Working Paper No. 44

SOURCES OF ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION IN AFRICA

by Alicia Bannon, Edward Miguel, and Daniel N. Posner

A comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa.

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AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

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Introduction

In the popular imagination, Africans are deeply and uniformly ethnic people. Ask an African "who she is," most people assume, and you will get an ethnic response: "I am a Yoruba," "I am a Kikuyu," "I am a Buganda." Moreover, ask most people why ethnicity is so salient in Africa and they will tell you that it is because Africans are so "backward." Once Africans become more educated and urbanized (in short, more "modern"), it is assumed, ethnicity will cease to cause so much conflict, distort so many elections, and pervert so many public policies.

The first part of this paper draws on survey data from more than 14,000 respondents in nine African countries to dispel these myths about the salience and origins of ethnic identifications in Africa. We show first that ethnicity is not nearly as central to Africans' conceptions of who they are as is frequently assumed. Responding to an open-ended question about how they identify themselves first and foremost, fewer than one-third of African respondents identify themselves in ethnic terms. The majority identify, instead, in terms of non-ethnic affiliations such as occupation. Moreover, contrary to the assumption that Africans are "all the same," the share of respondents who rank their ethnicity as their most important group membership varies tremendously from country to country.

We then investigate the factors that predispose individuals to identify themselves in ethnic terms. We examine both individual- and country-level characteristics and find support for the proposition that the sources of strong ethnic identification lie not in economic or political backwardness but in "modernity." Specifically, we find that education, working in non-traditional occupations that expose people to competition for employment, and exposure to political mobilization all increase the likelihood that an individual will see him or herself primarily in ethnic rather than non-ethnic terms. Strikingly, we find that the closer a country is to a national election and the greater the degree of political rights the people in a country enjoy, the greater the likelihood that respondents from that country will say that they identify themselves ethnically first and foremost. In addition, contrary to one of the central assumptions in the literature on ethnic diversity, we also find a robust *negative* relationship between a country's ethnic fractionalization and ethnic salience.

The second part of the paper then turns to the slightly different question of the factors that cause individuals to identify themselves in terms of one dimension of ethnic identity rather than another. Drawing on survey data collected from more than 1,100 respondents in two Kenyan market towns, we find that the salience of two competing types of ethnic identity, corresponding with membership in one's tribe and membership in one's sub-tribe, depends largely on the scope of the social arena the respondent inhabits. Respondents who interact in broad social and political spheres – because of their education, occupation, or location in an urban population center – tend to associate more strongly with their tribe. Respondents who interact in narrow social spheres – because of their lack of education, dependence on subsistence agriculture, or rural location – tend to identify more strongly with their sub-tribe.

Taken together, these findings provide strong empirical support for situational and instrumental approaches to ethnicity that are well-established in the academic literature. The context dependence of ethnic identifications is borne out by the finding that the salience of ethnicity varies both across and within African countries, and that it does so in predictable ways. The instrumentality of ethnic identifications is suggested by the finding that competition for political representation (as evidenced by election proximity and political rights) and jobs (as evidenced by participation in the "modern" economy) tend to increase the likelihood that a person will identify him or herself in ethnic terms and to affect the kinds of ethnic identities with which the person will identify. The results reported in the paper reinforce those reported in other studies (e.g., Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi forthcoming) to undermine popular views that ethnic salience in Africa is uniformly strong and fundamentally pre-modern, and point the way to a richer understanding of ethnicity in African politics

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Sources of Ethnic Identification: Evidence from the Afrobarometer

Data and Measurement

To investigate the sources of ethnic identification in Africa, we employ data collected in Round 1 of the Afrobarometer, a multi-country survey project that employs standardized questionnaires to probe citizens' attitudes in new democracies in Africa. Round 1 surveys were administered in 12 sub-Saharan African countries between mid-1999 and mid-2001. Nationally representative samples were drawn through a multi-stage, stratified, clustered sampling procedure, with sample sizes sufficient to yield a margin of sampling error of +/- 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.[1]

Round 1 Afrobarometer surveys included a question designed to gauge the salience for respondents of different group identifications. The question was worded as follows:

> We have spoken to many [people in this country, country X] and they have all described themselves in different ways. Some people describe themselves in terms of their language, religion, race, and others describe themselves in economic terms, such as working class, middle class, or a farmer. Besides being [a citizen of X], which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?

The main dependent variable used in the analyses in the first part of this paper – the measure of "ethnic salience" – is constructed from the responses to this question by 14,414 respondents in nine countries: Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.[2] We coded respondents' answers to the "which group do you feel you belong to first and foremost" question into five categories: ethnic, race, religion, class/occupation, and other. We defined ethnic responses in two ways. Our principal definition, which we employ in the analyses reported in the main paper, equates ethnicity with tribe (or sub-tribe) and language. However, recognizing that other non-tribal and non-linguistic identities – e.g., race in South Africa, region in Malawi, religion in Nigeria – are sometimes also understood in ethnic terms, we also coded our dependent variable in a second, more encompassing, way to include these other categories as ethnic responses as well.[3] We replicate our main findings using this broader definition in the Appendix.

Before turning to the main findings, three limitations of the analysis bear mention. First, although broadly representative of Africa as a whole, the nine countries included in our study are not a substitute for a continent-wide sample. The nine countries include no Francophone nations, no countries that have failed to introduce at least some democratic or market reforms over the last decade, and, with the exception of Uganda, no countries currently involved in civil wars. As Table 1 indicates, per capita incomes in the nine countries are significantly higher than the African average (though this is driven by the cases of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa – the other six countries are actually poorer than the average African country). Rates of under-5 mortality in our sample are slightly lower than in Africa as a whole, and urbanization is slightly higher. Ethnic fractionalization – a measure of the likelihood that two

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[1] Further details of the Afrobarometer project, including the sampling procedures used in collecting the data, are available at the project's web site: www.afrobarometer.org.

[2] The question was not asked in Ghana. In Mali, the question was included but the codebook did not provide information about response categories until after this version of the paper was completed. The Mali data will be added to future analyses. Lesotho was excluded because the name of the country nationality is identical to the name of the country's dominant ethnic group, the Sotho (who comprise 99.7 percent of the population, CIA 2003). Thus the survey question (which asks, "besides being Mosotho, which group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?") rules out an ethnic response by definition.

[3] In addition to language and (sub-) tribe, the broad ethnic variable codes race as an ethnic response in all nine countries; region as an ethnic response in Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda; and religion as an ethnic response in Nigeria.

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people chosen at random from the country will be from different ethno-linguistic groups – is roughly comparable to what is found on the rest of the continent. But the nine countries in our sample enjoy more extensive political rights than the average African country (on the Freedom House scale, lower numbers indicate greater rights). Our findings therefore must be interpreted with the caveat that they may not be entirely representative of Africa as a whole.

Table 1: How Representative is Our Sample of African Countries?

	Per capita GNI in US$ (2000)	Under-5 Mortality per 1,000 (2000)	Percent Urban (2001)	Ethnic Fractionalization (Fearon)	Political Rights Score (2000-01)
All Sub-Saharan Africa	**480**	**162**	**33**	**0.71**	**4.5**
Nine Sample Countries	**1,130**	**139**	**36**	**0.73**	**3.7**
Botswana	3,300	99	50	0.35	2
Malawi	170	193	15	0.83	3
Namibia	2,050	112	32	0.72	2
Nigeria	260	153	46	0.80	4
South Africa	3,020	79	58	0.88	1
Tanzania	280	149	34	0.95	4
Uganda	310	161	15	0.93	6
Zambia	300	186	40	0.73	5
Zimbabwe	480	116	37	0.37	6

Notes: GNI, under-5 mortality, and percent urban figures are from World Bank (2002). Ethnic Fractionalization figures are from Fearon (2003). Political rights scores are from Freedom House (2001).

Second, the question from which we construct our dependent variable explicitly bars respondents from describing themselves in terms of nationality: it asks "*besides being Namibian, Zambian, Tanzanian, etc*, which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost." We therefore cannot rule out the possibility that respondents might consider national identity as more salient than the identity categories that they mention, and that are recorded in our data.

Third, the question provides information about the salience of ethnicity in relative, not absolute, terms. All we are able to infer from respondents' answers is the identity that they rank first among those identity categories explicitly mentioned in the survey question. We have no way of knowing how much importance respondents attach to their first- (or second- or third-) ranked group memberships. Thus to conclude on the basis of our data that ethnicity is more salient in country A than country B because a larger share of survey respondents in country A ranked ethnicity first is not quite right. It is possible that ethnicity might be more salient in absolute terms to people in country B, even though a larger share of them rank some other category of identity as even more important than ethnicity.

These caveats notwithstanding, the measure of ethnic salience adopted in this paper is superior to that employed in earlier studies, almost none of which measure the salience of ethnicity directly. Most rely on inferences based on the presumed effects of ethnic salience. In effect, they reason that, because there is ethnic violence in the country in question or because voting patterns or the distribution of patronage seem to follow ethnic lines, ethnicity must be a salient motivating factor in people's behavior. Others rely on assumptions about what the diversity of ethnic groups in a country implies about the salience of ethnicity in the country's politics – a relationship that we demonstrate in a moment works exactly *opposite* from the often hypothesized direction. Neither approach is as defensible as the one pursued here, which bases its assessment of ethnic salience on the self-reported identities of individuals as collected in a nationally representative sample survey.

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The use of self-reported identities does, however introduce the risk of response bias. Respondents in societies where ethnic labels mark people for discrimination or where expressing one's identity in ethnic terms is frowned upon could potentially be less likely to self-identify in ethnic terms. While these concerns cannot be ruled out, they are dampened by the structure of the Afrobarometer survey, which is conducted confidentially and in private by enumerators who are not affiliated with the government. Also, the Afrobarometer survey is not primarily about ethnicity – the question about how respondents identify themselves was just one of more than 175 questions asked in the questionnaire – so respondents are likely to have treated the ethnic identification question as a background question rather than as the central issue about which the survey was designed to elicit information. Given these factors, we expect that respondents were likely to have been less guarded in their responses about their ethnic identities than might otherwise have been the case.

The Salience of Ethnic Identities

Table 2 reports the frequency distribution of responses to the "which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost" question for all respondents taken together, and then broken down for each of the nine countries in the sample. Contrary to the stereotype that Africans are intrinsically "ethnic" people above all else, fewer than a third of the respondents in the nine countries identify themselves first and foremost in ethnic terms. Indeed, ethnic responses are not even the most frequent response type: class/occupation is the most common answer with 40 percent of responses. In addition, responses vary tremendously across countries: whereas 92 percent of respondents in Botswana identify themselves "first and foremost" in ethnic terms, only 3 percent of respondents do so in Tanzania.[4] This diversity of responses suggests that the national context matters for the salience of ethnicity – a point to which we shall return shortly. Confidence in the validity of these findings is bolstered by the consistency of the patterns with what we know about the history and politics of the countries in the sample. Race is most salient in countries with large white settler populations and recent histories of racial discrimination (South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia). Class is most salient in the traditionally socialist countries of Tanzania and Zambia (and, less predictably, also in Uganda).

Table 2: Respondent Self-Identifications

"*...which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?*" (from Afrobarometer)

	Ethnic	Race	Religion	Class/ Occupation	Other	Obs.
All Respondents	**0.31**	0.07	0.14	0.40	0.08	14414
Botswana	**0.92**	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.01	1196
Malawi	**0.59**	0.02	0.11	0.23	0.05	1132
Namibia	**0.38**	0.15	0.12	0.33	0.01	838
Nigeria	**0.47**	0.00	0.21	0.29	0.03	3516
South Africa	**0.17**	0.34	0.19	0.16	0.15	2152
Tanzania	**0.03**	0.00	0.05	0.79	0.12	2151
Uganda	**0.12**	0.00	0.09	0.66	0.12	1945
Zambia	**0.07**	0.04	0.32	0.54	0.02	905
Zimbabwe	**0.37**	0.15	0.08	0.33	0.07	930

Notes: The "other" category includes gender, region, and other responses. The rows may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding errors.

[4] In Botswana, where approximately 80 percent of the country's population is Setswana, ethnic responses were in terms of sub-tribes (i.e., Mongwato, Mokweme, Mokgatla, and so forth).

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Moreover, these findings are robust to alternative interpretations of what constitutes an "ethnic" response. Using our broader coding of ethnicity, the share of ethnic responses rises to 45 percent, largely because of increases in the number of responses coded as "ethnic" in Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe (see Appendix, Table A1). But even this figure falls short of what popular perceptions about the centrality of ethnicity in Africa might have led us to expect. Even with this broad measure, only two countries have ethnic responses over 60 percent (Botswana and Nigeria). Cross-country variation in the salience of ethnic identification also remains high.

If Africans are not uniformly "ethnic" people, what makes some Africans more likely to identify in ethnic terms? Although popularly viewed as vestiges of pre-modern society that will wither away in the face of political and economic development, ethnic identities have long been recognized to be products of modernization (Deutsch 1961; Anderson, von der Mehden and Young 1967; Lloyd 1967; Melson and Wolpe 1970; Gulliver 1971; Bates 1983).[5] Rather than causing ethnic identifications to "disappear into museums" (Davidson 1992: 100), 40 years of scholarship has shown that urbanization, industrialization, education, political mobilization, and competition for jobs *deepen* ethnic identities rather than weaken them, as individuals exploit their ethnic group memberships as tools for political, economic, and social advancement. The implication is that we should find the greatest frequency of ethnic responses among urban, educated respondents who are competing for scarce jobs and maximally exposed to political mobilization.

We test these expectations using the Afrobarometer dataset in two stages. First, we address the individual-level determinants of ethnic identification. Then we turn to the country-level factors that predispose individuals to identify themselves in ethnic terms. Descriptive statistics for the data used in these analyses are reported in Table 3.

Individual-Level Sources of Ethnic Identification

The key individual-level determinants of ethnic identification that we investigate are gender, age, education level, occupation, urban/rural location, and media exposure (as proxied by how often the respondent gets his or her news from the radio or from newspapers – Table 4, column 1).[6] Given the high degree of variation in the dependent variable across countries, we employ country fixed effects in column 1, and extensive country controls later. We also cluster regression disturbance terms at the country level in all specifications in Table 4.

Gender has no effect, and the effect of age is weak. The point estimate on the age variable implies that an increase in twenty years (roughly half the average life expectancy in the countries in the sample) would increase the likelihood that a respondent identifies him or herself in ethnic terms by just over 3 percent.

Education, however, has a strong effect, even when controlling for other variables like occupation. Compared to people with at least some primary education (the omitted category), respondents with no formal education are nearly 11 percent less likely to say that they feel they belong to an ethnic group first and foremost. Even a small amount of formal education appears to increase the likelihood that a

[5] During the 1950s and 1960s "it was accepted that…parochial ethnic loyalties were mere cultural ghosts lingering on into the present, weakened anomalies from a fast receding past…[that] were destined to disappear in the face of the social, economic and political changes that were everywhere at work" (Vail 1989: 1). Notwithstanding Vail's claim that "people from all sectors of the political spectrum believed in this vision," it is almost impossible to find examples of serious scholars who actually predicted that ethnic identities would evaporate in the face of modernization.

[6] Questions about respondents' household incomes are only included in five of the round 1 Afrobarometer surveys (Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda), so the effect of wealth can only be explored at the country level, which we do in the next section. Note that, in contrast to other Afrobarometer publications, we do not weight our individual-level analyses by country size.

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respondent will identify him or herself in ethnic terms. Beyond primary schooling, however, additional education has little impact on the likelihood an individual self-identifies in ethnic terms.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (for Afrobarometer Analysis)

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Obs.
Panel A: Individual-level characteristics			
Female	0.50	0.50	14414
Age (years)	35.0	13.5	14414
No formal education	0.13	0.34	14414
Some primary education	0.15	0.36	14414
Completed primary education	0.19	0.39	14414
Some secondary education	0.22	0.41	14414
Completed secondary education	0.18	0.39	14414
At least some post-secondary education	0.12	0.32	14414
Occupation: Farming or fishing	0.24	0.43	14414
Occupation: White collar, teacher, or government employee	0.16	0.36	14414
Occupation: Blue collar or miner	0.13	0.34	14414
Occupation: Student	0.08	0.28	14414
Occupation: Business, shop keeper, or petty trader	0.16	0.37	14414
Occupation: Other (e.g., unemployed, housewife, don't know)	0.22	0.41	14414
Lives in rural area	0.57	0.50	14414
Gets news from radio daily	0.57	0.49	14414
Gets news from newspaper at least weekly	0.31	0.46	14414
Panel B: Country-level characteristics			
Log per capita income (2000, 2000 US$ – *source: World Bank 2003*)	6.2	1.0	14414
Ethnic fractionalization – Fearon (*source: Fearon 2003*)	0.79	0.18	14414
Ethnic fractionalization – Alesina (*source: Alesina et al. 2003*)	0.74	0.15	14414
Ethno-linguistic fractionalization (*source: Easterly and Levine 1997*)	0.81	0.14	14414
Size of largest ethnic group (*source: Morrison et al. 1989*)	0.35	0.20	14414
Politically relevant ethnic groups score (*source: Posner 2004b*)	0.55	0.16	14414
Proximity to closest next or previous election, in months (*source: authors)*	8.3	5.5	14414
Average political rights, 1-7 (last 10 years, 1 is best – *source: Freedom House*)	4.4	1.5	14414

Notes: The education categories are mutually exclusive. The occupation categories are mutually exclusive. Reported figures are unweighted by country size.

The salience of ethnicity also varies strongly with occupation. Compared to farmers and fishermen (the omitted category), blue collar workers/miners, students, business people, and the unemployed are significantly more likely to identity themselves in ethnic terms. The effect is strongest for students, who are more than 12 percent more likely to identify themselves in ethnic terms than farmers or fishermen.[7] One interpretation of this pattern is that strong ethnic identification among students stems from the competition that they know they will face with their fellow graduates for scarce jobs, and the role that ethnic ties may play in securing employment.

We also find that respondents living in rural areas tend to be less likely than urban residents to privilege their ethnic group memberships, although this result is only statistically significant at traditional confidence levels in one of the specifications.[8]

[7] The finding for students is robust to the exclusion of the education indicator variables.
[8] The urban variable remains insignificant if we drop the occupation indicator variables, so the finding is not an artifact of colinearity between occupation and urbanization. This is probably because of heterogeneity of individual types in the rural domain.

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Table 4: Sources of Ethnic Identity: Individual and Country Characteristics

	Dependent variable: Ethnic identity "describes respondent best"		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Female	-0.010	0.001	0.002
	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.012)
Age (years)	0.0016*	0.0008	0.006
	(0.0008)	(0.0009)	(0.006)
No formal education	-0.106***	-0.038	-0.017
	(0.035)	(0.044)	(0.030)
Completed primary education	-0.002	-0.068	-0.053
	(0.014)	(0.042)	(0.038)
Some secondary education	0.005	-0.014	-0.024
	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.017)
Completed secondary education	0.012	0.039	0.024
	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.042)
At least some post-secondary education	-0.026	0.009	-0.042
	(0.043)	(0.049)	(0.059)
Occupation: White collar, teacher, or government employee	0.015	0.066***	0.054
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.037)
Occupation: Blue collar or miner	0.103***	0.203***	0.184***
	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.040)
Occupation: Student	0.123***	0.246***	0.245***
	(0.022)	(0.032)	(0.042)
Occupation: Business, shop keeper, or petty trader	0.062***	0.136***	0.120***
	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.039)
Occupation: Other (e.g., unemployed, housewife, don't know)	0.117***	0.164***	0.147***
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.039)
Lives in rural area	-0.035	-0.118***	-0.079
	(0.039)	(0.047)	(0.055)
Gets news from radio daily	-0.011	-0.041**	-0.049***
	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Gets news from newspaper at least weekly	-0.047**	-0.097***	-0.085***
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.033)
Log per capita income (in 2000, 2000 US$)		-0.119**	-0.158***
		(0.057)	(0.051)
Ethnic fractionalization – Fearon measure		-0.74***	-0.77***
		(0.28)	(0.24)
Proximity to closest next or previous election, in months		-0.023***	-0.024***
		(0.008)	(0.007)
Average political rights, 1-7 (1 is best) – Freedom House		-0.078	-0.120**
		(0.052)	(0.055)
Country fixed effects	Yes	No	No
Country population weights	No	No	Yes
Observations (respondents)	14414	14414	14414

Notes: Probit estimation, with marginal coefficient estimates (at mean values for the explanatory variables). Huber robust standard errors in parentheses. Significantly different than zero at 90 percent (*), 95 percent (**), 99 percent (***) confidence. Regression disturbance terms are clustered at the country level. The omitted education category is "Some primary education". The omitted occupation category is "Occupation: farming or fishing". The F-test on the hypothesis that all of the country fixed effects (in regression 1) equal zero has p-value<0.001. Regression 3 weights each observation by 1 / (Number of Afrobarometer observations for the country in which the respondent is located), thus effectively weighting each country equally.

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Taken together, the findings are broadly consistent with the hypothesis that "modern" individuals – individuals who are educated, working in non-traditional occupations, and living in urban areas – are more likely to identify in ethnic terms. One important caveat comes when we look at media exposure. Exposure to news through newspapers and radio seems to dampen ethnic salience, whereas the modernization scholarship cited earlier would lead us to expect the opposite relationship. It may be that media exposure is too coarse a measure of "modernization." An alternative hypothesis is that the relationship between modernity and ethnic salience is curvilinear: both those least exposed to modern currents and pressures and those most exposed to them (for example, those who never read the newspaper and who do so every day) are least likely to view their as fate bound up with their ethnic affiliation, and thus are less prone to identify themselves in ethnic terms. The pattern of coefficient estimates on the employment indicators is broadly consistent with this view, as white-collar employees, teachers, and government workers are somewhat less likely than lower status blue collar employees, shopkeepers, traders, and students to identify in ethnic terms.

Country-level Sources of Ethnic Identification

Having considered individual-level sources of ethnic identification, we turn to the country-level. The country-level variables we introduce both complement and complicate the modernization story we have explored thus far. First, and most provocatively, we find a challenge to the assumption that higher degrees of ethnic fractionalization lead to greater ethnic salience. Second, we find strong support for the modernization thesis about the relationship between political mobilization and the salience of ethnicity: both the proximity of national elections and the degree of political rights enjoyed by a country's citizens affect the likelihood that respondents will identify themselves in ethnic terms. The key limitation of these results is the inclusion of only nine countries in the analysis, but data limitations make this impossible to overcome (until further rounds of Afrobarometer data are made publicly available).

We present two different country-level specifications. In columns 2 and 3 of Table 4, we replace the country fixed effects with measures of the country's per capita income, degree of ethnic fractionalization, the number of months since the previous (or before the next) election, and a measure of the country's average level of political rights over the past ten years. Column 2 presents the model in unweighted form, while column 3 weights each observation by 1/(number of observations from that country). The main effect of including the country population weights is to reduce the influence of Nigeria, which accounts for 25 percent of the total respondents in our analysis. Since we are concerned here with country-level effects, the regression that includes the country weights is the preferred specification.

We first investigate the impact of per capita income on the salience of ethnicity. While we find the log of per capita income to be negatively related to ethnic salience, the substantive effect is small: the coefficient estimate suggests that a country's per capita income would have to increase ten-fold in order to generate a 16 percent drop in the share of the population identifying itself in ethnic terms.

A more substantively and theoretically important finding is that ethnic fractionalization is negatively related to the salience of ethnicity in the countries in question.[9] In the large literature that employs indices of ethnic fractionalization to account for outcomes such as civil war (Collier 2001; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2002; Reyna-Querol 2002), economic growth (Easterly and Levine 1997; Collier and Gunning 1999; Alesina, *et al*. 2003), and the quality of governance (Mauro 1995; La Porta, *et al.* 1999), ethnic diversity is frequently used as a proxy for the salience of ethnic identity per se. Our results suggest that the assumption underlying this approach has it exactly backwards. It turns out that the more diverse a country is, the *less* salient ethnicity is for its citizens (Table 4, columns 2 and 3). For a sense of the magnitude of this relationship, an increase in ethno-linguistic fractionalization of 0.18, or one standard deviation in our sample, is associated with a reduction in expressed ethnic identification of 14 percentage

[9] We use Fearon's (2003) measure, which we feel to be the most reliable.

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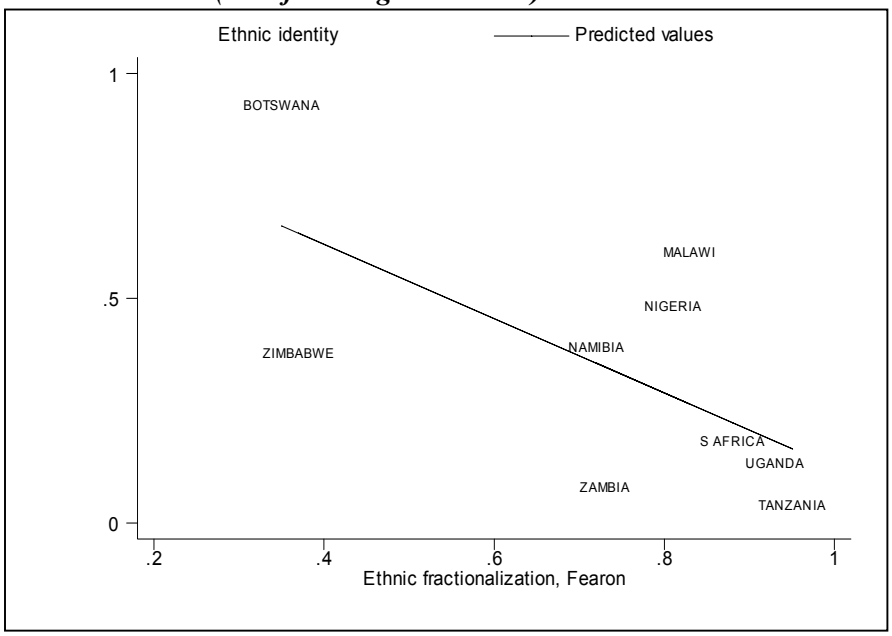
points, a very large effect (column 3). This finding is extremely robust: it holds under multiple measures of ethnic diversity (see Table 5), when using the broader measure of ethnicity (see Appendix, Table A2), and is not driven by any single country.[10] Figures 1 and 2 make clear graphically that no single country drives the result.

Table 5: Sources of Ethnic Identity: Ethnic Diversity Measures

	Dependent variable: Ethnic identity "describes respondent best"					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ethnic fractionalization – Fearon measure	-0.83**	-0.77***				
	(0.44)	(0.24)				
Ethnic fractionalization – Alesina measure			-0.67**			
			(0.28)			
Ethno-linguistic fractionalization				-1.02***		
				(0.39)		
Size of largest ethnic group					0.80***	
					(0.19)	
Politically relevant ethnic groups score						-1.10***
						(0.15)
Individual and country characteristics, and country population weights	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations (respondents)	14414	14414	14414	14414	14414	14414

Notes: Probit estimation, with marginal coefficient estimates (at mean values for the explanatory variables). Huber robust standard errors in parentheses. Significantly different than zero at 90 percent (*), 95 percent (**), 99 percent (***) confidence. Regression disturbance terms are clustered at the country level. The individual and country characteristics and weights are as in Table 4, regression 3.

Figure 1: Ethnic Identity "Describes Respondent Best" and Ethnic Fractionalization, Fearon Measure (with fitted regression line)



[10] When countries are dropped one at a time, the coefficient estimate on ethnic fractionalization remains large, negative and significant in all cases (regression not shown). This holds even for Botswana and Zambia, the two apparent outliers in Figure 1.

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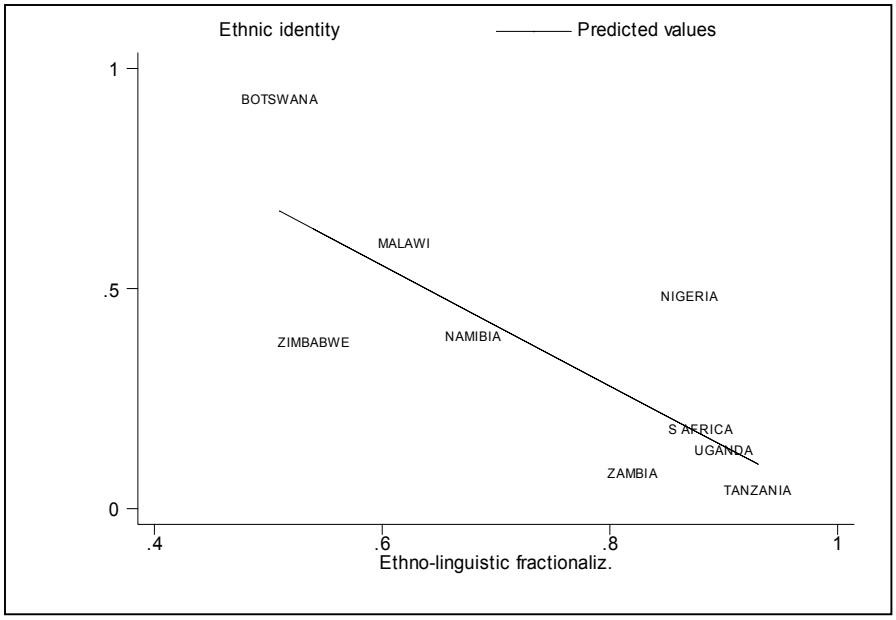
This empirical finding is consistent with theoretical claims advanced by Collier (2001) and Bates (2000) regarding the relationship between ethnic diversity and politics. They argue that ethnic rivalries are likely to be muted in highly diverse societies, since no single ethnic group is strong enough to attain power on its own under such conditions and incentives will arise for cooperation across ethnic lines. At very low levels of diversity, ethnicity will also not be salient for the simple reason that everyone is a member of the same group. But as ethnic diversity increases from very lower levels to the middle of the range, ethnicity will become more and more salient, as minority groups begin to challenge the dominant ethnic group for power. Ethnicity becomes most salient in a situation where two more or less equally sized groups are competing for power. Our empirical results, while consistent with this curvilinear hypothesis, do not allow us to test it completely, since we do not have country observations in the relevant range: even the most ethnically homogeneous societies in our nine-country sample (Botswana and Zimbabwe) are reasonably ethnically diverse, with fractionalization measures in the 0.4 range (see Figures 1 and 2). So our sample only allows us to capture the right (downward sloping) part of the curve.

Figure 2: Ethnic Identity "Describes Respondent Best" and Ethnic Fractionalization, ELF Measure (with fitted regression line)



A second central finding of our analysis is that the salience of ethnicity is closely related to the intensity of political competition in the country in question. We find that the proximity of the timing of the Afrobarometer survey to a national election is a highly significant explanatory variable: the closer the survey is to an election (i.e., the greater the proximity), the more likely respondents are to respond that they view themselves first and foremost in ethnic terms (Table 4, columns 2 and 3). The interpretation of the electoral proximity coefficient is that, all else equal, a respondent in a country that is holding an election at the time of the survey will be almost 30 percentage points more likely to identify him or herself in ethnic terms than a respondent in a country whose election took place a year ago, or whose election is scheduled to take place a year hence.[11] This finding has clear implications not just for the sources of ethnic identification but also for the design and implementation of survey research, since surveys conducted near election time appear to generate systematically different response patterns. As

[11] There is no statistically significant difference between the effect of time since an election and time before an election on the extent of ethnic identification (regression not shown), so we focus on a measure that treats time before versus after an election symmetrically.

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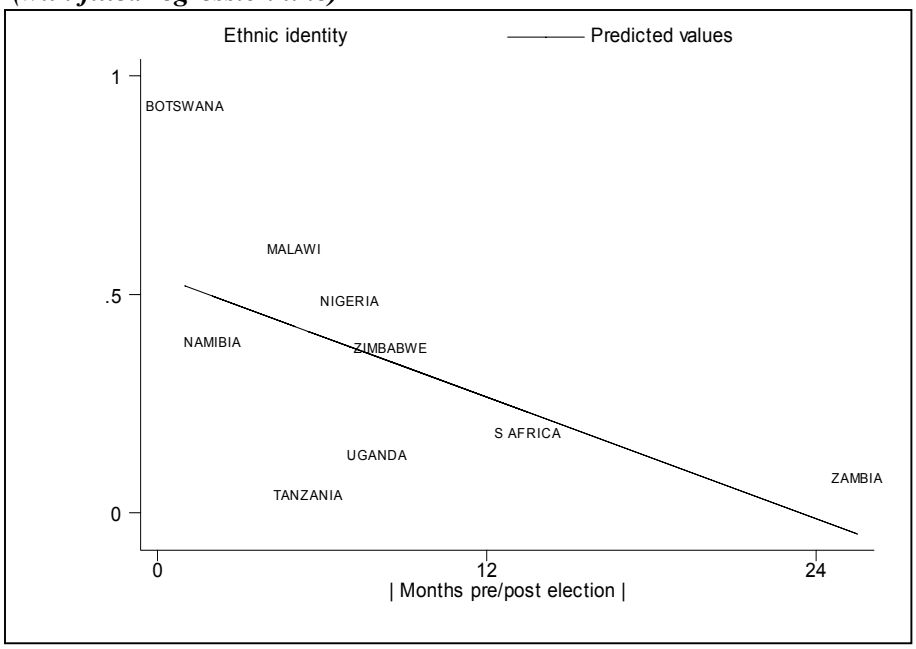
with the relationship between ethnic diversity and ethnic salience, the main result is robust to controlling for the broader measure of ethnicity, and to the exclusion of individual characteristics, country characteristics, and country population weights (see Appendix, Table A3). Figure 3 indicates that no single country drives the finding.

Figure 3: Ethnic Identity "Describes Respondent Best" and Electoral Proximity (with fitted regression line)



Consistent with this result about the impact of electoral competition, we also find that a country's average Freedom House score (measuring political rights) over the last ten years is negatively related to the salience of ethnicity in the country. Since Freedom House scores run backward – a score of 1 is awarded for the highest levels of political freedoms; a score of 7 is given to the most closed and repressive regimes – the interpretation of the political rights coefficient is that more open and vigorous political contestation is associated with a more prominent place for ethnicity in people's understandings of who they are. These results provide strong empirical support for the modernization thesis that ethnic salience is a product of increased political competition.[12]

Ethnic Multidimensionality: Evidence from Kenya

To this point in the analysis, we have treated ethnicity as a unidimensional concept. Built right into our coding procedures has been the assumption that while individuals may have multiple identities – such as ethnicity, race, religion and occupation/class – their ethnic identities are singular: they either have them (and rank them as most salient) or not. Yet abundant research (Mitchell 1956; Laitin 1986; Posner forthcoming) suggests that this is simply not the case. Just as individuals possess repertoires of social identities that include both ethnic and non-ethnic group memberships, they also possess multiple ethnic identities: their language, their race, their tribe, and their sub-tribe, and, depending on whether or not one

[12] We also explored the effects of socialist history and found it to be significant and negatively related to ethnic salience (results not shown). Effectively, our "socialist history" variable amounted to a dummy variable for Tanzania and Zambia. Our finding is almost certainly a product of the greater tendency of respondents in these countries to answer the open-ended question about social identification in terms of occupation or class, and the consequent effect this had on depressing ethnic responses.

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admits them as "ethnic" – scholars disagree on this score – also their region, their religion, and their nationality. Quite apart from the issue of whether ethnic identities trump non-ethnic ones, the question therefore arises: *which* ethnic identity is most salient, and under what conditions?

To better understand the conditions under which particular dimensions of ethnic identity become salient, we collected original survey data in Kenya that would allow us to investigate the relative salience of tribal and sub-tribal ethnic identifications. Tribal and sub-tribal identities are only two of the multiple ethnic identities that most Kenyans have in their identity repertoires. But by exploring the factors that predispose respondents to identify themselves in terms of one rather than the other, we can begin to investigate the conditions under which some ethnic identities become salient rather than others.

Data and Measurement

Data collection was carried out in the main markets of two Kenyan towns: Chwele and Eldoret. Chwele is a small rural town in Kenya's Western Province; Eldoret, located in Rift Valley Province, is the sixth largest town in Kenya and a regional center for trade. Enumerators from ICS Africa, a Dutch non-governmental organization that works in nearby districts, carried out the data collection, with the support of local government officials. Surveys were administered in January and February 2003 to 1849 individuals who were randomly sampled from every fifth person working and shopping in the markets. Respondents were given a small gift in appreciation for their participation.

Questions about respondents' ethnic identifications were couched in a larger survey about how often respondents came to the market and what they were buying or selling. The survey also collected information about respondents' gender, age, education level, religion, and home area. We asked two questions regarding ethnicity. First, we asked an open-ended question: "What is your tribe or sub-tribe?" Enumerators recorded all answers that respondents provided and noted the answer (tribe or sub-tribe) they mentioned first. Then we asked a close-ended question: "A moment ago, you said that you were [occupation], [religion], [tribe], and [sub-tribe]. Which of these do you think describes you best?" Although not identical, the phrasing of this second question is very similar to the standard Afrobarometer question employed in the first part of this paper.

Unlike the data from the Afrobarometer surveys, the data from our market surveys in Chwele and Eldoret is not nationally representative. The market setting distinguishes the respondents from the national population in terms of occupation (which was more likely to be business- or trade-related), degree of social interaction (which was almost certainly higher than the median resident in the country), and urban/rural location (which was neither as rural as experienced by most Kenyans nor as urban as experienced by others). Given that the survey was conducted in just two relatively proximate locations, our sample is also not nationally representative in terms of tribe or religion. Finally, the fact that many of the respondents were interviewed in their places of business may have influenced responses, particularly since "occupation" was an option for the identity that described them best. Descriptive statistics for the sample are provided in Table 6.

When respondents were asked about the salience of ethnic identity compared with other attributes – a question analogous to the one asked in the Afrobarometer survey – only 12 percent of respondents said that ethnic identity described them best. This figure is low when compared to the Afrobarometer average, but is similar to the results for neighboring Uganda (13 percent). It is also very close to the results from the Kenya survey from Round 2 of the Afrobarometer project, where 13 percent of respondents identified in ethnic terms.[13] The breakdown of responses across all identity categories is also similar to that found in the Round 1 Afrobarometer surveys in Zambia and Uganda, where, as in our Kenya sample,

[13] Although Round 2 Kenya data have unfortunately not yet been released to the public, certain summary statistics are provided in Wolf, *et al.* (2004).

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approximately 7-13 percent of respondents describe themselves in ethnic terms, about a third in religious terms, and about half in class/occupational terms.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics (for Kenya Market Survey Analysis)

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Obs.
Named sub-tribe (not tribe) first when asked for ethnic identity, Kalenjins and Luhyas	0.51	0.50	1186
Named sub-tribe (not tribe) first when asked for ethnic identity, Kalenjins only	0.53	0.50	509
Ethnic identity "describes respondent best"	0.12	0.32	1186
Religious identity "describes respondent best"	0.33	0.47	1186
Occupation identity "describes respondent best"	0.53	0.50	1186
Other identity "describes respondent best"	0.02	0.12	1186
Female	0.53	0.50	1186
Age (years)	35.6	10.2	1186
No formal education	0.02	0.14	1186
Some primary education	0.20	0.40	1186
Completed primary education	0.31	0.46	1186
Some secondary education	0.17	0.37	1186
Completed secondary education	0.22	0.42	1186
At least some post-secondary education	0.08	0.28	1186
Occupation: Farming or fishing	0.40	0.49	1186
Occupation: White collar, teacher, or government employee	0.10	0.29	1186
Occupation: Blue collar or miner	0.11	0.31	1186
Occupation: Student	0.02	0.13	1186
Occupation: Business, shop keeper, or petty trader	0.72	0.45	1186
Occupation: Other (e.g., unemployed, housewife, don't know)	0.05	0.22	1186
Rural data collection site (Chwele)	0.41	0.49	1186
Listens to radio daily	0.79	0.41	1186
Reads the newspaper at least weekly	0.55	0.50	1186
Kalenjin ethnic group (tribe)	0.43	0.50	1186
Keiyo sub-tribe	0.11	0.31	1186
Kipsigis sub-tribe	0.03	0.16	1186
Marakwet sub-tribe	0.06	0.23	1186
Nandi sub-tribe	0.12	0.33	1186
Sabaot sub-tribe	0.07	0.26	1186
Tugen sub-tribe	0.02	0.15	1186

Notes: The education categories are mutually exclusive. The occupation categories are not mutually exclusive, unlike in Afrobarometer. We restrict attention in the Kenya analysis to individuals from the Kalenjin and Luhya ethnic groups, since the question of tribe versus sub-tribe identity is only relevant for them.

However, the Kenya results also deviate from Round 1 Afrobarometer findings in some ways. For example, in the Kenya data, older respondents are significantly less likely to say their ethnicity described them best, while in the Afrobarometer data age is positive and significantly related to ethnic identification. Individuals in the occupational categories "white collar, teacher or government employee" and "business, shop-keeper or petty trader" are significantly less likely to identify ethnically in the Kenya data, unlike in the Afrobarometer data.

Structural Sources of Tribal and Sub-tribal Identifications

We limit our analysis of the sources of tribal and sub-tribal identification to the 1,186 respondents who identified themselves as members of the Kalenjin or Luhya ethnic groups. In addition to being the two largest ethnic groups in Chwele and Eldoret, the Luhya and Kalenjin groups are both umbrella categories

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for large numbers of linguistically distinct sub-tribes, so focusing on members of these tribes allows us to examine which level of ethnic identity people associate with most strongly.

The most striking characteristic of the data is that roughly half of respondents from both groups identified themselves first in terms of their sub-tribe, and half identified themselves first in terms of their tribe (Table 6). This result challenges the conventional wisdom that ethnicity is experienced the same way by all members of an ethnic group. Ethnic identity is not uni-dimensional; rather, both levels of ethnic association are salient for large portions of the sample population.

However, while Kenyans in the sample are evenly split about which dimension of ethnic identity they associate with most strongly, their identification with their tribe or sub-tribe is not random. There are some clear determinants of the dimension of identity that respondents associate with most strongly. We consider the same individual-level factors as in the earlier Afrobarometer analysis: gender, age, education level, occupation, urban/rural location, and media exposure. We estimate two slightly different models (see Table 7): column 1 reports results from the full sample; column 2 introduces controls for membership in the Kalenjin ethnic group and the Tugen sub-tribe. The main results are robust to both specifications.

We find that education significantly reduces the likelihood of sub-tribal identification – the higher a respondent's level of educational attainment, the greater the likelihood that they identify themselves in terms of their tribe rather than sub-tribe. This effect continues to increase at higher levels of education, as seen in the coefficient estimate on the indicator variable for post-secondary education (-0.240, standard error 0.071 – Table 7, column 1). Occupation also matters. Petty traders and shopkeepers are significantly more likely to identify themselves in tribal terms, with a large point estimate (-0.152, standard error 0.058). Respondents in the "white collar, teacher or government employee" and "blue collar or miner" categories are also significantly more likely to identify themselves as Luhya or Kalenjin than as members of one of these communities' sub-tribes. The strength and consistency of these occupational findings are remarkable given that we have already controlled for respondents' levels of education.

Consistent with these results is the finding that respondents in Chwele (the more rural survey location) are significantly more likely to see themselves in terms of their sub-tribe than their tribe. The interpretation of the point estimate on the Chwele dummy is that, all else equal, a respondent in Chwele is between 21 percent and 31 percent (depending on the model) more likely to identify him or herself in sub-tribal terms than a respondent in Eldoret. Women, who may often be less likely to have opportunities to leave their home area, also tend to associate more strongly with their sub-tribes, although this result is statistically significant in only one of the two specifications. In contrast, listening to the radio and reading the newspaper have no effect on the relative salience of tribal and sub-tribal identities in this sample.

The results are consistent with a single over-arching theory: that the scope of the social sphere in which a person operates affects the dimension of ethnic identity with which the person associates most strongly. People with low levels of education, enmeshed in highly localized networks, and interacting principally with others from their narrow rural arena have a circumscribed social universe and tend to see themselves in sub-tribal terms. People who are more cosmopolitan and, through trade or because their occupations bring them in contact with a wider set of individuals, interact in a broader social sphere, see themselves in terms of a more expansive social unit – their tribe. This finding offers strong confirmation for situational approaches to ethnic identity, as articulated by early scholars such as Mitchell (1956), Epstein (1958), Gluckman (1960), and Young (1965). It also corroborates Posner's (2004a) thesis that the salience of a social identity will depend on the size of the group it defines relative to the scope of the social arena in which the group is located.

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Table 7: Sub-Tribal versus Tribal Ethnic Identification in Chwele and Eldoret, Kenya

	Dependent variable: Named sub-tribe (rather than tribe) first when asked for ethnic identity	
	(1)	(2)
Female	0.050	0.068**
	(0.033)	(0.033)
Age (years)	-0.0017	-0.0008
	(0.0016)	(0.0016)
No formal education	-0.092	-0.076
	(0.107)	(0.109)
Completed primary education	-0.079*	-0.077*
	(0.045)	(0.046)
Some secondary education	-0.114**	-0.096*
	(0.053)	(0.055)
Completed secondary education	-0.163***	-0.178***
	(0.051)	(0.051)
At least some post-secondary education	-0.240***	-0.236***
	(0.071)	(0.072)
Occupation: Farming or fishing	0.038	0.022
	(0.039)	(0.040)
Occupation: White collar, teacher, or government employee	-0.152*	-0.135
	(0.080)	(0.081)
Occupation: Blue collar or miner	-0.131*	-0.079
	(0.069)	(0.072)
Occupation: Student	-0.149	-0.124
	(0.144)	(0.146)
Occupation: Business, shop keeper, or petty trader	-0.152***	-0.126**
	(0.058)	(0.059)
Occupation: Other (e.g., unemployed, housewife, don't know)	-0.110	-0.103
	(0.070)	(0.072)
Rural data collection site (Chwele)	0.21***	0.31***
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Listens to radio daily	-0.040	-0.020
	(0.039)	(0.040)
Reads the newspaper at least weekly	0.040	0.055
	(0.038)	(0.038)
Kalenjin ethnic group		0.21***
		(0.04)
Tugen sub-tribe (Kalenjin)		-0.11
		(0.10)
Observations (respondents)	1186	1186

Notes: The sample includes all Kalenjin and Luhya respondents. The survey question that generated the dependent variable was phrased: "What is your tribe or sub-tribe?". Probit estimation, with marginal coefficient estimates (at mean values for the explanatory variables). Huber robust standard errors in parentheses. Significantly different than zero at 90 percent (*), 95 percent (**), 99 percent (***) confidence. The omitted education category is "Some primary education". Enumerator fixed effects are included in all specifications.

Note that these findings say nothing about the salience of ethnicity per se. What the results show is that ethnicity is expressed in different ways – that is, through identification with different dimensions of social identity – depending on the degree to which respondents are enmeshed in the broader social networks to which urbanization, education, and working in non-traditional occupations provide exposure. Whereas, in the analysis of the Afrobarometer data, being more "modern" affected the salience of ethnic identifications, in the analysis of the Kenya data, being more "modern" defines a situation (characterized

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by exposure to a broader universe of interacting partners) in which some kinds of ethnic identities become more salient than others. However, a person's education, urban-rural location, and occupation are just three of the many factors that define their "situation." If his or her situation changes – for example, if the person travels to a neighboring country or is introduced to a person of a different race – then so too will the dimension of ethnic identity that the person finds most salient, and this will be true irrespective of how "modern" the person happens to be.

Political Sources of Tribal and Sub-Tribal Identification

A key finding from the first part of this paper was the close link between exposure to political competition and the salience of ethnic identifications. The timing of the Kenya survey, which was undertaken almost immediately after Kenya's watershed December 2002 national election, allows us to test the effects of politics on a slightly different outcome: the kinds of ethnic identities that people use to describe who they are.

The 2002 general election was the first election in over twenty years not contested by President Daniel arap Moi, and it resulted in the transfer of power from the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which had controlled the government since independence, to a grouping of opposition parties united under the banner of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which was led by former vice president Mwai Kibaki. The significance of the transfer of power from Moi to Kibaki lay not just in the shift of authority from KANU to the opposition but in the fact that it was perceived to transfer power from one ethnic group to another. The political landscape under Moi (and, before him, Jomo Kenyatta) was characterized by tribal cronyism. Members of Moi's Kalenjin tribe reaped significant political patronage during his twenty-five year reign, and Moi's home region enjoyed disproportionate economic development and investment (Barkan and Chege 1989). Moi's Tugen sub-tribe was widely considered to have enjoyed the most favoritism. While the Kalenjin enjoyed a privileged status under the Moi regime, other groups were marginalized, including the Luhya, a tribe usually in the opposition, and the Kikuyu, who, as the former ruling group under Kenyatta, were subjected to particularly concerted repression. The 2002 election saw the Kalenjin lose the presidency to a Kikuyu (Kibaki) and the vice presidency to a Luhya (Michael Kijana Wamalwa).

The fact that the survey was administered within weeks of the election and that the sample we treat is comprised entirely of two communities whose political fortunes had changed so dramatically almost guarantees that respondents' answers were influenced by the political events of the moment. In addition, the two survey sites were in areas that were particularly likely to have been affected by the election campaign and aftermath. Eldoret was one of the primary beneficiaries under Moi's presidency, enjoying among other things a new international airport and university (Moi University). Eldoret was also the scene of land grabs and tribal clashes in the early 1990s permitted and perhaps directly supported by Moi (Kenya Human Rights Commission 1998). Eldoret's Rift Valley Province was one of only two provinces (out of a total of eight) where the KANU presidential candidate received a majority of votes in 2002. Chwele sits in a more marginalized area, although it still contains a significant Kalenjin population that, at the very least, was presumed to have benefited from the Moi presidency. Both sites also have large Luhya populations.

In discussions with the authors before and immediately after the election, many Kenyans expressed the belief that the Kalenjin had unfairly benefited from being members of Moi's tribe and that, with a new government, they would no longer enjoy such benefits. There was even speculation that the Kalenjin might face a backlash for the perceived advantages they had enjoyed under the old regime. Indeed, during the campaign season, Kalenjin leaders were accused of warning their constituents that they would only be protected by the ruling KANU party (*Daily Nation* 4 November 2002). And soon after the election, 14 Members of Parliament from the Kalenjin-dominated Rift Valley Province threatened that

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their region would secede from Kenya in response to the discrimination it was facing at the hands of the new NARC government (*Daily Nation* 24 February 2003).

To the extent that Kalenjins in the aftermath of the 2002 election felt that their Kalenjin identity would associate them with the old regime and thus put them at risk of either retribution or exclusion from future patronage flows, we might expect Kalenjin respondents to answer questions about their ethnic background by claiming that they were not, in fact, Kalenjin – that is, by passing – or by identifying themselves in sub-tribal rather than tribal terms. If so, it would provide empirical evidence for the fundamentally political origins of identity choice.

Of course, it is difficult to study these dynamic political effects using a single cross-sectional survey in only two sites. In the absence of longitudinal data on individuals, or at least repeated cross-sectional surveys in the same study site, our strategy is to compare the frequency of sub-tribal identification among Kalenjins and Luhyas. Since both groups have traditionally had strong sub-tribal associations, there is no reason to expect Kalenjin respondents to be *a priori* more likely to identify themselves in sub-tribal terms than their otherwise identical Luhya counterparts, so a difference in the response patterns between the two communities can plausibly be interpreted as a product of ethnic redefinition triggered by the changed political landscape.[14]

Although we have no way of detecting Kalenjins passing as members of non-Kalenjin groups, we do find suggestive evidence that, conditional on a range of individual characteristics, Kalenjins are more likely than Luhyas to identify themselves in sub-tribal than tribal terms. The coefficient estimate on the Kalenjin indicator variable (Table 7, column 2) indicates that Kalenjins are 21 percent more likely to identify themselves in terms of their sub-tribal affiliations than are Luhyas (standard error 0.04). This finding is consistent with the interpretation that respondents from either one group or both are altering the way they identify themselves in response to the new political environment: Kalenjins are retreating from their tribal identifications as Kalenjin to their sub-tribal identities as Nandi, Sabaot, Keiyo, and so forth as a means of distancing themselves from their association with the old KANU regime, while Luhyas are embracing their tribal identity as a means of signaling their relationship with the new ruling cohort.

Two percent of our respondents in Eldoret and Chwele identified themselves as Tugen, former President Moi's sub-tribe. In keeping with the political interpretation of our results, the negative coefficient on the Tugen indicator implies that self-described Tugen were *less* likely to describe themselves in terms of sub-tribe than other Kalenjin groups. Although the Tugen indicator is not statistically significant, the large point estimate (-0.11) is suggestive that the Tugen are retreating into a broader Kalenjin ethnic identity to distance themselves from their association with the former president.[15] Informal interviews undertaken by the authors at the time in Western Kenya confirmed that many people believed that the Tugen had uniquely (and unfairly) benefited under the Moi regime.[16]

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[14] Note that we cannot definitively rule out the possibility that baseline levels of sub-tribal identification might differ between these two communities.

[15] Given the small number of Tugen respondents in our sample, it would have been unlikely that we would find significant results in any case – note the large standard errors on the Tugen coefficient estimate in Table 7, column 2. We do not look for similar patterns among the Luhya because the bulk of Luhyas surveyed were from the same sub-tribe (Bukusu).

[16] Of course, we would also expect the Tugen to be particularly likely to try to pass as non-Kalenjin, but this is not something we can detect in our survey. We intend to repeat the survey in Eldoret and Chwele in early 2005 to create a quasi-panel that will permit a more definitive investigation of how the 2002 election affected the salience of tribal and sub-tribal identities among the Kalenjin and Luhya.

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Conclusion

The findings of this study challenge two persistent conventional wisdoms about Africa: that Africans are uniformly and uni-dimensionally ethnic, and that the salience of ethnicity is a product of the region's low levels of political and economic development. The study's central result is that exposure to education, non-traditional occupations, and political competition powerfully affects both whether or not people identify themselves in ethnic terms and the particular ethnic identity they embrace when they do so. Taken together the findings provide strong confirmation for modernization approaches to ethnicity, and for theories that link identity choices with context and instrumentality. Beyond their relevance for these academic literatures, the paper's results also have important implications for policymakers and researchers interested in ethnicity's effects.

Economists and political scientists use the concept of ethnic salience to help explain everything from economic growth to civil conflict and the effectiveness of foreign aid.[17] When they do so, they frequently employ measures of ethnic diversity as indicators of ethnic salience, the nearly universal assumption being that greater diversity implies greater ethnic salience. Perhaps surprisingly, then, we find that high levels of country ethnic fractionalization actually *reduce* the likelihood that individuals will identify themselves first and foremost in ethnic terms. The finding is sufficiently robust to call into question a central assumption on which many studies are based.

We also find evidence that both the salience of ethnicity and the particular dimension of ethnic identity that matters for individuals can change – not just over the course of years, but even over the course of a few months, particularly at election time. This result, which is entirely consistent with situational approaches to ethnicity, challenges empirical work that takes ethnic identities as static and historically determined. Particularly for researchers undertaking survey work, it provides a caution that the timing of data collection – particularly the proximity of the survey exercise to large-scale political events such as national elections – can have significant effect on the answers respondents provide about their ethnic identifications.

The strong relationship we find between the intensity of political and economic competition on the one hand and the salience of ethnicity on the other also makes it clear that as African countries institute democratic and market reforms it will become more urgent – not less – for African governments to develop policies and institutional mechanisms that are capable of dealing with ethnic divisions. Kenya's recent political developments are informative. After the reintroduction of competitive multi-party politics in the early 1990s, Kenya's reform efforts have increasingly become mired in tribal politics, including violent ethnic clashes that left hundreds dead. Policies and institutions such as those in place in neighboring Tanzania – a country known for its efforts at nation-building through the promotion of Swahili as a national language, public education, and institutional reforms, as described recently by Miguel (2004) – might serve as a model for how Kenya, and other African countries, could dampen destructive ethnic divisions. Tanzania has the lowest degree of ethnic identity salience in the Round 1 Afrobarometer sample, at just 3 percent.

Finally, our work brings new evidence to bear on the stubbornly persistent popular misconception that ethnicity in Africa is an atavism that can be "solved" by political and economic development. Scholarly consensus has long disputed this position, but the popular view remains firmly entrenched. Part of this disconnect may lie in lingering racism, which leads some to uncritically accept representations of Africans as backward and tribe-bound, and of Africa as a place where modern aspects of life somehow fail to snuff out pre-modern social attachments. But another part of the answer may lie in the fact that nearly all of the research that documents the association between modernization and deepening ethnic identification is either anecdotal or based on analyses of single countries. Absent systematic, cross-

[17] Refer to Easterly and Levine (1997) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) for just two of many such studies.

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national analyses of the sort presented in this paper, old stereotypes and media-reinforced misperceptions are frustratingly difficult to break. The results of this paper, based on precisely the kind of cross-national data that has hitherto been lacking,[18] provide new support for the claim that ethnicity is salient in Africa because people are becoming more modern, not less, and because political competition on the continent is increasing, not diminishing.

[18] The efforts summarized in Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi (forthcoming) are an important exception.

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Appendix

Table A1: Group Identification, Broad Ethnic Measure:
"*...which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?*" (from Afrobarometer)

	Broad Ethnic Measure	Religion	Class/ Occupation	Other	Obs.
All Respondents	**0.45**	0.09	0.40	0.07	14414
Botswana	**0.95**	0.02	0.03	0.01	1196
Malawi	**0.59**	0.11	0.23	0.05	1132
Namibia	**0.54**	0.12	0.33	0.00	838
Nigeria	**0.69**	0.00	0.29	0.02	3516
South Africa	**0.51**	0.19	0.16	0.15	2152
Tanzania	**0.03**	0.05	0.79	0.12	2151
Uganda	**0.15**	0.09	0.66	0.09	1945
Zambia	**0.11**	0.32	0.54	0.02	905
Zimbabwe	**0.54**	0.08	0.33	0.05	930

Notes: The "other" category includes gender, and other responses. The rows may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding errors. The construction of the broad ethnic identity measure is described in the text.

Table A2: Sources of Ethnic Identity: Ethnic Diversity Measures, Broad Ethnic Measure

	Dependent variable: Ethnic identity "describes respondent best", broad ethnic measure					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ethnic fractionalization – Fearon measure	-0.87**	-0.67**				
	(0.42)	(0.26)				
Ethnic fractionalization – Alesina measure			-0.60**			
			(0.30)			
Ethno-linguistic fractionalization				-0.99**		
				(0.43)		
Size of largest ethnic group					0.68***	
					(0.24)	
Politically relevant ethnic groups score						-0.98***
						(0.25)
Individual and country characteristics, and country population weights	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations (respondents)	14414	14414	14414	14414	14414	14414

Notes: Probit estimation, with marginal coefficient estimates (at mean values for the explanatory variables). Huber robust standard errors in parentheses. Significantly different than zero at 90 percent (*), 95 percent (**), 99 percent (***) confidence. Regression disturbance terms are clustered at the country level. The individual and country characteristics and weights are as in Table 4, regression 3.

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Table A3: Sources of Ethnic Identity: Electoral Proximity Measures

	Dependent variable:			
	Ethnic identity "describes respondent best"		Ethnic identity "describes respondent best", broad ethnic measure	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
| Proximity to closest next or previous election, in months |	-0.031**	-0.024***	-0.025***	-0.021**
	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Individual and country characteristics, and country population weights	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations (respondents)	14414	14414	14414	14414

Notes: Probit estimation, with marginal coefficient estimates (at mean values for the explanatory variables). Huber robust standard errors in parentheses. Significantly different than zero at 90 percent (*), 95 percent (**), 99 percent (***) confidence. Regression disturbance terms are clustered at the country level. The individual and country characteristics and weights are as in Table 4, regression 3.