

VOTING FOR THE DEVIL YOU KNOW:
UNDERSTANDING ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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August 2017

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Cornell University 2017

In countries where elections are not free or fair, and one political party consistently dominates elections, why do citizens bother to vote? If voting cannot substantively affect the balance of power, why do millions of citizens continue to vote in these elections? Until now, most answers to this question have used macro-level spending and demographic data to argue that people vote because they expect a material reward, such as patronage or a direct transfer via vote-buying. This dissertation argues, however, that autocratic regimes have social and political cleavages that give rise to variation in partisanship, which in turn create different non-economic motivations for voting behavior. Citizens with higher levels of socioeconomic status have the resources to engage more actively in politics, and are thus more likely to associate with political parties, while citizens with lower levels of socioeconomic status are more likely to be nonpartisans. Partisans, however, are further split by their political proclivities; those that support the regime are more likely to be ruling party partisans, while partisans who mistrust the regime are more likely to support opposition parties. In turn, these three groups of citizens have different expressive and social reasons for voting. This dissertation argues that ruling party partisans vote out of a sense of civic duty, opposition parties vote to improve democracy, and nonpartisans vote when they are mobilized by their communities during elections. Overall, the dissertation shows that in Cameroon, expressive and social reasons are more important to explaining the voting act than economic motivations.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Natalie Wenzell Letsa received her B.A. in political science from Reed College in Portland, Oregon in 2009. She earned her Ph.D. in Government from Cornell in 2017. She will be a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law in the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University. She will also be joining the faculty of the Department of International and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma as the Wick Cary Assistant Professor of Political Economy.

For Kwame

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was motivated by the desire to give voice to people who are not usually heard. With this in mind, I start by thanking the thousands of ordinary Cameroonians who took the time to talk to the random American who showed up on their doorstep. This project would not have been possible without them, and the depth of my gratitude is impossible to express. Every single one of my 576 interviewees taught me something new, and the first major lesson of my Cameroonian education was the torturous journey of navigating my complex role as a privileged stranger. Being an American both opened and closed doors for me, which was a deeply humbling experience. One of my first surveys in Yaoundé was with an old man who was so excited to be interviewed by *une blanche* that we took an extra 20 minutes to review his corkboard of political memorabilia, which prominently featured a photograph of Chantal Biya with Michelle Obama. In Bafoussam, door after door was closed in my face and I could hardly find a willing participant, while in Bamenda I had people lining up for the privilege of an interview. I remember the young woman—barely old enough to do the survey—who outright refused to be interviewed by a French woman. But once I pulled out my American accent and passport, she was delighted to oblige. In Mvila in the South, my assistants and I had the police called on us on three separate occasions. In the tiny village of Baforchu in Santa, I shared a long and enlightening political conversation with a random circle of elders over palm wine and donuts. In an equally tiny village, Bot Makak in Nyong et Kellé district, a *fou* chased me around the village screaming at the top of his lungs that I had arrived in order to begin the killing of the “black babies.” Whether being welcomed with open arms or being run out of town, each of these experiences cut through my pride and exposed my privilege, for which I am grateful.

The other chief lesson from my time in Cameroon was discovering the incredible diversity of human thought and experience. It was not uncommon to spend 30 minutes listening to a passionate anti-regime tirade, only to walk next door in order to hear an equally genuine and impassioned defense of the president and his regime. In

the middle of Bamenda, a man explained to me how he was incredibly proud to vote in elections, but that in each election he would randomly choose who to vote for because, according to his opaque political philosophy, “the SDF could not exist without the RDPC, and the RDPC could not exist without the SDF.” Go figure.

The joy of this dissertation was collecting these diverse opinions and experiences; the challenge was making sense of them. For the second part, I cannot thank enough the members of my dissertation committee, who have been an immense source of support for my work from the start. Nicolas van de Walle was on board with my vision for this project from very early on, and his encouragement provided me the confidence to move forward during several moments of paralysis. Nic’s door was never closed, and it was through our meandering conversations that I learned almost everything that I know about Africanist political science. Valerie Bunce provided invaluable feedback at every step of the process. This dissertation is framed within the authoritarianism literature because of her, and her vast knowledge of autocratic politics kept me accountable from prospectus through fieldwork to defense. Adam Levine inspired my love for public opinion, and for his methodological guidance, the empirics of this dissertation were made possible. Before leaving for Cameroon, it never really occurred to me that single-handedly implementing a 2,400 respondent survey in a country I had never been to before was overly ambitious. I attribute this sense of limitless possibility to Adam. I would also like to thank Tom Pepinsky, who has offered his advice and feedback at multiple stages of the dissertation process, as well as Peter Enns, who read early drafts of my dissertation work for both third year colloquium as well as dissertation colloquium. Thanks also to Jeremy Wallace, who offered excellent feedback as my outside reader. Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank Tina Slater for her indefatigable administrative assistance over the past six years.

Miguel Bityeki, Brenda Masanga, Evelyn Ngu, and Shella Ayula (and Kwame Letsa!) implemented the survey across Cameroon. Miguel put everything into perspective for me; he made sense of my experiences that made no sense. In many ways, he gave me the foundations for how I now understand Cameroonian politics.

Brenda is the hardest worker I know, and her tireless work ethic put me to shame. Together, Miguel and Brenda made my time in Cameroon what it was—I'm not sure I have ever laughed harder than those evenings on the side of the road in Boumnyebel. Evelyn was my hustler, and she made all things possible. We worked alone together to complete most of the survey, and our voyages throughout the Northwest, Southwest, West, and East built between us a camaraderie rarely felt in life. The empirics in this dissertation would have been impossible without these incredible people.

Also from Cameroon, I would like to thank my fixer, Patrice Bigombe, whose incredible generosity of time and contacts opened doors for me throughout the country. Thank you to Professor Yves Paul Mandjem, who personally drove me around Yaoundé for two days so I could get access to people and resources at MINADT and ELECAM. I thank Professor Luc Sindjoun, whose blessing to do research in Cameroon quite literally made my fieldwork possible (and saved me from a few pickles with the authorities). Thanks to Aristide Onambele at ELECAM, who illuminated many dark corners of Cameroonian politics for me, and also offered an excellent drinking spot for several important milestones during my time in Cameroon. And a final thanks to my photocopier at Ngoa-Ekele. I have forgotten his name, but he was a shining light in a sea of darkness; a moment of sheer, uncontested competency and brilliance when all else seemed to be failing. For all of these people, I did not and do not understand why you were so generous to me, but I promise to pay the favor forward.

I would also like to thank many friends for their support along the way. In Cameroon, Amethyst Gillis, Christelle Blanc, Jake Moore, Katherine Kalaris, Raman Chettiar (and the photocopy machine at the British High Commission!), Sarah Cook Runcie, Connor O'Steen, Aunty Edith, and Thierry Nga. In the US, my cohort at Cornell has offered endless support and laughter over the past six years, especially David Cortez (my BCF) and Mariano Sanchez Talanquer, as well as Lin Fu, Sarah Maxey, Thibaud Marcesse, Seb Dettman, and Lauren Honig. Martha Wilfahrt managed to restore my sanity on multiple occasions, and always gives me new ideas and perspectives. I am forever grateful to Michael Allen, Rebecca Valli, David De

Micheli, and Whitney Taylor for adopting me as their own. I also thank my mom, Nanette Piper, and sister, Ann Wenzell, for their love, kindness, and generosity during this process.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my incredible husband, Kwame. He has supported me at every step of the way. He came with me to Oakland, Ithaca, Yaoundé, Bamenda, Oklahoma and back again without complaint, but instead with excitement and encouragement. When I doubted, he was sure; when I waivered he was steadfast. No one understands me or believes in me more than Kwame, and I am eternally grateful for his love and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In countries where elections are not free or fair, and one political party consistently dominates politics, why do citizens bother to vote? If voting cannot substantively affect the balance of power, why do millions of citizens continue to turn out in these elections? In Algeria's 2014 presidential elections, where President Bouteflika won his fourth term in office, a reported 11.3 million citizens voted, representing 49.4 percent of all registered voters.¹ In Belarus, 6.1 million citizens went to the polls in 2015 to re-elect longstanding dictator Alexander Lukashenko to his fifth term in office.² And in Cameroon, one of the most stable electoral autocracies in sub-Saharan Africa, 4.2 million voters turned out in the most recent 2013 parliamentary and municipal elections, and 4.9 million voted in the 2011 presidential elections.³ Why do these citizens choose to vote when it is clear that elections will not bring change?

In Cameroon, one can easily find the expected frustration and apathy one would expect in a long-standing electoral autocracy. Across the country, many citizens have withdrawn from a political system that they feel does not change through elections. Seventy percent of Cameroonians believe that if an election were held tomorrow, the ruling party, the *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais*

¹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Voter Turnout Database; <http://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

(RDPC), would “definitely win a clear majority” of seats in the National Assembly.⁴ Citizens from all different backgrounds profess their frustration with this status quo. When asked if she voted in the 2011 Presidential elections, a woman in the rural opposition heartland of Boyo in the Northwest, who is otherwise sympathetic to the opposition,⁵ claimed that, “I didn’t vote because my vote would not make a difference.”⁶ A young man from Kribi, a small beach town long-dominated by the ruling party, stated “I didn’t vote because I don’t believe in the system.”⁷ A woman from the Northwest city of Bamenda, headquarters of the largest opposition party, reported negative feelings about all aspects of the political system: “There is no need to vote because the outcome is already known beforehand. It’s a waste of time.”⁸ Given the current state of affairs, it is not surprising that many Cameroonians feel alienated from the political system.

And yet millions of citizens choose to vote in elections. Amongst the pessimism and disillusionment, there are clear voices of hopefulness and inclusion. Many Cameroonians feel strongly that voting is a civic duty, and, regardless of their political views, are proud to cast their ballot. A 32 year-old Bamoun man in Foumban in the West Region proclaimed that, despite his very strong reservations about the

⁴ Author’s survey: 70.4 percent say the RDPC would definitely win a majority; 7.4 said they probably would win a majority; 2.9 said it would be fifty-fifty; 2.4 said they probably wouldn’t win a majority; 5.6 said they would definitely not win a majority of seats. 11.2 percent said they didn’t know.

⁵ She reported that her feelings toward the RDPC were “very negative,” while her feelings toward the opposition SDF were “somewhat positive.”

⁶ Respondent Number 1168. Interviewed on January 25, 2015 in Fundong, Boyo by Brenda Masanga.

⁷ Respondent Number 761. Interviewed on November 25, 2014 in Kribi, Océan by Brenda Masanga.

⁸ Respondent Number 1024. Interviewed January 23, 2015 in Bamenda II, Mezam by Brenda Masanga.

political system,”⁹ “I vote only because it’s obligatory as a citizen. It’s my duty. I am not a citizen if I don’t vote.”¹⁰ Others are generally satisfied with the political system, and vote to support the status quo. A 45 year-old woman in the West put it succinctly: “We eat, we sleep, there’s no war. I vote RDPC.”¹¹ For others, despite issues at the national level, they are satisfied with local politics. An older woman in an isolated village in the East Region confided about her vote choice: “Our mayor started to do good things for our community. She planted trees and added a water pump. It’s the people that matter, not the party.”¹² Others vote less out of a sense of duty or support for the status quo, but instead because they feel that voting can bring change to the system. As one 50 year-old opposition militant in Belo district expressed: “Even if elections are not fair, it’s still good to vote because we can participate to expose the irregularity that happens. But if we just stay at home it means everything is just fine.”¹³ Clearly, Cameroonians possess a diverse set of political opinions, and perhaps surprisingly, a large number of them express genuine reasons for participating in elections, even if they know the elections will not result in short-term political change.

Why Do People Vote in Autocratic Elections?

How can one make sense of these diverse and oftentimes conflicting points of view? Why do different people choose to participate in autocratic elections, while

⁹ On a scale from zero to ten, the respondent reported that the level of democracy in Cameroon today is a ‘zero.’ In addition, his feelings toward the RDPC are “very negative” and his feelings toward the opposition SDF are “somewhat negative.”

¹⁰ Respondent Number 2212. Interviewed March 23, 2015 in Foumbon, Noun by the author.

¹¹ Respondent Number 2164. Interviewed March 22, 2015 in Foumbot, Noun by the author

¹² Respondent Number 2399. Interviewed April 25, 2015 in Angossas, Haut Nyong by the author

¹³ Respondent Number 1275. Interviewed February 1, 2015 in Belo, Boyo by Evelyn Ngu.

others do not? From the citizen's point of view, the existing literature on autocratic elections focuses almost exclusively on the importance of material inducements to voting, and therefore argues that citizens most susceptible to clientelistic relationships will be more likely to vote (Blaydes 2011; Magaloni 2006; Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015). Discussing elections in Jordan, Lust-Okar (2006) perfectly sums up the existing approach to political behavior in electoral autocracies:

That elections are primarily an area of patronage distribution has a significant impact on voting behavior. Most obviously, voters tend to cast their ballots for candidates whom they think will afford them *wasta* [patronage], and not for reasons of ideology or policy preferences. They are also more likely to turn out to the polls when they believe that their candidates are close enough to the government to deliver state resources (460).

Making almost identical assumptions, Shehata (2008) writes that, "In Egypt, as elsewhere in the Arab world, people do not vote primarily on the basis of party affiliation, electoral program, or ideology, but rather on the provision of services, including individual services provided to district residents" (95). While this assumption is the cornerstone of our understanding of political behavior in electoral autocracies, in fact, it has hardly been tested empirically, particularly from an individual-level perspective. Very few studies have actually asked citizens in these types of regimes why they choose to vote in elections.

While vote-buying and patronage are clearly important factors to understanding voting behavior in autocratic contexts, the central argument of this dissertation is that it is unlikely that these forms of inducements are the only, or even the most important, motivation for voting in autocratic elections. It is impossible for

any state to provide special gifts and services to the majority of its citizens during every election cycle. Further, when most communities lack basic infrastructure, such as piped water or electricity, after decades of multiparty elections, it seems unlikely that the majority of people vote because they think that high turnout will result in local investments.

This is particularly true of economically under-developed autocratic regimes, where the reach of the state is notoriously weak. Arguably, one of the reasons that the literature has focused so substantially on economic incentives for voting is the heavy concentration of these studies in regions of the world that feature middle income autocracies, which are better positioned to promise and deliver these economic incentives to constituents. The literature on electoral autocracies has relied primarily on the cases of Mexico and Egypt (Blaydes 2011; Greene 2007; Magaloni 2006), and to a lesser extent Russia and Jordan (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Lust 2009; Lust-Okar 2006, 2008); countries where the state is relatively strong and capable of running large-scale vote-buying campaigns and programs of electoral patronage. This is a critical point because the majority of electoral autocracies in the world are in much poorer countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 1 presents a global list of contemporary electoral autocracies. For each case, the table lists a number of development indicators taken from the World Bank (2017): GDP per capita, health expenditure per capita, and percent of the population with access to electricity and an improved water source. Cases from sub-Saharan

Africa are highlighted, and the averages of sub-Saharan African cases and non-sub-Saharan African¹⁴ cases are listed at the bottom of the table.

Table 1: Cases of Electoral Autocracy and Contemporary Levels of Development

Country	GDP per capita (PPP, Constant 2011 Dollars)	Health Expenditure per capita (PPP, Constant 2011 Dollars)	Access to Electricity (% Pop.)	Access to Improved Water Source (% Pop)
Algeria	13,823	932	100	84
Angola	6,938	239	37	49
Azerbaijan	16,699	1,047	100	87
Belarus	16,662	1,031	100	100
Burundi	683	58	67	76
Cameroon	2,926	122	54	76
Chad	2,044	79	6	51
D.R. Congo	737	32	16	52
Ethiopia	1,530	73	27	57
Jordan	10,240	798	100	97
Kazakhstan	23,522	1,068	100	93
Malaysia	25,312	1,040	100	98
Mozambique	1,120	79	20	51
Rep. Congo	5,993	323	42	77
Russia	23,895	1,836	100	97
Rwanda	1,655	125	18	76
Singapore	80,192	4,047	100	100
Sudan	4,121	282	33	56
Tajikistan	2,661	185	100	74
Tanzania	2,510	137	15	56
Togo	1,372	76	32	63
Uganda	1,738	133	18	79
Zimbabwe	1,678	115	41	77
Average for SSA countries	2,503	134	30	64
Average for non-SSA countries*	16,602	992	100	91

All data from the World Bank Development Indicators Database

*Excluding Singapore

¹⁴ Excluding Singapore, which is a clear development outlier for autocracy.

The first thing to note is that of all the contemporary cases of electoral autocracy, African countries represent a majority. Of the 23 cases listed in Table 1, fourteen countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. However, despite the fact that most electoral autocracies are found in Africa, few of our studies of authoritarianism come from the region. Indeed, the two most foundational cases for our knowledge of electoral autocracy—Mexico and Egypt—are no longer electoral autocracies at all.

If electoral autocracy is a unique category of regime type, then does it matter where in particular our theories of autocracy are developed? In principle, given the similar institutional foundations of the regimes in these countries, the study of any one of these cases can shed light on the politics of the others. While, arguably, all cases of autocracy can help us to understand politics in other autocracies, it is clear from the data in Table 1 that African electoral autocracies are fundamentally different economically from electoral autocracies in other regions of the world. On average, even excluding Singapore, the GDP per capita of non-African electoral autocracies is 6.6 times higher than the average electoral autocracy in sub-Saharan Africa.

This huge gap in develop would not necessarily matter, except that our existing theories rely heavily on economic explanations for political behavior. In nearly every study of political participation in electoral autocracies, almost all of which are based on studies of middle-income countries, the baseline assumption is that the state provides economic incentives to its people in order to maintain power (Blaydes 2011; Brownlee 2007; Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014; Gandhi 2008; Greene 2007; Magaloni 2006; Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015; Svobik 2012). But this assumption is

problematic if the state is not strong enough or developed enough to provide these resources.

As shown in Table 1, the per capita health expenditure of the average electoral autocracy outside of Africa is more than seven times as much as the average per capita health expenditure of African electoral autocracies. Outside of Africa, there is 100 percent access to electricity in every single electoral autocracy. In Africa, the average coverage is a paltry 30 percent. In Chad, just six percent of the population has access to electricity. Similarly, in non-African electoral autocracies, the average country is able to provide 91 percent of its citizens with an improved source of water. In African electoral autocracies, this figure is just 64 percent. Further, the foundational cases of Mexico under the PRI and Egypt under the Mubarak regime were likewise middle-income countries. For Mexico in 1990, GDP per capita was \$12,547 and 96 percent of the population had access to electricity, while 82 percent had access to an improved water source. Similarly, for Egypt in 2010, GDP per capita was \$10,102, 100 percent of the population had access to electricity, and 99 percent had access to an improved water source.

Theories that argue that the majority of citizens vote because they receive or expect to receive something from the state implicitly assume that the state is capable of providing the majority of its citizens economic rewards for participation. In terms of the average contemporary electoral autocracy, this simply may not be the case. In a country like Ethiopia, Mozambique, or Tanzania, where the average citizen has seen many elections come and go, but continues to lack access to electricity or an improved source of water, it seems unlikely that these citizens participate because they believe

the state will bring them water and electricity if only they vote again. Further, voter turnout in Africa is consistently higher in rural areas (Kuenzi and Lambright 2011), precisely where the state is conspicuously absent. For example, in Togo, only nine percent of the rural population has access to electricity, and only three percent of rural Chadians have electricity.

With the existing literature in mind, it is important to note that the argument I will present in this dissertation is not that citizens of African autocracies *never* vote because they expect an economic pay-off. Where the state is extremely under-developed, even a small incentive, such as a sachet of laundry soap or a t-shirt might incentivize someone to vote for them, especially if voters see the gift as a symbol of more things to come (Kramon 2016). But in contrast to both middle-income countries as well as more competitive electoral systems, where the economic promises of the state are far more credible for a much larger percentage of the population, this dissertation will present evidence that the percentage of citizens in under-developed electoral autocracies who vote because of economic incentives is fundamentally smaller. Where economic incentives are not credible or prevalent, we must turn to non-economic explanations for political behavior. In contrast to the existing literature, this dissertation will argue that, apart from economic reasons for voting, citizens also participate in elections for expressive and social reasons (Abrams, Iversen, and Soskice 2011; Brennan and Hamlin 1998; Campbell 2006; Gerber et al. 2014; Riker and Ordeshook 1968).

In order to understand the expressive and social reasons citizens have for voting, it is first necessary to understand the importance of existing socioeconomic

and political cleavages in autocracies. Nearly all of our theories of authoritarianism start from the perspective of the regime (Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Geddes 2003; Svobik 2012), and, as a result, model political behavior based on the incentives provided by the state (Blaydes 2011, see Chapters 4 and 6; Magaloni 2006, see Chapter 4). In contrast, this dissertation starts theoretically from the perspective of the citizen. Given an individual's political, social, and economic experiences as a citizen of an autocratic state, what reasons would one have for participating in politics? Given the political, social and economic differences *between* citizens, what are the different reasons different *types* of people have for voting?

I propose that partisanship is a critical factor to answering these questions, and that different types of partisans have different reasons for participating in politics. First, similar to democratic regimes, partisans of all types—those who support the ruling party and those who support the opposition—should be more likely to possess higher levels of socioeconomic status (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba 1972, 1995). Conversely, nonpartisans should have lower levels of socioeconomic status. Further, although partisans of all types look similar demographically, they should differ in their political beliefs about the state: while ruling party partisans support the regime and the status quo, opposition partisans are opposed to the regime, and seek a change in power.¹⁵ This typology of partisanship is depicted in Table 2.

¹⁵ This pro-/anti-regime cleavage in autocracies has been most clearly articulated in theories developed by Schmitter and O'Donnell (1986), Bunce and Wolchik (2011), and Schedler (2013), but, to my knowledge, none has mapped the cleavage onto a theory of mass-based partisanship.

Table 2: Differences between Partisans

	Pro-Regime	Anti-Regime
High Socioeconomic Status	Ruling Party Partisans	Opposition Partisans
Low Socioeconomic Status	Nonpartisans	

These basic yet fundamental differences amongst ruling party partisans, opposition partisans and nonpartisans can help to explain why different types of citizens choose to vote in elections. Because the existing literature has focused on economic incentives, variation in voting behavior is often assumed to exist between citizens with high or low levels of socioeconomic status (Blaydes 2011; Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015). But if citizens have more complex voting motivations apart from economic inducements, then voting cannot be explained simply by the divide between the rich and the poor. The pro- and anti-regime divide between ruling party partisans and opposition partisans shapes their motivations when voting in elections.

This dissertation will argue that ruling party partisans, who support the status quo and are more likely to see the regime as generally democratic, should be more likely to vote when they feel that voting is a civic duty and an expression of patriotism or civic pride. In contrast, opposition partisans, who are fundamentally opposed to the regime, should be less likely to be motivated by appeals to patriotism and civic duty. Opposition partisans should be more likely to vote when they feel that participating in elections democratizes the political system as a whole. Opposition partisans who feel that voting legitimizes the autocratic state should not be motivated to vote. Finally,

nonpartisans, who possess few resources and little social standing, should be less influenced by these ideological debates. Instead, nonpartisans should be more likely to vote when they are mobilized by their communities. Nonpartisans who feel social pressure from their families, friends, communities, and local party elites should be more likely to go to the polls on election day. Nonpartisans who do not feel this pressure should be less likely to participate.

I provide evidence for this theory with original survey data collected in Cameroon. The public opinion survey was implemented in seven of Cameroon's ten regions between September 2014 and April 2015. The survey reached 2,399 respondents in 15 of Cameroon's 83 electoral districts, and was designed to better understand why different types of citizens would vote for different economic, expressive, and social reasons. Notes were taken by hand during survey interviews when respondents provided explanations for their responses, and supplementary quotations are included to support the aggregate survey numbers. I also use interviews with elite-level actors from the largest political parties in Cameroon to extend the analysis of public opinion and mass political behavior. Finally, I use macro-level budgetary and electoral data collected from the archives in Cameroon in order to test the "null" hypothesis from the existing literature that government spending and patronage are the primary influence on voter turnout.

This dissertation offers several contributions to the existing literature on electoral behavior and authoritarianism. First, while research into democratic elections has explored the causes and consequences of turnout amongst different types of partisan groups, the existing work on autocratic elections has not yet explored this

cleavage in a systematic manner. This dissertation analytically explores the demographic and political cleavages between partisans who support the ruling party, partisans who support the opposition, and nonpartisans. Second, as noted already, the few existing studies of voter behavior in autocratic regimes rely almost exclusively on the assumption that voters receive material benefits in return for their vote. My theory proposes that not every citizen votes because she receives or expects to receive something, and instead provides a theoretical framework for explaining why different types of people may hold different reasons for voting.

Third, to my knowledge, it is one of only a handful of studies to use micro-level survey data to understand why people vote in autocratic elections. Further, it is the first original, quasi-nationally-representative study in an electoral autocracy designed to understand why ordinary people vote.¹⁶ Because the survey was implemented myself, it provides deeper insights into the thoughts and beliefs of these citizens. For example, another contribution of the theory is to propose that different types of citizens have different expressive and social reasons for participating. To my knowledge, studies of expressive and social voting have not hypothesized why some people would be motivated for these reasons more than other types of people. Finally, it is the first study to look at political behavior in Cameroon, a non-trivial country of 22 million citizens.

Overall, the goal of this dissertation is to use the vantage point of the ordinary citizen to better understand why people participate in autocratic elections. By taking seriously the beliefs of citizens, I hope to shift the *way* in which we understand mass

¹⁶ Frye, et al. (2014) conduct an original survey in Russia to understand why people vote, but it only samples employers and workers in firms.

politics in electoral autocracies. The overarching argument of this dissertation is that politics are critical to understanding public opinion and political behavior in autocracies. Citizens are not just economic actors responding to economic incentives. In order to understand why people participate, we must take seriously the role of socialization and political learning. This perspective has been dominant in our studies of democratic politics for decades (Campbell et al. 1960; Verba 1972), yet remains almost entirely ignored in our work on authoritarian politics.

There are likely a number of reasons for this. First is the relative lack of data in autocratic regimes. Second, economic incentives, especially government spending, are in general easier to measure than expressive and social reasons for voting. Third, economic reasons for voting help to advance a normative argument about democracy and authoritarianism. If citizens of autocracies are uniformly repressed, and the autocratic regime is fundamentally illegitimate, it is difficult to explain why ordinary citizens would vote to legitimize the regime. Economic incentives help to explain away what appears to be mass commitment to autocracy. Without apologizing for authoritarianism, this dissertation argues that many citizens do not see their commitment to the regime as problematic. Even if they receive no material benefits from the regime, many people still see the government as legitimate and sometimes even democratic.

Bringing politics into our theories of political behavior in authoritarian regimes introduces a wide range of potential implications. For example, while some of political science's classic theories of democratization argue that citizens with low socioeconomic status as the backbone of autocratic support (Ansell and Samuels 2014;

Lipset 1959b, 1959a), others propose that they are the biggest threat to the regime (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003). How does class affect commitment to democracy? This dissertation argues that we cannot understand the importance of class and socioeconomic status without embedding it within an understanding of political beliefs and partisanship in autocratic regimes. Citizens with high socioeconomic status are not uniformly for or against the regime. Instead, they possess diverse political beliefs based on a number of factors, such as their exposure to the opposition and their experiences with the state. Overall, this dissertation calls for renewed attention on the micro-level politics of autocracy. Before elaborating this theory of political behavior in Chapter Two, the following sections introduce the scope conditions and case selection of the dissertation.

Scope Conditions and Electoral Autocracies

The theory presented in this dissertation utilizes a broad definition of electoral autocracy, and includes any hegemonic-party autocratic regime that holds national-level multiparty elections, which it never loses. Electoral autocracies of all stripes cohere around one major feature: the serious unlikelihood of the opposition to win elections due to structural disadvantages. Levitsky and Way (2010) famously define what they call ‘competitive authoritarian regimes’ as: “civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents’ abuse of the state places them at a significant

advantage vis-à-vis their opponents” (5).¹⁷ Not without its detractors (Hyde and Marinov 2012), this definition has by-and-large become the default definition for many studies in the comparativists literature.

While my definition generally coincides with that of Levitsky and Way, I am less concerned than they are with the ‘competitive’ aspect of their definition. The authors (2002) argue that, “It is essential...to distinguish regimes in which democratic institutions offer an important channel through which the opposition may seek power from those regimes in which democratic rules simply serve as to legitimate an existing autocratic leadership” (54). On the one hand, this is an ambiguous clause in their definition: if the opposition never wins, how are we to know whether or not elections are channels through which the opposition legitimately seeks power?¹⁸ For example, the authors (2010) note that for an electoral autocracy to be competitive, “Opposition parties can open offices, recruit candidates, and organize campaigns, and politicians are rarely exiled or imprisoned. In short, democratic procedures are sufficiently meaningful for opposition groups to take them seriously as arenas through which to contest power” (7). But Cameroon offers a good example of why this definitional clause remains ambiguous: Although the opposition in Cameroon is able to do all of these things, elections are simply not competitive or ‘meaningful channels for contesting power.’¹⁹ In sum, the authors’ insistence on the existence of ‘meaningful’

¹⁷ This definition is very similar to Schedler’s (2013), who defines an electoral autocracy as such: “Unlike other authoritarian regimes, electoral autocracies establish the entire set of formally representative institutions that characterize liberal democracy. Unlike electoral democracies, they subject these institutions to severe and systematic manipulation” (6).

¹⁸ See a similar discussion in Morse (2012), pages 171-2.

¹⁹ As noted earlier, 70 percent of Cameroonians expect the ruling party to win a clear majority of seats in legislative elections. In fact, most people who think the opposition could win are those who have bought the regime’s rhetoric about being democratic.

competition introduces a variable that is difficult to measure, and, further, requires an ex post facto judgment. As Hyde and Marinov (2012) write, "...if scholars are interested in studying the consequences of elections, they should not exclude elections based on whether they *were* consequential. Doing so excludes all cases of elections that *could have been* consequential but were not..." (191). As long as independent opposition forces are able to stand in elections, I consider the regime an electoral autocracy to which my theory could apply.

On the other hand, for the purposes of the theory presented in this dissertation, the distinction between competitive and uncompetitive is not particularly relevant anyways. My theory relies on the existence of opposition and ruling party partisans, and so it is critical that an independent opposition exists. However, the likelihood of the opposition actually winning is less important. In fact, the theory would likely not hold as well in electoral autocracies where the elections are extremely competitive because many citizens of all partisan stripes would be more likely to vote for instrumental reasons. If citizens believe that the elections could actually result in a change in power, many may vote to influence the outcome of the election. So, for example, when the opposition in an autocratic regime wins by surprise, such as the color revolutions in Eurasia, retroactively, this theory would not pertain to such elections.

Thus, the theory does not apply to closed autocracies, which I consider to be regimes that hold single-party elections only (such as the communist regimes in China, Vietnam or Laos). Nor should it apply to autocracies where the opposition is not fully independent from the state (such as Uzbekistan). In such cases, the

opposition is not strong enough to create a sustained group of partisan adherents; a key feature of the theory presented in this dissertation.

In addition to closed autocracies, the theory also does not pertain to non-autocratic hegemonic party systems. A handful of countries (for example, Botswana under the BDP, South Africa under the ANC, Namibia under SWAPO, or Japan for much of its history under the LDP) feature all of the hallmarks of democracy (such as personal freedoms and liberties, the absence of electoral fraud, a relatively even electoral playing field, and full voting rights) but never experience electoral turnover. In one sense, if no one believes the opposition can win, then the theory proposed in this dissertation may be able to explain voting behavior in hegemonic-party democracies. However, the pro-/anti-regime cleavage between partisans in democratic regimes is likely less severe than it is in autocratic regimes. In countries where individual rights are protected and the opposition is given complete freedom of expression and access to the media, opposition partisans should be considerably less motivated by their opposition to the state itself, and therefore fundamentally different from their cousins in hegemonic-party autocracies. I therefore restrict the scope conditions of the theory to electoral autocracies where the opposition is highly unlikely to win.

Table 3: Voter Turnout in Electoral Autocracies Across the World

Country	Year of Election	Type of Election	Number of Voters	Voter Turnout*
Algeria	2014	Presidential	11,307,478	49.42
Angola	2012	Parliamentary	6,123,914	62.75
Azerbaijan	2015	Parliamentary	5,211,765	55.54
Belarus	2015	Presidential	6,113,013	87.22
Burundi	2015	Presidential	2,826,072	73.44
Cameroon	2013	Parliamentary	4,208,796	76.79
Chad	2011	Presidential	2,765,765	55.71
D.R. Congo	2011	Concurrent	18,911,572	59.05
Ethiopia	2015	Parliamentary	34,351,444	93.22
Jordan	2013	Parliamentary	1,282,550	56.45
Kazakhstan	2015	Presidential	9,090,920	95.21
Malaysia	2013	Parliamentary	11,257,147	84.84
Mozambique	2014	Concurrent	5,333,665	48.64
Rep. Congo	2009	Presidential	1,380,651	66.42
Russia	2012	Presidential	71,701,665	65.27
Rwanda	2013	Parliamentary	5,881,874	98.8
Singapore	2015	Parliamentary	2,304,331	93.56
Sudan	2015	Concurrent	6,091,412	46.40
Tajikistan	2015	Parliamentary	3,540,760	82.00
Tanzania	2015	Concurrent	15,596,110	67.34
Togo	2015	Presidential	2,138,438	60.94
Uganda	2011	Concurrent	8,272,760	59.29
Zimbabwe	2013	Presidential	3,480,047	54.38

*Percent of all registered voters

Source: <http://www.idea.int/vt/>

Table 3 presents a list of such electoral autocracies (the same list from Table 1), and their reported levels of voter turnout in each one's most recent national election. Examples of electoral autocracies include countries that feature a prominent dictator, such as Russia under President Vladimir Putin or Rwanda under President Paul Kagame. However the theory should also hold in hegemonic-party regimes with a rotating executive, such as Mozambique under FRELIMO or Tanzania under the

CCM. Though, perhaps, our archetypical image of an electoral autocracy features a strong party that shares power amongst a coterie of elites,²⁰ most of the regimes listed in Table 3 actually feature a dictator. The presence or absence of such dictators is important for understanding a host of important regime dynamics. For example, much of everyday politics in these types of regimes (Cameroon included) revolves around rumors and whispers of succession plans and the health of the President. Nonetheless, the existence of an autocrat has little effect on the theory presented in this paper, as partisanship and voter turnout should not look fundamentally dissimilar in regimes with or without a strong executive.

Relatedly, the theory should also pertain to both electoral autocracies that feature a deeply-embedded, mass-based ruling party as well as those with a weakly-rooted elite-based ruling party. Again, in part because of the literature's reliance on the foundational case of Mexico (Greene 2007; Lawson 2002; Magaloni 2006), the popular image of a hegemonic political party is one with strong levels of partisanship and mass-based membership. But this is not a necessary feature of an electoral autocracy. While countries such as Malaysia under UMNO or Singapore under the PAP have relied historically on the cultivation of partisanship amongst ordinary citizens, this is not a universal feature of autocratic ruling parties. For example, although the UNIR/RPT party has ruled in Togo since 1969, according to Round 5 data from the Afrobarometer, only 24 percent of Togolese reported feeling close to the party (see Chapter Two). The primary implication of this distinction for my theory is

²⁰ This is likely the prominent view for two reasons. First is the foundational work of Geddes (2003) who makes a purposefully strong distinction between personal dictatorships and party autocracies. Second, much of our foundational empirical work on electoral authoritarianism comes out of Mexico during the PRI era (Greene 2007; Lawson 2002; Magaloni 2006), which featured a rotating executive.

that the ratio of ruling party partisans to opposition partisans to nonpartisans would vary depending on the nature of the ruling party. However, I argue that regardless of how much the ruling party attempts to cultivate partisans, the same socioeconomic and political cleavages should prevail, and this is what should matter for predicting political participation.

Finally, as noted earlier, the theory should also apply to both economically developed autocracies such as Kazakhstan and Malaysia, as well as economically underdeveloped electoral autocracies like Chad and Uganda. Though the content of the theory was inspired by electoral autocracies with weak states and underdeveloped economies, it should nonetheless travel to developed autocracies as well. Where the state is incapable of delivering promises of patronage and vote-buying, expressive and social reasons for participating should be overwhelmingly dominant. However, even where such promises are credible, we should still expect to see different types of partisans participating for different social and expressive reasons. Even where the state is strong, it cannot possibly provide the majority of its citizens with gifts and investments during each election cycle. Thus, while perhaps a smaller percentage of the population may participate for expressive and social reasons (when compared to less developed electoral autocracies), there should still be a large number who do so.²¹

In general, the dissertation is not overly concerned with the role that elections play in demarcating the line between democracy and authoritarianism, or the possibility that they will lead to democratization. Indeed, since the 1990s, many scholars have been interested in autocratic subtypes, and how the various

²¹ What percentage exactly remains an empirical question left for future research. See the Conclusion for a discussion of future research agendas.

characteristics of elections affect the line between distinct categories of non-democracies (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Diamond 2002; Levitsky and Way 2013). Others have focused on whether electoral autocracies are a shifting category inevitably moving toward democracy (Howard and Roessler 2006; Lindberg 2006; Schedler 2002b), or instead a static and distinct category separate from both democracy and authoritarianism (Carothers 2002; Hale 2011). Bunce and Wochik (2011) note the “...very different reading by scholars of what motivates authoritarian leaders to ‘decorate’ their regimes with seemingly democratic institutions, and what these explanations imply in turn about the likelihood of more authentic democratic politics in the future” (10). On the one hand, scholars of democratization tend to focus on the weakness of autocratic leaders and how this weakness tends to translate into regime change. On the other hand, scholars of authoritarianism argue that autocrats adopt democratic features from a position of strength, and use them to consolidate their rule (ibid, 10-12). While these are all critical issues in considering autocratic elections, the theory presented here is agnostic about the political trajectory of electoral autocracies. While my theory might shed light on the nature of variation in autocratic elections and what this may mean for autocratic stability,²² it is not a question I answer in this dissertation.

²² For example, in regimes with high levels of ruling party partisanship, high levels of voter turnout might indicate regime stability. Inversely, where partisanship is low, high turnout may be a sign of instability. In contrast, where partisanship is high and turnout low, we may expect regime legitimacy to be in question. However, for regimes with low levels of partisanship, demobilization is likely the desired outcome for the election.

Cameroon

In order to test the theory presented in this dissertation, I use evidence from Cameroon, a stable autocratic regime in Central Africa that has held regular multiparty elections since 1992. The President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, came to power in 1982 and is now one of the longest-ruling civilian presidents in the world. Before his succession, Cameroon held single-party elections regularly. However in 1992, under immense domestic and international pressure, Biya opened the electoral process to opposition parties, harshly cracking down on them in the early years of the transition. Today, overt repression and electoral fraud during elections is rare, and state-sanctioned electoral violence is virtually nonexistent. Nonetheless, the opposition continues to face major structural impediments to gaining power, such as gerrymandering, unfair electoral laws, and grossly unequal access to state resources (Albaugh 2011, 2014, Chapter 6; Takougang 2003; Takougang and Krieger 1998). In the most recent elections held in 2013, the hegemonic political party, the *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais* (RDPC), received 148 out of 180 legislative seats, and in 2011 President Paul Biya received 78 percent of the popular vote. These results have not varied considerably since the founding multiparty elections, and there is little hope for this to change as long as Biya is President (Pigeaud 2011). See Chapter Three for a more in-depth discussion of politics in Cameroon.

Although few people in Cameroon expect the opposition to win elections (as noted earlier, 70 percent report that if an election were held tomorrow, the RDPC would win a majority of seats in the National Assembly and President Biya would win

re-election), national elections are still an important event in the country. Overall, 70.1 percent of Cameroonians reported voting in the 2013 legislative and municipal elections (compared to the official figure of 76.8 percent of registered voters). Further, 91.6 percent of Cameroonians reported that they felt somewhat or completely free to vote for whomever they wanted. When asked whether they were threatened during the previous election, less than 4 percent of respondents responded affirmatively.²³

Cameroon shares certain features with some electoral autocracies, but diverges from others. Crucially, the RDPC dominates politics because of an extremely advantageous playing field. Few people in Cameroon expect the opposition to come to power through elections while President Biya is alive. In general, most believe that if a regime transition were to occur, it will happen once Biya, who is now 84 years-old, leaves politics. In this sense, President Biya dominates politics, making Cameroon more similar to cases like Russia under Putin or Angola under President José Eduardo dos Santos than to electoral autocracies like Tanzania or Malaysia, where the power of the executive is checked by the party. Similarly, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, the RDPC is not a mass-based party like the CCM in Tanzania or FRELIMO in Mozambique. The party does not go out of its way to cultivate partisans, and instead is used primarily to coopt and control elites.

Finally, as shown in Table 1, the state in Cameroon is notoriously weak and the economically underdeveloped. While not as poor as Burundi or the DRC, Cameroon's economy is tiny in comparison to countries like Belarus or Kazakhstan.

²³ Figures from the author's survey: 75.6 percent reported that they were completely free; 16.0 reported that they were somewhat free; 3.8 said they were not very free; 3.6 said they were not at all free; 1.0 percent said they didn't know.

This makes Cameroon an easy test of my theory, as expressive and social reasons for voting should be more prominent in countries where the state is weak. Overall, however, although electoral autocracies vary in numerous institutional and historical capacities, Cameroon shares important features with other electoral autocracies, most importantly, in the overwhelming dominance of the RDPC.

Plan of the Dissertation

The following chapter answers the question of why people vote in autocratic elections by presenting the central theory of the dissertation. The theory hinges on two arguments. First, partisanship captures important socioeconomic and political divides in electoral autocracies. Partisans of all types (those who support the ruling party and those who support the opposition) should be more likely to possess higher levels of socioeconomic status than nonpartisans. Citizens with more resources, higher levels of education, and denser professional networks should be more likely to actively support a political party (whether the ruling party or the opposition). I argue that this cleavage is important to understanding electoral behavior in autocracies. Second, the motivations behind voting vary according to degree and direction of partisanship, and these motivations are not solely economic. While the existing literature assumes that citizens vote in autocratic elections primarily in expectation of a gift or a reward, I propose that, similar to democratic regimes, citizens of autocracies may instead vote for expressive or social reasons. Together, the theory argues that different types of partisans have different reasons for voting. This chapter also introduces the survey used to provide evidence for the theory.

Chapter Three seeks to better understand the nature of partisanship in Cameroon. It begins with a history of the major contemporary political parties in Cameroon (RDPC, SDF, UNDP, and UDC); the roles they played during the 1992 transition; their geographic strengths and limitations; and how they have changed (and stayed the same) during the past 25 years. It then discusses the various ways in which Cameroonian political parties attempt to garner supporters, and how everyday citizens view the parties. Finally, this chapter provides evidence from the survey about the demographic characteristics of partisans and nonpartisans, showing that socioeconomic status explains much of the variation between them. It also discusses the different political beliefs that divide partisans of the ruling party from partisans of the opposition.

Chapter Four provides evidence for the core theory of the dissertation. It shows that there are many reasons for voting in autocratic elections, and that non-instrumental reasons can be just as strong, or stronger, than instrumental ones. Further, it demonstrates that different types of citizens—partisans who support the ruling party, partisans who support the opposition, and nonpartisans—have different reasons for voting.

Using macro-level budgetary data and voter turnout figures, Chapter Five shows that there is no clear correlation between reported government spending and voting behavior. Using original data collected from the government ministries in Cameroon, this chapter attempts to find a correlation between spending and voter turnout. Looking at different types of elections (legislative and municipal versus presidential) and different directions of causality, the data reveals that there is not a

strong relationship between spending and turnout in Cameroon. Although the data cannot conclusively show that there is no relationship between patronage and voting in Cameroon, it suggests that the relationship is not universal, and that government spending is not solely dictated by mass political behavior. The chapter concludes with a discussion of this finding, arguing that the Cameroonian government is more concerned with elite cooptation and management than it is with electoral mobilization.

Finally, the concluding chapter discusses the implications of the theory and empirical findings of this dissertation. Complicating the assumptions of voting behavior in autocratic elections is important for two reasons. First, by relaxing the assumption that most citizens vote because they expect a material reward, we can explain the longevity of some of the poorest and most under-performing electoral autocracies in the world, such as Cameroon. When states can develop legitimacy outside of clientelistic networks, they are able to endure decades of economic stagnation. Second, if we assume that a regime's legitimacy is tied exclusively to economic pay-offs, then an electoral autocracy's primary base of support is the beneficiaries of these rewards. However, if different groups of citizens have different reasons for participating in politics, and vote-buying is not prevalent, then understanding who supports the regime and why is critical to understanding regime legitimacy.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORY OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR IN AUTOCRATIC REGIMES

As Gandhi and Lust-Okar have noted (2009), the scholarship on elections in autocracies “has focused on exploring the relationships between elections and democratization...[and] these tendencies have kept political scientists from asking a wide range of questions about the micro-level dynamics of authoritarian elections...” (404). Indeed, the vast majority of the foundational studies on electoral autocracies have concentrated on the macro-level implications of holding elections, such as why dictators would hold elections in the first place (Brownlee 2011; Svobik 2012), how elections can stabilize autocratic regimes (Boix and Svobik 2013; Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Lust-Okar 2006; Magaloni 2006; Wright 2008), or, on the other hand, lead to democratization, at least under certain conditions (Donno 2013; Howard and Roessler 2006; Lindberg 2006; Schedler 2002b; Wolchik and Bunce 2006). A few studies occupy a middle-level of analysis, looking at the candidates who stand in autocratic elections (Greene 2007; Lawson 2002; Lust-Okar 2006; Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Shehata 2008).

Though most studies of electoral autocracies focus on macro-level questions, the few studies that explore micro-level political behavior tend to treat citizens as having homogenous preferences. These theories argue that citizens in autocratic regimes participate in elections because they expect a material reward in exchange for their vote (Magaloni 2006; Blaydes 2011). Thus, where social cleavages exist in these

studies, they lie between the rich and the poor, depending on who is best positioned to receive such economic rewards. Due to the lack of alternative conceptualizations of voting behavior, these theories imply that citizens who are not embedded in clientelistic networks simply have no reason to vote in elections.²⁴ Further, these arguments are largely tested using macro-level public spending figures and voter turnout data.

For example, Magaloni's (2006) analysis of Mexico under the PRI shows that from 1989 to 1994 a poverty relief program (PRONASOL) spent more money in PRI-controlled municipalities that were considered "swing districts" than it spent in heavily-controlled PRI districts or in opposition strongholds. She argues that the government used such spending to encourage people to vote for them in elections. Blaydes (2011) goes as far as to state that "the majority of voters in Egypt make their voting decision based on clientelistic considerations" (101). She shows that in Egypt under the Mubarak regime, electoral districts with higher vote shares for the opposition received fewer water and sewer improvement projects. She also argues that citizens were motivated to vote during elections due to vote-buying by showing through an ecological inference strategy that illiterate citizens were more likely to vote during parliamentary elections.

Although less concerned with mass political behavior *per se*, Pepinsky (2007) finds that Malaysian budgetary spending patterns cycle with the electoral calendar, suggesting that the Malaysian government spends more on public goods during elections in order to increase voter turnout. He argues that in electoral autocracies,

²⁴ Some authors have noted in passing that opposition voters may be motivated by ideological commitments, but have not investigated these claims empirically.

elections offer a focal point for patronage spending and are used to reward supporters and punish opponents. While the study does not make direct claims about voting motivations, the implication is that citizens are driven to support the regime during elections through incentives provided by government patronage networks.

Collectively, this body of work methodically and systematically demonstrates that these autocratic states are spending in a way that correlates with voting behavior and election cycles. However, due to the limitations of the macro-level data, they cannot show whether or not individuals are affected by this logic of spending. To my knowledge, only three studies have used individual-level data to analyze why people vote in authoritarian elections. Miguel, et al. (2015) look at Arabarometer pooled survey data and find several reasons for voting in autocratic elections in the Middle East and North Africa. First, although the authors find that citizens who use clientelist networks are more likely to vote, in contrast to Blaydes (2011) they also find that this relationship is strongest amongst *high-income* citizens. The authors argue that high-income citizens are better networked than low-income citizens, and therefore better positioned to benefit from clientelism and the regime more generally. Second, the authors also argue that citizens of autocratic regimes engage in economic voting, rewarding the regime with their vote when the economic climate is favorable and abstaining altogether when the economy is bad. Further, they argue that this relationship between economic evaluation and voting is mediated by overall trust in the government.

Methodologically, Miguel, et al.'s foundational study is compelling: it is the first to use micro-level survey data to investigate why ordinary citizens participate in

autocratic elections. However, the analysis leaves several open questions. First, because it uses Arabarometer data, which is a general public opinion survey, it does not ask respondents directly why they participate in elections. Second, although the study begins to theorize voting behavior in terms of motivations outside of patronage networks, its reliance on economic motivations ignores a host of expressive and social reasons for participating in politics. Finally, although it takes trust in the regime seriously—a cleavage that I agree is fundamental to understanding voting behavior in autocracies—it does not systematically theorize which types of citizens trust the regime or why. This dissertation builds on Miguel, et al.’s work by using similar micro-level data, but pushes the literature forward by answering some of these open theoretical and methodological questions.

In addition, Croke, et al. (2016) find that in Zimbabwe, education is negatively related to voter turnout. The authors argue that citizens with more education have the resources to engage with politics, but have more democratic values and are also better equipped to criticize the regime in power, and therefore are less inclined to participate in autocratic elections. This is a fascinating finding because, in many ways, it contradicts Miguel, et al.’s conclusions, since they find that higher levels of socioeconomic status increase participation through clientelism. In addition, there is an inherent tension with many of the assumptions outlined in the literature on authoritarianism, which tends to assume that citizens with high levels of socioeconomic status will support the autocratic status quo because they benefit from it economically (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003). However, the analysis

focuses more on why people with high levels of education abstain from autocratic elections, without dwelling much on the reasons why some citizens do participate.

Finally, using a survey of the employees of firms in the regional capitals of Russia, Frye, et al. (2014) find that 25 percent of workers were mobilized to vote by their employers. The authors argue that economic coercion can be a significant cause of voter turnout in electoral autocracies. While this dissertation does not argue against the existence of such economic coercion, particularly in more economically developed electoral autocracies, according to the authors' figures (p. 211), about 44 percent of their total sample was formally employed by private firms. If 25 percent of these employees were mobilized by their employers, this accounts for roughly 11 percent of Russian voters. While this is no doubt an important minority of voters to understand, the number of formally employed citizens in Cameroon, or any other under-developed electoral autocracy, is a fraction of this number. Therefore, the theory presented in this dissertation aims to better understand the voting behavior of citizens who lack economic ties to the state, which arguably constitutes the majority of voters in all electoral autocracies, and the vast majority of voters in poor autocracies such as Cameroon.

Notably, while some of the literature argues that citizens with low levels of socioeconomic status (SES) should be more inclined to vote in autocratic elections (Blaydes 2011; Croke et al. 2016), others contend that citizens with high levels of SES should be more likely to vote (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014; Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015). Do citizens with more education and more resources benefit from the regime, and therefore support the status quo? Or do these resources and critical

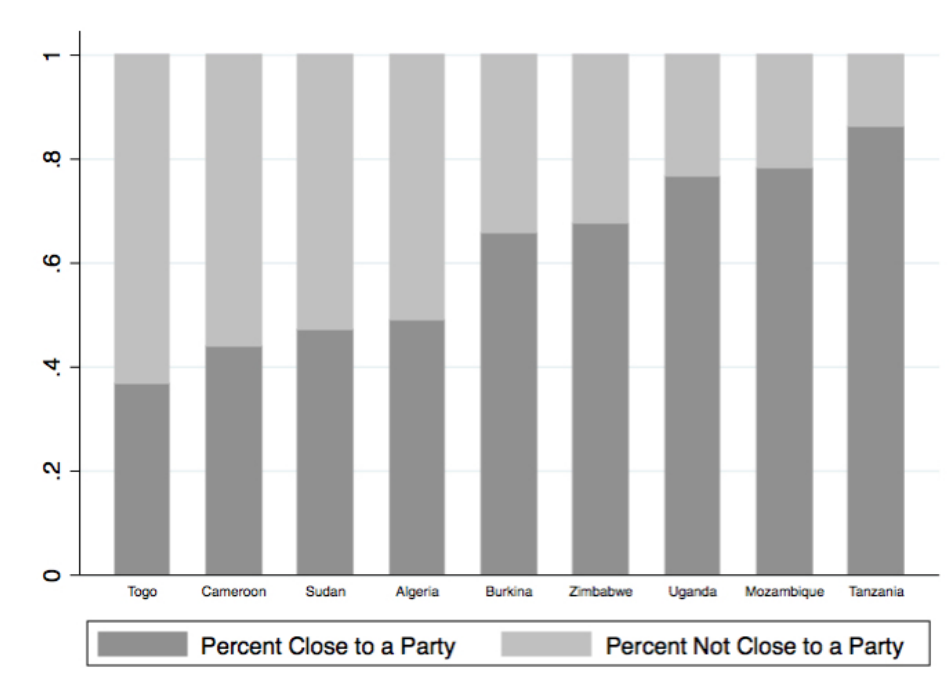
thinking skills drive high SES citizens to disengage from politics altogether? I argue that socioeconomic status alone is not enough to understand political behavior in electoral autocracies. Instead, SES must be contextualized by political beliefs; citizens with high SES are more likely to be partisans, but sometimes they support the ruling party, and sometimes they support the opposition. This pro-/anti-regime divide may explain bifurcated theoretical expectations about their participation. High SES citizens who support the opposition may be more likely to disengage from politics, especially when they feel that their participation makes no difference to the system. On the other hand, high SES citizens who support the ruling party may be more likely to participate because they support the status quo and the regime in power. The following sections discuss the importance of partisanship in explaining voting behavior in electoral autocracies.

Partisanship in Electoral Autocracies

A whole host of micro-level dynamics has yet to be explored by scholars of electoral autocracies. For example, despite being heavily studied in democratic contexts, I argue that one of the most critical (yet overlooked) cleavages in autocratic regimes is between partisans and nonpartisans (Carlson 2015). Partisans are citizens who feel close to a political party, whether the ruling party or the opposition. Nonpartisans, on the other hand, do not feel close to any party. Just like in democracies (Klar and Krupnikov 2016), nonpartisans are critical to understanding voter turnout in electoral autocracies. In Cameroon, nonpartisans represent roughly 61 percent of all citizens, and further, 60 percent of all nonpartisans reported voting in the

last election.²⁵ Figure 1 below shows levels of partisanship in electoral autocracies surveyed by the Afrobarometer (Round 5). While Cameroon sits at the low end of partisanship, there is clearly wide variation in Africa, ranging from 37 percent in Togo to 86 percent in Tanzania. Understanding the voting behavior of nonpartisans is therefore just as important as focusing on the opinions and behaviors of partisans.

Figure 1: Reported Levels of Partisanship in African Electoral Autocracies, Afrobarometer Round 5



I contend that in electoral autocracies, similar to democratic regimes (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), partisans of all types should tend to come from higher socioeconomic groups.

²⁵ Data from author's survey. 61.3 percent reported not feeling close to any party. 13.3 felt close, but not very close; 14.9 felt somewhat close; 10.3 felt extremely close; 0.16 didn't know.

Just like in democracies, citizens who actively align themselves with a political party—whether the ruling party or the opposition—have the time and resources to participate in politics. They possess the capacity to engage locally within party structures, and importantly, are expected by their communities to participate in politics. In the context of Cameroon, as elsewhere, socioeconomic status includes such factors as wealth, education, gender, age, and to a certain extent, urban or rural locality (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980).

First and foremost, wealth, education, gender, age, and locality, create *social expectations* for individuals from privileged groups to participate actively in local party politics. Particularly in developing countries, older men are considered to be the opinion leaders of their communities. For example, Bratton (1999) finds that in Zambia, gender—being male—predicts political participation better than any other single factor. The likelihood of older men dominating political networks is likely magnified in rural areas, where traditional gender roles are more deeply ingrained. Village elders—older men from rural areas—are often the default conduit between political parties and local populations. Whereas women, the youth, and citizens with lower levels of socioeconomic status are not expected to be politically active, older men with higher levels of socioeconomic status face much higher social expectations to engage with politics. Thus, these types of citizens should be much more likely to report feeling close to a political party (whether the ruling party or a local opposition party).

To a lesser extent—particularly in poorer autocracies—citizens with higher levels of education and income should also be more likely to be partisans because of

their professional or business networks (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, et al. 1995). This dynamic is likely magnified for ruling party partisans in both developing countries, where an unusually large proportion of salaried jobs are created by the state (van de Walle 2001), as well as in electoral autocracies, where the state is synonymous with the ruling party. In many electoral autocracies, citizens who work for the government are more likely to support and vote for the ruling party (Widner 1992). Citizens whose livelihoods are dependent on the regime in power are likely to be much more supportive of it in general. Not only does this logic affect civil servants and bureaucrats, but also teachers, soldiers and employees of parastatal companies, who receive their salaries from the government. Thus in electoral autocracies, citizens from privileged socioeconomic groups should be more likely to have salaried jobs with the state, which in turn are deeply embedded in partisan networks, particularly for the ruling party (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014). However, although they may be an interesting minority of voters to understand, the total number of formal public sector employees in any given electoral autocracy is likely not a major proportion of partisans or voters.

In comparison to partisans, nonpartisans should be more likely to come from under-privileged groups in society who have fewer resources to devote to politics. Likewise, they are less likely to have salaried jobs, and are thus less likely to be embedded in the ruling party networks that have engulfed the public sector in many low- and middle-income electoral autocracies. As noted, women and young people from traditional societies are not expected to participate actively in politics, at least relative to older men. This is reflected in the existence across Africa of ‘youth’ and

‘women’s’ branches of political parties.²⁶ These special organs are created to include women and young people because it is implied that the positions of leadership in the regular party hierarchy are reserved for older men. In general, the social expectations placed on both the youth and women are less likely to include political leadership, regardless of whether one is politically active with the ruling party or the opposition. As a result, if partisans from both sides of the political spectrum are demographically similar, then perhaps their true counterpoint is nonpartisans. In some ways nonpartisans, not opposition partisans, are the true underbelly of autocratic politics.

Variation in Reasons for Voting

Using this typology of partisanship, I propose that different groups of citizens should have different reasons for voting in autocratic elections, and that not all of these reasons revolve around economic issues. In building this argument, I suggest that the puzzle of voter turnout in autocratic regimes is not so different from the puzzle of voter turnout in democratic regimes. In democratic elections, theories of turnout have found that instrumental reasons for voting are not very good at explaining voting behavior (Fiorina 1976; Geys 2006). The infamous “D-term,” which captures non-instrumental motivations, does much of the explanatory work in describing who votes in democracies.

People do not usually vote because they believe that they can personally affect the outcome of the election (Blais, et al. 2000). Instead, voter turnout is better predicted by expressive and social factors, such as one’s sense of civic duty (Riker and

²⁶ For example, in Cameroon, “L’Organisation des Femmes du RDPC” (OFRDPC) and “L’Organisation des Jeunes du RDPC” (OJRDPC).

Ordeshook 1968), a desire to ‘cheer’ for a particular political party (Brennan and Hamlin 1998), or, alternatively, because it is important to them that others know that they vote (Abrams, Iversen, and Soskice 2011; Campbell 2006; Gerber et al. 2014). Although the general concept of expressive and social voting can be brought into the framework of autocratic elections, the original theories do not account for why *different types of people* might hold *different reasons for participating* in politics. They implicitly presume that these expressive motivations are randomly distributed within the population, rather than associated with partisanship or socioeconomic status. I build on these theories by arguing that different types of citizens have different reasons for voting in autocratic elections, specifically by looking at partisans who support the ruling party, partisans who support the opposition, and nonpartisans.

Ruling Party Partisans

Partisans in autocratic regimes are fundamentally divided by their political beliefs about the state. The principal political cleavage in electoral autocracies is between supporting and opposing the regime itself. As Riedl (2014) argues for transitioning regimes in Africa, “The most salient cleavage [during democratization] is the anti-incumbent regime cleavage: the ruling party argues for democratic stability and peace to result from its continued leadership, whereas the opposition claims that it is the only true party of democracy” (174). The same logic holds true in electoral autocracies, where the ruling party and the opposition make identical arguments. Similarly, Schedler (2013) describes his ‘political institutionalist’ approach to authoritarianism, which “...focuses on the conflictive interaction between pro-regime

and anti-regime actors. The former defend the political status quo, the latter strive to transform it” (10). I argue that in electoral autocracies, this cleavage maps onto partisanship: While opposition supporters are committed to democratization and a turnover in power, ruling party supporters value the stability of the regime over democratic reform.

In electoral autocracies, opposition parties are uniquely situated to ‘own’ the issue of democratization (Bleck and van de Walle 2013; Letsa 2016a). Opposition parties, by definition, have little experience in government, and therefore have few concrete accomplishments to point to, particularly in regards to economic development and especially security. This is not to say that the issues of economic development or security are ignored by opposition parties; they most certainly use these issues to criticize the ruling party’s past incompetence or weaknesses. However, while opposition parties in electoral autocracies can use economic and security issues to criticize the ruling party, it is difficult for them to own these issues, having little past experience with which to point.

In contrast, opposition parties can and do own the issue of democratization. By and large, democracy is the bread-and-butter campaign issue of opposition parties in electoral autocracies. Not only are issues of democratization (such as the reform of electoral rules or the redrawing of electoral districts) critical to the fundamental survival of the opposition (Schedler 2002b), these issues are also nearly impossible for the ruling party to own. In electoral autocracies, the ruling party’s credibility as a symbol of democracy is tenuous at best. By definition, these parties have been ruling for decades, using their powers of incumbency to disadvantage the opposition and

manipulate the institutions of democracy to their personal advantage. Although they can and do deny accusations of abuse, democracy is hardly an issue that ruling parties can easily take ownership of. As a result, their platforms focus much more heavily on economic development and national security. Further, the narratives that they produce are predicated on the idea that the regime is already democratic, and that democratic consolidation is a secondary issue to more important concerns, such as the economy and the security of the state. Given the inexperience of the opposition in governing, the ruling party is better positioned to own issues of economic development and stability.

Because of this political divide, I argue that ruling party partisans who support the regime most strongly, and thus, due to the conflation between the ruling party and the state, feel a sense of civic duty towards the state, will be most likely to participate in elections. Tending to come from privileged groups in society, ruling party supporters may be the most likely to expect local investments or patronage in return for voting, but if vote-buying campaigns target the poor (Blaydes 2011; Magaloni 2006), ruling party supporters are probably not voting overwhelmingly because they have sold their votes. Instead, ruling party partisans are more likely to vote when they feel that voting is a civic duty.

There are a number of different mechanisms through which a sense of civic duty induces ruling party partisans to vote in elections. First and foremost, due to the conflation between the ruling party and the state in most electoral autocracies, voting for the ruling party is often seen as an act of patriotism. Thus, where ruling party supporters may feel pride to express this duty, opposition supporters and nonpartisans

who believe that voting is a civic duty may not feel any more inclined to vote than citizens who think of voting as a choice (as opposed to a duty), since they are less likely to feel a strong attachment to the state.

This inclination is likely nurtured by the state itself, which often teaches through public school curricula and voter registration campaigns that voting is a duty. However, such government messages are likely to affect ruling party partisans more than other types of citizens for two reasons. First, if partisans of all types come from backgrounds of relative privilege, then they are more likely to have received more education, and therefore received more messages equating voting as a civic duty (Zaller 1992). Thus, citizens with more education may be both more likely to support a political party as well as to believe that voting is a civic duty. Secondly, however, citizens who are inclined to support the ruling party are more likely to internalize this message than citizens who are inclined to support the opposition. Citizens who support the ruling party are more likely to find state messages credible.

Croke, et al.'s (2016) findings from Zimbabwe complicate the relationship between education, political participation, and support for the ruling party in autocratic regimes. On the one hand, education increases one's resources, and therefore one's capacity to participate in politics. In addition, it increases a citizen's exposure to state communications, which might increase their proclivity to support the ruling party. However, as Croke, et al. argue, education can also increase one's capacity to think critically, and therefore more education may lead to increased support for opposition parties. We may expect to find an inverted U-shaped relationship between education and partisanship, whereby the least and most educated citizens are the least likely to

join the ruling party. As Geddes and Zaller (1989) find in authoritarian-era Brazil, citizens with the strongest levels of support for the autocratic regime are those who receive messages from the state, but are not inclined to criticize or question these messages. Thus although partisans of all types may be more likely to *receive* the message that voting is a civic duty, ruling party partisans are more likely to accept and internalize this message. Further, I propose that those ruling party partisans who have done so will be more likely to participate in elections.

Opposition Partisans

Opposition supporters, on the other hand, are politically committed to democratization over stability and regime continuity. Although opposition partisans might have diverse goals, such as to improve corruption or governance (Beissinger 2013), democracy is the bedrock of the opposition's platform, and partisans in particular (not just anti-regimes nonpartisans) should be most affected by the symbolic relationship between the act of voting and democratization. I hypothesize that opposition partisans should be less likely than ruling party partisans to believe that voting is a civic duty, and should be less motivated into action by this belief. Opposition partisans are more likely to criticize the status quo, and instead value the benefits of democratization. Though democracy is largely seen as a valence issue (Bleck and van de Walle 2013), I argue that opposition partisans should be less likely than other types of citizens to see the current system as democratic, and also more willing to vote when they see it as a means to democratization.

This political orientation likely springs from two possible sources. First is through indoctrination by opposition parties. Opposition parties in electoral autocracies are oftentimes situated geographically; they may have historical roots in a particular region or strongholds in specific localities, and are sometimes tied to a distinct identity group (Letsa 2016b). For example, one of Tanzania's strongest opposition parties, the Civic United Front, has historically received most of its electoral support from the semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar. Similarly in Mexico under the hegemonic PRI, the opposition PAN party had historic strongholds in Guanajuato and Jalisco in the Center-West, and in Baja California and Chihuahua in the North. In Cameroon, the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) always receives the largest number of its Parliamentary seats from Anglophone districts in the Northwest Region. Socioeconomic elites that hail from such opposition strongholds are likely to join the party networks of the opposition instead of the ruling party. In these historic strongholds, the local government and associational networks are dominated by the opposition instead of the ruling party, and thus elites are more likely to join these networks and adhere to the opposition's political stance of democratization. By geographic happenstance, these socioeconomic elites are more likely to be socialized into the ranks of the opposition instead of the ruling party.

The second path towards an oppositional political orientation can instead occur more independently of the opposition parties themselves, when individuals have had negative experiences with the ruling party. Citizens who have been spurned by the ruling party, perhaps by being denied contracts by the government, fired from public sector jobs, or harassed by security forces, may turn to the opposition seeking an

alternative ideology. This pathway may account for opposition partisans who live outside of opposition strongholds. Whether they come to the opposition independently or through social networks, I hypothesize that civic duty is less important for opposition partisans, who instead are motivated when they see voting as a chance to democratize the political system.

Though most citizens support democracy, not all of them think of the relationship between voting and democratization in the same way. Ruling party supporters should be more likely to think of their country as democratic anyways, and therefore less likely to think that voting is important for its ability to democratize the system. Opposition partisans in electoral autocracies should be less likely to believe that their country is democratic, so although opposition partisans may be less likely to think that voting will improve democracy, those that do believe in this logic should be more likely to vote. Opposition supporters who do not believe voting can improve democracy should see the act of voting as pointless, and opt out of elections entirely.

Although from a normative perspective this benevolent desire for democracy is seemingly altruistic, it may be just as instrumental as it is expressive. For citizens who live in opposition districts that may represent repressed or marginalized identity groups, or for citizens who have been scorned by the state, a desire for “democracy” may be tantamount to a “change in leadership.” These citizens would presumably be less wedded to democratic transition if one of their leaders were in charge instead.²⁷ Either way, however, these opposition partisans should be more likely to vote when they feel that the act can lead to an opening in the political status quo (even if only

²⁷ Not unlike ruling party partisans, who may certainly agree that democracy is important, but who are happy enough with the party in power, and therefore more likely to vote in support of the status quo.

symbolic), and this motivation should have little effect on ruling party partisans.

Further, for many (if not most) opposition partisans, the connection between voting and democracy has an expressive element related to their aspirational hopes for regime change or democratization.

Conversely, we might believe that if citizens in general are ‘burned out’ on the belief that voting can lead to better patronage outcomes, then opposition supporters should be equally skeptical of the relationship between voting and democracy. On the one hand, the theory supports this point: on average, opposition partisans should be less likely than ruling party partisans to believe that voting can improve democracy. On the other hand, the comparison between voting and patronage and voting and democracy is not entirely parallel. Voting out of an expectation for patronage is a purely instrumental act based on an expected reciprocal exchange. While voting to improve democracy can potentially have instrumental motivations (the desire to ‘kick the bums out’), citizens who see voting in this way may indeed be more ‘burned out’ on the idea that voting is linked to democratization. Conversely, when voting to improve democracy is an expression of one’s identity as a democrat or opposition partisan, then the continued act of voting does not necessarily need to lead to concrete gains for democracy for one to continue voting. It is the expression of one’s identity that motivates someone to action, not the expected instrumental outcomes of that act.

Nonpartisans

Finally, because nonpartisans are less likely to possess the status or material resources to actively engage within the autocratic political space, I argue that they are

only likely to vote when they are susceptible to being mobilized. As Gerber and Green (2015) note, “In electoral systems where bribes and other material inducements are rare, incentives to vote are thought to be social in nature: voters are rewarded by the approbation of others, while nonvoters are criticized or shunned” (144). Even if “bribes” are present, it is unclear why such social pressures would be entirely absent. Even during autocratic electoral campaigns, political parties mobilize citizens to vote for them, and nonpartisans who feel this pressure should be more likely to vote. Nonpartisans who are not pressured by their families or communities to vote should be more likely to remain at home on election day.

To my knowledge, this point has been most clearly articulated by Schaffer (1998), who argues that in new democracies, such as Senegal, citizens (particularly those with little education), see elections as “...an occasion to reinforce bonds of community solidarity” (96). Schaffer argues that citizens who strongly value their group or community membership (such as rural villagers) should feel the most pressure to vote in solidarity with these groups. In contrast, “Individuals who belong to several nonoverlapping groups, none of which is essential to their welfare, are likely to feel less pressure to conform their (electoral) behavior to the expectations of any one group” (ibid, 98). Urban citizens with higher levels of socioeconomic status are more likely to belong to such diversified networks, and therefore should be less likely to feel social pressure to participate in elections.

Previous theories proposed by Magaloni (2006) and Blaydes (2011) might argue that this mobilization is centered on material incentives provided by the ruling party. If nonpartisans tend to come from less-privileged societal groups, they may be

more likely to be targeted by vote-buying campaigns since their votes are relatively cheaper to “buy.” However, for many electoral autocracies, and particularly electoral autocracies in the developing world, the state simply does not possess the resources to provide private transfers to the majority of its citizens. Thus where vote-buying is common, it likely targets the poor, who are likely to be nonpartisans. But where the state cannot provide these transfers, I argue that it mobilizes citizens through old-fashioned grass-roots campaigns, which have been found to be generally effective at boosting turnout in democratic contexts (Donald P. Green and Schwam-Baird 2015).

Since partisans require less persuasion to vote, such mobilization campaigns are more likely to target nonpartisans,²⁸ and nonpartisans who are more susceptible to communal and familial pressures are more likely to be successfully mobilized. Indeed, Bratton, et al. (2004) have argued for emerging democracies in sub-Saharan Africa that “male party activists explicitly target women, especially less educated rural women, because they perceive them as ‘easier to organize’” (165). Just as citizens from privileged socioeconomic groups are likely to feel societal pressures to become partisan community leaders, so too do citizens from under-privileged socioeconomic groups feel social pressure to *follow* these community leaders during elections.

This form of mobilization in electoral autocracies can oftentimes be very local and very personal. Scholars of voting behavior in Africa have long noted that ethnic communities tend to vote together to support a particular candidate during elections.

²⁸ It is important to note that the Americanist literature has found that political parties work hardest to mobilize their own partisans and focus less on uncommitted nonpartisans who are both less likely to vote and also less likely to vote for the party doing the mobilizing (compared, at least, to the partisans of that party). In Cameroon, where partisanship is exceedingly low, and communal identities are extremely salient, it is likely that nonpartisans are most susceptible to mobilization, especially where voters only have one choice at the ballot box—the RDPC.

As Schaffer (1998) notes in his book about Senegal when it was dominated by the *Parti socialiste du Sénégal* (PS):

“...an elderly farmer in the village of Kab Gaye offered [the following reasons] for voting for Abdou Diouf in 1993, even though he personally strongly supported Diouf’s main opponent, Abdoulaye Wade of the PDS: ‘I voted for Diouf because of my relatives and the people with whom I live in this village. Before the elections, everyone got together and decided to vote for Diouf. I voted for him out of respect for that decision.’ Motivated by deference to his family and neighbors, he implicitly acknowledges the powerful moral obligations imposed on him by the network of reciprocal social relations to which he belongs” (96).

Citizens such as this villager in Senegal vote because they feel significant pressure from their families and communities to turn out on election day. Partisans and local party leadership mobilize such citizens to vote, even though they might otherwise be disinclined to participate in politics.

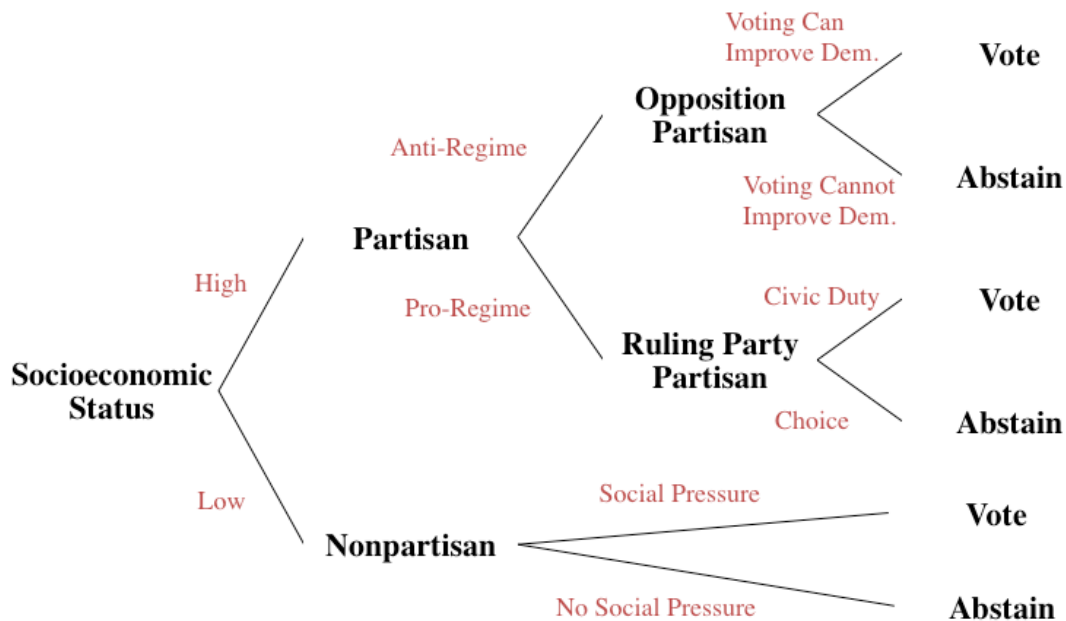
Overall, I argue that there is considerable variation in voting behavior in autocratic regimes. While most studies have focused either on divides between the opposition and the ruling party or on who is most likely to sell their vote, these analyses have overlooked an important group of voters in autocratic elections—nonpartisans—and have not yet systematically considered the non-economic reasons people have for voting in these regimes.

The Relationship between Partisanship and the Voting Act

Taken together, I argue that in electoral autocracies socioeconomic status can help to predict partisanship, and that, in turn, political attitudes toward the regime determine partisan type: ruling party or opposition partisanship. Given this

trichotomous framework of partisanship, three different voting motivations can help predict voter turnout: a sense of civic duty, a belief that voting can improve democracy, and a feeling of social pressure to participate. Whereas a sense of civic duty should predict turnout amongst ruling party partisans, it should have little effect on opposition partisans and nonpartisans. Similarly, a belief that voting can improve democracy should predict voter turnout for opposition partisans, but should not predict turnout for ruling party partisans or nonpartisans. Finally, a feeling of social pressure should predict turnout amongst nonpartisans, but not ruling party or opposition partisans. This argument is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Relationship between Partisanship and the Voting Act



Overall, this is not a deterministic argument. First, there are likely many citizens with low socioeconomic status that identify with a political party, and vice versa. I argue that socioeconomic status and political beliefs can help us better understand partisanship, but there are likely other factors that can explain this variation as well.²⁹ Second, it is important to note that many nonpartisans likely hold political beliefs about the regime that may motivate them to vote, and, likewise, many partisans may be motivated for social reasons. On average, however, I argue that different types of partisans tend to vote for different reasons.

In addition, the theory presented here makes the assumption that partisanship is exogenous to voting motivations. This assumption is largely supported by the literature on American voter behavior, which has mostly found this to be the case (Whiteley 1988). In general, American partisanship is exceedingly stable over time (Green and Palmquist 1994). Although national level measures of partisanship fluctuate over time, it is unusual for partisans—especially strong partisans—to switch parties or identify as independents (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, especially Section III). Because partisanship usually forms early in life, scholars have argued that attachment to a party predicts voting behavior, as opposed to the other way around (Campbell et al. 1960).

Similarly, I argue that socioeconomic status and political attitudes are causally prior to partisanship, and that, in turn, partisanship is causally prior to the voting act. First, it seems unlikely that partisanship would significantly alter one's socioeconomic status or political beliefs. Although on occasion one may benefit

²⁹ For example, political geography (Letsa 2016, 2017).

economically from one's connection to the ruling party, it is unlikely that such benefits are systematic or far-reaching within the population as a whole. Further, feeling close to a political party is even less likely to change one's level of education, age, gender, or rural or urban locality. In addition, while partisanship may deepen one's political beliefs about the regime in power, it is unlikely to fundamentally alter these beliefs. For this to be true, we would have to find plausible the counterfactual, that someone with anti-regime beliefs would be just as likely to join the ruling party as they would the opposition, and vice-versa, and that only socialization into that party would alter their beliefs. Without panel data, this possibility cannot be ruled out, but it generally seems implausible.

Second, the theory assumes that these political beliefs and their impact on partisanship are causally prior to the voting act. In general, the act of voting should not cause partisanship (though it may deepen it), and it likewise should not strongly affect socioeconomic status or political beliefs. Instead, the decision to vote, and the motivations for doing so, should stem from one's partisanship, and in turn, one's socioeconomic status and prior political beliefs about the state. In all, I argue that based on one's partisanship, different types of citizens have different social and expressive reasons for voting.

Alternative Non-Economic Explanations

In addition to these expressive and social reasons for voting in autocratic elections, there are two other potential non-economic reasons citizens might vote: ethnicity and electoral violence or intimidation. The literature on African politics

strongly suggests that people vote in elections in Africa as an expression of their ethnic identity. In addition, scholars have also written about the role that intimidation or violence plays in affecting electoral behavior.

Ethnicity

An enormous literature on political parties and electoral behavior in sub-Saharan Africa has noted that “partisan” voting tends to cohere around ethnic cleavages more than ideological or political ones. On the one hand, African political parties organize their constituencies around convenient ethnic groupings in order to garner more votes (Posner 2005). On the other hand, voters see it in their best interest to support candidates of their ethnic group who will better represent them nationally (Wantchekon 2003). By and large, this behavior is seen as instrumental: ethnicity acts as an obvious organizational heuristic in societies where class and (therefore) ideological identities are weak. Citizens vote for their co-ethnics because they believe that a representative from their own ethnic group is more likely to deliver patronage or pork-barrel spending than representatives from other ethnic groups. While it is undeniable that, generally speaking, ethnicity plays a strong role in African elections, it is less relevant to the theory presented here for three reasons.

First, as an instrumental motivator for voters, ethnicity should be less salient in electoral autocracies. If elections are noncompetitive, then the high-stakes game for ethnic representation should be less important. Large-umbrella, catchall ruling parties in autocratic countries tend to be more inclusive ethnically, precisely because they do not need to use ethnic cleavages to compete for voters. Wahman (2015) has shown

across all types of regimes in sub-Saharan Africa that incumbent parties are much more likely to be ethnically inclusive than opposition parties. In electoral autocracies, where the incumbent party has dominated for decades, this high level of ethnic inclusion makes the need to organize around identity less important.

At the presidential level, presidents-for-life are likely to have a “core” constituency of co-ethnics; but unless their ethnic group represents a majority in the population, it is not in their best interest to appeal to this identity cleavage during elections. While legislative elections tend to be much more competitive locally in electoral autocracies (even if the party itself will never lose a majority in parliament), legislative elections are less likely to be ethnically-driven since candidates represent smaller, usually ethnically-homogenous, constituencies.³⁰ Since legislative seats represent smaller constituencies, most of the time local candidates for the same seat will all hail from the same ethnic group, particularly for rural constituencies where ethnicity tends to be more salient anyways. For example, in autocratic Ethiopia, “Both electoral laws and party rules virtually guarantee that voters at the district level will choose between candidates from the same ethnic background” (Arriola 2003, 116). Therefore, electoral autocracies in general should feature less ethnic politicking than democracies, where the stakes for ethnic representation are much higher.

Second, if ethnic voting is seen as an “expressive” motivation, as opposed to an instrumental one, then this type of incentive can largely be subsumed by socially-

³⁰ Of course, no constituency is completely homogenous ethnically. Most rural constituencies, however, are dominated by one autochthonous ethnic group and feature one or more minority migrant groups. A minority migrant group may have an important voice in local politics, but few rural communities feature large enough ethnic variation to support long-term ethnic cleavages during election cycles. Urban constituencies tend to be much more ethnically diverse, but also tend to feature less ethnic mobilization during elections because ethnic identity is less salient in urban settings.

motivated voting. If citizens vote with their ethnic group out of a sense of in-group attachment, then citizens most susceptible to social pressure will be more likely to vote. I argue that this expressive type of ethnically-motivated voting may sometimes be categorized under a more general form of community mobilization. Whether appeals to vote are motivated by familial ties, community custom, or ethnic influences from the local chief, they are socially-based stimuli. While it is difficult to disentangle the mechanism—whether one votes with their ethnic group to fulfill an expressive desire to vote with the group or out of an instrumental desire to obtain patronage—according to the theory presented in this dissertation, nonpartisans should be more sensitive to these types of ethnic appeals.

Finally, for many of the reasons related to the features of electoral autocracies outlined above (as well as others), Cameroon simply does not feature strong ethnic parties. Ethnicity is critical to understanding elite-level politics, but, partially because the ruling party is not a mass-mobilizing party (see Chapter Three), it does not play heavily in electoral politics. Writing about Cameroon, van de Walle (1993) notes:

“...clientelism does not have the political role that it has in countries with vibrant machine politics. Individuals in the state elite do not cultivate an autonomous power base by promoting a given region or ethnic group, or even a functional category like trade unionists or teachers. It may be important for the Ewondo people (or any other group) that there is an Ewondo minister in Biya’s cabinet—and certainly informal interviewing suggests it does—but it does not appear that the Ewondo minister feels obliged to do anything substantial for that ethnic group” (369).

Politicians and elites do not win favor with the regime by their capacity to mobilize ethnic blocs or constituencies, and therefore elites do not tend to appeal to voters based on ethnic appeals.

Historically, Cameroon is usually demarcated ethnically by three major political “identity” blocks: the Southerners, the Northerners, and the so-called ‘Grassfielders’ or Anglophones and Bamiléké. Biya’s own ethnic group, the Beti, reside in the South of Cameroon as well as around the capital, Yaoundé in the Centre region, but are not a very large ethnic group. They are largely considered important politically because the President is Beti himself. The Fulani ethnic group of the North represents about ten percent of Cameroon’s population, but is a plurality in the Muslim north where their language acts as a lingua franca. Cameroon’s first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo (Cameroon’s only president before Biya), hailed from the Fulani ethnic group, and thus the Fulani have been historically powerful in Cameroonian postcolonial history. Nonetheless, upon Biya’s peaceful succession, the Fulani found their role in politics increasingly diminished, leading to their fairly strong opposition of Biya, especially during the 1992 transition to multipartyism. The Northern (and markedly Fulani) political party, the UNDP, under the leadership of Maïgari Bello Bouba, won most of the opposition seats in Cameroon’s first (1992) elections when the SDF boycotted. In the following presidential election, Bouba came in third place, just after the SDF’s John Fru Ndi, with almost 20 percent of the popular vote. However, since the transition, the Fulani and the UNDP were successfully co-opted by the Biya regime and no longer represent the hotbed of opposition they once did during the transition. Bouba was invited into the Biya administration after the 1997 presidential elections, and the UNDP officially backed Biya in the 2002 presidential elections.

Hailing from the Northwest and West regions of Cameroon, the Grassfielders represent an amalgamation of many different fragmented ethnic groups. The largest of these, the Bamiléké, traditionally a hierarchical and strongly centralized ethnic group, are known for dominating business and trade across Cameroon (Arriola 2012, Chapter 6), though they have a long history of political opposition to the regime (Joseph 1977; Konings 1996). Today, they represent a large minority in the commercial capital of Douala, as well as most regions of Cameroon.

However, the Bamiléké are largely Francophones, and therefore linguistically and culturally divided from their cousins across the border in the Anglophone Northwest. While the Bamiléké and the broader Anglophone Grassfielders ethnic union (under the SDF) coalesced into a fearful opposition to the Biya regime during the transition, complicated linguistic, ethnic and ideological divisions have fractured the SDF in the past twenty-five years. During the transition, the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest stood united linguistically, but ethnic and political divisions have driven the Southwest away from the SDF. Inversely, the relative ethnic unity between the Northwest Grassfielders and the Western Bamiléké was ultimately riven by linguistic divides over the Anglophone question. The regime has done everything in its power to nurture the seeds of these divisions, particularly through co-opting prominent Bamiléké business interests as well as Southwesterners (Arriola 2012, Chapter 6; Nyamnjoh 1999, 108).

The reality is that Cameroon is one of the most ethnically fragmented countries in sub-Saharan Africa. There are upwards of 250 distinct ethnic groups within Cameroon's borders, and the only group that constitutes a large enough plurality to

represent a political threat, the so-called ‘Grassfielders’, is really an amalgamation of dozens of ethnically distinct communities. As Cameroon scholar Neville Rubin describes it: “Cameroun presents an ethnic pattern of almost unrivaled complexity, a good deal of which is still shrouded in uncertainty. Attempts to classify the different ethnic or tribal groups have rested on linguistic or cultural characteristics, but have produced major disagreements among ethnographers” (Rubin 1972, 9). Further, the Anglophone-Francophone and North-South divides have dominated identity politics in Cameroon, further muddying the potential for ethnicity as an organizing political factor. In general, ethnic-balancing in Cameroon has historically been an elite game (van de Walle 1993), and while it is possible that ethnicity plays a stronger role in political behavior for other electoral autocracies, it is difficult to view it as systematically critical for understanding voter turnout in Cameroon.

Electoral Violence and Intimidation

While electoral violence seems like a bread-and-butter issue of electoral autocracies, it has not actually been systematically studied within the context of these types of regimes.³¹ Stable, long-term electoral autocracies, such as Malaysia, Tanzania, or Cameroon actually tend to feature relatively little electoral violence, at least after they have transitioned from closed autocracies. Electoral violence appears to be more common in unstable or transitioning regimes, such as Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, or Kenya (Goldsmith 2015). However, there are important exceptions, such as Zimbabwe or Ethiopia. Further, low-level intimidation during elections—shy of

³¹ For example, Gandhi and Lust-Okar’s (2009) review of autocratic elections barely touches on the topic of electoral violence.

outright violence itself—is likely to be much more common in autocratic elections than is electoral violence.

Although the dissertation considers electoral violence and intimidation throughout the empirical analysis, these factors are not a feature of the theory. Violence is not a major attribute of Cameroonian elections, and is therefore dismissed outright as a key motive for voting. Nonetheless, where violence is prevalent in autocratic elections, such as in Zimbabwe or Ethiopia, it is likely the most important factor to understanding electoral behavior. General intimidation, on the other hand, is a much more prevalent factor in electoral autocracies around the world. In Cameroon, however, it does not account for a significant amount of variation in voter behavior. Overall, when asked if they were threatened in any way during the previous election, only 3.5 percent of respondents reported intimidation. Further, 75.6 percent of respondents reported feeling “completely free” (and a further 16.0 percent felt somewhat free) during elections to vote for whomever they wanted.³² Because intimidation does not appear to be a widespread consideration for Cameroonian voters, it does not feature prominently in the theory presented in this dissertation. However, I do include these measures in the empirical analysis in order to probe their plausibility as a systematic predictor of voting behavior.

Survey Design

The following two chapters test the plausibility of this theory of partisanship and voting behavior by looking at data from an original 85-question public opinion

³² Data from the author’s survey.

survey conducted in Cameroon from September 2014 through April 2015. Seventeen of the questions are common to the Afrobarometer Round 5 and Round 6 instruments (not including demographic questions). Appendix 1 presents the comparative results of these common questions, revealing the relatively strong replicability of the survey. An original survey was conducted because existing surveys in electoral autocracies, notably the Afrobarometer, do not ask direct questions about social and expressive reasons for voting. In order to better understand these expressive motivations, it was necessary to design a novel instrument incorporating questions about civic duty, the relationship between voting and democracy, and the role that community expectations play during elections.

Sampling

The survey was designed to be nationally representative, but it was only implemented in seven of Cameroon's ten regions because the three northern regions were inaccessible due to the activity of Boko Haram. Therefore, all results are only representative to the seven southern regions of Cameroon. Within the seven regions the survey included, 15 electoral departments sampled on two significant characteristics: 1) whether the department was urban or rural (with a fifty-fifty distribution), and 2) whether the department was an opposition area, an RDPC area, or an area that "swings" between the two. The 15 sampled electoral departments are presented in Table 4. Table 5 lists all of the sites visited within the seven regions. Appendix 2 presents a map of all the sampled districts in relation to this sampling design of opposition stronghold, RDPC strongholds, and swing districts.

Table 4: Sampling Design

	Opposition Area	Swing Area	RDPC Area
Urban	Mezam Centre Noun Mémé	Wouri East Wouri Centre Mifi	Mfoundi Océan
Rural	Boyo Momo East	Nyong et Kelle Mezam South	Haut Nyong Mvila Manyu

Post-stratification weights were created to compensate for over-sampling in opposition and swing areas as well as to readjust urban/rural sampling within these district types to match the national distribution. The post-stratification weights range in value from 0.196 to 2.300. Opposition and swing regions were over-sampled in order to provide enough within-sample variation for sub-group analysis. Within each enumeration area, the survey was administered by myself and four research assistants on a random walk to willing and informed respondents aged 23 years or older, and reached a total of 2,399 respondents. Twenty-three years was chosen because the voting age in Cameroon is 20, and I wanted to interview only citizens who would have been eligible to vote in the 2013 parliamentary and legislative elections.

Table 5: Sampled Areas

Region	Département	Arrondissement
Centre	Mfoundi	Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II
	Nyong et Kellé	Matomb, Bot Makak, Ngog-Mapubi
East	Haut Nyong	Abong-Mbang, Angossas, Doumé
Littoral	Wouri Est	Douala III, Douala V
	Wouri Centre	Douala I
Northwest	Boyo	Belo, Fundong
	Mezam Centre	Bamenda II, Bamenda III
	Mezam South	Santa
	Momo East	Batibo
South	Mvila	Ebolowa, Ngoulemakong
	Océan	Kribi
Southwest	Mémé (Kumba Centre)	Kumba I, Kumba II, Kumba III
	Manyu	Mamfé
West	Mifi	Bafoussam I, Bafoussam II, Bafoussam III
	Noun Centre	Foumban, Foubot

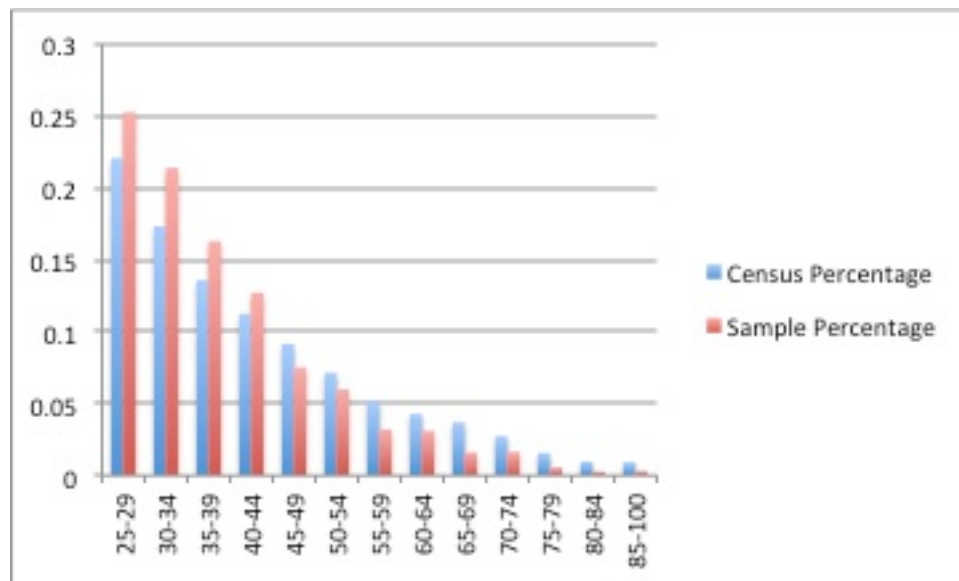
Characteristics of the Sample

Within the weighted sample, 48.8 percent of respondents were male, and 51.2 percent were female. The age distribution of respondents is presented below in Figure 3, in comparison to the distribution of age in the general population.³³ The majority of respondents were 40 years old or younger. Education was normally distributed around a mean of ‘some secondary schooling.’ The weighted percentages for level of education within the sample are reported in Table 6 below. As noted earlier, the survey does not cover the three northern regions of Cameroon. Therefore Christians are overrepresented in the sample (32.4 percent Catholic, 26.59 percent Protestant, 8.5

³³Cameroon census data projected to 2015.

percent Pentecostalist, and 20.5 percent non-denominational Christian). Muslims represent 7.7 percent of the sample (compared to 13.8 found by the Afrobarometer, Round 6), and a handful of others were also interviewed, including two Bahai respondents, a Mormon, and a dozen Jehovah's Witnesses. In addition there are more than 125 self-reported ethnic groups represented in the sample.

Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents' Ages



Socioeconomic status was a little more difficult to measure within the survey framework. A series of questions, mostly borrowed from the Afrobarometer, were included to assess the level of income of each respondent's household. Respondents were asked whether they owned various household items, including a radio, a television, a car, a motorcycle, a mobile phone, or a computer. The average number of items owned is three items, with a normal distribution around this average. The most

common combination across the sample was for a respondent to own a television, a radio, and a mobile phone.

Table 6: Level of Education in the Sample

Level of Education	Weighted Proportion of Respondents
No formal education	2.86
Informal education only	2.58
Some primary schooling	7.71
Primary school completed	17.72
Some secondary schooling	31.73
Secondary school completed	15.68
Post-secondary school technical diploma	5.66
Some university	6.42
University completed	5.89
Post-graduate degree	3.75

In addition, about 22 percent of the sample had running water inside of their house, 35 percent only had a well or tap within their household's compound, and 43 percent had to fetch water outside of their compound (either at a community source or at a nearby river, stream, or lake). Similarly, 28 percent of the sample had a toilet within their house, while 62 percent had a latrine within their compound instead. Ten percent had no toilet or latrine within the compound. Finally, the plurality of respondents was self-employed (43.8 percent), for example as a farmer or market trader. Twenty-one percent of the sample was unemployed and looking for work and 17 percent were formally employed full time. Eleven percent was not looking for work; this included students, housewives, and retired persons.

The following chapter uses this survey data to better understand the demographic and political differences between ruling party partisans, opposition partisans, and nonpartisans in Cameroon. Chapter Four uses the data to uncover the different reasons citizens have for participating in elections in Cameroon. Overall, the survey data indicate that non-economic motivations for voting—expressive and social motivations—are much better at explaining variation in self-reported voter turnout than economic reasons for voting. Further, different non-economic reasons for voting have stronger relationships amongst the different groups of partisans. While ruling party partisans are much more likely to vote when they believe voting is a civic duty, opposition partisans are more likely to vote when they believe it is a democratizing act, and nonpartisans are most likely to vote when they are mobilized to do so by their families and communities.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF PARTISANSHIP

In order to better understand the meaning of partisanship in Cameroon, this chapter begins with a discussion of Cameroon’s postcolonial political party history. Though the same party has essentially been in power since independence, it has survived multiple permutations as the politics of Cameroon have changed over time. The chapter also discusses the introduction of opposition parties in the 1990s, and the role the most important opposition parties have played in reshaping the meaning of partisanship. It is impossible to understand the meaning or content of partisanship in electoral autocracies without a theoretical contextualization of both opposition parties as well as ruling parties. The second half of the chapter uses survey data in order to explore the demographic and political determinants of partisanship in Cameroon today.

Cameroon’s political experience is not unusual in regards to the electoral autocracies of sub-Saharan Africa.³⁴ Although Cameroon lacked much of the instability that other African countries faced during the 1970s and 1980s—such as in Togo, Burkina Faso, or Sudan—it is the poster child for “big man rule” in Africa. Since the turn to multipartyism in the 1990s, the ruling party has relied on a number of

³⁴These include Angola, Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

common tactics to remain in power, such as altering the constitution in order to concentrate power in the hands of the executive branch, relying on gerrymandering to win artificially high numbers of legislative seats, and using various tactics to delegitimize and split the opposition (Albaugh 2011, 2014, Chapter 6; Schedler 2002a). On the whole, Cameroon looks similar to many electoral autocracies in Africa that feature a powerful incumbent party surrounded by many smaller, weaker parties, situated within a presidential system that magnifies the powers of the executive (van de Walle 2003). As the following section will show, with only a handful of setbacks, the ruling party's dominance in politics has been gradually cemented over the 60 years of its rule.

Nationalism, Independence, and the First Parties of Cameroon

Cameroon has a long history of party politics, predating the transition to multipartyism in the 1990s and stretching back to the post-World War II era under colonialism. Like many African nations, Cameroon had a troubled independence process, and although Francophone Cameroon emerged successfully from French colonization in 1960 under President Ahmadou Ahidjo and his *Union Camerounaise* (UC), this independence was hard-fought and left Cameroon politically fragile. After World War II, African nationalism planted deep roots in Cameroon. As France began experimenting with limited self-governance, promoting a handful of pro-France political parties in Cameroon, the *Union des populations du Cameroun* (UPC), founded in 1948 and led by Ruben Um Nyobé, quickly turned from a group of trade unionists to a “radical” nationalist party by the early 1950s (Joseph 1977). Demanding

independence from France within ten years and reunification with the Anglophone regions of the former German Kamerun (then a United Nations Trust Territory under the management of British-controlled Nigeria),³⁵ the French outlawed the UPC in 1955 as its leadership went underground and began the process of turning the UPC from a political party into an insurgent movement (Gardinier 1963, 66–71).

Although the French brutally crushed the UPC rebellion, assassinating Um Nyobé in 1958 and taking a “scorched earth” policy to the UPC’s strongholds in the West (LeVine 1964, 160–61), independence was ultimately granted to French-controlled Cameroon in 1960. With the UPC driven underground, the French backed Ahmadou Ahidjo, a northerner, to lead Cameroon into independence; less due to his popularity, and more because of his compliance with the French policies of independence accompanied by continued French political and economic influence.

Meanwhile, in 1961, immediately after Francophone Cameroon’s independence, two of the four British Cameroonian territories voted to become a part of Francophone Cameroon (the two northern territories voted to join Nigeria). This decision to join Cameroon as a linguistic minority region has dominated political considerations in Western Cameroon for decades, and continues to strongly influence national politics today (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997). Anglophone Cameroon agreed to join Francophone Cameroon under a federalist system, with an Anglophone prime

³⁵ Similar to Togo, the German colony of Kamerun was split between the French and the British after the German loss of World War I. Though the areas were technically League of Nations Mandates and then United Nations Trust Territories, the French and the British more or less administered their respective Cameroonian territories as they did their other colonies (Gardinier 1963; LeVine 1964; Rubin 1972). The smaller, but more densely populated British Cameroons were integrated politically and economically into Nigeria. The much larger French Cameroon was administered as its own territorial unit.

minister, John Ngu Foncha, who held considerable authority over politics in the Anglophone region during the reunification era (Gardinier 1963, Chapter 9).

During the independence and reunification process, Ahidjo adopted a policy of cooptation and inclusion,³⁶ side-lining his northern base in the short-term and including members of ethnically diverse political parties in his early cabinets (Bayart 1979). By building a diverse coalition of support, specifically based on a North-South axis, Ahidjo was slowly able to consolidate power within the UC, officially turning Cameroon into a one-party “democracy” in 1966, as he dissolved several Western and Eastern-based political parties, establishing the new *Union nationale Camerounais* (UNC). The UNC would continue to dominate Cameroonian politics until Biya’s ascension to the presidency in 1982. Elections for both the National Assembly and the President were held (non-concurrently) every five years from 1970-1988. In 1970, 1975, and 1980, Ahidjo was re-elected president with 100 percent of the vote.

As Ahidjo consolidated power within the UNC, he simultaneously worked tirelessly to coopt and sideline the Anglophone Westerners and break apart the federalist constitution. In 1969, Ahidjo amended the constitution to give himself sole power to appoint the prime ministers of each federated state. With this new power, Ahidjo nominated the sympathetic Solomon Muna to replace Foncha in the Anglophone West. Further, between 1961 and 1972, Ahidjo slowly eroded the powers of state governments by transferring authority over the police, civil service, prisons,

³⁶ Ahidjo is famous for his masterfully-executed strategy of ethnic balancing, which many cite as the basis for his long and stable rule. For his part, Biya has attempted to replicate this strategy, though many criticize his favoritism of southerners. Nonetheless, since the turn to multipartyism, the four most prestigious national offices—the Presidency, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, and the President of the Senate—are always evenly divided between the four major ethnic groups (Beti/southerners, Sawa/Douala, Fulani/northerners, and Grassfielders/Anglophones).

education, and import and export tariffs from the state governments to the federal government (Takougang and Krieger 1998, 49). Finally, in a 1972 referendum, 99.99 percent of Cameroonians approved of a new unitary constitution in which political power was heavily consolidated in the executive branch, and Anglophone Cameroon lost its autonomy.

Political Parties in Postcolonial Cameroon

Although the UNC was the only political party in Cameroon for twenty years of Ahidjo's ascendancy, it could only briefly, during the culmination of the heady decolonization period, be considered a mass-based party (Bienen 1978, 40; Schachter 1961). As Bayart noted in 1979, by the early 1970s, Ahidjo had successfully personalized all political power in Cameroon; the party, the administration and the regime were all directly controlled by the President. As a result. "The head of state drew his legitimacy from the exercise of power itself: *de facto* legitimacy justified by his success was only later transmuted into a secondary legitimacy, democratic and *de jure*" (Bayart 1979, 143).³⁷ Ahidjo fully controlled the political machine, and the party was a tool of co-optation for elites. The masses were mobilized to vote during elections, but otherwise not expected to actively participate in party politics, or politics of any sort for that matter (Bayart 1978).

In the 1960s and 70s in Africa, the exclusion of the masses from the single party was not unique to Cameroon.³⁸ Kasfir (1976) notes this growing trend of

³⁷ Author's translation.

³⁸ The one partial exception to this trend would be Tanzania, where a general effort was made to make CCM partisans out of ordinary citizens based on a Marxist-inspired ideology of African socialism.

political demobilization across Africa in the post-independence period. Despite relatively high levels of inclusion and participation during decolonization, Kasfir points to the common attraction for leaders across the continent to strengthen their control of the political arena by excluding the number of participants. In particular, he highlights the role of policies designed to strengthen the central administration at the expense of participatory institutions, such as local governments, opposition parties, and legislatures (229-30). After sidelining alternative sources of popular participation, leaders eventually gutted their own ruling parties by rendering them useless. As power became increasingly centralized and competitive elections were abolished, the purpose and functions of the ruling party withered, eroding popular participation with it (244-45).

As Bienen (1978) writes of Africa during this period, "The problem is that, insofar as 'single mass-party authoritarian regime' implied a monolithic party whose control extended out into all areas of the countryside enabling it to mobilize political and economic resources from a central core, such regimes did not exist" (64). Bienen likens the African single-party regime during the postcolonial period to the American party machine, where ideological or programmatic issues are minimized, and popular mobilization is limited to clientelistic or patronage-based relationships between periphery and center. Cameroon would arguably be a textbook case of such party organization.

Nonetheless, the political environment in Cameroon pivoted unexpectedly with the transition to the Biya presidency in 1982. An (apparently temporarily) ailing Ahidjo retired abruptly on November 4, resigning most of his political authority to a

relative political unknown: Paul Biya. Although in many ways (and for many reasons) history has largely remembered Ahidjo as a founding father and unifier of Cameroonians who presided over a period of sustained economic growth, by the late 1970s, many Cameroonians viewed Ahidjo and his personalistic state as brutally autocratic. Biya was thus seen in 1982 as a symbol of change, political liberalization, and hope. Indeed, Biya came to power with a message of “a new society where there would be a greater degree of tolerance, individual liberty, and freer exchange of ideas” (Takougang and Krieger 1998, 63; Biya 1987, 36–37). The troubled transition, however, dashed many of these hopes.

Although at first Ahidjo strongly backed Biya, lending Biya much of his political authority during the months following his resignation, Ahidjo remained chair of the UNC, attempting to maintain at least partial control of the political environment. Further, the longer Ahidjo remained out of office, the more it appeared he wished to regain the presidency. In an interview with the *Cameroon Tribune* in late January 1983, Ahidjo indicated that the UNC (which he still controlled) was responsible for determining policy; the government itself had only the power of implementation (Takougang and Krieger 1998, 68). Further, as time progressed, Ahidjo began to use his power within the UNC to actively undermine Biya’s authority (ibid, 69-70). This rift came to a head in April 1984, when a coup attempt by several northern officers was successfully thwarted. Although Ahidjo denied any involvement in the coup plot, he was tried in absentia (while in exile in France) and found guilty. The coup attempt drastically altered Biya’s approach toward governing, as he tightened his control over

the military, his cabinet, the party, and the institutions of the state in general (Takougang and Krieger 1998).

In an attempt to establish undisputed control over the ruling party, Biya undertook an initiative to rebrand the UNC. At the 1985 UNC congress in Bamenda, Biya officially changed the name of the party to the *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais* (RDPC). He also attempted to deliver on some of his messages of liberalization, though the effects were largely cosmetic. He expanded the number of members of the party's Central Committee, allowed for multiple candidates to stand in legislative and municipal elections, re-introduced electoral constituencies (as opposed to one national electoral district), and included more "progressives" in leadership positions within the party (largely in order to displace the Ahidjo-era leadership) (Takougang and Krieger 1998). In practice, the new RDPC did not look fundamentally different from the UNC, as the Central Committee still held veto power over the candidate lists, and Biya largely controlled the decisions of the Central Committee. Although the changes brought new blood into the party, it hardly changed the autocratic nature of the state or the ruling party: "Biya's New Deal political changes, intended to portray him as a reformer, operated in such a way that they did not jeopardize his control of the institutions of power and authority" (ibid, 84).

The RDPC

Since the British Southern Cameroons voted to reunify with French Cameroun in 1961 (Ardener 1962; LeVine 1964), Cameroon's political history has revolved around a 'divide and conquer' strategy of elite-level ethnic balancing, developed by

Ahidjo and perfected by Biya (Nyamnjoh 1999). Through the ‘ethnicization’ of elite networks (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands 1998) and the funneling of resources through regional linkages (Bayart 1979), the party has become the central hub for political ascendancy. Elites who wish to accumulate political power must do so through loyalty to the party. During the Ahidjo era, the party was largely believed to favor his northern constituency³⁹ while under Biya, the Southerners—and particularly the Beti—have found themselves in the position of dominance. But the need for ethno-regional balancing has curbed tendencies towards extreme favoritism. For the most part, this ethno-regional calculus has remained an elite-centered game, and poverty and political exclusion remains the status quo for ordinary citizens across every ethnic group and region.

In terms of the technical structure and operations of the RDPC, not much has changed since 1985; Biya retains tight control over the party apparatus. Although the organization of the party has devolved, featuring an effort to attract and mobilize more members (or as they are called in Cameroon, militants), especially at the grassroots level, this pyramidal organization is not intended to cede real power to the masses. The transition to multiparty elections in 1992 forced the party to take electoral mobilization seriously. While symbolically it was always tangentially important for the ruling party to promote voter turnout, Biya’s 1992 near loss to John Fru Ndi forced the party to build genuine grassroots mobilization structures. Today, nearly every village and neighborhood in Cameroon has an RDPC “party cell” headed by a low-level elite elected by local party “militants.” Party cells are grouped into “base

³⁹ And more specifically Ahidjo’s Fulani ethnic group—to the anger of other Northern minority ethnic groups.

committees,” again with an elected head; base committees are clustered into “sub-sections,” usually within a voting district; and finally sub-sections are amalgamated into “section committees,” which represent *arrondissements*. Section committees are elected by members of the outgoing section committee, members of the sub-section committees, and the presidents of each base committee.⁴⁰

This hierarchy of local titles is intended to, on the one hand, penetrate into Cameroonian towns and villages and involve ordinary Cameroonians in the party structures and, on the other hand, cede some local control over municipal affairs. Overarching these two goals is the clear delimitation of relinquishing any true power outside of the national Central Committee. Unlike more repressive autocratic regimes, the party cells do not appear to have (or ever have had) a “monitoring” function. No one I encountered ever expressed any fear of these cells or base committees, or felt that they were active in observing, censoring, or reporting to the party in regards to the opinions or activities of ordinary citizens. By most accounts, low level militants and cell presidents are only active during elections when they are expected to help facilitate rallies, canvassing activities, and electoral mobilization for the RDPC.

The real power within the party is held by the national Central Committee and, more narrowly, the Political Bureau. The RDPC Congress, consisting of the Central Committee, the presidents of *arrondissement* sections, a set number of party members elected by local sections, and party notables (such as MPs, ministers, etc.), meets every five years in order to elect the president of the party (Biya) and 150 of the 250

⁴⁰ This structure was described to me by Jacque Fame Ndong, Secretary of Communications for the RDPC and Minister of Higher Education, in an interview on May 4, 2015 at the Ministry of Higher Education in Yaoundé.

members of the Central Committee (the other 100 of whom are directly appointed by Biya), as well as to discuss general issues within the party. Two parallel organs, *l'Organisation des femmes du RDPC* (OFRDPC) and *l'Organisation des jeunes du RDPC* (OJRDPC), in theory ensure the participation of women and youth within the party. In practice, it sidelines their participation; as one online commentator noted, tongue-in-cheek, “The principal role [of the OFRDPC] is to sing, dance, and applaud” (camer.be, 2016). In general, the quinquennial meetings of the RDPC Congress are largely ceremonial affairs, reported on in the news, but usually resulting in little change.

The official role of the 23 members of the Political Bureau, an elite subset of the Central Committee, is to “assist the President in affairs of the party.” In practice, most members of the Political Bureau are also members of the President’s governing cabinet. They direct all nominations within the party, and guide its national campaigns and electoral strategies. The current Secretary of Communication for the RDPC, Jacques Fame Ndong, is also currently the Minister of Higher Education (MINESUP), but has been in government since Biya came to power. Ndong has stood at the heart of Biya’s propaganda machine since the 1980s, holding positions such as the Director of the Advanced School of Mass Communications and editor-in-chief of the state newspaper, *The Cameroon Tribune*. In an interview with Ndong, he noted repeatedly that decisions within the party (such as the holding of elections and the planning of electoral strategy) occur at the “pleasure of the president.”⁴¹ Overall, despite massive political transformations within Cameroon between 1985 and today,

⁴¹ Interviewed on May 4, 2015 at the Ministry of Higher Education in Yaoundé.

very little has changed within the ruling party. While a genuine effort has been made to mobilize ordinary Cameroonians into the party structure, the formal organization of the party itself cedes very little power to the masses. Paul Biya remains the sole veto point for politics in the RDPC.

The Opposition, 1990 – 1997

As the UNC was being restructured and renamed to the RDPC in 1985, clearer voices began to arise calling for an opening of the system to opposition parties. Biya's unfulfilled promise of liberalization, a declining economic climate, and renewed ethnic tensions as Biya shifted his cabinet to favor his Southern constituency at the expense of the North (and others),⁴² all contributed to a growing demand for the legalization of opposition parties. Eventually, as international events unfolded with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the evolution of Benin's National Conference, demands for multiparty democracy in Cameroon reached a boiling point. The scandalous arrest in February 1990 of the "Douala ten," a group of lawyers led by Yondo Mandengue Black (former president of the Cameroon Bar Association) who founded a pro-multipartyism civil society group, the National Coordination for Democracy and a Multi-party System, set off the beginning of the democratization era in Cameroon.

The closely followed show trial of Black and his associates spurred Anglophone populist John Fru Ndi to officially register his newly formed Social Democratic Front (SDF) with the Ministry of the Interior (MINATD) as an official

⁴² It is unclear how extreme this favoritism was. While the northerners certainly lost out during the transition (especially after the attempted coup), and Biya has been dogged by accusations of southern favoritism, the RDPC remains an ethnically inclusive party, with every major identity constituency represented in both the President's cabinet as well as the Political Bureau of the RDPC.

political party. The government actively tried to dissuade Fru Ndi and refused to grant recognition of the SDF. In response, Fru Ndi rallied around 20,000 peaceful protesters in Bamenda on May 26, 1990, which was met brutally by the police, who shot and killed six protestors (Krieger 1994). The killing of the “Bamenda six” catalyzed opposition forces into action. Within a month, Maïgari Bello Bouba, a Northerner in exile in Nigeria for his alleged involvement in the 1983 attempted coup, launched his own political party, the *Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progrès* (UNDP). Protests spread across the country, gaining increasing support from a number of important groups, such as the Catholic Church and university students (Takougang and Krieger 1998).

Seeking to appease this opposition, Biya released the “Douala ten” from prison, further expanded the RDPC’s Central Committee, and “on December 5 [1990], the National Assembly approved a series of bills introduced by the president, who signed and proclaimed them ‘Liberty Laws’ on December 19” (ibid, 109). The liberty laws expanded press freedoms and, finally, outlined provisions for the establishment of opposition parties. Within months, the independent press had expanded exponentially, and calls began for a National Conference following the successful model of Benin (and soon after, many other Francophone West African nations). Biya refused to concede on this point, hoping to personally manage the (now inevitable) democratization process. In response, protests escalated, culminating in the “*ville mortes*” or “ghost town” campaigns in which entire cities—most famously Douala, Bamenda, and Bafoussam, but also many regional towns throughout the Littoral, Northwest, Southwest, and West Regions—shut down for weeks, and brought tens of

thousands of protestors to the streets week after week for months (van de Walle 1993, 381).

During this period, four primary opposition parties rose to the forefront of the protests: the SDF, UNDP, UDC, and UPC. John Fru Ndi's Social Democratic Front (SDF) was clearly the most prominent organizational force behind the *villes mortes* campaign. Based in Bamenda, its natural constituency was the Anglophone regions, particularly the Northwest. But during these early days, Fru Ndi made significant inroads bringing in elites and organizers from the Francophone West and Littoral regions. Fru Ndi was a charismatic leader with strong populist appeal; his speeches rallied tens of thousands of protestors across Western Cameroon, and Bamenda became the unofficial capital of the larger opposition (Takougang and Krieger 1998).

The UNDP arose to represent the (by now politically relegated) interests of the "greater north" encompassing the Adamawa, North, and Far North regions. Its primary leaders, Bello Bouba, Samuel Eboua, Hamadou Mustapha, and Issa Tchiroma, hoped to revive and transform Ahidjo's legacy into a mass opposition movement in the north. Meanwhile, Adamou Ndam Njoya arose as a strong opposition figure in the heart of the Bamoun Kingdom in the Noun *département* in the West Region. His *Union démocratique du Cameroun* (UDC) was an early ally of the SDF. At the time, Ndam Njoya was a long-standing intellectual of the RDPC and member of the Bamoun royal family. Appointed Minister of Education under Ahidjo, he spent most of the Biya years of the 1980s as a career diplomat abroad. Njoya broke sharply with his royal family in opposing the RDPC (today, his brother the Sultan, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, is a staunch supporter of Biya and member of the RDPC Political Bureau), and his

intellectual and independent standing have remained nearly unblemished over the decades. Finally, the reestablished UPC undertook a revival during this period, garnering some support in Douala and northwards into its historic home in Bassa and Bamiléké country. Though unlike the other opposition parties, its leadership never really coalesced around one figure, and after 1992 the party fractured.

Eventually Biya conceded to the protests, scheduling multiparty legislative elections for March 1, 1992. The SDF and UDC boycotted the elections, but the UNDP and a faction of the UPC led by Frédéric Kodock stood against the RDPC. Because of the SDF/UDC boycott, the UNDP won 68 seats out of 180 across the Far North, North, Adamawa, West, Southwest, and even made inroads into the East. The UPC won 18 seats mostly in the Littoral, though also a handful of constituencies in the Center, West and Southwest. From a historical perspective, most opposition leaders regret the SDF/UDC decision to boycott the election. The RDPC swept the SDF and UDC constituencies on extremely low voter turnout (for example, 23 percent of registered voters in Mezam (Bamenda) and 16 percent in Noun), giving the ruling party a majority of seats it most certainly would not have won if the SDF and UDC had fielded candidates.

Learning from their mistakes in the legislative elections, the opposition attempted to unify for the presidential elections later that year. Unfortunately, however, early calls for a unified opposition candidate quickly evaporated into squabbles amongst the party leaders. Fru Ndi was challenged within his party by the Douala Ten's defense lawyer, Bernard Muna, fracturing the party and signaling the start of many future defections from the SDF. More fatally, Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya

had a major falling out, as each one saw himself as the legitimate leader of the opposition. With support splintering around Fru Ndi, Bello Bouba, empowered by his showing in the legislative elections, decided to run under the UNDP banner. Against the fractured opposition, Biya won the presidential election with 40 percent of the vote (an outcome still intensely disputed by all opposition leaders, and many independent observers). Officially, Fru Ndi won 36 percent of the vote, Bello Bouba won 19 percent, and Ndam Njoya won just under 4 percent.

The Opposition, 1997 – Present

The 1992 presidential elections marked the last time the opposition threatened the Biya regime. In the 1997 legislative elections, the SDF entered the National Assembly with 43 seats, but the RDPC added 21 seats to their majority, primarily gaining ground from the nearly defunct UPC, as well as establishing its primacy in the East. The opposition successfully boycotted the presidential election several months later, allowing Biya to win with 93 percent of the vote. The RDPC made even stronger inroads in the 2002 legislative elections, now gaining majorities in nine of ten regions of the country; the sole exception being the Northwest where the SDF won the largest number of opposition seats (Takougang 2003). In 2004, Biya won 71 percent of the vote nationally, cementing his unrivaled station. He then revised the constitution, abolishing term limits and winning re-election in 2011 with 78 percent of the vote.

Today, in terms of vote totals, the SDF remains the strongest opposition party in Cameroon, followed by the UNDP and then the UDC. Various factions of the UPC continue to run for office (sometimes successfully), and other smaller parties, such as

Maurice Kamto's *Mouvement pour la renaissance du Cameroun* (MRC) contest seats in a handful of constituencies. However, most everyone agrees that today the opposition is deeply demoralized. In 2013, the RDPC ran uncontested in 13 electoral districts (out of 83 total). The most popular explanation in Cameroon for this outcome is the RDPC's ability to coopt the opposition. Arriola (2012) pinpoints the key moment of cooptation in the mid-1990s, when Biya successfully brought in key Bamiléké business interests, depriving the opposition of its primary source of funding (Chapter 7). Even where opposition leaders have (by their own accounts) remained independent, most are dogged by rumors that they have accepted bribes and favors from the RDPC leadership in order to remain a "loyal" opposition; independent enough to give Cameroon the appearance of democratic competition without actually posing a threat to the regime. Whether these accusations are founded or not, many Cameroonians believe them to be true.

Further, the regime has deeply disadvantaged the opposition through various legal and extralegal channels (van de Walle 1993, 379–82). Access to the media (especially television broadcast) remains dominated by the state; the conflation between the ruling party and the state gives the RDPC unparalleled access to resources and campaign funding; gerrymandering continues to make winning structurally more difficult for the opposition; and although outright electoral fraud has become increasingly rare, it certainly played a decisive role in keeping Biya in power throughout the turbulent 1990s (Albaugh 2011). Finally, the opposition itself has become increasingly unlikable. Opposition leaders who came to power criticizing the autocratic state now appear, 25 years later, as little dictators within their own parties.

The lack of leadership turnover has resulted in a general stagnation within these parties, and many constituents complain that repeated and unvarying attacks on the regime fail to inspire hope or inspiration for erstwhile supporters. Further, infighting *within* the parties has eroded not just the political bases of the opposition, but also their credibility.

Repeated defections within the SDF lost Fru Ndi almost all of his original support outside of the Northwest (Konings 2004). Today, apart from a handful of seats in the capitals of the Littoral, Southwest, and West regions, all of the SDF's parliamentary seats are in the Northwest region. Further, 7 of the Northwest's 20 parliamentary seats are held by the RDPC (see Appendix 2). Nonetheless, Fru Ndi remains a steadfast symbol of the opposition. Despite popular accusations, he maintains that the SDF is fundamentally independent from the RDPC. In his own words, "The CPDM [RDPC] does not reach out to us; they think they know everything. The CPDM believes that money can change everyone's minds. Our relationship has not changed much. When you go to talk to them with an open heart, they look to cheat you. It is worse today than ever before".⁴³ Regardless of their relationship with the RDPC, the electoral messages of the SDF have not changed much in 25 years. When I asked Vanigassen Mochiggle, a member of the SDF's National Executive Committee, about the SDF's general electoral strategy and which types of voters they target during elections, he replied that, "We don't have a specific campaign strategy. There are no groups we target specifically. Instead we have a broad

⁴³ Interviewed by the author on March 30, 2015 at his compound in Ntarinkon, Bamenda.

message, mostly on the economic failings caused by the politics of the CPDM government”.⁴⁴

The structural organization of the SDF mirrors the RDPC. In order to mobilize voters, they organize their militants into village “wards,” which are aggregated up into subdivision (*arrondissement*) groups, which cluster further into divisional (*département*) groups, and finally regional groups. Local level campaign messages are often filtered up through this hierarchy from the ward level, and the decentralization of this campaign strategy compliments the lack of a unified or professionalized electoral strategy. Not unlike the RDPC Congress, the SDF holds a convention for its members every four years to elect party representatives, though primary power lies with Fru Ndi and his National Executive Committee.

The UDC is similarly structured, though through discussions with Ndam Njoya, now mayor of Foumban, and separately with his wife, Patricia Tomaino Ndam Njoya, senior Deputy for the UDC, the party seems much more focused on local issues. Although the UDC entertains ambitions of national status, the fact that it has only held seats in one electoral district since 1992 firmly defines it as a regional party of Noun in the West. Because it has just one constituency, it is logical that it would have a more grassroots approach towards governing. As Ndam Njoya noted in an interview, “Bamouns are open people and so we have always been open with the UDC. The organization of the party has always been focused on the human being”.⁴⁵ Both Ndam Njoya and his wife spoke at length about the importance of engaging directly with their constituents. The mayor frequently cited independent development

⁴⁴ Interviewed by the author on March 30, 2015 at his compound in Ntarinkon, Bamenda.

⁴⁵ Interviewed by the author on March 21, 2015 at his house in Foumban.

projects and initiatives he was starting in Noun outside of government channels. The senior MP noted that:

Election campaigns are not really important to us. The time we spend educating people—sensitizing them—has been since day one and is everyday, not just during elections... We campaign, but what is important to us is to educate our militants to keep a political ethics in their everyday lives... We want militants who are moral and disciplined and who want good representatives and good governance.⁴⁶

The UDC's focus on local politics and development has clearly contributed to its success in Noun. Despite the Bamoun Sultan's strong support for the RDPC, the UDC continues to be re-elected in both legislative and municipal elections in that district.

Ironically, the distrust Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya express towards Biya is dwarfed by their distrust of one another. Both spoke far more passionately and angrily of one another than they did of President Biya (whom they barely even mentioned). Ndam Njoya, an otherwise erudite and soft-spoken statesman, lashed out at the SDF, accusing them of being coopted by the RDPC: "They are greedy and don't see the long game".⁴⁷ Fru Ndi, a garrulous and pugnacious populist, who in nature and disposition could not be more different from Ndam Njoya, nevertheless had similar accusations. In the middle of an unprovoked rant against "these smaller parties" who are "jealous of us," Fru Ndi accused Njoya of single-handedly destroying their opposition unification pact in 1992.⁴⁸ These seemingly insurmountable challenges to

⁴⁶ Interviewed by the author on May 8, 2015 at her house in Essos, Yaoundé.

⁴⁷ Interviewed by the author on March 21, 2015 at his house in Fouban.

⁴⁸ Interviewed by the author on March 30, 2015 at his compound in Ntarinkon, Bamenda.

opposition unity do not present a clear path forward for the two remaining viable opposition parties.

Finally, the UNDP, which currently holds 5 seats in the National Assembly, has come fully under the umbrella of the RDPC. After the 1992 elections, two of the founders of the UNDP, Hamadou Mustapha and Issa Tchiroma, were invited into the Biya government as ministers. They accepted, and Bella Bouba denounced them, but did not expel them from the party (Takougang and Krieger 1998, 161). The co-optation nonetheless worked to begin discrediting the unity and independence of the UNDP. In 1997, after losing 55 seats in the elections for the National Assembly (largely because of the entrance of the SDF after its 1992 boycott), Bello Bouba also accepted a cabinet position from Biya, first as Minister of Industrial and Commercial Development (now the Ministry of Trade (MINT)), and bouncing around different ministries until landing in 2011 as Minister of Tourism and Leisure, a position he enjoys today. Though the UNDP continues to run in municipal and legislative election, it does not run in presidential elections, and its MPs vote in conjunction with the RDPC.

Demographic Divides between Partisans and Nonpartisans

Given the current state of the political environment, what does contemporary partisanship look like today in Cameroon? To what extent do citizens identify with these political parties, and how does the meaning of partisanship differ for citizens who identify with the RDPC versus partisans who support an opposition party? Perhaps because the opposition in Cameroon today is so deflated, there is very little

scholarly discussion of partisanship or mass political behavior in Cameroon (or electoral autocracies more broadly). Generally, the assumption most elites and scholars make in assessing the state of public opinion in Cameroon is that the average Cameroonian is cynical about politics and disconnected from the political system as a whole. The general belief is that the Biya regime is deeply unpopular and lacks any kind of popular support. As one commentator noted, “Even if the general spirit is one of demobilization, pockets of resistance still exist within Cameroonian society” (Pigeaud 2011, 215).⁴⁹

However, the almost complete vacuum on public opinion in Cameroon means that these conjectures are largely derived from elite interviews and speculation. This dissertation attempts to fill this gap in our knowledge by directly analyzing Cameroonian public opinion. Although analysts and commentators are correct to argue that citizens are generally demobilized, they are incorrect to believe that partisanship is meaningless or that the existing regime is deeply illegitimate. If pockets of resistance exist, so do many pockets of support. Most studies of authoritarianism have very little to say about mass publics, except as a potential threat to the regime (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003; Gandhi 2008; Svobik 2012). In most cases, the public is assumed to be adversarial to the ruling regime, and partisanship is thought to be exceedingly weak. Although this dissertation does not argue that the Biya regime or the RDPC is overwhelmingly popular, it seeks to explore the variation in support for and against the regime and the parties. In order to better understand partisanship in Cameroon, I first investigate the types of citizens who choose to

⁴⁹ The author’s translation.

associate with political parties, whether the ruling party or the opposition. As outlined in Chapter Two, I argue that, similar to democratic regimes, partisans in general should feature higher levels of socioeconomic status than nonpartisans. Opposition partisans and ruling party partisans are instead divided by their beliefs about politics and the legitimacy of the state.

Today in Cameroon, partisanship is low, particularly for the opposition. Overall, 38.5 percent of respondents reported feeling close to a particular political party. Of this group of partisans, 75.7 percent reported feeling close to the RDPC. Almost 15 percent were close to the largest opposition party, the SDF, and eleven other parties were mentioned, including the northern-based UNDP and the UDC, all of which represented fewer than five percent of partisans. As shown in Table 7, this roughly matches national vote totals for these parties. This means that only 9.2 percent of all respondents are opposition partisans (reporting that they feel close to an opposition party).

Table 7: Self-Reported Partisanship and Official Vote Totals

Political Party	Proportion of Reported Partisans*	Percent Vote in 2011 Presidential Election
Rassemblement démocratique du Peuple Camerounais (RDPC)	75.7 %	78.0 %
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	14.6	10.7
Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progress (UNDP)	2.7	--
Mouvement pour la renaissance du Cameroun (MRC)	2.0	--
Union démocratique du Cameroun (UDC)	1.6	1.7
Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC)	1.1	--

*Author's survey

Overall, I argue that partisans of all types—both those who support the ruling party as well as those who support the various opposition parties—should possess higher levels of socioeconomic status than nonpartisans. Socioeconomic status incorporates various different indicators; most classically this includes income and education (Lipset 1959b; Verba and Nie 1972). Citizens with higher levels of income possess the economic resources to more fully participate in political life. They have the time and means to engage with candidates and parties in ways that poorer citizens (who are pre-occupied with making ends meet at home) do not. Relatedly, citizens with higher levels of education have the cognitive resources to more fully participate in politics. Citizens with very low levels of education are less likely to fully understand the political system or engage with it directly.

Apart from endowing citizens with the *resources* to engage with political parties, socioeconomic status also provides citizens with social expectations to participate. For example, wealthier and more educated citizens are often expected to join parties through their personal and professional networks. In addition, older citizens, and particularly men, are far more likely to be expected to participate in politics than younger citizens and women, especially in traditional societies. Rural areas are also more likely to enable partisanship, as close-knit networks of reciprocal participation are stronger than urban networks, especially amongst networks of older men. The following section presents the descriptive statistics of the survey, looking at the basic relationships between demographic factors and partisanship. The next section estimates the comparative relationships between income, education, age, gender and

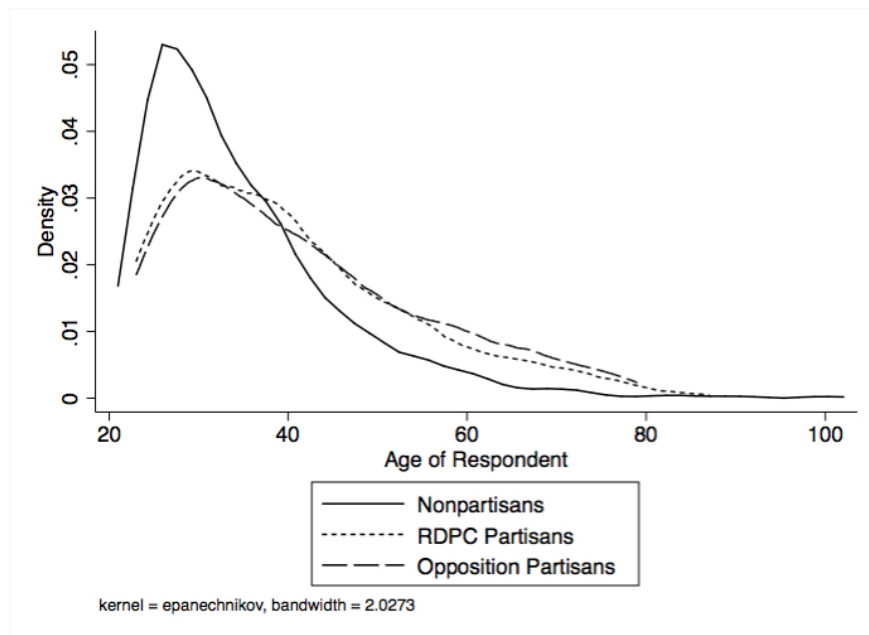
locality with partisanship using regression analysis. The final section turns to the political divides between ruling party partisans and opposition partisans.

Descriptive Statistics of the Demographic Determinants of Partisanship

In Cameroon, the clearest indicators of partisanship are age, gender, and locality. Far and away, partisans are more likely to be older men from rural areas. Looking first at age, Figure 4 shows the density of nonpartisans, RDPC partisans, and opposition partisans at all ages between 23 and 100 (the range of ages in the survey). While the age distribution of RDPC partisans and opposition partisans is nearly identical, nonpartisans clearly skew younger than partisans as a whole. While the average survey respondent was 37 years old, the average nonpartisan is 35 and the average partisan is 40. On average, opposition partisans are about one year older than RDPC partisans.

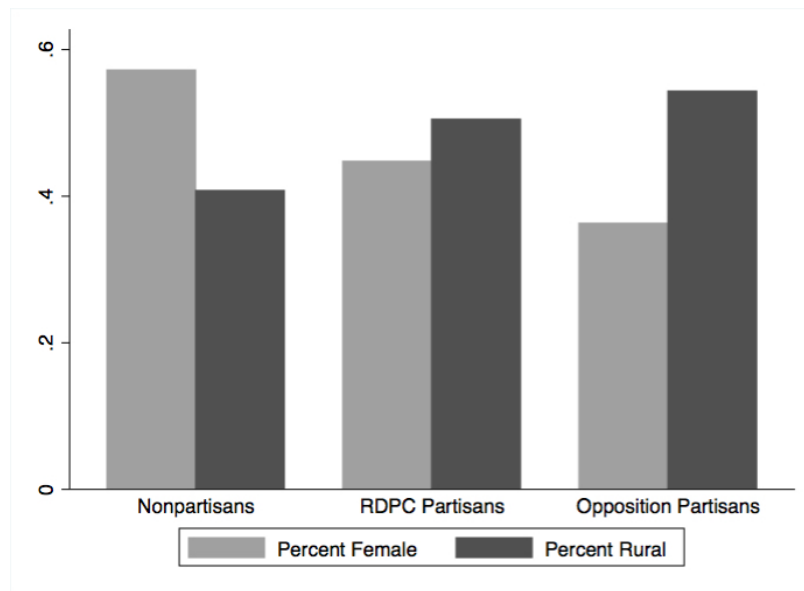
In addition, partisans are also much more likely to be men from rural areas. Figure 5 presents the percent of nonpartisans, RDPC partisans, and opposition partisans that are men or women and were interviewed in rural or urban locations. Fifty-seven percent of nonpartisans are women, compared to 50 percent of RDPC partisans and only 34 percent of opposition partisans. Of all the women interviewed, 70.7 percent were nonpartisans, 23.7 percent reported feeling close to the RDPC, and only 6.6 percent reported feeling close to an opposition party. In contrast, 57.2 percent of men were nonpartisans, while 30.2 percent felt close to the RDPC and 12.5 percent felt close to an opposition party. Clearly men are much more likely to report feelings of partisanship when compared to women.

Figure 4: Kernel Density Plot of the Relationship between Age and Partisanship



Similarly, rural respondents were also much more likely to be partisans. For both RDPC and opposition partisans, roughly half were interviewed in urban areas and half were interviewed in rural areas. However, only 40 percent of nonpartisans were interviewed in rural areas; 60 percent were urban. For subgroups of partisans, it appears that opposition partisans tend to be even more rural than RDPC partisans. While RDPC partisans were almost perfectly split between urban and rural enumeration areas, 54.3 percent of opposition partisans were rural compared to 45.7 percent urban.

Figure 5: Gender and Locality across Partisan Groups



While the relationship between partisanship and age, gender, and locality is quite striking, there appears to be a weaker or more nuanced connection between income and education and partisanship. First, in terms of income, it does appear that, on average, partisans of all types appear to be slightly wealthier than their nonpartisan counterparts. Because few Cameroonians know their annual incomes, the survey attempts to approximate a measure of income in more tangible ways. These are captured in Table 8. First is a combined measure of items owned by the respondent: a radio, television, car, motorcycle, mobile phone, computer, piped or well water, and an indoor or outdoor toilet within the compound. This scale ranges from 0-10, where someone who owns all items, as well as piped water in their house and a toilet in their house receives a perfect 10, and someone who owns none of those items nor any water or a toilet/latrine within their compound receives a zero. While the average score of a

nonpartisan is 4.85, the average score of a partisan is slightly higher: 5.18. Ruling party partisans tend to be slightly “wealthier” (5.27) than opposition partisans (5.04).

Table 8: Income Measure of Partisans and Nonpartisans

	All Respondents	Non-Partisans	All Partisans	RDPC Partisans	Opposition Partisans
Average No. Items Owned (0-10)	4.98	4.85	5.18	5.27	5.04
Average Full-Time Employment Rate	16.1 %	15.7 %	16.8 %	17.2 %	16.1 %
Average Lack of Basic Needs (0-12)	4.6	4.8	4.3	4.3	4.3
Total Number	2,399	1,461	931	590	341

The second measure of income is employment. The survey offered five categories of employment: unemployed not looking, unemployed looking, self-employed, formally employed part-time, and formally employed full-time. The plurality of respondents (45.6 percent) was self-employed, usually as farmers, market traders, or informal service providers, such as hairdressers or tailors. Roughly 16 percent of the entire sample was formally employed full-time, but this figure was slightly higher for partisans (16.8 percent) than it was for nonpartisans (15.7 percent). Formal employment was highest for RDPC partisans (17.2 percent).

Finally, a series of abstract questions probed the respondent's level of "lived poverty" (Bratton 2005). Borrowed from the Afrobarometer, these three questions asked the respondent how often during the past year their family had gone without 1) enough food to eat, 2) medicine, or 3) a cash income. For each question, options included, "never," "just once or twice," "several times," "many times," or "always." The average respondent went without food or medicine once or twice a year, and went without a cash income several times. For each response, "never" was coded as zero, while "always" was recorded as 4; thus the "wealthiest" respondents, who never went without food, medicine, or an income, had the lowest scores, while the poorest respondents had the highest scores. Combined, the scale ranged from zero (152 respondents) to twelve (17 respondents), with an average of 4.6. Although the differences are slight, nonpartisans scored slightly higher on this scale (4.8) than partisans (4.3), indicating that by this measure as well, nonpartisans are poorer than partisans.

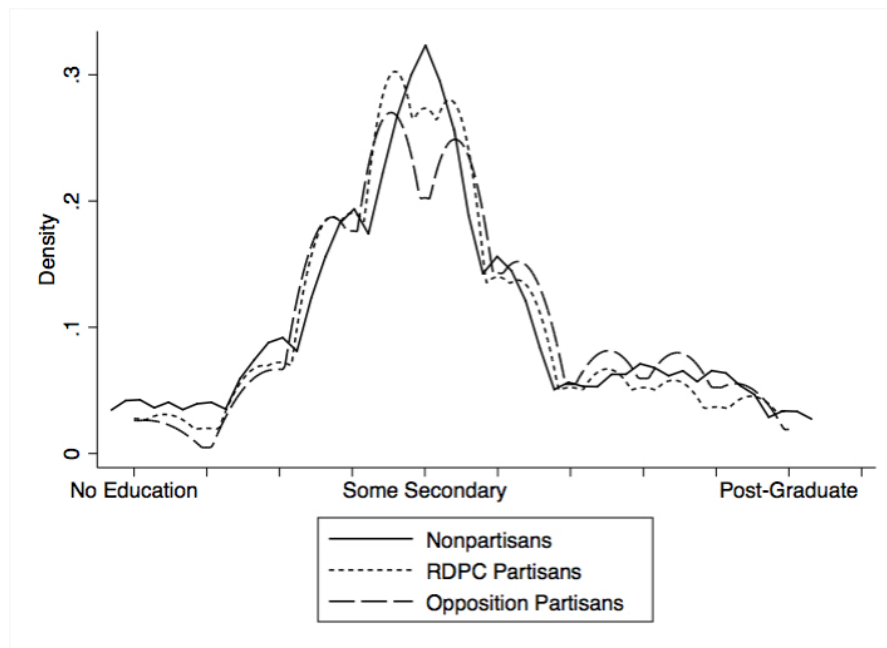
Taken together, I believe that the first measure of income (items owned) is the best approximation of income because it is most precise. While full-time formal employment is most certainly a strong measure of wealth, the sub-categories contain many different income groups. In particular, self-employment is too broad a category to convey information: small plot rural farmers are lumped together with successful market traders, who may themselves employ dozens of full-time employees. Further, the three questions of lived poverty are overly subjective, and respondents often used the question to emphasize how upset they were with their personal circumstances, regardless of how well the response category correlated with reality. A number of

respondents who were clearly well-off professed to me that they “always” went without food, medicine, or income as a way to tell me that Cameroon was underdeveloped or mismanaged.⁵⁰ In contrast, the measures of items owned are more objective, and therefore respondents answered the questions more earnestly. Thus, throughout the rest of the dissertation, I use the first measure of “items owned” in order to capture overall wealth. This measure is also not ideal, particularly because while it captures extreme poverty, it does not capture gradients of wealth (which likely deflates the differences between partisans). Nonetheless, it is more precise than the other two measures.

Even more than income, the relationship between education and partisanship appears to be ambiguous. Within the sample, education ranges on a nine-point scale from no formal education (3.7 percent of the sample), to post-graduate degree (3.2 percent of the sample). Overall, the modal Cameroonian possesses “some secondary schooling.” As shown in Figure 6, the direct comparison of education levels amongst different partisans groups doesn’t reveal much variation, although opposition partisans do appear to possess slightly higher levels of education than nonpartisans or ruling party partisans. The average education score for an opposition partisan is 4.4, compared to 4.2 for both nonpartisans and RDPC partisans (where a 4 represents “some secondary schooling”). This is likely complicated by the nature of autocratic politics.

⁵⁰ As a result, I recommend that researchers refrain from using this series of questions to measure income when analyzing the Afrobarometer data.

Figure 6: Kernal Density Plot of Education and Partisanship



As Croke, et al. (2016) have noted in Zimbabwe, citizens with high levels of education may be less likely to participate in autocratic politics because their cognitive skills make them less likely to buy into the political system as a whole, and therefore less likely to participate in general. This logic does not appear to dominate the relationship between education and partisanship in Cameroon, though a competing logic may be at work. On the one hand, citizens with high levels of education may be more likely to participate in politics than citizens with low levels of education because education endows them the basic resources to do so. On the other hand, having more education may make some citizens more likely to bow out of politics altogether.

The basic descriptive statistics present a mixed message about partisanship. While clearly partisans of all types tend to be older men from rural areas, they only

appear to have slightly more wealth than nonpartisans.⁵¹ Inversely, education appears to be unrelated to partisanship. However, given the overlapping and inter-related nature of these demographic features, it is unclear from the descriptive statistics whether or not the different aspects of socioeconomic status uniformly predict partisanship. After discussing the relationship between ethnicity and partisanship, the following section uses multinomial logit regressions in order to better understand the predictive relationship between partisanship on the one hand, and these different characteristics of socioeconomic status (income, education, age, gender, and locality) on the other.

Ethnicity

As noted in Chapter Two, a voluminous literature has argued that ethnicity is central to understanding partisanship and political behavior in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, it is worth looking at ethnicity as an additional demographic factor that might determine partisanship. In order to measure ethnicity, the survey asked an open-ended question: “To which ethnic group do you belong?” I received more than 200 different responses to the question, and so I therefore include only the top ten ethnic groups represented in the survey: all groups that had 50 or more respondents, plus a category for ‘other.’ Taken together, the top ten ethnic groups account for 66.5 percent of the sample. Table 9 reveals the percentage of nonpartisans, all partisans, ruling party partisans and SDF partisans for each sampled ethnic group.

⁵¹ Though arguably the measure of income is less precise than the other demographic measures.

Table 9: Partisanship and Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Nonpartisans	All Partisans	RDPC Partisans	SDF Partisans
Beti	58.2 %	41.8 %	39.7 %	1.0 %
Douala	71.2	28.8	23.2	1.5
Makas	52.8	47.2	42.7	1.9
Bamiléké	68.2	31.8	24.0	3.6
Bamoun	54.0	46.0	33.3	1.4
Bassa	61.9	38.1	25.4	1.1
Bayangi	51.9	48.2	38.2	6.6
Kom	61.1	38.9	12.0	23.4
Mamfe	61.0	39.0	30.0	7.5
Moghamo	53.3	46.7	17.8	27.4
Other	60.1	39.9	23.7	13.6
Total	60.1	39.9	26.3	9.5

Overall, there is clearly variation in partisanship amongst the largest ethnic groups. Total partisanship varies between a high of 47.2 percent (the Makas, an acephelous group that straddles a wide swathe of the East region, spilling into Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) and a low of 28.8 percent (the Douala). Similarly, there is clear variation in type of partisanship as well. Although we might expect the Beti (the President's ethnic group) to be the most hardcore RDPC partisans, in fact, it is again the Makas who have the highest percentage of ruling party partisans (at 42.7 percent of all Makas respondents). This is considerably higher than the national average of 26.3 percent. Further, the Bayangi—an acephelous ethnic group from the Anglophone Southwest region—possess similar levels of ruling party partisanship as the Beti (38.2 versus 39.7 percent); a perhaps surprising finding given the stylized fact that all Anglophones are SDF partisans. Less surprisingly, the largest numbers of SDF

partisans identify as Moghamo (27.4 percent) and Kom (23.4 percent), ethnic groups from the Northwest departments of Batibo and Boyo, respectively. While ethnicity can give us some clues to understand partisanship, it is unclear how much ethnic identity overlaps with confounding factors such as urban/rural locality, education and wealth. Thus, the following section arbitrates between these different demographic factors in order to arbitrate between their relative predictive powers.

Statistical Analysis of the Demographic Determinants of Partisanship

The first multivariate analysis looks at the overall divide between all partisans and all nonpartisans, where a partisan is anyone who reported feeling close to a political party. All models control for the demographic characteristics discussed above (including ethnicity), and also include region fixed effects as well as post-stratification weights designed to re-balance over-sampling in opposition areas. Table 10 reports the results of the regression.⁵²

Overall, it is clear that demographically, partisans are different from nonpartisans. The logit results indicate that holding all other indicators equal, partisans as a whole tend to possess more personal items, be older men from rural areas, and have middling levels of education. Ostensibly, one of these factors is not driving the relationship between socioeconomic status; instead all of them describe the socioeconomic differences between partisans and nonpartisans. Further, it is important to note that all of these factors help to explain partisanship *even controlling for*

⁵² Coefficients for region fixed effects are not included because of space constraints.

ethnicity. However, in comparison to the Beti (the baseline group), the Bassa, Kom, and Mamfe are all less likely to be partisans.

Table 10: Characteristics of All Partisans and Nonpartisans

Reported Feeling Close to a Political Party	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Personal Wealth	0.091*** (0.033)
Rural	1.054*** (0.201)
Female	-0.405*** (0.118)
Age	0.037*** (0.005)
Education	0.398*** (0.112)
Education Squared	-0.042*** (0.011)
Beti	--
Douala	-0.317
Makas	0.211
Bamiléké	-0.257
Bamoun	0.087
Bassa	-0.704**
Bayangi	-0.537
Kom	-0.755**
Mamfe	-1.157***
Moghamo	-0.505
Other	-0.122
Constant	-3.187***
Pseudo R-Squared	0.086
Model includes region fixed effects (Centre, East, Littoral, Northwest, West, Southwest, and South).	
*p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01 ; n = 2,325	

In order to better understand the more nuanced divide between ruling party partisans, opposition partisans, and nonpartisans, the second statistical analysis uses a

multinomial logit model to evaluate which types of respondents report feeling close to either the ruling party or an opposition party, or feeling close to no party at all. The multinomial logistic approach calculates the odds that a particular type of citizen (for example, a 30 year-old woman with a high school diploma) is a nonpartisan relative to the odds of being an RDPC partisan or SDF partisan. The marginal effects of the multinomial logit regression are presented in Table 11. The marginal effects can be interpreted as the odds of being an RDPC partisan, an SDF partisan, or a nonpartisan, given a one-unit increase in the independent variable.

**Table 11: Characteristics of Partisanship:
Marginal Effects of Multinomial Logistic Regression**

	Nonpartisans	Members of the Ruling RDPC	Members of the Opposition SDF
Personal Wealth	-0.022*** (0.007)	0.018*** (0.007)	0.004 (0.003)
Rural	-0.212*** (0.041)	0.239*** (0.040)	-0.027 (0.018)
Female	0.071*** (0.025)	-0.042* (0.024)	-0.030*** (0.010)
Age	-0.008*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)
Education	-0.083*** (0.024)	0.071*** (0.025)	0.012 (0.008)
Education Squared	0.009*** (0.002)	-0.008*** (0.002)	-0.002* (0.001)
Multinomial logit. Marginal effects reported. Standard errors in parentheses. Model includes region fixed effects (Centre, East, Littoral, Northwest, West, Southwest, and South) and ethnicity dummies. *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01 ; n = 2,176			

Across all socioeconomic indicators, the starkest contrast lies between RDPC partisans and nonpartisans. The odds of being close to the ruling party increases for men and rural citizens, and as personal wealth and age increase. These odds simultaneously decrease the likelihood of being a nonpartisan. Education appears to have a more nuanced relationship with partisanship, as the squared term indicates that citizens with the highest and lowest levels of education have the strongest odds of being a nonpartisan. The odds of partisanship increase at middling levels of education. In general, it appears that SDF partisans are more heterogeneous than RDPC partisans. Apart from locality, the signs of the marginal effects for SDF partisans and RDPC partisans are identical, however only gender and the education-squared term are statistically significant from zero for SDF partisans. Similar to RDPC partisans, SDF partisans are more likely to be men with middling levels of education.

Thus although opposition SDF partisans are more likely to come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, it is clear that nonpartisans are far more likely to hail from lower socioeconomic categories when compared to partisans of all types. Nonpartisans are more likely to be younger, poorer, urban women. In general, these results show that partisans and nonpartisans are distinct categories of citizens, at least demographically. Whilst the wealthiest citizens have about a 50-50 chance of being a partisan (of any party), the poorest respondents only have a 26 percent chance of belonging to a party. The predicted probability of being close to the RDPC doubles for the wealthiest citizens (compared to the poorest ones). Further, nonpartisans are heavily represented by the youth whilst older citizens are much more likely to feel

close to a political party. Whereas a 25 year-old Cameroonian has a 73 percent likelihood of being a nonpartisan, an 85 year-old has only a 23 percent likelihood.

Again, these findings hold even controlling for ethnicity. Unsurprisingly, the Kom and the Moghamo (both traditionally from districts in the Northwest SDF heartland) are more likely to be SDF partisans. In comparison to the Beti, they are also less likely to be RDPC partisans, along with the Mamfe (from the Southwest region) and the Bassa (the group central to the UDC rebellion). Thus, overall, the statistical analysis supports the contention that partisans tend to possess higher levels of socioeconomic status than nonpartisans. Though this relationship appears to be stronger for ruling party partisans than it is for opposition partisans.

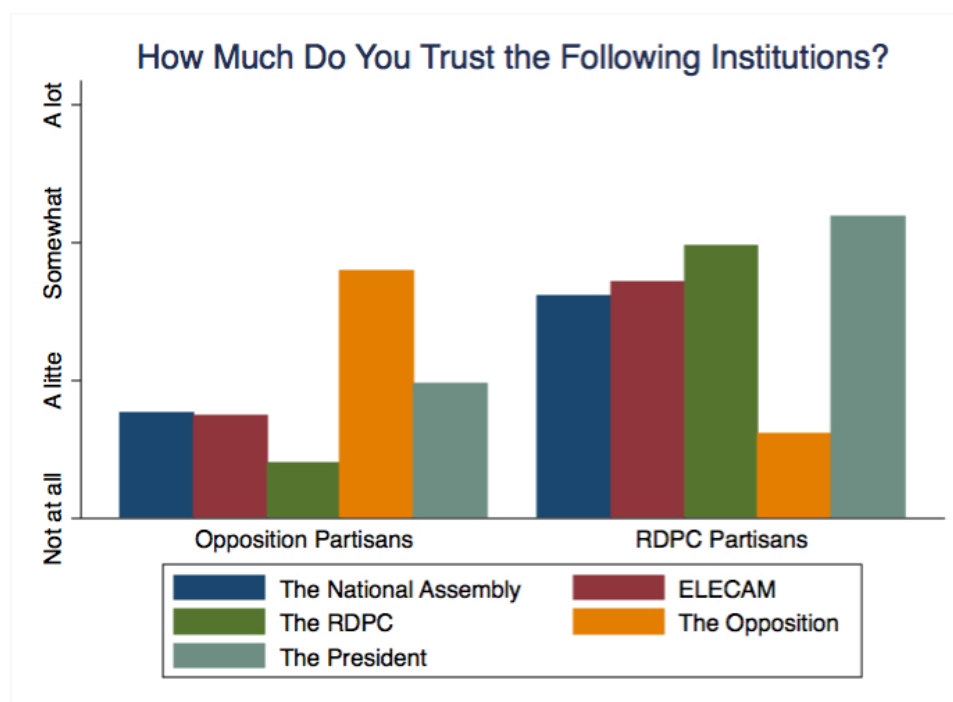
Political Divides between Opposition and RDPC Partisans

Although there is a deeper demographic divide between partisans and nonpartisans than there is between different types of partisans, this does not mean that opposition partisans and ruling party partisans are identical. Indeed, despite their similar levels of socioeconomic status, they are deeply divided in their views of politics. While opposition parties are mistrustful of the regime and skeptical of the level of democracy in Cameroon, ruling party partisans are far more trusting and optimistic.

As predicted, in terms of general approval of the regime, ruling party partisans are far more likely to express trust in all of the ruling institutions. Figure 7 shows the average scores for trust by partisanship. The survey asked each respondent how much

they trusted the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission (ELECAM), the RDPC, the opposition parties, and the president.

Figure 7: Trust in the Regime by Partisanship Type



Not surprisingly, the only one of these institutions opposition partisans trust more than RDPC partisans is the opposition itself. Apart from the opposition parties, however, trust in the institutions of government clearly bundles together. Although ruling party partisans trust the president more than any other institution, their average level of trust for all institutions of government (apart from the opposition) hovers around “somewhat.” Similarly, for opposition partisans, apart from their higher approval of opposition parties, their level of average trust in the National Assembly, ELECAM, and President all hover just under “a little.” Though they do appear to hold

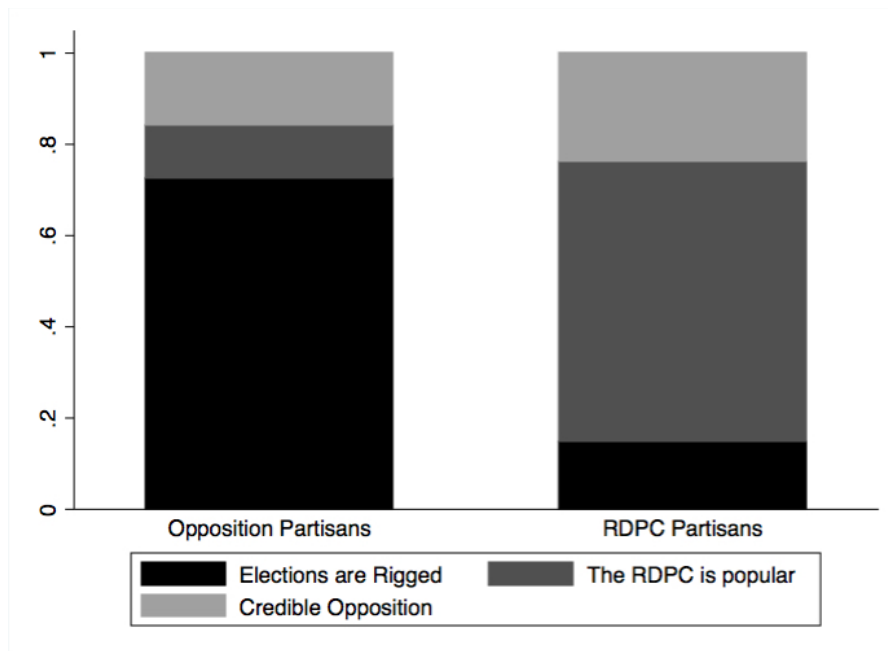
a special disdain for the RDPC. Similarly, when asked whether or not they believed the work of their deputy (MP) makes a difference in their life, 33.5 percent of opposition party partisans replied in the affirmative compared to 41.5 percent of ruling party partisans.

For trust in each of these different institutions, nonpartisans float somewhere in between ruling party partisans and opposition partisans. For example, the average score for a nonpartisan for trust in the National Assembly is 0.89, falling in between the average score of an opposition partisan (0.73) and a ruling party partisan (1.61). Average trust scores for nonpartisans fall somewhere in between average for ruling party partisans and opposition partisans for every institution of government, including the political parties. For nonpartisans, the average trust score for the RDPC is 0.86; certainly higher than the average opposition partisan score (0.38), but likewise lower than the average RDPC partisan score (1.97). For trust in the opposition parties, the average score for a nonpartisan is 0.73, compared to 1.87 for opposition partisans and 0.61 for RDPC partisans. As we might expect, nonpartisans appear to be less ideologically committed than partisans in general.

Striking at the heart of this political cleavage, different types of partisans have profoundly different explanations for the historical dominance of the RDPC. The survey asked respondents to choose one of three different explanations for why the RDPC always wins elections: 1) “because it is genuinely popular,” 2) “not because it is popular, but because there is no credible opposition,” or 3) “because the elections are rigged.” As presented in Figure 8, the majority of ruling party partisans (61.5 percent) believes that the RDPC wins elections because it is popular. Inversely, very

few opposition partisans agree with this explanation (11.6 percent). Instead, the vast majority of opposition supporters (72.5 percent) believe that the RDPC only wins elections because the electoral system is rigged. A similar number reported believing that the RDPC wins because there is no credible opposition (23.9 percent of RDPC partisans versus 15.9 percent of opposition partisans).⁵³

Figure 8: Explanation for Why the RDPC Always Wins



Just as these different groups of partisans have inverse views of the government, they also have different understandings about democracy in Cameroon.

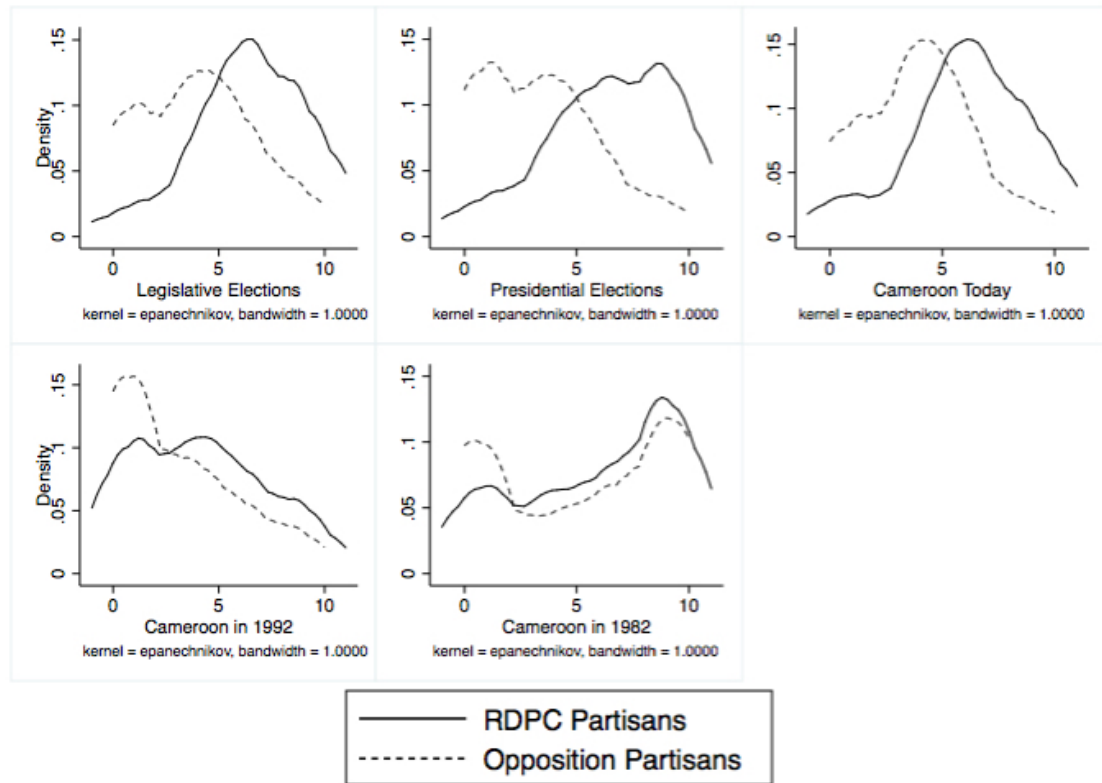
⁵³ Again, on average, nonpartisans fall in the middle of the two partisan groups. They are far more evenly split in their responses to this question. 31.2 percent say the RDPC is genuinely popular, 27.8 percent say that there is no credible opposition, and 41.0 percent say that the elections are rigged. As a group, when compared to ruling party partisans and opposition partisans, nonpartisans are slightly more likely to think that there is no credible opposition. However, the percentage of nonpartisans who believes that the RDPC is genuinely popular or that the elections are rigged falls in between the correlating percent of RDPC partisans and opposition partisans.

In general, RDPC partisans are much more likely than opposition partisans to believe that the system is democratic. A series of questions asked respondents to rate the level of democracy in Cameroon on a scale from zero to ten, where zero represents not democratic at all, and ten represents completely democratic. For each question, RDPC partisans on average rated the level of democracy in Cameroon higher than did opposition partisans on average. For legislative elections, the average score provided by RDPC partisans was 6.4, compared to 3.9 for opposition supporters. The gulf is even wider for presidential elections: 6.5 compared to 3.2. For the country “today,” the averages diverge by 2.3 points, for the country in 1992, there is a 1.2-point difference, and for the country in 1982, there is a 0.8-point divide.⁵⁴ The distributions of responses by partisanship type are depicted in Figure 9. Of all the different ratings, ruling party partisans, on average, gave the highest democracy scores to presidential elections, which was second-to-last for opposition partisans.

When asked whether or not elections should be abolished, neither group of partisans was particularly anti-democratic (2.9 percent of RDPC partisans and 3.8 percent of opposition partisans said it would be good to abolish elections). However, opposition partisans were generally more cynical about the general worth of elections; 16.8 percent of opposition partisans said it wouldn’t make a difference either way if elections were abolished or not (compared to only 6.3 percent of RDPC partisans who held this view).

⁵⁴ The average score for nonpartisans falls in between the average score for RDPC partisans and opposition partisans for each question. Taken with the similar findings for the questions about trust and the question about why the RDPC wins elections, these results for nonpartisans indicate that, on average, nonpartisans appear to be less ideologically committed than either group of partisans.

Figure 9: Assessments of Level of Democracy by Partisanship Type



These figures reveal a very clear political cleavage between ruling party partisans and opposition partisans. Although they both hail from relatively higher socioeconomic groups, they hold vastly different levels of trust in the government and beliefs about the level of democracy in Cameroon. While ruling party partisans have relatively high levels of trust in the government and give higher-than-average marks to the level of democracy in Cameroon, opposition party partisans hold very little trust in what they view as undemocratic institutions of government. In contrast, as a group, nonpartisans appear less ideologically committed than either set of partisans.

Taken together, this chapter has shown that although the ruling party was not primarily designed as a “mobilizing” party meant to indoctrinate or control mass participation, the party—in one form or another—has now been at the heart of Cameroonian politics for nearly 60 years. Over the decades, it has developed a core group of partisan supporters, who on average tend to possess higher levels of socioeconomic status. Opposition parties have likewise relied on a core group of high SES partisans to support them during elections, but have appealed to a completely different set of political beliefs about the state. Whereas the ruling party paints a picture of stability, peace, and long-term economic growth, the opposition campaigns on a narrative of economic stagnation, corruption, and the illegitimacy of the autocratic government. These different party narratives have been cultivated and used over the past 25 years to mobilize partisans to vote during elections. The next chapter assesses the ways in which this framework of partisanship can help to explain the different reasons Cameroonians have for voting in elections.

CHAPTER 4

WHO VOTES AND WHY?

The previous chapter showed that partisans in Cameroon, not unlike partisans in developed democracies, tend to come from groups with higher levels of socioeconomic status. Citizens who align themselves with a political party are more likely to possess the resources and social standing that enable them to engage directly with politics. However, although partisans tend to look similar demographically, at least when compared to nonpartisans, they also display clear political divides. In electoral autocracies, the primary division between ruling party partisans and opposition partisans revolves around support for or opposition to the state itself. Different types of partisans have fundamentally different understandings of national politics. Whereas ruling party partisans, on average, trust the various institutions of the state and see the country as relatively democratic, opposition partisans are deeply distrustful of all the institutions of government, and far less likely to view the state and its institutions as democratic.

This dissertation argues that these cleavages, both demographic and political, can help us to better understand why people vote in rigged elections in autocratic regimes. The theory presented in Chapter Two proposed that partisans in electoral autocracies are motivated to vote by political considerations. Ruling party partisans, who are more likely to support the government, should be more likely to vote out of a sense of civic duty. Opposition party partisans, on the other hand, will be more likely

to vote when they feel that their participation will democratize the political system, even if only symbolically. Nonpartisans, however, should be less likely to be motivated by these political concerns. Instead, nonpartisans should be more likely to vote when they feel social pressure from their families and communities to participate in elections. Overall, I argue that these considerations should be more important to understanding voting behavior in Cameroon than material incentives for voting, such as vote-buying or patronage.

The theory argues that in many autocratic contexts, instrumental inducements for voting are relatively rare, and therefore people may have reasons for voting that are not directly related to economic considerations. I propose that partisanship can offer a strong framework for understanding this type of non-instrumental political behavior. The survey data used to explore this framework of voting is advantageous because it can get closer to the mechanisms of voting that have largely been ignored by the existing literature on mass political behavior in autocratic regimes.

The first section of this chapter discusses the survey evidence for economic voting in Cameroon. The second section looks at the evidence for non-economic reasons and compares the data for both sets of theories. The final section shows how partisanship helps to explain why different types of citizens choose to participate in autocratic elections.

Economic Reasons for Voting

By and large, the existing literature contends that people vote in autocratic elections for economic reasons, and in some ways the descriptive data from Cameroon

supports this theory. Overall, 10.9 percent of all respondents reported receiving a “gift or favor” during the last election. People who reported that they received something included citizens engaged in the traditional relationship of vote-buying, where the citizen receives cash in exchange for their vote. However, this group also includes more indirect exchanges, such as those who received a small gift (for example, rice, soap, or cloth) at a political rally. These extremely common offerings during electoral campaigns are largely seen as benevolent gestures from the party, and not as reciprocal or monitored exchanges (Kramon 2016). For example, it is common for citizens to attend both RDPC as well as opposition rallies to receive the gifts of both parties. Although most citizens would not feel obligated to vote for the party after receiving such a gift, it is possible that some do feel such an obligation, at least subconsciously. Thus, although the vague wording of the question measures activities that are broader than the traditional reciprocal exchanges of cash for a vote, it offers a conservative measure of the null hypothesis of the study by including anyone who may feel obliged to vote because of a direct, personal material reward.

Because of the sensitive nature of vote-buying, I also created a list experiment for the instrument that was designed to measure the prevalence of vote-buying without introducing social sensitivity bias. However, my experience implementing the list experiment has led me to conclude that the results are unreliable. Miscomprehension and satisficing were so prevalent that it is impossible to say what percentage of respondents understood the question and provided an accurate response. Further, the introduction of bias from satisficing may be leading researchers to over-estimate the prevalence of vote-buying and other socially sensitive activities in general (Gonzalez-

Ocantos et al. 2012). Appendix 3 outlines these issues and how they may be inflating our estimates of vote-buying in autocratic or semi-democratic elections.

Vote-buying, however, is only one aspect of economic voting. In autocratic (and also democratic) elections, it has been argued that the promise of local government spending is the largest motivating force for citizens to vote (Blaydes 2011, Chapter 4; Magaloni 2006). Where national elections are not competitive, the idea is that constituencies that support for the ruling party with high levels of pro-regime turnout will be rewarded with higher levels of local government spending. This logic of patronage is certainly not lost on ordinary Cameroonians. In order to measure this motivation, I designed a question for the survey that asked, “Do you think that if voter turnout is high in your district, the government will reward the district with resources like schools, health clinics or paved roads?” To my knowledge, this is the first time a survey has asked a direct question about the logic of electoral patronage. A majority of Cameroonians—51.6 percent of respondents—somewhat or completely agreed with the statement (41.7 percent disagreed and 6.7 percent reported that they did not know).

Further, in an experimental setting, responses implied that a candidate’s ability to deliver local spending is the most important factor in vote choice. An experiment embedded within the survey proposed a hypothetical parliamentary candidate who possessed four defining characteristics. These characteristics included, 1) the candidate’s party, 2) the candidate’s potential ability to deliver local spending, 3) the degree of support the candidate has for the government, and 4) the candidate’s popularity within the community. The description is presented below:

First, imagine that this new candidate **is // is not** a member of the political party you find appealing. Second, although nobody knows for sure, some people on the street have been saying that this candidate **will // will not** be able to bring things like schools, clinics and paved roads to your community. In addition, he is known as a candidate intent on **improving democracy // maintaining the current political regime** in Cameroon. Finally, it is clear that this candidate **is // is not** popular in your [village/neighborhood].

The four characteristics of the candidate were randomly assigned to be missing or present, such that there were sixteen different versions of the candidate. After hearing the description of the candidate, each respondent was asked whether or not they would vote for the candidate. By controlling the information each respondent received about the hypothetical candidate, it is possible to discern which piece of information most affects a person's decision to vote (or not).

Table 12 presents the "vote totals" for five of the sixteen candidates. The baseline category, Candidate A, presented in the first row, possessed none of the four characteristics—he was not from an appealing party, he likely would not bring development projects, he supported the ruling regime, and he was not popular. Columns 2 - 5 represent the four characteristics, and an 'X' in that column indicates that the candidate possessed that particular characteristic. Thus, Candidate B was identical to the baseline category (Candidate A), except that he was from an appealing political party. The last two columns represent the percentage of respondents in each group who reported that they would or would not vote for that candidate.

Table 12: "Vote Totals" of Hypothetical Candidates

ID	Partisan	Patronage	Democratic	Popular	No. of Resp. (No Don't knows)	Percent Don't Know/ Refused	Percent Vote	Percent Would Not Vote
A					136	3.55	19.86	76.60
B	X				144	0.69	13.10	86.21
C		X			143	2.72	59.18	38.10
D			X		139	2.80	37.06	60.14
E				X	149	1.32	17.88	80.79

Of respondents who received the baseline candidate (who possessed none of the potential positive characteristics), only 19.9 percent said they would vote for him. Of the four “treatment candidates,” the candidate who can deliver patronage is far and away the most popular candidate: 59.2 percent of treatment group C respondents reported that they would vote for him. Surprisingly, Candidate B (a co-partisan) and Candidate E (who is locally popular) received *less* support than the baseline candidate. The only other candidate who did better than the baseline candidate was Candidate D, who ran a pro-democracy campaign.

The substance of these descriptive statistics is reflected in the t-tests presented in Table 13. Each row of Table 13 shows the mean response value (“Would you vote for this candidate?”) of each candidate from Table 12, along with the difference in means between each treatment group and the control group (Candidate A). Treatments B (partisanship) and E (popularity) appear not to be statistically different from the control group. Treatments C (patronage) and D (democracy) are statistically distinct from the control group mean, indicating that in this hypothetical scenario, respondents are more likely to vote for a candidate who is able to deliver patronage or willing to

campaign on a pro-democracy platform. Further, the huge difference in means between treatment C and the control (and the smaller difference between treatment D and the control) suggests that the ability to deliver patronage is the most important characteristic of a parliamentary candidate, while the desire to democratize is, perhaps, a secondary concern.

Table 13: Difference in Means between Treatment Groups

ID	Baseline Mean (Control Group (A))	Treatment Mean	Difference in Means	P Value	Degrees of Freedom
B	0.203	0.141	0.062	0.162	290
C	0.203	0.603	-0.400	0.000	287
D	0.203	0.386	-0.183	0.001	286
E	0.203	0.180	0.023	0.621	291

The results of this survey experiment indicate that Cameroonians care very much about the ability of a politician to deliver development projects to their home constituency. In this hypothetical scenario, the delivery of development trumps everything else, including partisanship, popularity, and even support for democracy. All in all, the evidence from this hypothetical survey question supports the existing literature; citizens vote for candidates who can deliver local development. This should not surprise us: When asked to name the biggest problem in Cameroon, the top two choices were unemployment (23.7 percent) and poverty (11.5 percent). Only two percent of Cameroonians feel that the present economic condition of Cameroon is

“very good.”⁵⁵ Ordinary Cameroonians are sincerely troubled by the poor level of economic development in Cameroon, both locally as well as nationally.

At the same time, however, the hypothetical scenario presented in the survey experiment does not reflect the political reality in Cameroon. While Cameroonians deeply desire local spending and development, it is not entirely clear that they believe that this spending will come because of their actions during elections. Overall, 76.1 percent of Cameroonians feel that the deputy that represents them in the National Assembly makes absolutely no difference in their life. In addition, 64.7 percent of respondents trust the National Assembly only ‘just a little’ or ‘not at all.’ The theory in this dissertation does not oppose the claim that citizens of autocratic regimes are deeply affected by their desire for economic equality, development, and opportunity. Nor does it deny that economic issues such as employment and infrastructure are the most important issues in Cameroon today. Instead, this dissertation proposes that after decades of one-party rule and economic stagnation, most Cameroonians no longer expect economic development to come from the choices they make at the ballot box. As a result, beliefs about patronage may not be the strongest predictor of voting behavior.

Non-Economic Reasons for Voting

If citizens no longer trust their representatives to deliver economic investments, then why do so many people continue to vote in these autocratic

⁵⁵ Author’s survey data: 2.2 percent said the present economic condition of Cameroon was very good, 14.7 reported that it was fairly good, 26.5 said it was neither good nor bad, 21.8 said it was fairly bad, and the plurality, 34.8 percent, reported that that it was very bad.

elections? I argue that political and social considerations play the most important role in motivating citizens to vote. Before delving into sub-group analysis of partisanship, it is important to first establish that these non-economic motivations are even plausible. Economic and ethnic reasons for voting have dominated the discourse on voting in Africa and autocratic regimes for so long, it may seem unlikely that in a context like Cameroon, citizens would consider voting a civic duty, or believe that their vote might democratize the political space.

Descriptively, however, these considerations appear to be very important to Cameroonians. The three questions designed to capture these motivations are presented in Table 14. In order to avoid acquiescence bias, the question about civic duty provides the respondent with two compelling logics for voting being either a choice or a duty (Blais and Achen, n.d.). It then asks with which one they agree. Roughly 69 percent of respondents believe that voting is a duty. Similarly, the next question offers respondents two options regarding the democratic aspects of voting, asking whether the best way to improve democracy is to abstain from an unfair process as a form of boycott, or to vote to increase representative participation. Nearly 80 percent of respondents believe that voting is the best way to improve democracy. Finally, the survey asks whether or not the respondent takes into account the expectations of their family and community when deciding to vote. Respondents were split on this question: 57 percent said that these expectations were “very important” or “a little important,” while 42 said that they were “not very” or “not at all” important.

Table 14: Question Wording and Responses

Question	Response Option #1	Response Option #2	Response Option #3	Response Option #4	Don't Know
In general, different people feel differently about voting. For some, voting is a duty. Regardless of what they think about the candidates and parties, they feel they should vote in every election no matter what. For others, voting is a choice. In each election they choose whether to vote or not depending on how they feel about the candidates and parties. For you personally, is voting first and foremost a duty or a choice?	I feel strongly that voting is a duty 62.7 %	I feel that voting is a duty, but not very strongly 6.6 %	Voting is a choice 30.3 %		0.4 %
People have different opinions about how to improve democracy in Cameroon. Some people think that voting will improve democracy. Other people think that it is better to boycott elections that are not free and fair. To improve democracy in Cameroon, do you believe it is better to vote in or to boycott elections?	I feel strongly that we should vote 76.6 %	I feel we should vote, but not very strongly 10.2 %	I feel we should boycott, but not very strongly 3.8 %	I feel strongly that we should boycott 7.1%	2.3 %
When deciding whether or not to vote, do you take into account the expectations of your family and community?	Their expectations are very important 43.9 %	Their expectations are a little important 14.3 %	Their expectations are not very important 5.5 %	Their expectations are not at all important 34.9 %	1.4 %

The raw response figures indicate that, in general, Cameroonians are familiar with these different logics of voting. For example, although, *a priori*, it may seem doubtful that Cameroonians think of voting as a duty (“*un devoir*”), it is clear that a

robust majority believe that it is. Further, Cameroonians who did not believe voting was a duty still understood the concept: only 0.4 percent of all respondents reported that they did not know if voting was a duty or a choice.⁵⁶ It is also important to note that while the majority of respondents agree with these expressive and social reasons for voting, there is only modest correlation between the three questions. The two expressive reasons for voting—civic duty and democracy—correlate most strongly at 0.23. But voting with the community only correlates with civic duty at 0.05 and with voting for democracy at 0.08. Thus, the measures do not appear to be tapping into some broader latent measurement of expression, citizenship, or participation in general.

While there is broad support for these three general ideas, the basic figures do not give us a sense of whether these beliefs motivate action, or whether one is more important than the other, or that any one of them is more important than economic reasons for voting. Therefore, the following regression analyses simultaneously measure the relationship between all of these potential voting motivations and self-reported voting behavior. The dependent variable of this analysis is a dichotomous measure of whether or not the respondent reported voting in the most recent 2013 legislative and municipal elections. Although it has been shown that people over-report voting behavior in surveys (Tittle and Hill 1967), there is unfortunately no way around this issue given the available data.

Further, certain steps were taken to improve the reliability of response rates and measurement given issues of social sensitivity across the instrument. First,

⁵⁶ Note, for example, that 6.7 percent of respondents responded that they “did not know” when asked about the existence of electoral patronage.

Cameroon was specifically chosen as the site of fieldwork because political repression is rare amongst ordinary citizens, and therefore relative to some autocratic contexts, the fear of retribution for participation in the survey was low. Second, a 100-respondent pre-test of the instrument was conducted in Yaoundé prior to full implementation. A number of questions and question orderings were altered to improve comprehension and minimize response bias.⁵⁷ Third, measurement of the key dependent and independent variables were carefully designed to minimize social sensitivity bias. For example, it has been shown that people over-report voting behavior in surveys, and so the survey took steps to minimize this bias by providing respondents a list of options regarding the previous election.⁵⁸ Further, as an alternative measure of the potentially sensitive question of patronage voting, the regression analysis includes direct measures of local government investments.

Even given the inevitability of social sensitivity bias, I argue that these micro-level measures of voting behavior are an improvement over existing analyses. Overall, studies that use macro-level measures of voting behavior commit ecological fallacy if they try to extrapolate individual behavior from macro-level indicators (Blaydes 2011; Magaloni 2006). At best, we can say that turnout correlates with state spending; but we cannot say whether or not citizens are actually affected by this spending as they decide whether or not to vote. In particular, Blaydes' methodological strategy for

⁵⁷ Two list experiments were included in attempt to measure vote-buying and intimidation, but despite repeated re-writing of the questions, I found it exceedingly difficult for participants to follow the directions of the experiment, and therefore do not find the responses accurate or credible. See Appendix 3 for more information.

⁵⁸ These options included "You were not registered to vote," "You were registered, but chose not to vote," "You were registered and tried to vote, but were turned away at the polling station," and "You did vote."

measuring vote-buying is especially dubious. She measures vote-buying by regressing district-level voter turnout on district-level illiteracy rates using Gary King's ecological inference statistical package (King, Tanner, and Rosen 2004). On the one hand, this decision is methodologically problematic as a number of scholars have found the ecological inference strategy problematic if a number of highly-restrictive assumptions are not met (Cho and Gaines 2004; Cho 1998). On the other hand, even if we accept the methodological assumptions made by her modeling choices, at best all we can say is that illiterate citizens are more likely to vote than literate citizens. This gives us no purchase on the question of vote-buying, unless we make the heroic assumption that the only reason illiterate citizens would vote is because they sold their vote.

Apart from these macro-level methodological approaches, I also argue that the measures are an improvement over existing micro-level measures of voting motivations, which either rely on pre-packaged survey data that was not designed to measure voting motivations (Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015), or only samples small subsets of the population (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014). Despite the drawbacks of social sensitivity bias (which I have taken steps to minimize), I contend that the precision of the questions and their micro-level measurement make them superior to our existing measures.

With this in mind, the regression features six primary independent variables: three economic reasons for voting and three non-economic reasons. The first two economic motivations were the survey questions discussed in the earlier section concerning vote-buying in the previous election ("Did you receive a gift or favor?")

and the logic of patronage (“Do you think that if voter turnout is high in your district, the government will reward the district with resources like schools, health clinics or paved roads?”). The third economic independent variable is a direct measure of government spending. This measure was constructed from government investment budgets, which have been produced by Cameroon’s Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development (MINEPAT) for 2008-2015. The coding details of this measure are discussed in Chapter Five. The three non-economic motivations are the three questions detailed in Table 14 (voting as a civic duty, as a way to improve democracy, and whether or not the respondent takes into account the expectations of their family or their community). All regressions include region fixed effects and post-stratification survey weights.

Results: Different Motivations for Voting

Model 1 in Table 15 presents the results of a logistic regression of just these six independent variables. Model 2 includes a set of control variables, which might account for potential confounding relationships between the six independent variables and the likelihood of voting. The first set of control variables are the demographic measures from Chapter Three: items owned, urban/rural locality, gender, age and education. In addition, following Miguel, et al. (2015), I include a question that measures the respondent’s assessment of the national economy. I also include self-reported news consumption to try to account for the respondent’s exposure to political communications from the government. Finally, I measure the ruling party’s vote share in the respondent’s *arrondissement* for the previous election to account for the effects

of living in a ruling party region of the country versus an opposition region, or a region that ‘swings’ between the two.

Table 15: Primary Motivations for Voting, Full Sample

Reported Voting in the 2013 Elections	Model 1	Model 2
Received a Gift Or Favor	0.030 (0.219)	-0.018 (0.221)
Expects Patronage	0.061 (0.054)	0.029 (0.058)
Per Capita Budgetary Spending	0.033* (0.018)	0.004 (0.020)
Civic Duty	0.298*** (0.078)	0.245*** (0.083)
Improve Democracy	0.373*** (0.077)	0.388*** (0.084)
Votes with the Community	0.280*** (0.054)	0.310*** (0.058)
Items Owned	--	0.004 (0.044)
Rural	--	0.561 (0.361)
Female	--	-0.237 (0.150)
Age	--	0.063*** (0.010)
Education	--	0.002 (0.043)
Evaluation of Economic Performance	--	0.125* (0.070)
News Consumption	--	-0.003 (0.008)
RDPC vote share (Arrondissement)	--	-0.004 (0.015)
Constant	-1.448*** (0.291)	-3.118** (1.212)
N	2,126	2,043
Pseudo R-Squared	0.109	0.177

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Coefficients are reported. Standard errors are given in parentheses. All models contain region fixed effects and ethnicity dummies.

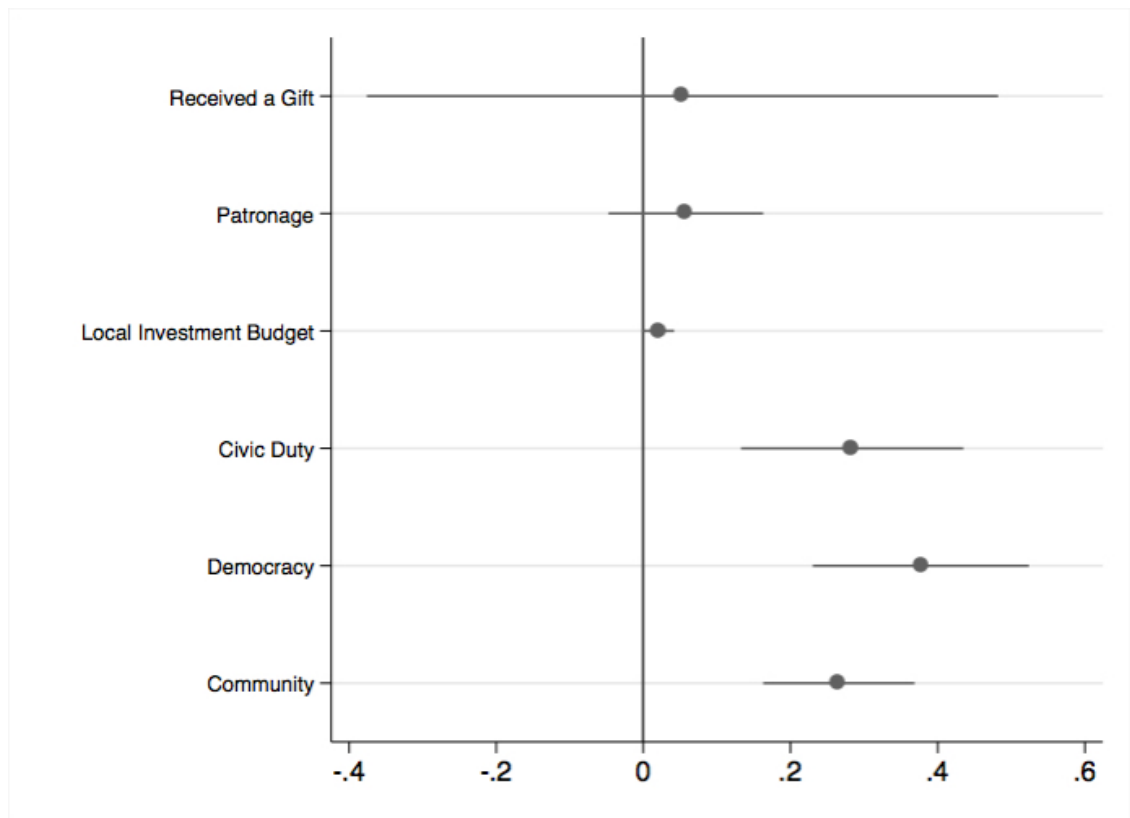
The results of both Model 1 and Model 2 indicate that, for the entire sample of respondents, even controlling for ethnicity and other demographic factors, non-economic reasons for voting have a stronger relationship with self-reported voter turnout than economic reasons. While all three non-economic independent variables (civic duty, improving democracy, and expectations of the community) have a positive and significant relationship with self-reported voter turnout, government spending in the less restrictive model is the only statistically significant economic variable. Respondents who reported selling their votes in the last election or expecting a government reward do not appear to be more or less likely to vote than their peers who responded negatively to these survey questions. Further, local government spending does not appear to have a strong relationship with self-reported voter turnout, especially when controlling for demographic and geographic factors. The results reveal that the logic of electoral patronage does not dominate the reasons people hold for voting.⁵⁹

The coefficients from Model 1 are displayed graphically in Figure 10. Although all six measures have positive relationships with voter turnout, only the non-economic measures are statistically distinguishable from zero at a 95 percent confidence interval. The measure of vote-buying has very wide confidence intervals because relatively few respondents actually reported receiving a gift or favor during

⁵⁹ The results from Model 2 also provide support for findings in the existing literature that older citizens and citizens from rural areas are more likely to vote (Kuenzi and Lambright 2011). In addition, the positive and statistically significant coefficient on the respondent's assessment of the national economy also supports the findings from Miguel, et al. (2015), who argue that in autocratic elections in the Middle East and North Africa, citizens reward the regime with their vote when the economic environment is favorable. However, the data do not support the contention that education or socioeconomic status are strong predictors of political behavior in Cameroon.

the previous election. Though vote buying is surely influential on the likelihood of voting when it happens, it is not a very common occurrence in Cameroon today, and therefore cannot explain the voting behavior of the majority of voters.

Figure 10: Coefficients with 95% Confidence Intervals, Model 1



While the confidence intervals on patronage and government spending are much smaller in comparison, both of these measures have coefficients very close to zero, indicating that they do not have a very strong correlation with self-reported voting behavior, at least when controlling for other motivations for voting. Although a majority of Cameroonians believes in the logic of electoral patronage, this belief

apparently does not translate strongly into self-reported voting behavior. Citizens who believe voting can bring increased spending are not any more or less likely to vote than citizens who do not believe spending correlates with vote shares.

Non-economic reasons for voting, on the other hand, all correlate positively and significantly with self-reported voting behavior. For the entire sample of survey respondents, all else held equal, a respondent who feels that voting is a civic duty is about 10 percent more likely to vote than one who feels that voting is a choice. A respondent who believes that voting can improve democracy in Cameroon is nearly 23 percent more likely to vote than someone who thinks that boycotting is the best strategy. Finally, a citizen who thinks the expectations of their family and community are very important is about 14 percent more likely to vote than someone who does not take their expectations into account, all else held equal. Although the coefficients are not reported in the table, it is important to note that ethnicity plays very little role in explain voter turnout. At a p-value of 0.05 or less, no ethnic group is any more or less likely to vote than another. Overall, these findings suggest that non-economic reasons for voting are important for understanding voting behavior in autocratic elections, and that they are seemingly even more important than economic reasons for voting. The following section further investigates how these different motivations affect different types of partisans.

Results: Partisanship and Voting

The core theory of this dissertation, presented in Chapter Two, proposes not just that citizens vote in autocratic elections for non-economic reasons, but that

partisanship can help us to understand the *different* reasons why people choose to vote. Given their unique set of political beliefs, I argue that ruling party partisans will be most affected by their sense of civic duty, whereas opposition partisans will be most influenced by their beliefs about the relationship between voting and democratization. Nonpartisans, on the other hand, should be more strongly motivated by the social expectations and pressures of their families and communities. The models in Table 16 disaggregate respondents into partisans who support the opposition SDF, nonpartisans, and partisans who support the RDPC.⁶⁰ In order to contextualize and better interpret these results, Table 17 reports the predicted probability of voting for the lowest and highest values of each non-economic motivation for each group. Figures 11 through 13 plot these marginal effects.

⁶⁰ Models are identical to Model 2 in Table 13, except that they are run on only groups of partisans. In addition, the models do not include ethnicity dummies because the models are under-powered.

Table 16: Explaining Which Partisans Vote for Which Reasons

Reported Voting in the 2013 Elections	Members of the Opposition SDF	Nonpartisans	Members of the Ruling RDPC
Received a Gift Or Favor	2.276 (1.620)	-0.154 (0.271)	-1.022* (0.560)
Expects Patronage	-0.087 (0.287)	-0.050 (0.069)	0.070 (0.164)
Per Capita Budgetary Spending	0.074 (0.056)	0.009 (0.014)	0.001 (0.034)
Civic Duty	0.266 (0.392)	0.178* (0.095)	0.567** (0.240)
Improve Democracy	0.938** (0.473)	0.384*** (0.093)	0.370 (0.239)
Votes with the Community	-0.429 (0.308)	0.316*** (0.069)	0.204 (0.146)
Items Owned	-0.100 (0.181)	-0.021 (0.053)	-0.100 (0.106)
Rural	-1.877 (1.689)	-0.049 (0.378)	2.388*** (0.794)
Female	-0.296 (0.692)	0.008 (0.174)	-0.282 (0.403)
Age	0.108 (0.077)	0.049*** (0.011)	0.137*** (0.034)
Education	-0.019 (0.204)	-0.010 (0.050)	0.079 (0.124)
Evaluation of Economic Performance	-0.480 (0.357)	0.104 (0.083)	-0.127 (0.174)
News Consumption	0.105 (0.113)	-0.016 (0.014)	0.162** (0.065)
RDPC vote share (Arrondissement)	0.066 (0.044)	0.016 (0.016)	-0.048 (0.040)
Constant	-10.072* (4.313)	-4.368* (1.287)	-3.136 (3.276)
N	187	1206	526
Pseudo R-Squared	0.366	0.134	0.310
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 Coefficients are reported. Standard errors are given in parentheses. All models contain region fixed effects.			

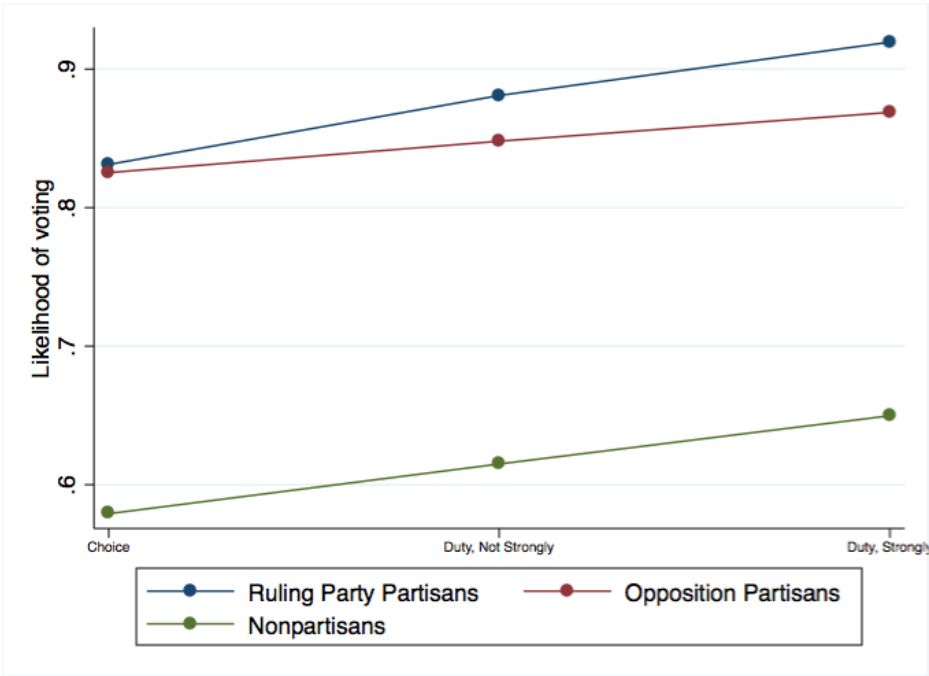
Table 17: Predicted Probabilities of Non-Economic Voting Motivations

Reported Voting in the 2013 Elections		Members of the Opposition		Members of the Ruling RDPC
Motivation	Belief	SDF	Nonpartisans	
Civic Duty	Voting is a civic duty	0.869 (0.034)	0.650 (0.022)	0.919 (0.034)
	Voting is a choice	0.825 (0.046)	0.579 (0.029)	0.831 (0.016)
Community	Community is very important	0.801 (0.041)	0.714 (0.024)	0.915 (0.018)
	Community is not very important	0.898 (0.036)	0.520 (0.030)	0.871 (0.025)
Democracy	Voting improves democracy	0.877 (0.025)	0.665 (0.019)	0.903 (0.015)
	Boycotting improves democracy	0.589 (0.121)	0.425 (0.051)	0.807 (0.069)

First, the results indicate that RDPC partisans are more likely to report having voted when they believe that voting is a civic duty. RDPC partisans who feel strongly that voting is a duty are about nine percent more likely to vote than RDPC partisans who see voting as a choice. As revealed in Table 17 and Figure 11, believing that voting is a civic duty is positively correlated with voting behavior amongst all subgroups: opposition partisans who believe voting is a duty are about four percent more likely to vote, and nonpartisans who believe this are seven percent more likely to vote. Controlling for other motivations, however, these relationships are not

statistically significant for these other groups. The correlation is clearest and strongest amongst ruling party partisans.

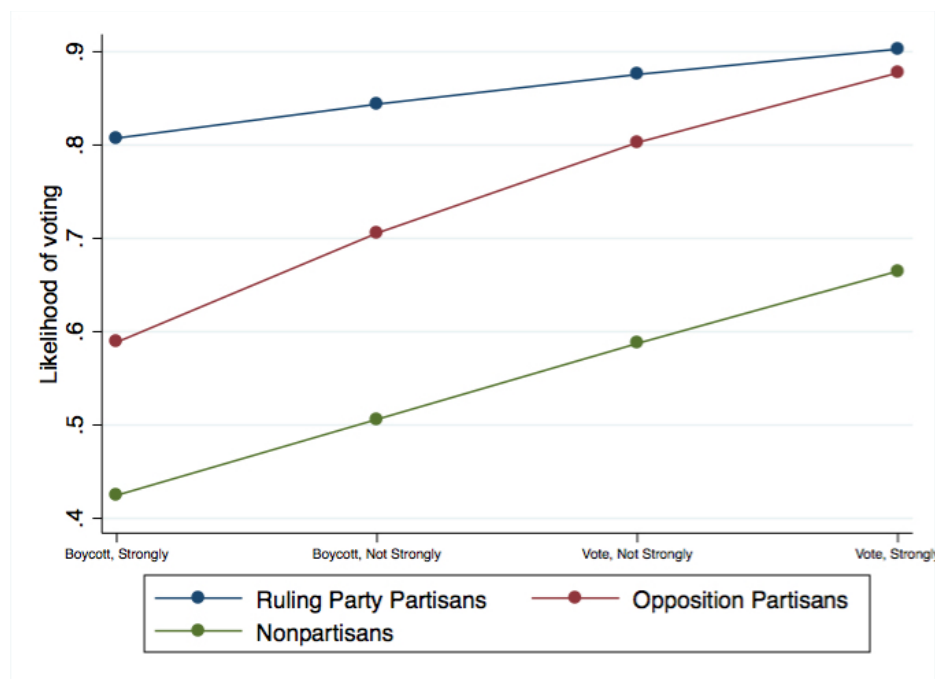
Figure 11: Predicted Probabilities of Voting Amongst Different Partisans, Civic Duty



Second, opposition partisans are instead more likely to vote when they feel that it can improve the level of democracy in Cameroon. Again, although this measure has a positive coefficient for all groups, it is the only statistically significant predictor of voting for members of the opposition. As shown in Table 17 and Figure 12, an SDF partisan who feels strongly that boycotting elections is the best strategy to improve democracy is nearly 30 percent less likely to vote than an SDF partisan who feels strongly that voting will improve democracy. The magnitude of this measure is quite large and it also has an influence on other types of citizens, particularly nonpartisans.

While RDPC partisans are about ten percent more likely to vote when they believe it will improve democracy, nonpartisans who believe this are almost 25 percent more likely to vote. However, for RDPC partisans, this is not statistically distinguishable from zero. Nonetheless, for opposition partisans, a belief in improving democracy appears to be the only statistically significant correlate of reported voting behavior.

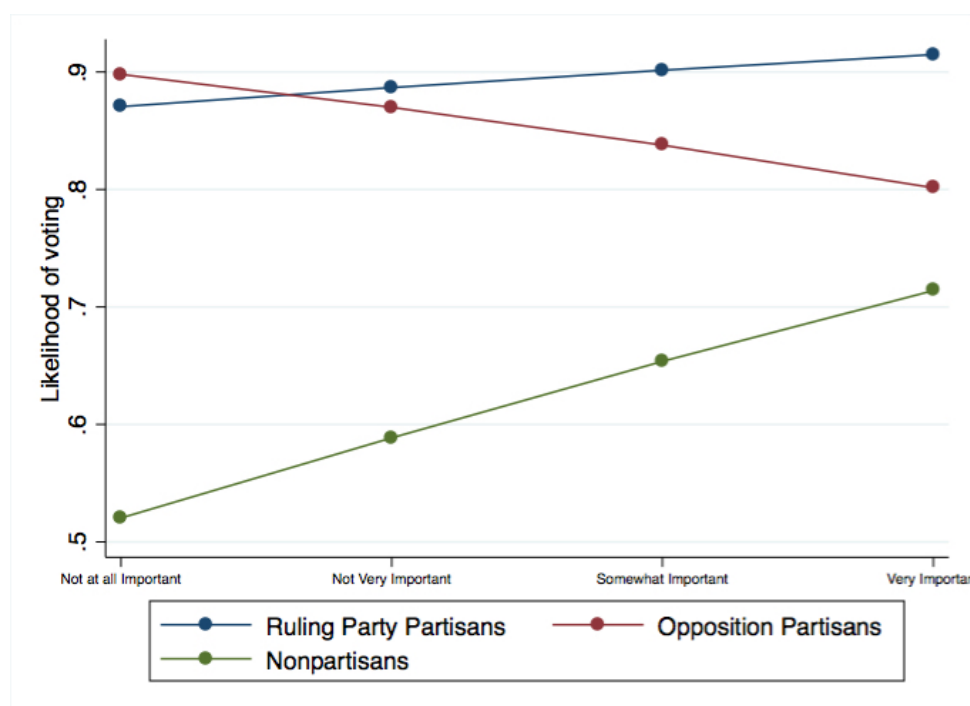
Figure 12: Predicted Probabilities of Voting Amongst Different Partisans, Improve Democracy



Finally, nonpartisans are the only subgroup of citizens who have a statistically significant relationship between feeling pressure from their community and reported voting behavior. Interestingly, as shown in Figure 13, opposition partisans are the only group with a negative coefficient on the community measure, meaning that they are potentially more likely to vote when they feel that the expectations of their family and

community are *not* important to their voting decision. This perhaps reflects the opposition's value of independence and individualism. But for opposition partisans this measure is not statistically significant.

Figure 13: Predicted Probabilities of Voting Amongst Different Partisans, Community and Family Expectations



Unlike opposition partisans, nonpartisans are more likely to vote when they feel like their family and community expect them to do so. Citizens who feel the most pressure from their families and communities are nearly 20 percent more likely to vote than citizens who feel the least amount of pressure. RDPC partisans who feel influenced by their families and communities are only about 4 percent more likely to report having voted, and SDF partisans are almost ten percent *less* likely to have

reported voting. However, this relationship is only statistically significant for nonpartisans. Nonpartisans who feel that voting can improve democracy and who take into account the expectations of their families and communities when voting are more likely to vote than nonpartisans who think boycotting is best and who do not take into account the expectations of their communities.

In addition to the different motivations for voting, several of the control variables also appear to affect voter turnout. As we might expect, older respondents are more likely to report having voted in the most recent election (Kuenzi and Lambright 2011), at least amongst nonpartisans and ruling party partisans.⁶¹ In addition, it is interesting to note that for RDPC partisans, rural citizens and citizens who consume more news are also more likely to vote, but these relationships are not statistically significant for nonpartisans or opposition partisans. Koter (2013) has argued that rural African citizens are more likely to vote for incumbent political parties, and Kuenzi and Lambright (2011) have shown that rural Africans in general are more likely to vote in elections. Taken together with the findings from Chapter Three, showing that partisans tend to come from rural areas, it is interesting to note that only ruling party partisans are more likely to vote when they hail from rural constituencies. It is also perhaps unsurprising that RDPC partisans who consume more news are more likely to vote in elections. Given that the media in Cameroon is dominated by the state and the ruling party, news consumption is a proximate measure for receiving messages from the state, and state media generally encourages citizens to

⁶¹ The relatively smaller sample size of opposition partisans decreases the precision of estimates for the subgroup. Notably, the only measure that is significantly correlated with voting is whether or not the (opposition) respondent believes voting can improve democracy.

vote during elections. Because nonpartisans and opposition partisans who receive more of these messages are not any more likely to vote, we may be able to infer that such citizens find these messages less credible, and are thus less likely to internalize them (Geddes and Zaller 1989).

These results provide evidence for the theory that different groups of partisans in electoral autocracies have different reasons for participating in politics. They also bring into question existing theories that argue that citizens vote in autocratic elections primarily for economic reasons, adding complexity to some of the traditional assumptions of electoral behavior in autocratic regimes. As one nonpartisan in Bafoussam (a swing city in the West Region) put it, “Only RDPC Members of Parliament can bring development. The opposition isn't favored by the government. But really it doesn't even make a difference because nobody ever brings anything anyways.”⁶² The logic of patronage certainly exists in Cameroon, but after 20 years of multiparty elections and continued economic stagnation and underdevelopment, many citizens doubt the connection between electoral returns and the provision of public goods.

Instead, citizens may hold more ideational or social reasons for voting. For example, ruling party supporters in autocratic countries may possess a high level of patriotism, and feel pride in fulfilling their civic duty come election day. As one female RDPC supporter told me in Foumban, “I vote the RDPC because it's the ruling party. I grew up with it. My mother was a member since I was a child.”⁶³ Opposition supporters, on the other hand, are more confident in alternatives to the ruling party,

⁶² Respondent Number 1951. Interviewed on March 17, 2015 in Bafoussam I, Mifi by the author.

⁶³ Respondent Number 2119. Interviewed on March 21, 2015 in Foumban, Noun by the author.

and hope, perhaps idealistically, that their participation may have some effect on the level of democracy. As a 35 year-old respondent in Batibo district (an SDF stronghold in the Northwest region) expressed, “I vote to show that the opposition has support; to show people outside of this country that the government isn't universally supported. But I know it won't really change the results.”⁶⁴ Such opposition supporters are aware that their vote will not significantly alter the balance of power in government, but are still committed to voting because they believe that their participation can make a larger systemic difference, even if it is only symbolic.

While the results in this chapter point to a more dynamic understanding of voting behavior in electoral autocracies, they do not definitively undermine the hypothesis that government spending affects voting behavior in systematic ways. The existing literature proposes that the state uses its budgetary powers to affect electoral behavior during elections. The following chapter explores these systemic influences on voting behavior. It shows that variation in turnout is not well explained by government spending patterns, and instead proposes different ways that the state and political parties use their power to influence voter behavior.

⁶⁴ Respondent Number 1293. Interviewed on February 13, 2015 in Batibo, Momo East by the author.

CHAPTER 5

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND TURNOUT

Thus far, this dissertation has inverted the existing approach to understanding electoral behavior in autocratic regimes by starting from the perspective of the citizen instead of the state. The most influential work on electoral autocracies focuses on the role of the government in influencing voting behavior, taking for granted that citizens respond to state inducements in rational ways (Blaydes 2011; Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Magaloni 2006; Svoboda 2012). Having established a non-economic theory of voting behavior, and demonstrating that there is strong micro-level evidence for this theory, I now turn to the state: Given this new framework for understanding economic, expressive and social reasons for voting, how is the government, in turn, affecting electoral behavior?

The existing literature proposes two main ways that the state attempts to affect voter turnout using budgetary allocations: either spending most in swing districts that narrowly support the ruling party or instead rewarding core districts at the expense of all other districts. The first hypothesis, originally developed in the context of democratic elections (Dixit and Londregan 1996; Lindbeck and Weibull 1987), but adapted for the autocratic context by Beatriz Magaloni (2006) in Mexico, suggests that between elections, the government adjusts its regional spending in order to boost turnout and support for the ruling party by focusing most closely in swing districts. Magaloni argues that the government does this in two ways: “First, the party will react

in an unforgiving fashion toward defectors by withdrawing funds from those municipalities that elect opposition representatives. Second, the ruling party will disproportionately invest in its supporters who can more credibly threaten to exit, rather than its most loyal followers, who are likely to support the party regardless” (2006, 124). As a result, government spending should be lowest in opposition districts, but highest in swing districts that vote for the ruling party. Swing districts that vote for the opposition should be the biggest threat to a ruling party, and therefore see few investments. Further, Magaloni proposes that core ruling party districts should not receive the highest budgetary allocations. Although they may receive more than opposition districts, the government should spend most in districts that narrowly vote for the ruling party.

The second hypothesis, likewise developed in democratic contexts (Cox and McCubbins 1986; Schady 2000; Scheiner 2006), but adapted by Blaydes (2011, see Chapter 4) to understand autocratic politics, proposes instead that the government should invest the most in its strongholds. The ‘punishment regime’ should be the most compelling strategy in allocating government investment spending: elections reveal to autocrats where they are least and most popular, and autocrats should respond to this information by rewarding supporters and punishing detractors. From the micro-level, the logic here is that if ordinary citizens believe that districts that support the regime are rewarded, they too should vote to support the regime. In contrast to the first hypothesis, the highest levels of government investment should be directed towards ruling party strongholds.

Because these theories are derived from the perspective of the state, they are focused more on explaining government spending than on the actions of individuals. For example, their analysis is centered on explaining the vote totals for the ruling party (vote choice), without considering at all voter turnout in the aggregate (why vote at all?). Thus when taken to their logical conclusions, their theories may tell us about why citizens of swing districts choose to vote, but continue to leave unanswered the question of why people vote in opposition or ruling party strongholds, which, by definition, constitute the vast majority of districts in electoral autocracies. Citizens who live in swing districts may believe that the act of voting can change the fortunes of their district vis-à-vis government spending. But if your district has *always* voted heavily for the ruling party or the opposition, what is the point of voting?

By flipping the point of theoretical departure, this dissertation has shown that ordinary citizens in autocratic regimes do not vote solely for economic reasons. By understanding the socioeconomic and political divisions between citizens, we can explain why different types of people might vote for expressive and social reasons, even if they know their vote will not affect the outcome of the election or result in any sort of economic reward. Nonetheless, the idea of electoral patronage is not new to Cameroon or Cameroonians. After all, Cameroon is the birthplace of the idiom “politics of the belly” (Bayart 1989); a complex notion with multiple levels of meaning, but which essentially equates politics with the personal accumulation of wealth or favors.

Indeed, the micro-level data supports the contention that many citizens are familiar with the idea of electoral patronage. As noted earlier, when asked, “do you

think that if voter turnout is high in your district, the government will reward the district with resources like schools, health clinics or paved roads?”, 36.5 percent of respondents completely agreed with the statement and 14.0 percent somewhat agreed. From the results of the survey experiment discussed in Chapter Four, it is clear that Cameroonians wish that their representatives worked harder to deliver these local goods to their communities. However, as this chapter will argue, the weakness of the Cameroonian state combined with the unassailable electoral position of the ruling party translates into very little local investment for most communities in Cameroon.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to more fully investigate the hypotheses proposed by the existing literature regarding electoral patronage. Focusing on the role that the state plays in affecting voter turnout, the first part of this chapter investigates regional variation in government spending patterns. According to the existing literature, the government should allocate budgetary investments based on electoral returns—either spending more in swing districts or in strongholds. The first section discusses the original budgetary and electoral data collected from the Cameroonian ministries and the second section estimates the relationship between government spending and electoral behavior using a number of different statistical models, finding little evidence of electoral patronage of any kind. The final part of the chapter discusses possible explanations for this lack of evidence, using what we have learned in previous chapters about the structure of the RDPC and the nature of partisanship in Cameroon to help explain why electoral patronage would be a costly and redundant strategy for the government.

Data and Measurement

To better understand the structural effects of patronage and government spending on macro-level turnout in Cameroon, the following sections will test the hypothesis that government spending is correlated with voting patterns. In order to estimate such a relationship, the dissertation presents a new dataset of budgetary figures (2008–2015) and electoral returns (1992–2013) collected from the government ministries in Cameroon. Though the following analysis is not an exact replication of Magaloni or Blaydes’ work, it attempts to imitate their methodological approach as closely as possible by measuring the macro-level relationship between government spending and election results. Departures from their approaches are noted where appropriate.

Investment Data

In order to measure electoral patronage, the following analysis uses Cameroonian annual public investment budgetary data. The budgetary data was collected for 2008–2015 (annually) from the archives of the Ministry for Economy, Planning, and Regional Development (MINEPAT) for every government ministry. There are 36 ministries in Cameroon, including three ministries of education (MINEDUB for basic education, MINESEC for secondary education, and MINESUP for higher education), various ministries of public spending (for example, MINTP for public works, MINT for transportation, and MINSANTE for public health), as well as a series of smaller ministries for various sectors of the population (MINPROFF for women’s empowerment, MINADER for agriculture and rural development, and

MINJEC for youth and civic education), and, finally, numerous ministries designed to implement regular functions of the state (for example, MINFI for finance, MINJUSTICE for the courts, DGSN for national security, and MINPOSTEL for posts and telecommunications).

Annual public investment budgets for each ministry vary widely. For example, in 2015, the largest budget allocation was to the Ministry of Public Works (MINTP), which received 218.5 billion CFCA (roughly \$346 million), contrasted to the budget for the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTSS), which only received 54.2 million CFCA (roughly \$86,000). It should be noted that President Biya's 2011 presidential campaign was heavily focused on the promise of renewed infrastructure spending, and so the MINTP budget increased considerably in 2011 (from about \$6.65 million in 2010 to roughly \$350 million in 2011); the next closest budget allocation in 2015 was \$135 million for the Ministry of Water Resources, and Energy). Nonetheless, excluding MINTP, the average budget allocation across all other ministries in 2015 was 8.5 billion CFCA (roughly \$13 million).

It is important to note that the budgetary data collected in this dataset only accounts for the public investment budgets (*les budgets d'investissement publique*), and does not include the operating costs for the ministries (*les budgets de fonctionnement*). Operating budgets are not released to the public, and even retrieving the public investment budgets proved politically sensitive (I was unable to obtain records predating 2008). Operating budgets include things like salaries for civil servants, budgets for office supplies, electricity and water bills, and other incidental costs of running each ministry.

Public investment budgets, on the other hand, account for investments in permanent infrastructure. This means different things for different ministries, but for the most part accounts for building and maintenance budgets of physical facilities. For ministries whose functions comprise mostly social activities, such as the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), public investment budgets are annually quite small (roughly \$618,000 in 2015) and usually account for maintenance of the actual ministry's physical building in the capitol city of each region. For ministries tasked primarily with building physical infrastructure, the budgets are obviously much larger. The Ministry of Public Health's (MINSANTE) annual investment budget is always sizeable (about \$31.4 million in 2015) because each year they are tasked with building new health clinics and renovating existing hospitals. Similarly, the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB), which builds and maintains every elementary school in Cameroon, had a public investment budget of roughly \$16.7 million in 2015. According to the 2015 budgetary planning document, public investment budgets represent about 30 percent of all government spending in a given year.

The budgets are formatted such that each ministry reports their spending by region, with a line-item entry for each expenditure. The level of detail for these entries varies from ministry to ministry and from year to year, but they all include a brief description of the item purchased, the city or village where the money was spent, and the amount of money spent on the item. In order to systematize this data, I aggregated the spending by electoral district (*département*). For example, in its 2008 document for Adamawa Region, the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) reported

spending 18 million CFCA (\$28,515) on two classrooms at the Lycée Bilingue de Meiganga in the village of Meiganga in the Mbéré electoral district. Along with the other line items reported by MINESEC for the Mbéré region in 2008, total spending for the ministry-district-year was 111 million CFCA (\$176,319).

Occasionally, I was unable to locate the electoral district of a particular village reported in a budget, in which case the line item was not included in the dataset.

Further, I have removed defense and security spending from the totals (the budgets of the General Delegation of National Security (DGSN) and the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF)). The logic of defense spending is likely different from that of spending on general public services, as its strategic political use as a source of patronage is curtailed during times of crisis (such as the national security threat of Boko Haram in the north of the country, where defense spending should be a priority). In peace times, it may be focused disproportionately on opposition areas as a way of suppressing the opposition (which undermines the logic of using spending to reward turnout). I also excluded “interventions and investments,” which include huge sums set aside for specific major infrastructure projects, such as the development of the deep-water port at Kribi. Finally, using population totals from the 2005 census, I also created per capita figures for each observation (per capita spending for each ministry-district-year).

These public investment budgets offer a reasonable approximation for electoral patronage. Unlike existing work, which looks at spending on one public service (i.e. Magaloni’s assessment of the poverty reduction program PRONASOL and Blaydes’ measure of water and sewage improvement projects), this approach captures a much

wider set of ways that government spending may be used to affect voting behavior. Further, it includes most of the traditional sources of pork barrel politics considered important in Africa: the building of classrooms, health clinics, and roads. While this measure may appear excessively broad, its advantage is its ability to capture most potential sources of government patronage. Kramon and Posner (2013) have shown that measuring only one source of patronage to understand government favoritism can be misleading, as governments may use different government programs to target different groups. By including all government spending by every ministry of government (with the exception of defense), the measure captures most possible sources of government favoritism.

Nonetheless, there are drawbacks to the measure. As noted earlier, it does not include operating costs, such as government salaries. Therefore if electoral patronage intended to influence voter turnout is primarily channeled through the regional allocation of government jobs and salaries, this data will not measure bias in this sort of spending. Further, the official data does not capture any leakages or illicit transfers from the central government to local offices. Cameroon is infamous for its corruption, and it is extremely likely that extra funds make their way to particular elites in different regions of the country. However, it seems unlikely that local elites would unilaterally use such illicit funds to invest in public goods, such as elementary school classrooms or hospital beds. It is more likely that reported funds get diverted for personal use, and do not make it to the reported investment project. Unfortunately, I do not have any way to measure for such diversions, though, *a priori*, I also do not have reason to believe that such diversions would vary systemically with levels of

voter turnout. Although the data is not perfect, it is a reasonable measure of government investments in local public goods, and I argue that it is an improvement over existing measures, which have relied on the spending of just one type of investment or social program.

Electoral Data

In order to measure the relationship between spending and turnout, I include two measures of macro-level electoral behavior: registered voter turnout and percent vote for the RDPC, both by electoral district. For the 2013 legislative election and the 2011 presidential election, these figures were collected from the Cameroonian Electoral Commission (ELECAM), which was officially created in 2006. For the 2007, 1997, and 1992 legislative elections and the 2004 and 1992 presidential elections, I collected Supreme Court decrees from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD). Historically, the Supreme Court was tasked with announcing the official results of all elections in Cameroon, and this was the only aggregated source I could find for district-level electoral returns. I personally coded all of these returns electronically from the original paper documents. The historical records were missing for both the 2002 legislative elections (I was able to obtain the names and parties of the winning candidates for each district, but not the turnout or vote total figures) as well as the 1997 presidential elections.

Between the 1992 and the 2007 elections, the central government significantly altered the legislative electoral districts by breaking up opposition districts into smaller units (Albaugh 2011). So, for example, Wouri district (*département*), which

encompasses Douala (the largest city in Cameroon), was a unified legislative district that elected (by party list) nine seats for the 1992 elections. Seven of the nine seats went to the opposition in the 1992 legislative election. Before the 1997 election, Wouri was subsequently divided into four separate electoral districts: Wouri Centre et Manoka (3 seats), Wouri Est (4 seats), Wouri Ouest (1 seat), and Wouri Sud (1 seat). In 1997, the opposition only won four seats across the nine seats total in these four new districts (one in Wouri Centre et Manoka, two in Wouri Est, and the seat for Wouri Ouest).

Although legislative districts across the country were altered significantly after 1992, all new districts were simply smaller units within the original 1992 district. No new districts were created by amalgamation of existing districts. Each original district (*département*) is comprised of multiple subdivisions (*arrondissements*), and the new legislative districts were broken down by the boundaries of these pre-existing subdivisions within districts. So for example, in 1992 Wouri was comprised of six subdivisions (Douala 1, Douala 2, Douala 3, Douala 4, Douala 5, and Douala 6). In breaking Wouri into four new districts, the government redrew the district lines around the existing subdivisions. As a result, Wouri Centre et Manoka now comprises Douala 1 and Douala 6, Wouri Est includes Douala 3 and Douala 5, Wouri Ouest is Douala 4, and Wouri Sud is Douala 2.

Despite these changes, the government has rarely incorporated the smaller electoral districts into their other planning or administrative documents. For example, the presidential election results are still reported for the original 1992 districts (i.e., total votes for Wouri; not Wouri Est, Wouri Ouest, etc.). Similarly, the budgetary data

described in the previous section is aggregated to the standard district level (the original 1992 districts). I have therefore similarly aggregated the electoral data for the legislative elections, such that all voter turnout and RDPC vote totals are observed at the larger (original 1992) electoral unit.

Voter turnout is measured as turnout amongst all registered voters.

Unfortunately, the government does not report voter turnout figures as the percentage of the voting-aged population (VAP). Further, it is difficult to calculate these numbers myself for two reasons: census data in Cameroon is both difficult to obtain and of dubious quality. The most recent census was conducted in 2005, but the results were not officially released until 2010, and many believe that this long incubation period resulted in various politically calculated manipulations of the data. Unfortunately, it is difficult to assess the ways in which the figures would have been changed. Relatedly, it was difficult to obtain fine-grained data for the purposes of estimating VAP turnout figures. Although I have the total population by electoral district, the census data is not published by age. The Census Bureau has figures on “youth populations,” including numbers of citizens aged 18 years and older by district, but the voting age in Cameroon is 20 years, and this data (citizens 20 years or older per electoral district) has not been released by the Census Bureau. I must therefore rely on registered voter turnout figures.

For the 2013 legislative election, registered voter turnout varied from 68.4 percent (Mfoundi district, which comprises the capital, Yaoundé) to 88.2 percent (Bamboutos in the West region). Turnout varies far more drastically at both ends of the spectrum for presidential elections. For the 2011 presidential election, Wouri

(Douala) had the lowest level of turnout at just 32.6 percent of all registered voters. In contrast, registered voter turnout was 96.5 in Mefou et Afamba district in the Centre region. In general, and unsurprisingly (Koter 2013; Kuenzi and Lambright 2011), voter turnout tends to be much higher in rural areas of Cameroon than in cities and towns.

Finally, in addition to voter turnout, I also include vote share for the RDPC in order to capture electoral support for the regime. If electoral patronage is prevalent, we would expect government spending to be fundamentally different if turnout is high and for the opposition versus if voter turnout is high and for the ruling the party. Unlike the opposition parties, the RDPC has run a candidate in every electoral district for every single legislative election. Therefore RDPC vote share is always greater than zero and sometimes equals 100 percent. For the most recent 2013 legislative elections, the RDPC received its lowest vote share, 37.2 percent, in Mezam district in the Northwest (Bamenda). Running uncontested, the RDPC won 100 percent of the vote in 13 different electoral districts across the Southwest, South, Centre, and Adamawa regions. Unlike the legislative elections, the presidential opposition candidates are on the ballot in every electoral district across the country. For the 2011 contest, Biya won the lowest share of the vote (26.1 percent) in Mezam district (Bamenda), and the highest share of the vote (99.5 percent) in his home district, Dja et Lobo, in the South region.

Alternatively, in some model specifications, I include a measure of regime support that is more historically oriented. Instead of focusing on the results of a particular election, certain electoral districts may develop a ‘reputation’ over time that

may be less sensitive to movements in actual vote shares during individual elections. If an electoral district is 'known' as a ruling party district, this may matter more for government officials than the actual number of votes the ruling party receives in any given election. For example, two districts might elect an MP from the RDPC with 60 percent of the vote in a particular election, but if historically one district swings back and forth between the opposition and the ruling party while the other district has always had an RDPC representative, then spending decisions might be qualitatively different for these two districts. With this in mind, I include a dichotomous measure of whether the electoral district is a core RDPC district, a swing district, or a core opposition district. Core RDPC districts have had only RDPC representatives since 1997 (the first non-boycotted multiparty legislative elections), while opposition districts have only had opposition representatives. Swing districts have had representatives from both parties at some point between 1997 and the present. Overall, there are 26 core RDPC districts, 29 swing districts, and 3 core opposition districts.

Control Variables

In order to estimate the relationship between spending and voter behavior, I include a number of control variables in the following regression models. First is a dichotomous measure of whether or not the district is the capital of its region. Because ministries maintain their regional headquarters in the capital districts, public investment spending is uniformly higher in regional capitals (16.7 billion CFCA, on average for a capital) than in non-capitals (3.1 billion CFCA, on average). Further, as mentioned in the previous section, voter turnout is also usually lower in urban areas,

such as capitals, than in rural areas. I also control for each district's distance, in kilometers, from Yaoundé, the national capital of Cameroon. All else equal, the farther the district is from Yaoundé, the less attention we should expect it to receive from the central government. This may have an adverse effect on both government spending as well as turnout. Finally, I include the area of each district in kilometers squared. Large districts likely require larger public investment budgets, but may depress turnout if voters must travel longer distances to reach the ballot box on election day.

The Relationship between Government Spending and Turnout

The following analysis cannot prove or disprove a systematic causal relationship between government spending and voting behavior. However, if the motivation of electoral patronage is the most important factor for understanding electoral behavior in Cameroon, we should see some sort of systematic relationship between the aggregate spending figures and popular support and turnout for the regime. Admittedly, this is a strongly circular and endogenous relationship. On the one hand, the existing literature has suggested that spending is specifically used to affect turnout rates and vote share for the regime. On the other hand, these spending decisions are made based on turnout and vote share figures themselves. Thus in some cases spending is affected by electoral behavior, in other cases electoral behavior is affected by spending, and presumably in most cases, the two would be endogenously related. The literature proposes that the government chooses where to invest resources based on past voting behavior in the hope of altering future voting behavior.

Regardless of the direction of causality, however, we should expect at least a modest correlational relationship between where the government chooses to allocate investments geographically and voter turnout for the regime. According to Magaloni, government spending should be highest in swing districts that support the RDPC. For Blaydes, there should be a linear positive relationship between investment and support for the regime. The following analysis uses ordinary least squares regression in order to estimate the relationship between voter turnout, vote share for the ruling party, and government budgetary spending, controlling for a modest number of important confounding factors, including region fixed effects and using robust standard errors.

Because the expected relationship is endogenous, I first estimate the effect of electoral returns on future government spending. This has been the approach of the existing literature, which has focused most on explaining how the government responds to vote shares for the ruling party, rather than on how citizens react to spending decisions. I then switch the sides of the equation in order to estimate the effect of government spending on future voter turnout. Again, this strategy does not give us purchase on the question of the causal direction of the relationship between government spending and voting behavior. Nonetheless, if electoral patronage is an important reason why people vote in autocratic elections, we should find some sort of statistical relationship between government spending and voter behavior: either that spending is greatest in core ruling party areas, or in swing districts that vote for the ruling party.

Government Spending as the Dependent Variable

The following models in Table 18 estimate the relationship between voter behavior in both the 2013 legislative election as well as the 2011 presidential election and government spending the year following each election. If the government spends money based on electoral returns, we should expect to see a correlation between voter turnout and government spending the year after an election, specifically in areas that voted for the ruling party. For all models in Table 18, the dependent variable is per capita government spending by district the year after the election (2014 for Models 1-3 and 2012 for Model 4-6). The primary independent variables of interest are vote share for the RDPC and voter turnout per district. Models 1 and 4 present the naïve models for these relationships; Models 2 and 5 present the same results with control variables, and Models 3 and 6 interact RDPC vote share with voter turnout.

The literature suggests that vote share should be positively correlated with government spending. Regardless of whether spending is greatest for swing districts that vote for the ruling party or ruling party strongholds, spending should always be lowest in districts that vote for the opposition. Thinking further about voter turnout (and the interaction between voter turnout and vote share for the ruling party), we should expect spending levels to be lowest for districts where vote share for the RDPC is lowest, and perhaps especially in such districts where turnout is high. Inversely, at least according to Blaydes, spending should be highest in areas with high vote totals for the RDPC, particularly where voter turnout is also high. Alternatively, it is also possible that the government might spend more in areas with middling levels of support for the ruling party.

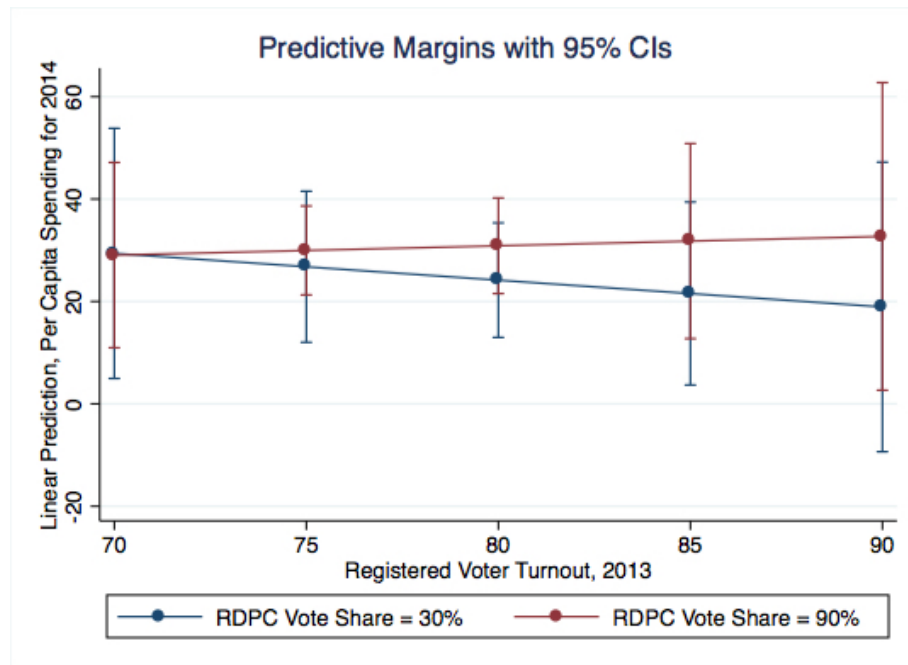
Table 18: The Effect of Voter Behavior on Government Spending

Per Capita Government Spending by District	2013 Legislative Election			2011 Presidential Election		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Voter Turnout x RDPC Vote Share	--	--	0.012 (0.032)	--	--	0.004 (0.024)
Vote Share for RDPC	0.125 (0.213)	0.084 (0.137)	-0.829 (2.544)	-0.696 (0.795)	-0.631 (0.886)	-0.855 (1.733)
Voter Turnout	0.443 (1.010)	-0.109 (0.644)	-0.876 (2.076)	1.313 (0.989)	0.742 (1.051)	0.410 (2.223)
Regional Capital	--	-0.555 (8.039)	-0.899 (8.58)	--	-14.62 (24.08)	-15.02 (25.05)
Distance from Yaoundé	--	0.000 (0.0029)	0.000 (0.030)	--	0.038 (0.079)	0.039 (0.078)
District's Area, Kilometers Squared	--	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	--	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Per Capita Government Spending, lagged	--	1.055*** (0.092)	1.051*** (0.092)	--	0.541 (0.639)	0.536 (0.630)
Centre Region	1.221	-4.678	-4.756	10.20	21.06	20.82
East Region	13.01	4.073	4.738	17.33	34.59	34.45
Far North Region	-9.819	-1.589	-1.470	-17.48*	-37.72	-38.46
Littoral Region	28.81	10.65	10.13	16.11	15.36	14.99
North Region	-12.29	-4.693	-4.156	-6.440	-11.10	-11.29
Northwest Region	-11.89	-5.572	-5.091	-19.48	-24.75	-24.26
South Region	131.6**	-0.517	1.412	139.7	144.8	144.1
Southwest Region	6.603	7.203	6.921	-4.101	-10.55	-10.19
West Region	-8.505	-1.657	-1.625	-15.31	-12.86	-12.13
Constant	-23.23	6.241	66.14	-18.172	2.146	20.67
N	58	58	58	58	58	58
R-Squared	0.506	0.936	0.936	0.397	0.418	0.418

Overall, as presented in Table 18, there does not appear to be a strong statistical relationship between voter behavior and government spending for either legislative or presidential elections. Regardless of model specification or election type, electoral behavior—vote share or turnout—is never statistically significant. Further, although the coefficient is positive for RDPC vote share for the 2013 election, it is negative for the 2011 presidential election. If we could distinguish the relationship between spending and behavior from zero, it would appear that the government spent *less* in districts with higher vote shares for the President.

In order to better understand these results, Figures 14, 15, and 16 plot the predicted probabilities of spending for the interactive models in Table 18 (Models 3 and 6). Figure 14 presents the interactive effect of turnout and RDPC vote share on government spending the year after the 2013 legislative election. The x-axis plots turnout levels from their minimum (68.4 percent) to their maximum (88.2 percent) while the y-axis plots the predicted probability of per capita government spending given various levels of turnout and vote share. The red line represents a district with a high vote share for the ruling party (90 percent), while the blue line represents a district with a low vote share for the ruling party (30 percent).

Figure 14: Predicted Probabilities of Spending in Strongholds, 2014

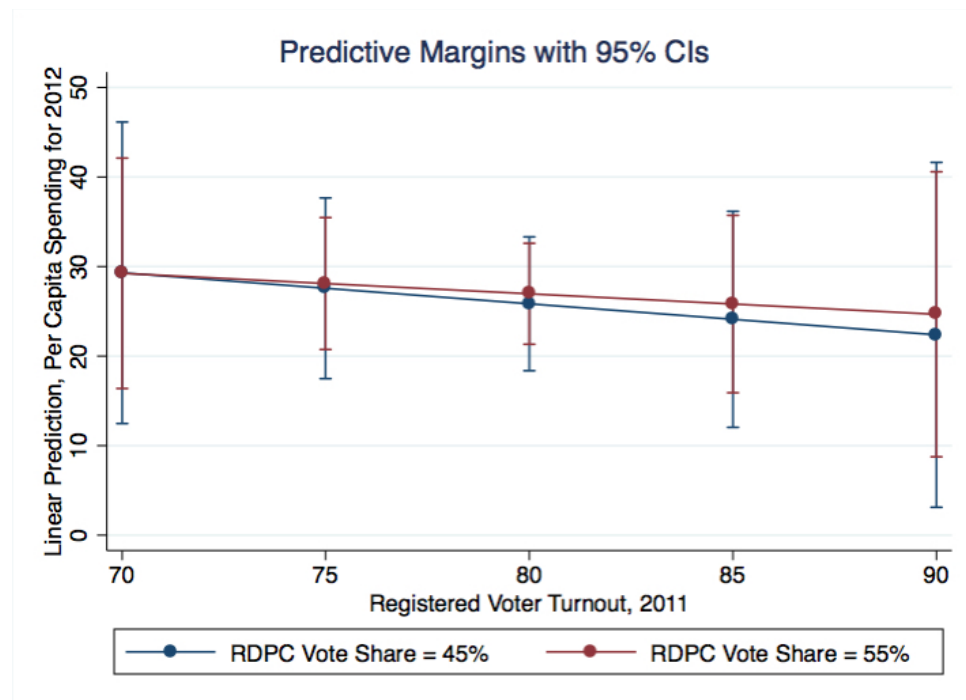


The relationship follows the theoretical prediction. On average, spending is about the same for all districts with relatively low levels of voter turnout. In districts that vote for the opposition, spending decreases as turnout increases, such that a district with high turnout for the opposition is predicted to receive about 10 CFCA (roughly two cents) per capita less per year than an opposition district with very low turnout. Inversely, an RDPC district with high turnout is predicted to receive about 4 CFCA (1 cent) *more* per capita than an RDPC district with relatively low turnout. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 15 plots the results of the same model, but this time focuses on the marginal effects of vote share at more narrow intervals. Perhaps the contrast is not strongest between opposition and ruling party strongholds, but instead between

districts that vote very narrowly for the opposition versus just barely for the ruling party. Figure 15 presents the predicted probabilities of spending for different levels of turnout for districts where the vote share for the ruling party is just below and above 50 percent. The plot shows that spending is virtually identical in districts that voted narrowly for the RDPC (55 percent vote share) versus districts that voted just narrowly for the opposition.

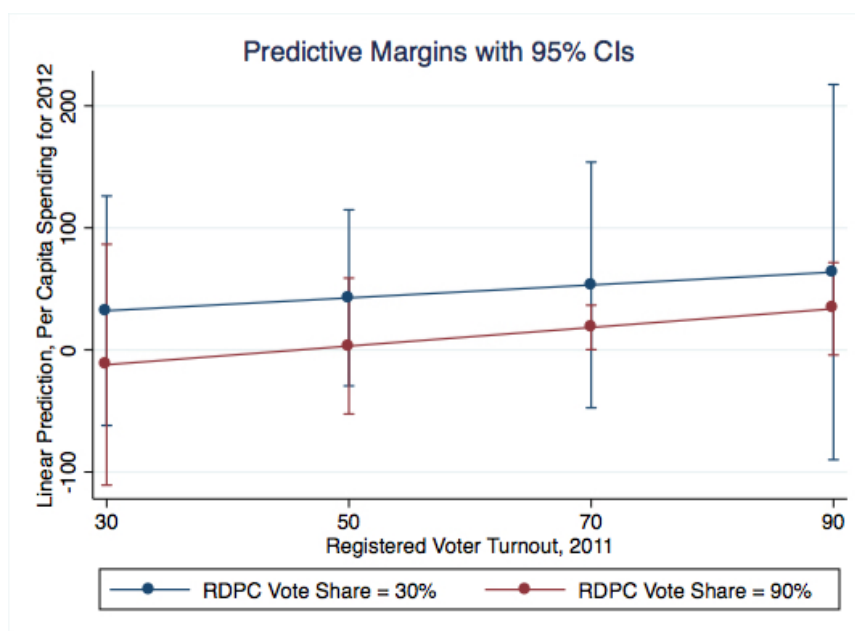
Figure 15: Predicted Probabilities of Spending in Swing Districts, 2014



Finally, Figure 16 presents the same predicted probabilities as Figure 14, but this time looking at the 2011 presidential election. The minimum and maximum turnout values have expanded, but variation in vote share remains similar to the 2013 municipal and legislative elections. Similar to the 2013 election, there is not a

significant relationship between voting behavior and government spending. However, the marginal effects patterns are different for the presidential election. The data suggests that the government spends more in districts with higher turnout, regardless of which party the district elects. According to the literature, this pattern makes sense for districts that vote for the ruling party, but no theory predicts that the government rewards high turnout in districts that vote overwhelmingly for the opposition.

Figure 16: Predicted Probabilities of Spending, 2012



It is important to note that one of the reasons we may see little evidence for Magaloni's hypothesis about swing districts is that there are relatively few close contests in Cameroon. For the most recent 2013 legislative elections, only six electoral districts (of 83 total) changed parties; the vast majority of districts re-elected their

deputies from the same party that already represented that district. Table 19 below presents the vote totals and budgetary changes for those six electoral districts. Five of the six districts (Djerem, Nyong et Kéllé, Mayo Danay Sud, Bui South, and Munchum North) switched from the RDPC to an opposition party. Only Mayo Tsanaga Nord switched from the opposition to the RDPC (though it went from split representation to full ruling party representation).

Table 19: Districts the Elected Different Parties in the 2013 Elections

District	2007 RDPC Vote Share (MP's Party)	2013 RDPC Vote Share (MP's Party)	2014 – 2012 Budgetary Change (CFA per capita)
Djerem	46.0% (RDPC)	49.0% (UNDP)	+6.053
Nyong et Kéllé	55.4% (RDPC)	49.1% (UPC)	-0.891
Mayo Danay Sud	48.9% (RDPC)	49.8% (MDR)	-2.708
Mayo Tsanaga Nord	48.1% (2 RDPC; 2 UNDP)	52.6 (RDPC)	+1.023
Bui South	52.1% (RDPC)	46.9% (SDF)	+2.004
Menchum North	59.1% (RDPC)	46.5% (SDF)	-1.322

For the one district that gained more RDPC representatives, spending did indeed increase from the year before the election (2012) to the year after the election (2014). However, for the five districts that switched to the opposition, there is no discernable trend in the pattern of funding changes. Three districts did in fact receive

less per capita investments after the election (Nyong et Kéllé, Mayo Danay Sud, and Menchum North), but two actually received more investments (Djerem and Bui South). Magaloni argues that these swing districts should be where the government focuses its attention on strategic electoral patronage spending. In the Cameroonian context, it does not appear that the government is particularly interested in such a strategy.

Voting Behavior as the Dependent Variable

The following analyses flip the equation by estimating the effect of government spending on voter turnout in each district the year before the most recent election. For the first set of models, presented in Table 20, the dependent variable is voter turnout in the 2013 election at the level of the electoral district. For the second set of models in Table 21, the dependent variable is voter turnout in the 2011 presidential election. The primary independent variable of interest is government spending at the level of the electoral district the year *before* the election (2012 for Models 7-9; 2010 for Models 10-12). If citizens vote primarily in response to economic incentives, then we should expect voter turnout to be highest in districts that receive the most government investments.

In Model 7 and Model 10, the regression is run on all electoral districts of Cameroon. Models 8 and 11 estimate the model only on ruling party districts (districts that have elected their MPs solely from the RDPC since 1997), in order to discern if there is a special relationship between spending and turnout in core RDPC districts. Finally, Models 9 and 12 are run only on swing districts. If citizens primarily vote to

obtain electoral patronage, then we should expect higher levels of turnout where per capita government spending is greatest.

As the results in Table 20 show, controlling for a modest number of confounding factors, there is no statistically significant relationship between government investment spending the year before the election and voter turnout in the ensuing legislative election. The relationship between these two variables appears to be small and negative, but never statistically significant, regardless if we look at the relationship in all electoral districts, just ruling party districts, or just swing districts. Though voter turnout varies considerably amongst different districts, its variation is not explained well by government spending the year before the election. If the government is hoping to boost turnout through investment spending, the strategy does not appear particularly effective.

Table 21 estimates the same statistical models as those in Table 20, but using electoral data from the 2011 presidential election. The dependent variable in Models 10–12 is voter turnout in the 2011 presidential election, and the primary independent variable is government spending the year before the election (2010). Again, Model 10 estimates this relationship across all electoral districts in Cameroon, Model 11 estimates the same regression on just core districts of the RDPC, and Model 12 estimates the model on just swing districts.

**Table 20: The Effect Spending on Turnout in the
2013 Legislative and Municipal Election by District Type**

Voter Turnout by District	Model 7: All Districts	Model 8: Ruling Party Districts Only	Model 9: Swing Districts Only
2012 Government Spending, per capita	-0.002 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.062 (0.076)
Vote Share for RDPC	0.003 (0.033)	0.083 (0.084)	0.065* (0.037)
Regional Capital	-5.933*** (0.833)	-4.598* (2.481)	-5.593*** (1.261)
Distance from Yaoundé	-0.000 (0.006)	0.006 (0.010)	0.006 (0.010)
District's Area, Kilometers Squared	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Centre Region	4.202	6.750	11.06*
East Region	0.100	2.365	-0.061
Far North Region	6.999	0.698	2.815
Littoral Region	5.215*	9.721**	5.545
North Region	5.510**	3.562	2.568
Northwest Region	9.694***	--	9.556**
South Region	1.908	3.149	--
Southwest Region	5.378**	8.658**	2.670
West Region	9.599***	13.80***	8.146
Constant	73.25***	61.94***	69.35***
N	58	26	29
R-Squared	0.699	0.716	0.847
Coefficients are reported. Standard errors are given in parentheses. **p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Similar to the findings for the 2013 election, the relationship between spending the year before the election and turnout in the 2011 presidential election is not statistically significant. When considering spending and turnout in ruling party districts (Model 11), the coefficient continues to be negative. However, unlike the

previous models, the coefficient for government spending in 2010 is positive across all districts (Model 10) as well as just swing districts (Model 12). However, the relationship is not statistically significant. Collectively, voter turnout appears to be similar regardless of how much the government spends in a given district the year before the election.

Although government spending the year before the election is never a statistically significant predictor of voter turnout, several of the control variables do have a significant relationship with turnout. In the 2013 legislative elections (Models 7-9), turnout is systematically lower in regional capitals than in non-capitals. Interestingly, for the 2011 presidential election, there is a strong positive correlation between vote share for the ruling party and voter turnout. This is likely because while some local legislative elections remain competitive, citizens in opposition and swing districts may see these elections as more important to vote in. Alternatively, the presidential election is a foregone conclusion, and turnout in opposition districts is uniformly lower for these contests. For example, the most steadfast opposition district, Mezam (Bamenda) featured a turnout level of 77.6 percent for the 2013 legislative election, compared to a paltry 51.1 for the previous presidential election in 2011. Citizens in opposition districts (who support the opposition) likely see voting in legislative elections as more productive than voting in presidential elections. Nonetheless, the data in Tables 20 and 21 do not provide much evidence that, collectively, citizens respond to government spending by voting in elections.

Table 21: The Effect Spending on Turnout in the 2011 Presidential Election by District Type

Voter Turnout by District	Model 10: All Districts	Model 11: Ruling Party Districts Only	Model 12: Swing Districts Only
2010 Government Spending, per capita	0.075 (0.237)	-0.511 (0.475)	0.228 (0.440)
Vote Share for RDPC	0.574*** (0.139)	0.831* (0.444)	0.715*** (0.216)
Regional Capital	-5.762*** (1.956)	-6.076 (4.322)	-5.852 (3.549)
Distance from Yaoundé	0.018* (0.010)	-0.002 (0.031)	0.036 (0.022)
District's Area, Kilometers Squared	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.001)
Centre Region	8.033	1.436	15.58
East Region	-4.056	-7.045	-3.791
Far North Region	-4.171	8.243	-12.90
Littoral Region	4.319	17.31	12.52
North Region	-8.246*	-0.989	-12.86
Northwest Region	15.10**	--	21.94**
South Region	11.93**	8.849	--
Southwest Region	7.507	11.63	18.44*
West Region	12.15***	14.99	18.28*
Constant	11.01	2.130	-13.61
N	58	26	29
R-Squared	0.757	0.681	0.851
Coefficients are reported. Standard errors are given in parentheses. **p<0.10; *p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Government and Party Influence on Electoral Behavior

Taken together, the analysis in this chapter has shown that there is not a strong relationship between government spending and electoral behavior in Cameroon. On the one hand, it does not appear that election results play a large role in the central

government's allocation of investments. On the other hand, citizens also do not appear any more or any less likely to vote when their district receives more resources from the government (relative to other districts). Why wouldn't the government use the power of the purse to influence voting behavior during elections? If the state is not using budgets to influence voter turnout, what *does* it do to get people to vote? The following section offers answers to these questions.

The Lack of Electoral Patronage

Why doesn't the government invest more in districts that support it and punish districts that vote for the opposition? The logic of electoral patronage is weak in Cameroon for two inter-related reasons. First and foremost, the regime has built its hegemony over politics through institutional and systemic means; the government knows it will not lose power through elections. The opposition is so thoroughly defeated that the need to demonstrate its weakness further is generally redundant, especially given the expense (both fiscally and politically) of electoral patronage. Second, as demonstrated in Chapter Three, the regime is not overwhelmingly popular, has not created an inclusive, popular ruling party, and therefore likely does not seek to maximize voter turnout during elections if it does not need to.

First, existing theories implicitly assume that the national budget is a fixed amount, and the central government has full authority to direct funds wherever it sees fit. While of course it is in theory possible for a government to spend however it wants to, allocation decisions are always costly for the government in terms of reserving its own political capital. Spending a dollar in District A means not spending that dollar in

District B. If the government truly fears losing an election or feels that cowing the opposition is a major priority, then it may be politically efficient to allocate budgetary investments according to the logic of electoral patronage. But if this is not a major priority, then it will be politically costly for the government to reward ruling party strongholds when it has more pressing priorities, such as development goals or other reasons for distributing economic rewards.

As discussed in Chapter Three, since independence, the primary goal of the RDPC (and the UNC and UC before it) has not been to build mass popularity and legitimacy, but instead to coopt political elites. As van de Walle wrote nearly 25 years ago in regards to economic policy in Cameroon: “Reform and economic austerity can be imposed on the general population; it is the state elite that will not tolerate the end of a system of prerogatives and privilege that is the glue that keeps it together” (1993, 359). In this sense, little has changed in Cameroon; the regime is fundamentally an elite-centered operation with little regard for mass public opinion or voter turnout.

If the ruling party is an elite-coopting party and not a mass legitimacy party, then basing spending decisions on electoral returns is not highly efficient. For example, the literature has unambiguously argued that the government should consistently spend less in opposition districts in order to punish the opposition and its supporters. But if the party is trying to coopt opposition elites, then it may make more sense to send larger investments to opposition districts in an effort to make them a loyal opposition. An opposition MP who gets more than his fair share of investment money for his constituency may be less inclined to fiercely attack the ruling party. Further, an elite’s loyalty to the regime may not be adequately measured by his

constituency's support for the ruling party. A highly loyal and valuable MP may not necessarily come from a highly loyal or valuable constituency. Thus the regime may reward an MP with constituency-level budgetary investments, even if turnout for the regime in that district is not high or overwhelmingly pro-regime.

Although the government does not allocate investments according to the logic of electoral patronage, we might still expect to see citizens responding to these investments with their decision to vote. However, as demonstrated with survey data in Chapter Four, citizens who believe in the logic of electoral patronage do not appear any more or less likely to vote than citizens who do not believe in electoral patronage. Further, as the statistical analysis in this chapter has shown, constituencies that receive more government investments do not feature higher levels of voter turnout than constituencies that receive fewer investments. If citizens are aware of the logic of electoral patronage, why don't they respond to such inducements by voting?

As I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation, most citizens have seen so few investments in their constituencies that the promise of economic patronage is no longer credible. For example, the largest group of citizens who "completely agree" that "if voter turnout is high in your district, the government will reward the district" come from opposition districts—precisely where this logic should be least convincing. Citizens in opposition districts who express a belief in the logic of electoral patronage are expressing a belief that the system is rigged against them, not a belief that if they vote they will receive a reward.

These citizens believe that electoral patronage exists in Cameroon, but that it benefits other areas of the country, and not their own. An astounding 76 percent of all

Cameroonians surveyed said that their Deputy has made no difference in their lives, indicating that a general belief in the systemic existence of electoral patronage may not translate into any personal experience with the practice. Interestingly, when compared to citizens in RDPC districts or swing districts, a larger proportion of citizens in opposition regions believe that their MP *has* made a difference in their life. On the whole, citizens in opposition regions are happier with their MPs than citizens of RDPC strongholds or swing strongholds. In opposition strongholds, 14.6 percent of citizens reported “very positive” feelings toward their MP, compared to 9.3 percent of citizens in RDPC strongholds and just 5.9 percent of citizens in swing districts. Inversely, citizens in opposition strongholds are less happy with the National Assembly as a whole: only 23.4 percent of opposition residents trust the National Assembly “somewhat” or “a lot,” as compared to 38.9 percent of RDPC district residents and 33 percent of swing district residents.

Overall, people are generally unsatisfied with the government and the economy in Cameroon—only 2.2 percent of Cameroonians say that present economic condition in Cameroon is “very good,” compared to 34.8 percent who say it is “very bad”—and while many citizens may believe that the government allocates budgetary investments according to electoral returns, few believe that they are (or could be) the beneficiaries of such a practice. This chapter has tried to show that not only does the government not invest money primarily based on voter turnout patterns, but also that citizens do not systematically respond to economic investments by voting. Given the many diverse priorities of the central government, including the cooptation of elite political actors, rewarding loyal constituencies with budgetary investments is but one reason to

allocate funding. Given the evidence presented in this chapter, I argue that it is not a top priority for the Cameroonian government. Further, given the meager number of investments doled out to each constituency every year, few citizens believe that their constituency is being rewarded relative to other constituencies.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS, SIGNIFICANCE, AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY

This dissertation has made two broad arguments. First, even in sub-Saharan Africa, where party systems are notoriously weak, partisanship matters for understanding the basic beliefs and political behavior of ordinary citizens. The theory presented in Chapter Two proposed that, as an analytical framework, partisanship can help us better understand why everyday people participate in politics. Citizens are not randomly distributed into categories of partisanship. Instead, citizens with higher levels of socioeconomic status are better positioned—both socially and instrumentally—to engage in politics, and thus are more likely to identify as partisans. Further, electoral autocracies feature unique political cleavages that are critical to understanding different types of partisans. Citizens who identify with the ruling party tend to support the status quo and see the state as legitimate and relatively democratic. Inversely, opposition partisans tend to see the regime as illegitimate and autocratic. Nonpartisans, who possess lower levels of socioeconomic status, are less politically or ideologically committed to beliefs about the legitimacy of the state. Chapter Three showed that even in a case like Cameroon, where political parties are historically hierarchical and elite-centered, there is systematic variation in the types of citizens who support parties.

Second, I have also argued that it is critical to understand the non-economic motivations that citizens have for participating in politics. Though the literature on

autocratic elections has focused on patronage and vote-buying to explain political behavior, and existing work on political participation in Africa has centered on ethnicity, this dissertation has instead argued that citizens also have expressive and social reasons for participating in elections. As I proposed in Chapter Two, not only do citizens in general possess non-economic motivations, but also different types of citizens vote for different types of expressive and social reasons. Using a framework of partisanship can help us better understand why different people participate for different reasons. Chapter Four presented data to support these claims, showing that ruling party partisans are most likely to vote when they feel that voting is a civic duty, while opposition partisans are more likely to vote when they believe that voting can improve democracy. Nonpartisans participate in elections when they feel social pressure from their families and communities to vote. Using macro-level data, Chapter Five showed that there is little evidence to support the argument that Cameroonians vote primarily because they receive investments from the state.

Taken together, this dissertation poses a conspicuous challenge to the way that we think about politics in electoral autocracies. Therefore, a number of concerns are raised by these theoretical departures. First and foremost we must ask: So what? Thus far, the dissertation has worked on the assumption that understanding political behavior in electoral autocracies is inherently important. But how do the differences in the theory presented here reflect on the implications of existing theories? What can a theory of partisanship or expressive political behavior tell us about authoritarianism more broadly? Second, to what degree is the theory presented in this dissertation driven by its case selection? To the extent that Cameroon is a unique case of

autocracy, how can we extend these findings to other cases? Finally, given the theoretical departures of this dissertation from the existing literature, it is critical to outline the contrasting research agenda proposed by its findings. If non-economic political behavior is important to understanding authoritarian politics, I propose that future work on electoral authoritarianism must take seriously the role not only of non-economic participation, but also partisan identification and political cleavages between ordinary citizens. The following sections discuss these issues.

Implications of the Theory

If citizens of electoral autocracies vote primarily for non-economic reasons, how do the implications of their behavior differ from a world in which citizens primarily have economic motivations for voting? If partisanship can give us analytical leverage on political behavior, how can we use a framework of partisanship to understand other aspects of autocratic politics? The theory in this dissertation implies three important differences in our broader expectations about autocratic politics.

First, from a more micro-level perspective, expressive and social reasons for voting can shed light on the campaign strategies of parties, candidates, and elites, which provide us with a whole range of possibilities that we are blinded to if we focus solely on strategies of vote-buying and patronage. Second, the significance of voter turnout takes on a different meaning and has different consequences if citizens vote primarily for expressive and social reasons. Third, and relatedly, many of our theories of autocratic regime stability rely on arguments about economic growth and inequality, which are predicated on the argument that citizens only support or tolerate

the regime when they receive economic incentives to do so. But if most citizens do not receive or expect to receive economic benefits from the state, then economic growth and redistribution may not always be the cornerstone to explaining regime stability.

First and foremost, one of the clearest implications of the theory in this dissertation is that political parties in electoral autocracies use different political messages to mobilize different types of voters during elections. Only a few studies have looked closely at political campaigns in autocratic regimes. Lust-Okar (2006, 2008), analyzing legislative campaigns in Jordan, and Shehata (2008), who conducts an ethnography of a legislative campaign in Cairo, Egypt, both highlight the singular centrality of issues of clientelism, patronage, and constituency service within these campaigns. However, while several authors touch on the differences between candidates who run for the opposition versus the ruling party (Blaydes 2011, Chapter 8; Magaloni 2006, 22; Reuter and Gandhi 2011),⁶⁵ Greene (2007) offers the strongest and most comprehensive theoretical claim over this question of campaign strategies in electoral autocracies. He argues that because of their enormous advantages vis-à-vis control over the state, ruling parties campaign almost exclusively on economic issues. However, opposition parties, who are not so advantageously positioned, tend to focus more heavily on political issues. He emphasizes that these ideologically-oriented opposition parties are condemned to being niche organizations because their messages only appeal to a small subset of citizens.

While this is a critical departure from the overwhelming emphasis of the literature on issues of economic patronage and vote-buying, it does not go far enough

⁶⁵ Which thus implies differences in campaign techniques and political messages.

in exploring the nuance and importance of non-economic political campaigning for the ruling party. By focusing on the economic dominance of the ruling party, we may be missing the political and social foundations for its rule (as opposed to the economic foundations). While economic issues are seriously important for understanding the campaign rhetoric of ruling parties, they are most certainly not the only messages that these parties use to attract voters. Further, by dismissing the political messages of opposition parties as niche, or only appealing to tiny constituencies of voters, the theory also overlooks a critical aspect of political communication in electoral autocracies. While opposition voters may constitute a minority of citizens in electoral autocracies, they are a critically important minority. Ruling parties tend to be obsessed with countering the claims made by the opposition, which is more than just ‘empty rhetoric’ when it impacts the beliefs and actions of voters. By reorienting our focus on political campaigns to ideological, expressive, and social messaging, we open up the possibility of understanding a whole host of legitimizing techniques used by both ruling parties and oppositions.

Relatedly, if citizens are voting for expressive and social reasons, where and how do they develop these motivations? Citizens are not born with an innate sense of civic duty or desire for democracy. Instead, these expressions of identity are likely learned from political messages from the state and from the political parties themselves. Thus, not only does a focus on the political communications of parties tell us about their campaign tactics, but it also has the potential to tell us about the political socialization of ordinary citizens (Letsa 2017). By refocusing our attention away from vote-buying and patronage, we can better understand how citizens in autocratic

countries learn about politics, how they develop diverse political stances toward the state, and how these beliefs feed back into the tactics, failures, and successes of parties.

In addition to shifting our attention to the significance of autocratic electoral campaigns, the theory presented in this dissertation also introduces nuance into the way that we interpret the meaning of voter turnout in autocratic elections. By and large, the literature has assumed that the regime seeks to produce high levels of voter turnout because high turnout signals to the opposition and the international community that the regime and ruling party are strong and legitimate (Blaydes 2011, 17; Magaloni 2006). As Magaloni writes, “The pillar of a hegemonic-party regime is its monopoly of mass support...Hegemonic parties are oversized governing coalitions that are largely sustained through the distribution of government spoils and patronage. These autocracies strive to sustain oversized governing coalitions rather than minimally winning ones because...they want to generate an image of invincibility” (15).

While this may be the case in some electoral autocracies, this is not what we observe in places like Cameroon, where turnout is usually quite low.⁶⁶ In part, turnout may be explained by levels of partisanship: whereas the PRI in Mexico actively sought to create partisans out of ordinary citizens, and then enthusiastically mobilized them to vote in elections, the RDPC in Cameroon, as explained in Chapter Three, is an elite-oriented party that takes as a secondary concern the partisanship of ordinary citizens. While the PRI has created partisans who are mobilized to vote during elections, the

⁶⁶ While certainly the ruling party would not highlight these low levels of participation with pride, showcasing high levels of turnout does not appear to be a primary concern of the regime.

RDPC has not invested in its citizens and does not go above and beyond to mobilize them to vote.

One of the implications of this dissertation's theory is that partisanship and turnout are likely interactive. Where partisanship is high, and ordinary citizens are politically committed to the status quo, high levels of voter turnout are, as the literature has emphasized, a sign of regime strength and stability. Where partisanship is high, low turnout may be viewed as red flag of regime weakness or illegitimacy. Inversely, where partisanship is low—such as in Cameroon, Togo, or Algeria⁶⁷--high levels of voter turnout may not be a sign of regime legitimacy or stability. In electoral autocracies that feature low levels of partisanship, high turnout indicates that a large number of ideologically uncommitted nonpartisans are participating in politics. This may or may not signal danger for the regime, depending on how and why these nonpartisans are being mobilized.

Given the assumptions of the literature, one of the implications of these theories is that electoral autocracies always seek to mobilize citizens in order to produce high levels of voter turnout. Why else would the state invest in costly vote-buying campaigns? But if levels of partisanship vary across autocracies, and vote-buying is not common, then the meaning of voter turnout is not always so obvious. We must seek to better understand why levels of partisanship vary across autocracies, and why only some autocratic parties are invested in producing high levels of partisanship and voter turnout. Further, given this new set of assumptions, we are

⁶⁷ See Figure 1.

primed to investigate the differential role that turnout has in explaining regime legitimization in electoral autocracies that feature varying levels of partisanship.

Finally, and relatedly, this study questions the principle approach to understanding the regime stability of electoral autocracies. By and large, most of the literature on autocracy and democratization focuses on providing a political economy explanation for when and why regime transitions occur. For example, in two of our most foundational theories of regime transition, Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) argue that democratization is precipitated by a crisis of economic inequality, with issues of economic redistribution at the heart of regime transition. Similarly, Magaloni (2006, Chapter 7) argues that economic decline is an underlying condition for the de-stability of hegemonic party regimes. Greene (2007) puts economic decline squarely at the heart of Mexico's regime transition:

The economic crisis beginning in 1982 angered voters and increasingly turned them against the PRI. Yet the incumbent continued to win national elections until 1997...in large part because the PRI still had access to the resources of massive state-owned enterprises, dominated the airwaves in campaigns, and outspent competitors by a factor of about ten. By the late 1990s, in contrast, state control over the economy had decreased dramatically and a leaner federal public bureaucracy yielded fewer patronage jobs. As a result, the PRI's national patronage system ran dry (8).

Because these theories of political participation in electoral regimes rely heavily on the importance of patronage and vote-buying, their natural implication is that electoral autocracies are in trouble when they can no longer deliver patronage.

One of the central claims of this dissertation is that not every electoral autocracy has the resources or capabilities to provide mass-based patronage. The

implication of this claim is that economic decline may not necessarily precipitate regime transition or democratization. Mexico's story of economic decline is not dissimilar to the economic context in Africa. By the 1980s, many African economies featured negative growth rates, bloated public sectors, and huge external debts (van de Walle 2001). Similar to Mexico, structural adjustment plans in the 1990s liberalized the public sector, forcing states to abandon failing parastatals, cut government budgets, and decrease the number of state employees. Yet unlike Mexico, electoral autocracies such as Cameroon, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe weathered the storm. Despite decreased access to resources and a declining standard of living, the hegemonic parties in these regimes trudged on, even through the crisis of political liberalization, during which many of these countries allowed opposition parties for the first time. The theory presented in this dissertation suggests that if electoral patronage and vote-buying are not at the center of mass political behavior, then autocratic regimes may be better positioned to survive economic decline.

External Validity

Thus, not only can the theory in this dissertation better describe politics in the modal electoral autocracy, but I will also argue that the insights derived from autocracy in Africa, with some modifications, can also be applied to middle-income countries. Given the unique under-development of the electoral autocracies of sub-Saharan Africa, can the theory developed in this dissertation be applied outside of Africa? If we need a new theory to understand political behavior in sub-Saharan Africa's electoral autocracies, can we expect it to travel outside of Africa? In part, this

is an unanswered question. But the response for now must be that citizens of all electoral autocracies vote for expressive and social reasons, but the proportion of citizens who do so depends on how many vote primarily for economic reasons. Although a weak state is not a scope condition of the theory presented in this article, the importance of non-economic voting is likely inversely related to economic development: As economic rewards for voting become less credible, the proportion of citizens voting for non-economic reasons should increase.

This dissertation has demonstrated that in Cameroon, the proportion of citizens who vote for economic reasons is small. And while the existing literature has argued that in places like Mexico under the PRI and Egypt under the Mubarak regime, the vast majority of citizens vote for economic reasons, these studies have not taken into account the possibility of non-economic reasons for voting. Even where economic incentives for voting are credible for larger proportions of the population, many citizens presumably vote for expressive and social reasons. Given these arguments and implications, the following section discusses new research agendas for future work.

New Research Agendas

With these considerations in mind, the first task for future research is to expand the theoretical framework we have for understanding autocratic political behavior to include both economic and non-economic motivations for voting. The theory of autocratic partisanship developed in Chapters Two and Three can help to bridge this divide. I have argued that the experience of partisanship is unique in

electoral autocracies, and different types of citizens—based on their socioeconomic and political proclivities—vote for different reasons. Thus, based on this framework of partisanship, it is possible to incorporate economic reasons for voting in cases where these motivations are more credible.

If Blaydes (2011) is correct that vote-buying is most common amongst citizens with low levels of socioeconomic status, then in more economically developed countries, we might expect vote-buying to be most prevalent amongst nonpartisans. Miguel, et al. (2015) find that in the Middle East and North Africa, citizens with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to vote because they have access to the benefits of electoral patronage. Similarly, Frye, et al. (2014) argue that citizens with salaried jobs vote when they feel pressure from their employers. Thus we might find that ruling party partisans, who tend to possess higher levels of socioeconomic status, are more likely to vote because they expect electoral patronage or because they are victims of electoral coercion. In more repressive electoral autocracies, such as Ethiopia or Zimbabwe, we might find that the decision of opposition partisans to vote is strongly related to their fear of retaliation or repression.

In sum, a framework of partisanship in electoral autocracies can be expanded to incorporate both economic and non-economic motivations for voting, and thus better explain outcomes in autocracies with varying levels of economic development. While not all electoral autocracies feature the same levels of development or repression, I argue that the socioeconomic and ideological foundations of partisanship should look similar across all cases of electoral autocracy. Thus, while the economic, expressive, and social reasons why these groups participate may not be identical

across cases, these three groups of citizens—ruling party partisans, opposition partisans, and nonpartisans—should still possess different reasons for voting, and these reasons can be tied to their differences in socioeconomic status and political attachments to the regime.

In addition, there is important work to be done on the implications articulated earlier in this chapter. First, future work must take seriously the role that parties and candidates play in shaping the political beliefs of ordinary citizens, both in electoral autocracies, as well as in Africa more generally. On the one hand, how do parties use messages to attract different types of voters? Presumably, parties use a mix of economic, ideological, and social campaign messages and tactics to attract supporters. Future work should investigate the different messages used by different types of parties, and how parties target different types of voters with different types of tactics and messages. Do ruling parties use economic messaging to mobilize their base, but use socially-based tactics, such as rallies and door-to-door canvassing to mobilize nonpartisans or ‘swing’ voters? To what extent are opposition parties forced to rely on anti-regime political appeals, and how and when do they expand their messaging? Studies that take seriously non-economic campaign appeals have the potential to shed light on a host of micro-level dynamics of autocratic elections.

On the other hand, how do these political messages reciprocally affect the ways that citizens think about voting, elections, and politics more broadly? More than two thirds of Cameroonians believe that voting is a civic duty—a fact that the existing literature would likely find surprising. Where did these citizens learn that voting is a civic duty, and if the regime is viewed as autocratic and elections as an exercise in

extracting patronage, why did they internalize this belief? Further, if opposition parties appeal to their supporters through messages about democracy, did these parties cultivate their supporters to adopt these values, or did they find citizens who already held beliefs about the importance of democratization? The answers to these questions hold important implications for our theories of democratization. If democratic values and a commitment to democratization are instilled in citizens by opposition parties, then opposition parties may play a critical role in developing a democratic culture in autocratic regimes, even if they fail to win elections or play a major structural role in regime transition.

In general, this dissertation also proposes that we take partisanship in autocracies more seriously. Why do some autocratic ruling parties mobilize voters during elections, while others do not? Why do some, but not all, ruling parties create partisans out of their citizens? Clearly, partisans are a special group of citizens in autocracies, who hold strong political beliefs about the legitimacy of the regime, its level of democracy, and its ability to manage and control national issues. If ruling party partisans are good for the autocratic regime, why doesn't every autocratic party invest in creating partisans? Or, if every autocratic party *does* attempt to create mass partisanship, then why do some fail where others succeed? On the one hand, we have the PRI in Mexico, the CCM in Tanzania, and the BN in Malaysia, which have all created high levels of partisanship and go to great lengths to mobilize citizens to vote during elections. On the other hand, the RDPC in Cameroon, the MPLA of Angola and United Russia do not go to such great lengths to incorporate ordinary citizens into

the party. Providing answers to these foundational questions can give us better leverage on understanding the dynamic of politics in otherwise similar regimes.

On the whole, this dissertation has made two main arguments: that partisanship matters, and that citizens have non-economic reasons for voting. These two simple propositions open the door to a host of new research agendas in the field of authoritarian politics. If different groups of partisans have different socioeconomic characteristics and political beliefs, there are a number of ways they might think or act alike. This framework of partisanship has the potential to shed light on everything from protest, to social movements to revolution. And if people have non-economic motives for participating in politics, we must strive to understand what these are, where they come from, and when and why they motivate different people into action.

Understandings of Citizenship Outside of the Western Context

In part, the existing literature on political behavior in electoral autocracies has relied on assumptions of economic motivations because these types of motivations are easier to measure. But they also support a larger normative narrative that autocracies are exotic and illegitimate. The broader western public tends to view authoritarianism as outside of ordinary politics—that autocratic politics are fundamentally apart; extraordinary. In the popular imagination, the Kim Jong-Ils, Talibanis, and Saudi princes of the world have helped to make authoritarianism both evil and mysterious. Thus, it is difficult to imagine that ordinary citizens in autocratic regimes could share the same political experiences and beliefs as citizens in consolidated democracies.

How could someone living in a dictatorship believe that voting is a civic duty? How could they believe that their elections are free and fair?

Political scientists have inadvertently supported this storyline by constructing a fundamentally different approach to understanding political behavior in autocratic regimes. While it is uncontested that citizens in democracies vote for expressive and social reasons, it is harder to imagine that ordinary citizens in autocracies vote for similar reasons. Instead, we must rationalize political participation in autocratic contexts by insisting that it is economically motivated: Citizens don't *want* to legitimize the regime by voting, but they do so anyways because they are economically incentivized. No doubt, vote-buying occurs in autocracies around the world. But for every erstwhile defector who sells her vote, there is a citizen happy to participate in elections in order to express their civic duty as a proud citizen.

Unfortunately, these tendencies to exoticify autocratic politics are multiplied when we turn to our understandings of African politics. Political scientists have made monumental efforts to normalize African politics in the public imagination. Nonetheless, our theories of African political behavior rely overwhelmingly on the tropical concepts of ethnic identity and patronage. Again, this dissertation does not argue that ethnicity or patronage play no part in explaining political behavior in African autocracies. However, I do argue that other (less exotic) reasons for participating in politics may have been overlooked because of our singular focus on ethnicity, vote-buying and patronage.

Politics in electoral autocracies is unique. But, as Bayart (1989) has argued (for African politics), it is also banal. In the course of searching for exotic and exciting

explanations for politics in extraordinary places, we risk missing a whole host of mundane processes that, in fact, may explain more about outcomes than we would expect. African citizens, who are increasingly embedded in a highly globalized world, are not immune from or ignorant to Western narratives about democracy, elections, and citizenship. Although Africans of all nationalities possess unique understandings of the world that are different from Western beliefs and practices, they also share with Westerners a common normative language about politics and democracy.

Citizenship—even in Africa’s electoral autocracies—in many ways is shockingly mundane. Citizens participate in politics to express identities that are not dissimilar from the identities of citizens living in economically developed consolidated democracies. Nationalism, patriotism, and support for democracy (Letsa and Wilfahrt 2017) are increasingly globally-held values.

With this in mind, this dissertation implores future work to de-exotify the African and the autocratic experiences of ordinary citizens. Public opinion surveys are beginning to do much of the legwork in this endeavor. For the first time, surveys are reaching countries that were otherwise shut off from the world—particularly the electoral autocracies in Africa. By asking ordinary people what they think about politics, we are finally permitted to hear voices that have largely been silent in the study of comparative politics. Increasingly, a new field of study is developing to analyze, contextualize and understand these new voices. While our existing work has focused on the extraordinary differences of citizens in these autocratic regimes, we might now be surprised to find that these voices sound quite similar to our own.

APPENDIX 1 REPLICABILITY OF SURVEY RESULTS (COMPARISON TO AFROBAROMETER)

The following Appendix presents the questions and (weighted) responses of the 17 Afrobarometer questions that were replicated by the original survey conducted for this dissertation, not including the demographic questions. The tables report questions that were asked by both the original survey as well as either (or both) Round 5 and/or Round 6 of the Afrobarometer. Several other questions were originally borrowed from the Afrobarometer, but the question wordings were changed after pre-testing, and therefore these modified questions are not included below. Note that the question ordering is not the same across instruments and that other questions unique to the author's survey or to the Afrobarometer are not presented below (question numbers for each instrument are included). Such discrepancies in question ordering, along with differences in sampling design (the original survey was not conducted in the three northern regions of the country) and timing of implementation (Afrobarometer Round 5 was conducted in 2013, the author's survey was conducted in 2014/2015; and Round 6 was conducted in 2015) may account for differences in the findings.

In this country how free are you to say what you think?					
	Not at all Free	Not very Free	Somewhat Free	Completely Free	Don't Know/Refused
Author's Survey (Q54)	16.00%	14.87	23.24	45.04	0.84
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q17A)	10.03%	20.15	33.09	33.03	3.70
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q15A)	7.28%	17.91	31.09	41.73	1.99

In this country how free are you to join any political organization you want?					
	Not at all Free	Not very Free	Somewhat Free	Completely Free	Don't Know/Refused
Author's Survey (Q55)	4.56%	4.84	20.20	69.01	1.32
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q17B)	5.67%	8.40	27.16	52.68	6.09
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q15B)	4.53%	6.91	24.97	59.99	3.60

In this country how free are you to choose whom to vote for without feeling pressured?					
	Not at all Free	Not very Free	Somewhat Free	Completely Free	Don't Know/Refused
Author's Survey (Q56)	3.60%	3.81	15.74	75.73	1.09
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q17C)	3.21%	5.71	19.76	65.64	5.68
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q15C)	2.73%	5.37	20.87	68.34	2.70

Do you feel close to any particular political party?			
	Yes	No	Don't Know/Refused
Author's Survey (Q19)	37.80%	61.99	00.15
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q89A)	41.49%	53.29	5.22
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q90A)	45.05%	47.18	7.77
[If respondent replied yes to the previous question] Which political party do you feel close to?			
	RDPC	SDF	Other
Author's Survey (Q19A)	74.54%	14.36	10.08
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q89B)	69.98%	9.35	12.86
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q90B)	71.98%	12.31	11.03

In general, would you describe the present economic condition of Cameroon as good, bad, or neither good nor bad?						
	Very Good	Fairly Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Fairly Bad	Very Bad	Don't Know/ Refused
Author's Survey (Q57)	2.01%	14.06	25.69	21.09	34.29	2.86
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q3A)	3.09%	27.73	20.21	27.36	17.34	4.27
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q4A)	4.34%	32.19	17.01	29.75	14.71	2.01

How much do you trust the President of the Republic?					
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know / Refused
Author's Survey (Q43)	22.59%	22.23	23.50	27.71	3.97
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q59A)	15.93%	20.62	25.28	30.70	7.48
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q52A)	10.73%	18.5	27.33	39.43	4.01

How much do you trust the National Assembly?					
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know / Refused
Author's Survey (Q39)	32.85%	28.39	22.34	10.49	5.93
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q59B)	25.41%	23.24	25.79	16.03	9.54
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q52B)	23.73%	27.38	25.96	17.59	5.34

How much do you trust ELECAM (the electoral commission of Cameroon)?					
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know / Refused
Author's Survey (Q40)	34.83%	26.33	20.75	13.32	4.77
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q59C)	25.32%	25.79	21.41	16.37	11.10
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q52C)	26.16%	27.38	25.12	15.98	5.36

How much do you trust the Ruling Party?					
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know / Refused
Author's Survey (Q41)	35.96%	21.89	22.42	16.21	3.52
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q59F)	36.58%	24.21	14.11	13.93	11.18
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q52F)	29.53%	25.32	26.77	12.41	5.96

How much do you trust the Opposition Political Parties?					
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know / Refused
Author's Survey (Q42)	52.07%	23.58	11.61	7.45	5.29
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q59G)	44.64%	26.34	12.44	6.15	10.42
Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q52G)	39.75%	27.03	19.83	7.52	5.87

On a scale between 0 and 10, where 0 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic, where would you place our country today?	
	Sample Average
Author's Survey (Q30)	4.88
Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q46A)	4.84
Afrobarometer Round 6 (N/A)	--

In your opinion, what are the three most important problems facing this country that the government should address?			
	Author's Survey (Q18)	Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q63)	Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q60)
Unemployment	23.38%	30.00%	24.53%
Poverty	11.42	9.49	6.15
Infrastructure / Roads	10.38	6.34	6.43
Corruption	9.67	10.02	10.03
Security / Crime / Boko Haram / Political Violence / Civil War	5.34	1.45	6.86
Education	4.96	4.04	4.39
Hospitals / Health	4.38	3.81	8.45
Management of the Economy	3.25	5.18	6.63
Water Supply	2.71	4.84	3.06
Electricity Supply	2.63	4.05	3.36
Agriculture	2.54	2.17	4.06
Wages and Salaries	2.33	8.32	3.44
Taxes	2.17	1.23	1.40
Economic Inequality / Discrimination / Tribalism	3.38	0.33	0.22
Democracy / Political Rights	1.38	0.88	0.13
Food Shortage	1.25	2.01	2.12
Transportation	1.00	0.77	1.02
Don't Know	0.83	0.74	0.93

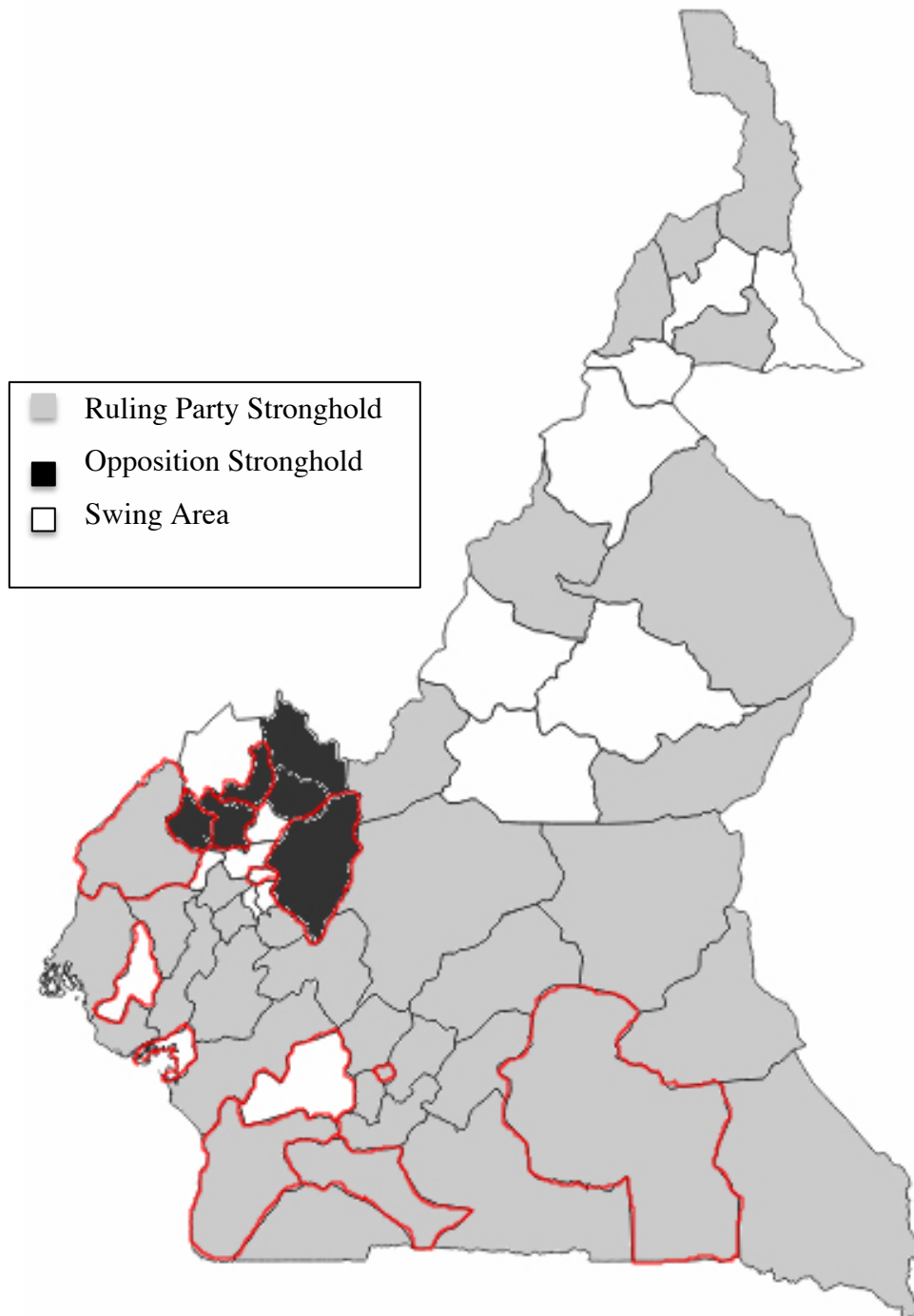
How often do you get news from the radio?			
	Author's Survey (Q10)	Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q13A)	Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q12A)
Everyday	33.74%	40.66%	45.52%
A few times a week	29.59	26.65	25.31
A few times a month	13.86	6.64	8.32
Less than once a month	6.31	4.97	4.74
Never	16.50	20.94	15.93
Don't Know // Refused	00.00	0.15	0.18

How often do you get news from the television?			
	Author's Survey (Q11)	Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q13B)	Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q12B)
Everyday	50.84%	55.92%	56.40%
A few times a week	23.71	20.81	21.48
A few times a month	9.75	5.59	6.91
Less than once a month	4.01	1.64	2.73
Never	11.69	15.75	12.27
Don't Know // Refused	00.00	0.30	0.21

How often do you get news from the newspaper?			
	Author's Survey (Q12)	Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q13C)	Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q12C)
Everyday	7.30%	6.2%	5.67%
A few times a week	13.19	10.78	12.99
A few times a month	14.61	14.01	19.83
Less than once a month	11.69	14.90	14.36
Never	53.13	53.27	46.49
Don't Know // Refused	00.00	0.84	0.67

How often do you get news from the internet?			
	Author's Survey (Q13)	Afrobarometer Round 5 (Q13D)	Afrobarometer Round 6 (Q12D)
Everyday	9.42%	5.52%	9.64%
A few times a week	10.09	11.13	10.12
A few times a month	9.15	7.77	11.90
Less than once a month	4.43	7.56	8.39
Never	66.82	67.05	59.38
Don't Know // Refused	00.00	0.99	0.57

APPENDIX 2
POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF CAMEROON



*The map depicts the larger administrative electoral districts, but some of these departments have been redistricted since 1992 into smaller electoral districts (for example, Benoué in the North became Benoué East and Benoué West after 1992). Districts highlighted in red were sampled in the survey.

APPENDIX 3

VOTE BUYING AND LIST EXPERIMENTS

In recent years list experiments have become a common way for researchers to generate responses to sensitive questions in survey research. The structure of the list experiment (also known as the item-count technique) is designed to allow survey respondents to report their socially sensitive actions and opinions without having to reveal outright these thoughts and behaviors to the survey enumerator (Ahart and Sackett 2004; Corstange 2009; Droitcour et al. 1991; Imai 2011; Tsuchiya, et al. 2007). For example, in the American context, they have been used to reveal prejudice against African-Americans and other minority groups (Kane, et al. 2004; Kuklinski, et al. 1997; Redlawsk, et al. 2010; Streb et al. 2008) as well as socially sensitive personal behaviors (Braithwaite and Walsh 2008; Dalton, Wimbush, and Daily 1994; LaBrie and Earleywine 2000). More recently, researchers have also begun to apply the list experiment technique to vote-buying (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012).

In order to avoid social sensitivity bias, respondents are randomly split into a control group and one or more treatment groups. Each group is read a list of beliefs or activities and asked with how many items they agree. The list is identical for each group, except that the treatment group receives an additional belief or activity that is socially sensitive. For example, in Cameroon I implemented the following list experiment (derived from Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012) in order to reveal the number of respondents who received money or a favor in return for their vote in the most recent election:

I am now going to read a list of activities concerning the legislative and municipal elections that took place on September 30, 2013. I do not want to know WHICH ones happened during the election, but only the total NUMBER of activities that took place. So when I list each activity, you should count the ones that you saw happen. When I ask at the end how many took place, you should give me a number. Do NOT tell me which ones in particular occurred.

- 1. They put up campaign posters or signs in your community.**
 - 2. They visited your home.**
 - 3. They placed campaign advertisements on the television or radio.**
 - 4. They sent you an email.**
- Treatment: They gave you money or did you a favor.**

When the researcher compares the two groups' total averages, the difference in the mean number of choices between treatment and control groups is an estimate of the percentage of respondents in the treatment group that counted the socially sensitive item in their list. Thus, if the average response for the control group is 2.45 while the average for the treatment group is 2.75, then 30 percent of respondents in the treatment group have "reported" that they received a gift or a favor in the previous election.

Criticism and Concerns with the List Experiment

Having conducted this list experiment myself with a total of 1,542 respondents in which I personally surveyed over 340 individuals, I have identified a number of issues with the list experiment technique. Overall, while the list experiment is designed to decrease social sensitivity bias, its cognitive complexity introduces other forms of bias that may be difficult to control for. In a meta-analysis of list experiments in psychology, Tourangeau and Yan (2007) have already voiced some concern about this technique. They find that, taken together, these studies produce a positive

treatment effect, but that this overall effect is not significant. However the authors do not discuss the potential reasons for these results.

I identify several potential sources of bias in the list experiment technique, and argue that the direction of bias cannot always be accounted for. First and foremost, in a face-to-face interviewing context, a large number of respondents simply do not follow the instructions, revealing to the survey enumerator the specific list items that they are counting. This biases the treatment effect downward by undermining the point of the list experiment, and is also potentially correlated with level of education, possibly introducing additional bias depending on the treatment being measured.

In addition, I echo Kramon and Weghorst's (2012) concerns about the problem of satisficing and agree that a potentially large proportion of a sample may not be providing accurate responses. I argue further that if people are satisficing, then being in the treatment group itself will bias the treatment effect towards 0.50. Because the treatment group by definition has more options than the control group, its average will be higher when people report random numbers. If the true mean is less than 0.50, then there will be upward between-group bias, and if it is less than 0.50, then there will be downward bias.

Other researchers have noted that there is potential bias in list experiment reporting, but have argued that this bias is predictable. For example, Zigerell (2011) shows that even given the anonymous list format, respondents will still deflate their responses to disassociate themselves from the socially sensitive item. However he argues that the direction of this bias can be accounted for and that it can be partially remedied by careful design for ceiling and floor effects. Similarly, Tsuchiya and Hirai

(2010) indicate why respondents may underreport their responses within the context of the list experiment, but propose that modifying the response options will remedy the issue. Finally, Blair and Imai (2012) discuss the importance of the “no-liar assumption,” which requires that respondents always provide truthful responses. However, the authors argue that violations of this assumption will only create bias through the interaction of the sensitive item with the control items, which can be remedied by controlling for floor and ceiling effects.

I argue instead that satisficing—not lying—produces unpredictable forms of bias. Thus, problems with the implementation of the list experiment can introduce different forms of bias in the measure of the sensitive item. If these issues are not fully accounted for, then it is difficult for the researcher to ascertain the true treatment effect of the list experiment.

The Example Survey and List Experiment

In order to illustrate these points, I draw on my experience implementing my survey in Cameroon. Within the total sample, 775 respondents were randomly assigned to the control group, while 767 received the treatment list item (“They gave you money or did you a favor”). I was fortunate enough to be able to implement the survey personally in every sampled region of the country, interviewing over 340 of the list experiment respondents myself. In-depth debriefings with my five research assistants confirmed my personal observations about the list experiment detailed below.

The Difficulty of Following Directions

The most obvious issue that arose during the implementation of the list experiment was the inability of a sizable number of respondents to correctly follow directions. After discovering this issue, survey enumerators were asked to record whether or not each respondent gave a number in response, or instead listed which items they were counting. *Fully 31 percent of respondents failed to correctly give a numerical option for their response.*

Oftentimes respondents would say “yes” or “no” after each item. Other times they would list the items they agreed with after the list was finished. When respondents began to do this, I instructed the enumerators to stop the respondent and re-read the instructions, allowing the respondent to try to answer the question correctly without revealing all of their list items. However, this option was not foolproof, as respondents would frequently reveal all of their choices before it was possible to stop them, sometimes reacting quickly to the sensitive item which they found surprising. Even when it was possible to stop the respondent, many of them failed to follow the directions multiple times, never being able to figure out what was being asked of them.

For the first few enumeration sites, my assistants and I simply recorded all responses equally—whether or not the directions were correctly followed. This approach is clearly problematic, as respondents who reveal their list items are violating the purpose of the list experiment. By including both types of respondents (those who follow directions and those who do not) in the same category, the

researcher biases their treatment effect downward if people who list their items are less likely to include the sensitive item.

This is especially problematic when the ability to follow instructions is correlated with particular demographic characteristics. As seen below in Table 1, in a region-level mixed effects logistic regression, where the dependent variable is the respondent's ability to follow directions (recorded by the survey enumerator), level of education is significantly related to who could properly follow directions. People with less education are less likely to follow directions.

Thus if a researcher includes the responses of both direction-followers and direction-breakers in the same group, the treatment effect will be further biased if the sensitive item is correlated with the ability to follow directions. For example, it has been argued that in developing countries, less educated citizens are more likely to sell their votes (Blaydes 2011). Therefore in this particular list experiment, if the responses of direction-breakers had not been separated from those of direction-followers, the treatment effect would be doubly diminished for the overall population because less educated citizens, who are more likely to sell their votes, are also less likely to follow directions.

Table A3.1: Explaining the Ability to Follow Directions

	Respondent Correctly Followed Directions
Rural	0.380 (0.253)
Female	-0.074 (0.162)
Age	-0.005 (0.007)
Education	0.254*** (0.049)
Socioeconomic Status	0.068 (0.046)
Interest in Politics	0.162** (0.073)
French Speakers (<i>baseline = English</i>)	-0.697* (0.383)
Pidgin Speakers (<i>baseline = English</i>)	-0.332 (0.216)
Constant	-0.048 (0.493)
***p <0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1 n = 887	

Satisficing and Bias from the Treatment Effect

Satisficing can also be a serious issue with list experiments, which require significantly more cognitive effort than straightforward yes/no or multiple-choice questions (Armstrong, et al. 1975). Satisficing occurs when respondents find the task at hand too difficult or taxing, and thus skip one or more steps in the cognitive process required to accurately respond to the question (Krosnick 1991; Tourangeau 2000). If a respondent finds the instructions confusing or the list items too complex, he may not actually count the items on the list that apply to him, but instead report a more-or-less random number that seems to be a reasonable response.

Satisficing is different from not following directions. When someone does not follow the directions, they fail to provide a numerical response to the question. When someone satisfices, they give a numerical response that is not a true reflection of the number of activities or beliefs they agree with. Thus although it is possible to count the number of people who do not follow directions, it is not possible to detect the number of satisficers in a sample. Kramon and Weghorst (2012) have already highlighted some issues with satisficing in the list experiment approach. After implementing a non-sensitive list experiment in Kenya, and then asking respondents outright about these non-sensitive items, they find that more than 40 percent of responses did not match between the two question formats.

Unfortunately this satisficing doesn't just create noise around the estimate. I argue that it also creates bias. The more satisficing there is in a sample, the more the treatment effect is biased towards 0.50 because the control and treatment groups do not have the same number of list items. If everyone reports random numbers, but one

group can choose between n options, while the second group can choose $n + 1$ options, then the difference in means between these two groups, by definition, will be 0.50. For example, if the control group has four list items (*average of 4.0 = 2.0*) while the treatment list has five items (*average of 5.0 = 2.5*), then the average “treatment” effect will necessarily be 50 percent. Thus, the more common satisficing is, the closer the treatment effect will be to 0.50. If the “true” treatment effect is 0.50, then no bias is introduced. But if we do not know what the true treatment effect should be—and if the researcher is using a list experiment, then it is likely that the true treatment effect is not known—it is impossible to know if this bias exists, or if it is artificially pushing the treatment effect upwards or downwards.

Researchers have assumed that if satisficing occurs, it will be randomly distributed across the control and treatment groups, and therefore will not create any bias in the treatment effect. This is not always a safe assumption, as the numerical average for the treatment group will be higher than the control group simply because there are more options to choose from in the treatment than in the control. Further, it is unclear what effect this bias will have unless the true treatment effect is already known, or it is possible to somehow identify satisficers. Researchers have tended to assume that the higher their treatment effect is, the better their list experiment must be working (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010), but it is entirely possible that a large treatment effect may instead be the result of extensive satisficing.

Conclusions

Given these issues with list experiments, I caution researchers against their use, at least in face-to-face interviews. First, if they are used in such a context, it is critical that survey enumerators record the ability of each respondent to follow the directions of the list experiment. Grouping the responses of direction-followers with the responses of direction-breakers will bias the treatment effect downward, if the treatment item is indeed socially sensitive. Second, satisficing is prevalent and can create not just noise around the true estimate, but also bias. It is much more difficult to correct for this bias because it is impossible to identify satisficers.

Nonetheless, a number of partial remedies can be used to improve the clarity of the question and reduce satisficing. First and foremost, extensive pre-testing is an important step in working out misunderstandings. In particular, each list item (not just the treatment) should be asked explicitly in order to get a sense of how people understand each one. Additionally, a ‘practice’ list experiment might fix problems involved with following the directions of the actual list experiment. I implemented this technique during the second half of survey implementation and found it to be only partially successful. In total, 552 respondents received a ‘practice’ list experiment before the actual list experiment and 732 received no practice. Roughly 60 percent of respondents who did not get a practice list were able to correctly follow the directions of the ‘real’ list experiment. Sixty-eight percent of respondents who did get practice correctly followed the directions. Thus there was some improvement, but the method was not perfect. In addition, 6.52 percent of respondents who followed directions on

the practice list experiment failed to correctly respond in the real experiment!

Unfortunately this cannot tell us how practice affects satisficing.

In addition, Kramon and Weghorst (2012) recommend using a “tick” or tabulation system whereby a respondent is given an erasable list of the question items, so that they may check with a pen the items they agree with, and erase their responses at the conclusion of the question. In order to help illiterate respondents, they also recommend the inclusion of pictures or cartoons to help respondents visualize and understand the list options. They find that these techniques have the potential to decrease the number of satisficers and improve the quality of responses.

With all of these recommendations in place, the list experiment is still a risky option for researchers with sensitive survey questions. While asking a sensitive question outright produces response bias, it is clear that this bias will be downward. The list experiment, on the other hand, produces several forms of bias that can be conflicting in direction and difficult to know the direction of. Therefore caution is needed in interpreting the results of any list experiment. Researchers tend to argue that the larger their treatment effect the better the list experiment must be working, but it critical to keep in mind that upward inflation of the treatment effect may be an artifact of satisficing more than anything else.

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