

# FROM SUBJECT TO CITIZEN: EVIDENCE OF GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN ETHNIC POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

Mauricio Velásquez  
Department of Political Science  
University of California, Los Angeles

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents evidence of spatial variation of ethnic political mobilization. The ethnic politics literature maintains that voters choose co-ethnic candidates because they expect to receive more benefits from co-ethnic officials. If the argument is true, however, a rational voter should take into account her ethnic self-identification in voting only if she can expect ethnicity to influence the process of distribution of private and public goods. Given the characteristics of public goods (non-rivalry, non-excludability), a voter should only expect to receive extra public goods from a co-ethnic official if she lives in a neighborhood or village with many other co-ethnics since only such areas would be targeted with local public goods. This identification of sets of co-ethnics will critically depend on their degree of spatial ethnic homogeneity. If this argument is true, we should expect to see ethnic voting in areas of relative ethnic homogeneity, but not in areas of ethnic mixing. In this paper I exploit the highly contrasting levels of ethnic spatial homogeneity of rural vs. urban areas in Uganda to show that candidate choice in a recent presidential election conformed to the expected pattern.

## **1 Introduction**

An explicit idea in the literature on ethnic voting, particularly in Africa, is that citizens vote on the basis of ethnic identity because they expect co-ethnics officials to deliver more benefits to them than non-co-ethnics. This

idea, in turn, hinges on the implicit one that the distribution of local public goods such as schools and health services, and individual goods distributed through local officials such as money, building materials or extra food, can be successfully accomplished by selecting areas where co-ethnics live. That this is true in most rural areas where co-ethnics are generally residentially concentrated has facilitated the testing of these hypotheses.

There are good reasons, however, to pay more attention to urban areas with high ethnic heterogeneity as they can provide us with important counterfactuals to these arguments. Indeed, it seems less obvious that citizens would vote for co-ethnics expecting benefits in places where there is significant ethnic heterogeneity making it much harder for politicians to target co-ethnics with local public goods or individual goods distributed by local officials. True, schools and health facilities as well as private goods can be still distributed, but no longer based on ethnic targeting considerations. Once the school is built it will serve every member of the community. On the other hand the kinds of extensive political machine needed for distributing private goods to the grassroots by individually identifying the ethnicity of the receiver does not usually exist in the African context. In other words, in highly ethnic heterogeneous areas there would be no rational explanation for the citizen's decision to vote ethnically. In fact he is better off by voting for the candidate that is more likely to deliver benefits to the area independently of his ethnic identity. In other words, the standard idea about why ethnic voting occurs does not apply when there is not reasonable expectation of receiving ethnically targeted benefits if co-ethnics are elected.

The motivation of this study has been thus trying to unpack the full implications of the idea that the rational expectation of access to benefits through voting ethnically depends on the likelihood that a politician can establish the spatial existence of ethnic homogeneous groups (to which the voter belongs) and thus target them with benefits. Or perhaps, in a more provocative way, to study the possibility that voters both in urban and rural areas vote rationally expecting benefits and use their ethnicity in instrumental ways. Indeed, my results suggests ethnic voting follows the same logic as all other voting: people vote for the candidate they expect to provide them with the greatest benefit. On average, voters have little information about candidates and parties, so they use candidates' ethnicity as a cue, with the expectation that coethnics would be more likely to deliver benefits to their own groups.

But ethnicity is not the only cue people use in ethnically homogeneous

areas to assess which politician is most likely to provide benefits. I will use evidence from district creation in rural areas of Uganda to show how the creation of new local governments has also indicated to people that their share of resources can be expected to increase, and as a result, people have rewarded the incumbent with more votes.

The argument is thus that an average citizen would vote on the basis of ethnic identity in places of ethnic homogeneity because it is only in homogeneous areas that citizens expect more benefits from co-ethnic officials, and, ignore his ethnic identity in places of ethnic heterogeneity. In addition to this I will use the dynamics of district creation in Uganda to show how even in rural areas an average voter would respond marginally to incentives indicating that he will specifically benefit from private or public goods.

The empirical tests on the mechanisms described in this paper invite us to rethink what lies behind ethnic political mobilization. If ethnicity is the result of durable patterns of geographic settlement originated in pre-colonial times and then enforced as colonial administrative devices, in independent times it has been fundamentally a mode of population administration, a geopolitical device incorporating groups to the rule of law. Ethnic voting maximizes this system of political incorporation via the expectation of geographic targeting of benefits. In the city, however, things were different. Indeed, inexistent in pre-colonial times and only populated by whites and their servants in colonial times, the city after independence produced a pattern of geographic settlement that broke the connection between ethnicity and geographic location. Living in the city became an experience of incorporation to the rule of the state that was no longer mediated by the neighboring group and that as such could not guaranteed access to benefits on the exclusive condition of belonging to a specific ethnic group.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the debate on ethnic political mobilization in which this paper is inserted. The argument is outlined in Section 3. The background is presented in Section 4 and its followed by Section 5 describing the data and methods used. In Section 6 I present the results. Section 7 concludes.

## **2 Literature review**

In studying ethnic political mobilization in rural areas in Zambia Posner (2005) has shown how varying institutional arrangements making more or

less likely the success of co-ethnic candidates lead voters to rationally recalculate their chances of getting access to benefits by taking linguistic clues as the next preferred consideration for voting. His results demonstrate not only the rational calculation in ethnic voting, but perhaps more importantly, the ways in which these calculations are affected by specific considerations regarding the likelihood of benefiting from belonging to specific groups that can be identified and thus rewarded by politicians.

Although Posner specifically addresses the difference in the spatial ethnic homogeneity in rural vs. urban areas, his account of the divergence in voting patterns rest on the consideration that instead of ethnicity, voters in urban areas would take language as their next rational choice to get access to public resources<sup>1</sup>. Posner's argument is thus more about likelihood of access to benefits given the individual's personal proximity with the candidate (either through ethnicity or language) rather than about the actual spatial likelihood of receiving the benefits of such proximity.

Other authors making arguments on ethnic voting implying high degrees of homogeneity of ethnic constituencies include Arriola (2009) and Chandra (2006). Arriola has shown how incumbent presidents in Africa extend their tenure in office by expanding cabinets in order to include representatives of more ethnic groups and how higher levels of ethnic fractionalization leads to larger cabinets. In the same vein Chandra predicts high levels of strategic voting for ethnic parties in "patronage democracies". In both cases the citizen's access to benefits via co-ethnics politicians is presumed to take place by being in spaces of rural ethnic homogeneity where politicians can direct their patronage.

That most rural areas in Africa tend to be ethnically homogeneous is the result of pre-colonial settlement patters reinforced by colonialism and in most

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<sup>1</sup>"...the model does generate a prediction about what we should expect to see in urban constituencies: rates of tribal voting should be quite low, and there should be little difference in the degree of tribal voting in one-party and multi-party contests. (...)The language cleavage will be salient in urban contexts in both one-party and multi-party elections [...] for different reasons. In the multi-party context, language group differences matter because of the centrality of language group divisions in national affairs; in the one-party context, they matter because of the polyglot nature of urban electoral constituencies and because language communities always include members of multiple tribes" (p 115 and 75 in this order).

In his paper on "Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa" Posner (2007) explicitly excludes urban areas "since it is only in rural areas that tribal voting patterns should differ across one-party and multiparty settings" (p15)

cases can be taken as a correct assumption. By defining ethnic homelands in rural areas and enforcing the exclusion of other groups the colonial administration –and later on independent despotic states in Africa- articulated state power with rural communities via colonially appointed chiefs whose role was to extract resources for the colonial center, but in exchange had full unconstrained powers at the local level (Mamdani (1996)Posner (2005)). Individuals living in rural areas must obey the tribal chief on whose will their chances of getting access to various kinds of benefits relied. Homelands were thus spaces of despotic politics in which ethnic affiliation served to articulate power between clearly defined communities and the colonial administrative center.

At independence, however, at least one space radically changed its demographic composition, the city. Indeed, with independence most African cities became magnetic destinations for individuals from all different tribes searching for a better life leading to greater levels of ethnic heterogeneity when compared with rural areas (not least because of the lack of effective policies of urban planning). I will take advantage of this to suggest a way of testing for variation in ethnic political mobilization as a function of the variation in ethnic spatial homogeneity.

### **3 The Argument**

My argument is that the expectation of benefiting from voting for co-ethnics is a function of the likelihood of being identified as co-ethnic in the distribution of benefits, and that this likelihood in turn depends of whether the voter lives in homogeneous or heterogeneous ethnic areas.

That rural areas tend to be ethnically homogeneous explain the predominance of ethnic voting there. If the argument is true we should see a significant divergence in ethnic voting patterns for co-ethnics living in the city where heterogeneous ethnic residential areas predominate. To illustrate this point, note that all the ethnic specific targeting strategies that a politician may have to attract ethnic votes in exchange for local public goods should be difficult and costly in the city as ethnic exclusivity of access cannot be guaranteed. For example, if the president promised to appoint an education minister from a specific ethnic group, there are no reasons for the individual to believe that his multiethnic city neighborhoods will get a new school. Instead, if he expects the minister to favor his own co-ethnics, he would be expected to allocate schools the geographic areas where his coethnics are

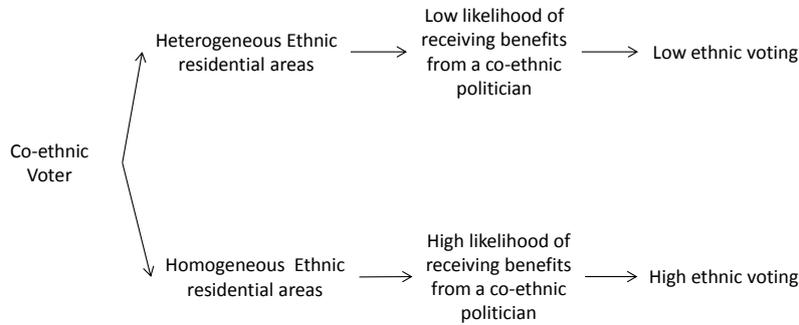


Figure 1:

concentrated. Therefore, one can imagine that in deciding their vote urban dwellers will have considerations driven by more individual based interests such as unemployment insurance, healthcare reforms, universal access to education, or in other words policies that will benefit them or pure public goods whose access cannot be denied based on ethnic considerations.

In order to make my case we should think of ethnicity as a category that can be used or activated depending on the context or situation in which individuals interact. Brubaker suggest we “ask about the degree of groupness associated with [ethnicity] in a particular setting and about the political, social, cultural and psychological processes through which [ethnicity] gets invested with groupness. We can ask how people -and organizations- do things with [ethnic] categories. This includes limiting access to scarce resources or particular domains of activity by excluding categorically distinguished outsiders but it also includes more mundane actions such as identifying or classifying oneself or others”.

Following Brubaker I will take the ethnic self-identification of individuals in my data as a category susceptible of political mobilization to constitute groups of voters when it is rational for the individual to expect better access to benefits from co-ethnic politicians. In particular I will claim that whereas rural dwellers can have reasonable expectations of being compensated for forming groups this is less true in urban contexts where goods cannot be so easily distributed to ethnic self-identified individuals.

## 4 Background

Uganda is considered one of the most ethnically diverse countries with estimates of ethnic fractionalization higher than most other African countries, except Congo DR, Zambia, Nigeria, Angola and Cameroon (Posner (2004)). In one of the most rigorous tests of ethnic diversity which is linguistic difference (Chandra (2006)), the number of living languages in Uganda corresponding to different ethnic groups is 43. In this paper I concentrate on the nine biggest ethnic groups - ITESO, BAGANDA, BAKIGA, BASOGA, ALUR, LANGI, BAGISU, BANYANKOLE and BATORO- each one with a different language, set of traditions and a defined history of political interaction.

Particularly important for this paper is the fact that no ethnic group in Uganda has the possibility to win a presidential election without forming coalitions with other ethnic groups, a fact that has always displaced attention away from the specific ethnicity of the presidential candidates onto the one of his closest allies or coalition, particularly in the cabinet [see table 1]. This importance of the cabinet (currently the third largest in the world) is compounded by the fact that during the last ten years the same candidates have contended for election as favorites and both are from the same Banyankole ethnic group, thus technically holding constant their individual ethnicity and displacing ethnic considerations onto the cabinet appointees (more below). Finally, as we study vote patterns in rural vs. urban areas it is important to

Table 1: Ugandan population distribution by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Total population	Percentage of the total population
Baganda	4,126,370	17.3
Banyankole	2,330,212	9.8
Basoga	2,062,920	8.6
Bakiga	1,679,519	7
Iteso	1,568,763	6.6
Langi	1,485,437	6.2
Acholi	1,145,357	4.8
Bagisu	1,117,661	4.7
Lugbara	1,022,240	4.3
Other	7,340,257	30.7

Ugandan population census of 2002 (the most recent)

have a concise picture of each one of them. First, the picture of rural Uganda corresponds quite well with the image of relative ethnic homogeneity within

localities as described above. Indeed, except in the cases of the Banyoro (a very small group anyway) and the Baganda (who dominates the central area and thus gets most inter-rural migration) all other groups are much larger in their own areas than the second largest [see, table 2].

Kampala<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, presents a more complex picture that is worth

Table 2: Percentage participation by the dominant ethnic group in their respective homelands

Ethnic group	Predominant ethnic group	Second ethnic group
Iteso	92%	5%
Bakiga	77%	8%
Basoga	66%	10%
Baganda	62%	12%
Alur	74%	18%
Lango	96%	1%
Bagiso	91%	2%
Banyankole	81%	13%
Batoro	66%	21%
Banyoro	45%	22%
Acholi	93%	4%

explaining in detail. Different estimates suggest Kampala is between one and two million people, with the census of 2002 indicating 1.2 plus “the population that spent the census night within the confines of Kampala district” which is why most experts believe Kampala has a population closer to two million people. The dominant ethnic group in the city is the Baganda as the heartland tribe with fifty eight percent of the population. The other forty two percent, that is, somewhere between five hundred thousand and one million people are divided in other ethnic groups, none reaching more than seven percent of Kampala’s population. Perhaps more importantly from our point of view is that Kampala does not present a clear pattern of ethnic segregation. Indeed, from the Kampala representative household survey conducted by the Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC) for the Kampala City Council with assistance from the World Bank from January to May

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this paper I will refer as “urban areas” exclusively as Kampala and to the rest of the country as rural areas. This is due to the hugely asymmetrical pattern of urbanization in Uganda with several small towns in ethnic homeland and a single primate city. For example while Kampala has almost two million people (several estimates consider that it has almost three million) the next town in population size has less than two hundred thousand (Gulu).

## Ethnic spatial heterogeneity in Kampala

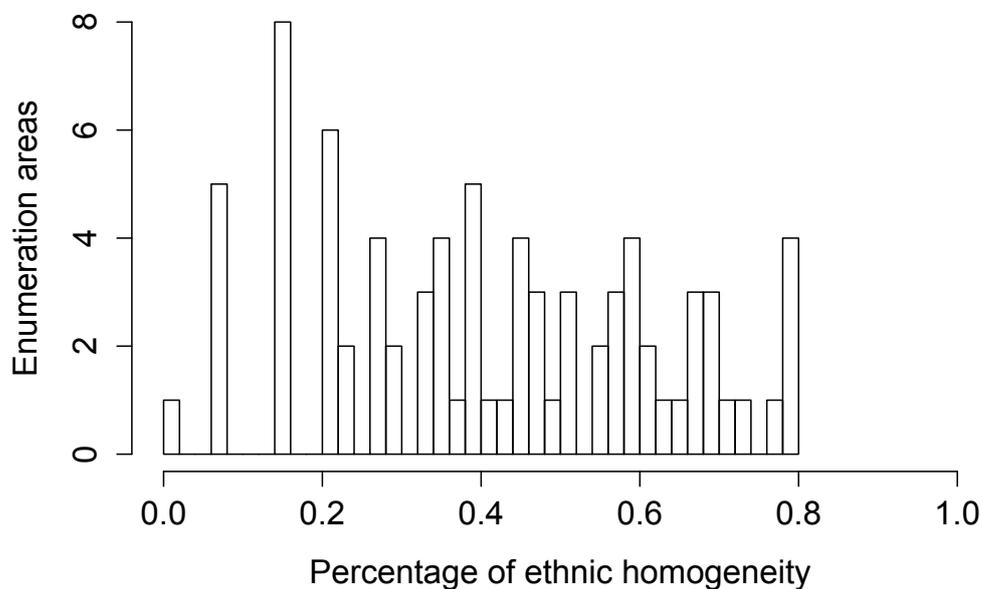


Figure 2:

2000, covering all of the five divisions of Kampala, we have the following distribution of ethnic spatial concentration [see figure 2) <sup>3</sup> .

Note that although Kampala has a degree of ethnic spatial heterogeneity that is not matched by any of the rural areas, this is not enough to assume that any variation in voting patterns could be attributable to the mechanism that this paper is investigating. We know, for example, that in the last two presidential elections before 2011 Kampala was actually won by Kizza Besigye and not by the election winner, president Museveni. This result, however, did not allow knowing if the difference was explained by a changing voting behavior attributable to all the ethnic groups in Kampala, and thus closer to our hypothesis, or, simply by the ethnic vote of the Baganda due to any other consideration. This was the main reason to conduct the survey in Kampala before the last presidential election (described below) and thus

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<sup>3</sup>Some 16 enumeration areas were randomly chosen from each division for a total of 80 enumeration areas; from each enumeration area a random sample of 25 households was drawn and interviewed. Thanks to professor Matthias Schündeln for providing me with this information.

be able to disaggregate vote patterns by ethnic groups in the city.

## 5 Data and Methods

To test my argument, I conducted a survey in Kampala from the 31th of January to the 7th of February collecting the vote intention for the 2011 presidential elections to be held the 20 of February. Apart from their vote intention, demographic variables (including ethnic self-identification) from 1945 respondents were collected. The survey was conducted in seven different markets across Kampala. The format of the survey included a ballot box and a secret marking of the voting preference. When the respondent could not read he was assisted in filling the demographic questions and then given the survey to mark the candidate in secret (the faces, names and party identifications of each candidate were provided).

I also use the data from the Afrobarometer pre-election survey conducted between the 20th and the 28th of January 2011. The number of respondents to the Afrobarometer survey was 2000. Similar demographic information and vote intention was collected in the Afrobarometer survey allowing me to contrast the rural population sampled by Afrobarometer by ethnic group with the urban respondents in the survey of Kampala<sup>4</sup>. Using Afrobarometer along with my own survey allows me to compare the candidate choices of Kampalans with those of their own rural coethnics. Taken together these data allowed me to compare voting patterns for nine of the biggest ethnic groups: ITESO, BAGANDA, BAKIGA, BASOGA, ALUR, LANGI, BAGISU, BANYANKOLE and BATORO. The ethnic distribution of the sample respondents in Kampala generally reflects the true ethnic composition of the city, with some bias towards the Baganda and Banyankole groups (table 3). Throughout the paper when I refer to vote intention I will be using both the Afrobarometer [rural] and my survey [urban].

The last three presidential elections in Uganda have been technically competitive with the same two main contenders; incumbent president Yoweri Museveni from the National Resistance Movement on the one hand, and on

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<sup>4</sup>I could have separated the sample between urban and rural areas and not between Kampala and the rest of the country (which can be done easily with the variable URBRUR in the database), however I decided that the transition that I was most interested in was the one occurring from homelands, which include the urban small center, to Kampala, the primate city of the country. Although to evaluate the geographic variation between homeland rural areas and their small urban centers is a worthy enterprise, I did not have enough respondents to make that comparison.

Table 3: Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Kampala’s Sample and Population

Ethnic group	Percentage of Kampala’s population	Percentage of the sample
Iteso	2.6	1.5
Bakiga	2.4	3.4
Basoga	4.6	6.6
Baganda	58.3	62.7
Alur	1.7	0.5
Lango	1.6	0.4
Bagiso	2.4	1.6
Banyankole	6.6	17.7
Batoro	3.2	5.6

Data based on the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census

the other Kizza Besigye from the Forum for Democratic Change party. In the data collected these two account for 86 per cent of the vote intention with the next candidate (Norbert Mao from the Democratic Party) reaching only 4 per cent. For these I have compared vote intention patterns only for these two contenders.

In order to evaluate the effect of the ethnic composition of presidential cabinets on ethnic voting I needed an assessment of the ethnic composition of cabinets. I calculated the percentage demographic excess in appointments per group. If cabinets were appointed without regard to ethnicity, we might expect -especially given the size of Uganda’s Cabinet with 76 members- to see in it a sample of the ethnic demographic composition of the nation. So rather than evaluating the sheer number of appointed by ethnic groups, I calculated the difference between the percentages of each ethnicity represented in the cabinet Vs. the percentage of the ethnic group represented in the nation. This measure allows us to know which groups are overrepresented or underrepresented in the cabinet and by how much. This is information that voters would expect to predict which ethnic groups would receive the most benefits from the government after the election.

Finally In order to test for variation in ethnic vote in rural areas I built a dataset containing all the rural districts in Uganda for which the ethnic groups selected for this study were predominant and the corresponding percentage of the district vote for president Museveni in the 2011 presidential

election<sup>5</sup>.

In order to test my argument I will proceed in three steps. First I will compare vote intention patterns in rural vs. Urban areas in relation to a common signal which is the ethnic composition of the cabinet. Second I will concentrate in rural areas to show how the increase in vote share for the incumbent president in newly designed districts demonstrates that the likelihood of being targeted with local public goods influences vote choices independently of any ethnic factor. Finally I will show how the divergence in voting patterns between rural and urban coethnics increases as the latter live longer in the city suggesting that the mechanism this paper describes in one of increasing awareness of the changing environment.

## 6 Results

### 6.1 Common signal: the ethnic composition of cabinets

Arriola (2009) has shown for 40 African countries that African leaders extend their tenure in office by expanding their patronage coalition through cabinet appointments and that the size of cabinets varies systematically with the level of ethnic fractionalization. Uganda is a very fertile case to exploit Arriola's insight. Since Museveni entered electoral politics his cabinet has systematically grown to become the third largest in the world, preceded only by North Korea and Kenya (see figure 3)

This growth has been denounced in the local press with Tumushabe (2009) indicating, for example, that "ethnic considerations, which requires that key tribal constituencies be given ministerial positions, is perhaps the single most important reason that accounts for the increasing size of the cabinet".

What the argument of Arriola implies for African countries in general and Tumushabes for the Ugandan case in particular is that if voters see cabinet

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<sup>5</sup>Since the last census implemented in 2002 some districts have been created (see below). I conducted an investigation to determine whether the size of the second ethnic group made a district more likely to split or whether district creation was principally the result of the population size of districts, with bigger districts more likely to divide. The results indicated that district creation was not promoted to make new ethnically homogeneous ethnic districts but based on population density

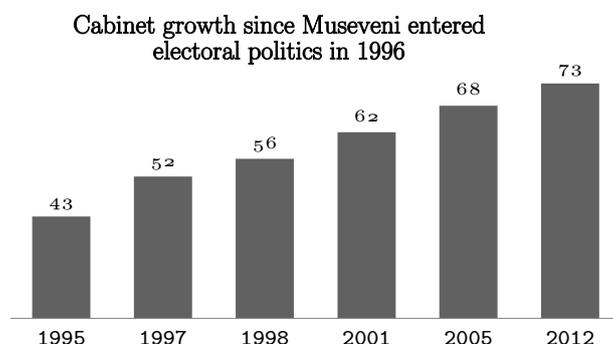


Figure 3:

appointments as identifying the ethnicities favored by the president, they should be more likely to vote for the incumbent if their co-ethnics are included in the cabinet. The mechanism described in this paper will add to this the fact that the effect of the composition of cabinets on vote share is expected to be greater in ethnically homogeneous areas such as rural homelands as the likelihood of receiving benefits from cabinet co-ethnics increases there.

In figure 4 I compare the relationship between vote intention and cabinet ethnic representation for the different ethnic groups in rural vs. Urban areas. First, note the significant difference in the intercept showing that urban areas have a significantly lower preference for Museveni than rural areas at every level of cabinet favorability. This finding suggests that the distribution of benefits, an area in which the incumbent Museveni has an enormous advantage over the challenger, has a much lower effect on urban voting, as might be expected if urban voters believe that ethnicity affects distribution but understand that the kinds of goods usually exchanged for votes cannot be efficiently distributed to co-ethnics who live in ethnically heterogeneous areas. Unexpectedly, no clear pattern is observed of the positive impact of cabinet ethnic share on vote intention in rural areas.

The expected pattern emerges, however, when we take the vote share for Museveni in all the districts of each ethnic homeland (in which the ethnic groups studied hold the majority of the population) [see figure 5]. Actual vote share includes less error and perhaps fewer lies than vote intention. A

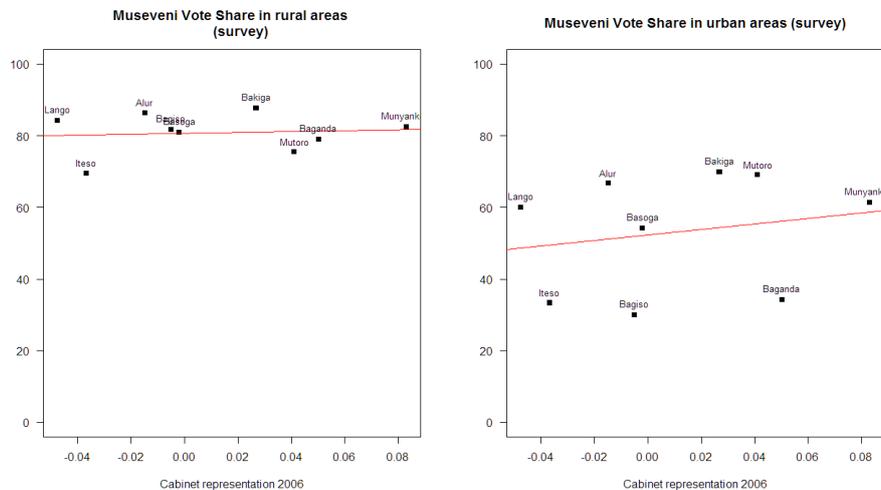


Figure 4:

substantive interpretation of this relationship suggests that an additional two percentage points in the over representation of the dominant ethnic group in the cabinet in 2006 (which represent about three members or, alternatively a distance of six in relation to other groups if we take into account that appointments are zero sum) can potentially explain 8 per cent increase in the vote for Museveni.

A similar analysis was made with the cabinet appointed by president Museveni after he was elected president in 2011. The results are less coherent [see figure 6] (except perhaps in homeland districts) suggesting the signal from cabinets correspond to the composition that is visible at the time of the election rather than the one the president is planning in the campaign, but that voters may not know about.

It is noticeable that even in the face of the impact that cabinet composition apparently has in Uganda, there has been no attempt by the main contender, Kyssa Besygie, to publicize what his future cabinet would look like if he were elected president. Although in parliament there is a shadow cabinet for the combined opposition, in which Besygie's FDC party holds the majority, most of it correspond to elected members from the Baganda and Acholi ethnic groups. This may be why such cabinet composition is not publicized as can be interpreted by other ethnic groups as indicating they would be excluded from most benefits if Besygie won.

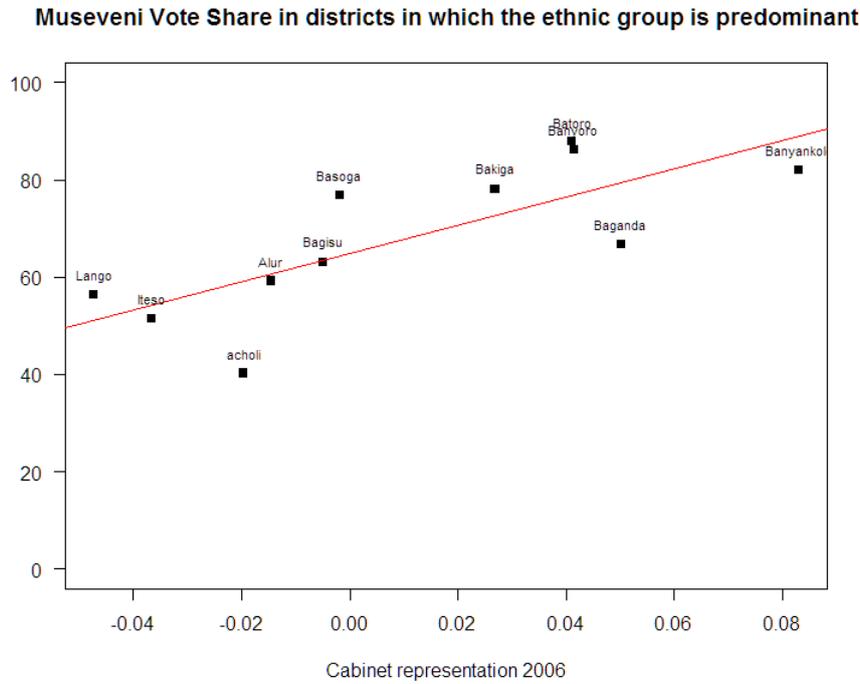


Figure 5:

## 6.2 District creation

The pertinence of the argument I am advancing can be seen in more stark terms if we recognize it does not necessarily depend on the ethnic self-identification of the voter but only about his instrumental calculation about the likelihood of having access to benefits. Indeed, if the argument is correct, the voter will respond positively to any indication that he would receive benefits given his spatial location if a particular candidate were elected, even in the absence of ethnic considerations.

In this section I will examine the effects of district creation in Uganda. Indeed, the mechanism of spatial likelihood of benefiting from local public goods (also, it is worth remembering from private goods distributed via local officials) implies that having a new district increases the chances of the community of getting access to public resources. On the one hand local elites can

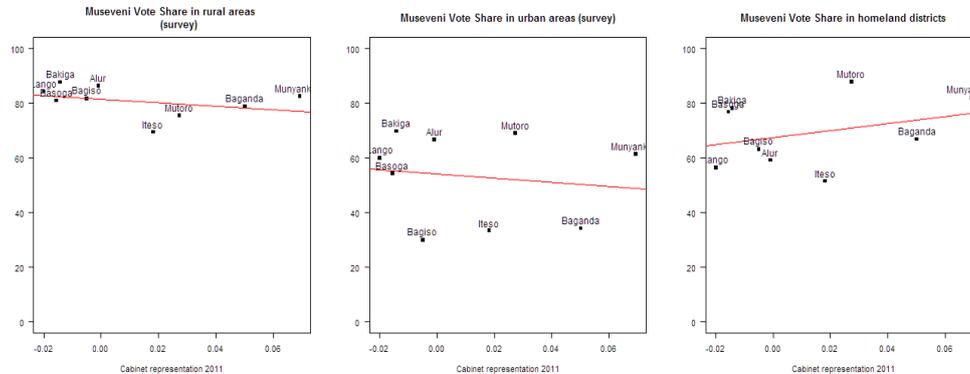


Figure 6:

be promoted from being representatives of the community in bigger districts to be the exclusive power holders in the new district, this in turn makes more likely for local dwellers to get access to benefits via the greater proximity they have with their local elites.

In his study on district creation as patronage in Uganda Krutz (2006) describes the mechanism as one in which “populations living within these new districts can expect to benefit from the introduction of new, more-proximate governmental structures” (local public goods) and local leaders “enact pro-incumbent policies, remain personally loyal to the ruling party, and use the clientelistic networks they build using government resources to mobilize votes for the incumbent”.

The first thing that calls the attention on district creation as patronage for votes is that when Museveni seized power in 1986 there were 33 districts in Uganda and only six more had been created by the time Museveni agreed to hold elections in 1996. It is after Museveni enters competitive electoral politics that the number of districts grows steadily to reach 112 in 2010<sup>67</sup>. In fact Uganda has the largest number of highest-level, sub-national administrative units and the smallest population per unit (Green (2008)).

<sup>67</sup>25 more districts are being proposed by the government as this paper is written, it would bring the country to 137 districts (New Vision, 21 August 2007)

<sup>7</sup>It is worth recalling that the Ugandan commission for local government reform recommended reducing the number of districts in order to increase service capacity via economies of scale.

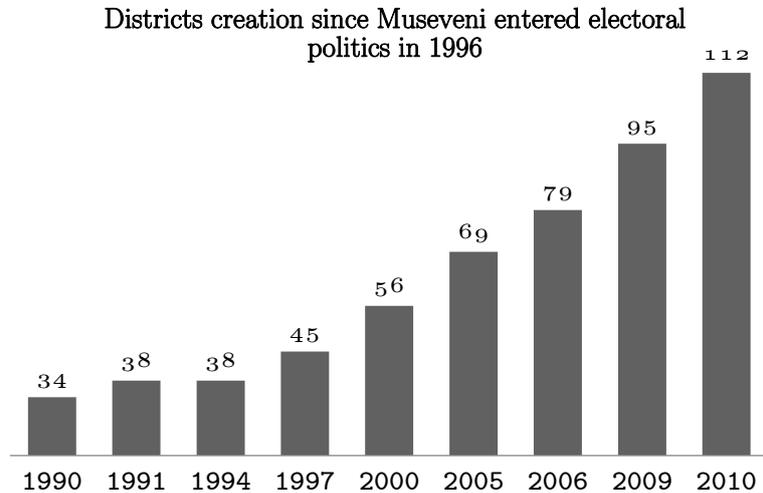


Figure 7:

If the strategy of district creation is helping the government electorally in the way the mechanism is this paper describes we should be able to observe a relative higher vote share for Museveni in the communities belonging to those districts independently of their ethnic composition. In other words a new district should be seen as a reward both by the local community and the local elites and this should be represented in a higher vote share for the incumbent<sup>8</sup>.

In table 4 I update Green's (2008) analysis on district creation in Uganda showing how all the new districts created since 1996 have indeed consistently surpassed the national average in voting for Museveni (table 4).

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<sup>8</sup>It can be argued that a new district can be a reward for the staunch support shown by a particular community rather than a way to increase support, and effect rather than a cause. Nevertheless given the fact that most districts are created in the year before elections and that their vote share for the incumbent increases after the election compared to their mother districts, suggest that the use of district creation is principally a strategy in which the government offers the district first and the community responds after. Note, however, that a "reward" new district, that is a district that may be created to compensate for the communities previous support will still conform with the argument of this paper as the increased likelihood of access to benefits would serve to mobilize the community politically. Now, the fact that very few new districts in Uganda have resulted in the formation of new ethnic compositions points precisely to the idea that people have not mobilized ethnically, that is pushing for a district of their co-ethnics, but strategically from a district "closer" to them, independently of the ethnic composition.

Difference in vote share for Museveni of the 23 new districts created before the 2011 election in relation to their mother districts

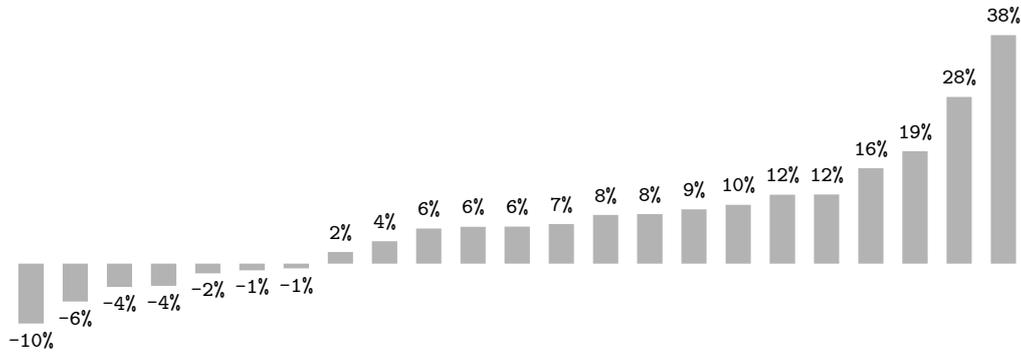


Figure 8:

Also, by comparing the vote share for Museveni in newly created districts

Table 4: Vote share conditined on whether the district was new.

Election	Type of District	Museveni	Other Candidates
1996	New Districts (6:1990,1991,1994)	89.20%	10.80%
	Ugandan Average	74.30%	25.70%
2001	New Districts (16:1997, 2000)	72.50%	27.50%
	Ugandan Average	69.40%	30.60%
2006	New Districts (13: 2005)	73.60%	26.40%
	Ugandan Average	59.30%	40.70%
2011	New Districts (23: 2010)	70.24%	29.80%
	Ugandan Average	68.38%	31.60%

in relation to their “mother” ones from which they have been carved out we can have still more conclusive results to illustrate the relative effectiveness of the mechanism of targeted rural territorial reform in exchange for votes. In figure 8 I show how the difference in vote share between the mother and the new district amounts to a full seven percent for the 23 districts created a year before the presidential election of 2011.

Again, this relation between district creation in rural areas and patronage for votes has escaped no one in Uganda. The late Abu Mayanja (2005),

perhaps one of the few politicians living a politically active life from late colonialism until the XXI century, reflected on the ironic consequences of multiplying districts when common sense indicated the contrary “So, why aren’t we following this cheaper and better route? Because to do so would not satisfy the vocal local politicians who are expecting to ”eat” all the new posts at the district level. By creating the districts, Government and Parliament have taken the easy way out for earning political and voting support”. In the same vein Emmanuel Gyezaho, journalist from the main newspaper in Uganda –The monitor-, reflects:

“On the economic front, taxpayers through the consolidated fund will feel the birth pangs of this irrational district creation, but politically, this move gives the president a big boost in the forthcoming elections, because he is certain of a block vote from the new districts”.

### **6.3 Kampala Vs. rural areas: Change in time?**

Finally I want to explore whether the difference in voting patterns for co-ethnics living in the city vs. rural areas changes with the time the former spend in the city pointing towards an effect of increased awareness about a changing spatial environment in which only pure public goods could be expected from politicians. For clarity of exposition I want to change slightly the focus of analysis in this section from vote intention for Museveni to the vote intention for his Challenger, Kizza Besigye. This is only a change in focus on the same dummy variable of vote intention that will nevertheless serve for a clearer observation on the vote intention difference from members of the same ethnic group but living in rural vs. urban areas.

First note the secular tendency for all ethnic groups to vote in higher percentages for the Challenger in Kampala than in homeland areas [see figure 9].

To test the significance of these differences I contrasted the probability of voting for the challenger by ethnic group in the rest of the country Vs. Kampala. The results confirm that vote patterns are significantly changed in Kampala and that this is not driven exclusively by the Baganda vote. The comparison of the first and second columns in Table 5 and figure 10 show the contrasting vote intention patterns for members of each one the ethnic groups conditioned on whether they live in Kampala or in rural areas. Substantively for an individual living in Kampala the likelihood of voting for the challenger increases by 30 per cent -on average- when compared with her co-ethnics living in rural areas. Notice the inverse signs of the Log coeffi-

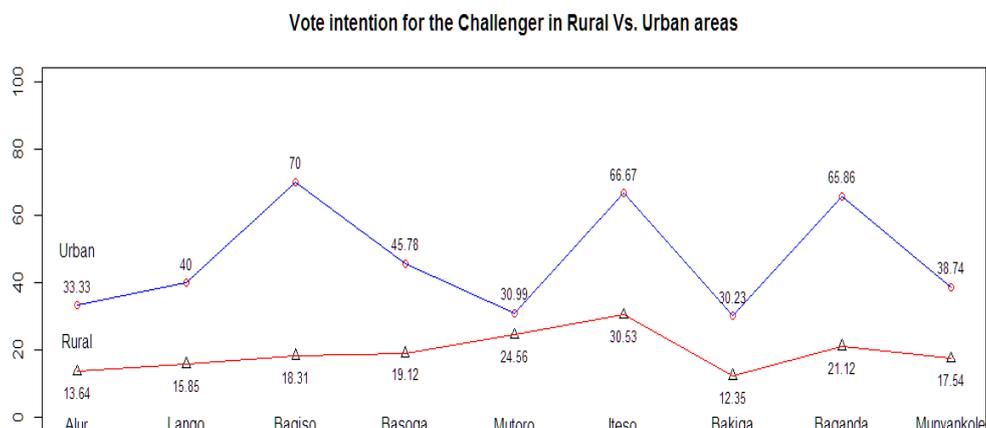


Figure 9:

cients, with negative in rural areas and positive in Kampala suggesting that ethnicity is significant in voting for Museveni in Rural areas and the challenger in Urban ones. However, once we control for the income of voters in Kampala the significance of belonging to an ethnic group disappears (except for Baganda). Indeed, now it is low income what appears to drive the vote intention for the challenger (see table 6 at the end)<sup>9</sup>.

These set of findings are consistent with the mechanism described in this paper. Members of the same ethnic group but living in urban Vs. rural areas present a contrasting vote intention pattern. Once members of any tribe living in Kampala realize in the city that their ethnicity will not help them to get access to benefits their concerns merge with the ones of the heterogeneous community where they live.

In fact, there is some empirical evidence that ethnic spatial heterogeneity leads to significant increases in the willingness to contribute privately to public goods. Indeed, in different papers both Posner (2005) and Schundeln (2012) report their finding on this. Posner, is very descriptive in his surprise

<sup>9</sup>All the estimate intervals in tables 5 and 7 and figures 10 and 11 are simulated from the initial variance-co variance parameter matrix using the "clarify" method with 10000 repetitions.

Table 5: Predicted Probabilities of voting for the Challenger in Kampala vs. Rural Areas

Ethnic Group		Rural	Kampala
Iteso	Predicted Probability	0.307	0.659
	logit coefficient	-0.822	0.692
Bakiga	Predicted Probability	0.129	0.307
	logit coefficient	-1.96	-0.836
Basoga	Predicted Probability	0.193	0.458
	logit coefficient	-1.442	-0.171
Baganda	Predicted Probability	0.212	0.658
	logit coefficient	-1.318	0.656
Alur	Predicted Probability	0.144	0.349
	logit coefficient	-1.846	-0.69
Lango	Predicted Probability	0.162	0.409
	logit coefficient	-1.669	-0.433
Bagiso	Predicted Probability	0.187	0.691
	logit coefficient	-1.496	0.849
Banyankole	Predicted Probability	0.177	0.388
	logit coefficient	-1.548	-0.459
Batoro	Predicted Probability	0.252	0.312
	logit coefficient	-1.122	-0.803

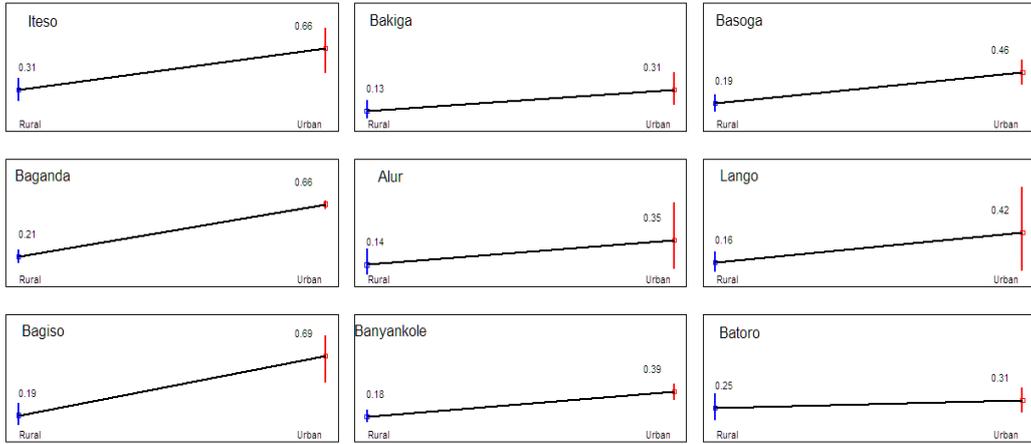


Figure 10:

”Given both my theoretical expectations and the findings of earlier studies, I was surprised to find no relationship between ethnic diversity and any of the local public goods outcomes under investigation. Since the size of the largest ethnic group in the community is the inverse of ethnic diversity, the negative sign can be interpreted as a positive relationship between diversity and local public goods provision. In short, across multiple specifications of a broad range of local public goods outcomes, I find either no relationship between diversity and local public goods provision or the opposite of what I, and the literature, would have expected”.

Schundeln finds his results “robust across various public goods, hold after controlling for the level of satisfaction with existing public goods and a large number of other community level characteristics” his hypothesis being that “more ethnic diversity may be associated with higher uncertainty about the expected contribution of other individuals (...) theoretically leading to higher private contributions to public goods under ethnic diversity than under ethnic homogeneity.

I suggest a different interpretation. Individuals in ethnically heterogeneous environments increasingly ignore their ethnicity for political mobilization purposes as they realize its relative uselessness for getting access to benefits, including local public goods. As a result they are comparatively more willing to contribute privately to the provision of public goods.

This mechanism of increasing environment awareness seems validated by

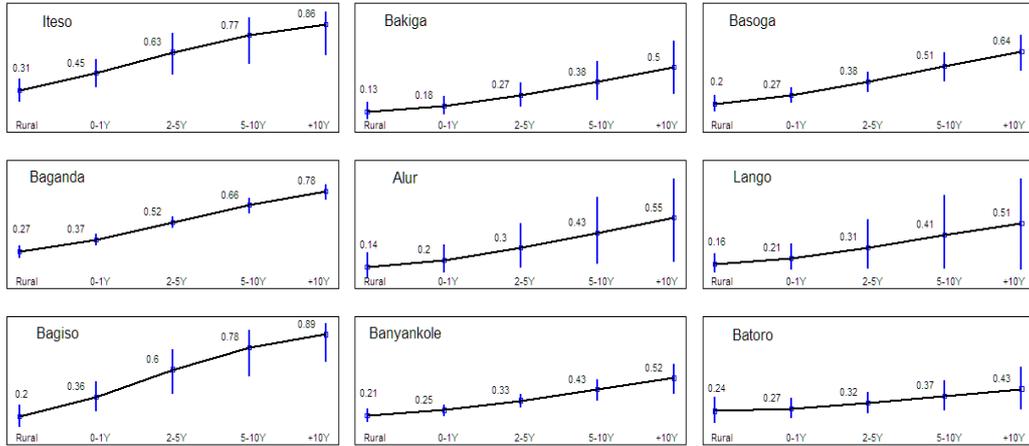


Figure 11:

the finding according to which living a longer time in Kampala is proportional with the increasing divergence in voting patterns between co-ethnics living in urban vs. rural areas across all ethnic groups (see figure 11 and table 7). This shows that individuals recently arriving in the city present similar voting patterns as their co-ethnics in rural areas; as they spend more time in the city the divergence in voting patterns increases.

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper I investigate the relationship between ethnic political mobilization as determined by the degree of spatial ethnic homogeneity. This is done in the context of the Ugandan presidential election of 2011. The empirical evidence presented suggests that ethnic voting is a function of the likelihood of getting access to benefits and that this likelihood in turn depends of whether the voter lives in homogeneous or heterogeneous ethnic areas. This is equivalent to say that ethnic voting follows the same logic as all other voting: people vote for the candidate they expect to provide them with the greatest benefit. A rational voter should take into account her ethnic self-identification in voting only if she can expect ethnicity to influence the process of distribution of private and public goods. Given the characteristics of public goods (non-rivalry, non-excludability), a voter should only expect to receive extra local public goods from a co-ethnic official if she lives in a neighborhood or village with many other co-ethnics since only such areas would be targeted with local public goods. This identification of sets of

co-ethnics will critically depend on their degree of spatial ethnic homogeneity.

The paper uses the contrast in human settlement patterns between rural areas of high ethnic spatial homogeneity, and Kampala's high ethnic spatial heterogeneity to show that ethnic voting can be understood as a function of the degree of ethnic spatial homogeneity. Indeed, while holding ethnicity constant, the voting behavior of urban and rural dwellers differs in relation to the appointment of co-ethnics in cabinet. Rural dwellers expect more benefits from a co-ethnic in a high political position (local public goods such as schools and health facilities, or private goods such as food or building materials), and thus respond positively by increasing their vote share for the incumbent president who appointed their co-ethnics in cabinet. This is not observed for urban residents who cannot rationally expect to benefit from such appointments in areas of high ethnic spatial heterogeneity. In the same vein whereas voting in rural areas is well predicted by ethnicity, in urban areas ethnic voting loses significance once we control for income. That voting for the challenger across all ethnic groups is more likely in the city and its more likely at lower levels of income -to which the overwhelming majority of the population belongs- serves to validate the idea that once the individual moves from a highly homogeneous ethnic space to one highly heterogeneous, his strategies of political mobilization changes. The political use of ethnic self-identification is gradually reduced and I show that this awareness of a changing political environment is proportional to the time the citizen spends in the city.

Finally in rural areas with a single dominant ethnic group an increase in the likelihood of getting benefits via district creation increases vote share for the incumbent. This is consistent with the hypothesis that voters have a marginal disposition to increase their vote share for any politician that increases their chances of getting access to benefits.

In recent years there has been an explosion of literature unpacking the idea of ethnicity and how it is mobilized for political purposes. Evidence that there is indeed something that can be called "ethnic voting" often combines with studies suggesting that people treat their ethnic identities in a far more instrumental way and that this blurs the easy inferences about ethnic voting, or ethnic collective action. Posner (2005) and Schundeln (2012), for example, found that ethnic spatial heterogeneity in neighborhoods of Kampala was strongly correlated with the disposition of individual to join forces in the community for the private provision of public goods. Mamdani has also make strong references to the fact that successful guerrillas in Africa

have share a non homogeneous ethnic composition and that the promise of urban areas to overcome tribalism lies in their potential to recreate a civil society of citizens whose sense of affiliation is national and not tribal.

This paper is walking in the direction of these findings. It does not ignore ethnic voting but makes a case to demistify it by relating it to the rational expectation of voters to get access to resources. What is significant about ethnic political mobilization is not a sense of primordial identification but a rational expectation of access to benefits that is intrinsically connected with the rural spacial concentration of co-ethnics. I have shown that changing levels of ethnic spatial concentration are associated with voting intentions and actual voting patterns.

That Africa is rapidly urbanizing and that urbanization brings with it a blurring of ethnic voting if the process of urban occupation leads to a non-homogeneous distribution of ethnic groups in urban areas, gives some reason of hope to see a continuous transition from subject to citizen in which the voter recognizes that his best change of getting access to public goods is by voting for candidates who can be credible in their promise of delivering pure public goods.

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Table 6:

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	CHALL
Household income	−0.078*** (0.030)
ITESO	0.718 (0.481)
ACHOLI	−0.655* (0.340)
BASOGA	0.027 (0.233)
MUGANDA	0.833*** (0.102)
ALUR	0.157 (0.819)
LANG	−0.205 (0.919)
BAGISO	0.998** (0.492)
BANYANKOLE	−0.282* (0.153)
BATORO	−0.632** (0.265)
Observations	1,383
Log likelihood	−897.766
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,815.532

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 7: Probability of voting for the Challenger by Ethnic group according to the time spent living in Kampala

		Rural	(0-1) Year	(2-5) Years	(5-10) Years	(10+) Years
Iteso	P.Prob	0.307	0.452	0.630	0.770	0.862
	Std.E	0.046	0.059	0.090	0.102	0.094
Bakiga	P.Prob	0.130	0.179	0.268	0.382	0.506
	Std.E	0.036	0.036	0.051	0.082	0.116
Basoga	P.Prob	0.197	0.268	0.382	0.512	0.637
	Std.E	0.033	0.032	0.041	0.060	0.076
Baganda	P.Prob	0.268	0.370	0.517	0.660	0.778
	Std.E	0.026	0.023	0.023	0.030	0.033
Alur	P.Prob	0.137	0.195	0.300	0.428	0.554
	Std.E	0.052	0.059	0.095	0.146	0.186
Lango	P.Prob	0.164	0.214	0.303	0.405	0.503
	Std.E	0.041	0.055	0.106	0.166	0.213
Bagiso	P.Prob	0.198	0.362	0.594	0.781	0.890
	Std.E	0.047	0.063	0.096	0.102	0.083
Banyankole	P.Prob	0.207	0.254	0.335	0.426	0.523
	Std.E	0.026	0.023	0.028	0.044	0.063
Batoro	P.Prob	0.243	0.265	0.316	0.373	0.433
	Std.E	0.054	0.043	0.045	0.063	0.090