Group Norms, Social Pressure, and Ethnic Voting*

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Abstract

Explanations for ethnic voting have focused primarily on voters' use of ethnicity as a heuristic for evaluating parties or candidates, or on the expressive benefits voting for coethnics may provide. This article describes and tests a largely overlooked explanation for ethnic voting resulting from group norms and social pressure. Employing a combination of experimental and observational data from Kenya—as well as observational data from three other African countries—it finds evidence that many voters have no intrinsic preference for coethnic candidates, but that their desire to conform to the norms of their ethnic community drives them to vote along ethnic lines. The results have important implications for our understanding of ethnic voting, as well as the conditions under which survey respondents provide truthful answers about group-related preferences.

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Ethnic voting—the tendency to vote for candidates from a voter's ethnic group—is a common feature of electoral politics in polities around the world. Voters have been shown to prefer coethnics in places as diverse as India, Uganda, and the U.S. (Carlson 2015; Chandra 2004; Conroy-Krutz 2013; Pasek et al. 2009; Payne et al. 2010; Piston 2010). In one particularly stark example, 92 percent of Kikuyus voted for their coethnic Uhuru Kenyatta—and 98 percent of Luos voted for their coethnic Raila Odinga—in Kenya's 2013 presidential election (Ferree, Gibson and Long 2014).

What explains ethnic voting? When citizens vote primarily for coethnic candidates, is it consistent with, or contrary to, instrumental voting that seeks to elect officials that share voters' policy preferences or successfully carry out voters' wishes once in office? Existing explanations of ethnic voting have suggested that voters use candidates' ethnicity as a heuristic for evaluating candidates' quality and their likely performance in office (Pasek et al. 2009; Payne et al. 2010; Piston 2010), especially in low-information environments where voters have little additional information about the candidates to guide their choice (Conroy-Krutz 2013); that they use it as a heuristic not for candidate quality, but rather the likelihood that they will benefit from a candidate's decisions about how to target policies and government resources (Carlson 2015; Chandra 2004; Ferree 2006; Ichino and Nathan 2013; Lieberman and McClendon 2012; Nathan 2016; Posner 2005); or that voters prefer coethnic candidates because they receive an expressive benefit from voting for or electing politicians who share their social (ethnic) identity, a benefit distinct from concerns about candidate performance and potential material or policy benefits (Adida et al. 2017; Horowitz 1985; Tajfel 1974). In this article, I describe and test a largely overlooked explanation for ethnic voting resulting from group norms and social pressure.

Employing a combination of experimental and observational data from Kenya, an exemplary case of entrenched ethnic voting, I find evidence that it is driven—at least in part—by individuals' desire to conform to the norms of their ethnic community. In short, the

results show that Kenyan voters only prefer coethnic candidates over otherwise identical non-coethnic candidates when they are revealing their vote choice to fellow coethnics; this preference goes away when they are responding to non-coethnic interviewers, as well as when the revelation of their true preferences is obscured by sensitive survey techniques. Voters in three other African countries known for voting along ethnic lines also profess a stronger preference for coethnic candidates when interviewed by coethnic enumerators. These results suggest that ethnic voting may occur not only due to individuals' intrinsic preferences for coethnic politicians or a belief that they are most likely to benefit them, but because of voters' efforts to comply with a norm within their ethnic community of supporting coethnic candidates for office.

The insights from this study have far-reaching applications and can reconcile seemingly disparate findings in the literature. They can also explain why—in places where individuals' social networks are primarily contained within ethnic communities—a pattern of ethnic voting, once established, is so persistent, even where individual-level preferences for coethnic candidates are not particularly strong.

In addition, this study makes a methodological contribution by replicating previous findings that survey measures of coethnic vote preferences are stronger when respondents interact with coethnic interviewers (Adida et al. 2016, 2017; White and Laird 2020) but demonstrating that social desirability bias affects responses given to *coethnics* more so than non-coethnics, which I argue results from within-group norms affecting respondents' beliefs about what is socially desirable to a greater degree than society-wide norms. In fact, this study is the first, to my knowledge, to measure coethnic vote preferences using sensitive survey techniques to get around the problem of desirability bias.[1] The comparison of the coethnic interviewer

[1]Corstange (2013) uses a list experiment to measure Lebanese sectarian groups' support for illiterate voting rights—where the issue could take on a sectarian dimension due to differing literacy rates across groups—but not coethnic vote preferences.

effect when sensitive survey techniques are or are not used sheds light on what type of interviewer is most likely to capture true preferences, as well as how these preferences translate into actual political behavior.

In what follows, I first summarize the range of explanations for ethnic voting put forward in the literature and describe a largely overlooked explanation resulting from social norms. I then lay out my empirical strategy, which combines a series of conjoint and vignette experiments with observational data on Kenyan voters, as well as observational data from three additional African countries. Next I describe the results of my analysis, which are consistent with the idea that high levels of ethnic voting are maintained by groups norms and social pressure. I conclude by drawing out some of the findings' major implications for our understanding of ethnic voting, electoral accountability, and social networks, and describe how group norms and social pressure can explain a variety of political preferences and behaviors.

Explanations for Ethnic Voting

The main explanations for ethnic voting may be categorized into two broad camps. The first argues that ethnic voting is instrumental, resulting from the use of ethnicity as an informational heuristic with respect to political outcomes (candidate performance, policy decisions, resource distribution) that voters care about rather than their preference for coethnic leaders, *per se*. The other argues that it is expressive, arising out of an expression of social identity. Heuristics-based theories suggest that voters use candidates' ethnicity as a signal of their quality and/or likely behavior in office (Carlson 2015; Chandra 2004; Chauchard 2016; Conroy-Krutz 2013; Ferree 2006; Ichino and Nathan 2013; Nathan 2016; Posner 2005). Especially in low-information environments where relevant information about candidates is unavailable or difficult to access—a common feature of developing democracies—such beliefs may be particularly important, with a candidate's ethnicity one of few pieces of highly visible

information available to voters (Chandra 2004; Conroy-Krutz 2013). Ethnicity may serve as a shortcut for 1) overall candidate quality and and likely performance and/or 2) who is likely to benefit from policy and resource distribution with the candidate in office, especially in areas where goods are more easily targeted given patterns of residential segregation (Ichino and Nathan 2013; Nathan 2016).

With respect to candidate quality, voters may vote for coethnic candidates because they believe them to be, on average, more likely to perform well on any number of dimensions once in office, such as providing public goods or reducing corruption (Conroy-Krutz 2013). When voters hold such beliefs—and where other, more direct measures of candidate quality are unavailable or difficult to access—voters may use coethnicity as a heuristic for candidate quality and vote largely along ethnic lines, even if they primarily care about how officials perform and have no intrinsic preference for electing coethnics *per se*. While ethnic voting is likely to be most widespread according to this logic when information about candidates is scarce, ethnic or racial prejudice can affect vote choice even where additional information about candidates is plentiful, as in the U.S. (Pasek et al. 2009; Payne et al. 2010; Piston 2010).

Alternatively, a candidate's ethnicity may serve as a signal of who is most likely to benefit from their decisions about policy and resource allocation once in office, with voters selecting coethnic candidates because they believe them to be more likely to make decisions that favor their group over others (Carlson 2015; Chandra 2004; Ferree 2006; Ichino and Nathan 2013; Nathan 2016; Posner 2005). This theory, perhaps the dominant one in recent scholarship, is bolstered by the observation that politicians often *do* favor coethnics with respect to the distribution of state resources (Butler and Broockman 2011; Luca et al. 2018; Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2016; McClendon 2016; Pande 2003).[2] Policy-focused

[2]But see Kasara (2007) for evidence of discrimination *against* coethnics.

voters may also prefer coethnic candidates if ethnicity is correlated with preferences over government policy (Lieberman and McClendon 2012).

Meanwhile, a second class of theories—those based on insights from social psychology—have received somewhat less attention in recent years. Yet research by Adida et al. (2017) suggests that they should not be discounted. Such explanations, drawing on social identity theory, suggest that people obtain psychological benefits from seeing their groups do well relative to others (Tajfel 1974). Applying this idea to electoral politics, Horowitz (1985) argued that voters derive psychic benefits from supporting coethnic politicians as an affirmation of their group identity. By this logic, voting for and electing coethnic politicians has *intrinsic* value for voters above and beyond any information coethnicity may convey about a candidate's likely performance or tendency to favor members of their group. Furthermore, voters may actually process information in line with their identity-affirming goals, accepting (rejecting) positive information about coethnic (non-coethnic) candidates and rejecting (accepting) negative information about coethnics (non-coethnics) (Adida et al. 2017; Kahan 2016; Taber and Lodge 2006). Since any individual voter is highly unlikely to affect the election outcome, the benefits of interpreting information in line with one's social identity goals may outweigh the benefits of accuracy in assessing candidates for office (Adida et al. 2017; Kahan 2016).

Social Norms and Ethnic Voting

An alternative explanation for ethnic voting—one based on insights from work on the role of social networks, social norms, and intragroup sanctioning in shaping political behavior—has been largely overlooked in scholaship on the topic. In particular, as I describe below, ethnic voting can occur as a result of social norms within ethnic communities that encourage

voters—regardless of their true preferences—to vote for coethnic candidates for office. The argument is as follows.

Research has shown that individuals tend to adopt the political preferences and behaviors most supported by those in their social network, even when they initially disagree with the dominant position (Huckfeldt et al. 1998; Sinclair 2012; Brown 2022). One explanation is that networks serve as a conduit for information that influences individual opinions and behaviors (Downs 1957; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Another, however, is that individuals face social pressure to conform with others in their network (Christakis and Fowler 2009).[3] Individuals place high value on maintaining their closest social relationships, relationships that are difficult to sustain when significant disagreements (such as over politics) occur (Mutz 2006; Sinclair 2012). They therefore face strong incentives to conform so as to reduce the level of friction within these relationships. Most individuals prefer to agree with their social network than to defend their individual politics; they thus succumb to social pressure and adopt the preferences and behaviors most common among their network (Sinclair 2012, 5). As Sinclair (2012, 7) notes, "[p]ut simply, individuals do not want to disappoint their friends and family, and this is how politics are contagious."

Of course, in order for members of a social network to conform to a particular preference or behavior, there must be a clear sense of what the majority opinion or behavior is (what social psychologists call a "descriptive" norm), as well as, perhaps, a perceived obligation to abide by it (what social psychologists dub an "injunctive" norm). Social norms (descriptive and/or injunctive) play an important role in this respect, establishing a strong signal of what is expected and praiseworthy within the communities in which individuals and their social networks are embedded (Chwe 2001; Cialdini and Trost 1998; Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). With these expectations in place, people's natural inclination to conform—combined with more direct social pressure in the form of praise (scorn) for upholding (violating) established

[3]See Kuran (1995) for a model in which *both* occur simultaneously.

norms—results in the tendency to adopt the modal behavior of the social network (Sinclair 2012, 11-12).

Social psychology suggests two types of explanation for the development of norms. The first suggests that they are fundamentally functional, arising because they encourage or curtail behaviors that improve survival prospects at the individual or group level (Cialdini and Trost 1998, 153). A second perspective holds, however, that they may arise as a result of a process of reward and reinforcement, regardless of their objective utility to the individual or their social group. Such explanations allow for the development and persistence of purely arbitrary norms; all that is required for a norm to perpetuate itself is for individuals to be rewarded socially for it, regardless of its inherent value to the individual or the group at large (Kuran 1995; Cialdini and Trost 1998, 152). In general, norms are most likely to be transmitted across individuals when 1) its sources are personally influential, 2) they are physically proximate to the receiver, and 3) they are numerous (Cialdini and Trost 1998, 154); or, in another formulation, "when the source is similar to us, or when we are particularly concerned about establishing or maintaining a relationship with the source" (Cialdini and Trost 1998, 162). Tankard and Paluck (2016) emphasize in particular the important role of influential individuals known as "social referents" in the dispersion of norms within groups.

These insights can explain patterns of ethnic voting in places where individuals' social networks are primarily contained within ethnic communities, a common feature of social networks around the world (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2002; Eubank 2019).[4] If an individual's social network is dominated by coethnics—and there exists within their ethnic community a norm of voting for coethnic candidates for office—then the individual is likely to be influenced by that norm, supporting coethnic candidates in order to conform with their social network, even if their personal preference would lead them to make a different choice.

[4]This may be particularly the case where between-group economic inequality is high and within-group inequality is low (Houle, Kenny and Park 2019).

White and Laird (2020), for example, attribute high rates of Black American support for the Democratic Party—despite relatively high rates of moderate to conservative political ideology—to racialized social networks and a norm of support for the party within that group: "[T]he steady reality that black Americans' kinship and social networks tend to be populated by other blacks means they persistently anticipate social costs for failing to choose Democratic politics and social benefits for compliance with these group expectations" (White and Laird 2020, 3).

Of course, if voters' intrinsic preferences differ from the norm within their ethnic community, then they face a tradeoff between acting in accordance with their personal preferences or those of their social network (Corstange 2013).[5] Furthermore, the secret ballot means that voting itself is in most cases a private, unobservable act, so it's not immediately clear why it should respond to social pressure the same way as more public political behaviors such as attending a rally or publicly expressing support.

Why is voting likely to respond to social pressure? In short, there is a non-negligible psychological cost associated with concealing one's vote, which those voting against the social norm would presumably attempt to do in order to avoid the potential for social repercussions. Concealment requires either lying—which research has shown most individuals are intrinsically motivated to avoid both in general (Rosenbaum, Billinger and Stieglitz 2014) and in the context of voting behavior in particular (Dellavigna et al. 2017)—or else refusing to reveal one's choice, a decision that could arouse suspicion and induce the very social/reputational costs that obfuscation is meant to circumvent (Dellavigna et al. 2017; Gerber et al. 2013). And if voting is rational, then motivations other than the negligible possibility of one's vote affecting the outcome should be most important; the psychological (and potentially social) cost of concealing one's vote only have to exceed the psychological cost of voting against one's

[5]Not to mention that it is only in such cases that social pressure has a potential role to play.

preferences in order for an individual to vote in line with their group's social norm (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). In fact, Mutz (2006) finds that some individuals may eschew voting altogether in order to avoid having to discuss a vote that may differ from their community's norm. This reflects the fact that voters are unlikely to be able to avoid the costs of concealment altogether; research from the U.S. has shown that the vast majority of voters—73 percent—share their vote choices with close friends or family members "most" or "all of the time" (Gerber et al. 2013), while individuals are 80 percent accurate in inferring the vote choice of their political discussion partners (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). There is little reason to believe these figures to be lower in other politically open countries such as Kenya, where politics is a frequent topic of conversation. In such contexts, therefore, voting under the secret ballot is subject to social pressure around group norms.

Why would a perceived norm of ethnic voting persist if—as this study suggests—large numbers of voters do not maintain an intrinsic preference for coethnic candidates? Importantly, norms—and compliance with them—may persist even if they no longer (or perhaps, never did) provide any objective benefit at the individual or group level. Experiments have shown that compliance with arbitrary group norms perseveres even when they result in suboptimal decisionmaking (Cialdini and Trost 1998, 154). This may be because individuals believe that the wisdom of the group is better, on the whole, than their personal judgments, but it can also result from a phenomenon known as "pluralistic ignorance" (Allport 1924; Katz and Allport 1931; Katz and Schanck 1938; Miller and McFarland 1987), a situation in which "virtually all members of a group privately reject group norms yet believe that virtually all other group members accept them" (Miller and McFarland 1987, 298). Under such circumstances, we may observe "widespread conformity to social norms in the absence of widespread private support" since what is needed for the norm to be perpetuated is not for the majority to support it, but simply "for the majority to believe that the majority supports it" (Miller and McFarland 1987, 298). In short, large numbers of individuals may

conform to a norm of ethnic voting even if they would prefer not to because they believe *others* support the norm, and that they are likely to face explicit or implicit social sanctions for violating it (White and Laird 2020).

Furthermore, the outsize role of social referents may be crucial. Even if the average voter perceives no particular benefit from voting along ethnic lines, political elites may profit from such behavior and might therefore use their influence as social referents to perpetuate and enforce such a norm.[6] Thus, elite messaging can shape expectations about appropriate group voting behavior. And, once established, there is good reason to believe group norms will be widely followed, whether because members perceive a moral duty to abide by them (Ekeh 1975; Ndegwa 1997), and/or because integrated social networks and norms of reciprocity make for effective intra-group sanctioning of violations (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Habyarimana et al. 2007; Larson 2017; Eubank 2019).

The political history and contemporary political discourse of Kenya, the focus of this study, helps elucidate how this process—the development and maintenance of a norm of ethnic voting—may play out in practice. In the Kenya case, its roots can be traced to the period of colonial rule, when British authorities divided the colony into political units by tribe (Kenyan ethno-linguistic groups), codifying and solidifying social and geographic boundaries between groups that were previously much more fluid. When the native population was finally allowed to form political organizations in the 1950s, they were only permitted to do so within the group-based districts the colonial authorities had prescribed, hampering cross-ethnic political mobilization and making such organizations representative of particular ethnic groups by default (Branch 2011, 11). When the anti-colonial movement succeeded and its most prominent leader, Jomo Kenyatta, took power, several factors ensured that

[6]Indeed, the evidence that Kenyan voters benefit from having coethnics in office is decidedly mixed (Kramon and Posner 2013; Burgess et al. 2015; Harris and Posner 2019), yet Kenyan politicians frequently encourage their coethnics to vote along ethnic lines.

the central role of ethnicity in politics remained. For one, Kenyatta himself saw his role as leader of his Kikuyu ethnic group first and leader of Kenyans second (Branch 2011, 8). In fact, just a few years after independence, the president turned to "oathing" ceremonies to consolidate his ethnic base of support, a process by which over 300,000 people were transported to Kenyatta's home to allegedly swear that "[t]he government of Kenya is under Kikuyu leadership, and this must be maintained. If any tribe tries to set itself up against the Kikuyu, we must fight them in the same way we died fighting the British settlers...You shall not vote for any party not led by the Kikuyu" (Branch 2011, 85). Beyond Kenyatta, much of the political elite in the newly independent country encouraged the organization of politics along ethnic lines in order to avoid cross-ethnic mobilization around economic and land redistribution that could have threatened their newly acquired wealth (Branch 2011, 16-17).

With the return of multiparty electoral politics in the early 1990s after decades of one-party rule, ruling party elites employed hostile ethnic rhetoric against the opposition, whom they characterized as representing larger ethnic groups seeking to displace the smaller groups that dominated the ruling coalition from power (Klopp 2001). And Kenyan political elites continue to encourage their coethnics to vote along ethnic lines to this day. For instance, when speaking at an event in Bungoma—an area dominated by his Luhya ethnic group—two months after coming in a distant third in the recent presidential election, Musalia Mudavadi "thanked the electorate from the region who voted for him as a presidential candidate but cautioned the [Luhya] community against dividing their vote...'You dared me to stand as president and even sung *shenywe ni shienywe* (our own is ours) and I tried my best. But when the time came to deliver, you split your vote'...'How many times are you going to continue donating your votes to others?' he asked" (Reporter 2013). In short, Kenya's early political development created the conditions for ethnic voting to arise, and many influential elites—whom, as a result of the colonial experience, tended to be seen as leaders of their par-

ticular ethnic groups—encouraged and promoted the persistence of the practice as it tended to enhance their political and economic goals. As a result, a combination of entrenched expectations about normal group behavior (group norms) and the sway of influential political elites (social referents) in transmitting and enforcing them has led to the development and persistence of a norm of ethnic voting in Kenya, the effects of which are apparent in the analysis presented below.

The role of political elites in promoting a norm of ethnic voting can be found in other contexts as well; in Benin, for example, the national coordinator of a presidential alliance noted that "when politicians campaign in their home areas they say: 'I am your son (*fils*), will you take an outsider to govern you?"' (Koter 2016, 87). Overall, there is good reason to think that this logic can explain ethnic voting in a range of contexts. All that is necessary for the posited mechanism to play out is for voters' social networks to be primarily intraethnic—a common feature of communities around the world (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2002; Eubank 2019)—and for there to be a social norm within that group of supporting coethnic candidates or parties for elected office.

In sum, ethnic voting can be explained not only by the use of coethnicity as a heuristic or as an expression of social identity, but as a function of social pressure to vote for members of one's ethnic group, especially where instrumental or expressive motivations are lacking. While some scholars have explored the role of group norms and social pressure in pushing individuals to support candidates or policies that don't align with their private preferences (White and Laird 2020; Corstange 2013), it has been largely overlooked in the literature on ethnic voting in favor of instrumentalist and social identity-based explanations. I now turn to analyzing the evidence for this additional consideration.

Data and Research Design

If social pressure around a group norm of voting for one's coethnics is a primary driver of ethnic voting, then voters should demonstrate a preference for coethnic candidates only when they are subject to social pressure, i.e. when they must reveal that preference to their coethnics with whom they are bound by the relevant social norm. The coethnic preference should dissipate when either 1) they are expressing their views to a non-coethnic or 2) the revelation of their preference is obscured, e.g. by the use of sensitive survey techniques as described below.

I study the role of group norms and social pressure in ethnic voting with a combination of experimental and observational data from Kenya, a country known for a strong link between ethnicity and vote choice. In Kenya, voters' ethnic identity is highly predictive of the political parties and candidates that they support (Ferree, Gibson and Long 2014; Gibson and Long 2009). In the 2007 presidential elections, for example, exit polls suggest that 94 percent of ethnic Kikuyu voted for the Kikuyu candidate Mwai Kibaki, while 98 percent of Luo voted for the Luo Raila Odinga; even 86 percent of Kamba voted for the non-viable (but coethnic) candidate Kalonzo Musyoka (Gibson and Long 2009).[7] In 2013, 92 percent of Kikuyu voters supported the Kikuyu Uhuru Kenyatta while 98 percent of Luo again supported Odinga (Ferree, Gibson and Long 2014).[8] In short, Kenya is a clear-cut case of ethnic voting, which makes it an appropriate context in which to study *why* it occurs.

[7]In contrast, most Luhya voters did *not* vote for the non-viable coethnic candidate Musalia Mudavadi in 2013 (Ferree, Gibson and Long 2014), a possible difference being knowledge about the relative viability of the candidate (Horowitz and Long 2016).

[8]Note that, even if a group does not have a viable candidate for president, they can still (and nearly always do) vote for coethnic candidates to represent subnational units, such as counties, constituencies, and wards.

It is also a useful case for testing the contribution of groups norms and social pressure to ethnic voting because prior studies have provided substantial evidence that the contextual features that make other logics of ethnic voting plausible—including the perception that politicians favor coethnics in the distribution of clientelist goods—are present in the Kenyan context (Mueller 2008; Kramon and Posner 2016; Horowitz 2017). In other words, the literature suggests that Kenyan politics are characterized by the conditions associated with *existing* theories of ethnic voting—in particular, instrumentalist theories rooted in the logic of ethnic clientelism—such that Kenya could be said to constitute a *hard* case for uncovering evidence that some alternative logic (e.g. social norms) explains the tendency of Kenyans to vote along ethnic lines. If evidence of a norm-based explanation is found in a context widely perceived to be a prototypical case of ethnic clientelism, then it seems reasonable to believe that such an explanation could apply to other cases of ethnic voting as well.

The data I analyze come from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Kenya Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2016 and 2021, respectively, as well as two original survey experiments conducted in 2018 with a nationally-representative sample of 2,015 respondents. The first experiment presented respondents with two potential candidates for president, with information about each candidate's sex, age, religion, tribe, education level, and record in office, including whether or not they have a successful history of providing public goods in their constituency and whether or not they have a history of organizing election-related violence. The candidates' current office (MP), sex (male), age (50s), and education level (Bachelors degree) were held constant, while their ethnicity, record of public goods provision, and allegations of violence are allowed to randomly vary. Specifically, candidates were from one of the five largest tribes;[9] were assigned either a positive record of public goods provision, a negative

[9]Each respondent from one of the five largest tribes—which make up 71 percent of the total sample—had a 50 percent chance of seeing a coethnic candidate and a 50 percent chance of seeing a candidate from one of the four other largest tribes. Respondents from

one, or no information about their record either way; and were said to have either organized youths to engage in violence or to have run a peaceful campaign when running in the last election (see Online Appendix Table B1 for a summary of the design). After receiving the information, respondents were asked to choose which of the two candidates they prefer to see as president of Kenya.[10] I analyze this experiment to assess the extent to which voters' coethnic preference depends on their ethnic match with the interviewer, as well as whether their preference depends on the information they have about candidates' performance, each of which test key observable implications of the norms and social pressure explanation or its alternatives.[11] Importantly, the ethnic match/mismatch between respondent and enumerator on this survey was conditionally as-if random, allowing me to causally identify its effect on the outcomes of interest (more on this below).[12]

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smaller tribes (who would not plausibly have a coethnic presidential candidate) could not see a coethnic candidate and are therefore excluded from the analysis of this experiment.

[10]All outcome questions for the two experiments analyzed here are listed in Online Appendix D.

[11]Experiments such as these can capture many elements of why voters may prefer coethnic candidates and parties in the real world, but not all. For instance, pride in voting for a member of one's group (a potential social-psychological motivation mentioned earlier) may not accrue to the same extent in a hypothetical vote choice than in an actual vote. Importantly, the goal of this analysis is not to *disprove* existing explanations for ethnic voting, but to examine whether social pressure around group norms *also* plays a role, especially for a segment of the population for whom coethnic preferences are not intrinsic or particularly deep-seated.

[12]The ethnic identity of the interviewer in both surveys is signaled primarily by their name when they introduce themselves to the respondent; Kenyan surnames are highly predictive

In the second experiment, respondents were presented with a vignette about a candidate for county governor that randomly varied the candidate's ethnicity (signaled by their name) and history of violence (see Online Appendix B for wording), where respondents were assigned with equal probability to either a coethnic or non-coethnic candidate.[13] Outcomes in this experiment were measured with a series of questions that elicit respondents' attitudes towards a politician by asking them their opinions about public policies that the politician has endorsed. This approach takes advantage of an observation from social psychology—that individuals are more likely to express support for policies when they maintain positive affect toward the endorser—in order to measure attitudes towards politicians without asking respondents directly about them (Rosenfeld, Imai and Shapiro 2016). By measuring preferences for politicians indirectly, the method obscures the revelation of individual respondents' attitudes towards particular politicians while still allowing for analysis of what determines these attitudes. It is therefore useful for eliciting true preferences with respect to sensitive topics (Rosenfeld, Imai and Shapiro 2016). To increase the statistical power of the tests I run, I measure support for candidates with questions about respondents' attitudes toward three different policy proposals that are combined into an index (see Online Appendix D). Analyzing this experiment allows me to assess whether obscuring the revelation of individuals' attitudes towards politicians reduces their preference for coethnics—as well as any difference

of individuals' ethnic affiliation (Kasara 2013; Harris 2015), and Kenyans are very aware of which groups names tend to be associated with.

[13]This was limited to respondents from the 11 tribes that each make up at least 1 percent of the country's population. Together they make up more than 92 percent of the total sample. Importantly, even if some of these groups do not usually have viable presidential candidates, they can vote for coethnics in more local races such as those for governor or MP. The effects of the violence treatments on voter support are explored in other work.

between their attitudes as expressed to coethnic and non-coethnic interviewers—as the idea of ethnic voting arising from social pressure would suggest.

Importantly, this method can be distinguished from vote choice under the secret ballot—which also obscures individuals' voting preferences—because the setup is such that respondents are not even aware that the motivation of the survey is to infer their attitudes towards politicians. This is qualitatively different from voting under the secret ballot, where—as noted above—individuals know that they're likely to have to discuss and defend their choice to friends and family in their social network.[14] On the survey, by contrast, they're simply indicating preferences over policy proposals and should therefore be unconcerned with having to defend their choice with respect to the social norm of ethnic voting. This allows me to interpret responses to the candidate-endorsed policy questions as reflective of intrinsic preferences even as standard survey measures—as well as votes cast under the secret ballot—remain subject to social pressure around group norms.

Notably, the survey firm that implemented the survey ensured that all enumerators in the former North Eastern province—which is dominated by Somali speakers—were ethnic Somali, as well as that a majority of enumerators in most provinces were from the majority ethnic group in that province. However, once assigned to a province, enumerators were assigned randomly to a given enumeration area; Online Appendix Figure A2 shows results from a balance test that is consistent with conditional random assignment of coethnic enumerators

[14]Thus, if social pressure related to group norms of voting for coethnics exists as posited here, then expressing a sincere preference by voting for non-coethnics in real elections under the secret ballot still results in a psychological cost (disapproval from, or having to lie to, one's friends and family), whereas sincere preferences for non-coethnic versus coethnic candidates as measured by the endorsement measure does not.

to respondents.[15] I therefore take advantage of this conditional as-if random variation to study coethnic candidate preferences by interviewer coethnicity, excluding respondents from North Eastern.

I also examine data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the nationally-representative Afrobarometer survey, fielded in Kenya in October 2016 and November 2021 in the run-up to the August 2017 and August 2022 general elections. My analysis of this data focuses on 1) the respondent's ethnic identity; 2) the interviewer's ethnic identity; and 3) the respondent's support for their coethnic presidential candidate. I analyze support for the coethnic presidential candidate for respondents from the Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups only for Round 7 and the Kalenjin and Luo ethnic groups for Round 9, since those were the groups with viable candidates certain to run in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections, respectively.[16] This data allows me to assess the relationship between the ethnic match/mismatch between respondent and interviewer and the likelihood of supporting a real-life coethnic presidential candidate. Because certain groups are more likely to be interviewed by coethnics than others due to various group-specific reasons (including ethnic group size, location, and whether they live in an area

[15]Balance tests are conditional on province, provincial majority group status, urban/rural status (since urban areas are more diverse so residents there more likely to be enumerators' non-coethnics), and ethnic group fixed effects. Only one of nine covariates shows a (substantively small) association with being interviewed by a coethnic enumerator.

[16]In October 2016 when the Round 7 survey was fielded, Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) was the incumbent president and had already declared his intention to run for reelection on his Jubilee Party ticket. In November 2021, William Ruto was the Deputy President to a term-limited president and had also announced his intention to run for president in the upcoming elections on his UDA party ticket. In both cases, Raila Odinga (Luo) had not yet formally announced his candidacy, but was widely assumed to be contesting the presidency for the 4th and 5th time on his longtime party's ticket (which he subsequently did).

dominated by their ethnic group or not, the Afrobarometer analyses all include group fixed effects, and I break down the analyses by whether respondents live in the multiethnic capital city of Nairobi, and by whether they live in a county dominated by their group or not.[17]

Finally, to examine whether group norms and social pressure can explain ethnic voting beyond Kenya, I extend the analysis of Afrobarometer data on how the ethnic match between interviewer and respondent affects voters' preferences for coethnic candidates to three additional African countries where ethnic identity tends to be closely associated with vote choice: Zambia, Malawi, and Nigeria. Adida et al. (2016) show that differences in how respondents answer sensitive questions according to whether they're interviewed by a coethnic or non-coethnic occur across African countries, but the analysis here is specific to vote choice and thus a better test of the external validity of the findings from Kenya.

Results

To test whether group norms and social pressure give rise to ethnic voting, I analyze 1) whether voters' preference for coethnic candidates in the conjoint experiment and the Afrobarometer survey is driven by respondents who interact with a coethnic interviewer and 2) whether voters' preference for coethnic candidates—and any difference between preferences expressed to coethnic and non-coethnic interviewers—goes away when voters' attitudes towards candidates are obscured by sensitive survey techniques. The logic of this approach is that—if ethnic voting is driven by social pressure around a group norm of voting for coethnics—then that norm should only be operative in voters' interactions with coethnics;

[17]The Afrobarometer Survey Manual specifies that interviewers should be selected based on their ability to conduct interviews in the languages most commonly spoken in the areas they're canvassing, so interviewers from a particular ethnic group will be more likely to be sent to areas where their group predominates (Afrobarometer 2022).

Table 1: Determinants of ethnic vote preferences, Afrobarometer Rounds 7 and 9

	Round 7		Round 9	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All Counties	Nairobi Excluded	All Counties	Nairobi Excluded
Coethnic Interviewer	0.0509*	0.0531*	0.214***	0.218***
	(0.0304)	(0.0302)	(0.0453)	(0.0451)
Constant	0.902***	0.915***	0.593***	0.601***
	(0.0224)	(0.0230)	(0.0371)	(0.0370)
Group fixed effects?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	477	389	730	487

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

in the context of a survey, that means interacting with a coethnic interviewer.[18] Furthermore, the relevant norm can only be upheld by *social pressure* when the respondent is explicitly revealing their preference; the interviewer's identity should not affect their answers when the revelation of that preference is obscured. The results of this analysis are supportive of the idea that social pressure around groups norms is an important driver of ethnic voting.

Observational Analysis of Afrobarometer Data

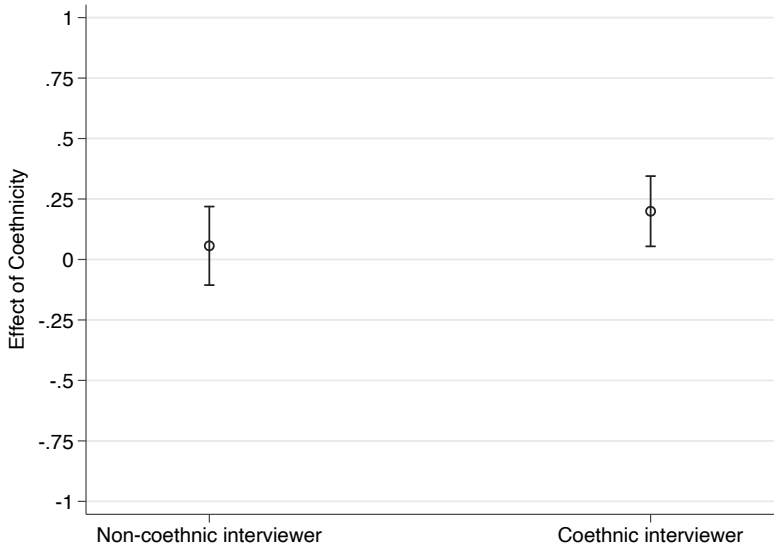
Beginning with the Afrobarometer data, Table 1 shows that respondents are more likely to assert that they plan to vote for their coethnic presidential candidate when interviewed by a coethnic enumerator.[19] The estimated difference is significant at only the ten percent level for Round 7 data collected in late 2016 (Column 1), but it is substantively large, indicating an

[18]See White and Laird (2020) for an example of this approach using the racial match/mismatch of respondents on a survey of American political opinions.

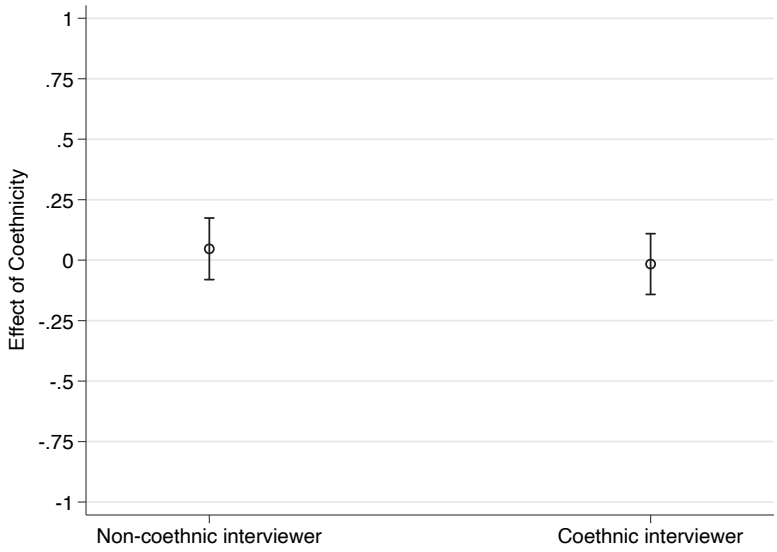
[19]The analyses in Table 1 include group fixed effects.

increase in support for the coethnic candidate of five percentage points, an impressive figure given that baseline support for the coethnic candidate in that survey is so high (90 percent of respondents interviewed by non-coethnic respondents expressed an intent to vote for the coethnic candidate).[20] The estimated difference is large and highly significant for Round 9 collected in late 2021 (Column 3), when baseline levels of ethnic political polarization were lower. Since respondents are more likely to encounter a non-coethnic interviewer—and perhaps less likely to vote along ethnic lines—in cosmopolitan Nairobi than elsewhere, I also estimate the relationship between having a coethnic interviewer and planning to vote for the coethnic presidential candidate for non-Nairobi residents only. The result remains the same (Table 1, Columns 2 and 4). The results also hold regardless of whether respondents come from a county dominated by their group or not, which both 1) affects the likelihood that a respondent will be interviewed by a coethnic and 2) potentially affects the extent to which group norms affect behavior.[21]

Figure 1: Effects of candidate coethnicity on voter support, by interviewer coethnicity



(a) Direct Measure



(b) Indirect (Endorsement) Measure

Note: Estimates are marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, based on the results from regressions of standardized support outcomes on the interaction of candidate and interviewer coethnicity. Support is measured indirectly (via support for candidate-endorsed policies) in the second experiment (1b). Results exclude respondents from the former North Eastern province.

Experimental Results

Next, I break down the effect of candidate coethnicity on voter support in the first experiment—in which candidate preferences are measured directly—by whether respondents were interviewed by coethnic or non-coethnic enumerators. As noted above, the ethnic identity of enumerators assigned to a given enumeration area for this survey was conditionally random. The effect of enumerator coethnicity can therefore be causally identified in a model that conditions on the characteristics (province, province majority-group status, and urban/rural status) that affect the likelihood of encountering a coethnic interviewer, which is how I analyze the data in Figure 1 and Online Appendix Table C1.[22] What this analysis shows is that respondents only express a preference for coethnic candidates when interviewed by coethnic enumerators; respondents are no more likely to support coethnic candidates when interviewed by a non-coethnic (Figure 1a and Online Appendix Table C1, Column 1). Can-

[20]In fact, these estimates—based on interviewer identity effects—likely reflect only a portion of the overall effect of group norms on vote choice since voters (including those not interviewed by coethnics) will have already incorporated those norms into their choice of candidate for the upcoming election.

[21]The coefficients for Round 9 are large (0.249 and 0.174) and highly significant (p-values of 0.005 and 0.001) for both counties where coethnics predominate and those where they do not, respectively. Average support for the coethnic candidate increases from 77 percent to 94 percent in coethnic-dominated counties and from 58.5 to 83.5 percent when interviewed by a coethnic. The analysis was only possible for Round 9 because respondents' county was not tagged for Round 7.

[22]I also control for values of the independently randomized violence and public goods record treatments, group fixed effects, and respondents' gender, age, education level, income level, and prior exposure to electoral violence.

didate coethnicity increases voter support by 0.20 standard deviations (p-value of 0.007) when the interviewer is a coethnic, while the estimated effect size is about a quarter the size and indistinguishable from zero for respondents interacting with a non-coethnic.[23] There therefore appears to be something about the interviewer's ethnicity that affects the level of support voters express for coethnic versus non-coethnic candidates for office.

A sensible first interpretation of these results is that respondents may be more comfortable speaking freely with coethnic interviewers and therefore more likely to reveal their "true" preferences, especially about sensitive issues such as ethnicized political preferences (Adida et al. 2016). However, analysis of the second experiment—which used support for candidate-endorsed policies to measure candidate support in order to avoid precisely the sort of social desirability bias that might lead respondents to provide less truthful answer to non-coethnics—suggests that it is with *coethnics* that voters feel pressure to express political preferences that differ from their true, intrinsic preferences.

As described above, the policy endorsement measures used in the second experiment are used to elicit true preferences, free from social desirability bias, by obscuring individual attitudes about the individuals or groups of interest (Rosenfeld, Imai and Shapiro 2016). Strikingly, when measured this way, respondents' preference for coethnic candidates goes away entirely, regardless of whether they are interviewed by coethnic or non-coethnic enumerators (Figure 1b and Table C1, Column 2). Figure 1 makes clear that it is only when respondents are explicitly disclosing their candidate selection to coethnic interviewers that they demonstrate a preference for coethnic candidates; this preference goes away when they are either interacting with a non-coethnic interviewer or when their true preference is obscured. The results therefore suggest that many Kenyan voters do not maintain an intrinsic

[23]Note, however, that the interaction between coethnic candidate and coethnic interviewer does not reach statistical significance (Online Appendix Table C1).

preference for coethnic candidates, but that their desire to conform to the norms of their ethnic community leads them to vote along ethnic lines at high rates.[24]

Group Norms and Ethnic Voting Beyond Kenya

The results above provide substantial evidence from observational and experimental survey data that social pressure around group norms may lead some voters in Kenya to vote along ethnic lines despite lacking any intrinsic preference for coethnic candidates. To what extent does this logic apply elsewhere? To explore this question, I extend the analysis of Afrobarometer data to three countries where voting in national elections tends to occur along ethnic lines: Zambia, Malawi, and Nigeria. To do so, I analyze data from Afrobarometer Round 8 in Zambia (conducted prior to the 2021 presidential election); Round 8 in Malawi (conducted prior to the 2020 presidential election); and Round 6 in Nigeria (conducted prior to the 2015 presidential election).[25] Paralleling the analysis in Kenya, for Zambia I analyze the effect of being interviewed by a coethnic interviewer on professed support for the coeth-

[24]If ethnic voting is entirely instrumental, then we might also expect the coethnic preference to disappear when measured using the policy endorsement measure. But instrumental voting would *not* explain the difference in preference for coethnics when being interviewed by coethnic versus non-coethnic enumerators, so a social norm-based explanation is most consistent with the totality of the evidence.

[25]The 2021 and 2020 elections are the most recent ones held in Zambia and Malawi, respectively; the surveys were conducted 8 months (Zambia) and 6 months (Malawi) prior to each election. I analyze Nigeria's Round 6 survey (collected 3 months prior to Nigeria's 2015 election) because 1) Round 9 was collected before the presidential candidates for Nigeria's 2023 elections were selected and 2) the main candidates in the 2019 presidential elections hailed from the same ethnic group.

Table 2: Determinants of ethnic vote preferences on Afrobarometer surveys in Zambia, Malawi, and Nigeria

	(1) Zambia	(2) Malawi	(3) Nigeria	(4) Pooled
Coethnic Interviewer	0.240***	0.0621	0.306	0.104***
	(0.0813)	(0.0409)	(0.187)	(0.0358)
Constant	0.451***	0.543***	0.576***	0.351***
	(0.0481)	(0.0275)	(0.0807)	(0.0568)
Observations	231	646	89	966

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Note: Results are from the Zambia Round 8, Malawi Round 8, and Nigeria Round 6 Afrobarometer surveys. All models include ethnic group fixed effects; the pooled analysis (Column 4) includes country fixed effects, as well.

nic presidential candidate among Nsenga and Tonga respondents in Zambia; among Chewa and Lomwe respondents in Malawi; and among Fulani and Ijaw respondents in Nigeria.[26] Table 2 summarizes the results of this analysis, which includes ethnic group fixed effects for the single-country analysis in Columns 1-3 and both group and country fixed effects for the pooled analysis with respondents in all three countries in Column 4.

The results in Table 2 are consistent with the idea that social pressure around group norms can explain why some voters vote along ethnic lines in countries beyond Kenya.

[26]The relevant candidates are Edgar Lungu of the PF and Hakainde Hichilema of the UPND in Zambia; Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP and Peter Mutharika of the DPP in Malawi; and Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP in Nigeria. Adida et al. (2016) document differences in how Afrobarometer respondents across countries answer sensitive questions according to whether they're interviewed by a coethnic or non-coethnic occur across African countries, but don't study how the ethnic match or mismatch of interviewers affects support for actual coethnic candidates, specifically.

The coefficients for each individual country regression are in the expected direction; they are highly statistically significant for Zambia and the pooled analysis combining survey responses from all three countries, and are close to significance at the 10 percent level for Malawi and Nigeria. The coefficient for Nigeria is actually the largest, though it doesn't achieve standard statistical significance because the very small sample of Fulani and Ijaw (relatively small ethnic groups in Nigeria) results in a large standard error. Strikingly, the pooled estimate is large (falling between the estimates for Kenya's Rounds 7 and 9) and highly significant, despite respondents from Malawi (where the coefficient is smallest) making up two thirds of the three-country sample. These results suggest that the findings described above are not unique to Kenya, and social pressure around group norms may help explain ethnic voting in other contexts where it is prevalent.

Discussion

This study has presented evidence in favor the idea that ethnic voting is driven at least partially by voters acting in accordance with a group norm—upheld by social pressure—of voting for members of one's ethnic group. In both observational data on preferences for real candidates and experimental data on preferences for hypothetical candidates, voters demonstrate a preference for coethnic candidates, but *only* when they are interacting with a coethnic interviewer. Furthermore, this preference goes away when respondents' attitudes towards candidates are obscured by sensitive survey techniques, revealing attitudes unaffected by beliefs about what they *should* say. It is only when respondents must explicitly disclose their candidate selection to coethnic interviewers that they demonstrate a preference for coethnic candidates, suggesting that social pressure around a group norm of supporting coethnics for office encourages voters to support coethnic politicians to a greater extent than their intrinsic preferences would otherwise lead them to.

The results should not be interpreted to suggest that social pressure around group norms is the *only* reason that voters vote along ethnic lines. Some voters may support coethnic over non-coethnic candidates because they believe them to be more likely to benefit them once in office, for example, or because it affirms their group identity; however, the evidence here suggests that widespread beliefs about the preferences and expectations of fellow group members and the social (un)acceptability of voting for ethnic outsiders can help explain why the seemingly significant number of voters who don't strictly prefer coethnic candidates tend to vote along ethnic lines as well.

The findings have a number of important theoretical and practical implications. For one, the fact that some voters appear to predicate their vote on what they believe to be acceptable among their community—rather than on evaluative criteria related to a candidate's previous or potential performance in office—suggests that elections may not serve as an effective means of holding politicians accountable for what voters desire. If votes are used to conform to group norms rather than sanction poorly performing politicians or select candidates with compatible policy platforms, then elected officials may have little incentive to respond to voter preferences (Banerjee and Pande 2007; Sinclair 2012).[27]

Relatedly, the findings have implications for efforts to reduce the salience of ethnicity in voting decisions in favor of considerations that may be more conducive to elections serving as an effective tool for holding government accountable. Whereas explanations for ethnic voting focused on the use of ethnicity as a heuristic imply that efforts to reduce its prevalence should concentrate on increasing the amount of information available to voters about politicians'

[27]Though see Ake (1993) and White and Laird (2020) for arguments in favor of the democratic potential of ethnic and racial solidarity in politics and its role in empowering marginalized groups. Whether ethnic voting bolsters or undermines democratic accountability may depend on the notion of citizenship given priority in a polity's political institutions and culture (Ndegwa 1997).

qualifications, past performance, and policy platforms, and social-identity based theories suggest promoting national or cross-cutting identities to reduce the salience of any particular one, the logic of ethnic voting described here implies a different approach. Under this logic, ethnic voting is driven by individuals' beliefs about members of their social network's preferences and expectations about how they will respond to their support for a coethnic versus a non-coethnic candidate. Breaking down this equilibrium therefore requires either 1) changing people's beliefs about the distribution of political preferences and behavior within their social network and/or 2) changing people's expectations about how their social network will react to their support of a non-coethnic candidate. In short, this means breaking down the social norm of voting for coethnics, i.e. the idea that it is expected and/or praiseworthy behavior. Efforts might include publicizing the results of social desirability-robust opinion surveys or working with respected local institutions or community opinion leaders (or "social referents," as social psychologists refer to them) to encourage individuals to vote for their preferred candidate, who may or may not be a member of their group (Tankard and Paluck 2016).

An alternative may be interventions that seek to affect the structure of social networks themselves. As described above, a key assumption of the explanation of ethnic voting arising from social pressure is that most individuals' social networks (their close friends and family) are *intra*ethnic; the norms of the network thus reflect the norms of the ethnic community at large. Should this assumption break down, then a community-wide norm may not have as substantial an effect on individuals' behavior. It follows that individuals who live and work in more ethnically heterogeneous contexts—and thus more likely to have more ethnically diverse social networks—will be less likely to subscribe to a group norm of voting along ethnic lines; in fact, recent research suggests this to be the case (de Kadt and Sands 2019; White and Laird 2020). In practice, ethnic demography and interethnic interaction are usually the result of complex social forces. Yet tools exist for encouraging residential diversity and the intensity

of interaction between groups, and such interventions could be encouraged as potentially powerful ways of promoting interethnic social networks that break down the norms that uphold ethnic voting (Barnhardt 2009; Alexander and Christia 2011).[28]

There is good reason to think that the logic uncovered in this study can explain ethnic voting in a range of contexts. All that's necessary for the posited mechanism to play out is for voters' social networks to be primarily intraethnic, a common feature of communities around the world (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2002; Eubank 2019). In fact, the logic of group norms and social pressure can help explain a variety of findings about ethnic politics—and even other political phenomena—in the comparative politics literature.

Take findings about the geography of ethnic voting. In an influential study of voting behavior in Ghana, Ichino and Nathan (2013) find that voters are less likely to vote for the party associated with their ethnic group when they live in an area dominated by members of a group associated with the opposing party, attributing this finding to voters' desire to elect the party most likely to provide their area with locally nonexcludedable public goods. Yet this pattern is also consistent with the logic described here, whereby voters in areas dominated by other groups may maintain less ethnically homogeneous social networks, which in turn lead them to eschew a group norm of voting for their coethnic party; in fact, they may conform to the local norm of voting for the party associated with the dominant group. Similarly, this logic can explain why voters cast their votes for nonviable coethnic candidates over more viable non-coethnic ones primarily in the most homogeneous ethnic enclaves (Horowitz and Long 2016) and why voters stress the importance of policy or performance in their voting decisions yet still vote along ethnic lines (Bratton and Kimenyi 2008). It also provides an

[28]Interethic interaction may be most effective in societies where alternative cleavages such as class are cross-cutting rather than reinforcing (Houle, Kenny and Park 2019). Paler, Marshall and Atallah (2020) find that cross-ethnic discussion reduces support for ethnic politics, but only when such discussion involves individuals from the same economic class.

explanation for the findings of de Kadt and Sands (2019), which shows that greater racial isolation in South Africa leads to higher levels of voting along racial lines.

The logic described here may be relevant for interpreting findings about political preferences and behavior beyond ethnic voting as well. Letsa (2019), for example, finds that—conditional on a range of theoretically-relevant drivers of political preferences—citizens living in opposition strongholds are more likely to view the state as autocratic and illegitimate than citizens living in ruling party strongholds. While Letsa argues that this is due to the types of information that citizens in ruling party versus opposition strongholds have access to, it could also be the case that the logic of social norms and social pressure described here is responsible for the spread and/or persistence of regime support and opposition in the strongholds of the former or the latter. In short, the potentially widespread implications of this model of political behavior—and the range of existing findings that are consistent with it—suggest that studies of the determinants of political preferences and behavior should consider the possibility of an explanation along these lines and craft their empirical approach accordingly.

Finally, the findings have implications for how we study ethnic political preferences and voting behavior, in particular for how we use survey data to do so. While previous research has documented differences between how survey respondents answer ethnically-charged questions when interacting with coethnic versus non-coethnic enumerators (Adida et al. 2016; Carlson 2016), it has not yet demonstrated which type of interviewer (if any) is most likely to elicit the more "truthful" responses.[29] This study—the first, to my knowledge, that uses sensitive survey techniques to measure coethnic vote preferences without bias—shows that, at least with respect to ethnic voting, it is with *coethnic* interviewers that respondents are most likely to prevaricate. Still, the choices they reveal in their interactions with coethnics are more in line with their actual voting behavior, which this study has argued is shaped

[29]See also Malik and Siddiqui (2024) on coethnic third-party effects on survey responses.

by coethnic social ties. As scholars, we must therefore take care in how we interpret survey evidence on this subject, keeping in mind whether we are interested interested in personal preferences or actual behavior and what survey data—whether collected by coethnic or non-coethnics, or via standard or sensitive survey techniques—can tell us about each.

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Online Appendix

Contents

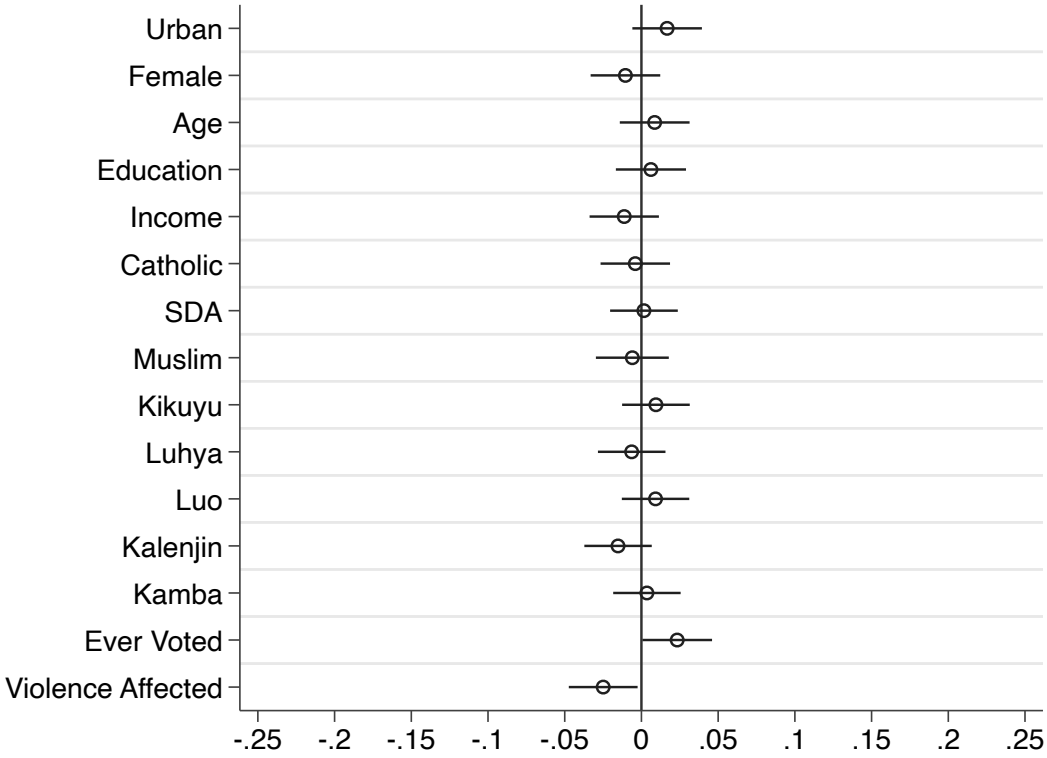
A Balance Tests and Randomization Checks

Table A1: Randomization check for conjoint experiment: Correlation coefficients for all treatment conditions

	Candidate 1 Coethnic	Candidate 2 Coethnic	Candidate 1 Public Goods Record	Candidate 2 Public Goods Record	Candidate 1 Violence	Candidate 2 Violence
Candidate 1 Coethnic	1					
Candidate 2 Coethnic	0.00269	1				
Candidate 1 Public Goods Record	-0.0329	0.00871	1			
Candidate 2 Public Goods Record	0.00490	0.0542**	0.0182	1		
Candidate 1 Violence	-0.00909	-0.0151	-0.0213	0.0125	1	
Candidate 2 Violence	-0.0189	0.0231	0.0361	0.00809	0.0297	1
Observations	1436					

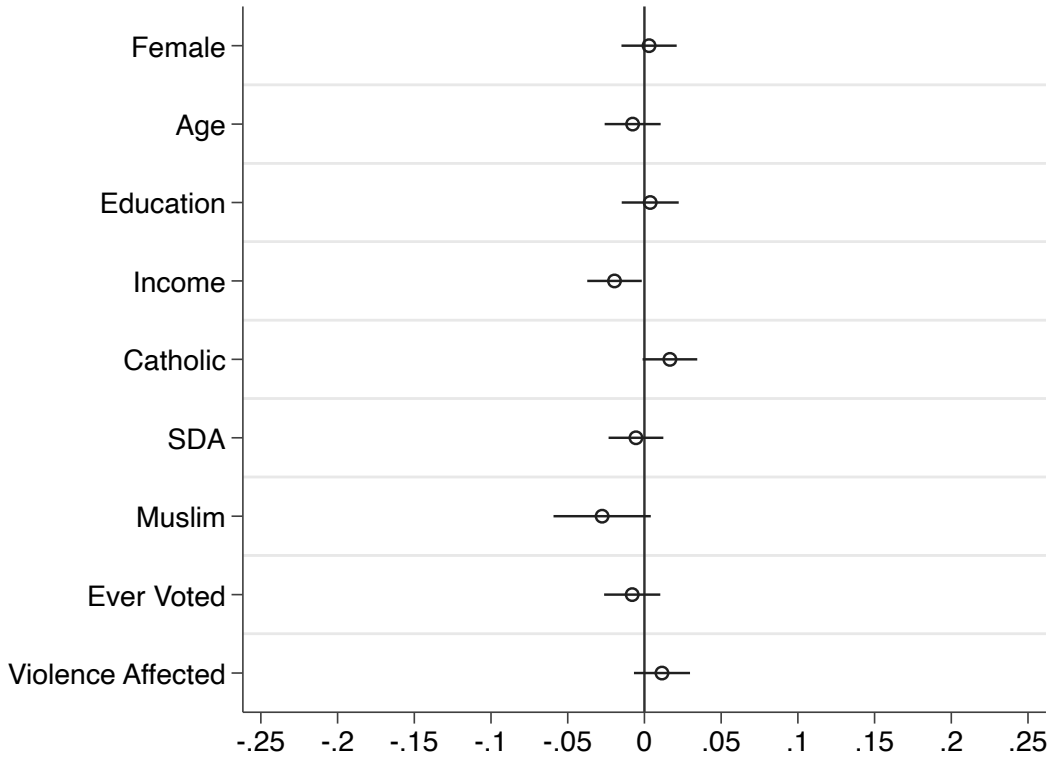
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Figure A1: Vignette experiment balance tests on pretreatment covariates



Note: This figure presents point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the vignette experiment from regressions of the coethnicity treatment on standardized pretreatment covariates.

Figure A2: Conditional balance tests for enumerator coethnicity



Note: This figure presents point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the nationally-representative Kenya survey from regressions of enumerator coethnicity on standardized pre-treatment covariates, conditional on province, provincial ethnic majority status, urban/rural status, and respondent ethnicity.

B Experimental Design: Experimental Treatments and Text of Candidate Vignettes

Table B1: Conjoint experiment design

	Candidate 1	**Candidate 2**
Sex	Male	Male
Age	50s	50s
Religion	Christian	Christian
Tribe	[Kikuyu/Luo/Maasai/Kalenjin/Kisii]	[Kikuyu/Luo/Maasai/Kalenjin/Kisii]
Education Level	University (Bachelors)	University (Bachelors)
Record in Office	[The candidate has a record of delivering public goods to his constituency such as health clinics and improved roads./The candidate has not yet delivered improvements in public goods such as health clinics and roads to his constituency./BLANK] [In the last election, he was said to have organized youths to commit violence./In the last election, he was said to have run a peaceful campaign.]	[The candidate has a record of delivering public goods to his constituency such as health clinics and improved roads./The candidate has not yet delivered improvements in public goods such as health clinics and roads to his constituency./BLANK] [In the last election, he was said to have organized youths to commit violence./In the last election, he was said to have run a peaceful campaign.]

Note: The candidates ethnicity, public goods record, and history of violence were each independently randomized (thus making each characteristic orthogonal to the other). Each respondent from one of the five largest tribes had a 50 percent probability of seeing a candidate from their own group, and a 12.5 percent probability of seeing a candidate from one of four others. There was a one third probability of seeing a candidate that had a positive public goods record, a negative public goods record, or no record provided. There was a 50 percent probability of seeing a candidate with a history of violence and a 50 percent probability of seeing a candidate without one.

Vignette Experiment w/ Support for Candidate-Endorsed Policies to Measure Candidate Support:
Mr. [Peter Chege/Peter Masinde/Peter Kipkosgei/Peter Onyango/Peter Mutungi/Adan Ibrahim/Peter Bosire/Peter Kazungu/Peter Kithika/Peter Lokwalima/Peter ole Sankale] plans to run for governor in the next elections in 2022. Mr. [Chege/Masinde/Kipkosgei/Onyango/Mutungi/Ibhrahim/Bosire/Kazungu/Kithika/Lokwalima/ole Sankale] is 51 years old and a member of the [Kikuyu/Luhya/Kalenjin/Luo/Kamba/Somali/Kisii/Mijikenda/Meru/Turkana/Maasai] community. He is a prominent businessman who has contributed some of his wealth to sponsor sporting events for county youths. [When he ran for MCA in the last election campaign, [youths in his ward were said to have been involved in clashses with members of other communities] [he was said to have provided youths with pangas to attack members other communities] [he was said to have provided youths with pangas to defend against attacks from members of other communities]. If elected as governor, he promises to create jobs, reduce corruption, and improve the quality of primary education.

Note: Each respondent for any tribe making up at least 1 percent of the Kenyan population had a 50 percent probability of seeing a candidate from their own tribe (ethnic group), and a 5 percent probability of seeing a candidate from one of 10 others.

C Supplementary Analyses

Table C1: Effect of coethnicity on voter support, by interviewer coethnicity

	(1) Experiment 1 (Direct Measure)	(2) Experiment 2 (Policy Endorsement Measure)
Coethnic Candidate	0.0250	0.135
	(0.0367)	(0.213)
Coethnic Interviewer	-0.0659**	0.0151
	(0.0330)	(0.249)
Coethnic Candidate ×	0.0634	-0.147
Coethnic Interviewer	(0.0492)	(0.299)
Positive Public Goods Record	0.120***	
	(0.0306)	
Negative Public Goods Record	0.00230	
	(0.0297)	
Violence	-0.175***	
	(0.0213)	
Constant	0.490***	4.396***
	(0.0900)	(0.696)
Observations	1728	1714

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Note: Both models include province and ethnic group fixed effects and control for whether the respondent comes from the majority ethnic group in the province, in addition to respondents' gender, age, education level, income level, and prior exposure to electoral violence. They exclude respondents from the former North Eastern province, where all interviewers were (purposely) coethnics.

D Outcome Questions

Conjoint Experiment:

Which of these two candidates would you prefer to see as President of Kenya?

a) Candidate 1

b) Candidate 2

c) Neither

Vignette Experiment:

A recent proposal by Mr. [Chege / Masinde / Kipkosgei / Onyango / Mutungi / Ibrahim / Bosire / Kazungu / Kithika / Lokwalima / ole Sankale] calls for decreasing the share of the budget controlled by the national government and increasing the share controlled by county governments. How do you feel about this proposal?

a) Strongly agree

b) Somewhat agree

c) Indifferent

d) Somewhat disagree

e) Strongly disagree

A recent proposal by Mr. [Chege / Masinde / Kipkosgei / Onyango / Mutungi / Ibrahim / Bosire / Kazungu / Kithika / Lokwalima / ole Sankale] calls for creating a county program to provide credit to farmers to buy agricultural inputs. Farmers who fail to repay their loans would have their farms confiscated. How do you feel about this proposal?

a) Strongly agree

b) Somewhat agree

c) Indifferent

d) Somewhat disagree

e) Strongly disagree

A recent proposal by Mr. [Chege / Masinde / Kipkosgei / Onyango / Mutungi / Ibrahim / Bosire / Kazungu / Kithika / Lokwalima / ole Sankale] calls for tarmacking 200km of new

roads in the county in order to reduce transport times in rural areas. The work would be funded by charging a toll on drivers and passengers for using the new roads. How do you feel about this proposal?

a) Strongly agree

b) Somewhat agree

c) Indifferent

d) Somewhat disagree

e) Strongly disagree

Afrobarometer Data:

If presidential elections were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you vote for?