange, *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East: Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen* (Cambridge University Press 2016); Susan Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco, *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (Cambridge University Press 2013); Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, "What wins votes: Why some politicians opt out of clientelism," *American Journal of Political Science* 56.3 (2012): 568-583; Avinash Dixit and John Londregan, "The determinants of success of special interests in redistributive politics," *Journal of Politics* 58.4

assume that the poor have induced preferences because they are in environments where these are the offers that candidates make. Other scholars assume that the poor actually prefer vote buying. The poor may prefer short-term gains over long-term benefits, may be more likely to view vote-buying as acceptable behaviour, and likely see material goods as a signal that the candidate can deliver in the future.⁶ The poor are expected to embrace vote-buying, in contrast to the middle class, which Weitz-Shapiro

argues punishes candidates employing clientelism.⁷

However, studies from social psychology draw this into question, suggesting that the poor may not prefer vote-buying; indeed, they may even be offended by it. They find the poor are more likely than the wealthy to prioritize community needs over individual incentives and, given their greater need for assistance, to develop a greater propensity toward altruism than the wealthy. Similarly, behavioral economists find that monetizing exchange often undermines reciprocal relationships. These studies prompt us to question the untested assumption that the poor prefer vote-buying.⁸

Empirical Strategy

To interrogate the poor's preferences toward vote-buying, we exploit a survey experiment conducted in Malawi in 2016. The experiment, described in more detail

below, was designed to examine the extent to which respondents preferred parliamentary candidates who offered immediate targeted goods, targeted goods in the future, or community benefits. The experiment helps us to decipher preferences over vote-buying in the absence of direct questions, thus reducing social desirability bias associated with vote-buying. It also helps us to examine the poor's pure preference for vote-buying, isolated from other, simultaneously presented appeals. Segmenting respondents by level of wealth according to a number of different indicators, we leverage the experiment to explore the expectation that the poor are more likely to prefer those offering them immediate targeted incentives over those offering future selective goods or public/club goods for their communities.

We use a rating-based conjoint analysis in order to examine the poor's attitude toward candidates who engage in vote-buying. In single vignette experiments, such as a rating-based conjoint design, respondents are presented with, and asked to evaluate, a single candidate. This design is viewed as less powerful than paired comparisons, in which respondents compare two candidates side-by-side.⁹ In this case, however, it is the better design. Individuals are not comparing candidates who engage in vote buying versus those who do not, but rather are simply asked to rate the appeal of a single candidate who provides community goods or targeted incentives. By doing so, we are less likely to cue respondents to focus on vote-buying, thus reducing social desirability bias.

(1996): 113-1155; Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press 2006); Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge University Press 2010); Susan Stokes "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina," *American Political Science Review* 99.3 (2005): 315-325; Peter Jensen and Mogens Justesen, "Poverty and Vote Buying: Survey-Based Evidence From Africa," *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 220-232; Javier Auyero, "From the Client's Point(s) of View: How Poor People Perceive and Evaluate Political Clientelism," *Theory and Society* 28.2 (1999): 297-334; and Javier Auyero, The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account," *Latin American Research Review* 35.3 (2000): 55-81; Frederico Finan and Laura Schechter, "Vote-Buying and Reciprocity," *Econometrica* 80.2 (2012): 863-881.

⁶ Scott Desposato, "How Does Vote Buying Shape the Legislative Arena," In *Elections For Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, F Schaffer (ed.) (Lynne Rienner 2007); Herbert Kitschelt, "Linkages Between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities," *Comparative Political Studies* 33.6-7 (2000): 845-879; James Scott, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 63.4 (1969): 1142-1158; Ezequiel Gonzalez Ocantos, Chad Kiewiet Jonge and David Nickerson, "The Conditionality of Vote-Buying Norms: Experimental Evidence from Latin America," *American Journal of Political Science* 58.1 (2013): 197-211; and Eric Kramon, "Electoral Handouts as Information," *World Politics* 68.3 (2016): 454-498.

⁷ Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, *Curbing Clientelism in Argentina: Politics, Poverty, and Social Policy* (Cambridge University Press 2014).

⁸ Pia Dietze and Eric D Knowles, "Social Class and The Motivational Relevance of Other Human Beings: Evidence From Visual Attention," *Psychological Science* 27.11 (2016): 1517-1527; Paul Piff and Angela R Robinson, "Social Class and Prosocial Behavior: Current Evidence, Caveats, and Questions," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 2017; Nicole Stephens, Hazel Rose Markus and Sarah SM Townsend, "Choice as an Act of Meaning: The Case of Social Class," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93.5 (2007): 814; Jennifer Stellar, Vida M Manzo, Michael W Kraus and Dacher Keltner, "Class and Compassion: Socioeconomic Factors Predict Responses to Suffering," *Emotion* 12.3 (2012): 449; Paul Piff, Michael W Kraus, Stephane Cote, Bonnie Hayden Cheng and Dacher Keltner, "Having Less, Giving More: The Influence of Social Class on Prosocial Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 99.5 (2010): 71; and Samuel Bowles, *The Moral Economy: Why Good Incentives Are No Substitute For Good Citizens* (Yale University Press 2016).

⁹ Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner and Teppei Yamamoto, "Validating Vignette and Conjoint Survey Experiments Against Real-World Behavior," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112.8 (2015): 2395-2400.

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The experiment was embedded within the LGPI. The LGPI is a national face-to-face survey aimed at understanding individuals' experiences, satisfaction and perceptions of governance and service provision. We implemented the survey in March of 2016, using tablet computers. The experiment was seen by a random subsample of 1,191 of the survey respondents.

The stem of the question that all respondents received read as follows: "I am about to read you the descriptions of a candidate for parliament. Then I will

ask you how likely you would be to vote for this parliamentary candidate." The interviewer then read a description of a candidate and asked the respondent: "How likely is it that you would vote for this parliamentary candidate: very likely, somewhat likely, not likely, not at all likely." To assure that the respondents had the opportunity to consider the information fully, the interviewer also offered to read the description of the candidate again. Once the respondent indicated that he or she was ready to answer, the interviewer recorded the answer.

The experimental setup involves randomly altering the candidate characteristics. The random assignment of profile characteristics in conjoint analysis allows for the testing of numerous candidate characteristics at once, while maintaining a low number of respondents. For this study, candidate characteristics varied in a number of ways including campaign appeals, co-ethnicity with the respondent, and strong (weak) ties to the community. These characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Randomized Attributes and Characteristics for Hypothetical Candidates

Characteristic	Choices
Campaign Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Immediate Targeted Goods – bags of sugar, salt, and K500 bills. → Future Targeted Goods – promise of fertilizer subsidies/financial aid for funerals, and help with personal problems. → Future Public Goods – promise of more schools, improved healthcare, digging of boreholes.
Co-Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Co-ethnic → Non-co-ethnic (multiple)
Strong/weak ties to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Born in the village/ward, has lived in the area for a long time → Has recently moved to back to this village/ward after many successful years living abroad

The primary goal of the analysis presented here is to test whether poor voters prefer candidates who make appeals based on different types of incentives, including short- and long-term selective incentives, or community-oriented public goods. To

do so, we consider how respondents evaluated candidates making different campaign appeals. The experiment presented six possible candidate platforms, three of which are the focus of this analysis: candidates who were described as handing out kilo bags

of sugar, half-kilo bags of salt, and K500 bills to citizens in exchange for votes at public rallies; Candidates who promise citizens fertilizer subsidies, financial aid for funerals, and help with other personal problems once elected in exchange for their votes; and those

who offer constituents to improve schools, improve healthcare, and dig more boreholes once elected.

Wealth Measures

Given the importance of poverty to our study, we measure respondent wealth in four ways in our working paper.¹⁰ It is important to note that we do not employ direct measures of income. Many Malawians do not exist in a predominantly cash-based economy and, thus, respondents do not always know their income. Instead, we employ alternative measures of wealth and class. In this essay however, we present just one of the four wealth measures.

The measure of wealth that we employ in this essay is an asset index. The asset index was created by performing a multiple correspondence analysis on four assets a household could possibly possess: motor vehicle, mobile telephone, radio, and bicycle. The higher the value, the more assets a household possesses. This measure was standardized and cut into three categories based on asset scores. Lower numbers represent respondents whose wealth according to an asset index is low, higher scores represent scores closer to one on the asset index, meaning more assets and therefore more wealth. According to this index, 41 percent of the respondents are in the most economically disadvantaged bracket, 25 percent are in the middle wealth bracket, and 34 percent are in the most economically advantaged bracket.

The Results

We used the four-point scale described above to rate candidates. We follow Hainmueller et al. (2013) who show that Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis is a consistent estimator of the Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE) of different candidate attributes on the probability of a respondent voting for the candidate.¹¹ To do so, we rescale the ratings to range between 0 and 1. One level of each attribute is omitted to serve as the reference category. Here, we present the impact of appeals, further conditioned on indicators of respondent's wealth.

The results demonstrate that voters are not attracted to the promise of selective incentives. Using the promise of future particularistic goods including fertilizer subsidies, financial aid for funerals, and help with other personal problems once elected as the baseline appeal, OLS analysis finds that the ranking of candidate platforms is as follows from the most to the least preferable platform: the long-term promise of communal club goods, the long-term promise of individual benefits (access to services or government benefits after the elections). Compared to the base of long-term selective clientelism, immediate individually targeted goods (denoted as "Immediate Targeted Goods" below) are significantly ($p < 0.001$) less likely to be preferred by voters. Voters are 25 percentage points less likely to support candidates who attempt to buy their votes today than they are to prefer those who offer targeted incentives in the future.

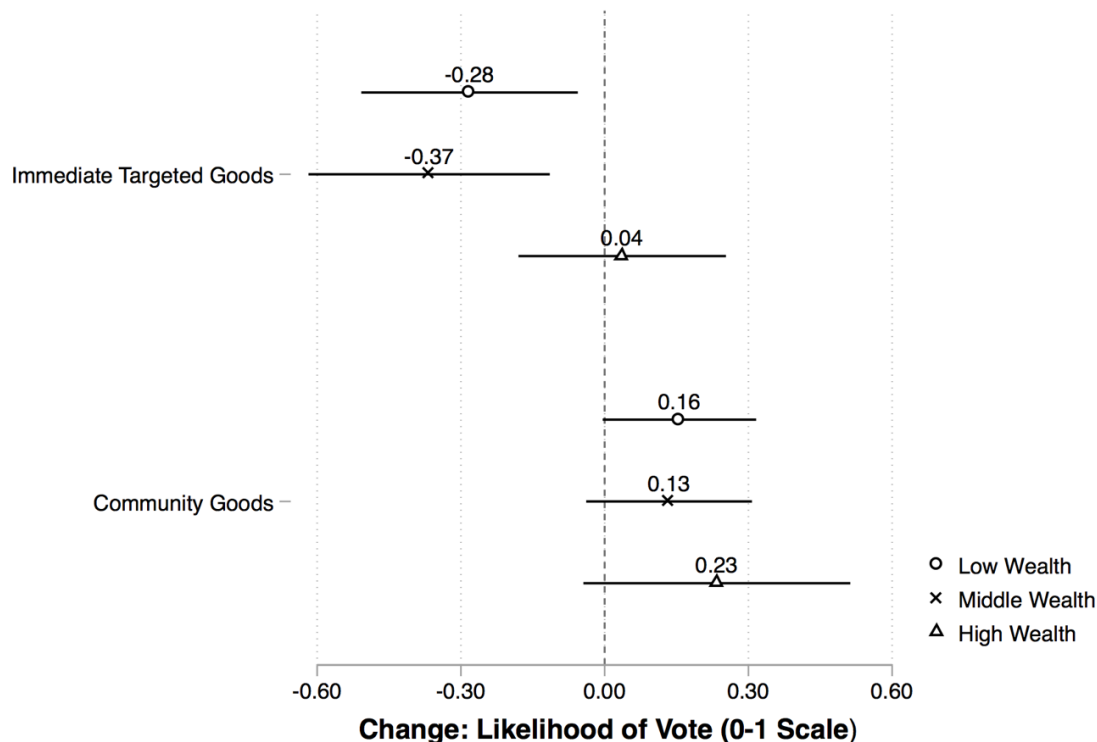
To examine whether lower class individuals nevertheless prefer candidates who offer selected incentives, we analyze heterogeneous effects in the conjoint experiment across wealth levels. As shown in Figure 1, we find that the lowest wealth bracket, or poorest Malawians, significantly prefers candidates who offer goods for the community by 23 percentage points and eschews immediate targeted goods (i.e., 'vote buying') by 28 percentage points when compared to the promise of future selective goods. That is, voters appear to be driven by community goods. The results are similar for those in the middle class. Respondents in the middle income group are 41 percentage points less likely to prefer a candidate who buys votes outright when compared to those who offer future targeted benefits. However, in contrast to assumptions underlying much of the literature, the upper wealth categories are not less likely to prefer particularistic goods. In short, there is no evidence that the poor are more likely to welcome vote-buying than their wealthier co-nationals.

Across all four wealth measures, our analyses find little support for the assumption, so prevalent in literature on vote-buying, that the poor prefer clientelistic appeals. Regardless of the wealth indicator employed, we do not find support for the hypotheses that individuals prefer candidates offering individual incentives over those that offer community goods. We similarly find little support for the hypotheses that Malawians are present-oriented, preferring targeted goods today to those in the future. Rather, we find that the poor actually are less likely to support candidates who are willing to buy votes. Vote buying not only fails to appeal to potential voters, it actually makes them less likely to support the candidate.

¹⁰ Kristen Kao, Ellen Lust, and Lise Rakner, "Money Machine: Do the Poor Demand Clientelism?" Working Paper 2017, Program on Governance and Local Development, University of Gothenburg.

¹¹ Jens Hainmueller, Daniel J Hopkins and Teppei Yamamoto. "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices Via Stated Preference Experiments," *Political Analysis* 22.1 (2013): 1-30.

Figure 1: Effects of Candidate Appeals by Asset Index (Base of Future Targeted Goods)



Concluding Remarks

The findings in this study draw into question widespread assumptions underlying the literature on clientelism. Scholars of vote-buying have largely assumed that vote selling candidates target the poor, and the poor grant them support in return. We find, however, that poor voters are less likely to support candidates who offer them immediate targeted incentives, and they prefer those who promise to deliver community goods. The poor are willing to accept offers of cash, sugar and other handouts at election time, but they question their motives, seeing them as more interested in winning elections than in the welfare of the community. Citizens may accept material handouts at election time, but they do not view themselves as committed to voting for the candidate just because they do so. Vote-buying candidates lose support of the poor when they are seen as monetizing the vote.

This raises important questions regarding why, and when, vote-buying increases vote shares for these candidates. Certainly, vote selling is not always negatively correlated with vote share, as one might expect if vote selling candidates repel voters. But, when is it effective? The distribution of goods and services may be effective if it is part of long-term, clientelistic relationships. In this case, handouts do not create credibility (as Kramon suggests¹²) but rather are part of continued exchange. They are inoffensive only where the candidate is credible from the outset. Vote-buying may also be effective when paired with appeals of community. In this case, voters can enjoy the fruits of election while justifying their vote choice in terms of community welfare. The exchange is not viewed as one of cash

for votes (i.e., voting is not monetized), and the exchange is not offensive.

Future work on the preferences of the poor concerning clientelism should explore the extent to which the findings set forth here transfer to settings that vary in terms of culture, economic development, inequality, and electoral conditions. In this study, we have focused on parliamentary elections in first-past-the-post, single member districts in a largely poor, underdeveloped country. The findings are important, as they demonstrate that even those often teetering on the brink of survival are highly critical of clientelism. We find convincing evidence against the widespread assumption that the poor embrace clientelism. Yet much work remains if we are to understand how this varies across conditions, and the mechanisms at work.

¹² Eric Kramon, "Electoral Handouts as Information." *World Politics* 68.3 (2016): 454-498.

SECTION NEWS

News from Members

Gellman, Mneesha. In 2017 Mneesha Gellman, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Emerson College, published the book *Democratization and Memories of Violence: Ethnic Minority Rights Movements in Mexico, Turkey, and El Salvador*. The book is available [here](#).

Gellman also founded the Emerson Prison Initiative in 2017, which is a college-in-prison program offering college classes to incarcerated students at MCI Concord, Massachusetts.

Greene, Kenneth F. "Why Vote Buying Fails: Campaign Effects and the Elusive Swing Voter" won the 2017 Franklin L. Burdette/Pi Sigma Alpha prize for the best paper (among 7,266 papers) presented at the 2016 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association and the 2017 Sage Best Paper Award Honorable Mention from the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association.

Howard, Marc M. *Unusually Cruel: Prisons, Punishment, and the Real American Exceptionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Ingesson, Tony, Mårten Lindberg, Johannes Lindvall & Jan Teorell. "The martial origins of democracy: a global study of military conscription and suffrage extensions since the Napoleonic wars". *Democratization*, forthcoming (first view available [here](#)).

Jones, Calvert. 2017. *Bedouins into Bourgeois: Remaking Citizens for Globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Opoku, Darko and Eve Sandberg, eds. *Challenges to African Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018)

Schuetze, Benjamin. postdoctoral research fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Freiburg / research associate, Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute (ABI), Freiburg, Schreiberstrasse 20, 79098 Freiburg, Germany. 'Simulating, marketing, and playing war: US-Jordanian military collaboration and the politics of commercial security', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, Issue 5, 2017, pp. 431-450.

News from Electoral Integrity Project

The project won two awards last week that we're very proud of. There's further information on our website [here](#).

Publications: Professor Pippa Norris has published the 3rd part of her book trilogy, entitled '[Strengthening Electoral Integrity](#)'.

We also recently released '[The Year in Elections, mid-2017 report](#)'.

Lastly, we are having a call for papers for the 2018 Pre-APSA Workshop held in [Boston](#) and for a stream at the ECPR General Conference for a stream named '[Democracies at Risk](#)'.

New V-Dem Working Papers

Altman, David, Rojas-de-Galarreta, and Urdinez. 2018. "An Interactive Model of the Democratic Peace: Revisiting the Theory with Elastic Measures", V-Dem Working Paper No. 61. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Burt, Calla, Gerring and Hummel. 2018. "Do Political Finance Laws Reduce Corruption?", V-Dem Working Paper No. 60. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Læg Reid, Martin, Ole and Povitkina. 2017. "Are Carbon Dioxide Emissions Decoupled from GDP Growth in Well-

functioning Democracies?", V-Dem Working Paper No. 59. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Lindberg, Lührmann, Mechkova and Valeriya. 2017. "The Accountability Sequence: From De-jure to De-facto Constraints on Governments", V-Dem Working Paper No. 58. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Coppedge, Michael. 2017. "Eroding Regimes: What, Where, and When?", V-Dem Working Paper No. 57. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Sigman, Rachel, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2017. "Neopatrimonialism and Democracy: An Empirical Investigation of Africa's Political Regimes", V-Dem Working Paper No. 56. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Rasmussen, Magnus B., and Carl Henrik Knutsen. 2017. "Party Institutionalization and Welfare State Development", V-Dem Working Paper No. 55. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Arrington, Nancy, Leeann Bass, Adam Glynn, Jerrey K. Staton, Brian Delgado, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2017. "Gender Diversity on High Courts", V-Dem Working Paper No. 54. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Marquardt, Kyle L, Daniel Pemstein, Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca, Brigitte Seim, Steven Lloyd Wilson, Michael Bernhard, Michael Coppedge, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2017. "Experts, Coders, and Crowds: An analysis of substitutability", V-Dem Working Paper No. 53. University of Gothenburg: Varieties of Democracy Institute. Available at [SSRN](#).

Section News

OPEN INVITATION

POLICY DIALOGUE DAY 2018 “New Research = Better Policies: Insights on Democracy, Governance, and Armed Conflict”

Wednesday 30 May 2018, 09.30-17:30
Wallenberg Conference Centre, Gothenburg, Sweden

We are pleased to extend an invitation to attend the Policy Dialogue Day 2018 “New Research = Better Policies: Insights on Democracy, Governance, and Armed Conflict” in Gothenburg, Sweden, May 30, 2018.

This year’s Policy Dialogue Day and GLD Conference is organized by the [V-Dem \(Varieties of Democracy\) Institute](#), the [QoG \(Quality of Government\) Institute](#), [GLD-Gothenburg \(Program for Governance and Local Development\)](#), [UCPD \(Uppsala Conflict Data Program\)](#) and [ViEWS \(a Political Violence Early-Warning System\)](#).

The annual Policy Dialogue conference bridges the gap between analysis and practice and aims to shed light on questions relating to democracy support and governance. The conference serves as a meeting platform for practitioners, policy makers, and academics.

We would be delighted if you are able to join us for this important event. To sign-up, please contact Natalia Stepanova at natalia.stepanova@v-dem.net.

More details and preliminary program could be found [here](#).

The Program on Governance and Local Development (GLD) at the University of Gothenburg will hold its second annual conference on May 31 - June 1, 2018 with the theme, “Layered Authority,” in Gothenburg, Sweden.

We seek to showcase research that examines the ways in which different authorities interact, and the extent to which they complement or clash with each other. We also wish to understand how such interactions affect governance more broadly -- at the community as well as the state level. We aim to stimulate dialogue on such questions among scholars, policymakers, and other members of the development community.

Emerging Scholars Short-Course at APSA 2018

We are pleased to announce a Call for Applications from early-career scholars based outside of the US, Canada, and Western Europe who are interested in attending the 2018 APSA Annual Meeting as a part of a Research Development Group. This presents a unique opportunity to advance current research towards publication, participate in the APSA annual meeting, and develop scholarly networks with colleagues. Selected participants are eligible to apply for an APSA Travel Grant to support expenses. Please see the attached document for details, and circulate widely.

Comparative Democratization Section - Upcoming Elections and Nomination Process

We are seeking nominations for candidates for Vice-Chair and Secretary for the Comparative Democratization Section of APSA. Self-nominations are encouraged. Nominees must be current section members. Candidates should submit a short statement (one to two paragraphs) that highlights the candidate’s qualifications and experience to Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro at rbweitz@brown.edu. The deadline for nominations is February 6th, 2018 and the elections will be held in February. The section’s current officers will finalize the candidate slate.

The Vice-Chairs’s duties include: identifying members for the section’s awards committees and coordinating awards-related business, and assisting the chair in various tasks as needed (for example, leading the section’s business meeting at APSA’s annual convention, providing general guidance and oversight for the section, and corresponding with APSA on section business). The Secretary takes minutes at the Annual Meeting, maintains the section website hosted by APSA, and runs section elections.

APSA - CD

is the official newsletter of the American Political Science Association's Comparative Democratization section. Formerly known as CompDem, it has been published three times a year since 2003. In October 2010, the newsletter was renamed APSA-CD and expanded to include substantive articles on democracy, as well as news and notes on the latest developments in the field. The newsletter is jointly produced by members of the V-Dem Institute and GLD at University of Gothenburg.



Executive Editor

Staffan I. Lindberg is professor of political science and director of the V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg; one of four Pls for Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem); Wallenberg Academy Fellow; member of the Young Academy of Sweden and the Board of U of Gothenburg; and a Research Fellow in the QoG Institute. He is author of *Democracy and Elections in Africa* and editor of *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition*, and has also worked on women's representation, clientelism, voting behavior, party and electoral systems, democratization, popular attitudes, and the Ghanaian legislature and executive-legislative relationships.



Sirianne Dahlum is a post-doctoral fellow at the V-Dem institute, University of Gothenburg. Her dissertation, which was received from the University of Oslo in 2017, studies the relationship between education, mass protest and democratization. She currently works on projects related to mass protest movements, politics in authoritarian regimes and political violence.



Ellen Lust is the Founding Director of the Programs on Governance and Local Development at Yale University and at the University of Gothenburg, and Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg. She has authored *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World* as well as articles in *Perspectives on Politics*, edited *The Middle East* and several volumes. The Moulay Hicham Foundation, NSF, the Swedish Research Council and other foundations have supported her research on authoritarianism, political transitions, and local governance.



Kyle L. Marquardt is a post-doctoral fellow at the V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg. He studies identity politics and the politics of authoritarianism. His current project uses data from extensive field and survey research from Eurasia to examine the relationship between language and separatism. Other projects involve the use of list experiments to analyze support for authoritarian leaders and Bayesian latent variable analysis of the components of social identities.



Kristen Kao is a Research Fellow with the Program on Governance and Local Development (GLD) at the University of Gothenburg and a PhD Candidate in Political Science at UCLA. In 2014, she ran a nationwide survey in Jordan in collaboration with Ellen Lust and Lindsay Benstead funded by the GLD program at Yale. She has served as a program consultant and election monitor for a variety of international organizations, including The Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute.



Anna Lührmann is a Research Fellow at the V-Dem Institute since 2015. She received her PhD in 2015 from Humboldt University (Berlin) with a doctoral thesis on the United Nation's electoral assistance. Prior to turning to academia, Anna was an MP in the German National Parliament (Bundestag, 2002-2009). She currently works on several research projects in the realm of autocratization, autocracy, democracy aid, and elections. Her research has been published or is forthcoming in *Electoral Studies*, *International Political Science Review* and the *Journal of Democracy*.



Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca is a post-doctoral fellow at the V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Mannheim in 2015. She specializes in elections, representation, and survey research. Her current research examines the effects of immigration on elections, develops new measures of multicultural democracy, and investigates the relationship between gender and corruption. Other projects include survey experiments, public opinion, and text analysis. Constanza is also Associate Editor of *Representation*, *Journal of Representative Democracy*.



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