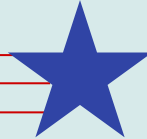




Political Competition & Ethnic Identification



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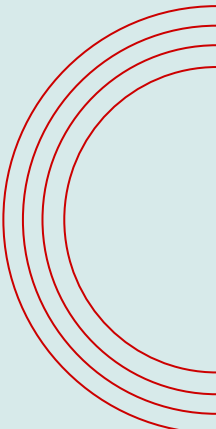
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Main Argument





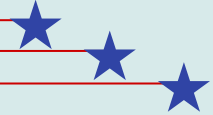
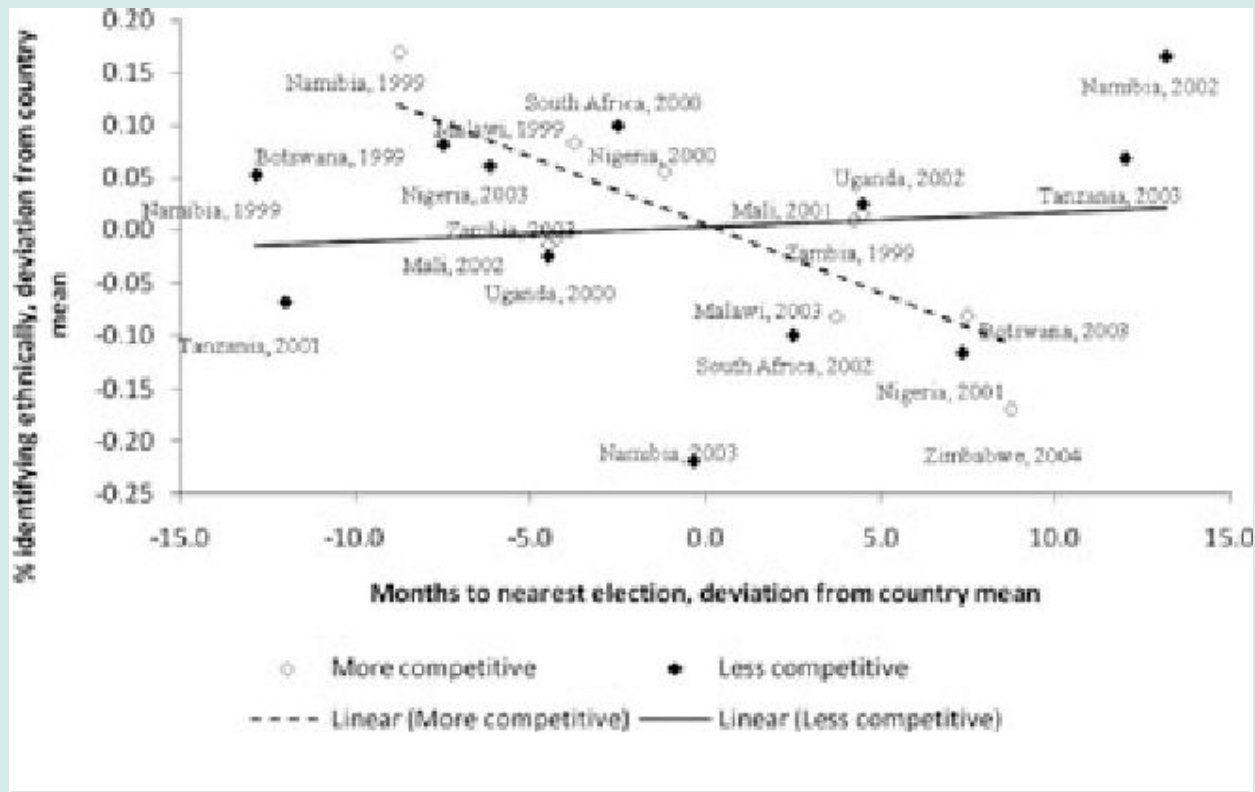
Eifert, Miguel, Posner

- ❖ Ethnic identities in Africa are strengthened by exposure to political competition
 - Proximity
 - Stakes

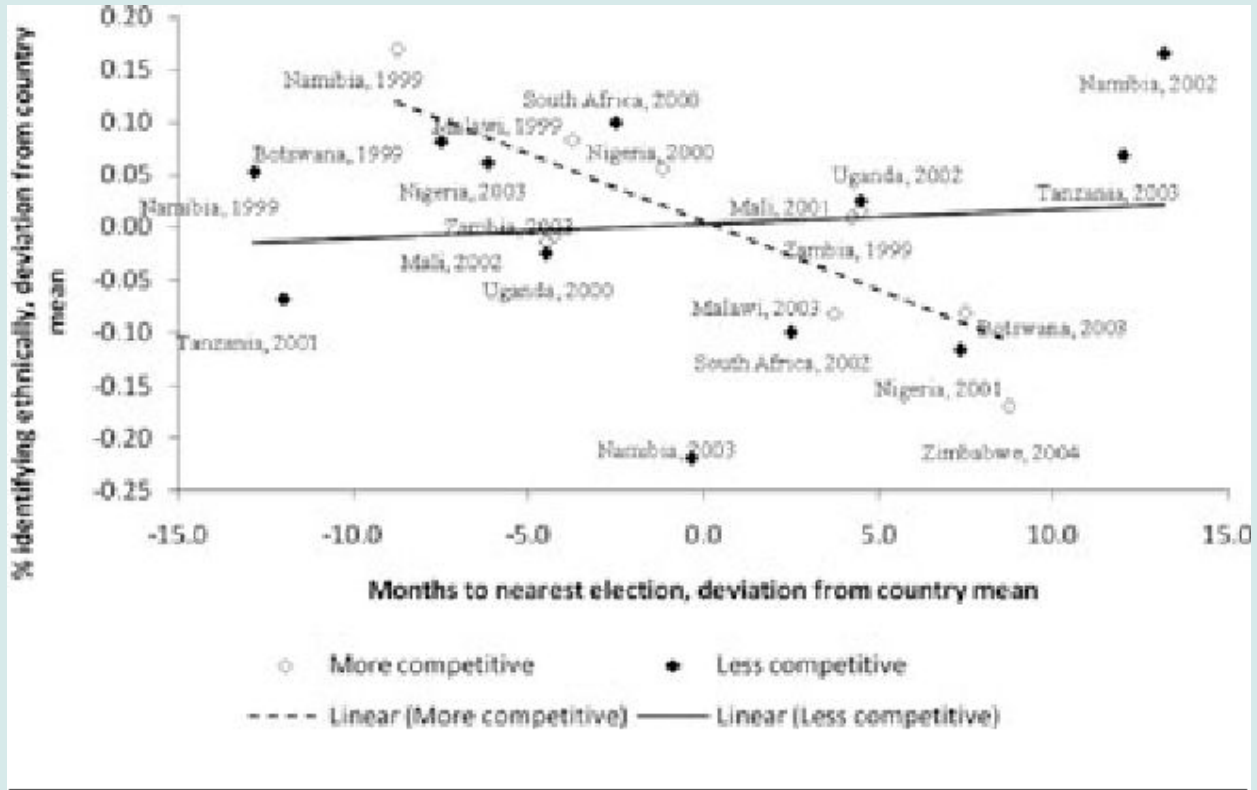
- ❖ For **every month closer** to a competitive presidential election, respondents are **1.8 percentage points** more likely to identify in ethnic terms

- ❖ **Increasing** salience of **ethnic identification** corresponds with **decreasing** salience of **class identification**

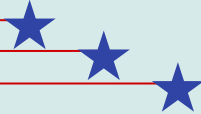


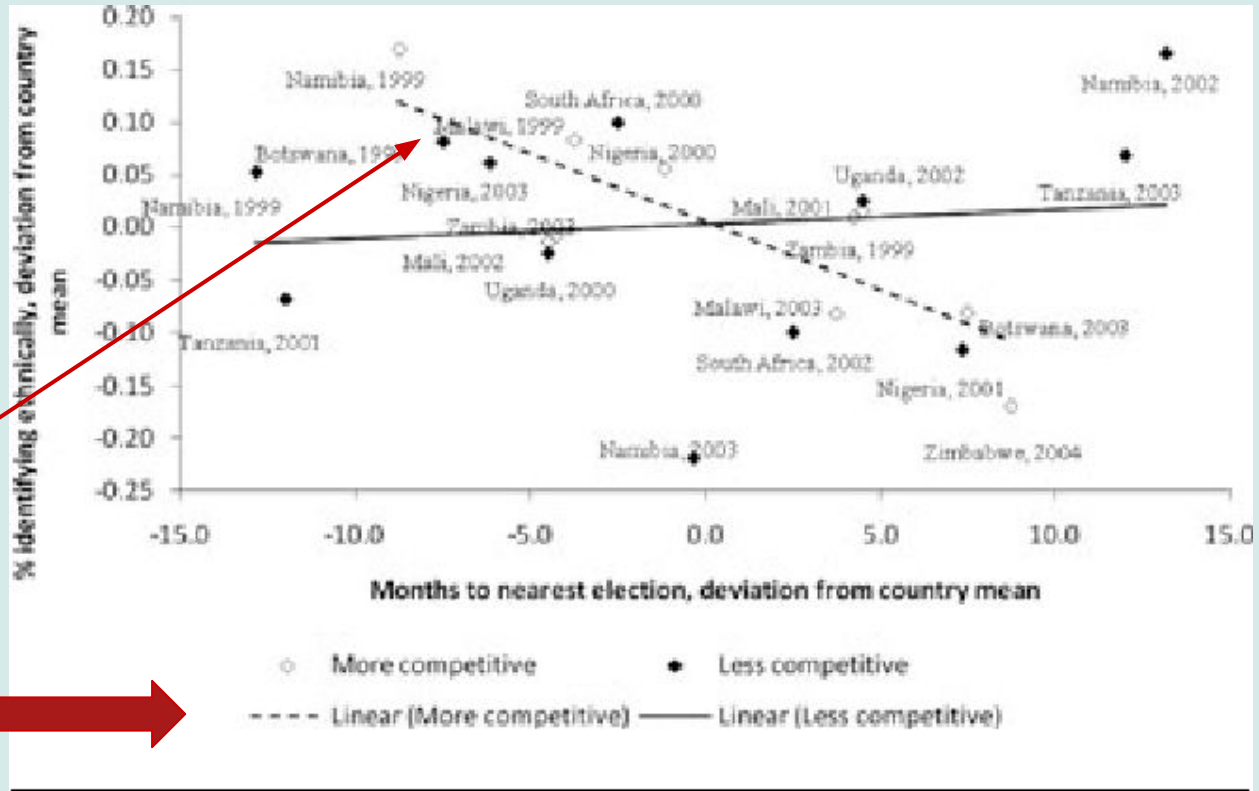


Y Axis:
% Identifying ethnically, deviation from country mean

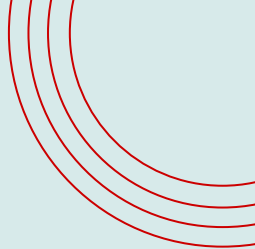
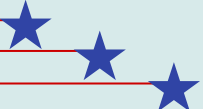


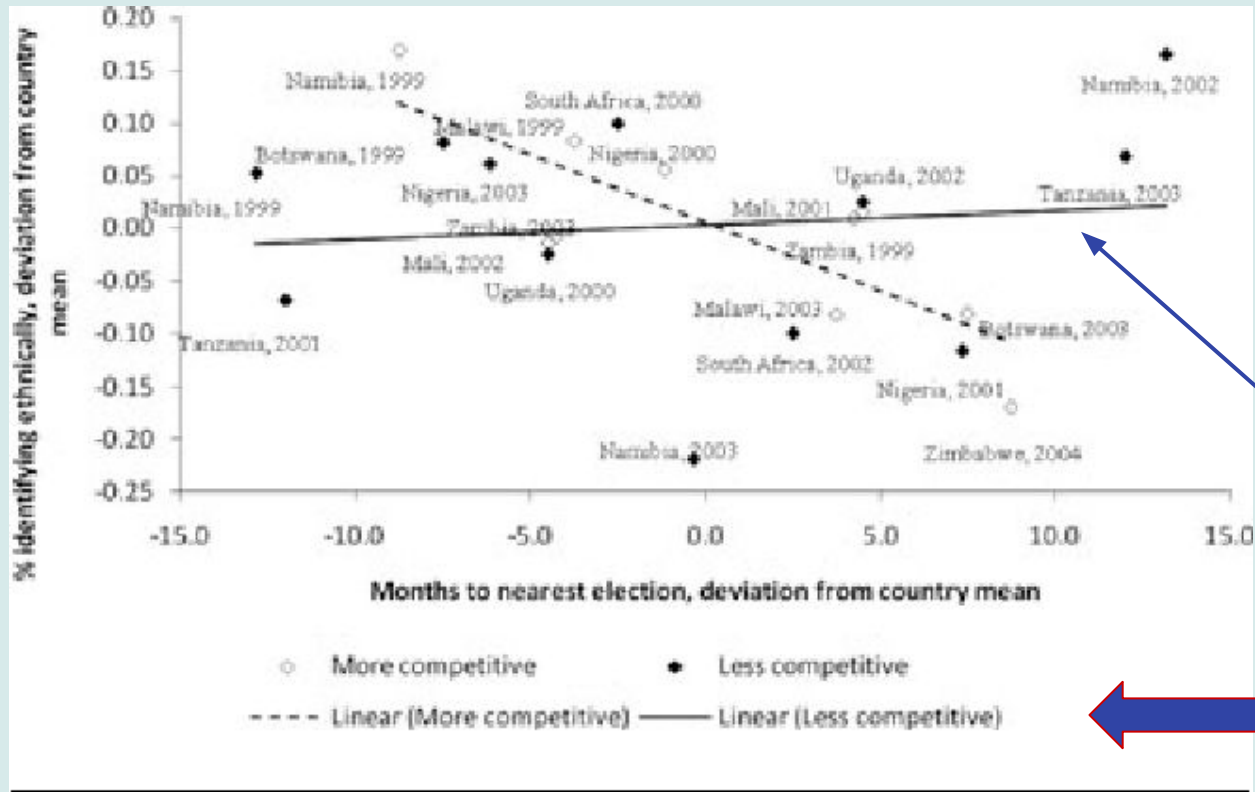
X Axis:
Months to nearest election, deviation from country mean



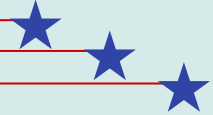


Linear
(More competitive)





Linear
(Less competitive)



◆ Two plots

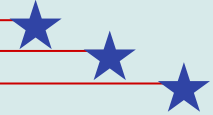
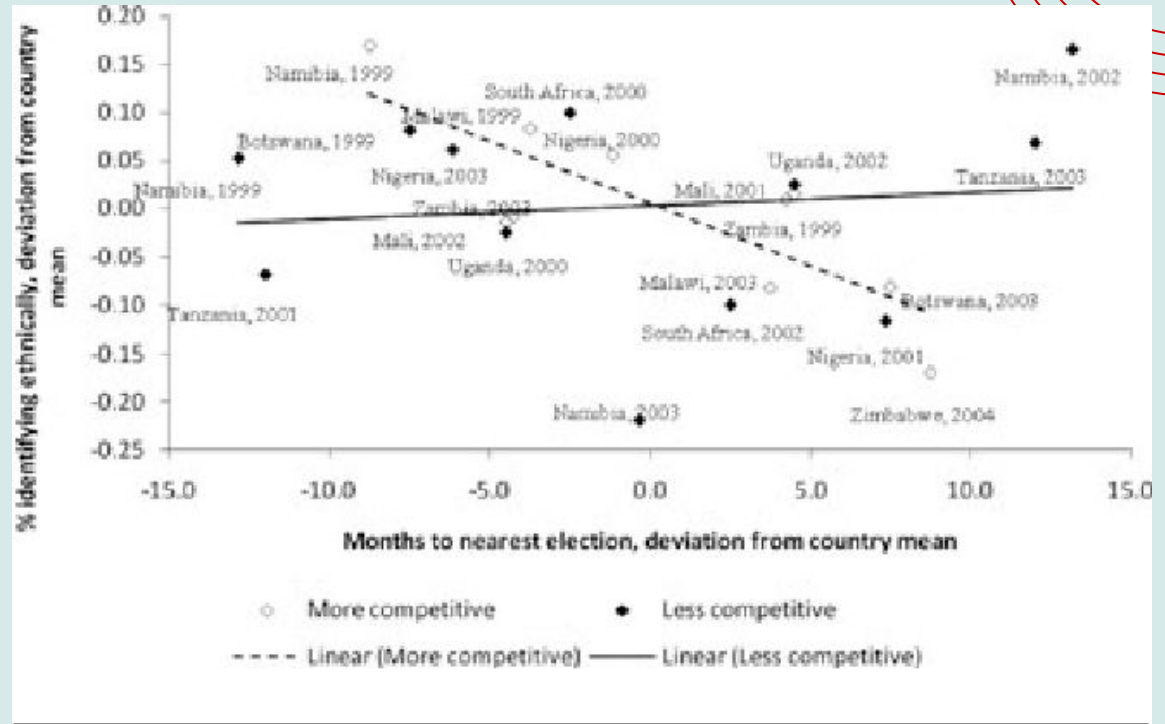
- Competitive elections
- Landslide elections

◆ Competitive Elections

- Negative relationship between ethnic identification and proximity to election

◆ Landslide Elections

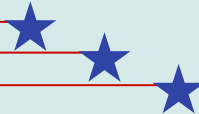
- Nearly flat relationship between ethnic identification and proximity to election



Mechanisms behind Relationship



1. **Politicians playing the ethnic card**
2. **Regular Citizens**
 - a. “Belief that jobs, favors, and public goods will be channeled disproportionately to coethnics”
 - b. “Since elections are the moment when the people who will control the allocation of resources are chosen, they are also the occasion when people should be most mindful of their ethnic identities and of the match between their identity and that of the candidates vying for power” (Eifert et. al, 507).
 - c. *Ethnic identity displaces class identity*



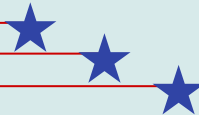
Street Fight



Mechanisms behind Relationship



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Street Fight





Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa

Eifert, Miguel, and Posner (2010)

“First, if ethnic identities are tools that people use to get access to political power, then they are likely to be rendered most salient when political power is at stake— that is, at election time.” (87)

- ❖ The salience of ethnic identification among respondents is not solely reliant on the proximity of the election, but the proximity to a **competitive** election.
- ❖ Eifert et al. state that “**ethnicity is salient because it is functional.**”
- ❖ Subsequent voter mobilization (and “groupishness”) occurs in part because of a perception that some groups will benefit more than others.
- ❖ **Because politicians know their prospective voters might hold expectations of ethnic favoritism, they are more inclined to appeal to those expectations.**
- ❖ Though the authors’ location of interest is Africa, can you think of any instances in recent memory in which ethnic appeals were made by Western politicians?
- ❖ **Were those appeals effective?**



Cory Booker



- ❖ From suburban town Harrington Park, New Jersey
 - ❖ Stanford and Yale Law School graduate
 - ❖ Rhodes Scholar
 - ❖ All-American football player
- “My parents owned a preschool in the middle 60s in which brothers Cory and Cary both attended. The Bookers were the first black family to move into Harrington Park. They were not universally accepted and it was a big deal at the time. There was a lot of underlying prejudice in this very white town. Cory and his brother Cary seemed to grow up assimilating very well and the children for the most part were very accepting. I was very young at the time but I do vividly remember hearing the adults talking. My parents were incredulous as to how much “crap” was being talked about this black family coming into town. Both of my parents were from Manhattan, New York which is a much more tolerant place than suburban New Jersey.” - Nathalie Montijo



Sharpe James

- ❖ From Newark, New Jersey
- ❖ Served in U.S. Army for two years
- ❖ Served five four-year terms as mayor
- ❖ Very well-loved within Newark, New Jersey
- ❖ Well connected with Newark P.D. & business owners





Political Power

- ❖ Power: the ability to influence the behaviors of others or the course of events.
 - **Where do we see displays of power in *Street Fight*?**

- ❖ “Power doesn’t corrupt. It just exposes who leaders really are. Power doesn’t change people as much as it accentuates their preexisting traits.” (Grant, *The Washington Post*)
 - **Do you agree with this perspective of power? Why or why not?**



Deracialization vs. Racialization

- ❖ Concepts that are frequently discussed alongside critical race theory & critical race studies
 - **Deracialization** is the process of of disentangling race from social relations.
 - **Racialization** is the process of using one's ethnicity as an indicator of social difference.
 - **If you were planning on running a campaign and had to choose either Sharpe James or Cory Booker as your adviser, who would you choose and why?**
- ❖ Cory Booker & deracialization
- ❖ Sharpe James & racialization



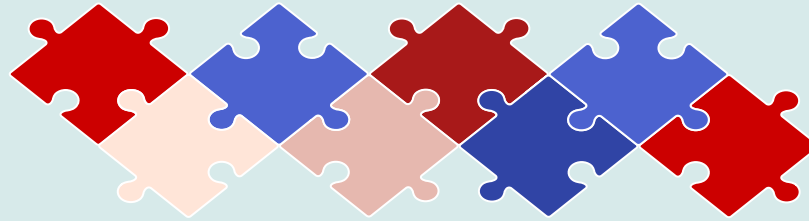
In-group Division

- ❖ In-group: A group of people who share a common feature of some sort, ranging from gender, race, religion, or geography.
- ❖ In-group division: A divide between those with a commonality.
 - In the film Street Fight, we witness in-group division in which incumbent Sharpe James attacks Cory Booker for his race, even though both James and Booker identify as African-American.
- ❖ “What it means to be black is becoming a major campaign issue in the streets.” (Marshall Curry)
 - **After Sharpe’s attack on Cory, Cory debates “going negative” with his campaign, how would you go about handling this dispute? Would you “go negative”, why or why not?**





Discussion Questions



No. 1

Why makes people choose ethnicity over class/any other category of identification? Why might politicians appeal to ethnicity to win elections instead of class identity? Is inciting ethnic “groupishness” more effective at mobilizing voters than inciting class groupishness?

No. 2

Eifert et al. found that respondents in the “traditional” sectors of the economy (i.e. farmers, fishermen, and other laborers) were less likely to identify on ethnic grounds than those in the modern sectors of the economy. Why do you think these two groups differed in this way?

