

Party Building and Politician Defection in Zambia

Leonardo Arriola, Donghyun Danny Choi, Justine Davis, and Melanie Thompson, UC Berkeley
Lise Rakner and Ingvild Skage, University of Bergen

Introduction

This document presents a pre-analysis plan for a survey experiment conducted on a sample of candidates that have competed in the 2011 Zambian parliamentary elections. This plan has been written and registered with EGAP prior to the analysis of data. The research has been reviewed and approved by UC Berkeley's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (IRB Protocol 2015-12-8222).

Study Design

In this study, we conduct a survey experiment on a sample of candidates who competed in the 2011 parliamentary elections in Zambia. We present both winners and first losers of these parliamentary contests with a profile of hypothetical political parties with varying attributes and characteristics in order to ascertain candidate preferences over political parties. To our knowledge, this project is the first of its kind to experimentally examine the factors that shape one of the most important decisions that politicians will have to make when seeking elected office: whether to join or defect from a political party. This experiment is embedded in a broader survey of legislators that seeks to understand the factors influencing individual politicians in their choices over party affiliation and defection, leadership endorsements, campaign entry, campaign financing, and policy positions.

We employ randomized conjoint analysis for this study. With a rich history in marketing research but recently introduced to political science by Hainmueller et al. (2014), conjoint analysis enables researchers to simultaneously examine the causal effects of multiple treatment components in the framework of a single experiment. Although conjoint experiments have been used in a variety of capacities to assess different attributes of individuals (Hainmueller et al. 2014; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015), our study leverages this design to assess individual evaluations of a group or entity (i.e., political party). Following common practice, each respondent is presented with multiple pairs of party profiles that will be generated using a completely independent randomization process: each attribute level is assigned with equal probability within each of the eight attributes we selected. The two profiles of party characteristics are presented side-by-side on an electronic tablet device. After each set of party pairs, the respondents are asked to identify the political party they prefer.¹

To minimize the possibility that respondents privilege the first attribute they encounter in the party profiles (primacy effects) to guide their choice, we choose to randomize the order of the

¹ As a robustness check to the discrete choice outcome, we also ask respondents to evaluate each party profile individually on a 1-7 scale, where 1 is the highest rating and 7 is the lowest.

attribute presented across respondents, but hold the order constant within the respondents. The choice to hold the order of the presentation constant within respondents was made in order to minimize respondent fatigue in repeatedly processing information in a different order. Since we pool across respondents for the analysis, we should be able to mitigate concerns over primacy effects to a great extent even if we do not randomize the order of attributes presented within individuals.

Sample and Case Selection

The experiment is conducted on a sample of candidates that competed in the 2011 Zambian parliamentary elections. We first identified the winners and first losers of the 150 single member district parliamentary constituencies in Zambia for a total of 300 potential respondents. Although conducting the experiment on a random sample from the potential respondent pool would have been ideal in drawing inferences that are representative of the population of legislators, significant logistical challenges inherent in interviewing prominent political elites, including sitting members of parliament, prevent us from doing so. We therefore surveyed all respondents within our subject population who were willing to participate in the project. The descriptive characteristics of the respondents will be presented in the paper upon analysis of the data.

We focus on Zambia because it is an ideal case to study candidate preferences over political parties in Africa's new democracies. Zambia shares many features with other African democracies: non-ideological patronage-based electoral competition, a strong executive, a weak parliament, and a long history of political competition between ethnolinguistic groups. Furthermore, while the country has regularly maintained multiparty elections and undergone three peaceful alternations in power since its democratizing transition in 1991, the country's once national parties have progressively fragmented into a number of small parties that often fail to survive across election cycles. The fragmentation of the party system and ephemeral nature of parties makes the issue of party choice and affiliation especially relevant for political candidates in Zambia.

Hypotheses

We rely on the existing literature on political parties and African politics to derive hypotheses to be tested regarding candidate preferences for political parties. We briefly review here the literature from which we derive the hypotheses.

Party Structure

Our study draws on insights from prior research showing that the level of party organization incentivizes politicians, with more organized parties resulting in lower electoral volatility and appearing more attractive to candidates (Chhibber et al. 2014).

H1 (Party Structure): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that have a high level of party organization and institutionalization, with participatory mechanisms for the selection of the party leadership.

Party Support at the National and Local level

The popularity of the political party among the electorate is conventionally expected to condition the electoral success of party-affiliated candidates. Candidates affiliated with parties enjoying a favorable partisan wave at the national level may benefit extensively from the popularity of those parties, thereby enjoying party coattail effects. However, given that parties in Africa typically derive support from a limited ethno-regional base (Posner 2005; Arriola 2012; Gichohi 2016), popularity at the national level may be less crucial than the level of partisan support within the region or constituency that the candidate is seeking office. Intuitively, voter support for the party at the local level is likely to be important, but an emerging research agenda on the role of local opinion leaders such as tribal chiefs, headmen, and religious leaders who often act as political brokers suggest that political parties and aspiring candidates must court the support of these local elites (Baldwin 2014; Koter 2013).

H2 (National Voter Support): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that have a high level of voter support at the national level.

H3a (Local Voter Support): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that have a high level of voter support in their own constituencies.

H3b (Local Elite Support): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that are supported by local power elites such as tribal chiefs, religious leaders, and headmen.

Candidate Selection Methods

A nascent research agenda in African politics has pointed to the importance of candidate selection processes in determining the fate of political aspirants in African democracies (Ichino and Nathan 2012a; Ichino and Nathan 2012b). Because party leaders are often perceived to influence the nomination of parliamentary candidates in favor of their political allies, candidates in general may prefer more bottom-up, grassroots-driven candidate selection procedures (e.g., primary elections) that ensure that their survival during party nominations is not solely based on their relationship with a select number of prominent party elites. They may instead prefer to compete in primaries.

H4 (Candidate Selection): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that have bottom-up processes of candidate selection such as primary elections.

Incentives and Inducements Offered by Parties

In fractionalized party systems where new parties are formed and existing parties disbanded in nearly every election cycle, parties often have to compete to recruit political aspirants to serve as party candidates. Material and non-material incentives are known to be offered to these candidates to make the affiliation with the party more attractive (Arriola 2012). For example, parties can induce candidates to join their ranks by offering to cover part of the campaign finance costs that are known to be significant in many African democracies (Pinkston 2016). Similarly, ruling parties can offer promises of cabinet or sub-cabinet appointments to candidates. This can be an attractive offer for aspirants, since appointments to government positions often allow politicians access to state resources and budgets that they can direct to their base of support in order to bolster their standing in subsequent elections (van de Walle 2007). Another important way in which parties can attract candidates to join the party is by guaranteeing candidate's nomination as the party's candidate. Given that the electoral geography of Africa often produces areas of party dominance, much of the political competition occurs during party nominations. Guaranteeing that the candidates will survive the candidate selection stage thus significantly increases the chances of electoral victory, and is likely to be an important factor that candidates consider before joining the party.

H5a (Incentives - Campaign Financing): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that offer support for campaign finances.

H5b (Incentives - Government Appointments): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that promise future cabinet and subcabinet appointments.

H5c (Incentives - Guaranteed Nominations): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that guarantee party nomination for the constituency for which they are seeking office.

Relationships to Party Leadership

Prior research on political parties in Africa has highlighted the highly personalized nature of parties and the degree to which party leaders exercise control and influence over the party apparatus (Resnick 2013). Given the level of personalization, candidates might be attracted to political parties whose leaders share the candidate's social ties: shared ethnic, religious, educational, and professional backgrounds with party leaders or prominent members of the leadership may make the candidate's prospects favorable for the advancement of their political careers such as promotion within the party hierarchy or securing nominations for the party ticket. While there is relatively limited research on what type of social tie would be the most influential than others, the salience of social identities such as ethnicity and religious affiliation in Sub-Saharan Africa leads to the expectation that ties based on these identities to be more important for candidates (McCauley 2014).

H6 (Relationship with party leaders): Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties in which they share social ties with the party leader.

Party in Power

There is well-documented evidence that African presidents and their parties rarely lose in elections: since 1960, less than 30% of presidential elections across the region resulting in a loss for the sitting incumbent or the ruling party's candidate (Posner and Young 2007; Arriola 2012). Scholars attribute this electoral advantage to the disparity between the incumbent and opposition parties in accessing the resources and financing required to generate electoral support in patronage democracies (Rakner and van de Walle 2009; Arriola 2012). Given that the provision of local public goods and constituency service has been found to be an important determinant of vote choice in African democracies (Ichino and Nathan 2013; Conroy-Krutz 2013; Harding 2015; Carlson 2015), candidates have an incentive to join parties that control the executive branch, and thus become the beneficiaries of the incumbent party's targeting of state services and goods that will play to their advantage during elections (Kramon and Posner 2012).

H7: Candidates are more likely to prefer political parties that currently control the executive branch.

Planned Analysis of the Conjoint Experiment

Main Analysis

We use conjoint analysis to test the hypotheses laid out in the previous section. We present respondents with two profiles of hypothetical parties generated from the attributes and attribute values presented in Table 1, and we ask them to make a choice between them.² The total number of possible combinations of attribute values is much larger than what would be actually observed in reality. However, by randomly assigning attribute values, profiles with a certain attribute-attribute value level will have the same distribution for all other attributes on average as compared to profiles with the same attribute but a different attribute value level, allowing for the comparison of means.

² We also conduct additional robustness checks to verify whether the results from the analysis on the discrete choice outcome hold in the 7-point ordinal outcomes that rate individual profiles.

Table 1. Conjoint Attribute-Attribute Level Table	
Attribute	Attribute Level
Party and the presidency	Party holds the presidency
	Party does not hold the presidency
Party support at the national level	51% of voters in the country support this party
	25% of voters in the country support this party
	5% of voters in the country support this party
Party support in the constituency	Chiefs support this party
	Headmen support this party
	Church leaders support this party
	Voters support this party
Party leadership selection	Party holds regular elections for party leadership
	Party leader directly chooses party leadership
	National executive committee appoints party leadership
Candidate adoption process	Party Members vote in elections to choose parliamentary candidate
	Constituency-level committee chooses parliamentary candidate
	National executive committee chooses parliamentary candidate
	Party leader directly chooses parliamentary candidate

The party leader promised you...	adoption as the parliamentary candidate in your constituency
	a deputy minister position
	a cabinet minister position
	financial support for your campaign in the next election
	nothing significant
The party leader and you...	belong to the same church
	belong to the same social organization
	are former co-workers
	are former schoolmates
	are family or relatives
Ethnic group of the party leader is...	from your ethnic group
	not from your ethnic group

The quantity to be estimated, following Hainmueller et al. (2014), is the average marginal component effect (AMCE) and the average component interaction effect (ACIE). We will use the fully non-parametric linear regression estimator presented in Hainmueller et al. (2014), and cluster the standard errors derived from the estimation at the respondent level. For example, the estimation of the AMCEs for “party support at the national level” attribute is conducted by running the following regression:

$$choice_{ijk} = \theta_1 + \theta_2[support_{ijk} = 51\%] + \theta_3[support_{ijk} = 25\%] + \epsilon_{ijk},$$

where $choice_{ijk}$ is the outcome variable, $[support_{ijk} = 51\%]$, $[support_{ijk} = 25\%]$ are dummy variables coded 1 if the respondents are assigned these attribute levels. The reference category is the party with 5% support.

References

- Arriola, Leonardo R. 2012. *Multi-Ethnic Coalitions in Africa: Business Financing of Opposition Election Campaigns*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Baldwin, Katherine. 2014. "Chiefs, Land, and Coalition-Building in Africa." *Comparative Politics* 46 (3), 253-271.
- Carlson, Elizabeth. 2015. "Ethnic Voting and Accountability in Africa: A Choice Experiment in Uganda." *World Politics* 67 (2), 353-385.
- Chhibber, Pradeep, Jensenius, Francesca Refsum, and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2012. "Party Organization and Party Proliferation in India." *Party Politics* 20(4), 1-27.
- Conroy Krutz, Jeffrey. 2013. "Information and Ethnic Politics in Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 43(2), 345-373.
- Gichohi, Matthew. 2016. "Ethnic Groupness and Party Competition," Working Paper.
- Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2015. "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3), 529-48.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2014. "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices via Stated Preference Experiments." *Political Analysis* 22(1), 1-30.
- Harding, Robin. 2015. "Attribution and Accountability: Voting for Roads in Ghana." *World Politics* 67 (4), 656-689.
- Ichino, Nahomi and Noah L. Nathan. 2012a. "Primaries on Demand? Intra-Party Politics and Nominations in Ghana." *British Journal of Political Science* 42(4),769-91.
- Ichino, Nahomi and Noah L. Nathan. 2012b. "Do Primaries Improve Electoral Performance? Clientelism and Intra-Party Conflict in Ghana." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2), 428-441.
- Ichino, Nahomi, and Noah L. Nathan. 2013. "Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana." *American Political Science Review* 107(2), 344-361.
- Koter, Dominika. 2013. "King Makers: Local Leaders and Ethnic Politics in Africa." *World Politics* 65 (2), 187-232.

- Kramon, Eric, and Daniel N. Posner. 2013. "Who Benefits from Distributive Politics? How the Outcome One Studies Affects the Answer One Gets." *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2), 461-474.
- McCauley, John. 2014. "The Political Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Africa." *American Political Science Review* 108(4), 801-816.
- Pinkston, Amanda. 2016. "Political Spending and Finance in Ghana and Benin." Working Paper.
- Posner, Daniel N. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Posner, Daniel N. and Daniel J. Young.. 2007. "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 18(3),126-140
- Rakner, Lise, and Nicolas Van de Walle. 2009. "Opposition Weakness in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 20(3), 108-121.
- Resnick, Danielle. 2013. *Urban Poverty and Party Populism in African Democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2007. "Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa." In *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*. Cambridge University Press.