

# **Parties on the Ballot: Visual Cues and Voting Behavior in Uganda<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Electoral ballots in developing countries typically contain party symbols, photos, and other information thought to facilitate informed voting by citizens with low levels of literacy, political knowledge, and voting experience. However, these cues might shape voter decisions—and, hence, election outcomes—in unintended ways. We conducted a survey experiment days prior to the February 2011 elections in Uganda to test the effects of party identifiers and other features on ballot papers. Respondents were asked to mark randomly assigned ballots that included or excluded different visual and verbal cues about the actual candidates. Our preliminary findings indicate that party cues induce straight-ticket voting and selection of major parties rather than independents. Surprisingly, the party cue effects are similar in magnitude to experimental results from established party systems, despite the fact that multi-party elections are only five-years old and parties do not distinguish themselves along policy lines in Uganda. These findings challenge the conventional view that party cues are consequential because they activate longstanding partisan identities or signal policy preferences. We posit that party cues in Uganda provide information about patronage networks rather than policy positions or performance. Party identifiers on ballots may undermine rather than enhance accountability mechanisms, especially in new and unstable party systems.

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Diana Mutz, Robin Pemantle, John Bullock, Guy Grossman, Gina Lambright and participants of the Michigan State workshop for their helpful suggestions and insights. We would also like to thank John Kavuma, James Odongo, Jin Woo Kim and Douglas Allen for their assistance with the research, and the Annenberg School for Communication at University of Pennsylvania for financial support.

## Parties on the Ballot: Visual Cues and Voting Behavior in Uganda

Although nearly all countries around the world hold regular elections, there is significant diversity in the manner in which their citizens cast their votes. The electoral institutions that structure voters' choices—whether they vote for a party or an individual, make a single choice per office or conduct some kind of ranking—are the variables most studied by political scientists. Voters' interaction with the ballot as a physical object itself—whether they use a pen to check a box, fill in a bubble, or connect a line; a stylus to punch a hole; an inked finger to make a print; or a computer touch screen to click an option—is also different across countries and elections.

Yet another source of variation is the manner in which the competitors themselves are presented to voters on these ballots. More limited designs include only the candidates' names, in a non-partisan competition, or, in partisan competition, candidates' names and affiliated parties. In other instances, there is more information about individual candidates, such as their mailing addresses or occupations. And visual features, such as party symbols and candidate images, are prominent on many ballots, especially in the developing world (Reynolds & Steenbergen 2006). Advocates of the inclusion of images on ballots maintain that such features facilitate voting by citizens, many of whom, particularly in the developing world, have little formal education, access to political information, or previous experience with voting. When images are present, such thinking goes, voters simply need to remember their favored candidate's face or affiliated party's symbol in order to register their preferences; even illiterate citizens can participate fully under such arrangements.

For normative and practical purposes, it is important to design electoral institutions and voting technologies that allow elections to be accurate representations of the electorate's preferences. Much of the research on various technologies focuses on how well they accurately record and tally voters' choices,<sup>2</sup> while the copious literature on electoral institutions examines how voters' choices, once recorded and tallied, are translated into distributions of power. Less research has been conducted on the possible effects of including various pieces of information about competitors, such as party symbols and candidate images, on ballots, especially in the developing world, where such features are held to be especially beneficial. Certainly, the inclusion of additional pieces of information on ballots is not without cost; each word, symbol, or image added to a ballot increases its complexity, and color images increase production costs. Therefore, it is important to measure the extent to which these images actually do increase citizens' abilities to register their preferences correctly.

It is additionally important to study these features of ballot design because there is the possibility that the inclusion of certain pieces of information and images could have (seemingly) unintended

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<sup>2</sup> For examples from recent US presidential elections, see, for example, Wand, *et al.* 2001; Herron and Sekhon 2003; Ansolabehere and Stewart 2005; Herron and Wand 2007.

consequences on vote outcomes. Certainly, there is significant research to suggest that voters' preferences are impacted by visual cues, such as candidate appearance, during campaigns (Antonakis & Dalgas 2009; Bailenson, Iyengar, Yee, & Collins 2009; Boudreau 2009; Lawson, Lenz, Baker, & Myers 2010; Lenz & Lawson unpublished; Sigelman, Sigelman, & Fowler 1987; Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall 2005; Tsfati, Markowitz Elfassi, & Waismel-Manor 2010) and on ballots (Banducci, Karp, Thrasher, & Rallings 2008; Buckley, Collins, & Reidy 2007; Johns & Shephard 2011). Voters often prefer candidates who are more attractive or have a certain ethnic phenotype, for example. The inclusion (or exclusion) of information about parties on ballots can lead to more (or less) party-based voting, which itself has implications for the strength of parties in post-election environments. And there is evidence from the developing world that the symbols that are often included on ballots to help voters differentiate between candidates and parties can themselves have attractive or repellent effects.<sup>3</sup> In short, there is the possibility that, apart from helping voters accurately voice their preferences, certain features of ballots might themselves contribute to the shaping of those preferences. Because voters in developing democracies often have the lowest levels of political sophistication and knowledge, these effects might be particularly significant there. These are, of course, the very places where visual aides are usually held to have the strongest benefits.

In this research project, we examine how aspects of ballot design in one case directly affect voters' abilities to register their preferences accurately. We also examine the effects of ballot design on vote choice. In order to test the effects of various features of ballot design, we conducted a survey experiment with 902 adults in one electoral area of Uganda in early February 2011, just days prior to presidential, parliamentary, and local elections in that country. The experiment involved the random assignment of different types of ballots to survey respondents, in an attempt to measure the effects of certain ballot features: party names, party symbols, and candidate photographs. Although we are interested in a wide range of outcomes, including the effects of ballot design on participation, "correct voting," ethnic voting, and evaluations of candidate quality, we focus more narrowly in this paper on party-based voting. We examine the extent to which the inclusion of party names and symbols on ballots impact vote outcomes, such as respondents' tendencies to support minor party candidates and independents, and to "vote" straight-ticket lines.

Our preliminary findings indicate that the inclusion of party identifiers on ballots results in greater support for major parties, lower support for independent candidates, and greater rates of straight-ticket voting. Finally, we find that party identifiers have no discernible impact on the likelihood that a respondent mark a ballot, nor do they appear to have any impact on respondents' selections in the relatively salient and information rich presidential race. These findings could have important implications for still-transitional political systems like Uganda's, which often struggle with presidential dominance and low party institutionalization.

Surprisingly, the estimated effects from Uganda are similar in magnitude to party cue effects found in established party systems; our results challenge the conventional view that party cues are consequential because they activate longstanding partisan identities or signal policy preferences. In Uganda, multi-party elections are only five-years old and parties do not distinguish themselves along policy lines. Party cues are expected to be less consequential in

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see Reynolds and Steenbergen's (2006) discussion of the hoe and house in Tanzania.

new and unstable party systems than in longstanding democracies (Brader & Tucker 2010). We argue that party cues in Uganda are consequential because they provide information about patronage networks rather than policy positions. The process generating partisan effects has important implications for the degree to which party cues facilitate or undermine accountability mechanisms.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section provides an overview of existing literature on ballot design and, more specifically, the relationship between ballot design and party-based voting. The second section discusses the Uganda case and provides an overview of our survey and experimental methodologies. The third section presents six hypotheses on the relationship between the inclusion of certain types of party identifiers on ballots (i.e., party names and symbols) and vote outcomes, and describes the measures we use to test the hypotheses. Section four covers analyses and presents our initial findings, while the fifth concludes with a discussion of potential normative implications.

### **Literature on Ballot Design, Visual Cues, and Party Heuristics**

Many developing countries include candidate pictures, and/or party names and symbols on electoral ballots in order to allow accurate voting by citizens with little education and voting experience. Advocates of visual cues argue that even illiterate voters can identify candidates and parties and mark their ballots in private, rather than having to rely on assistance from others who may try to alter their votes. In addition, they posit that visual cues reduce voting errors such as spoilt ballots and help mobilize disadvantaged populations to vote (Reynolds & Steenbergen 2006; Smith, Laskowski, & Lowry 2009).

The assumption that pictures and/or party symbols facilitate informed voting is widespread in the policy community that advises on elections in developing countries. For example, ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, a leading election assistance organization, produces an election encyclopedia; in a section on ballot design entitled “Making Voting Easier” they advise: “In all environments, inclusion of the party symbols on the ballot paper will help voters. In less literate societies, especially where party affiliations are more fluid, candidate or party leader photographs are useful” (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network).

The suggestion to include photos and symbols is striking given that it conflicts with ACE’s central tenant of ballot design: “A general principle underpinning any design is that the simpler the ballot paper the more effective” (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network). Inclusion of photos and symbols dramatically increases the cost of ballots, increases the complexity and size of the ballot paper, and makes the process of producing, printing and distributing ballots more complicated. In addition to the extra cost of color versus black and white ballots, inclusion of pictures and symbols often means ballots must be printed abroad; many developing countries lack the facilities to print large volumes of color ballots of the quality required for reproducing pictures and symbols. All else equal, the more elements on the ballot, the more complicated it is for voters, and the more chance for error or coordination problems during ballot production. As one ACE document on ballot design notes: “It is also important to remember that the use of photos and icons adds to the complexity and cost of ballot production and makes it more difficult

to re-print ballot papers in case a candidate dies or is withdrawn because the EMB [Electoral Management Body] will need to receive and scan a new photograph instead of just adding another name” (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network 2007). Nonetheless, the same document recommends the use of visual cues because the supposed benefits are thought to outweigh these costs in most cases. Ironically, the document also notes that: “It is difficult to find any particular studies showing how the use of photographs and icons affect voters” (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network 2007). Also ironically, ballot pictures and symbols are most often employed in poor new democracies that are least equipped to deal with the extra costs and complexities.

Anecdotal evidence does suggest that citizens employ these visual identifiers when marking ballots, though not always in ways that enhance accountability and voice. In a particularly dramatic example, the *Monitor* newspaper reported on citizen reliance on party in the 2011 local races:

There was confusion at Bugonga Polling Station in Entebbe in Wakiso District early this morning after voters discovered that the ballot papers that electoral officials were giving them were meant for Mbale District. Some of the voters from Bugonga I and II polling stations had already cast their votes when vigilant polling agents discovered that the voters had been casting their ballots for councillors from a district in eastern Uganda. ‘We were told to vote either the bus or the hoe.’<sup>4</sup> We don’t read names and see the photos of the aspiring candidates,’ said Johnson Matovu, one of the voters, speaking in Luganda (Monitor 2011).

There is further anecdotal evidence that the symbols, rather than simply facilitating efficacious voting, themselves can make a difference in voters’ decisions. For example, after the 2005 referendum, one elderly voter in Kampala explained her support for multipartyism (represented by a tree on the ballot), rather than a retention of the no-party system (represented by a house), with the following: “You need a tree to build a house, so I chose the tree. It is the tree from which we get fruits like guavas, jackfruit; all foods come from the tree. When it rains you can also go under a tree. The house can easily collapse while a tree will be there forever.” Another voter, also in Kampala, explained his vote against multipartyism: “I just ticked the house. I do not care which politician wins. I ticked the house because it looked good. I do not understand what it means” (Nyakairu and Glauser 2005). The selection of symbols themselves was a controversial process, and the EC refused initial entries by both sides (Sabastiano 2005).

Politicians also seem to recognize that pictures and party symbols are consequential for election outcomes. For example, the opposition in Uganda cried foul when word got out that the incumbent president, Yoweri Museveni, was wearing a hat in his election picture. They argued that election rules prohibited head gear that would distinguish him from other candidates [find citation]. Museveni managed to keep his picture with the hat on all subsequent election ballots and is careful to don the same style hat in photos and campaign appearances whenever possible. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) symbol, a yellow bus, is also ubiquitous on the campaign trail. The state-owned newspaper, *The New Vision* quoted the president at a 2010 election rally in Pallisa District: “You give whoever gives you. You voted for NRM, I gave you a district. Your role is one, vote for NRM. You don’t need a gun to do that, just your vote. Where

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<sup>4</sup> The bus is the symbol of NRM party while the hoe is the symbol of the Democratic Party.

you see a hat, tick. Where you see a bus on the ballot paper, tick” (Mukasa & Watala 2010). Museveni reportedly also employed ‘robocalls’ on the eve of the 2011 election with a recorded message asking them to vote for the ‘old man with the hat’ (Sunday Vision 2011).

Despite the widespread use of pictures and party symbols on ballots, especially in developing countries, to date we lack systematic evidence about the effect of visual cues on voting (Katz, Alvarez, Calvo, Escobar, & Pomares 2010; Reynolds & Steenbergen 2006). Nonetheless, there are sound theoretical and empirical reasons to think that ballot pictures and symbols are consequential, either because they affect who casts a vote, or because they affect how people vote. A large body of evidence shows that voters rely on heuristics, or simplifying rules of thumb, such as party labels as well as candidates’ names, gender, ethnicity, and appearance to facilitate their voting decisions (Popkin 1991). Cues can facilitate decision-making by poorly informed voters, increase the salience of certain judgment criteria, shift attention towards specific candidate characteristics and stimulate dormant attitudes (Chaiken 1980; Kam 2005; Krosnick & Kinder 1990; Lau, Andersen, & Redlawsk 2008; Mondak 1993; Petty & Cacioppo 1986; Rahn 1993). Voting cues do not always facilitate efficient and accurate decision-making—they can also lead voters astray—but they are often consequential (Arceneaux 2008; Boudreau 2009; Kam 2005; Lau & Redlawsk 1997, 2001; Levendusky 2010; Schaffner & Streb 2002).

In this paper we present and discuss the findings of an experiment designed to test the effects of different informational cues included in electoral ballots on voters’ choices. We focus here on the effects of party identifiers (party names and party symbols) although the research design allows us to examine the effects of candidate photos as well. The literature on party cues suggests a number of different ways that party names and party symbols on ballots might affect election outcomes. First, party cues are expected to affect election outcomes by increasing turnout and ballot marking. Marcus Prior (Prior ND) examined the causes and consequences of visual knowledge (based on viewing pictures) compared with verbal knowledge (based on seeing names) among US citizens. He found that women, minorities, and less educated people were not disadvantaged in visual knowledge as they were with verbal knowledge and that visual knowledge was more highly predictive of turnout. To the degree his findings travel, they suggest that visual cues may encourage disadvantaged populations to vote either by reducing threat or by reducing the procedural skills necessary to select a candidate.

Research on the consequences of partisan versus non-partisan races in the United States also suggests that party cues may help increase turnout, especially among less affluent and educated voters (Klein & Baum 2001; Schaffner & Streb 2002; Schaffner, Streb, & Wright 2007; Welch & Bledsoe 1986). Partisan elections are thought to increase turnout by providing information on the ballot that makes candidate choice less demanding, and by increasing campaign spending. Higher turnout can affect election outcomes to the extent that political preferences are associated with likelihood to turnout. Nonetheless, higher turnout, especially among disadvantaged populations, is a normatively desirable outcome that enhances democratic representation. The remaining effects of party identifiers discussed here are more normatively ambiguous.

Second, party cues may not only affect whether people vote, but also for whom they vote. Party identifiers are expected to alter citizen choices (and thus election outcomes) by providing voters

with new information or by priming party-based considerations.<sup>5</sup> For example, Schaffner *et al.* (2007) find that partisan elections increase vote for majority party candidates and decrease support for minority party candidates as compared to non-partisan elections. Majority parties by definition have more supporters and should thus benefit from party-based decision-making, which is more likely in partisan elections. In an interesting study of alternative voting technologies in Brazil, Katz *et al.* (2010) find some evidence that major parties benefit from party-centric ballot designs while minor parties benefit from the absence of readily available party cues. They argue that major party labels provide more effective heuristic cues than minor party labels because major parties are better known and thus labels provide more information (see also Coan, Merolla, Stephenson, & Zechmeister 2008). Thus, major parties are better positioned to benefit from party identifiers encountered in the ballot booth.

Third, ballot cues should be more influential in low-salience, low-information elections. Individuals are more likely to engage in heuristic processing when issues are peripheral and they lack motivation to seek information and engage cognitive energy to process information systematically (Chaiken 1980; Petty & Cacioppo 1986). Even if individuals are motivated, there may be external constraints on the amount of information they can access, especially for poor individuals in rural Africa who have limited or no access to newspapers, internet, television, campaign rallies, and campaign posters. Voters are more likely to be swayed by what they encounter in the voting booth if they have not been exposed to information during the campaign and have not already exerted cognitive energy deciding how to vote.

Fourth, party cues should encourage more straight-ticket voting for two reasons: party information on the ballot allows citizens to more accurately identify candidates and vote in line with their party preferences; and party cues prime the importance of party over other considerations (Karp, Vowles, Banducci, & Donovan 2002; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau 2004). In the Brazilian field experiment on vote technologies, Calvo *et al.* (2009) found that e-vote devices that displayed party name and symbol more prominently produced more straight ticket voting while candidate centric features increase spit ticket voting.

In a cognate of the previous two points, party choices in salient races should affect party choice in down-ballot races rather than the other way around. Therefore, party identifiers should induce individuals to base their decision for less visible down-ballot contests on whichever party they voted in for in salient top-ballot races.

Finally, party symbols should be more influential than written party names, particularly in least developed countries. Low education and literacy mean that symbols convey information to more of the population than text. Since poorly informed individuals are most likely to be swayed by ballot cues, cues that are relevant for illiterate populations are expected to be more consequential. Even for those who can read well enough to decipher the party names, ballot symbols are more likely to capture attention and to evoke thoughts or emotions than written words [find citations].

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<sup>5</sup> Like many other studies of party cues, we cannot determine with much accuracy the degree to which outcomes are due to information or priming. We may gain some leverage from additional analysis that examines the added effect of party symbols compared to party names for those who report they could or could not read the ballot, but literacy is itself confounded with factors related to information and priming. We may also gain some leverage by comparing those who knew the party symbols with those who did not.

To date the existing evidence on party cues comes almost exclusively from advanced industrial democracies, especially the United States. It is not clear how these findings will translate to other parts of the world, such as rural Africa. The effects of heuristics on voting are expected to be larger in electoral environments where sources of information about candidates are scarce and voting habits are not yet solidified such as is the case in many developing countries with new electoral institutions (Calvo et al. 2009; Kam 2005; Katz et al. 2010; Lawson et al. 2010; Lenz & Lawson unpublished). The existence of multiple parties and independent candidates on the ballot also increases the complexity of decision-making and makes heuristic use more likely (Calvo et al. 2009; Katz et al. 2010; Lau et al. 2008; Mondak 1993).

While Ugandans may be more likely to rely on voting heuristics in general, they would seem to be much less likely to rely on party cues in particular. Party cues are expected to be less consequential in new and unstable party systems than in longstanding democracies (Brader & Tucker 2010). Uganda is a relative latecomer to the resumption of multiparty politics, even compared to other third-wave democracies. Although significant political liberalization started in 1986, it was not until 2006 that the first multiparty election took place. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), the main opposition party and the most popular party in the Teso sub-region, where research for this project was conducted, was only founded in 2004. Therefore Ugandans have had little time to develop partisan attachments. Ugandans may be habituated to voting along criteria other than party lines and ballot design may not alter this tendency. Furthermore, parties throughout Africa seldom distinguish themselves from each other on policy positions [Van de Walle 2003].<sup>6</sup> Therefore party identifiers would seem to carry little policy relevant information. The influence of party cues depends on voters having partisan stereotypes, which may not exist in the minds of most Ugandans. At an even more basic level, Ugandans may not recognize party symbols. Most rural Ugandans get their news from radio, which does not convey visual information.<sup>7</sup> A minority would have been exposed to party symbols in newspapers, on television, on campaign items, or during rallies.<sup>8</sup> Given this type of environment, Soroti Uganda would seem to be a tough case for testing the effects of party cues on ballots. If party cues on ballots are consequential in this study, they are likely to be consequential in most other polities as well.

This paper focuses on party identifiers but the larger project is designed to also evaluate the effect of candidate pictures. A large body of research from advanced industrial democracies indicates that voters exposed to candidate images during campaigns tend to vote for physically attractive, ethnically similar, or socially constructed high status candidates (Antonakis & Dalgas 2009; Bailenson *et al.* 2009; Boudreau 2009; Lawson *et al.* 2010; Lenz & Lawson unpublished; Sigelman *et al.* 1987; Todorov *et al.* 2005; Tsfaty *et al.* 2010). In addition, we plan to evaluate whether pictures and party cues have implications for ethnic voting. Finally, we will examine whether individual-level characteristics moderate the effects we observe here.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Katz et al (2010) and Calvo et al (2009) make similar arguments with respect to Latin American and Eastern Europe which have far more ideologically distinct parties than Africa.

<sup>7</sup> In our sample, 72% said they get news from radio while only 25% reported getting news from newspapers and 2% from television in the last week.

<sup>8</sup> The uneducated respondents in Prior's study of visual knowledge were heavy TV watchers as is typical of most Americans. They had greater exposure to visual political images.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix C contains a list of additional hypotheses we seek to test with this research project.



## Case Selection and the Experiment

Given the research questions addressed in this paper and those listed in Appendix C, Uganda was an ideal site for the experiment. Uganda is optimal because: 1) there is a relatively large illiterate population in the country, suggesting that ballot design could have significant implications for political participation rates and vote outcomes; 2) the country has a fairly extensive recent history of utilizing various cues on its ballots in order to facilitate voting, but to our knowledge, no research has been done examining the implications of these designs on election outcomes; and 3) while ethnicity has been a salient feature of Ugandan politics since independence, there are also relatively high rates of cross-ethnic voting, suggesting that it is worth examining features, such as ballot design, that might impact ethnic voting rates.

First, as stated previously, we might expect that the inclusion of visual cues, such as party symbols and candidate images, will have significant impacts on both participation rates and correct voting in illiterate and undereducated populations. Such cues are, of course, specifically included to further these desirable outcomes; whether they encourage behaviors such as party- and/or ethnic-based voting are, we contend, largely unexplored, particularly in developing contexts.

Uganda's literacy rate, while higher than Sub-Saharan Africa's,<sup>10</sup> is still relatively low, globally speaking. According to the 2002 Population Census, 68.2% of Ugandans were literate. However, there is significant geographic variation in these rates: while 93.7% of residents of Kampala's Central Division could read, only 6.8% in Jie County (Kotido District), in the northeastern Karamoja sub-region, could. Beyond geography, literacy gaps also exist on the basis of sex and age, with older Ugandans and women exhibiting lower rates.<sup>11</sup> These groups, who also often generally lack access to political information from a wider range of sources, might especially benefit from the inclusion of visual cues on ballots.

Second, Uganda has a long tradition of using images on ballots, stretching at least as far back as the 1994 Constituent Assembly (CA) elections, when candidates' photographs appeared alongside their names. However they have far less experience with party information on ballots. In contests for local councilors in the late 1980s<sup>12</sup> and the CA, and in the 1996 and 2001 general elections, political parties were not allowed to support candidates overtly. Under the so-called "Movement" system, or "no-party democracy," established soon after Yoweri Museveni's forces

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<sup>10</sup> According to the World Bank, the regional adult (i.e., 15 and older) literacy rate in 2009 was 62%. <http://data.worldbank.org/region/SSA> (accessed 19 August 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Although the Census did not report differences in literacy rates by gender, UNESCO estimates that, in the entire adult population, literacy rates for women are about twenty percent lower than for men (2005-8 estimates). Statistics available at [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda_statistics.html) (accessed 18 August 2011). And the literacy rate for younger (aged 15-24 years) Ugandans is significantly higher (85%, in 2010) than the general adult population's (73%), according to World Bank figures. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/uganda> (accessed 19 August 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Local elections under the NRM in the 1980s involved aspirants making a short, public speech, followed by voters lining up behind the candidate of their choice (Carbone 2008: 145). Thus, while ballot cues were not a feature of these elections, it is quite possible that candidate appearance influenced voters.

seized power in 1986, candidates were barred from identifying party affiliations on campaign materials or in other communications, although party affiliations, or at least one's position as a Movementist or multipartyist, were often widely known (Carbone 2008: 146). Party cues (i.e., party names and symbols) therefore did not appear on ballots until the 2006 general elections, which followed a 2005 referendum that abolished the "no-party" system. A ballot without partisan information would be familiar to most respondents and it remains a plausible option in Uganda.

Political parties design their own symbols, although the Electoral Commission (EC) of Uganda must give final approval of all choices. While the primary purpose of symbols is, at least in theory, to facilitate participation and correct voting by illiterates, parties clearly believe that the right symbol can reinforce underlying messages and even potentially serve as an attractor in its own right. The most widely recognizable symbol is undoubtedly the ruling National Resistance Movement's (NRM) yellow bus, which represents visions of inclusiveness and forward motion. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), founded in 2004, has utilized a blue key, symbolizing an ability to unlock change. The Democratic Party's (DP) symbol is a hoe, which, as "the commonest and most important tool in the lives of Ugandans," according to the Party's constitution, ostensibly reinforces a populist orientation. Other prominent symbols include the Uganda People's Congress' (UPC) welcoming open hand, the People's Progressive Party's (PPP) illuminating lantern ("Political Fever," 2011), Uganda Federal Alliance's (UFA) "far-seeing" giraffe (Adiaka 2011), and the People's Development Party's (PDP) bell, which was rung during the most recent campaign to signify that it was time for Museveni's rule to end (Ssenkibirwa 2010). Party symbols, as well as candidate images, generally appear on all campaign posters and other paraphernalia, and oversized keys, hoes, bells, and other symbols are often features of parties' rallies.

A large proportion of candidates for offices at various levels contest as independents, and these individuals also are associated with specific symbols, although they must choose between a pre-determined menu, rather than create their own.<sup>13</sup> In 2011, independent candidates could choose from one of ten symbols: a soccer ball, a bicycle, a chair, a clock, a cup, a kettle, a pot, a radio, a sauce pan, and a table. Candidates' symbols are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, and those who file nomination papers after their counterparts will find a reduced menu. There is some evidence that candidates with a fuller menu (i.e., those who file earlier and those who face fewer challengers) prefer certain kinds of symbols over others. Of the 530 approved independent candidates for Parliament in 2011, 112 (21.1%) had a clock as their symbol, while 103 (19.4%) had a radio. These items are the only ones that require electricity to operate, perhaps suggesting that candidates prefer being associated with modern conveniences. Other items that might be considered luxuries by many in Uganda were also amongst the more commonly utilized: 73 (13.8%) candidates had a chair symbol, 72 (13.6%) a bicycle, 68 (12.8%) a soccer ball, and 41 (7.7%) a table. Items associated with cooking and eating—and those which all but the very

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<sup>13</sup> The exception is candidates for president, who are allowed to design their own symbols. In 2010, independent presidential candidate Samuel Lubega, formerly of the DP, had his initial symbol design rejected by the EC, which argued that it was too similar to that of his former party (Naturinda and Mulondo 2010). Many in the DP had claimed that Lubega had attracted many signatories to his nomination petition while using DP symbols on his campaign materials (Naturinda 2010).

poorest Ugandans would certainly possess—were the least-utilized: 27 (5.1%) had a pot, 19 (3.6%) a saucepan, 10 (1.9%) a cup, and only 5 (1.0%) a kettle.

The pattern of selected items was quite similar for candidates seeking district women member of Parliament (MP) positions. Of 186 independents, radio (49, or 26.3%) and clock (31, 16.7%) were again the most common symbols, followed by “luxury” items like bicycle (27, 14.5%), chair (25, 13.4%), ball (12, 6.5%), and table (11, 5.9%). Although one cooking item—the pot (17, 9.1%)—was slightly more popular among district women MP candidates, the other items—saucepan (11, 5.9%), cup (2, 1.1%), and kettle (1, 0.5%)—were similarly unpopular choices.

Finally, “modern” items did fare slightly worse in rankings amongst the 149 independent candidates for district chairperson: Only 28 (18.8%) had radios and 22 (14.8%) clocks, compared to 32 (21.5%) chairs and 31 (20.8%) bicycles. Other luxury items fell in the middle of the pack—16 (10.7%) soccer balls and 10 (6.7%) tables—while cooking and eating utensils were again at the bottom of the list: 7 (4.7%) pots, 2 (1.3%) saucepans, 1 (0.7%) cup, and 0 kettles. We do not make an attempt in this paper to estimate the added vote benefit that a particular symbol might provide to an independent candidate, nor does our experimental design allow us to examine whether a certain symbol is more advantageous than another. Still, the pattern here is at least suggestive of some sentiment amongst candidates that symbols do matter.

Finally, we hypothesize that the inclusion of visual cues on ballots—specifically, candidate images—could have the seemingly unintended consequence of encouraging ethnic voting, since affiliations are often cued by factors such as facial structure and dress. Uganda offers an excellent opportunity to test this expectation, since ethnicity is a factor in political competition, albeit not apparently the sole one in most voters’ decision-making processes. Appendix D provides a more detailed explanation of our case selection.

Within Uganda, we focused on one electoral area (i.e., a parliamentary constituency) for the research, and utilized two primary criteria in the selection process. First, for logistical reasons we had a strong preference for choosing a district where one of us was already collected pre- and post-election survey data for a different project.<sup>14</sup> Next, we were also interested in the possible effects of ballot design on ethnic voting (in research we do not report on here), we sought a location in which ethnicity would be a salient feature of electoral competition (i.e., one in which an ethnically diverse candidate pool was competing in an ethnically heterogeneous constituency). Soroti County provided the best fit given these criteria.

## **Subject Recruitment**

Subjects were recruited via a multi-stage (“cluster”) design, in which forty-five Enumeration Areas (EAs) were first selected with probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling.<sup>15</sup> These EAs covered all seven of the sub-counties and nineteen of the twenty-six parishes in Soroti County (Figure 1). Within selected EAs, enumerators selected households via a random-walk

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<sup>14</sup> These cases included the districts of Apac, Bushenyi, Busia, Gulu, Iganga, Kampala, Luweero, Ntoroko, Soroti, and Wakiso. These districts represent all four regions of the country.

<sup>15</sup> The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) delineates EAs for the purpose of population and household surveys. Population statistics were derived from the 2002 Population Census.

pattern, and then used a kish grid to select an adult in the household to interview. The only requirements for participation were that the individual had to be at least eighteen years of age, a member of the selected household, a citizen of Uganda, and able to understand and respond to questioning in any of the three survey languages (Iteso, English, and Kumam); subjects did not have to be registered to vote in the upcoming election. Of the eligible individuals who were approached for an interview, 93.5% accepted. A total of 902 individuals completed the survey, and surveys were conducted between 10 February and 17 February 2011.

The proximity of the experiment to actual elections—presidential and parliamentary elections were held on 18 February, while district chairperson elections were held on 23 February—increases external validity, since respondents were asked to mark ballots after having already experienced an entire campaign and all its associated stimuli, as would be the case in the real world. Conducting the experiment earlier, or even prior to, the campaign would likely result in larger effects, but since we are interested in the effects of ballot design on vote outcomes, we sought to replicate the voting experience as closely as possible.

**[Insert Figure 1 about here]**

After initial questioning about age and education, subjects were asked to fill out a sample ballot, in private, for each of four upcoming electoral contests: President, Member of Parliament (MP) District Women Member of Parliament, and District Chairperson. Subjects were instructed to mark the ballots, fold them, and place them in envelopes. Ballots and envelopes were serialized in order to allow for later matching with the completed questionnaires.

Caution is warranted with respect to generalizing findings to other populations. Soroti County is not representative of Uganda as a whole. The County is somewhat poorer than the rest of Uganda. For example, according to the 2002 Census, only 25.0% of Soroti households took sugar regularly, compared to 47.6% of Ugandans. Similarly, rates of shoe (12.8%) and radio (39.8%) ownership were comparably low (43.5% and 48.6% nationally, respectively).<sup>16</sup> The County also had lower rates of household access to piped water (0.7%, versus 11.4% nationally) and electricity for household lighting (7.7%, versus 0.4% nationally). The Soroti population is only slightly less educated or better-informed than the rest of the Uganda. Over three-fifths (61.2%) of Soroti residents were literate, compared to 68.2% of the rest of the population, while 21.3% had completed primary school (29.2% nationally) and 40.1% reported using mass media as their primary source of information (49.1% nationally). The sample is representative of Soroti County at the household level but the analysis of ballot conditions is not representative of individuals within the household.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, there is reason to believe that the experimental results would apply more generally (Kam, Wilking, & Zechmeister 2007).

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<sup>16</sup> Soroti fares better on measures such as soap use (92.2% in Soroti versus 90.3% nationally) and ownership of multiple sets of clothing (75.7% in Soroti versus 77.8% nationally).

<sup>17</sup> Due to an unfortunate and systematic interaction between the kish grid rules and the randomization procedure that was only discovered after the fact, not all positions on the kish grid were equally likely to be assigned to the different treatment groups. For the treatment comparisons we have included respondents only from those positions on the kish grid (as determined by the number of individuals in a household and one's age rank within the household) that were equally likely to be assigned to the paired treatment conditions. This solution maintains the experimental design but gives up about half the observations. It also reduces external validity in that the analysis population is not representative of the population at the within-household level. For example, respondents in single

## The Ballot Experiment

In order to test the effect of different information cues on voters' behavior we designed an experiment with five treatments. In general, experiments are a good method when evaluating the effect of different stimulus on people's political behavior. For example, researchers have assessed the influence of candidates' appearance on voters' intention to vote for them (Aguilar 2009; Bailenson *et al.* 2008; Buckley *et al.* 2007; Mattes *et al.* 2010; Terkildsen 1993), or the effect of negative campaigns on people's decision to vote (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Desposato 2007; Lau and Rovner 2009), among other issues. The strongest advantage of experiments is their strong internal validity. It is easier to establish a causal relationship in the study because the researcher is capable of isolating the causal factor and temporal precedence (McGraw *et al.* 2003). For purposes of our research, experiments allow us to manipulate the information included in the electoral ballots so we can be sure that the differences found across experimental conditions are due to the different elements of information included in the ballots and not to other factors.

Our interest is in estimating the effect of different information cues (and the combination of those cues) on voters' electoral behavior in developing democracies. Having this in mind we designed an experiment manipulating the information included in the electoral ballots for the four electoral contests: President, Member of Parliament, Women Member of Parliament and District Chairperson. All five treatment conditions include the candidates' names. Treatments 2 through 5 contain additional verbal or visual cues:

Treatment 1: no additional information

Treatment 2: party names

Treatment 3: party names and party symbols<sup>18</sup>

Treatment 4: candidates' pictures<sup>19</sup>

Treatment 5: party names, party symbols and candidates' pictures

Table 1 shows the five treatment conditions by ballot features.

**[Insert Table 1 about here]**

For each treatment the information provided accurately portrays the candidates running in the actual election. Treatment 5 most closely mimics the real ballots that respondents encountered in

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person households are more prevalent in our analysis of the combined party cues (27%) than they are in the general (representative) sample (16%). The gender distribution is statistically indistinguishable in our analysis sample and the general sample, but respondents are about 4 years older on average and the age difference is statistically significant. [Add more comparisons of analysis sample and total sample based on demographic traits]

<sup>18</sup> As discussed earlier, the Electoral Commission requires that independent candidates select an object from a pre-designated list. The object appears on the ballot in the same location as the party symbol. We included (or exclude) the object (e.g. soccer ball, chair, etc.) in the same way that we include (or exclude) party symbols.

<sup>19</sup> We were unable to obtain the actual ballot photos from the Electoral Commission. Instead, candidates' pictures were obtained from candidates' websites, other websites, campaign posters, or from the candidates themselves. We located the candidates and took head shots when we could not find acceptable photos elsewhere. The cropping, brightness, and background of the images were then adjusted to make the photos as similar as possible.

the voting booths later that week.<sup>20</sup> Respondents were randomly assigned to the same treatment condition for all four races.

## Hypotheses and Measures

The literature review suggests six distinct hypotheses that we can evaluate against experimental evidence from Soroti. For the first five hypotheses, we compare those treatments that contain both party name and symbol (treatments 3 and 5) against those treatments that do not contain any information about parties (treatments 1 and 4).

First, party identifiers are expected to increase the number of ballots marked. In fact, this is the primary rationale given for including party names and symbols on ballots in developing countries.

H1: Party cues are positively related to the total number of contests marked.

We acknowledge that marking a sample ballot with an enumerator in the respondent's own home is not the same thing as turning out to vote in an actual election and marking a ballot.

Nonetheless, the test provides some suggestive evidence about whether party cues enhance the ability and motivation of rural Ugandans to cast a vote. We also contend that the experimental conditions bear some resemblance to reality for a portion of rural Ugandans who turn out to vote for reasons other than their desire to vote for a specific candidate. The desire for patronage and financial rewards, social approval, and entertainment also drive people to show up. Whether or not they actually mark the ballot once they are in private is analogous to whether or not they mark the sample ballot in our experiment. The measure *Marked Ballots* ranges from zero to four, and it sums the total number of contests where the respondent marked one and only one candidate across the presidential, parliamentary, women parliamentary and chairperson's contests.

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix B for the experimental presidential ballots for each treatment condition and a photo of the actual presidential ballot. The experimental ballots were similar in size and shape to actual ballots, but they differed in three important ways from the official ones. First, they did not contain the official seal of the Electoral Commission, and instead were clearly labeled as "sample ballots." We did not want voters to think that they were casting actual ballots in this exercise and thus remain home on election day. As additional cautions, respondents were told upon receiving ballots to "Please keep in mind that this is only a sample ballot, and there is language on the ballot that indicates that. If you want to cast an actual ballot, you will have to go to your local polling station on election days to do so." At the close of questioning, enumerators again told respondent that "We also want to remind you that the ballots you marked were not real ballots for the election. You must vote at your polling station on voting days if you want your choice to count for the Ugandan election." Official features were also excluded because we did not want our research teams to be accused of vote buying or other malfeasance. Second, the experimental ballots were to be marked by voters using a pen, while actual ballots are marked with voters' inked thumbs. Finally, our experimental ballots listed presidential candidates alphabetically by surname, while the official ballots, controversially, listed President Museveni last. It might have been that respondents were told to vote for candidates based on their order on the ballot and were thus confused by the different ordering on our ballot. For example, Museveni supporters may have been told to mark the last person on the ballot because Museveni knew he would appear last on the official ballot. Our respondents do not seem to have been confused in this way. Ssali appears last on our ballot and received only 4 votes total in our sample: he received two votes in condition two, one vote in each of conditions one and five, and no votes in conditions three and four.

Second, we expect that party cues will affect the total number of votes for major and minor parties as well as independents. Schaffner *et al.* (2007), working in the two-party American system, find that the majority party will benefit while the minority party will lose from partisan elections. This two-party constellation must be translated into a multiparty system in which gains for one party do not necessarily translate into losses for all others. Following the lead of Katz *et al.* (2010) we posit that all the major parties (rather than just the leading one) will benefit from party cues, while the minor parties will lose. The logic for minor parties also holds for independent candidates; party cues are expected to decrease voting for independents.

H2a: Party cues are positively related to total votes for major party candidates.

H2b: Party cues are negatively related to total votes for minor party candidates.

H2c: Party cues are negatively related to total votes for independent candidates.

The NRM and the FDC are well known and favored by a significant portion of the population in Soroti.<sup>21</sup> Thus we code major parties as votes for NRM or FDC and minor parties as votes for UPC, PDP, PPP, UFA, or DP. Later we provide evidence that party identifiers had no effect on the presidential race. Therefore we decided to include only the remaining three races, parliamentary, women parliamentary and chairperson's contests in our measures here.<sup>22</sup> *Major Parties* measures the total number of votes for major party candidates in the three races. *Minor Parties* measures the total number of votes for minor party candidates in the three races. *Independents* measures the total number of votes for independents in the three races. All three variables range from zero to three.

Third, we expect the effects of party cues to be stronger in lower-information / less salient races. The presidential race is the most salient, and the most widely covered and discussed. Politics in Uganda is heavily focused on the president, as is the case elsewhere in Africa. Furthermore, this is the third time the two main contenders have faced off against each other for president. Because the presidential race so dominates the political scene it is difficult to distinguish the relative importance and visibility amongst the other three races, so we do not have a hypothesis about the relative effects of party cues among the lower-ballot races.

H3: Effects of party cues are less for the presidential contest than for the MP, women MP, and chairperson contests.

Given that we have only four races our results will only be suggestive. We can evaluate this hypothesis against any of the above outcomes (marked ballots, major parties, minor parties and independents). We focus on the effect of party cues on major parties, while mentioning the results for other outcomes in the text. We disaggregate major parties into its four component races to get *Major Parties for President*, *Major Parties for Women MP*, *Major Parties for MP*, and *Major Parties for Chairperson*. Each measure is a binary variable coded one if the respondent marked her sample ballot for a major party candidate and zero otherwise.

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<sup>21</sup> FDC received 50.7% of the vote for president and NRM received 38.7% among the respondents that marked at least one ballot.

<sup>22</sup> The results are less strong when the presidential race is included but the results for major party and independents are still within conventional bounds of significance ( $p=.08$ ,  $p=.03$ ,  $p=.00$ ,  $p=.01$ ).

Fourth, party cues are expected to induce voting along party lines, thus making it more likely that respondents select all candidates from the same party.

H4: Party cues make straight-ticket voting more likely.

The measure *Straight-Ticket* is a binary variable coded one if the respondent marked his sample ballot for candidates of the same party in all four races, and zero otherwise. Since straight ticket voting is only possible if respondent voted for candidates from FDC, NRM and UPC party, since these were the only parties that fielded candidates in all four races. Respondents who did not mark their presidential vote for one of these three parties were omitted from the analysis.<sup>23</sup>

Fifth, in line with the previous two hypotheses, we would expect that when provided party cues, citizens are more likely to shift their vote in less salient down-ballot races to match the party of their vote in the most salient race. This is a somewhat less stringent requirement than straight-ticket voting because it records matching votes in only some races as opposed to only recording matching in all races.

H5: Party cues are positively related to the number of matches between the party of the presidential choice and the party of the candidates selected in the other contests

*Party Matches President* is a variable created from the sum of indicator variables for the MP, women MP and chairperson races. The indicator variables are coded: one if the party of the candidate selected matches the party of the presidential candidate chosen, and zero otherwise. It is impossible for presidential choice to drive down-ticket voting if the party of the presidential choice does not field candidates in other races. As with *Straight-Ticket*, respondents who did not mark their presidential vote for FDC, NRM, and UPC are omitted from the analysis. *Party Matches President* ranges from zero to three.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, we expect that party names (verbal cues) are *less* consequential for vote outcomes than visual cues (party symbols).

H6: The effect of adding party name to an otherwise non-partisan ballot is less than the effect of adding party symbol to a ballot with party name.

To test the first five hypotheses we compare the full package of party cues (party name and symbol) to ballots with no party cues. We cannot tell from this analysis whether or not verbal cues (party names) are more or less important than visual cues (party symbols). For hypothesis six we ask: how much does each additional party cue change voting outcomes? To determine the effect of party names only, we compare the difference between the condition including only party names (treatment 2) and no party names (treatment 1). To determine the added effect of party symbols, we compare the difference between conditions including both party names and

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<sup>23</sup> Results do not change if respondents who voted for other parties or independents for president are included.

<sup>24</sup> When *Straight-Ticket* is equal to one, *Party Matches President* is equal to three; If party selected in all three races matches the party of the president then the respondent is a straight-ticket voter. In the results section we also discuss results for *Party Matches President* when straight-ticket voters are omitted from the analysis.



party symbols (treatment 3) with the condition with only party names (treatment 2).<sup>25</sup> We expect the differences in the latter comparison to be greater.

The comparison of party name and party symbol could be made with respect to any of the outcome variables employed to test in hypotheses one through five. In this paper we focus on the outcomes evaluated for the second hypothesis: *Major Parties*, *Minor Parties*, and *Independents* because we think these are the most important outcomes.

For analyses to evaluate hypotheses two through six, we drop from the analysis all respondents who did not mark a choice for at least one of the races.<sup>26</sup> Appendix A provides descriptive statistics for the variables described here.

## Results

Table 2 displays the difference of means and proportions we use to evaluate hypotheses 1 through 5. The results do not support hypothesis 1. Party cues are not significantly associated with the number of marked ballots.<sup>27</sup> The null result is notable given that the main justification for including partisan cues on ballots is to help citizens cast a vote. Illiterate voters do appear to need help recording their preferences.<sup>28</sup> However, the addition of party names and symbols did not provide that help, at least in the survey experiment. Once again we want to note that marking a sample ballot in one's household is not the same thing as casting a vote at a ballot booth. However it is consistent with findings from cross-national observational data that there is no relationship between visual cues on ballots and spoiled ballots (Reynolds & Steenbergen 2006). Nonetheless, additional evidence is needed before concluding that party cues do not facilitate turnout and ballot marking in actual elections.

**[Insert Table 2 about here]**

Hypothesis 2a is supported by the evidence; total votes for major party candidates are significantly greater in the conditions with party cues than in the conditions without party cues ( $p=0.04$  and  $p=0.07$ ). Additional analysis suggests that FDC and NRM may both benefit from party cues but the estimated effect is greater for FDC, which is expected given that FDC is the

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<sup>25</sup> We decided that it was extremely unlikely that a ballot would ever contain party symbols without party names, and thus, given limited resources, we did not include such a condition in our experiment. The relevant policy questions are whether to provide partisan or non-partisan ballots, and whether to include party symbols in addition party names on the ballot. The theoretical value of testing a condition that would never exist in the real world seems minimal. None of these treatment conditions include candidate pictures.

<sup>26</sup> 10.4% of the sample did not mark at least one of the sample ballot races. We do not know what prevented respondents from marking at least one ballot. For example, it could be due to lack of preference, inability to read the ballot, fear of revealing their vote, dissatisfaction or lack of understanding of the exercise (Uggla 2008). Excluding them from the analysis eases interpretation of the findings. However, the main findings in this paper are not affected by the inclusion or exclusion of this set of respondents.

<sup>27</sup> Results are also not significant if we drop respondents who failed to mark a single race and only examine variation in the number of races marked among respondents who marked at least one race.

<sup>28</sup> Of respondents who did not mark their sample ballots at all, 41.5% said they could not read the ballot and 19.2% said they could read a little with difficulty. This compares with 10.5% and 29.0% respectively for those who did mark at least one race.

most popular party in Soroti.<sup>29</sup> Hypothesis 2b is not supported by the evidence. Party cues have no significant effect on votes for minor parties. This null result may be due to the dearth of viable minor party candidates in the down-ballot races.<sup>30</sup> Given the low level of voting for minor party candidates, there was little room for loss of votes due to the inclusion of party symbols. Finally, Hypothesis 2c is consistent with the evidence. Independent candidates lost support when party symbols were included ( $p=0.00$  and  $p=0.02$ ).

The substantive size of the effects are similar in magnitude to those found in experimental studies of party cues conducted in established party systems, and considerably larger than other new party systems (Bullock 2011). Approximately one in ten respondents are estimated to vote differently in the presence of party cues. [Add in substantive significance as compared to actual vote differences in Ugandan elections] In sum, the evidence suggests that the inclusion of party cues on the ballot pulled respondents away from voting for independent candidates and towards voting for major party candidates. The strong partisan results of party cues are striking given the newness and instability of the party system in Uganda.

Hypothesis 3 is consistent with available evidence, though caution is warranted in drawing conclusions. With only four races, we cannot provide a systematic test of the race level characteristics. Nonetheless, the pattern of results is consistent with the argument that party cues are most influential in low-salience/low-information races. With respect to major party vote, the inclusion of party cues had no effect on the presidential race, but significant effects for four of the six comparisons in the other down-ballot races. In fact, the lack of any effect in the presidential race is quite striking. We used ANOVA to test the effect of party cues on the overall vote, and chi square tests to evaluate the effects of party cues on the vote for each presidential candidate individually, minor party candidates together, the independent candidate, and marked ballots. Regardless of what outcome measure we examine, there is no significant effect of party cues in the presidential race. Party cues did not help respondents locate their preferred presidential candidate nor did it affect their decision with regard to who to select. To the extent that respondents sometimes mistakenly vote for the wrong candidate, the results also indicate they are equally likely to make such mistakes with or without the help of party cues. While we posit that this null result is due to the high salience and greater information level surrounding the presidential election there is an alternative explanation that is consistent with the data. To the extent that party cues cause voters to abandon independents in favor of major party candidates, the null result in the presidential race could be due to a floor effect on the vote for independents (and a ceiling effect on the votes that could be captured by major parties). Samuel Lubega, the only independent candidate in the presidential race, polled only 0.6% of the vote in our sample. While both interpretations are possible we think that the argument based on salience is more plausible given that we also didn't see a drop in the vote for minor party candidates. While hardly conclusive, the evidence is suggestive that when information is available and outcomes are dear, cues in the voting booth do not sway voters.

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<sup>29</sup> 59.3% of respondents who marked the presidential ballot selected the FDC candidate for president, whereas 39.2% selected the NRM candidate.

<sup>30</sup> Only 3.2% of correct votes in the women MP race were for a minor party, 8.8% in the MP race, and 5.9% in the chairperson race.

Hypothesis 4 on straight ticket voting finds support in the data. Respondents in the party cue conditions were estimated to be 17% ( $p=0.01$ ) and 12% ( $p=0.04$ ) more likely to vote for the same party across all four races than respondents in the non-cue conditions. This represents about a 50% increase in straight ticket voting. We don't know whether respondents with party cues were more likely to vote straight-ticket because they were provided with information that enabled them to vote their party preferences, or whether they were primed to consider party as a key decision-making criterion (or both). Regardless of the mechanism, the results suggest that Ugandans prefer undivided government.

The test of hypothesis 5 lends additional support to this argument. Respondents who saw party cues were more than ten percent more likely to match the party of their presidential vote and their down-ballot votes for each race ( $p=0.02$  and  $p=0.10$ ). Given that party cues did not affect presidential votes, it seems that respondents with party information shifted their votes for less salient races (MP, women MP and chairperson) to match the party of their choice in the more salient presidential race. Even among those who split their ticket, there was a greater proclivity to match party vote to that of the president for some of the races when respondents were shown the party cues.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the results shown in Table 3 provide only weak support for hypothesis 6. There is some suggestive evidence that party symbols are more consequential than party names, but we do not have a great deal of confidence in this finding. In each case the difference of means for party symbol is greater than for party name, and only the difference for party symbol's effect on vote for independents rises to conventional levels of statistical significance (difference of means = -.30,  $p=0.03$ ). For the other main outcome where we expect significant results, *Major Parties*, the result for party symbol is only significant in a one-tailed test at the 90% confidence level. In contrast, none of the effects of party name come close to significance.<sup>32</sup> Additional research is needed to substantiate the claim that visual cues are more influential than verbal cues.

### **[Insert Table 3 about here]**

At a minimum, we can say that most respondents can correctly identify the symbols for major parties (91.9% for NRM's symbol and 89.9% for FDC's symbol), and sizeable numbers can identify the symbols of minor, but longstanding, parties (45.3% for DP's symbol and 75.8% for UPC's symbol).<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, symbols are informative even when words are not; of those who said they could not read the ballot, 81.0% were still able to identify the NRM symbol correctly

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<sup>31</sup> When the analysis is rerun dropping all respondents who voted straight-ticket, we get a difference of means of .18 ( $p=0.13$ ) for ballots without pictures and a difference of means of .14 ( $p=0.38$ ) for ballots with pictures. When ballots with and without pictures are analyzed together the estimated effect of party cues controlling for picture is statistically significant ( $p=0.05$ )

<sup>32</sup> In addition to the results presented here, preliminary analyses of *Straight Ticket* and *Party Matches President* as outcomes suggest that these results are very fragile. The relative importance of party name versus party symbols depends on how votes for independents and non-marked ballots are coded.

<sup>33</sup> These percentages of respondents who could properly identify the party when shown the symbols are based on respondents in conditions that were not shown party labels on the ballots. Recognition of other minor party symbols was low: 18.9% properly identified PPP's symbol, 20.9% properly identified UFA's symbol, 6.6% properly identified PDP's symbol.

and 75% the FDC symbol.<sup>34</sup> The weakness of the results may be due to the fact that different cues are consequential for different segments of the electorate. [Add analysis of moderating effect of individual level traits]

## Conclusion

The increased frequency with which elections are held in the developing world means that many millions of voters can now cast meaningful ballots. However, a large proportion of these citizens face a knowledge deficit at the polls due to deficits in formal education, political information, and electoral experience. In many countries, certain features of ballot design—primarily, the inclusion of party symbols and candidate images—are meant to help voters overcome these deficits and cast votes correctly. However, literature on heuristics and electoral decision-making suggests that the inclusion of such features on ballots might have unintended consequences: namely, they may themselves impact voter preferences, in the very moments before they cast their ballots, and therefore affect election outcomes.

In this paper, we focused on the effects of party identifiers—party names and symbols—on vote outcomes. Our preliminary findings suggest that there are, in fact, significant consequences of including party identifiers on ballots. Namely, we found that respondents who received ballots that contained party identifiers in our electoral area of focus in Uganda were more likely to: 1) vote for major parties—in this case, the NRM and FDC; 2) vote for party-affiliated candidates, rather than independents; 3) cast straight-ticket ballots; and 4) align, along partisan lines, their votes for down-ballot races (i.e., MPs and district chairs) with their votes for president. We find no evidence that party cues make ballot marking more likely, and party cues did not affect voting in the highly salient and visible presidential contest.

In many ways our other findings are consistent with other research on partisan cues in elections, much of which have been conducted in developed democracies. The inclusion of partisan identifiers on ballots tends to increase support for major parties (Katz *et al.* 2010; Schaffner *et al.* 2007) and reduce incidence of split-ticket voting (Calvo *et al.* 2009). The finding that partisan identifiers did not seem matter for the presidential vote, yet did for down-ballot races, appears to be consistent with others' findings that such cues are more consequential in low-information settings or amongst voters with lower levels of political sophistication or interest (Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Schaffner and Streb 2002; Katz, *et al.* 2011; Kam 2005). One possible interpretation of our findings is that respondents did not possess as much information about politicians contesting for member of Parliament, women member of Parliament, and district chairperson, while the presidential race was well-covered in the media and included combatants who had faced off in two previous elections. Thus, they relied heavily on partisan cues in these down-ballot races when such cues were available.<sup>35</sup> In addition, we found some evidence that visual cues (i.e. party symbols) seem to have a larger impact on vote choice than written ones

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<sup>34</sup> Larger numbers reported that they could not read the sample ballot (15.4%) or could only read a little with difficulty (28.6%) than those who failed to identify either of the two main party symbols (13.3%).

<sup>35</sup> Again we note our inability to draw firm conclusions from only 4 contests. The results should be seen as suggestive evidence rather than as a strong test of the hypothesis.

(i.e. party names), a finding that is consistent with arguments by Prior (ND) and others that those with lower education recognize pictures better than names.

While our findings are generally consistent with results from other experiments on party cues, they also contradict prevailing wisdom about the mechanisms generating effects. Party cues are thought to be consequential because they activate longstanding partisan identities or signal policy preferences of candidates. Party cues are thus expected to be less consequential in new and unstable party systems than in longstanding democracies (Brader & Tucker 2010). Citizens in new democracies were not socialized into party identities and the parties lack clear reputations based on policy positions or past performance. The fact that partisan identifiers significantly impacted vote outcomes is surprising in a country like Uganda, which has only allowed parties to campaign openly and affiliations to appear on ballots for five years. Even more striking is the fact that the largest effect we found was for the newest major party, the FDC, which was only founded in 2004, while the oldest parties—the DP and UPC—saw no significant benefit or loss from the inclusion of their identifiers. Although Uganda has the youngest party system of countries studied to date, we found stronger party cue effects than others recorded in Russia, Hungary, Poland, Mexico and Canada (Bullock 2011). In light of the prevailing wisdom about why and where party cues are consequential, the strong effects in Uganda are puzzling.

Why do party cues have such strong effects in Uganda? We hypothesize that party cues are consequential because they provide information about patronage networks rather than policy positions or leader performance in Uganda. Party cues do not cause voters to switch between parties, but rather to abandon independent candidates in favor of major party candidates. We expect that many voters in Uganda do not know or do not consider which candidates are running on the party ticket unless informed or primed; most independents were party candidates in the past and are popularly known as party stalwarts even if they were ousted from the party or did not win the nomination in the current election. The party cues caused voters to shift towards party candidates not because those candidates have different policies, but because the party labels signal which candidates are currently most connected to the party-based patronage systems. [Add suggestive evidence about mechanism] [Include evidence on independent candidates across Africa and discussion of generalizability of findings].

Is party-based voting—particularly in Africa—a beneficial outcome, as far as democratic consolidation, representation, and governance are concerned? The utility of partisan tags as heuristics lies in the information that they provide to voters about members' political preferences (Downs 1957), and reliance on partisan cues has been shown to significantly increase the probability of voting “correctly” (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). This argumentation applies particularly to developed democracies, where parties typically have well-established positions on salient issues and invest in strategies to minimize their elite members' likelihood of deviating significantly from these positions (Snyder and Ting 2002). Arceneaux (2007) argues that partisan cues can diminish democratic accountability when there is not congruence between party stereotypes and candidate positions. In Africa it is usually hard to differentiate parties by policy positions (van de Walle 2003, Conroy-Krutz and Lewis 2011). Rather, parties tend to convey more information about ethnic or regional biases and patronage access and distribution. Given the lack of congruence between parties and policy positions, partisan cues are unlikely to enhance policy, or even performance-based voting, and may harm it. By this logic, partisan cues

on ballots may diminish democratic accountability in Africa and in other polities where parties lack policy differentiation.

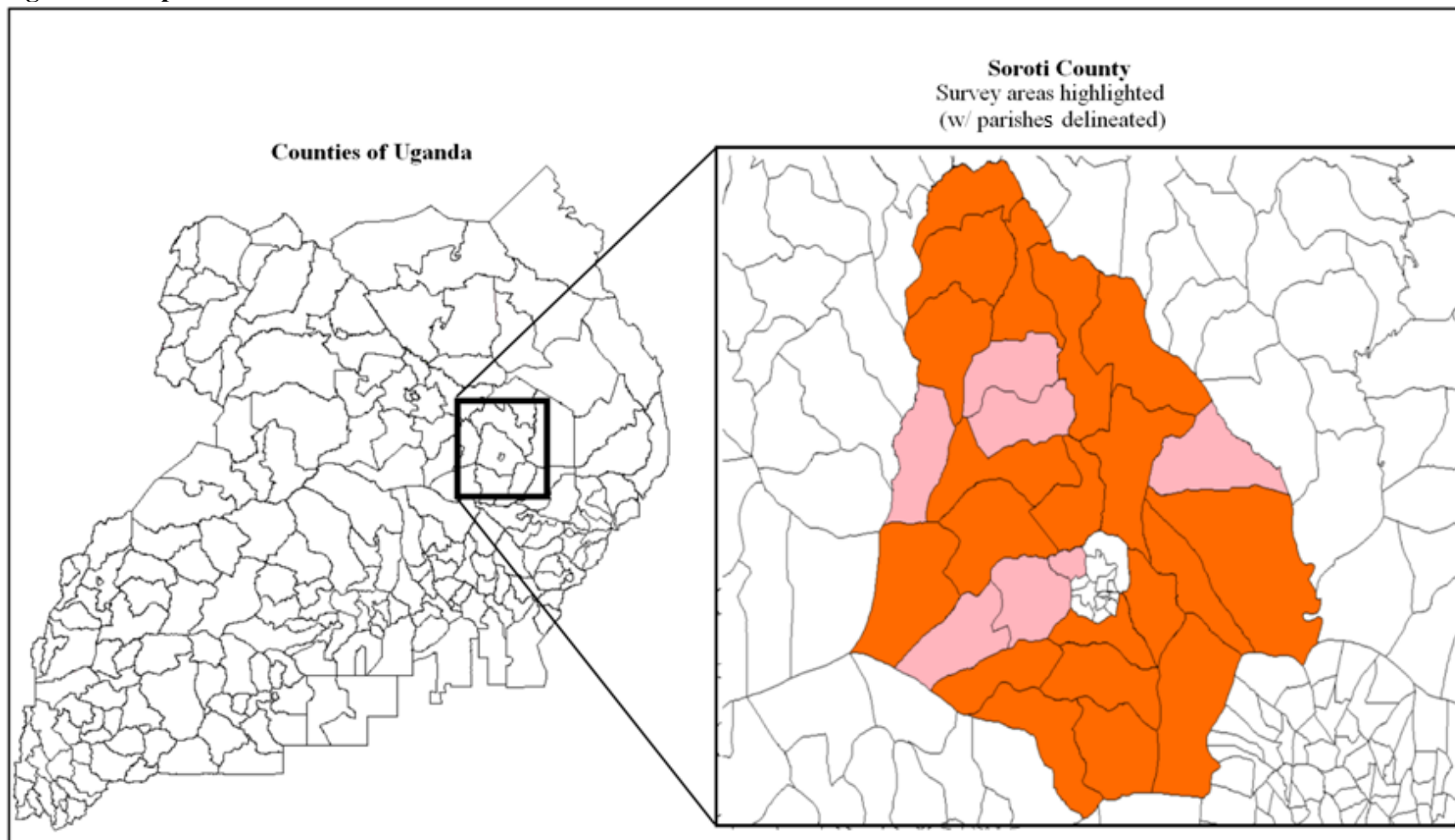
Another potential downside of straight-ticket voting, which we find is more likely when party cues are present, is that it makes divided government less likely. Divided government is extremely rare in Africa. Since 1990, 138 elections were held in polities with directly elected presidents, but “instances of true divided governments (where an opposition party captures a plurality or majority of seats in the legislature) have only occurred in only 13 (9.4% of) elections” (McKie 2011). The scarcity of divided government makes it hard for legislatures to develop institutional autonomy and to check power of president (Mozaffar, *et al.* 2008). Party symbols on ballots exacerbate this harmful tendency.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, there are reasons to expect that partisan cues might enhance democratic accountability in Africa, by fostering party institutionalization. In general, party institutionalization is low in Africa (Kuenzi & Lambright 2001). The inclusion of party cues increases the vote for major parties and decreased the vote for independents, an outcome that would seem to enhance party institutionalization. In Uganda, multi-party politics is new, and parties have a hard time exerting discipline on politicians. Those who fail to receive their party’s nomination often run as independents hoping to ‘rejoin’ the party once elected. In Soroti, this was the case with Samuel Anyolo, who was first elected to Parliament from Soroti County in 2001 as an avowed Movementist, and then ran (and lost) as an independent in 2006 and 2011 when the NRM spurned him. Party cues on the ballot make this party-defying option less feasible. One should also note that the main winner of partisan ballots in Soroti County was not the party of the current president (NRM), but the party of his main challenger (FDC). Party institutionalization through partisan ballots is therefore not necessarily pro-incumbent. Party cues could enhance democratic accountability but only if party institutionalization is accompanied by party differentiation.

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<sup>36</sup> Of course, having a legislature that supports the president—and thus prevents the inefficiency often associated with gridlock—might be a desired outcome in and of itself for many African voters. In this respect, African voters might not be “cognitive Madisonians” (Ladd 1990), like U.S. voters seem to be (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2004).

**Figure 1: Maps of research sites**



**Table 1: Treatment conditions by ballot features**

		party names		
		no	yes	yes
		party symbols		
		no	no	yes
pictures	no	1	2	3
	yes	4		5



**Table 2: Effects of both party cues when ballots do not and do include candidate pictures**

	<b>No-Pictures</b>	<b>Pictures</b>
<b>H1</b> Marked Ballot	0.24 p=0.42 n=223	-0.039 p=0.57 n=208
<b>H2</b> Major Parties	0.29 p=0.04 n=200	0.32 p=0.07 n=188
Minor Parties	0.03 p=0.53 n=200	-0.06 p=0.34 n=188
Independents	-0.31 p=0.00 n=200	-0.32 p=0.02 n=188
<b>H3</b> Major Parties for President	-0.04 p=0.23 n=199	0.00 p=0.97 n=186
Major Parties for Women MP	0.17 p=0.02 n=194	0.07 p=0.31 n=186
Major Parties for MP	0.11 p=0.07 n=196	0.16 p=0.02 n=183
Major Parties for Chairperson	-0.01 p=0.93 n=192	0.14 p=0.03 n=178
<b>H4</b> Straight-Ticket	0.17 p=0.01 n=192	0.12 p=0.04 n=181
<b>H5</b> Party Matches President	0.44 p=0.02 n=191	0.32 p=0.10 n=179

Notes: Cell entries are the effect of the party cues (i.e. Treatment 3 means or proportions minus Treatment 1 means or proportions for no pictures and Treatment 5 means or proportions minus Treatment 4 means or proportions for pictures). P-values are for two-tailed chi2 tests.

**Table 3: Effects of party names and party symbols separately**

Variable	Party Names	Party Symbols
<b>H6</b> Major Parties	0.09 p=0.84 n=195	0.30 p=0.20 n=173
Minor Parties	0.07 p=0.71 n=195	0.12 p=0.50 n=173
Independents	-0.12 p=0.38 n=195	-0.30 p=0.03 n=173

Notes: Cell entries are the effect of the inclusion of party names (i.e. Treatment 2 means minus Treatment 1 means) and party symbols (Treatment 3 means minus Treatment 2 means). P-values are for two-tailed chi-square tests

### Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Marked Ballot	3.53	1.22	0	4
Major Parties	1.80	1.10	0	3
Minor Parties	0.16	0.42	0	3
Independents	0.66	0.79	0	3
Major Parties for President	0.91	0.29	0	1
Major Parties for Women MP	0.60	0.49	0	1
Major Parties for MP	0.72	0.45	0	1
Major Parties for Chairperson	0.74	0.44	0	1
Straight-Ticket	0.26	0.44	0	1
Party Matches President	1.63	1.05	0	3









## Appendix B: Experimental and Official Ballots, for Presidential Race

<b>Kizza Besigye</b>	
<b>Abed Bwanika</b>	
<b>Beti Olive Kamya</b>	
<b>Samuel Lubega</b>	
<b>Norbert Mao</b>	
<b>Yoweri K. Museveni</b>	
<b>Olara Otunnu</b>	
<b>Jaberi Bidandi Ssali</b>	









**SAMPLE BALLOT 1**

<b>Kizza Besigye</b>	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)	
<b>Abed Bwanika</b>	People's Development Party (PDP)	
<b>Beti Olive Kamya</b>	Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA)	
<b>Samuel Lubega</b>	Independent	
<b>Norbert Mao</b>	Democratic Party (DP)	
<b>Yoweri K. Museveni</b>	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	
<b>Olara Otunnu</b>	Uganda People's Congress (UPC)	
<b>Jaberi Bidandi Ssali</b>	People's Progressive Party (PPP)	

















**SAMPLE BALLOT 2**

<b>Kizza Besigye</b>	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)		
<b>Abed Bwanika</b>	People's Development Party (PDP)		
<b>Beti Olive Kamya</b>	Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA)		
<b>Samuel Lubega</b>	Independent		
<b>Norbert Mao</b>	Democratic Party (DP)		
<b>Yoweri K. Museveni</b>	National Resistance Movement (NRM)		
<b>Olara Otunnu</b>	Uganda People's Congress (UPC)		
<b>Jaberi Bidandi Ssali</b>	People's Progressive Party (PPP)		

**SAMPLE BALLOT 3**

<b>Kizza Besigye</b>		
<b>Abed Bwanika</b>		
<b>Beti Olive Kamya</b>		
<b>Samuel Lubega</b>		
<b>Norbert Mao</b>		
<b>Yoweri K. Museveni</b>		
<b>Olara Otunnu</b>		
<b>Jaberi Bidandi Ssali</b>		

**SAMPLE BALLOT 4**

<b>Kizza Besigye</b>	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)			
<b>Abed Bwanika</b>	People's Development Party (PDP)			
<b>Beti Olive Kamya</b>	Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA)			
<b>Samuel Lubega</b>	Independent			
<b>Norbert Mao</b>	Democratic Party (DP)			
<b>Yoweri K. Museveni</b>	National Resistance Movement (NRM)			
<b>Olara Otunnu</b>	Uganda People's Congress (UPC)			
<b>Jaberi Bidandi Ssali</b>	People's Progressive Party (PPP)			

**SAMPLE BALLOT 5**



## **Appendix C: Additional Research Project Hypotheses for Future Work**

1. All cues help citizens to mark ballots autonomously
  - a. Conditions with cues are positively related to contests properly marked on ballot
  - b. Conditions with cues are positively related to match between marked vote choice and stated vote choice
2. Candidate pictures cause citizens to vote for attractive candidates
  - a. Conditions with candidate pictures are positively related to attractiveness (as rated by the coding survey) of vote choice
3. Pictures alter perceive quality of candidates
  - a. Supporting evidence: Respondent ratings of quality are different for treatments with pictures than those without
4. Candidate pictures cause citizens to vote for perceive quality candidates (by priming individual traits)
  - a. Conditions with candidate pictures are positively related to quality (as rated by the coding survey) of vote choice
5. Candidate pictures provide information about ethnicity
  - a. Conditions with candidate pictures are related to perceived ethnicity
  - b. Conditions with candidate pictures are positively related to respondent confidence in ethnic assessment
  - c. Test for accurate information: Conditions with pictures are positively related to correct identification of candidate ethnicity
6. Party cues provide information about ethnicity
  - a. Conditions with party cues are related to perceived ethnicity
  - b. Conditions with party cues are positively related to respondent confidence in ethnic rating
  - c. Test for accurate information: perceived ethnicity is closer to actual ethnicity of candidates for treatments with party cues than those without party cues
7. Candidate pictures cause citizens to vote for ethnically similar candidates
  - a. Actual: Conditions with candidate pictures are positively related to voting for actual ethnic kin (based on candidates actual ethnicity)
  - b. Perceive: Conditions with candidate pictures are positively related to voting for perceived ethnic kin
8. Party cues cause citizens to vote for ethnically sympathetic parties (information effect and/or priming individual characteristics)
  - a. Perceive: Conditions with party cues are positively related to voting for party that is perceived to favor one's own ethnic group
9. Effects are conditional on individual level traits
  - a. Education level
  - b. Gender
  - c. Political knowledge
  - d. Campaign exposure
  - e. Ethnicity
  - f. Party identification

## **Appendix D: Ethnic Voting Outcomes and Case Selection**

This paper focuses on how party cues affect partisan voting. In future work we plan to look at the effect of candidate pictures and party cues on ethnic voting. As such, the nature of politicized ethnicity played a large role in our selection of Soroti County, Uganda for our case. This appendix provides the rationale for selecting the country and the county.

### **Uganda and Ethnic Voting**

Regardless of the metric used (Posner 2004: 856), Uganda ranks as one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and, indeed, in the world. The largest group—the Baganda, who are the dominant group in the politically and economically important Central Region of the country, around Kampala—comprised only 16.9% of the population, according to the 2002 Census. Other major groups include President Museveni's Banyankole (9.5%), Basoga (8.4%), Bakiga (6.9%), Iteso (6.4%), and Langi (6.1%).<sup>37</sup> Parties in Uganda have, since independence, been structured along regional, ethnic, and religious schisms. Two of the earliest parties, the UPC and DP, eventually became associated with Northerners (i.e., Acholi and Langi) and Catholic Baganda, respectively. Ethnic schisms were exacerbated by events such as the abolition of traditional kingdoms in 1966, Idi Amin's violent purges against Acholi and Langi soldiers in the 1970s, and President Milton Obote's brutal counter-insurgency campaign against the primarily Baganda population in the Luweero Triangle in the 1980s.

The Movement system was, at least ostensibly, an attempt to de-ethnicize Ugandan politics (Museveni 1997), and in many respects Museveni and his NRM were successful in rebuilding the Ugandan state after decades of instability (Rubongoya 2007; Gilley 2009). However, while the Movement maintains a multiethnic base, anchored by strong electoral support from Western groups like Banyankole and Central groups like Baganda, opposition parties have had more limited ethnic bases of support, and these tendencies only increased following the 2006 elections (Cheeseman and Ford 2007). At least prior to the 2011 elections, which involved a potential realignment of support amongst some Northern groups toward the NRM, the FDC drew the bulk of its support from Acholi, Langi, Iteso and other Northern groups, while the UPC and DP remain largely Langi and Baganda parties, respectively.

It is, however, important to note that, at least at the presidential level, Ugandans have exhibited a strong willingness to cross ethnic lines during elections (see Tripp 2011: 54-6). After all, the two leading candidates in the last three presidential elections—Museveni and the FDC's Kizza Besigye—are both Banyankole. Together, these two men have won between 94 and 97% of the vote since 2001, despite the fact that their group comprises less than 10% of the total population.

This reality—salience of ethnicity in political competition, but demonstrated willingness to cross ethnic lines in voting—made Uganda an ideal location for the experiment. Selection of a case at either extremity—one in which ethnicity is politically unimportant and one in which inter-ethnic schisms are so deep as to prevent any cross-ethnic voting—would likely lead to Type II errors in our attempts to draw generalizable lessons about ballot design and ethnic voting. If ethnicity is

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<sup>37</sup> No other group claimed more than 5.0% of the population; nearly half (45.8%) of Ugandans are affiliated with one of these smaller groups.



not an important consideration at all in voting, then elements of ballot design that contain ethnic cues (e.g., names, candidate faces) should have no effect on likelihood of supporting a co-ethnic versus a non co-ethnic. On the other hand, if ethnicity is an overwhelming consideration, then no element of ballot design is likely to be able to induce cross-ethnic voting. Since most African electoral competitions fall somewhere between these two extremes—ethnicity being an important, but not completely overriding consideration (see, for example, Posner and Simon 2002; Cheeseman and Ford 2007; Bratton, *et al.* 2011)—conducting the experiment in an area that falls close to either would be inadvisable.

### **Soroti County and Ethnic Voting**

Since several of our hypotheses focus on the possible effects of ballot design on ethnic voting, we sought a location in which ethnicity would be a salient feature of electoral competition (i.e., one in which an ethnically diverse candidate pool was competing in an ethnically heterogeneous constituency). This first required a population that was significantly ethnically heterogeneous. Despite Uganda's ethnic heterogeneity, most groups tend to be quite geographically concentrated, and parliamentary constituencies are typically not very diverse. Of the 238 constituencies, a majority are either extremely (i.e., one group comprises at least 90% of the population, in 69 cases, or 29.0% of constituencies) or largely homogenous (i.e., one group comprises between 75% and 90% of the population, in 59, or 24.8% of constituencies). 68 constituencies (28.6%) had a majority, but not dominant ethnic group, while only 42 (17.6%) had no dominant group.<sup>38</sup>

Given these demographics, the number of electoral contests involving candidates from more than one ethnic group was somewhat limited. Since the research was being conducted in the run-up to the 2011 general elections, we considered electoral contests for directly elected members of Parliament, district women members of Parliament, and district chairpersons.<sup>39</sup> In those municipalities that fell within our universe of logistically feasible cases, we also considered mayoral contests.<sup>40</sup>

Given these parameters, we selected Soroti County, in Soroti District. Soroti County was one of the limited electoral areas within our selected districts in which there would be cross-ethnic electoral competition over at least one (non-presidential) office. Soroti County is dominated by two ethnic groups: the Iteso (69.1%, according to the 2002 Census) and the Kumam (29.1%). In recent years, the Iteso-Kumam division in this region of Uganda has been politically salient. In the last presidential election before we conducted our experiment, in 2006, Besigye of the FDC won at every polling station in the County, but he did best in the more heavily Kumam areas, and there is a significant, positive correlation between Besigye share at a polling station and Kumam share ( $r=.371$ ,  $p=.00$ ,  $N=101$  stations).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> All figures derived utilizing 2002 Population Census figures, adjusted to post-2010 constituency boundaries.

<sup>39</sup> All Ugandan districts elect one woman to serve in the national Parliament, while all districts are run by a directly elected chairperson.

<sup>40</sup> Parliamentary elections were scheduled concurrently with presidential elections, on 18 February, while district elections were held 23 February, and mayoral elections 2 March.

<sup>41</sup> Ethnic measures are only available at the parish level; Soroti parishes in 2006 had between two and six polling stations apiece.

In the parliamentary election of that year, the leading Kumam candidate in the race—Peter Omolo, of the FDC—ran strongest in Kumam areas, and there is a positive, significant relationship between Kumam share and Omolo’s share in that election ( $r=.609$ ,  $p=.00$ ). However, Omolo’s victory also suggests that some significant portion of Iteso voters were willing to support a Kumam candidate. After all, Kumams represent less than one third of the population of the constituency, yet Kumam candidates managed to win 72% of the vote in 2006.<sup>42</sup> Finally, in order to measure more precisely rates of ethnic voting in Soroti County’s recent past, we utilize King’s (1997) ecological inference (EI) method to generate point estimates of the share of Kumams and Iteso voting for each candidate at each polling station in Soroti in 2006.<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly, candidates tended to perform better with members of their own ethnic groups.<sup>44</sup> The estimated mean share of Kumams voting for one of the two Kumam candidates was .88 (SD=.006), while the candidates’ estimated mean share among Iteso was only .65 (SD=.002).<sup>45</sup> The estimated mean shares for the two Iteso candidates<sup>46</sup> were .33 (SD=.002) among co-ethnics and .09 (SD=.005) among non co-ethnics. In short, these histories suggest that, while ethnicity appears to have some political salience in Soroti County, schisms between Kumam and Iteso residents are not so stark as to prevent cross-ethnic voting.

In 2011, we identified two inter-ethnic races in Soroti County. First, Kumam and Iteso candidates were again competing for the MP position. Three of the four candidates from 2006 were running again—Ateker Ejalu, a Kumam, of the NRM had died in 2008—and there were four additional candidates in the race. The Kumam candidates included Omolo, Vincent I. Enomu of the NRM, and independent Simon Peter Ebitu, while the Iteso candidates included Engirot Lawrence Okae of the UPC, Raphael Okoropot of the DP, Jimmy Oriokot of the PPP, and independents Samuel Anyolo, John Lule, and William Opit.

In addition to the MP race, we also examined the impact of ballot design on three other races in the county: president, women MP for Soroti District, and Soroti District chairperson. There were no Kumam or Iteso candidates for president,<sup>47</sup> while all candidates for district women MP were Iteso.<sup>48</sup> For district chairperson, five of the candidates were Iteso, while a sixth—George Michael Egunyu, of the NRM—was Kumam.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Omolo won 62%, while the other Kumam candidate—Ateker Ejalu, of the NRM—won 10%.

<sup>43</sup> Since there are not reliable estimates of turnout at each polling station, the analysis assumes that there were not significant differences across ethnic groups in turnout rates in Soroti.

<sup>44</sup> The exception was Ateker, whose estimated mean share was higher among Iteso (.12, SD=.001) than amongst fellow Kumams (.05, SD=.003). This was likely due to the fact that Kumam support is particularly strong for the FDC, and Ateker was a NRM candidate.

<sup>45</sup> These means are weighted by the number of votes cast per polling station.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Anyolo, an independent, and Engirot Lawrence Okae, of the UPC.

<sup>47</sup> Presidential candidates included Museveni, Besigye, Norbert Mao of the DP, Olara Otunnu of the UPC, Abed Bwanika of the PDP, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali of the PPP, Beti Kanya of the UFA, and Lubega.

<sup>48</sup> Candidates included Grace Abuin of the UPC, Julian Fede Iseet of the NRM, Angelline Osegge of the FDC (the incumbent), and independents Elizabeth Adecho, Rachel Frances Adyango, Leah Jesca Amigo, Joyce Ijala, and Ruth Ikuna.

<sup>49</sup> Iteso included Daniel Ediau of the FDC, Napoleon Martina Oliba of the UPC, and independents Leonard Otekat Ekapu, George William Okwaput, and Jorem Obicho Opian.

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