

**The Nature of Ethnicity in Africa:
A Test of Political Relevance**

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Abstract:

Why do some individuals of sub-Saharan Africa express stronger ties to their own ethnic group than others? Using a compilation of Afrobarometer Round I surveys, I test the influence of economic conditions, good governance, and ethnic pride on individual ethnic strengths. Although my hypotheses predict that ethnic identity is politically and economically utilitarian in nature, multivariate OLS regression suggests that the strengths of ethnic ties are largely determined by ethnic pride. These results demonstrate that ethnic identity is largely constructive and support the use of ethnicity in explaining political phenomena.

I. Introduction and Research Question

When thinking of sub-Saharan Africa, rarely do positive associations arise. Instead, citizens of the United States commonly associate disease, underdevelopment, and ethnic conflict with the region. Although these stereotypes are far from accurately describing the detailed nature of 993,448,292 people representing 14.2% of the world population, these judgments do reflect the overwhelming difficulties sub-Saharan Africa has experienced since decolonization (“Internet”). These difficulties, particularly underdevelopment and ethnic conflict, have been fodder for social scientists for decades. Many researchers have sought to explain the relationship between underdevelopment and ethnic conflict. Others have wished to understand the effects of ethnic fractionalization or ethnic polarization on economic development. Largely ignored in these investigations, however, is an attempt to truly understand the nature of ethnic identity. This study seeks to recognize the genuine nature of ethnic identity by inquiring: why do some individuals express stronger ties to their own ethnic group than others?

II. Hypotheses

I hypothesize that as an individual’s sentiments towards the progress of economic development decrease, their expression of strong ties to their own ethnic group will increase.

H1: Those that express a negative sentiment towards the progress of economic development will be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

Secondly, I hypothesize that as an individual’s sentiments towards the honesty of state governance decrease, their expression of strong ties to their own ethnic group will increase.

H2: Those that express a negative sentiment towards the honesty of state governance will be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

Lastly, I will pose a third hypothesis testing a separate dimension of ethnic identity proposed in theory. I hypothesize that as an individual's sentiments towards pride of their own ethnic group increases, their expression of strong ties to their own ethnic group will stay unchanged.

H3: Those that express a greater sentiment of pride towards their own ethnic group will not be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

III. Significance

In 1994, conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi of Rwanda left estimates of 500,000 to 1,000,000 dead. Within 100 days of the conflict, up to 10% of the Rwandan population had been killed ("Rwanda"). Examining the underlying causes of sub-Saharan ethnic identity is an immediate concern for any activist concerned with human rights. Furthermore, this question has significant relevance to political scientists since ethnic identity, and the political and economic variables that may determine it, play a major role in international relations, comparative politics, and institutional theory.

Crises like the genocide in Rwanda are rare in sub-Saharan Africa, but not extraordinarily rare. In fact, the Fund for Peace's 2007 report of failed states found eight of the world's most ten vulnerable states for complete failure to be in sub-Saharan Africa. Seven of these eight states were identified as vulnerable in part from high levels of "Vengeance-Seeking Groups" (Failed States Index Scores). These statistics highlight the relevance of ethnic identity. If individuals base their strength of ethnic identity on massive cultural cleavages, unfair treatment, and vengeance-seeking, than the relevance of economic and political policy to prevent state conflict and failure in sub-Saharan Africa may be nullified. Furthermore, if individuals base their strength of ethnic identity more on political and economic variables, than the relevance of examining variables such as ethnic fragmentation and polarization may come into question. If factors such as personal economic conditions and corruption sentiment truly affect ethnic ties,

than past measures of ethnic fragmentation and polarization may only serve as intervening variables.

Many political theorists and researchers have attempted to examine the relationship between ethnicity, economic conditions, and political circumstances, yet few have attempted to apply recent theory. Countless empirical studies have found significant negative correlation among ethnic fragmentation, polarization, or conflict and economic development. These studies, however, argue that a nation-states' ethnic instability is the underlying cause of economic and political instability. Taken as fact in these studies, however, is that ethnic identity is rigidly based upon historical and cultural differences among peoples that drive animosity and unfair practices towards outsiders. In this study, however, I base my hypothesis on competing counter-theory. This general theory claims that although diversity in ethnicity is culturally relevant to society, it only becomes a stronger identity when good governance and economic development fail. Thus, by examining the effects of ethnic pride, governance, and economic conditions on the strength of individual's ethnic identity, I intend to support or refute this untested counter-theory.

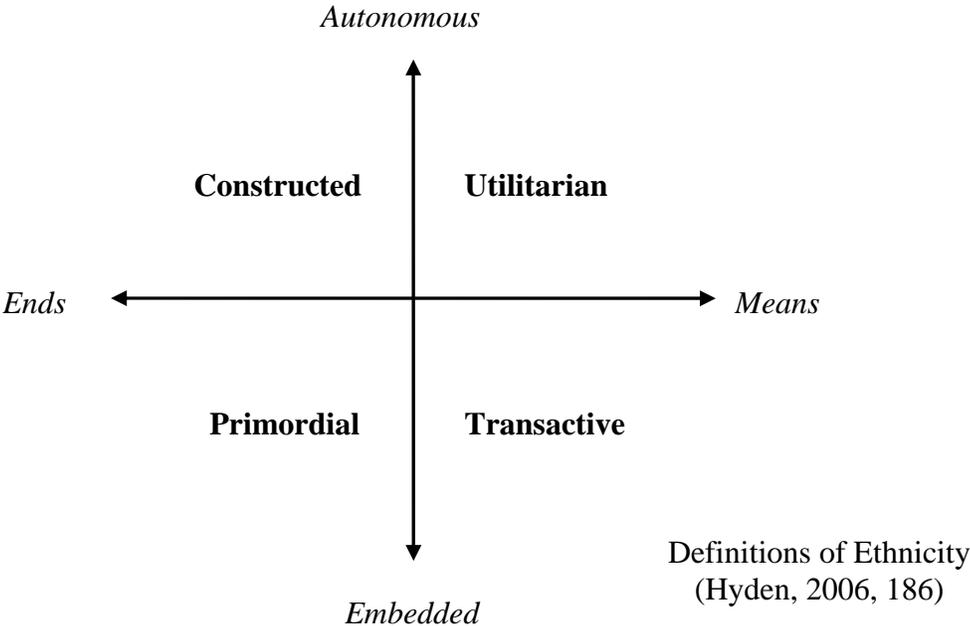
Many institutional and international organizations have a decided interest in understanding the underlying factors behind ethnic identity formation within individuals in sub-Saharan African nation-states. The formal institutions within African states will have strong interests, so that they may continue peace among diverse groups, or make necessary policy changes to improve current conditions. Does political and economic policy matter in the strength of ethnic identity? Regimes in each state will be interested in modifying their progress and policies to better avoid conflict that often results in coup attempts and regime change resulting from overwhelmingly strong ethnic identities. International business in African nation-states will want to understand the variation to help direct future investments. International monetary institutions will want to understand the variation when distributing investment aid to African

nation-states for further development. Finally, the United Nations will benefit from this information by understanding how it can help African nation-states avoid unnecessary death and elevate the living conditions of their citizens.

IV. Literature Review

Theory suggests four fundamentally different approaches in explaining the strength of ethnic identity formation within individuals in sub-Saharan Africa. These African ethnicity theories are primordial, constructive, utilitarian, and transactive. Each theory separates itself from the others by how it defines the ethnicity. According to Hyden (2006), each theory defines ethnicity according to how it answers two basic questions: (1) how much is ethnicity a result of human choice? and (2) to what extent is ethnicity a means to itself, or a means to other ends? From these two basic questions, a map of ethnicity theory emerges (Figure A).

Figure A:



In the bottom left corner of the ethnicity matrix is the definition of ethnicity as a primordial identity. Primordial theory believes that no element of ethnicity is a result of human

choice. Furthermore, primordial theory also believes that ethnicity is identified by peoples as a means and an ends in itself.

Of the four ethnic identity theories, primordialism has the deepest historical roots. Aristotle began the analysis with the philosophical suggestion that diverse states are more prone to internal strife that inhibits economic development than more homogenous nation-states (Mulgan, 1999). This political hypothesis was supported by his theory that ethnic differences such as race, language, locality, and religion divided state citizens into fundamentally separate and different groups. Consequently, 'us versus them' competitions would emerge, as various ethnic groups would compete in zero-sum games to win the spoils of the state for 'their' people. Primordial theory reemerged as the dominant ethnic identity theory during the modernization movement in the 1950's and 1960's. During this time, political theorists believed that underdeveloped and newly decolonized states would fail to successfully modernize due to ancient multiethnic societies. The civic citizenship identity could not emerge when such historical and cultural factors as language, religion, and tradition favored strong ethnicity (Geertz, 1963).

Numerous political scientists have examined relationships between ethnic identity and political or economic variables using primordialism. Most however, do not even take into account the possible differences in ethnicity definitions. Carrol and Hannon (1981) identified multiethnic societies as being susceptible to democratic stalemate due to the polarizing nature of ethnic differences. Many others have correlated ethnolinguistic fragmentation with economic indicators (Reynolds, 1985; Easterly and Levine, 1997; Lian and Oneal, 1997). Instead of fractionalization, Collier and Hoeffler (1998) found strong correlation between ethnic polarization and economic development.

Unfortunately, these studies did not examine the validity of their measure of ethnicity. Each of these studies found significant correlations assuming the rigid cultural characteristics of

primordial ethnic identity. Instead of taking into account what factors may cause greater fractionalization or polarization of ethnic groups, these researchers believe that ethnic identity remains rigid and stagnant. In particular, the ethnic identities of utilitarianism and transactivism will demonstrate the flaws of primordial theory. Any evaluation of ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa must take into account possible social origins.

In the top left corner of the ethnicity matrix is the definition of ethnicity as a constructed identity. Constructivism theory believes that some element of ethnicity is a result of individual human choice. Like primordialism, constructivism also believes that ethnicity is identified by peoples as a means and an ends in itself.

Recent studies have used this postmodern theory in arguing that individuals do define themselves according to culturally ethnic lines, however, it is within individual choice to emphasize certain aspects of an ethnicity rather than others (Bayart, 2000; Mbembe 2001). Although constructivism does not take into account the possibility of ethnic identity to be a means to another ends, it does grant some individual freedom in ethnic choice. Societies are continually evolving as individuals choose to express themselves by emphasizing different aspects of their ethnicity.

Constructivist accounts of ethnic identity, however, serve little purpose in the evaluation of ethnic identity as a politically relevant variable. Therefore, very little political research on ethnic identity in sub-Saharan Africa has used this theory. Like many constructivist theories, it offers new ideas, without answering any questions. Like primordialism, constructivism fails to consider the possibility of individuals using their individual ethnic identity as a means to an ends other than ethnicity itself.

In the top right corner of the ethnicity matrix is the definition of ethnicity as a utilitarian identity. Like constructivism, utilitarian theory believes that some element of ethnicity is a result

of individual human choice. Unlike primordialism and constructivism, however, utilitarianism believes that ethnicity is identified by peoples as a means to an end beyond itself.

Utilitarian ethnic identity is based upon the presumption that individuals within a society will act collectively to increase the significance of their own interests and preferences. This collective action, however, is based upon each individual's cost-benefit analysis. Therefore, when the costs of collective action outweigh the benefits, the individuals will choose to not collectively aggregate into an ethnic identity. Arguing that ethnic identity is strongly defined by common political and economic conditions, utilitarian ethnic identity theory leaves little room for ascriptive ties to cultural and traditional similarities (Banton, 1993). Utilitarianism believes that when a nation-state experiences economic instability, a series of economic choices within the structure of informal associations in sub-Saharan Africa force individuals to rely on their ethnic identities more to receive necessary resources. As ethnic identity becomes more necessary to receive resources once distributed by the state, zero-sum games between ethnic groups emerge that often result in tension and conflict. Thus, an individual's choice of strength to his or her ethnic identity is directly correlated to his or her need to rely upon ethnic identity for resources.

Utilitarianism suggests that the strength of an individual's ethnic identity is completely reliant upon economic and political circumstances. Once a state begins to experience economic instability, ethnic identity becomes an increasingly important identity to survive. Berman (1998) demonstrates that as economic conditions deteriorate, cultural identity can quickly transform into political ethnicity. Certain elites and low-level bureaucrats, seeking individual gain, exploit their ethnic identity to further government careers promising to distribute the spoils of the state to others sharing their ethnicity. Once ethnicity becomes politicized within an economy where resources are distributed privately, ethnicity also becomes a vital identity for the peasantry. Hale (2004) argues that ethnic identity becomes a necessary social identity when state resources

are scarce and the rule of law is weak. Hale (2004, 473) concludes, “Massive uncertainties such as economic collapse and social upheaval are widely associated with the broad appeal of very ‘thick’ (encompassing, compelling) social categories involving ethnic stereotypes and group conspiracy theories.”

Little quantitative theory on ethnic identity theory has been performed, other than research assuming rigid primordial identities. Recently, Miguel and Posner (2006) took steps towards testing primordial theory against utilitarian. This study supported utilitarian theory, concluding that ethnicity demonstrated a relatively high level of saliency in regards to independent variables such as competition for jobs, political power, and proximity to competitive national elections. In conclusion, the study suggested that ethnicity is more so a product of modernization than tradition.

Utilitarian views of ethnic identity can be very appealing to social scientists in attempting to explain the phenomenon of identity; however, this is primarily due to the theory’s reliance upon completely external conditions. Supporters of the theory are quick to point out the manipulation of various ethnic groups to suppress each other during colonization and authoritarian regimes to demonstrate their arguments. Unfortunately, utilitarianism ignores the cultural roles of ethnicity within sub-Saharan African societies. By treating ethnic identity only as an instrumental variable, utilitarianism fails to integrate cultural tradition into the equation of ethnic identity (Laitlin, 1992).

In the bottom right corner of the ethnicity matrix is the definition of ethnicity as a transactive identity. Like primordialism, transactive theory believes that some element of ethnicity is not a result from human choice. Unlike primordialism and constructivism, however, transactive theory believes that ethnicity is identified by peoples as a means to an end beyond itself.

Transactive theory bases its definition of ethnicity according to the assumption that ethnic identity is historically rooted, yet situational to social interaction. Hyden (2006, 188) expresses the importance of significant ascriptive ties such as culture, tradition, and language by explaining that “these phenomena become important in social in social exchanges and determine what is perceived as distinct about a particular person or group of people. The point about this relational approach is that ethnic boundaries are maintained not for cultural but for social and political reasons.” Furthermore, transactive theory believes that neither deep primordial differences in ethnicity nor zero-sum political and economic games are solely sufficient in determining strength of ethnicity. Instead, both are necessary. Transactive theory does not believe that ethnic identities can emerge out of thin air, like utilitarian theory suggests. Furthermore, it does not encourage the examination of identity as an unchangeable fact as does primordialism. Instead, transactive theory accepts the importance of historical and traditional factors, but suggests that these factors are intensified according to economic and political conditions.

The four fundamental theories of ethnic identity, primordial, constructive, utilitarian, and transactive, each emphasize different dynamics of ethnicity. Primarily, each theory’s presumptions are taken from individual versus group choice and ends versus means. By examining what specific variables influence the strength of an individual’s ethnic identity in sub-Saharan Africa, this study seeks to support one of these basic identity theories and refute the others. By the very nature of primordial and transactive theories, survey data taken from questioning individuals cannot closely test these theories. Since primordial and transactive theory believes ethnic identity is deeply embedded within individuals and free from individual discernment, these theories cannot be empirically tested. Asking an individual about the strength of his or her ethnic identity implies individual choice in ethnic identity. Therefore, I will only

empirically test constructive and utilitarian ethnic identity theories to help quantitatively determine the nature of individual ethnic identity.

V. Hypotheses

Each specific hypothesis in this study is designed to test the nature of individual's identity as either utilitarian or constructive. Within the realm of utilitarian theory, I have created two separate hypotheses. The first is designed to investigate the influences of economic conditions on strength of ethnic identity choice.

H1: Those that express a negative sentiment towards the progress of economic development will be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

If sentiment towards the progress of economic development does show a significant relationship towards stronger ties to an individual's own ethnic group, than there will be numerous theoretical implications. First, this relationship would support utilitarian theory that cost-benefit analysis of external variables creates ethnic identity choices. Secondly, this relationship would demonstrate that ethnic identity is not just generally utilitarian, but specifically economically utilitarian. Lastly, if no relationship is found, than constructive theory on ethnic identity will be supported.

The second utilitarian hypothesis investigates the potential political dependency of ethnic identity.

H2: Those that express a negative sentiment towards the honesty of state governance will be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

If this relationship were to be found statistically significant, this study would support the utilitarian argument that ethnic identity is fluidly formed around social contexts. This relationship will also test the extent that political conditions, particularly good governance, matters in identity choice. If ethnic identity is determined to be utilitarian, than which matters more, economic or political social contexts? Furthermore, if no relationship is found, than constructive theory on ethnic identity will be supported.

The third hypothesis is designed to evaluate the nature of primordial theory within individuals' choices of ethnic identity strength.

H3: Those that express a greater sentiment of pride towards their own ethnic group will not be more likely to express stronger ties to their own ethnic group.

This hypothesis is based upon the utilitarian theory that pride towards one's ethnic group is separate from strong ties to one's own ethnic group. While pride in one's ethnic group suggests a strong sentiment among individual's with their historical, cultural, and traditional predecessors and peers, stronger ties towards to an individual's own ethnic group measures how often individuals actively involve themselves and rely upon their ethnic identity in society. Thus, if sentiment of pride towards one's own ethnic group is found to be statistically significant in expressing stronger ties to one's own ethnic group, than constructive theory will be supported.

Both utilitarian and constructive theories will be supported if economic conditions, political sentiment, and identity pride are all found to be statistically significant. While the first and second hypotheses may measure the situational fluidity of ethnicity, the third hypothesis will measure its constructive impact as an ends in itself. Thus, testing all three hypotheses within one model will examine the economic and political factors that may intensify ethnic ties, while accounting for the importance of historical and traditional factors.

VI. Data and Variables

The dataset used in this study is titled "Compilation of Afrobarometer Round I Survey in 12 Countries: Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, 1999-2001." This dataset is provided by the Inter-Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. The collection of the dataset was supervised by Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes.

The Afrobarometer is a multi-state survey project that employs standardized questionnaires to probe citizens' attitudes about new democracies in Africa. Nationally representative samples were drawn through a multi-stage stratified, clustered sampling procedure, with sample sizes sufficient to yield a margin of sampling error of ± 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.¹ One of the initial questions in the questionnaire poses the question:

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

After asking this question to 21,531 individuals, 42.3% of individuals chose to associate themselves with ethnic identities (language, tribe, ethnicity, race, or religion). It is these 9106 individuals that will be examined when testing all three hypotheses.

The dependent variable in this study is the strength of an individual's ties towards their own ethnic identity group. This variable is measured by the 9106 respondents' answers to the question:

Here are a series of things people might say about how they see their group in relation to other [inhabitants of state]. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions. Please tell me whether you disagree, neither disagree nor agree, or agree with these statements: You feel much stronger ties to [members of your ethnic group] than to other [inhabitants of state]?

Respondents then were allowed to answer in six ordinal responses: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree, and don't know. "Strongly disagree" responses were given an ordinal value of 1, and increasing ordinal values were assigned so that "strongly agree" was given an ordinal value of 5. "Strongly Agree" was the most common response, representing 49.6% of individuals polled. In general the sample population agreed to feeling

¹ Details of the Afrobarometer sampling procedures used in collecting the data are available at the project's web site: www.afrobarometer.org.

stronger ties to members of their own ethnic group than to other inhabitants of their state (see Appendix 2 for a complete display of descriptive statistics).

There are three independent variables in this study, economic conditions, quality of governance, and ethnic identity pride. First, I will explain how economic conditions will be measured. To take into account the broad realm of economic conditions within an individual's status in an underdeveloped nation-state, two variables will be used. One focuses on current living conditions by asking the question:

Now let us speak about your personal economic conditions. Would you say they are worse, the same, or better than other [inhabitants of state]?

In answering this question, respondents were given six ordinal responses to choose from: much worse, worse, about the same, better, much better, or don't know. "Much worse" responses were given an ordinal value of 1, and increasing ordinal values were assigned so that "much better" was assigned a value of 5. Individual responses were normally distributed, with the "about the same" response chosen most often at 30.2%. Overall, individuals polled felt their personal economic conditions were about the same as other inhabitants of the state.

The second variable measuring economic conditions concerns the respondents' sentiments towards the national economy, asking:

At the moment, are you very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with economic conditions in [inhabitants of state]?

In answering this question, respondents were given six ordinal responses to choose from: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither dissatisfied or satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied. "Very Dissatisfied" responses were given an ordinal value of 1, and increasing ordinal values were assigned so that "very satisfied" was assigned a value of 5. The "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" represented 64% of the total individual responses. Thus, this sample was generally dissatisfied by national economic conditions. By taking into account sentiments of both personal

and national economic conditions, this study seeks to differentiate which condition impacts ethnic ties the greatest.

There are also two variables used to measure the concept of quality of governance. Governance is defined as the use of authority and institutions to allocate resources and control activity in a state's population. The first variable testing for quality of governance examines the honesty of elections performed in states to elected governors of the state:

On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in [year of last national election]?

When answering this question, respondents were given five ordinal responses to choose from: completely free and fair, free and fair with some minor problems, on the whole free and fair but with several major problems, not free and fair, or don't know. Numerical values were assigned to each ordinal response, with "completely free and fair" given a 1 and "not free and fair" given a 4. The "quite honest" and "honest" responses represented 76% of individual responses. Individuals polled generally believed that the last national election within their country was free and fair with only a few minor problems.

The second variable measuring the concept of quality of governance examines individual sentiments towards the extent of corruption with governing institutions. This variable is measured by asking the question:

What about corruption? (Corruption is where those in government and the civil service take money or gifts from the people and use it for themselves, or expect people to pay them extra money or a gift to do their job.) How many officials in the government do you think are involved in corruption?

When answering this question, respondents were given four ordinal responses to choose from: all/almost all, most, a few/some, or almost none/none. Responses of "all/almost all" were assigned a 1, and increasing values were assigned so that "almost none/none" were assigned a 4. The responses were normally distributed, with 52% believing that elected leader corruption was

either “fairly common” or “very common.” Thus, this sample by and large believed that most government officials were involved in some corruption at the time.

The variables previously mentioned will be used to test the theory of utilitarianism. However, these variables will be controlled by a third variable representing constructive concepts. This variable examines the extent to which individual’s take pride in their ethnic identity choice by asking:

Here are a series of things people might say about how they see their group in relation to other [inhabitants of state]. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions. Please tell me whether you disagree, neither disagree nor agree, or agree with these statements: You feel proud to be [a member of your ethnic group]?

When answering this question, respondents were given five ordinal responses to chose from: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Ordinal responses were assigned so that “strongly disagree” was given a 1 and “strongly agree” was given a 5. The most common response was “strongly agree,” representing 75% of individual responses. Generally, this sample agreed to feel strong pride in being a member of their own ethnic group. Although this is an indirect measure of constructive ethnic identity, I believe it parallels constructive theory. Disregarding political and economic factors, pride in ethnic identity takes into account the strength of individual’s association with their ethnic identities culture and traditions.

Before explaining how these independent and control variables will be tested on the dependent variable, it is important to address concerns regarding the data source. First, do the twelve states included in the Afrobarometer fairly represent sub-Saharan Africa as a whole? This is a legitimate concern. Of the twelve, only one Francophone and one Lusophone state is included. Furthermore, a World Bank (2004) study found the per capita incomes of households at the time of the study within the twelve sample states as nearly twice the sub-Saharan average.

Also, Freedom House (2001) has identified that political freedom of those inhabiting the twelve states at the time of the study to be slightly greater than all of sub-Saharan Africa. These statistics demonstrate that these twelve states may not be the ideal sample for studying the region as a whole; however, the dataset does provide the most current and accurate sample available (See Appendix 1 for a table of differences).

VII. Methods

Due to the ordinal nature of the dependent variable and all five of the independent variables, this study uses multivariate ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression. Prior to running the regression analysis, however, a few analyses and minor changes to the dataset were necessary. First, any individuals that answered “don’t know,” refused to answer, or were not asked one of the six questions analyzed in this study were recoded as missing in the dataset. This procedure was necessary so that such answers would not interfere with the data analysis. Consequently, the sample size of sub-Saharan African individuals from these twelve states used in the OLS regression analysis was lowered to 3,080 people. Also, prior to running the regression analysis, a correlation test for multicausality among the independent variables was performed. This test demonstrated that none of the five independent variables were correlated greater than .388 (See Appendix 3 for a full correlation table). Therefore, the regression analysis could be performed without any concerns of multicollinearity among the independent variables.

VIII. Analysis of Relationship

Table 1 presents the results of the multivariate OLS regression for the analysis of ethnic identity within twelve Sub-Saharan African states. The results demonstrate that the ethnic ties of individuals within the sample are dependent largely on pride. After pride, marginal variances in an individual strength’s of ethnic ties are dependent on senses of elected leaders’ corruption, personal economic conditions, and sentiments on the fairness of the last national election.

Table 1:**Results of Regression Analysis of Strength of Ethnic Ties**

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta
Personal economic conditions	-.063	.021	-.060**
National economic conditions	.017	.020	.017
Fairness of last national elections	.043	.021	.039*
Sense of corruption among elected leaders	-.085	.026	-.063***
Pride in own ethnic group	.369	.027	.236***
Model R²	.062		

*** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05

N = 3080

When explaining the strength of individual ethnic ties, OLS regression negates two of my three hypotheses. First, these results largely negate Hypothesis 1. Although individual sentiments on the national economy as a whole were found statistically insignificant to the strength of ethnic ties, sentiments on personal economic conditions were found to have statistically significant marginal influence on the strength of ethnic ties. With 99% confidence in a negative relationship, this analysis has determined that personal economic conditions influence the strength of an individual's ethnic ties by -.063. Accordingly, if an individual improved their personal economic conditions by moving up one point on the ordinal scale (ex: living conditions compared to others changed from "much worse" to "worse") this model predicts a negative decline within the individual's strength of ethnic ties by .063. The direction of this relationship supports *H1*.

Although the OLS regression identified a significant negative relationship between personal economic conditions and the strength of ethnic ties, the analysis also demonstrates the minuteness of this relationship. According to this model, if an individual's personal economic conditions compared to others were to make the largest possible jump, from "much worse" to "much better," this individual would only experience a $-.252$ change in their strength of ethnic ties. This $-.252$ would not be a large enough change to alter this individual's response on the five point ordinal scale for strength of ethnic ties. Therefore, although there is a statistically significant relationship identified by the analysis, personal economic conditions fail to substantively explain practically any variance in strength of ethnic ties.

Although both measures of good governance, fairness of the last national election and level of corruption among elected leaders, were found statistically significant in the analysis, their directional strengths are both weak. Under the same reasoning that proved personal economic conditions insubstantial, these results largely negate Hypothesis 2.

Good governance, as measured by individual sentiments on the fairness of the last national election, fails to substantially explain the variance in strength of ethnic ties. First, the level of significance for this independent variable was the weakest, at $.05$. With a large sample size of 3080, this 95% certainty becomes more questionable. Furthermore, this analysis reports an unstandardized coefficient of $.043$ for this independent variable. If an individual were to increase their sentiments of fairness of the last national election by 1 (ex: from very dishonest to somewhat dishonest), then this individual would experience a positive increase in strength of ethnic ties by $.043$. This coefficient size, however, remains too small to be substantively significant. If an individual were to make the maximum change in their beliefs on the fairness of the last national election (from very dishonest to very honest), this individual would still only experience a $.129$ increase in strength of ethnic ties. This $.129$ increase is unidentifiable and

insubstantial on the 5 point ordinal scale for strength of ethnic ties. It is interesting to note that this marginal relationship is positive, however. Although I had hypothesized a negative correlation among good governance and strength of ethnic ties, the relative weakness of this relationship maintains the unimportance of this variable.

Good governance, as measured by individual sentiments on the corruption of elected officials, also fails to substantially explain the variance in strength of ethnic ties. With 99.9% certainty of a negative relationship, the regression analysis found a $-.085$ correlation between corruption and strength of ethnic ties. Because this relationship is minimal, however, this test also negates Hypothesis 2. If an individual were to change their sentiments on corruption the greatest possible amount (from “very common” to “very rare”) this individual would still only experience a change in their strength of ethnic ties by $.255$. Resultantly, even the largest possible change in corruption perceptions would not result in a change in an individual’s strength of ethnic ties. Although the analysis illustrates a statistically significant negative relationship as I had hypothesized, this relationship is too minimal to be substantively significant.

Pride in an individual’s chosen ethnic group was identified as both statistically and substantively significant. The regression model reports a significant $.369$ relationship between personal pride in an individual’s ethnic group and an individual’s strength of ethnic ties. This strong positive relationship negates Hypothesis 3. In Hypothesis 3, I had hypothesized that pride and strength of ethnic ties would not be related. This regression analysis, however, demonstrates that pride is the best of all five independent variables in explaining variation in strength of ethnic ties. If an individual were to change their sentiments on ethnic pride by the largest amount possible (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”) than an individual would also experience an increase in strength of ethnic ties by 1.476 . Consequently, this individual would move upwards one, and almost two, ordinal steps on the measure of strength of ethnic ties.

The substantive significance of ethnic pride is further strengthened by the standardized beta coefficient. The beta coefficient is meant to compare the strength of each independent variable with the other independent variables. In this test, ethnic pride held the greatest standardized beta coefficient at .236. This coefficient was greater than the next coefficient by 3.7 times. This further demonstrates the significance of ethnic pride and insignificance of economic conditions and good governance.

Also, the model r-squared value supports the overall insignificance of economic and good governance variables to explain individual strengths of ethnic ties. Only 6.2% of the variation within strength of ethnic ties in sub-Saharan Africa is attributed to economic conditions, good governance, and pride. Since the unstandardized coefficient for ethnic pride is much greater than any other independent variables' coefficient, ethnic pride is responsible for a majority of the 6.2% explanation. Ultimately, however, the independent variables in aggregate failed to explain 93.8% of variation in individual ethnic-ties.

IX. Discussion

Before discussing the broad theoretical significance of these findings, it is important to address the criterion for the results' causality. Although the regression analysis has identified a significant association between ethnic pride and strength of ethnic ties, this relationship may only be identified as causal if it passes specific criteria. First, with a .369 slope, this relationship has strong positive significance. Secondly, is it logically plausible for ethnic pride to influence the strength of ethnic ties of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa? This causality seems rational. Thirdly, this relationship fits well into one of the four paradigm theories of ethnic identity in Africa. Constructivist theory argues that although ethnic identity can be determined by individual choice, it still remains an end in itself. Ethnic pride is used in this study to indirectly measure the extent to which people autonomously approach ethnic identity is an end in itself. When

individuals begin to take pride in their ethnic identity, as an end rather than a means, ascriptive ethnic ties among others with a common ethnicity emerge. By demonstrating statistical significance, logical plausibility, and a strong connection to constructivist theory, I can assume causality between ethnic pride and strength of ethnic ties.

To what extent do these findings influence ethnic identity theory, political science, and policy makers? The significance of ethnic pride and the insignificance of economic conditions and good governance empirically suggest a frontrunner among the four competing ethnic identity theories. The importance of ethnic pride in determining individual strengths of ethnic ties implies that constructivism is superior to utilitarianism in explaining ethnic ties. According to constructivist arguments, ethnic identity may result from individual choice to approach ethnic identity as an end in itself.

It is the failure of my utilitarian hypotheses, however, that are most disconcerting for political scientists. From Aristotle to modernity, social researchers have attempted to explain political phenomena by differences in ethnicity. Underlying these explanations, there has always been the assumption that political and economic phenomena and ethnic identity are interconnected. According to utilitarian theorists, the causal arrow moves from social phenomena to ethnic identity. The insignificance of economic conditions and good governance on individual strength's of ethnic ties in this study, however, suggest that this relationship is ultimately nonexistent. Within ethnic identity theory, this supports the belief that ethnicity is an end rather than a means.

Despite the suggestion that constructivism explains ethnic identity more completely than utilitarianism, the results of this study certainly allow for primordial and transactive arguments. Both constructivist and utilitarian variables only explained 6.2% of the variation in individual strength's of ethnic ties. Though seemingly un-testable, perhaps primordial or transactive

approaches could explain the remaining 93.8% of the variance. Deep historical roots may underlie ethnic ties, leaving little room for individual discernment.

For political scientists, these findings raise questions about the use of ethnic identity as a politically relevant variable. Researchers seeking to explain political phenomena according to differences in the strengths of ethnic identities may fail because they are assuming ethnicity is largely a means to a separate ends. Instead, the results suggest that those researchers seeking to explain variance in social phenomena according to variables such as ethnolinguistic fragmentation may grasp a more accurate understanding of ethnicity in Africa. Underlying variables like ethnolinguistic fragmentation are assumptions that ethnicity is a rigid social construct uninfluenced by economic and political phenomena.

These results may be alarming to policy makers wishing to end ethnic violence and encourage development. Policy makers often base their actions behind the assumption that improving governance and standards of living will eradicate the underlying causes of a society's problems. If the strength of ethnic identity in sub-Saharan Africa remains rigid despite dynamic changes in economic and political conditions, policy makers may fail to curb ethnic hostility despite successful development. If ethnic violence is truly caused by extremely polarized ethnic identities within a region, this study suggests that reducing ethnic pride would result in the greatest reduction in ethnic violence.

Perhaps the best way to reduce ethnic pride would be to increase citizenship pride. Further research analyzing the effects of increasing citizenship pride on individual ethnic pride, identity, and violence may bring insight on this matter. It may be possible that increasing the strengths of citizenship identities will immediately decrease the strengths of ethnic identities. Supporting this consideration is the fact that many states that experience high levels of ethnic polarization in sub-Saharan Africa also experience low levels of civil society.

Despite this theorization, a simple test using the “Compilation of Round I Afrobarometer Surveys” does not support such conclusions. Within the survey, individuals were asked two separate questions. First, whether or not they agreed that their children should identify themselves as citizens. Secondly, whether or not they agreed that their children should identify themselves with their ethnic group. The responses to these two questions had a positive correlation of .962. Thus, people who would prefer their children to identify themselves as citizens also would prefer their children to identify themselves with their ethnic group. This demonstrates that social identities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have multiple layers. In addition, this demonstrates the flaws of basing a survey off of one primary identity.

X. Limitations

Although the dataset used in this analysis was the best available source for testing sub-Saharan ethnicity, it is not without limitations. As mentioned previously, a World Bank (2004) study found the per capita incomes of households at the time of the study within the twelve sample states as nearly twice the sub-Saharan average. Also, Freedom House (2001) has identified that political freedom of those inhabiting the twelve states at the time of the study to be slightly greater than all of Sub-Saharan Africa. I believe that these discrepancies do not limit the generalizability of this study. Although these twelve states may have larger per capita incomes than the sub-Saharan average, analysis has demonstrated the insignificance of economic conditions on ethnic ties. Furthermore, the common characteristics that these twelve sample states share with all of sub-Saharan Africa, such as colonization history, cultural and environmental conditions, and world exposure make generalizations unproblematic.

A greater limitation came from the wording of the survey questionnaire itself. By asking individuals being polled what identity they associated themselves with, then asking a series of questions based upon this answer, the sample size of ethnic responses became limited. Although

individuals who answered the first question with an identity other than ethnicity certainly still have ethnic ties, the strength of the ethnic ties was never described. I believe that this form of questioning is largely responsible for the skewed left distribution of the “strength of ethnic ties” histogram. Perhaps if the strength of ethnic ties of every individual polled in the survey had been measured, a normal distribution and different results would have formed. Thus, readers must remember that these results come only from individuals who primarily identify themselves according to ethnicity. Utilitarian patterns of identity formation within individuals who do not select ethnicity as their primary identity are entirely possible.

XI. Conclusion

Identifying the underlying causes of ethnic identity is of great importance to political scientists and policy-makers. Addressing this topic, and following previous theoretical work on ethnic identity theory, this study examined the extent to which economic conditions, good governance, and ethnic pride influence individual strength’s of ethnic ties in sub-Saharan Africa.

The basis of my three hypotheses was the utilitarian approach to ethnic identity. According to this theory, ethnic identity is largely treated by individuals as an ends to a means. Thus, I hypothesized that political and economic conditions would greatly influence ethnic ties, while ethnic pride would be relatively insignificant.

According to OLS regression, however, all three of my hypotheses were negated. Findings suggest that individuals base ethnic ties according to ethnic pride in cultural and historical similarities, rather than political and economic conditions. Consequently, constructivist theory appears to most completely explain ethnic identity in sub-Saharan Africa for those who primarily identify themselves according to ethnicity. Ethnicity itself appears more rigid and less socially fluid than I had expected. These results, therefore, support the use of ethnicity as a variable for explaining social phenomena, rather than using social phenomena to explain

ethnicity. Also, this study highlights the need for more complete sub-Saharan data regarding ethnicity. By performing similar tests on responses from individuals who do not identify ethnicity as their primary identity, the validity test of these conclusions could be examined.

Beyond this study, future research could analyze the causes and implications of strong ethnic pride in sub-Saharan Africa. Does strong ethnic pride result in ethnic polarization and violence? Furthermore, what is the relationship between ethnic and citizenship identities? Ethnic and citizenship identities in sub-Saharan Africa may be mutually exclusive, or they may be relatively inclusive. As with most analyses of Africa, future research is most greatly hindered by limited statistical resources. If possible, however, the greatest manner to expand upon this study would be the use of a more complete dataset. Similar research on the nature of ethnicity is undoubtedly pertinent to political science as globalization expands our knowledge and interactions with others of different lifestyles, languages, and cultures.

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Appendix 1:

Differences among sample states and all Sub-Saharan African states

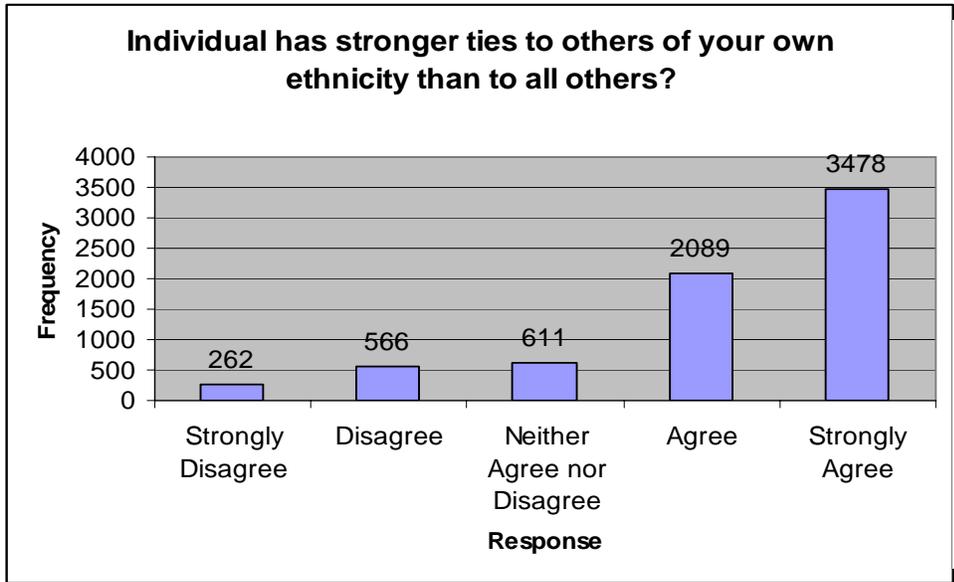
	Per capita GNI (US currency)	Under-5 Mortality (per 1000)	Percent Urbanization	Political Rights Score
All Sub-Saharan Africa	468	169	35.5	4.5
12 Sample States	888	146	35.8	3.2

Appendix 1 Notes: GNI, under-5 mortality, and urbanization figures are from World Bank (2004). Political rights score is from Freedom House (2001).

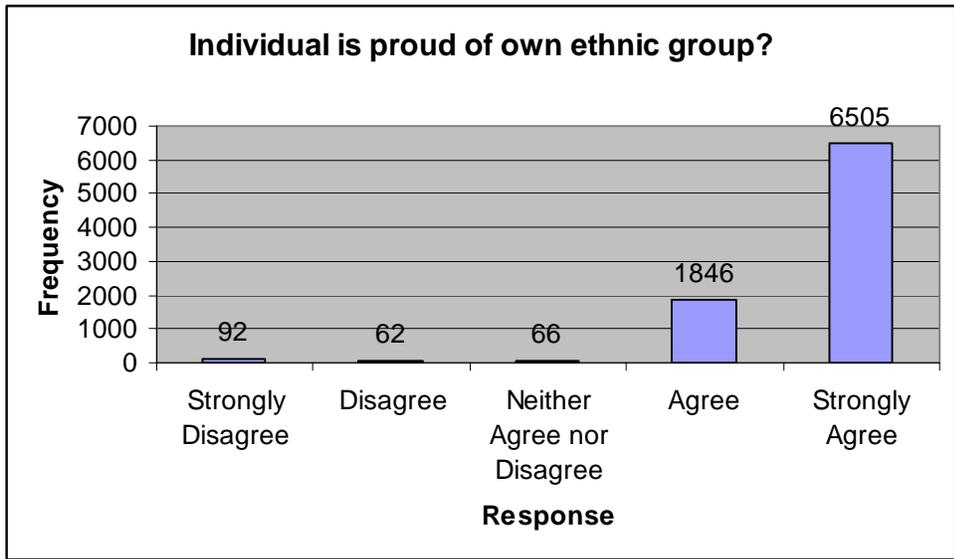
Appendix 2:

Descriptive Statistics

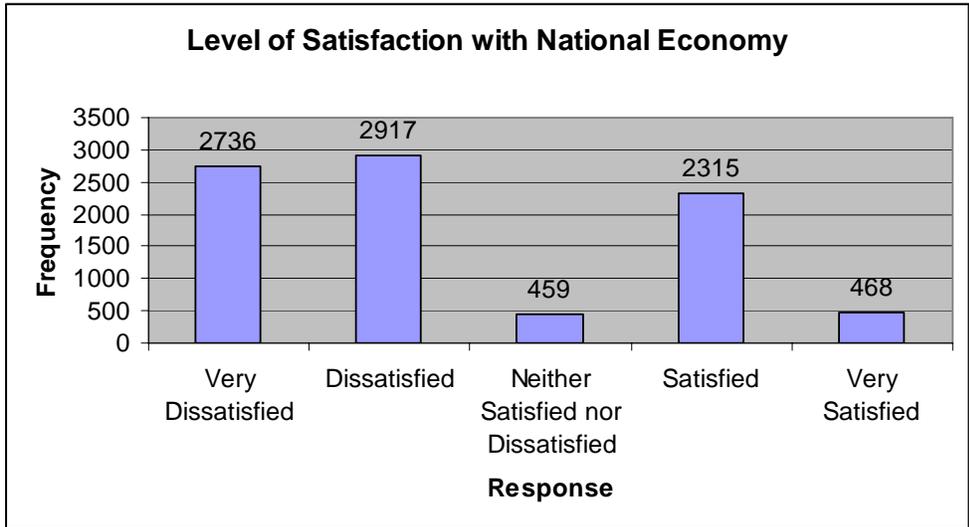
Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Strength of ethnic ties	4.14	1.107	1	5
Personal economic conditions	2.87	1.115	1	5
National economic conditions	2.42	1.302	1	5
Fairness of last national elections	3.07	.965	1	4
Sense of corruption among elected leaders	2.38	.947	1	4
Pride in own ethnic group	4.70	.629	1	5



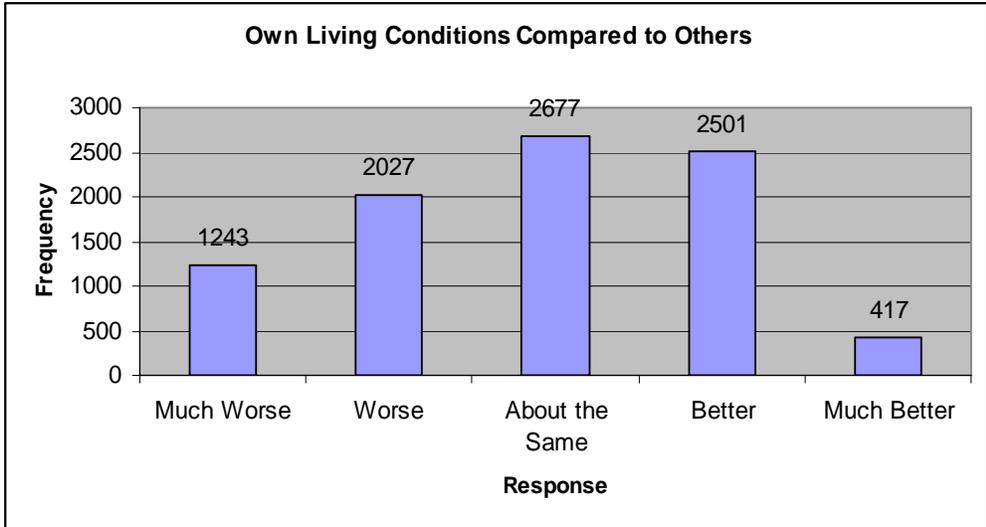
Strongly Disagree: 3.7%
 Disagree: 8.2%
 Neither: 8.7%
 Agree: 29.8%
 Strongly Agree: 49.6%



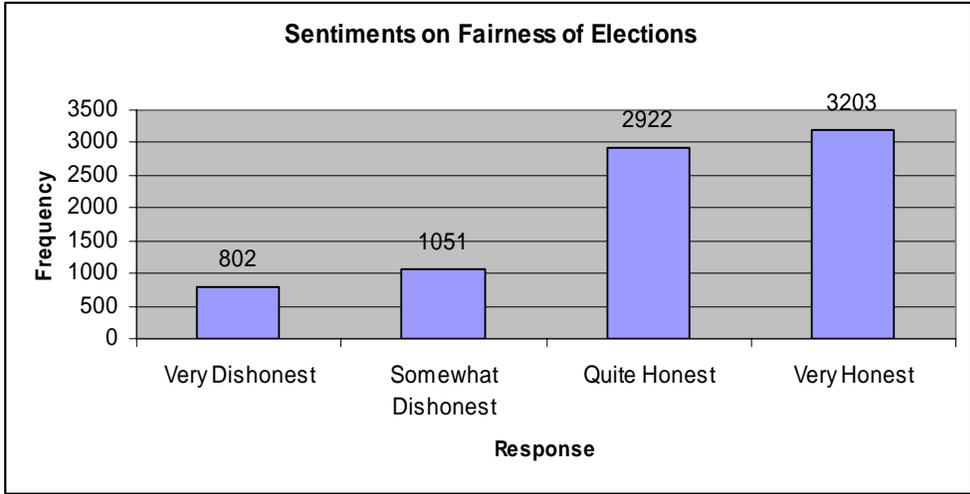
Strongly Disagree: 1.1%
 Disagree: .72%
 Neither: .77%
 Agree: 21.5%
 Strongly Agree: 75.9%



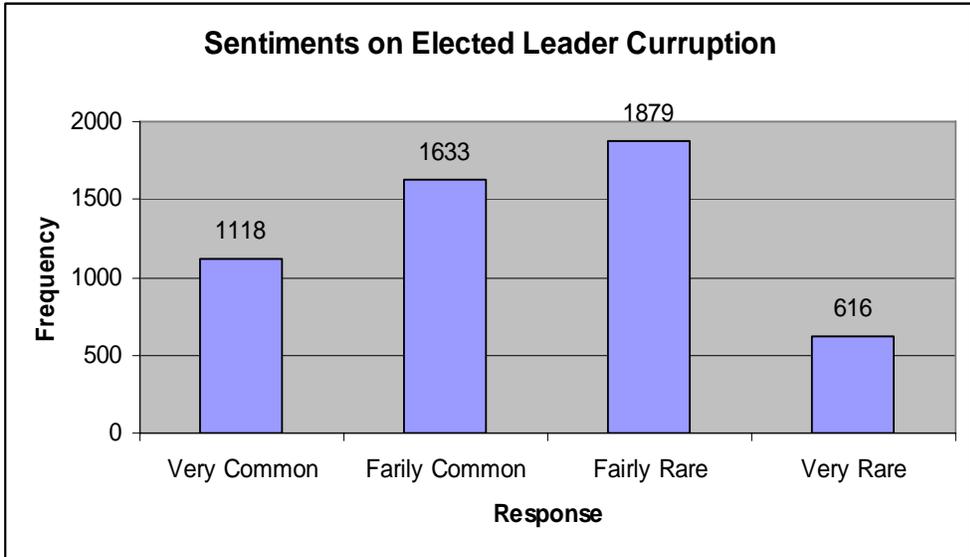
Very Dissatisfied: 30.7%
 Dissatisfied: 32.8%
 Neither: 5.2%
 Satisfied: 26%
 Very Satisfied: 5.3%



Much Worse: 14%
 Worse: 22.9%
 Same: 30.2%
 Better: 28.2%
 Much Better: 4.7%



Very Dishonest: 10.1%
 Somewhat Dishonest: 13.2%
 Quite Honest: 36.6%
 Very Honest: 40.1%



Very Common: 21.3%
 Fairly Common: 31.1%
 Fairly Rare: 35.8%
 Very Rare: 11.7%

Appendix 3:

Correlations among Independent Variables

Variable Correlation (Significance)	Personal economic conditions	National economic conditions	Fairness of last national elections	Sense of corruption among elected leaders	Pride in own ethnic group
Personal economic conditions	1	.388** .000	.135** .000	.141** .000	.072** .000
National economic conditions	.388** .000	1	.231** .000	.210** .000	.004 .736
Fairness of last national elections	.135** .000	.231** .000	1	.225** .000	.027* .019
Sense of corruption among elected leaders	.141** .000	.210** .000	.225** .000	1	.015 .286
Pride in own ethnic group	.072** .000	.004 .736	.027* .019	.015 .286	1

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)