Enduring Disappointment: How Voters' Affective Attachments Sustain Partisan Support in Young Democracies

by

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Dedication

For my family for inspiring and nourishing my pursuits.

For Hannah, the beacon guiding me back to harbor no matter how thick the fog.

For my nieces and nephews, Elisa, Frances, Harriet, Warren, and Sam, for always being the very picture of curiosity and discovery from which we could all learn something.

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Abstract

Voters in the Global South often parse political decisions guided by a sense of economic utility over alternatives. However, not only is there abundant evidence from other democracies that voters can be mostly motivated by non-economic incentives, but it appears increasingly likely that the same types of incentives exist alongside pecuniary motives in the Global South. This dissertation focuses on the nature and role of psychological or expressive incentives that extend from a voter's internalized affective connection to a politicized social group, or their *social identity*. Throughout, it draws primarily on original survey and interview data collected in Ghana between 2018 and 2022. The first empirical chapter explores the nature of these identities relative to prevailing concepts and measures of identity by introducing a multi-item measure of group identification. Observational results show that not only do social identities appear to differ in their correlates but explain variation in key political attitudes not captured by conventional (binary) measures. The second leverages a lab-in-the-field experiment to understand the impacts of activating a social identity. My results suggest that priming identities increases individuals' group orientation and may be an important avenue for parties to sustain support. The third and final empirical chapter reanalyzes the same experiment to consider whether specific identities provide the same behavioral incentives in politics. Comparing respondents primed to feel either more ethnic or partisan, I find that these identities differ significantly in their ability to further group-oriented behaviors and biases. I conclude that scholars should avoid collapsing these two identities and afford greater attention to the underlying social construction and context of an identity when studying their impacts on behavior. Together this points to a broader need of comparative political scientists to identify the limits of instrumental motives in voting, what lies beyond those limits, and how (and for whom) economic and non-economic motives interact. Toward policy actors working to improve governance, it suggests a need to adopt richer models of behavior that afford voters psychological and affective biases as they evaluate candidates, make electoral decisions, and process political information.

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Voters facing persistent economic vulnerability may rationally engage in politics as a means of improving their present and future welfare. This is particularly true where parties more often distribute or promise to distribute resources and opportunities to voters and communities that support them, including many contemporary African democracies. To what extent are these voters behaving as *homo economicus* and what guides their electoral behavior when they are not acting according to a rational self-interest?

1.1 The popularization of instrumental models of voter behavior in comparative politics

The staggered end of colonialism in Africa was followed with the hope that through self-governance, a continent would harness natural resources and the promise of democracy to extend the benefits of modernity to hundreds of millions. While there has been significant variation in development and levels of democracy over time and between countries, this hope has often given way to pessimism. Among the many reasons offered for this laggard progress (e.g., violence furthered by Cold War powers, colonial legacies, and the so-called resource curse), has been the failure to establish "traditional" notions of political accountability and legitimacy, whose absence both resulted in and emerged from the prevalence of neo-patrimonialism and electoral clientelism. The state was seen as captured by elites who manipulated electoral rules and public resources to maintain their incumbency.

At the same time, voters were often seen as having a hand in the stability of this equilibrium— ignoring the performance or candidate quality information that was available, and instead favoring a co-ethnic or ethnically aligned candidate/party. More precisely, observers and scholars alike saw these voters as undiscerning *ethnic voters*. Driven by inherited racial and ethnic affiliations, they supposedly approached politics as a chance to promote their group's success. Voters were blinded by group attachments such that they could not be relied on to select

better leadership and, in turn, further democracy. To compete, parties did not need to implement broad-based or even effective social policy, instead they simply needed to field compelling coethnic candidates. The work of scholars like Horowitz (1985) and Huntington (1991) popularized this view and the notion that elections might be thought of as a simple ethnic census or headcount. In turn, the preferred policy approach for resolving stubborn levels of poverty and conflict focused on structural, institutional, and electoral reform.

With time, this was met by an alternative perspective that focused on rational choice explanations of political behavior and why voters were ostensibly failing to select better politicians, preferring to simply vote with their ingroup. Bates and others rejected what they called the expressive view partly on practical grounds. Mechanically, the average African voter did not and does not have a coethnic for whom to vote; winning candidates and parties most often require the votes of non-coethnics to assemble a minimum winning coalition. But Bates (1985), Posner (2004), Ferree (2006) and others successfully promoted broader theoretical view that centered on voters approaching political alternatives *consciously* and *strategically*. Rather than being content with the promotion of their group's success, voters are now seen as maximizing their chances of sharing in the spoils of electoral victory. Parties, for their part, are understood to carefully manipulate the distribution of resources to incentivize and maintain a viable voter base. The growth of this approach shifted scholarship away from structural explanations as well as greatly shifted political scientists' approach toward voter behavior. This approach is known as an instrumental model of voter behavior and is typically constructed (and referred to) in opposition to the earlier expressive model.

The empirical evidence supporting the instrumental model is overwhelming. To highlight a few examples, Vicente (2014) shows that vote-buying is causally linked to higher turnout. Ichino and Nathan (2013) show not only is cross-ethnic voting easy to observe, but that its occurrence is clearly aligned with expectations of clientelist benefits. Bobonis et al. (2022) and De Kadt & Lieberman (2020) both show that demand for clientelism and clientelist voting are reduced as citizens' financial circumstances improve. Simply stated, instrumental logics thrive and thrive particularly where poverty is more widespread.

Yet, there are also limits to the universality of instrumental explanations. In some cases, information on parties' performance has been shown to decrease willingness to engage in vote-buying. This suggests that clientelism is not a system wholly sustained by voters demanding it, but one that voters engage in while other criteria remain unavailable. Likewise, there are ample theoretical and empirical doubts about whether clientelist exchanges are enforceable and therefore practical for the party. Lastly, recent evidence along with earlier qualitative accounts show relatively few voters receive clientelist transfers of substantial value, while most have no direct contact with party representatives at all.

Evidence of motives that rely on broader non-economic notions of utility is mounting. For example, McClendon's (2018) cross-national study, *Envy in Politics,* highlights the role of envy as a motivator of turnout. Findings show the feeling or anticipation of envy toward other social groups has material relevance to voter decisions and does so without relying on an individual economic calculus. Similarly, a number of scholars have shown subjective social norms of reciprocity often guide voters, rather than the direct material consequences of not completing a clientelist exchange (Finan & Schechter, 2012; Lawson & Greene, 2014; Ravanilla et al., 2021). Considering this recent body of evidence supporting the presence and role of more non-economic incentives in electoral behavior, along with the above limits to instrumental narratives, it appears increasingly likely that question of whether African voters are expressive or instrumental supposes a false dichotomy.

1.2 An emerging agenda

In politics, very few parts of behavior and cognition can be said to be strictly uninfluenced by the subconscious and motivated by only a clearly defined notion of utility. While these forces can enter in preferences, attitudes, behaviors, and general predispositions at many points, the frame of an affective tie to a political party or politically aligned social group bundles many such biases together. In contrast to an instrumental political identity, *affective* or *social* identities describe a group membership that is internalized into a voter's self-image that shapes both their internal emotional and cognitive functioning, as well as external or explicit attitudes, prejudices, and preferences.

Crucially, incentives and biases linked to affective identities are often implicit in human psychology and driven by subjective rewards or incentives. Whereas instrumental theories assume a utility function broadly defined in economic terms, many of the incentives tied to social identities are rewarding because they are associated (consciously or unconsciously) with positive or pleasurable affective states. When linked to group membership, for example, in a movement, political party, or partisan-aligned social group, these incentives help bind individuals to the collective. Because they rely on non-economic rewards, they do so at potentially minimal cost to the party or collective.

The affective identity perspective is thematically similar to the expressive approach previously popular in comparative politics. However, they bear important dissimilarities. First, the earlier expressive approach was largely focused on explaining variation in voting behavior while giving less regard to the underlying mechanism and its roots. The affective (or social) identity tradition originated around isolating the most minimal conditions under which a psychologically-rooted motive still thrives (e.g., Sherif et al. (1961)), and has since, through psychometric and experimental approaches, produced refined models describing the relationships between factors such as personality, cognitive resources, and emotion in sustaining group orientations. In contrast, main proponents of the expressive approach in comparative politics appeared content to assume an innate drive to support one's group and fend off the ascent of competing groups.

Recently, the affective identity approach has begun to be tested in young or emerging democracies with encouraging results for its applicability. While nascent, this thread of research supports the presence of complex subjective and psychological motives in those countries' elections and everyday politics. In broad terms, it seems the cultural and political differences that make the politics of these regions unique, are not barriers to the development of affective political identities. Voters around the world appear to be subject to biases in cognition, behavior, and emotion that further their active support of their ingroup and skepticism or hostility to alternatives or competition.

1.3 This dissertation's contributions

The primary goals of this dissertation are both theoretical and methodological in nature. Theoretically, it offers evidence showing the presence of social identities in a context where campaigning and vote choice are thought to revolve around more practical, clientelist goals. I also provide evidence that affective identities do not simply exist in the social landscape but are cognitive frames that readily respond to an attempt to activate them. Thirdly, I provide evidence that not all affective identities can be studied as functionally equal; though they are often aligned, I find that partisanship is a distinct and more responsive motivator than ethnicity. Fourthly, I introduce advantages and challenges of measuring affective identities relative to current approaches. Finally, in exploring the correlates of social identity strength using such a measure, I show it is associated with several individual level features that appear to have no relationship with traditional notions of partisanship.

Methodologically, I contribute tools and lessons for the further application of the social identity approach in the Global South. Firstly, I present and analyze measures of the strength of affective political identities, which remain largely undeveloped in these contexts. My six-item measures of political identities perform well and present an economical and viable means to capturing a key variable in understanding the breadth of political behavior. With wider piloting, this approach appears appropriate for inclusion on multi-national public opinion surveys. Secondly, while I note throughout studies that document behavior suggestive of the presence of affective political identities, my experiment belongs to a much narrower category of studies that experimentally manipulates identities' salience. Therein, I demonstrate that a brief behavioral activity in which a respondent perceives themselves as being treated differently because of their identity is a practical approach to priming political identities. Thirdly and lastly, my approach to that behavioral activity provides evidence that despite often being aligned, ethnic and partisan identities can be synthetically separated for their independent study.

1.4 Implications for future study

I make the empirical case that instrumental *and* expressive motives are present and electorally relevant in young and emerging democracies. Yet, I can currently provide only descriptive evidence as how the two are related to each other, leaving open many questions. In future work, I challenge myself and other scholars to explore several undertheorized points related to these two classes of incentives.

It seems likely that instrumental expectations are far more central in determining which party a voter will initially favor. There is much less evidence (of any variety) as to whether, when, and for whom, expressive motives begin to replace or offset material interests. My survey provides a static snapshot of a diverse sample of Ghanaian voters but does not serve to answer questions related to how the relevance of either fluctuates over an electoral cycle, throughout a lifetime, or across different regions of a country. For example, do some voters simply tend to have stronger affective orientations, or do these incentives largely follow parties' attempts to cultivate them?

While Chapters 3 and 4 suggest that these identities can be readily activated, it leaves open important questions about whether and how parties cultivate them. For example, I suggest that private transfers often labeled vote-buying may serve just this purpose. In fact, in my data I show that affective identification with the party is significantly associated with expectations of clientelism. At the same time, many voters across many contexts— as demonstrated in their own words and actions— are voting to maximize their material returns. Are parties able to distinguish the affective voter from the instrumental voter?

I also leave open the question of whether there is such a thing as a purely affective voter or a purely instrumental voter, or whether most voters approach politics with a mix of the two incentives? Given the broad prevalence of strong affective identities and expectations of electorally conditioned clientelism, the latter appears likely. But the two may not only exist in parallel but be endogenously related—with perceptions of clientelism being tinted by an affective tie, or a sense of kinship following clientelism. Do these motives lend themselves to distinct classes of engagement?

Lastly, while I argue my findings carry implications across many African democracies and beyond, conducting similar empirical studies in other contexts will add perspective and depth. While Ghana and my sample are ethnically very diverse, Ghana's party system is relatively stable among peer countries. A similar survey in a more dynamic party system will help indicate the portability of my conclusions. For example, in Kenya, party labels, party leaders, and the ethnic coalition that each party relies on demonstrate much greater levels of fluidity. Given the strong association I show between affective political identities and long-term roots, such as inherited partisanship, studying these relationships in a more fluid system may reveal a very different pattern of associations and distribution of identities.

Broadly, I find little evidence that the methodological and theoretical approaches that define contemporary political psychology are incompatible with studying political behavior in the Global South. Because democracies like Ghana differ greatly from the U.S. and European states (the favored cases of political psychologists), this may speak to a high degree of universality in how humans experience electoral politics. However, there are also many areas within political psychology, where this may yet prove to not be the case. For example, very little research exists that probes the role of emotions in driving behavior and preferences in places like Ghana.

Continuing to probe the limits of instrumental motives and what drives voters beyond said frontier is likely much more than a scholarly curiosity. How to foster development and reduce socioeconomic inequality is fundamentally an electoral puzzle. Though voters are far from morally or practically responsible for the political ecosystems they inhabit, their choices help reproduce and sustain those systems. As policymakers consider how to best shape the institutional arrangements within which voters act and the information environment within which voters make decisions, non-economic and psychological incentives must feature centrally. Whereas the "theory of change" suggested by instrumental models often favors empowering the individual through the provision of information on performance or policy alternatives, considering these other motives asks those actors to engage with how information is processed, the social norms and experiences that shape that processing, as well as when it is likely to correspond to behavioral change.

Thus, while recent decades have provided a wealth of research on one of the central mechanisms driving voter behavior in developing democracies, this dissertation shows that even voters who may understand themselves to be engaged in a rational calculus—voting for their pocketbook, pursuing material security—they (and their unconscious minds) are likely contemporaneously subject to another defining human drive, the pursuit of pleasure. Addressing the understudied status of this latter motive could take the form of replicating research from political psychology in the Global South. However, I argue a more complete and accurate model should sever the false dichotomy between instrumental and expressive motives. Instead, a new generation of scholarship should focus on the interaction of the two, at the social level, both in individuals' thinking, and in party strategy.

Chapter 2 : How Close is "Close": Capturing Political Belonging in Developing Democracies

2.1 Introduction

Affective attachments to political parties are one of the most important predictors of attitudes and political behavior in many countries. However, in young (or developing) democracies, scholars have long prioritized *instrumental* origins of party and ethnic group attachment. More recently, the completeness of this model has been questioned, with new evidence instead highlighting the impacts of affective or psychological dimensions of political belonging. As this body of evidence grows, a firmer understanding of what defines an affective identity and how to measure is needed before its further development as a predictor. How should politically relevant affective identities be conceptualized and measured, what are their correlates, and along which major dimensions to relate to similar constructs in other cases?

In the nascent literature studying the presence of affective political attachments (or *social identification*) in developing countries, it is increasingly clear that political behavior is determined by instrumental interests alongside an internalized sense of belonging. Studies from Cameroon (Letsa, 2020), Brazil (Samuels & Zucco, 2014), Turkey (Laebens & Öztürk, 2021), Kenya (Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023) and beyond, have all demonstrated behavior that supports the presence and broad behavioral relevance of affective group attachments in politics. In other words, for many voters, their party is much more than an avenue toward material enhancements, instead providing conscious and unconscious frames for understanding oneself and the political and social worlds. Though many such examples of scholarship demonstrate that this social identification with a political group (or party) is a viable explanatory variable, most do not attempt to measure it directly, nor identify factors that may produce it (e.g., González et al., 2008; Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023).

Most approaches to measuring partisanship in African democracies rely on a binary measure. Many scholars and the widely used data of Afrobarometer, asks respondents whether they "feel close" to a political party, which they are instructed to answer "yes" or "no." In contrast, I extend multi-item measures used in the US and Europe to capture the degree of affective attachment to one's party and primary ethnic group. Importantly, rather than only indicating which banner a voter may stand under, this approach captures both psychological and social dimensions of political belonging in one quasi-continuous scale. I match my measure with additional responses to evaluate several hypotheses on the origin of identities, drawing on the political psychology literature, as well as research on other forms of partisan attachment in emerging or young democracies.

In the broader literature on partisanship, myriad factors have been identified as affecting party support, both objective and affective. This includes the running tally thesis, *similarity-dissimilarity* comparisons with party elites and other voters (including racial or phenotypic traits), frequency or depth of involvement with the group, group threat, political knowledge, geographic context, and more. While each has been shown relevant to voter behavior and psychology, little is known about which of these factors rises above the rest in a multi-ethnic democracy that shows few signs of policy or performance-based competition. I study these factors, as well as a number established in multi-national studies of objective partisan belonging, in Ghana (e.g., Harding & Michelitch, 2021; Ishiyama & Fox, 2006).

I do so with original survey of 973 voters in constituencies surround the capital city, Accra. Ghana is a two-party democracy with rising levels of development. While a democracy, ethnic competition for clientelist resources appears to be one of the organizing features of partisanship (Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Nathan, 2019). Two main parties compete and regularly exchange control at the national level: the current incumbent, the NPP (New Patriotic Party) and its challenger, the NDC (National Democratic Congress). While both parties have relatively deep historical roots making Ghana a potential outlier in terms of partisanship strength, I measure it far from a national election (mid-cycle) reducing this concern (Michelitch & Utych, 2018). Lastly, two main ethnic groupings serve as reliable sources of votes for each party: the Ewe and

Akan, supporting the NDC and NPP respectively (Morrison & Hong, 2006). Liberally estimated, those two represent around 58% of all Ghanaians (2021 Census).

I first compare the mean partisan social identity strength of my sample to studies using highly similar multi-item measures in Western democracies. I find it matches or exceeds those means, including in the United States. This confirms recent work suggesting partisan ties have been undertheorized beyond Europe and the United States (Jöst et al., 2023). Next, I find that many factors shown to be important to binary notions of partisanship may not have the same relationship to affective partisanship. For example, intergroup attitudes, wealth, and expectations of benefiting from community-level clientelism are not significant in my main and alternative specifications. In addition, I find no evidence that several factors featuring in the American literature, including political knowledge and age, have any relationship to levels of affective partisanship in Ghana.

I identify a number of factors that appear strongly related to the degree to which a respondent acts and feels as a member of their party. Of greatest theoretical interest are the positive effects of expecting personal clientelism (but not indirect local benefits), "practicing partisanship" at higher rates, and childhood socialization. The first demonstrates that this kind of clientelism may also be a tool of persuasion, activating identities. The second highlights the importance of regular interaction with the party and party symbols; and the last demonstrates that voting does not need to be organized around policy or ideology to observe what appears to be generational inheritance of affective partisanship. Lastly, I show that affective identities are associated with a few factors distinct from a binary ("closeness") concept of identity, and that they appear to insulate approval from party performance.

This study makes two major contributions. First, affective partisanship has clear ties to the health of a democracy. It affects polarization not just on partisan lines, but also draws intersecting social cleavages into alignment (Mason, 2018). It also is a strong source of partisan motivated reasoning, reducing the threat of retrospective voting and reducing the need of parties to compete on performance (Little et al., 2022). This paper provides a clearer map of who is likely to engage in these behaviors and support a party with less direct benefits. Therein it opens a path for

additional research to predict when and where an affective identity's impacts are likely to fall, as well as how they may interlace with clientelist motivations, either within or across individuals.

Second, remarkably little empirical research both measures partisan identities directly and captures candidate origins of identity strength. While I identify three examples in this category (Harding & Michelitch, 2021; Ishiyama & Fox, 2006; Mattes & Norris, 2013), this paper is, to my knowledge, the first to apply a multi-dimensional measure of partisan social identification in a developing democracy. At present, most studies, including nearly all that rely on Afro/Latin/Arabarometer data, rely on a binary measure of identification with a party. My findings show not only are approaches used in studies of Western states tractable in democracies like Ghana, but they may explain variation that is missed by current approaches.

2.2 Measuring the party tie

Political parties benefit electorally when their voters develop an affective attachment to the party (Groenendyk & Banks, 2014). While much is known about the importance of affective partisanship in industrialized democracies, an only nascent literature has begun to study this type of tie in African democracies (Carlson, 2016; Letsa, 2020). On balance, most of that research has focused on the behavioral electoral impacts of such psychologically defined identities in politics. This section establishes existing views of what sustains party ties, as well as perspectives from the Americanist literature that predict specifically the strength of partisan identification.

In the study of young democracies, partisanship has most typically been operationalized through a *standing choice*, *running tally*, or economic model of partisanship (Fiorina, 1981; Mattes & Krönke, 2020). Voters are seen as rational actors approaching decisions of partisan support and affiliation through the evaluation of bundles of development goods, inducements, and performance that parties provide. As such, it predicts that changes in a voters' objective function or the bundle that a party offers should cause updating as to the effort or resources a voter will expend on the behalf of the party, thereby eroding or strengthening the party tie. In practice, ties are relatively stable as voters often have little incentive to defect to a new party that has few incentives to offer them political pork or handouts (Padró i Miquel, 2007).

A younger and emerging body of research has begun to explore whether partisanship may also function as an affective disposition, in addition to the well-documented instrumental motives that support the standing choice. Affective partisanship describes a relationship that is anchored in the conscious and unconscious pursuit of subjective benefits, such as a feeling of satisfaction that can flow from engagement with one's party. Over time, this type of belonging often merges into the voter's self-concept, introducing cognitive biases and attitudes, including motivated reasoning and stark prejudices that further sustain the party tie. In this sense, the party is leveraging stable features of human's social psychology to maintain its electorate, rather than focusing on policy alternatives and performance. In African states, this type of affective tie to the party has been shown to skew performance evaluations (Carlson, 2016; Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023), drive turnout (Letsa, 2020), determine campaign strategies (Gadjanova, 2021), bias outgroup attitudes (Duckitt et al., 2005), and more.

While the above findings show how important affective identities may be to explaining central features of politics such as vote choice, accountability, and party strategy, remarkably few studies have explored what causes variation in the strength of these ties. It is possible in the abstract that factors shown to drive economic voting, such as an ascriptive notion of ethnic identity (K. E. Ferree, 2006) or local ethnic geography (Ichino & Nathan, 2013) also drive affective ties, but only limited research empirically links such factors to an affective notion of identity. Alternatively, affective identification may emerge from similar sources as American and European partisans, where this perspective is widespread. However, those factors, such as parental partisanship (Campbell et al., 1960) or notions of civic duty (Downs, 1957) may not carry well to African democracies which are distinguished by high rates of clientelism (Wantchekon, 2003) limited ideological differentiation (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2013) fluid party systems (Weghorst & Bernhard, 2014) and high rates of ethnic diversity (J. Horowitz, 2016).

Predictor	Mechanism	Measure	Example
Political Knowledge	Necessary to deep engagement	Score over three knowledge items	Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), Conroy-Krutz (2019), Finkel and Ernst (2005)
Outgroup Attitudes	Threat, envy, prejudice	Favorability rating of cross partisan ethnic group	Enos (2016), McClendon (2018), Kinder and Sears (1981)
Ethnocentrism	Expressive voting, credibility of informational cues	Favorability rating of ethnic ingroup	Horowitz (1985), Conroy-Krutz (2013)
Demographics	Pocketbook voting, deliberate disengagement, experience	Age, assets index, gender, education preferences	De Kadt and Lieberman (2020), Nathan (2019b), Bratton et al. (2012), Croke et. al (2016)
Geography, campaigning, and clientelism	Clientelist voting, mobilization, vote-buying	Expectations of clientelism (local and personal)	Ichino and Nathan (2013), Harding and Michelitch (2021), Kramon (2016), Bratton et al. (2005)
Identity alignment/ comparative fit	Signal credibility, stronger collective orientation, expressive voting	Belongs to core ethnic group	Gadjanova (2021), Gonzalez et al. (2008), Dulani et al. (2021)
Long-term roots	Running Tally Parental socialization	Voting consistency, Same party as parents	Fiorina (1981), Converse (1969)
Praxis	Pressure, costly signals, monitoring	Attended a rally, wore party clothing	Szwarcberg(2012), Muñoz (2018), Fieldhouse et al. (2022)
Mass media exposure	Persuasion, selective exposure	Media exposure index	Adida et al. (2019), Conroy-Krutz (2019)

Table 1. Predictors of partisanship and turnout

In Table 1, I review several individual, social, and geographic features that have been associated with partisanship (either economic or affective) in either the Americanist literature or the literature on voting in Africa. While the drivers described here and studied empirically in this paper are not exhaustive, those included represent both a wide breadth of plausible predictors and a vast increase over more narrow studies.

2.2.1 Measuring the tie (or how close is "close")

I relate the above predictors to an outcome rarely applied in comparative politics, an affective measure of *partisan identity strength*.[1] This richer measure stands in contrast to most studies of partisanship which rely on narrow variations of the item, "Do you feel close to any particular political party?" In Afrobarometer surveys, this wording has been used since the year 2000 and

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[1] See (Huddy et al., 2020) for a review of common approaches to capturing partisanship in international survey efforts.

affords respondents three options, "Yes/No/Refuse."[2] Most studies exploring the origins of mass partisanship have used exactly this binary item as the outcome of interest in key analyses (e.g., (Harding & Michelitch, 2021; J. Horowitz, 2019; Keefer, 2010). In a similar vein, Ishiyama & Fox (2006) extend this item into a three-level variable by considering whether the respondent answered (1) "no," (2) "yes," or (3) "yes" and named a party.

Perhaps the greatest property of this survey item is its generality in framing-- it can be asked in any polity with political parties and remain a tractable question for respondents. Similarly, this generality allows researchers to observe a party tie over a wide range of voter-party relationships; in answering the question the voter can classify themselves as affiliated with the party or not, without the researcher having to impose a definition of that tie. By the same stroke, it is unclear what the modal respondent understands from the term "closeness." In one sense, it can mean proximity of preferences— similar to the metaphor of the spatial voting model (Downs, 1957). However, a respondent may also interpret closeness in terms of social distance, a plausible feature of partisanship in countries with diffused broker networks embedded in communities. One could also understand closeness to imply a notion of affection for or self-identification with a party (Letsa, 2020). Lastly, it may also invoke a notion of which party one (intends to) support(s), carrying agnosticism around the origin of this support. Because each of these are valid and possible interpretations of the prompt, it should be remarkably difficult for researchers to make informed conclusions about what sort of "closeness" is being studied. Additional complexity is introduced when placing closeness in a statistical model where individual terms, take rurality and age, can potentially impact different dimensions of closeness unbeknownst to the researcher.

Despite the diversity of potential interpretations, most often, answering "yes" to this item has been understood as a statement of a rational preference for a party which may come with higher rates of electoral engagement on its behalf. However, Figure 1 reveals some of the danger in assuming the validity of this measure and interpretation across countries. Each bar presents the

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[2] Notably, both Latinobarometro (4) and Asia Barometer (3) have offered multi-level responses describing the degree of closeness. Arabarometer has converged on the Afrobarometer item in recent rounds.

correlation coefficient of responses to the "closeness" item and reported turnout. While the presence of the party tie should be one of the most reliable predictors of whether someone contributes to its electoral success, we see wide swings in how the two relate to each other. Partisanship appears to mean different things from country to country. Whether a respondent accurately reported turnout or took the opportunity to be a partisan "cheerleader" (Bullock et al., 2015), this variation and observation holds.

Using this binary item is also indicative of a measurement choice that reflects a specific notion of partisanship along another dimension. By reducing the party tie to a yes or no response, this assumes a theory of mass politics wherein behavior pivots around a discrete threshold. In other words, a researcher need only know whether a voter is "close to" a party to predict behavior, and, therein, need only identify factors that predict whether someone is close to a party to account for the origins of that partisanship. If we assume the latent concept of partisanship is, in fact, binary, the item used to capture it is analogous to a classification model, sorting survey respondents into partisans and non-partisans. However, unlike other classification problems which take continuous variables as an input (such as identifying settlements from nightlight data (Baskaran et al., 2015), there is no ability to adjust a threshold and optimize the AUC/ROC (Area Under the Curve/Receiver Operating Characteristic). Essentially, the researcher has committed to an undiagnosable and addressable level of classification error in relying on binary notion of partisanship.

Finally, if one assumes instead the *latent* variable is continuous in nature, the use of a binary measure similarly introduces the strong possibility of measurement error, especially when moving from country to country where the latent concept may change in nature, as well as respondents' interpretation of "closeness." Finally, between respondents this approach implies uniformity in the distribution of responses on either side of the threshold. If we imagine the latent variable as being continuous from 0 to 1 and the classification threshold falling at .55, this enforces the strict expectation that there is little variation of interest between those who fall at .60 versus .95, or .00 and .50, for example.
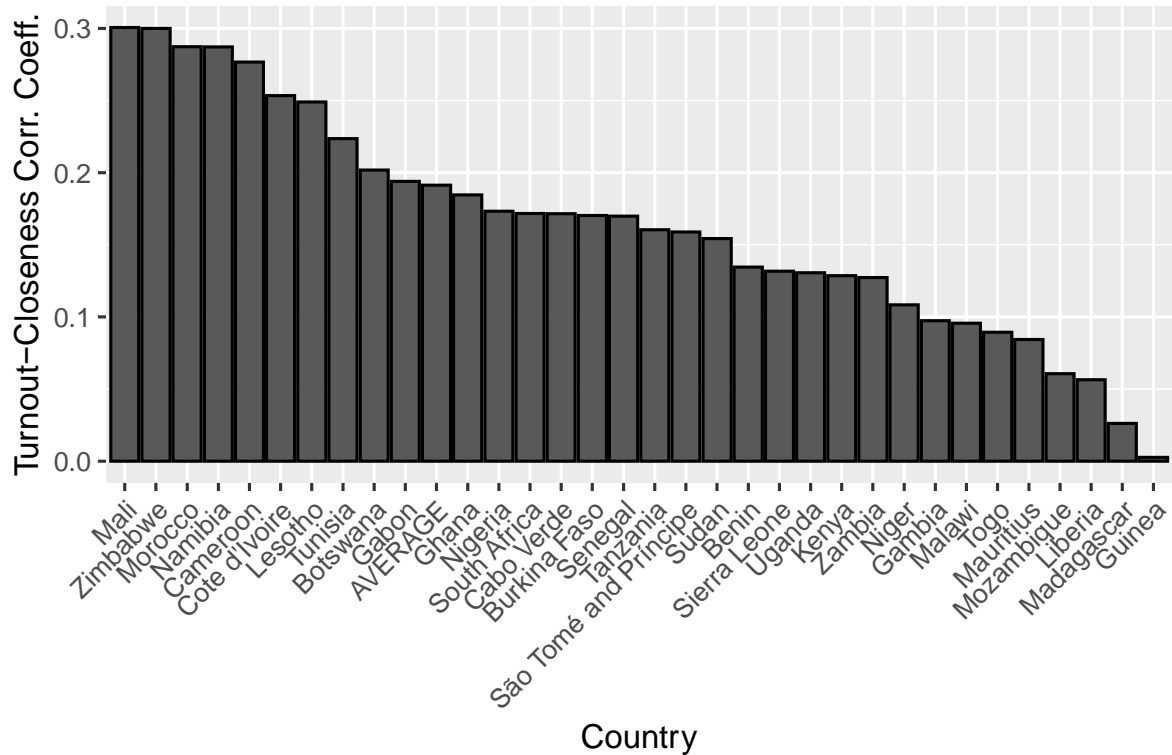
Figure 1. Individual level correlation of turnout and closeness by country. Each bar visualizes the Pearson's correlation coefficient of party closeness (0,1) and reported voting in the last national election (0,1). Data is from Round 7 Afrobarometer and is restricted to respondents that answered both questions (rather than refused or were unsure). Gabon is the only country with compulsory voting in this sample.

In the political psychology literature, rich behavioral evidence on the nature and impacts of partisanship has resulted from an alternative approach to measuring partisanship. Initially borrowing from social psychology and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), measures of partisanship as an affective identity begin with an *affective* model of belonging (Greene, 2004; Huddy et al., 2015). Rather than focusing on categories and instrumental motivations, it firstly understands partisanship as the integration of a psychological, social, and emotional orientation toward a party into a voter's self-image (Green et al., 2002). In this sense, the approach seeks to capture the degree to which membership affects how a voter perceives, processes, and responds to political stimuli and decisions on a social and psychological level. In doing so, it has illuminated the subtle ways in which group membership provides a "perceptual

screen" that creates conscious and unconscious incentives to favor one's group in politics (Gerber & Huber, 2009). Therein, the latent concept of partisanship is typically treated as continuous in nature when developing a measurement approach.[3]

Initially, this approach gained little traction beyond the United States where partisanship was thought to take on a uniquely intense form. However, Bankert et al. (2017) show similar measures perform well in capturing an affective notion of partisanship in multi-party European systems. Similarly little attention has been given to this type of partisan belonging in African democracies. Yet, a small and growing body of research has demonstrated that affective ties to the party impact political behavior in important ways (Carlson, 2016; Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023; Jöst et al., 2023; Letsa, 2020). To my knowledge, Duckitt et al.'s (2005) study of the multi-dimensionality of ethnicity among South African university students remains the only application of this approach with African voters.

Of the research exploring predictors of "closeness" items across surveyed African countries, several factors have been studied as driving party ties. In Table 2, I report factors explored in three cross-national studies of partisanship that rely on the coarser Afrobarometer measure. Three factors were replicated at least once— age and rurality increase partisanship, while income reduces it. Interestingly, the two data points on education are divergent.

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[3] While many use alternatives, the widely used American National Election Survey (ANES) panel primarily measures partisanship in a way similar to the "barometer" surveys. Respondents are asked if they think of themselves as close to a party, as well as how close they feel to that party on a three-point scale.

Predictor	Ishiyama and Fox (2006)	Harding and Michelitch (2022)	Mattes and Norris (2013)
Rurality	+	+	+
Incumbent support	+	x	x
Ethnic identifier	-	x	x
Age	O	+	+
Income	-	x	-
Organization member	+	x	x
Gender	x	+	O
Education	O	+	-
Ethnic group size	x	x	+
Media diet	O	O	O

Note: Symbols indicate direction of significant effects (+/-), non-significance (O), or not included in analysis (x). I exclude variables measured at the country-level.

Table 2. Predictors of partisanship

2.3 The case and data: Ghanaian voters

I focus on voters in southern Ghana as a productive case to study the antecedents of affective partisanship. Ghana has been a two-party democracy since 1996, with the NDC (National Democratic Congress) and the NPP (New Patriotic Party) exchanging power effectively every two terms in mostly free elections. Participation in national elections is substantial, fluctuating between 70 and 80%. Though it is often thought of as a place where partisanship is stable and engrained partisanship, in Round 8 of the Afrobarometer survey only 48% of respondents said they felt close to a party (against a round-wide average of 43%). Generally, vote choice (as well as turnout) is thought to be driven by voters' expectation of who will (or has) benefited them, their family, or their community the most (Harding, 2015; Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Nathan, 2019).

In qualitative interviews conducted in the two years preceding the main survey, I found many voters related to their party and politics in different ways, but in nearly every case they discussed politics with high levels of affect that are rarely captured in a closeness-style measure. One friend-group of secondary school graduates had been promised jobs that were never delivered. Animated by this breach of trust as well as the loss of income, one spoke bitterly of their local broker as well as the broader party, insisting none of the group would vote until they are gainfully employed (Voters in Nasia, Interview, Mar. 2020). Another man who lived in an

ethnically and religiously homogeneous NDC stronghold, explained how his support for the NPP defined and soured many relationships as he was unendingly chided by family, friends, and neighbors (Voter in Madina, Interview, Mar. 2022). Exceedingly common was also the apathetic voter, whose evaluations of their political alternatives were marked by disgust or sadness. One such voter (of few means and mother to two young children) indicated that she was too proud to ask locally dominant NPP for favors, was hurt by their absence at her most recent child's birth but would still evaluate their performance when the time came to vote (Voter in Walewale, Interview, Mar. 2020).

My sample was drawn from six communities in three constituencies within three hours of Ghana's capital, Accra. I purposefully constructed a sample that contained high levels of variation in key variables known to affect voter-party ties. First, I randomly selected three parliamentary constituencies to form sampling strata: one incumbent stronghold, one challenger stronghold, and one competitive. Within each, I restricted to peri-urban areas, which, while being unique from urban and rural politics in some ways, also bridge both urban and rural political dynamics (Cheeseman, 2022). Lastly, I selected one census tract in each constituency that had greater than 60% of one of Ghana's largest, most-aligned ethnic groups, and one with less than 40% of the same.[4] Over 1,000 respondents were interviewed, though after data quality checks and putting aside those who were determined to have had no party affiliation. My usable sample stands around 786 individuals.

2.3.1 Measuring partisanship

I base my main approach to measuring respondents' partisan affective identity on approaches developed and validated by Bankert et al. (2017) and Huddy et al. (2015) in Europe and the US, respectively. Drawing on earlier approaches from social psychology (e.g., Mael & Tetrick, 1992), they sought to capture both the social and the psychological dimensions of group belonging in politics on one continuous scale. Through adapting and piloting the measure, I adjusted their items to capture partisanship's relevance to voters' emotions, social perceptions, and self-concept, as well as to capture high and low identifiers across each domain. For each of six items, respondents were presented with a 5-point agree-disagree scale. The specific items are

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[4] I describe the sampling process in greater detail in Appendix A. Sample Balance Table.

presented in Table 3.[5,6] Responses were then coded as integers, summed, and rescaled to fall between 0 and 1 (following Huddy et al.'s approach (2015)).

Next I want to ask you a few questions about the political party to which you feel closest.	
1	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult
2	When people praise this party, it makes me feel good.
3	When I speak about this party, I refer to them as "my party"
4	When I meet someone who belongs to this party, I feel connected to this person
5	Being a [party] supporter is important to me
6	The term [party] supporter describes me well

Table 3. Partisan identity battery. In items 5 and 6, where "[party]" appears the respondent's self-reported party was substituted in.

The mean identity strength among all those asked was 0.69 (Std. Err. = 0.009). Because of the highly similar structure and wording of this battery, with a minor level of caution I compare this to mean partisan identity scores reported by Huddy et al. (2015) and Bankert et al. (2017). They find means of 0.51 and 0.68 for subsamples of Americans, and 0.44 for voters in the United Kingdom. This potentially places the average Ghanaian's partisan attachment somewhere on par with many Americans, who are typically noted for their exceptionally strong affective ties to the party and those ties effects on individual behavior and democratic outcomes (Mason, 2018).

The partisan identity strength measure appears to effectively capture a partisanship that falls on a single dimension. The Cronbach's α for the full sample is 0.93. In Appendix D. `Partisanship Measure Further Details` I discuss the properties of the scale in detail. The similar batteries used by Bankert et al. (2017) in Sweden, the Netherlands, and the UK, produced α's of 0.86, 0.88, and 0.83 respectively. Huddy et al.'s (2015) similar approach yielded α's between 0.81 and

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[5] Respondents were asked this battery if one of two things were true: (1) if, when asked "To which political party do you feel closest?", they named a party, or (2) if the difference in 10-point favorability ratings of the two main parties was greater than 1.

[6] Most interviews were conducted in the respondents' mother tongue and thus translated from English. To ensure validity, enumerators work-shopped translations within and across language prior to the survey.

0.90. While such comparisons are not objectively informative, they suggest that the partisanship that I tap is coherent to a similar degree.

In the same survey as the identity strength battery, I included measures of the predictors in Table 1. The exact variable definitions are described in much further detail in Appendix E. `Variable Definitions`.

2.4 Determinants of identity strength

I explore the relationship between the variables enumerated in Table 1 and identity strength through several approaches. First, in this section, I estimate a model including all predictors with OLS, producing the coefficient plot in Figure 2.[7] Because those estimates may contain significant interdependencies between predictors, in

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[7] This model includes sampling area fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency-level.

Appendix G. `Individual Models` I estimate the relationship of each predictor individually and show minimal deviations from the "kitchen sink" model. Second, in Appendix H. `Correlogram of IV's`, I present a figure containing the unconditional correlations between all variables, which again suggests high stability of results.

While some results confirm common wisdom about political ties in young democracies, others are likely to be more surprising for some scholars. A number of variables that have long featured in the study of American partisanship have no discernible impact on my scale. Namely, wealth, political knowledge, age, and education, all fail to achieve statistical significance. The same (null) finding contrasts with studies in the Global South which find education weakens interest in politics (Croke et al., 2016) and that wealth can either discourage engagement or partisanship (Ishiyama & Fox, 2006; Mattes & Norris, 2013; Nathan, 2019b) or (in the right conditions) encourage it (Kasara & Suryanarayan, 2015). It also replicates Kuenzi & Lambright (2007) cross-national finding that wealth is not predictive of turnout. Lastly, Harding & Michelitch find that age, being male, and more educated all have positive relationships with partisanship (2021). Several factors that have been empirically or theoretically related to party ties in the Global South also do not achieve significance. Variables measuring outgroup attitudes, ethno-centricity, being in a swing area/constituency, and being an incumbent supporter have no apparent relationship with this concept of partisanship.[8]

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[8] When estimating the relationship between being in a swing area and the strength measure individually, I find it has a positive and significant effect ($p < 0.001$).
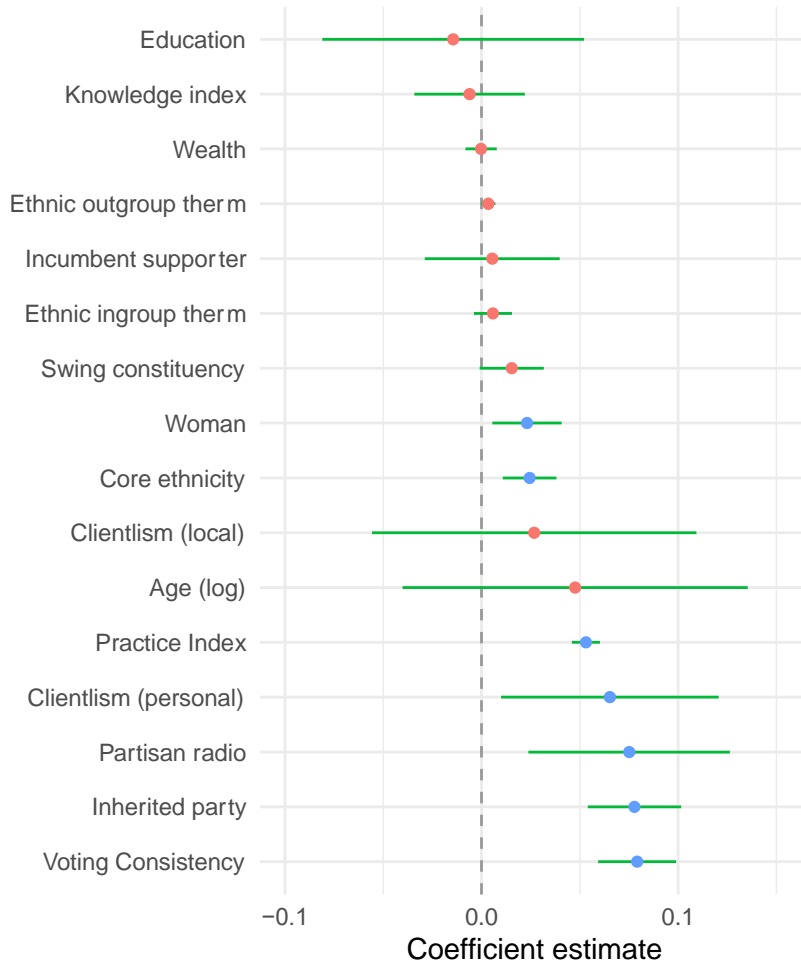
Figure 2. Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals on coefficients predicting partisan identity strength in the full sample. Model includes sampling area fixed effects and an indicator for whether respondents were randomly assigned.

A noteworthy pattern emerges when comparing my two clientelism measures: the expectation that one's chances of benefiting from personal transfers and transfers to one's community are linked to which party is in power. While personal transfers are significant and one of the strongest predictors in the full model, the considerations of one's community being targeted for local public goods is not significant. While both are documented as being important to vote choice, engagement, and turnout (Bobonis et al., 2022; Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Wantchekon, 2003), this suggests that personal transfers may offer advantages over supplying local public

goods. They may serve as a type of persuasion that does not require monitoring, instead engaging affective identification and activating mechanisms like reciprocity or a sense of community (M. R. Anderson, 2010; Finan & Schechter, 2012). These are things that through the impersonal nature of local public goods and the noisy process of their attribution may be hard to achieve through community-level transfers.

Two demographic features of respondents appear relevant to partisanship. Belonging to a core ethnic group (of a party coalition) is associated with higher affective partisanship.[9] This would suggest the findings from Weghorst & Lindberg (2013), who find belonging to this type of group is not predictive of what motivates vote choice in Ghana, may have limited transferability (though this result is not robust to estimating it individually in

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[9] Using Hoffman & Long's (2013) exit poll data, I code respondents as belonging to a core group if they indicated their primary ethnic community voted for one party at rates of 15 p.p. or greater.

Appendix G. `Individual Models`). I also find that being a woman was predictive of higher rates of partisanship. This is a very notable result compared to Harding & Michelitch's (2021) robust finding that men are more likely to identity as partisan.[10] Though this may be an artifact of this sample, I argue this could reflect genuine underlying differences in how the genders engage in politics. Greene (2001) and Ondercin & Lizotte (2021)both show that American women are more likely to experience partisanship as a social or affective identity, while men may experience politics through more numerous channels.

I find that my index of "practicing" partisanship is a positively and significantly associated with partisanship. Respondents who attended meetings, wore party clothing, or attended a rally in the preceding two months scored higher on the identity scale on average. This may indicate that an important part of partisanship is the regular practicing or performance of membership of the underlying identity. This comports with evidence showing that partisanship is stronger where it is more public (Harvey, 2001).

My measure of exposure to partisan media is also positively associated with partisanship. This is not altogether surprising as information has consistently been shown to condition partisanship and vice versa (Adida et al., 2017; Conroy-Krutz, 2018).[11] Of potential note is how strongly associated it is with affective partisanship. In Appendix I. `Media and Emotions`, I show that this may be driven by the emotional activation that political messaging carries (Brader, 2006).

I last consider two variables that related to deeper roots of partisanship, including childhood socialization, whether someone has almost always voted for the same party and whether the party they prefer is the same that was preferred by most adults in their childhood home. Both are positive and significant, as well as the two strongest predictors of my affective measure of partisanship. While these have long featured centrally in the literature on American partisanship, the potential "deep roots" of partisanship are often not considered in young democracies because

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[10] Bleck & Michelitch (2018) similarly find that in most countries women on average are less likely to report having voted in the last election.
[11] Notably, Conroy-Krutz (2018) finds that media tempers polarization, the precise opposite of what I observe.

the parties are also young or volatile. While compared to regional peers Ghana's parties have deep roots, globally they remain quite young. The deepest roots of the current parties do not extend past 50-60 years, but it is nevertheless one of the strongest correlates of affective partisanship. This affirms work from Brader and Tucker (2008), Carlson (2016), Letsa (2020) and others who argue that partisanship can emerge more quickly than most would assume.

2.4.1 What about ethnicity

Much of the research on partisan identity in African democracies has wisely centered the role of ethnicity in determining party ties. Among the better documented mechanisms supporting this relationship are the strategic and informational value of ethnicity as a heuristic, allowing voters to evaluate alternatives' potential to supply clientelist goods (Conroy-Krutz, 2013; K. E. Ferree, 2006). From the elite or party perspective, ethnicity provides a similar heuristic, helping indicate which voters to target with clientelist benefits with the goal of securing votes (Bates, 1974; Brierley & Kramon, 2020). While some evidence would support the view that partisanship and ethnicity are distinct in function (e.g., Michelitch 2015) and both social identities, less is known as to whether they are similar in origin.

What predicts ethnicity? In the same survey, I asked respondents a near identical six-item battery to measure ethnic identity strength. Figure 3 presents the main model predicting partisanship, while overlaying the relationship of the same variables to ethnic identity strength. The blue confidence intervals are the coefficients predicting ethnic identity strength, while red corresponds to partisanship. Many variables have a similar relationship to both identities, yet several points of clear divergence are apparent. Namely, many of the strongest correlates of partisanship are not significant when predicting ethnic identity strength. Perhaps of greatest theoretical interest is the minimal evidence of personal or local clientelistic transfers having any relationship to ethnicity. While clientelism may "buy" partisanship, it seems less clear how effective it would be in producing someone with a stronger sense of ethnic identification.

Next, I consider whether there are substantial differences in how members of different ethnic groups relate to partisanship. Though my data cannot reveal the relationship of each group to partisan belonging at any representative level, the comparisons in Table 4 present a view of

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whether there are substantial differences in southern Ghana. While existing work would suggest that the strongest partisans should be those belonging to strongly aligned groups, (i.e., Ewe and Akan voters), they do not appear to experience partisan identities in a way fundamentally distinct from the rest of my sample. Mole-Dagbani, Ga-Dangme, and "other" respondents do appear to report lower levels of partisanship.
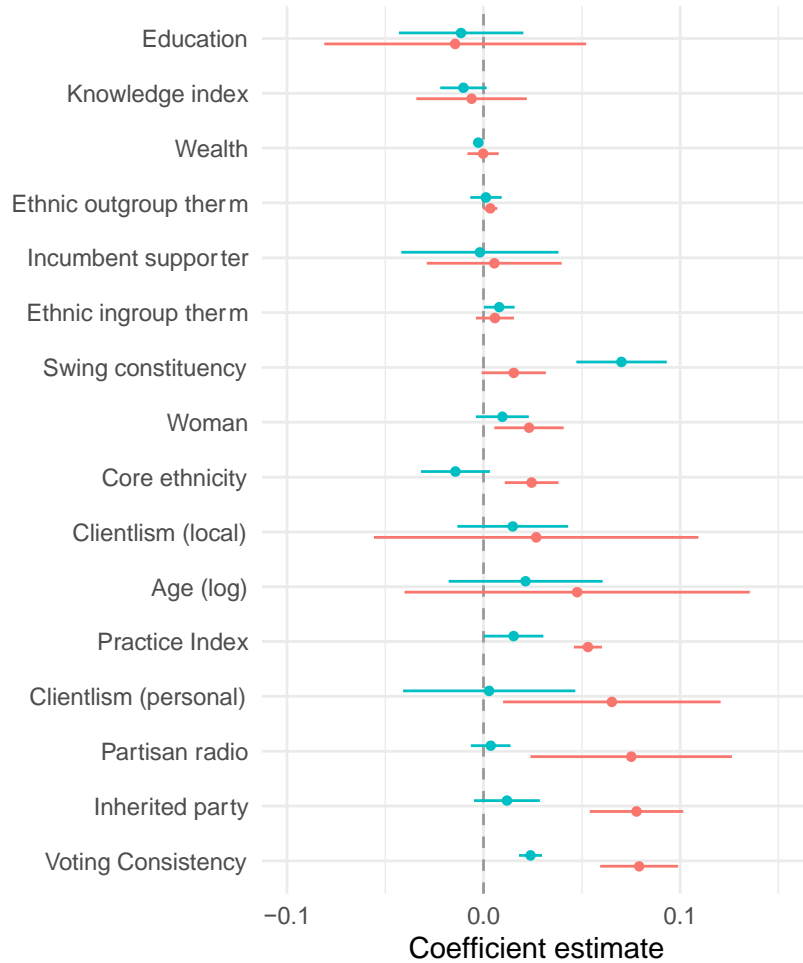
Figure 3. Comparing predictors of ethnic and partisan identification. The figure presents coefficient estimates of a model predicting partisan identity strength and a model predicting ethnic identity strength. Coefficients are ordered by magnitude of their point estimate in predicting partisanship. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Blue bars correspond to that variable's coefficient in predicting ethnic identity, while red represents its role in partisanship.

The Ga-Dangme are an important constituency in Ghana and a sizable portion of my sample with a lower mean partisan score. While Ga-Dangme voters typically favor the NDC, this is rarely by a wide margin. It seems possible that the weaker correlation of partisanship and ethnicity may inhibit identity formation. Yet, Ewe voters, who are often seen as the most strongly aligned of any group, do not demonstration exceptional partisanship in my sample. At a minimum, the variation in group-level partisan identification calls for caution when moving between ethnic and partisan belonging.

Ethno-Lingual Group	Mean Party ID score score (0-1)	Std. deviation	n	% of Ghanaian pop. (2021)
Akan	0.70	0.25	414	45.7
Ewe	0.71	0.23	305	12.8
Ga-Dangme	0.64	0.29	103	7.1
Grusi	0.70	0.24	18	2.7
Guan	0.75	0.20	70	3.2
Mole-Dagbani	0.57	0.33	22	18.5
Other	0.56	0.31	27	10.0
Sample	0.69	0.25	–	–

Table 4. Partisan identity strength by ethnicity.

2.4.2 Comparing to "closeness"

I have so far identified several sources of affective partisanship and shown that its relationship to ethnic belonging is likely complex. In this section, I consider how it compares to binary measures of partisanship. Table 5 presents a comparison of predictors of my affective measure to predictors of respondents providing an answer to the question, "To which political party do you feel closest?" (as opposed to refusing or stating they had no party).[12]

Many key results hold and are robust across all three models, including usually voting for the same party, practicing partisanship, exposure to partisan media, and sharing a party with one's parents. Notably, in both models predicting binary partisanship, local clientelism is significant. This would seem to confirm that affective partisanship is not sensitive to the expectation that

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[12] I did not ask respondents the verbatim Afrobarometer question in order to limit early questions about which party respondents support and foster openness.

community-level benefits are linked to elections, while also showing that it may be important to understanding how voters sort into parties.

Capturing a new, affective dimension of partisanship in young democracies may also shed light on what keeps those voters tied to their party. I asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the statement, compared to during the last

Outcome	Affective Partisanship	Binary Partisanship	Binary Partisanship
Estimation method	OLS	Logit	OLS
Partisan radio	0.075**	0.277**	0.047*
	(0.026)	(0.096)	(0.020)
Incumbent supporter	0.005	0.350*	0.025
	(0.017)	(0.158)	(0.029)
Practice index	0.053***	1.815***	0.076***
	(0.004)	(0.150)	(0.007)
Inherited party	0.078***	2.053***	0.197***
	(0.012)	(0.481)	(0.048)
Vote consistency	0.079***	0.983***	0.145***
	(0.010)	(0.248)	(0.041)
Knowledge index	-0.006	-0.128	-0.018*
	(0.014)	(0.156)	(0.007)
Ethnic ingroup therm	0.006	0.151	0.016*
	(0.005)	(0.129)	(0.007)
Ethnic outgroup therm	0.003	-0.047*	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.020)	(0.003)
Clientlism (personal)	0.065*	1.489***	0.190***
	(0.028)	(0.435)	(0.043)
Clientlism (local)	0.027	1.516***	0.184***
	(0.042)	(0.216)	(0.029)
Swing constituency	0.015	-0.056	0.020
	(0.008)	(0.342)	(0.023)
Core ethnicity	0.024***	-0.041	-0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.062)	(0.000)
Woman	0.023*	0.475*	0.040
	(0.009)	(0.233)	(0.026)
Education	-0.014	0.164	0.008
	(0.034)	(0.379)	(0.033)
log(age)	0.048	0.384	0.032
	(0.045)	(0.553)	(0.051)
Wealth	0.000	-0.022	-0.004***
	(0.004)	(0.056)	(0.001)
Num.Obs.	785	959	959

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5. Comparing predictors of partisan identity

election, "I am more disappointed in the party I ultimately voted for." In Table 6, I predict whether or they responded *agree* or *strongly agree* (versus neutral or disagree/strongly disagree) from both partisanship measures, controlling for wealth and incumbent support. I find only the affective measure is significant. I argue this measure likely captures aspects of a party tie that are resilient to poor performance. This connects to a broad literature on motivated reasoning and retrospective voting that finds socially-identified partisans down-weight negative information about their party (Adida et al., 2017; Healy & Malhotra, 2013; Little et al., 2022). Moreover, it helps answer the question posed by Svolik (2013), Letsa (2020), and others, *what keeps voters voting when candidate quality is low*? Those would-be apathetic (non-) voters may stay engaged through the numerous ingroup biases and subjective rewards that affective identities carry.

	Disappointment (0,1)	
Binary Partisanship		0.011
		(0.055)
Partisan ID strength	-0.125*	
	(0.059)	
Incumbent supporter	0.205*	0.168**
	(0.080)	(0.061)
Woman	-0.030	-0.024
	(0.043)	(0.043)
Education	-0.031	-0.020
	(0.041)	(0.035)
log(age)	0.000	0.008
	(0.094)	(0.071)
Wealth	-0.004	-0.009
	(0.020)	(0.026)
Num.Obs.	705	825

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6. Relating disappointment and partisanship

2.5 Determinants of identity strength

Voters in African democracies often make political decisions that suggest group identities are of central importance. In explaining this, scholars have widely settled on an instrumental view of voting behavior, ascribing this correlation to voters' pursuit of material benefits from the party and the party's use of identity as a rough heuristic to determine who to target. Therein, most attempts to understand the origins and correlates of party ties have focused on a binary notion of partisan belonging, or whether an individual "feels close" to a particular party. The instrumental view is now more frequently contrasted with evidence supporting a *social identity* or *affective* view of political belonging, wherein voters are seen as also acting based on subjective or psychological benefits that they experience from engaging with their party and politics. Yet, so far, not only are there scant examples of research applying an appropriate affective measure of political identity, but there is little evidence describing what predicts the strength of such identities.

In this paper, I review current measurement approaches, highlighting strengths and shortcomings, as well some of the research that has attempted to identify the social, demographic, and geographic factors that support the type of identification it seeks to capture. I contrast this with work from studies of American and European partisanship, using multi-item measures to capture both social (interpersonal and intergroup) and psychological (self-image and cognitive) aspects of political identification. I argue the latter is essential to understanding the relevance of affective identities in African politics.

In an original data set of 785 Ghanaians, I adapt a measure (based on work from Bankert et al. (2017) and others) informed by qualitative interviews and piloting. I match this to measures of several factors that have been linked to party ties, both affective and instrumental. From this, I assess the relationship between affective identity and these variables through several approaches. To give context to those results, I explore whether the same patterns hold when considering respondents' attachment to ethnic identities, which are very commonly aligned in African democracies. Lastly, I explore whether the same factors associated with my affective measure of identity support a binary "closeness" measure of partisanship.

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I find several notable patterns in exploring sources of variation in this concept of partisanship. Among my most stable results is that most demographic factors (e.g., age, wealth, education) appear to have no relationship to partisanship. I find factors such as actively participating as a partisan and listening to radio with a favorable slant, both support higher levels of partisanship. In addition, deep factors, such sharing a party with most of the adults in one's childhood home and always voting for the same party, appear positively related to partisanship. I note a relatively stable result that the linking of material benefits to elections matters in a nuanced way; only personal benefits seem to increase the likelihood of someone scoring higher on the affective partisanship index. I find that these sources in variation in affective relationships to the party appear largely different than those related to affective relationships to one's ethnicity. Lastly, I show that while the standard "closeness" measure of partisanship and affective partisanship share many factors, they draw differently on several often-studied variables related to political behavior and identity.

This paper presents two advances of broad interest to the literature on partisanship in the Global South. To my knowledge, this is the first study to introduce an affective measure of partisanship in a sample of African voters. While a growing number of studies have experimentally studied the behavioral effects of priming an affective identity, little is known about sources of variation in those identities at baseline. In addition, by comparing partisan and ethnic identities, I can show not only that they appear distinct in their baseline prevalence, but also appear to differ in terms of their correlates. This should encourage the wider adoption of such an approach, particularly in representative national surveys, which will furnish wider validity of findings, while also providing variation in variables not observed in this sample, such as rurality.

Second, it shows not only that affective elements of partisanship appear to exist in a place where instrumental voting is present, but that it appears distinct in origin from what drives traditional, instrumental notions of partisanship. I highlight how expectations of local clientelism do not appear to be associated with higher levels of affective identification, despite supporting party "closeness." In contrast, expecting personal transfers *does* appear tied to affective partisanship. This comports with work from Ravanilla et al. (2021), Schaffer & Baker (2015), and others who show such transfers can be more than payout for a vote, instead they can activate subjective

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social norms. Further exploration of the ways in which vote-buying affects affective party ties may provide new perspectives on why parties engage in unmonitored vote-buying (a costly and potentially inefficient strategy) (Hicken & Nathan, 2019).

Chapter 3 : Social Identity and Implicit Motives in Clientelist Democracies: Evidence from Ghana

3.1 Introduction

Across many low and middle-income democracies, political parties perform poorly by conventional metrics— failing to follow through on or even campaign based on policy, frequently abusing public resources, and leveraging public offices for self-enrichment (Chandra, 2004; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Williams, 2017). In explaining their continued success, many behavioralists point to genuine electoral support from materially-motivated voters (Kramon, 2016; Nichter & Peress, 2017). However, not only are material benefits often quite meager and infrequent (Auyero, 2000; Brierley & Kramon, 2020; Letsa, 2020; Van de Walle, 2007) but this also ignores an expansive body of evidence in political psychology which shows that electoral support can also originate from intrinsic motivations extending from an internalized sense of belonging to a social group or party. Do voters experience such affective identities and, if so, how do they relate to the presence of instrumental incentives and the success of unaccountable parties?

Recent contributions have begun to explore social identification in politics of the Global South as a pathway toward electoral engagement (e.g., Carlson (2016) or Samuels & Zucco (2014)), but a preponderance of comparative work in recent decades has focused on how parties persuade instrumental voters through the delivery or promising of goods and favors to certain ethnic groups (Baldwin, 2015; Ferree, 2006). Are those voters only instrumental in nature, or does social identification with one's ethnic or partisan group aid parties in cultivating a stable electorate in the absence of good performance? In this paper, I introduce new measures and an original lab-in-the-field experiment to answer these questions, shedding light on how instrumental and psychological motives work together to maintain engagement.

Specifically, I argue that voters in such contexts may initially sort into a party based on material motivations, but over time, are likely to develop a subjective sense of enjoyment in group success that drives their adhesion to the party (i.e., electoral support). Both via partisan and ethnic channels, voters' internalized psychological bond with a group will, among other things, incentivize them to (1) more readily engage prejudices against outgroup members, (2) engage in partisan motivated reasoning, and (3) more readily express open support for their party. At equilibrium, this not only can substitute for material motivations, but can become its own, self-sustaining, and potentially unconscious motive for participation (Mason & Wronski, 2018). In turn, this may partially free parties from the need to follow through on campaign promises, whether that be broad-based policies or clientelist transfers.

I study these relationships in Ghana, temporally far from both the past and next elections. Ghana is a useful exemplar to advance the study of social identities in politics for several reasons. First, it features in many central pieces of scholarship exploring an instrumental model of ethnic voting, both early and more recent (e.g., Bates (1983), Brierley & Kramon (2020), Harding (2015), Ichino & Nathan (2013), Nathan (2019), or Williams (2017)). Further research in other geographic regions will deepen, refine, or challenge the implications of this study, but directly relating it to the evidence behind current theories is an important early test. Second, though some features of Ghanaian politics would suggest it is a "most-likely" case to observe the present of social or affective political identities, other features suggest this worry is overwrought. Within countries surveyed by Afrobarometer, it appears to be unremarkable in terms of party ties: for 14 out of the 33 countries in the sample, the rate of affirmative responses to the Afrobarometer (Round 7) question "do you feel close to any particular political party?" was greater or within 5 percentage points of Ghana (51%). Moreover, the broader trend across the developing world has been toward party system consolidation (Hicken, 2009). While I do expect that in important ways the stability of the party system may produce higher rates of social identification, those identities should be weakest mid-cycle (Eifert et al., 2010; Michelitch & Utych, 2018).

To explore the presence and impacts of psychological attachments to groups, I surveyed 973 Ghanaians and invited them to participate in a lab-in-the-field experiment. I adapted a multi-item measure of social identification to capture respondents' baseline attachment to partisan and ethnic

groups, similar to that of Bankert et al. (2017) and others. The experiment itself then directly manipulated the salience of respondents' political identity, as well as provided a key behavioral outcome. From this, I provide descriptive evidence as to whether voters experience internalized affective ties to political groups, as well as experimental evidence on the impact of these identities on thinking and behavior.

In examining baseline identity strength, I show affective attachments to ethnic groups are high as the literature would predict. However, partisan identification, while on average weaker is still surprisingly strong; approximately 70% of respondents were in the upper two quartiles of partisan identification and other summary statistics show my diverse sample experiences partisanship at rates similar to American and European voters. In examining experimental outcomes, I find those who had an identity primed were significantly more likely to engage in the recreation of group boundaries, significantly more likely to engage in partisan motivated reasoning, and significantly more likely to be certain they will vote for their party in the next election. From this, I conclude that social identities are not only present in this still consolidating democracy but appear to be viable path to sustaining electoral support in the absence of good performance. Comparing the relationship between self-reported turnout decisions and these two motives observationally, I find that higher baseline identity score have a similar impact as linking clientelism to electoral outcomes.

This paper makes several contributions. First, it presents a novel theory and evidence as to how psychological and instrumental dimensions of identity may help reinforce each other to produce patterns of ethnic voting. It shows that parties can likely attract and hold the attention of voters using implicit and non-material motives, in part explaining the mismatch between party loyalty and the minor rewards most voters receive. It joins Carlson (2016), Gutiérrez-Romero (2023), Laebens & Öztürk (2021) and several others in showing that party ties in a young democracy with widespread instrumental voting are far more than a mapping of ethnic labels, showing it is a more powerful mobilizer, an independent social cleavage with its own cultural constructs, and a psychologically-rooted sense of self. In addition, while some studies observe behaviors that suggest the presence of social identities, this is among the first studies to attempt to directly manipulate the underlying identities. Therein, this suggests a dynamic campaign space where

parties should be able to activate these identities. This should broadly encourage scholars to go beyond a false *instrumental-expressive* dichotomy and afford a richer experience of campaigns and politics to the populations they study.

Second, it presents causal evidence on how identity-based behavioral and cognitive biases can subtly shape how voters process information about politics. This has clear implications for evidence and theory for the broad literature on accountability in new democracies. Many field experiments that have evaluated the ability of performance information to improve the quality of representation have yielded null results, the cause of which remains the subject of ongoing debate (Dunning et al., 2019). My paper shows even a modest augmentation of identity salience is enough to condition how information is processed and evaluated, putting a finer edge on findings like Adida et al.'s (2017), who show identity can impart motivated reasoning in politics in Benin. Further research should reveal how central such biases are in dulling the democratizing effects of information.

Finally, it joins the small but growing literature bridging political psychology and the politics of developing democracies. I join scholars like Brader & Tucker (2008), Carlson (2016), Harris (2022), and Samuels & Zucco (2014) in showing that notions of partisanship primarily developed to explain the US case appear to be valid in varied contexts. I also show that psychological measures of identity very similar to those used in research on American and European politics (e.g., Bankert et al. (2017) and Huddy et al. (2015)) can be adapted to contexts where clientelism is present and parties are young. Together with existing examples, this study furthers the argument that variation in subjective and non-material motives is much more than statistical noise in the relationship between group identity and vote choice and merits further research.

3.2 Theory

How does it make you feel when you hear negative news about [your party]... about a corruption case, for example? I feel sad because they are lying. (Voter in Madina, Ghana. December 2021.)

Do unaccountable parties in developing democracies succeed only because they "buy" constituencies? In contexts of low state capacity, politicians cannot credibly campaign on broad public policies (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2013; Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008). Instead political viability and legitimacy is ostensibly secured by distributing (or promising to distribute) private or local benefits and developmental goods to supporters (Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016), a strategy typically labeled *electoral clientelism* (Hicken, 2011). This type of instrumental voting has been documented clearly in a diverse set of developing democracies (Auyero, 2000; Bates, 1983; Cruz et al., 2017; De Kadt & Lieberman, 2020; Nichter & Peress, 2017). While some fixed individual-level characteristics may affect who is most likely to benefit (Cruz et al., 2017; Ravanilla et al., 2021) in most cases group identity (and ethnicity in particular) is understood as the mechanism by which parties know who to target, and by which voters know for whom to vote (Chandra, 2004; K. E. Ferree, 2006; J. Horowitz, 2019; Nathan, 2019).

Recent research suggests it is increasingly likely that voting behavior in the Global South is dependent on more than the instrumental exchange of one's vote for material benefits (Hicken & Nathan, 2019). Beyond the difficulty of enforcing those exchanges, handouts are often low in value (Auyero, 2000) and reach very few voters or households (Brierley & Kramon, 2020; Lockwood et al., 2023). Likewise, many community-level projects go unfinished (Williams, 2017) and can be similarly narrow in their distribution. Despite this, as Figure 4 shows, enthusiasm is not remarkably or consistently lower in the Global South relative to regions where parties more credibly campaign on policy alternatives and the state possesses fiscal and institutional capacity to shape voters' lives. Moreover, politics is ubiquitous in daily life in many young democracies; in the most recent round of Afrobarometer (8), 64% of all respondents said they discuss political matters with friends and family. Radio and TV programs, billboards and posters, clothing and murals frequently call politics to mind across these regions (Conroy-Krutz, 2018). If voters are only rational and instrumental in their motives, scholars must ask whether the uncertain and wavering promises of clientelism are able to replace broad-based public policy, redistribution, and ideology as motivators for turnout, or if alternative classes of motives help bring voters back every election.

Turnout in National Elections by Region (since 1995)
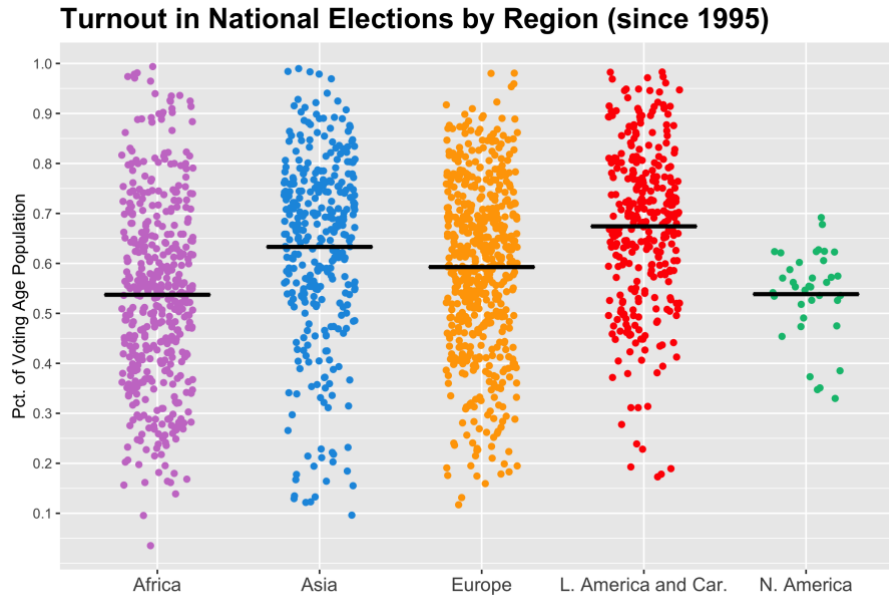
Figure 4. Election-level turnout grouped by global regions. Graph plots turnout (calculated as the number of votes cast divided by the estimated voting age population) for each national election since 1995. Bars represent the within-region mean. Data from https://www.idea.int/data-tools, downloaded September 2022.

Proponents of the instrumental voting perspective contend that identities are relevant to politics because expressing them is an avenue to joining a coalition that maximizes one's material returns in the political sphere (K. E. Ferree, 2006; Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Posner, 2005). While robust evidence supports this view across many global regions, it leaves largely unexplained attitudes and behaviors like that of the voter in the epigraph. Her attitude toward new information, even if performative, does not convey unto her or her community any utility as instrumental theories define the concept. At the same time, it has key relevance to an essential democratic behavior-- updating prior beliefs about performance (preferring instead to update her beliefs about the moral character of the conveyor of information) (Little et al., 2022). Beyond this, supposedly instrumental voters have been shown to systematically deviate from a stylized *homo economicus* model of political behavior, appearing to act instead on social norms and rewards, psychological biases, and more.

In the Global North, the *social identity* approach to belonging (and related *affective intelligence theory*) has been thoroughly studied as central to myriad social and political behaviors (Green et al., 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). While instrumental theories prioritize a conscious material self-interest as driving identity expression, the social identity approach focuses on the "emotional satisfaction" that group members attain from belonging (Kalin & Sambanis, 2018), which may be consciously or unconsciously pursued (Marcus, 2010). Social identification also describes a fundamentally different type of tie to a group— while an instrumental tie can be merely objective or categorical, e.g., "I vote for [party], therefore I am a [party] supporter," someone who is more strongly identified bears a greater internalized and subjective sense of belonging in that social group. Through this incorporation of the group into one's sense of self, social identities can introduce large biases in conscious and unconscious behaviors that may yield no clear material benefit. This type of tie and behavior is sometimes referred to as *expressive*. Notably, the earlier body of research in comparative politics that was labeled as "expressive" (e.g., Horowitz (1985), who is identified as such by Ferree (2006), Ichino & Nathan (2013), and others) bears important distinctions. Primarily the evidence supporting that "expressive" view relied on tribalist tropes and significant imprecision as to from where this expressive drive emerged.

Social identities can manifest in many dimensions of political belonging and behavior. This paper which targets theory generation, tests for three channels of impact of stronger identification. While often lacking a material or economic rationale for the individual, behaviors influenced by social identification often are rational at the level of the group, furthering its success in material ways. My outcomes each describe such a mechanism. First, affective ties to a group often define the self-concept, but do so in relation to others and other groups (Brewer, 2001). In practice, this encourages the individual to divide their social world into in- and outgroup members whose deeds either support or undermine the group's aims (Kinder & Ryan, 2017). This can also lead to conscious and unconscious discrimination (favoritism) toward outgroup (ingroup) members in the public sphere (Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023). These shifts in disposition and behavior can reify group boundaries in everyday life, inviting further polarization and strengthening of social identification with a political organization or identity (Mason & Wronski, 2018).

Second, many scholars describe affective social identities as following a sense of pleasure or satisfaction, be it psychological or affective, resulting from belonging or the performance of belonging. In an equilibrium of persistent poor performance and corruption, a supporter of a given party in the developing world would, all else equal, begin to drift away from their party due to the concomitant psychological and material costs. However, socially-identified individuals often adopt a "perceptual screen" favoring their group (Campbell et al., 1960), engaging in motivated reasoning at a number of possible stages from information acquisition to recall (Bisgaard, 2015). This tendency reduces the probability that a given voter will update their prior beliefs over political alternatives in a way that would harm the esteem of their party, potentially against their rational self-interest (Little et al., 2022). In the aggregate, this not only deepens affective polarization, but enables unaccountable parties to remain competitive.

Lastly, the social construction of an identity group typically can indicate what makes a "good" member, including how to do one's part in connection with collective goals. Brewer (2001) highlights how these "contents" of an identity, which includes practices, value and beliefs, can be internalized by members. Not only do the contents of an identity suggest behaviors, but those behaviors can be positively incentivized by social and psychological rewards as members achieve positive or pleasurable affective experiences from doing or being seen doing these things (Brewer, 1991; Groenendyk & Banks, 2014). In the world of politics and political identities, those practices commonly include voicing support, attending rallies, and voting for one's party. Therein, this is a channel by which the likelihood of electoral support rises as result of social identification (Huddy et al., 2015).

Elevating the role of affective dimensions of belonging and politics is not incompatible with current theories focusing on instrumental motives and the party strategies built around them. As a voter approaches the decision to protest, attend a rally, or vote, they may hold instrumental *and* expressive motives, both actively favoring the party interest (Groenendyk & Banks, 2014). Similarly, whether they rely on instrumental motives, affective motives, or both may vary across classes of decisions (e.g., seeking aid from a local politician, versus whether they express anger about a political scandal). Further, the two motivations can exist in tension

(Kalin & Sambanis, 2018). For example, if attending a rallyconflicts with work or work opportunities, a voter may be balancing them against each other and even "pricing out" the value of being able to support their party. Lastly, an electorate can be a mix of different "types" of voters, with some being more driven by identification and others relying more so on rational and instrumental calculations.

In practice many features of politics of the developing world present the image of instrumental interests driving politics, but those same features may also support non-instrumental motives. For example, Schatzberg (2001) shows how politicians are motivated to engage in clientelism often and visibly as a means of performing a paternal role that voters expect of a good candidate. Muñoz (2018), Kramon (2016), and Schaffer & Baker (2015) and others have argued that politicians engage in clientelism and vote buying as a form of "persuasion buying", rather than direct vote buying. Finan & Schechter (2012), Ravanilla et al. (2021) and others have demonstrated how personal transfers may serve to activate intrinsic social norms of reciprocity, rather than relying directly on economic interests. Yet, even if voters initially support a party for instrumental reasons, this does not prevent or preclude them from becoming expressive voters over time (Fiorina, 1981). Mason (2018) and Egan (2020) have shown after initially sorting into a party, partisans readily consolidate those interests into an expressive relationship to their party, shifting values, preferences, and attitudes to align with the group. Understanding things like vote buying and canvassing as having dual purposes will help scholars better understand who is targeted, with what, and to what effect.

3.3 The case: Peri-urban communities in Ghana

Since 1992, Ghana has been notable within West Africa as an example of a consolidating democracy with partisan turnover in national office occurring effectively every two terms. Because of high barriers to party formation, elections have been dominated by two major parties (Riedl, 2014). Both parties participate in electoral clientelism, rewarding local party organizers, some voters, and some areas of support with benefits, while simultaneously embezzling state funds to enrich party elites (Luna, 2019). While far from deterministic, historic voting patterns appear to factor into how incumbents distribute development projects (Briggs, 2021; Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013).

Most scholars describe the average Ghanaian voter as instrumental, considering material payouts before ideology, policy, or traditional notions of performance when choosing a party or candidate. Given fiscal constraints and low state capacity, both parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), remain largely unable to credibly commit to programmatic policies (Nathan, 2019). Instead they explicitly campaign on what Bleck and Van de Walle (2013) call *valence issues*, leaving few differences in either party's platform. Voters then appear to pay close attention to whether candidates provide clientelist benefits to people like them or regions like theirs (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). Yet, these supposed rational instrumental logics do not make elections a dispassionate affair; campaigns are lively, rife with emotion, turnout is high (typically between 70 and 80%), and diffuse electoral violence is not altogether uncommon (Bob-Milliar, 2014).

The partisan alignment of major ethnic groups is known to both voters and party organizers. Members of ethnic groups falling under the Akan language group (the Ashanti and Akyem, in particular) tend to vote for the NPP and expect to benefit from their victories, while Ewe people are often even more reliable as voters of the NDC (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). These two groups represent around 47% and 14% of all Ghanaians respectively (Hoffman & Long, 2013). While there is a strong affinity between ethnic communities in the Akan language group, some subgroups, such as the Fanti, tend to be less politically aligned and more of a swing constituency. Several other large groups, such as the Mole-Dagbani or the Ga-Dangme have historically supported the NDC but are relatively less aligned. The highest bar for ethnic voting, set by the Akan and Ewe, is around 70% of members voting with their aligned party (Hoffman & Long, 2013). Notably, ethnic voting does not stop at voting for coethnics, but also includes selecting candidates that are aligned with one's ethnic bloc (Nathan, 2019).

Ethnicity in Ghana is often tied to a number of ascriptive characteristics, such as language or dress, which sustain a strong relevance in everyday life, manifesting in prejudices, discrimination, and spatial sorting (Bollen, 2022; Michelitch, 2015; Paller, 2013). As I confirm later in the paper, psychological and social attachment to one's ethnic group is usually strong and

stronger than partisan ties. While partisan belonging appears less central and more easily masked in daily life, its social and psychological relevance is tangible. Many respondents employ evocative language suggesting more than a strategic attachment to their party, explaining that their "party is in [their] bones" or "my heart told me to vote for NPP or "I would never abandon my party."[13] These group orientations are reinforced by ubiquitous symbols on the street-level, such as posters, murals, and partisan media.

The respondents that participated in the survey at the core of this paper lived in peri-urban areas. The literature on electoral politics in younger democracies has often focused on rural cases, but has been increasingly extending to urban populations, which represent more than half of Ghana's citizenry (Nathan, 2019). Studies and theory remain relatively siloed as urban areas are said to introduce social mixing and attitudinal changes that discourage ethnic voting, for example, via intergroup contact (Cheeseman, 2022).[14] In contrast, rural communities tend to be ethnically and politically homogeneous and more oriented around local authority figures such as chiefs or headmen (Goldstein & Udry, 2008; Nathan, 2023). I focus on peri-urban areas as geographic contexts that support the dynamics of both urban and rural politics, though they are also independently interesting as a rapidly growing slice of Ghanaians settle in such areas (Afriyie et al., 2014). A descriptive table of community-level covariates is available in Appendix A.

`Sample Balance Table`

3.4 The survey and experimental prime

The main survey was conducted in December 2021 in six areas outside Ghana's capital, Accra. Sampling areas were drawn from a list of 2010 census enumeration areas selected to ensure variation across two variables commonly associated with campaign and voting behavior. Namely, whether an area is a stronghold for either party or competitive (Paller, 2019), and whether an area is dominated by one of Ghana's largest ethno-linguistic groups (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). I first sorted all parliamentary constituencies within a several hour radius of Accra according to whether they were an NPP stronghold, NDC stronghold, or competitive. From each category, I randomly drew one constituency. Within those three constituencies, I

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[13] Quotations are from respondents interviewed in March 2022 in areas around Accra.
[14] Recent evidence from Ghana suggests that this is not happening (Nathan 2019).

exclusively considered peri-urban areas, defined as having less than 70% of households engaging in farming activities as measured in the 2010 census. From the list of remaining areas, I randomly drew two areas in each constituency, one from those with more than 65% and one with less than 35% of one of Ghana's most politically relevant ethnic groups (either Ewe or Akan, or strongly aligned Akan sub-groups).[15]

3.4.1 Measuring Baseline Group Attachment

Prior to testing for causal effects of social identity salience on group cohesion, I use an original measure to understand the extent to which respondents carry a social identity associated with their partisan and ethnic group. Most scholars of developing democracies rely on binary measures of belonging.[16] While this is useful if belonging operates primarily as a label to coordinate the distribution of clientelist goods, it potentially ignores important variation if belonging also brings cognitive shifts. I depart from binary approaches to use a multi-item measure, as well as treating partisanship as a social identity.[17] The battery taps the degree to which that group defines how a respondent sees the social and political world around them, as well as how important that group is to their self-image. Respondents answered to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of statement six statements (on a five-point scale) piloted prior to the main survey.[18] The full set of questions is presented in Appendix D. `Partisanship Measure Further Details`. The final identity score for each is produced by mapping responses to an integer scale, averaging all six and re-scaling that vector of scores to fall between 0 and 1.[19]

3.4.2 The experimental prime

My main empirical approach to testing for the presence of social identities is to attempt to elevate their salience (or cognitive accessibility) and observe whether this has impacts on

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[15] See Appendix A. Sample Balance Table for sampling area demographic characteristics.}
[16] See Section 2.2 in the previous chapter for a discussion of this approach and its alternatives.
[17] This draws heavily on scales used by Bankert et al. (2017) and Huddy et al. (2015) who measure partisan attachment in the American and European context respectively.
[18] While these Likert-type responses are argued to perform worse than "radio buttons" or sliders (Marcus et al., 2017), the viability of alternatives was limited due to literacy and technology constraints during piloting.
[19] See Appendix D. Partisanship Measure Further Details for a note on measuring partisanship.

political behaviors and attitudes *unrelated to economic well-being*. In elevating identities, it mirrors real world campaigning processes in Ghana and beyond in which canvassers and elites appeal to shared belonging (Adida et al., 2017; Conroy-Krutz et al., 2016; Moehler & Conroy-Krutz, 2016).

Survey respondents participated in one of three possible versions of a behavioral game: a control condition, a condition that heightens partisan identity salience while suppressing ethnic identity salience, and a condition that heightens ethnic identity salience while suppressing partisan identity salience. In this study, I pool the second and third conditions, treating them as cases in which the salience of respondents' relationship to *any* political identity was elevated. Though the two identities are more distinct than many may assume (Jöst et al., 2023), together they represent the two most likely channels of identity-focused mobilization in Africa.

Concretely, respondents participated in three one-shot rounds of a dictator game. In each round, one player had discretion over the allocation of an endowment between themselves and one other player with no opportunity to respond. From the respondent's perspective, they were matched with a new person every round, each of whom were also respondents to the survey. Unbeknownst to the actual respondent, the other player was always simulated (which was revealed in a debriefing following the survey described in Section 3.4.4). By simulating other players of a specific identity, I very directly associate positive and negative affective experiences with specific identity cleavages in this brief social exchange.[20]

The activity was designed to cause respondents in the two identity conditions to think, feel, and behave more as a member of either their ethnic or partisan group. By providing positive affective experiences with outgroup members in the first round, it builds solidarity, reduces prejudice, and narrows existing notions of difference and competition on one cleavage (Lewis, 2011). Negative affective experiences from spiteful play by an outgroup member sharpens prejudice and expands notions of difference and competition on that cleavage (Brewer, 1999).

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[20] This design resembles one used by Broockman et al. (2020) to heighten polarization and partisan animosity among respondents in the US, while also bearing parallels to West & Iyengar (2022), who experimentally *reduce* identity salience.

In each round of the activity, one player was given an endowment of 5 cedis (approximately $1.25 USD) to share with the other. The player allocating the endowment could include a short message to the recipient explaining the amount they sent. In the first and second round, respondents were in the role of receiving part of the endowment from a simulated player they understood to have only known the respondent's group identity. In the third round, they were able to allocate the endowment to someone also identified by a group label.

For each respondent, the player in the first round gave 4 of 5 cedis with the explanation that "people who assist their friends also prosper." In the second round, a different simulated respondent gave 0 of 5 cedis with the explanation that "[a] [respondent's group] should take care of a [respondent's group]." Finally, in the third round the respondent was able to allocate 5 cedis to a new player and give their own motivation for how much they gave.[21]

Condition	Round 1 Altruistic player	Round 2 Spiteful player	Round 3 *Resp. gives*	n
Neutral	No label	No label	No label	304
Toward ethnicity	Non-copartisan	Non-coethnic	Non-coethnic	293
Toward partisanship	Non-coethnic	Non-copartisan	Non-copartisan	345

Table 7. Summary of experimental conditions

I summarize the three versions in Table 7. Respondents faced either (1) an altruistic non-coethnic followed by a spiteful non-copartisan, (2) an altruistic non-copartisan followed by a spiteful non-coethnic, or (3) an altruistic generic respondent followed by a spiteful generic respondent. In each case, in Round 3 they were matched with someone of the same group as the player from Round 2, but were informed it was a different individual. Respondents had an equal probability of being assigned to each condition. Because the manipulation is relatively subtle, I anticipated experimental effects could decay quickly and varied the order of outcome measures.[22]

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[21] Appendix K. Activity Script describes the structure of play in more detail.

[22] This helps avoid the possibility of false negatives with outcomes asked later due the attenuation of effects under constant ordering.

3.4.3 Did the primes work?

My primary manipulation check predicts the difference in post-treatment favorability rating of the in- and outgroup on the relevant cleavage. For example, the outcome for those in the partisan social identity condition is the evaluation of their party and its supporters *minus* their evaluation of the other party and its supporters.[23] If the attempt to prime an identity was successful, either the ingroup favorability should rise, the outgroup favorability should fall, or both, all of which should be reflected in a larger difference in the outcome measure. I compare evaluations against the control condition by regressing this gap on a treatment indicator, with demographic controls and constituency fixed effects. I find clear evidence respondents who were in an identity prime reported more extreme opinions of other groups. I conclude the manipulation was successful. Figure 5 plots this estimate.
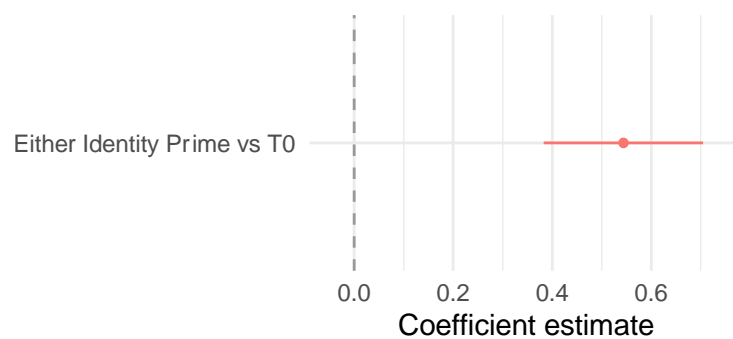
Figure 5. Estimates of the difference in post-treatment in- and outgroup favorability evaluations (-9 - 9). In this pooled comparison, I take the average of the two evaluation gaps as an outcome.

3.4.4 Study ethics

Individuals selected to be interviewed were read a description of the risks and benefits of participation. Per the policies of my local survey partner, respondents were not notified of any financial incentives to start the interview. However, they did receive money as part of the simulated money sending activity. In rough terms, this amount is equivalent to a couple hours

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[23] The specific item was, "would you say you feel more unfavorable or favorable toward _____ [people/and its supporters]?" For the few ($n = 14$) who supported one of Ghana's smaller parties, I randomly assigned them one of the two main parties as a reference outgroup.

work in a service job. This amount is enough to introduce meaningful stakes without raising swings in welfare conditional on participation. After the three rounds, all respondents received 15 cedis, regardless of what they sent to the simulated player in Round 3 so as not to punish respondents for being generous.

The identity priming activity required deception and hence additional considerations of how this impacts respondents within and beyond the interview. The deception and specifically the simulated players do not introduce scenarios that are uncommon in Ghana. Of greatest concern is the "spiteful" player who is constructed as someone who denies the respondent money on discriminatory grounds. Yet, this sort of experience with group discrimination is not uncommon in the everyday politics of Ghana, specifically including petty discrimination in financial exchanges (Michelitch, 2015).

Respondents were also informed before the survey began that they may be briefly mislead at some point during the survey in order to ensure informed consent was achieved. Most importantly, respondents were also debriefed at the conclusion of the survey, emphasizing among other points that the research team knows of no evidence that suggests that any group or type of individual is less trustworthy or charitable.

3.5 Main results

In this section I describe my main empirical findings. First, I discuss whether my descriptive measures of social identity attachment to either an ethnic or partisan group detect such identities in my respondents and briefly contextualize them. In broad terms, I find strong evidence that relationships to ethnic and partisan groups are psychological/affective in nature. Perhaps most interestingly, I find descriptively that partisan and ethnic identities are not as correlated as scholars have assumed in the past. Second, I present the results of my priming experiment. I show that when a social identity was primed, I observe significant effects on each of the three outcomes relative to the control condition, each in favor of group cohesion and electoral success.

3.5.1 Descriptive patterns in baseline identity strength

Using affective measures of identity strength opens a window into the degree to which respondents experience social and political stimuli as a member of a given group, as well as to what extent that belonging is likely coded on a psychological level. Moreover, using multiple items reduces the chances that a certain type of partisanship goes undetected due to question wording (Bankert et al., 2017). Lastly, while scoring higher on such a measure does not indicate whether a respondent holds instrumental motives, it would suggest that they are likely to experience some of the same unconscious biases that socially identified voters in the Global North would.

A visual analysis of the kernel density plots of these ethnic and partisan identity strength measures (Figure 6) suggests for the median respondent, they experience both as social identities. The mean scores are 0.62 and 0.86 for partisanship and ethnicity respectively. For reference, a very similar scale used by Huddy et al. (2015) to study American voters' partisanship produced sub-sample averages between 0.51 and 0.68 on a 0 to 1 scale. Another similar index placed U.K. voters' mean partisanship score 0.44 (Huddy et al., 2018). Despite my sample covering a diverse set of non-rural communities, where evidence suggests partisan attachment should be lowest (Ishiyama & Fox, 2006), I find the average partisan identity is not dissimilar from cases held up as being unique environments for the emergence of affective partisan identities.

Many scholars have also assigned limited relevance of partisanship in the developing world, treating it as a relabeling of more essential identities, such as ethnicity, religion, or race, in the political sphere. My results suggest that partisanship has at least some independent foundations. Not only do most respondents score above the mid-point of a scale probing specifically the partisan identity, but the two identities are far from a 1:1 correlation. Figure 7 is a scatterplot of respondents' identity scores. While positively related, a large amount of the variation in partisanship appears unexplained by ethnicity alone. In brief, politics and partisanship in Ghana appears to be more than an "ethnic census".
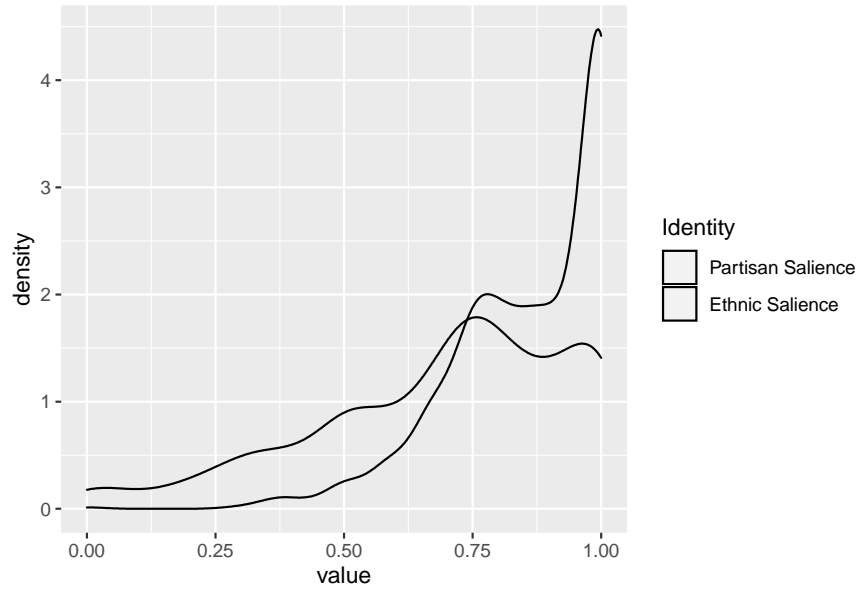
Figure 6. Baseline identity distributions.
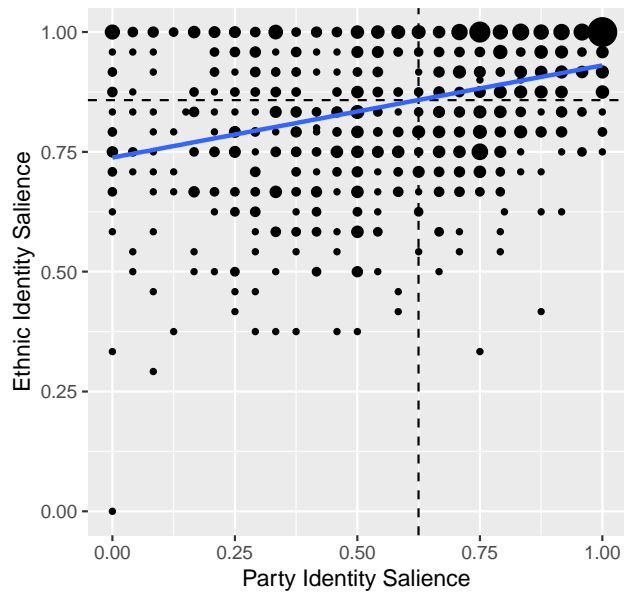
Figure 7. Baseline identity distribution comparisons. Dashed lines represent the mean score of all respondents on that scale. Using Cronbach's alpha as an indicator of internal consistency, both the ethnicity and partisan scales perform well (= 0.79 and = 0.93 respectively.)

3.5.2 Effects of priming social identity salience

The modest intervention of changing the identity of a simulated stranger was successful in elevating respondents' propensity to participate in maintaining group boundaries, shifting their perceptions of objective reality, and increasing their desire to express commitment toward their political party. Together, this indicates that when thinking as a member of a politicized social group, voters in young or clientelist democracies demonstrate behaviors and attitudes that do not have clear or direct material returns but nevertheless favor their party. Those same behaviors and attitudes would seem to strengthen group boundaries and party ties. Importantly, each of these outcomes are observed without altering the material rewards to belonging. Activating social identities in politics may then serve to maintain party ties in the absence of good performance, programmatic and non-programmatic transfers, and the advancement of ideological principles.

In hypotheses *1*, *2*, and *3*, I compare assignment to either social identity prime versus the control condition. I find raising the salience of social identities oriented respondents toward behavior and biases that favor active membership in their party without any immediate material stakes. Relative to the control condition, they were more likely to discriminate against an outgroup member, to have more divergent evaluations of the parties' performance, and be more certain they will support their party in the subsequent election.

My baseline regressions are of the following form:

where is a binary indicator for treatment assignment, is a sampling area fixed effect, and is an idiosyncratic error term. I include several demographic controls including *log(*age), an assets index (0-8), gender, and education. To avoid spurious results due to ordering effects and the decay of treatment, the outcomes were asked in one of six possible orders, and I include a factor variable to capture which version respondents were asked. For hypotheses *1* and *2* I report OLS estimates. Because the outcome in hypothesis *3* is binary (as pre-registered), I estimate effects using logit regression. For each estimate, standard errors are clustered at the constituency-level.

My first hypothesis tests whether respondents assigned to an identity prime were more likely to return prejudice to outgroup members, as measured by the amount of the endowment they give in the third round of the activity. The player in the third round was described as belonging to the same group as the spiteful player in the second round (or a generic survey respondent in the control condition). I find on average being assigned to either identity prime caused a 0.10 GHS drop in the donation amount compared to the control condition ($p < 0.001$). This indicates not only a higher willingness to discriminate but given this simulated player shares only a label with the round 2 player, it also indicates a shift in underlying group attitudes. In the aggregate, this type of divergent behavior can amount to a self-sustaining mechanism by which social groups and their associated rewards are sustained.

Hypo.	Y_i	$treatment_i$	β	p
1	Amount sent (0–5 GHS)		-0.10	< 0.001
2	Party performance eval. gap (-9–9)	In an identity prime (0,1)	1.15	< 0.0001
3	Vote surety (0,1)		0.57	< 0.001
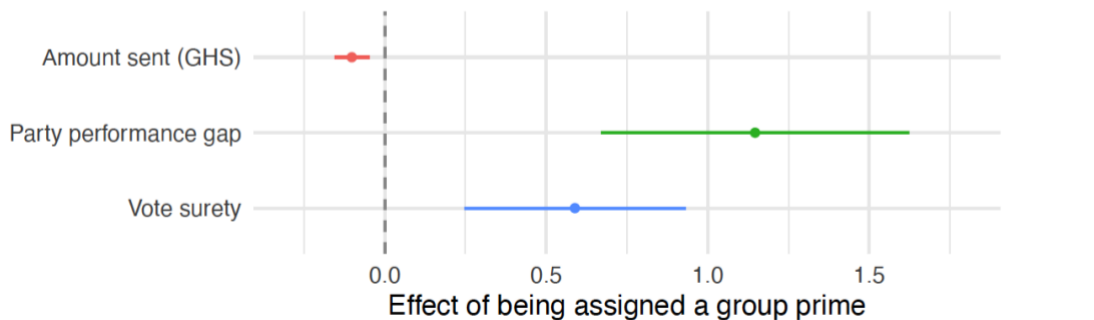
Figure 8. Main experimental results. The x-axis represents the coefficient on the independent variable in each model. Bars correspond to the 95% confidence interval. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are estimated with OLS and 3 is estimated with logistic regression. Each model includes demographic controls and sampling area fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.

For my second hypothesis, I estimate the effect of treatment on the size of the gap in party performance evaluations.[24] If social identification had no impact on motivated reasoning, I would

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[24] Respondents were asked to evaluate recent performance of their party and the opposing party on a ten-point scale.

expect no detectable differences between treatment and control. I observe a substantively large and positive effect of the identity primes on respondents' evaluations of their party versus the opposition. This suggests that social identities shift the way that partisans see the world such that they discount or ignore negative news about their party when evaluating performance. In the aggregate, this should erode the need of a party to deliver on performance and avoid accusations of corruption as the inevitably arise.

Lastly, I test whether an identity prime led respondents to be more certain of their vote choice in the next (2024) general election. I estimate the effect of treatment assignment on whether respondents answered "certain" or "very certain" to the question, "how sure are you of your vote choice [in the 2024 election]?". I find respondents in a social identity condition were significantly more certain of their vote choice. Precisely, they had a 73% increase in the odds of expressing certainty. While this may not reflect eventual vote choice in the subsequent election (which falls almost three years after the survey) the result is noteworthy. In semi-structured interviews after the 2020 election, but especially in interviews before the same election, a plurality of respondents quickly defaulted to saying it was "too early" to talk about the elections, let alone to know for whom to vote (Voter Interview, Walewale, Mar. 2021). At a minimum, this result indicates that stronger social identities increase the willingness to vocalize support for one's party. Interpreted naively, this suggests that, all else equal, being more identified with your party by either the ethnic or partisan identity channel increases commitment and may help close deliberation around vote choice.

3.6 Discussion

My main experimental results show that priming or raising the salience or cognitive accessibility of group identities steers individuals' attitudes, cognition, and behavior in ways that favor continued attachment to a party. In what follows, I present exploratory evidence on two points that demonstrate the importance of these findings: (1) how expressive and instrumental motives relate to each other and (2) whether heightened social identification affects additional attitudes relevant to democratic preferences.

3.6.1 Linking instrumental and non-instrumental incentives

My findings so far suggest that parties could potentially rely on their voters being socially identified with the party (or an aligned ethnic group) to sustain their support without providing material or ideological benefits to the voter. However, the existence of a psychological and identity-based channel toward partisanship does not render material incentives irrelevant. Here I argue social identities do not require maintenance through material transfers, but they may still be cultivated through material transfers. In addition, I find that being in the upper quartiles of identification strength has similar impacts on reported future voting behavior as believing that elections impact you or your community's receipt of clientelist benefits. Thus, while social identities can support party ties in isolation, instrumental motives may initially drive identification. Perhaps most importantly, I find that instrumental and intrinsic motives may have similar impacts on reported vote choice.

	Dependent variable:			
	Instrumental motive (0,1)		Instrumental motive (0,1)	
	(personal)		(local)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisan identity salience	1.434 (1.080)		1.211 (1.304)	
Ethnic identity salience		−0.080 (0.656)		0.209 (0.888)
Observations	729	730	728	729
Log Likelihood	−421.202	−431.821	−453.085	−461.488

Note: Both models include full battery of controls and sampling area fixed-effects. Std. errors in parentheses. $^{*}p<0.1; ^{**}p<0.05; ^{***}p<0.01$

Table 8. Logit estimates of instrumental expectations from identity salience.

I first test whether voters holding expectations for receiving *personal* and *local* clientelist benefits are predicted by the strength of their partisan and ethnic identity salience (as measured before treatment). The expectations variable is constructed by coding respondents that answered

that the likelihood of someone like them receiving benefits depending on which party is in power as 1, and all others as 0.[25] If someone believes their material gain is linked to elections, they plausibly have an instrumental motive to support the party most like to provide. Predicting these instrumental indicators from both identity scores (presented in Table 8) using logistic regression, I find neither identity is related to expectations of clientelism of either form. Feeling closer to a social group seems to have no clear relationship to perceptions of material benefits to participating in a social group. This may be cautiously interpreted to mean that cultivating identity is, in fact, an economically efficient substitute for clientelism in sustaining party ties—once a voter's identity coincides with politics, she requires fewer material benefits to remain in that state.

Identification does not readily raise expectations of material benefits, but material benefits may yet encourage identification and its ability to bind voters to the party. To empirically explore this possibility, I exchange the main independent and dependent variables inTable 9 Table 8 to predict identity salience from the instrumental indicators using OLS and present this in Table 9. I find only partisan social identities are furthered by material motives and only around personal transfers. This comports with the conclusion that parties' transfers to individuals, such as cash payments, material goods, or employment can induce identification. That is, clientelism and/or votebuying could serve to engage non-material motives for party support by causing voters to feel a part of a politicized social group.

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[25] Approximately 21% believed this was not contingent on who is in power for personal transfers.

	Ethnic identity salience		Partisan identity salience	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Personal clientelism motive	−0.004 (0.016)		0.096** (0.049)	
Local clientelism motive		0.001 (0.019)		0.076 (0.074)
Observations	703	702	702	701
Adjusted R^2	0.056	0.058	0.055	0.046

Note: Both models include full battery of controls and sampling area fixed-effects. Std. errors in parentheses.

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

Table 9. Association of identity salience and instrumental expectations

Social identities may not be of much scholarly or practical interest if the magnitude of their impact on political behavior is small relative to material motives. In Figure 9, I offer a comparison of them. I plot the regression coefficients of (1) holding material motives from personal transfers, (2) holding material motives from local transfers, and (3) holding psychological motives (i.e., the respondent's baseline partisan social identity salience) on vote surety in the next general election. While the third model has the highest point estimate, I cannot statistically distinguish any of the outcomes from each other. In this basic test of these relationships, being a strong party identifier appears to have a similar relevance as believing they or their community has something to gain (or lose) should a particular party win. Lastly, the previous exploratory test would indicate that at the individual level, social identities are at least as central to voting commitments as instrumental incentives.
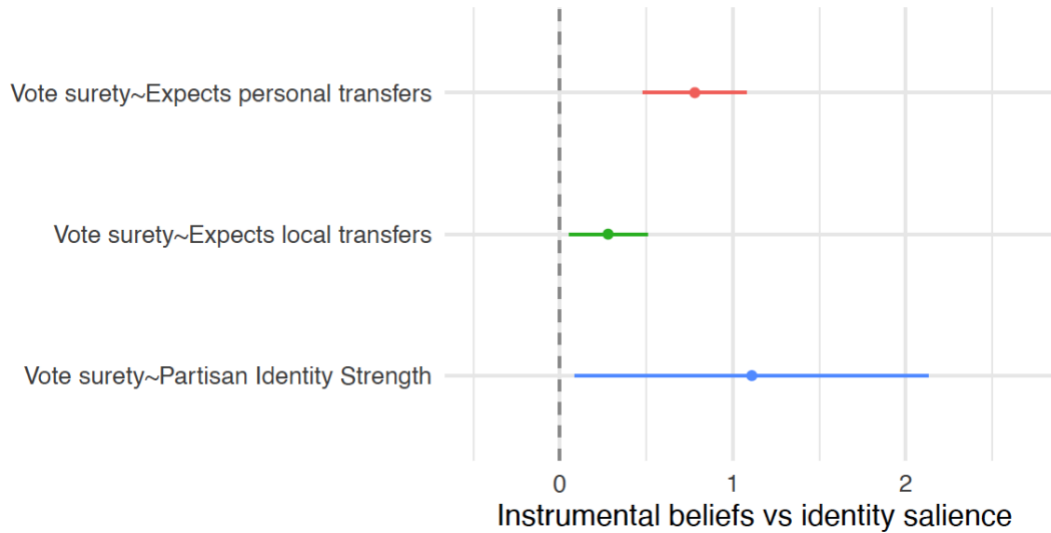
Figure 9. Comparing instrumental and subjective incentives. Labels reflect the outcome and the main independent variable from which it was predicted. Vote surety is an indicator for whether the respondent expressed being "certain" or "very certain" of who they will vote for in the next general election.

3.6.2 Social identities and democratic attitudes

My experiment and baseline measures of identity show it is likely that both partisan and ethnic social identities exist in Ghanaian politics and that parties are likely to benefit from activating them. I explore whether these identities have behavioral linkages to attitudes and practices that may impact broader patterns of democratic health. Specifically, I test how baseline attachment and experimental assignment relate to election integrity, intergroup stereotypes, and engagement.[26]

Identity attachments to political parties have been attributed with driving polarization across various spheres of social life in industrialized democracies (Mason, 2018). While the impacts of polarization on democracy may be more limited than some fear (Broockman et al., 2020), the consensus in the American literature is affective polarization has deepened significantly with

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[26] For brevity, regressions are reported more fully in the appendices.

negative impacts on democratic outcomes and freedoms (Abramowitz, 2010; Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Levendusky, 2018). Is this the case in younger democracies?

To tap respondents' faith in the electoral process as well as willingness to overlook fraud, they were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that the incumbent party won the last election through "cheating". I regress a binary indicator reflecting whether the respondent positively affirmed this statement on one of two independent variables. The first is an interaction of partisan affiliation and baseline partisan identity strength and the second is partisan affiliation interacted with a binary treatment indicator. I find incumbent supporters with a stronger baseline identity ($p = 0.001$), but not primed identity ($p = 0.161$), were more likely to say there was no cheating. This first result replicates the "winner's effect" (Sinclair et al., 2018), and would suggest that the heightening of partisan identities opens a window for parties to weaponize accusations of electoral fraud, a strategy linked to the erosion of democratic health (Levy, 2021). The lack of significant association between treatment and cheating may suggest that priors about electoral integrity are too strong to move in response to a small intervention.

As social groups come into competition in politics, partisan identities can exacerbate prejudice and animus across ethnic and racial lines (Broockman et al., 2020). While I observe priming an identity significantly increased tit-for-tat group-based discrimination, it may not be associated with changes in intergroup attitudes extending beyond the activity. To test this, I asked respondents how well the word "trustworthy" describes a cross-partisan non-coethnic. If partisan social identities strengthen prejudice along other cleavages, I should observe a lower likelihood of affirmative responses to this question. In one model, I regress a binary coding of trust responses on treatment assignment and find no evidence of effect ($p = 0.900$). In a second model, I regress the same outcome on baseline partisan identity strength, and again, find no evidence of a relationship ($p = 0.363$). From this I conclude this particular hazard of social identities mixing with politics should be of less concern.

Lastly, affective or psychological motives stemming from social identities can motivate engagement in the political process (Groenendyk & Banks, 2014; Robison, 2017). Under conditions of poor governance, voters may be more likely to disengage, favoring not just the

status quo, but potentially the incumbent (Chong et al., 2015). If social identification in the political realm fosters engagement, this may have the effect of *boosting* bottom-up accountability. I asked respondents how certain they were they would vote in the next election and regress this on baseline partisan identity strength, as well as a treatment indicator. I find in both cases respondents report a greater likelihood of turning out ($p < 0.001$ in both cases). As a second measure of engagement, I also asked respondents if they would like to be added to a real political Whatsapp group, should they have a smartphone. I find stronger baseline identification had a positive but not significant relationship ($p = 0.08$), while being assigned to an identity prime in the experiment had a positive and significant effect ($p < 0.001$).

In summary, social identities in politics appear to have downstream effects with potential positive and negative implications for democracy. Respondents appear more vulnerable to manipulation of perceptions of electoral fraud, which can both motivate and be explained by *Trumpian* claims of "rigged elections" made by Ghana's opposition leader in 2020 (Ghana, 2020). I found no evidence that respondents with stronger identities extend partisan animosity to cross-partisan non-coethnics. Lastly, I show that social identification is associated with greater engagement, which I argue may help provide a popular check against otherwise unaccountable parties and politicians.

3.7 Conclusion

Supposedly instrumental voters across the developing world regularly do and say things that both favor their party and have no apparent material returns. The voter quoted earlier as rejecting negative information was a market worker and non-card-carrying voter. She was asked this question in a private setting and had no reason to believe that any favor or reward lay on the other side of standing up for her party. Based on prevailing theory, it would be difficult to determine whether she enjoys cheering on her party without further impact on political behavior, or whether statements like this reflect a push and pull between identity and evaluations of political alternatives. I have shown that electorates in developing democracies, often characterized as instrumental and rational, likely also remain engaged and loyal partly because of the strong presence of social identities.

Through a novel experiment in Ghana, I demonstrate clear evidence of three mechanisms by which group belonging causes voters to remain loyal to a party and the underlying social group. I do this without presenting material rewards or raising expectations thereof. Even if voting in such contexts is heavily influenced by the pocketbook, voters' understanding of the political world including which alternatives will most benefit their pocketbook, are shaped by a psychologically grounded sense of kinship. Applying this finding to considerations of governance and accountability, it begins to answer the question of how poor-performing or newly formed parties can become and remain electorally relevant.

While a particular reading of my results could cast them as a rehabilitation of primordial theories of politics, such as Horowitz (1985), I caution strongly against this. Those theories understood the organizing feature of ethnic conflict to be innate identities. In contrast, current evidence firmly shows that socially constructed and instrumental identities do most of the work of sorting voters into constituencies and defining political cleavages. This study identifies several expressive mechanisms that may sustain those affiliations but does not attempt to answer the question of "who voters vote for in developing democracies". Second, Horowitz (1985) and others were associated with tribalist view of groups because of a reliance on imprecise notions of "envy, resentment, and fear" (p. 102) as motivating competition. For the dimensions of group competition I seek to explain, I draw on empirical results that demonstrated precise conscious and unconscious pathways linking a sense of belonging to cognition and behavior.

In addition, I provide exploratory evidence that social identities can readily exist alongside material motives even when being caused by them, because these identities do not require material motives to sustain attachment. I also show that partisan identification can has broader effects related to democracy, both good and bad. Those results suggest a need for greater evidence to how a more expressive engagement in politics affects key outcomes, such as performance-based voting, faith in electoral institutions, and intergroup relations.

As a stable two-party democracy, Ghana appears to be a most-likely case to study the effects of partisanship, perhaps suggesting need for caution when establishing the external validity of the above findings. However, while respondents have had more time to vote for the same party, this

has not made Ghana exceptional in basic indicators of partisan attachment in Afrobarometer data as shown in Section 3.3. To the extent that evidence of instrumental voting from Ghana can be carried to other countries in developing regions, I argue my evidence might be extended similarly. Moreover, I arrive at my results despite the comparatively lower strength of partisan identities (as measured in the middle of the electoral cycle) and subtle nature of my experimental manipulation. I also find differences between the two social identity treatments despite the ethnic outgroup in the ethnic prime being the group most closely aligned with the opposing party (i.e., the group most likely to also prime partisan categories). Last, my sample is a diverse set of electoral constituencies, suggesting my findings are not, for example, firmly limited to areas of low or high ethnic diversity.

While retrospective voting continues to be the democratic ideal pursued by a number of policy organizations working in developing democracies, achieving transparency and accountability will likely require careful attention to social identities. I demonstrate partisan motivated reasoning similar to that documented in other cases, like the United States, which has been shown to strengthen partisan identities and party support (or cross-party animus). Thus, improving transparency or the general media environment may do little to inform voters if its veracity is questioned or its weighting in a voter's evaluation is too minor to outweigh psychological rewards to supporting their party. Yet, social identities need not be bad for democracy. My theory and evidence suggest that many voters would be less engaged in their party if it were not for their identification with it. In this view, social identities and their maintenance may be important to maintaining a minimal amount of accountability by fostering greater contact between politicians and party organizers.

Chapter 4 : Equivalent or Intersecting? Observing the Nature of Political Identities in an Experiment with Ghanaian voters

4.1 Introduction

Mass politics in the developing world is widely understood to be driven by group belonging. Under conditions of low information, parties manipulate individual incentives away from performance or policy-based voting by emphasizing their ties to identity groups (Bates, 1983; Chandra, 2004; Conroy-Krutz, 2013). Voters, in turn, observe those ties and probabilistically determine the candidate or party most likely to benefit them (Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Kramon, 2016). Yet, recent contributions have suggested that in parallel, *affective* ties or social identification with a group may introduce additional motives at the ballot box— those of a psychological and emotional nature (e.g., Letsa (2020) and Samuels & Zucco (2014)). Across both approaches, theories also differ as to whether voters act as members of ethno-cultural groups, partisan groups, or both. This paper asks, to the extent that identities incentivize voting behavior in these younger democracies, is it through instrumental or psychological channels, and is it through primarily one identity group or potentially multiple?

I identify four groupings of research in the literature on voting behavior in developing democracies that map to these two dimensions. The first centers on instrumental incentives flowing through social groups, wherein partisanship is merely an image of a more fundamental identity. Second, a growing body of work sees behavior as related to affective identities of different sorts including partisanship, but either focuses on one attachment or is agnostic as to how multiple identities relate. The third studies non-partisan identities as important to initial sorting but focuses on instrumental partisan ties as the primary mechanism coordinating behavior across elections while the other identities fade in political relevance. The fourth allows both

social groups and partisanship to exist as affective identities with their own impacts on electoral behavior and unique social construction.

I argue that not only are political identities psychological or affective in nature in these cases, but also, they are often multiple, providing distinct motives and opportunities for mobilization. The literature identifying the immense power of expressive social identities in the Global North is expansive (Campbell et al., 1960; Green et al., 2002; Kinder, 2013; Mason, 2018). A small handful of contributions have demonstrated that voters in a diverse set of emerging or developing states may be subject to similar emotional and cognitive biases (Cammett et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021). Most such examples focus on either ethnic or partisan social identities, therein assuming the other does not matter, or that the two are one and the same. Referencing evidence from social psychology, I argue that a voter can hold multiple affective political identities and those identities will often differ in their contextual relevance and impact.

I test these hypotheses through a lab-in-the-field experiment and survey with 973 Ghanaians focused on their partisan and ethnic identities. Ghana is an often-studied two-party system bearing many hallmarks of ethnic clientelism. The main two parties, the NPP and NDC, each rely on high levels of support from at least one large ethnic group in Ghana, but many of Ghana's nearly 100 ethnic groups are less aligned or unaligned.

As with many young democracies, partisanship and partisan symbols are found in many areas of daily life and can form an important part of social interactions (Michelitch, 2015). By studying ethnicity and partisanship in Ghana I can test my theory in a context where partisanship is typically understood as a direct product of ethnicity, as well as study their relationship across ethnic groups with varying levels of partisan alignment. More broadly, Ghana is does not appear to be a standout case within Africa in terms of party attachment.[27]

I first approach these hypotheses by examining the results of multi-item measures of partisan and ethnic social identities that I adapt from studies of American and European partisanship. The

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[27] In a recent round of the Afrobarometer survey (7), in 14 out of 35 countries respondents reported being close to a political party at rates within 5% of Ghana's rate in the same round.

resultant indices allow me to capture levels of affective identification on a rich scale, enabling exploration of these identities independently and in relation to each other. Complimenting this, I achieve leverage over the four hypotheses through a lab-in-the-field experiment. I randomly manipulate the salience of respondents' partisan and ethnic identities through a behavioral game and assess the impacts of this on outcomes representing different behaviors and biases that sustain group support. Specifically, I examine engagement in tit-for-tat discrimination across group boundaries, degree of motivated reasoning, and commitment to eventually voting for one's party. Together, they represent channels by which intergroup dynamics can elevate social competition, psychology can support ingroup bias, and non-material rewards sustain action.

I find baseline evidence that partisanship and ethnicity are overlapping *social* identities, but far from deterministically related. This casts doubt on the first hypothesis, showing that partisanship is more than a relabeling of ethnicity. My experimental analysis shows that the two identities can be activated and primed independently with statistically significant effects on group-oriented behavior. Comparing the two primes, I find (surprisingly) that the weaker identity at baseline, partisanship, has larger effects on two of my three outcomes. Along with additional tests, this evidence supports the fourth hypothesis— overlapping identities appear to be social or affective in nature *and* bear unique constructions that lend distinct psychological and behavioral biases. I find this is true for both strongly and weakly-aligned ethnicities.

This paper makes several key contributions. First, it joins early examples of empirical work that extend a psychological and affective model of identity to the developing world. Though the evidence supporting an instrumental model of identity in young democracies is robust and widespread, it stands in contrast to an equally robust literature from older democracies supporting the centrality of expressive or social identities. Those theories are not likely to apply fully or without modification, but it appears increasingly likely that many citizens of democracies around the globe experience their political world in psychological terms, including those in young democracies (Brader & Tucker, 2008) and hybrid democracies (Carlson, 2016; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021). This carries likely consequences for accountability (Adida et al., 2017; Dunning et al., 2019) and polarization (West & Iyengar, 2022). Second, it helps answer the

puzzle of why participation remains high even when engagement in politics does not deliver for the individual (Svolik, 2013) .

The modal voter receives little personal contact or exchange with their party (Brierley & Kramon, 2020; Lockwood et al., 2023). In many cases where it is received, direct clientelism also does not appear to meaningfully enhance material welfare (Auyero, 2000; Letsa, 2020; Padró i Miquel, 2007). The same cases often experience low levels of party institutionalization and ideological differentiation between parties (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2013; Hicken, 2009). Despite this, turnout and enthusiasm remain substantial. By showing many voters experience some degree of psychological identification with their party, I demonstrate a clear channel by which parties can cultivate and sustain a voting base in the absence of good performance or any genuine alternative (Fowler & Kam, 2007; Groenendyk & Banks, 2014).

Lastly, as scholars continue to study identity-based electoral behavior in young democracies, this paper encourages greater care around which identities are deemed to be of interest. Each identity group, including those along the same cleavage, can differ in its cultural construction and mobilizational resources (Brewer, 1991; Huddy, 2001; Madrid, 2008). Similarly, to the extent that partisanship and other belongings are informational cues, they may carry distinct information. When considering how a particular voter is mobilized, scholars should not only ask which identity may be most important, but also how it may interact with other identities that voter may hold, e.g., additively or non-additively. Therein, I call into question the wisdom of assuming partisanship to be simple relabeling of ethnicity in the political realm (e.g., Chandra, (2004) and Ferree (2006). While some form of ethnicity is an organizing feature of many democracies, it is increasingly clear that for many voters in those places other factors are at least equally central to their behavior (Auerbach et al., 2022). Exploring partisanship and other social identities will be an important avenue for augmenting our understanding electoral behavior.

4.2 Theories of group attachment in politics

Research highlighting the role of identity in developing countries' politics has thoroughly established the centrality of instrumental voting, usually ethnic instrumental voting. Behavior is seen follow expectations of material benefit and that, in turn, is determined by group identity or belonging through several different mechanisms originating both from voters and parties. More recent work has suggested limits to instrumental identities and voting, highlighting the presence and importance of social or affective identities. Often overlooked in both frames is the question of whether politics can be effectively collapsed into one identity dimension, e.g., race, religion, or ethnicity, or if voters approach politics through multiple frames. Are political identities affective as well as instrumental in nature, and is politics experienced through one identity, or is the social psychological side of politics more complex than previously assumed?

4.2.1 Two dimensions to considering identity-based voting

Voters in the developing world are almost universally considered to be identity driven. Yet, identity as mechanism for vote choice can take on different forms. The dominant perspective in the literature is one of instrumental voting. Identity has been shown to coordinate exchanges between party and voter. As voters probabilistically assess the returns to turning out and voting for one party or another, the identity of candidates functions as an informational heuristic, indicating the likelihood of them or their community receiving benefits (K. E. Ferree, 2006; Ichino & Nathan, 2013). This includes a number different classes of identity— most common is ethnicity, though religion, race, language, and region have been shown operate similarly (Basedau & Stroh, 2011; Jöst et al., 2023). In Latin American, party membership has also historically provided a similar identity dimension (Madrid, 2008) and more recently evidence has suggested similar patterns in African democracies (Letsa, 2020).

Affective (or subjective) mechanisms are often cast as existing in opposition to instrumental mechanisms. In this approach, belonging engenders a psychological tie to that social group, even when the stakes are arbitrary or minimal (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Voters who experience this will vote on group lines, not for the material rewards it may bring, but because of the affective enjoyment or satisfaction that comes from myriad forms of engaging with and supporting one's group (Campbell et al., 1960). This can include subjective utility placed on seeing their group

(coethnics, copartisans, etc.) perform well in elections, cognitive biases that lead to inaccurate assessments of the merits and performance of their party and its competitors, and the adoption of political and social attitudes that drive polarization (Kalin & Sambanis, 2018). Thus when a group identity is integrated into a voter's self-concept, they are more likely to attend rallies, defend the group in conversation, and vote in support of the (aligned) party, perhaps even absent good performance or material rewards (Mason, 2018). While there are a growing number of examples this perspective in young or developing democracies, it broadly remains novel in the comparativist literature.

In practice, both types of identity-based voting can exist in tandem. Yet, if party attachments are primarily instrumental in nature, identification is not likely to be associated with behaviors that are costly or generally lack a utilitarian or economic motive. If voters are primarily instrumentally motivated, this impacts how we understand campaigns and exchanges— are handouts information about likely transfers in a later period (Kramon, 2016) or are they used to activate social norms and subjective rewards around reciprocity with one's "political kin" (Finan & Schechter, 2012; Ravanilla et al., 2021)? Do broker visits allow the party to monitor voter intentions (Larreguy et al., 2016) or are they building a sense of camaraderie, efficacy, and purpose in a voter (Anderson et al., 2012; Lieberman & Zhou, 2022)? These things long understood to be manipulations of voters' incentives may also or alternatively be tapping into implicit identity-related motives.

A second dimension dividing studies of identity-based voting is the question of *which identities*? A long-standing practice throughout much of the comparative literature has been to assume that what matters is whether someone is an identity-driven voter or not. Through partisan, ethnic, racial, or religious channels, voters are seen as referencing a key or central identity when making political decisions. Research has also engaged the question of which identities or cleavages become salient from an initial population of potentially salient political identities (Lipset & Rokkan, 1990; Piombo, 2005; Posner, 2005). Yet, most such research starts with an implicit assumption that political competition is dominated by a handful of identities on one cleavage, and that their prominence is likely sustained by historical and structural factors (Laitin, 1986). This often leaves unanswered the question of what happens to the other identities.

However, social psychologists have taken up this complexity and theorized how identities may relate to each other and the consequences thereof. A notable group of theories called the Dual Identity Model (DIM), explores the cognitive and material dimensions of individual behavior among individuals with multiple salient group identities. DIM spans instrumental and affective frames: "[dual identities] may coexist with important sociopsychological and objective benefits for their members" (González et al., 2008, pp. 98). While many such studies focus on conflicting identities (Davenport et al., 2022; Fleischmann et al., 2019; Klar, 2013), others explore how compatible, overlapping, or nesting identities relate to behavior (Gadjanova, 2021; González et al., 2008; Klandermans, 2014). Together, they have shown that voters reference their particular constellation of belonging and that that arrangement impacts intergroup attitudes (Dulani et al., 2021; González et al., 2008), mobilization (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2014), partisan attachment (Mason & Wronski, 2018), and more.

4.2.2 A typology of identity-based voting

In examining these two dimensions, I identify four groupings of empirical evidence in the literature on identity-based voting in developing democracies. Table 10 summarizes these.

| | Electoral motive | |
	Instrumental	**Affective/Expressive**
Single identity	(1) Hand-in-glove	(2) Affective partisanship
Multiple identities	(3) Coalitional partisanship	(4) Multiple belongings

Table 10. A typology of studying identity in electoral politics

4.2.3 Hand-in-glove

Across much of the developing world parties rarely win votes on performance, policy, or ideology (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2013; Padró i Miquel, 2007). They compete through the targeted delivery of scarce developmental goods (Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Harding, 2015; Nichter, 2018). To help make such clientelist exchanges bind, both voters and parties employ

identities as an informational heuristic, indicating which groups are likely to benefit and which voters are most likely to follow through with the exchange (Chandra, 2004; Hicken, 2011; Kramon, 2017). As a result, party attachments in young democracies are often considered to be the result of a rational evaluation of group-defined alternatives (Bobonis et al., 2022; De Kadt & Lieberman, 2020; Harding, 2015).

The relationship to one's party is then fundamentally *instrumental* in nature and usually channeled through a singular identity cleavage. While the instrumental voting perspective typically does not explicitly exclude the possibility of affection for one's ethnic group (or whichever group membership drives partisanship), it most often casts partisanship as an empty category (Carlson, 2016; Letsa, 2020). Partisan labels are primarily seen as yet another heuristic that maps directly back to ethnic boundaries (K. E. Ferree, 2006; Hale, 2004; Huber, 2017)(Hale 2004; Ferree 2006; Huber 2017). In this sense, partisanship is the glove that fits over the ethnic hand— taking on the same shape and meaning as the underlying cleavage, as it reaches into the world of politics. As Carlson summarizes, voters may view "parties merely as instruments for accessing resources" (2016, pp. 2). Thus, for a given voter, her party does not *directly* correspond to any social categories and her support of the party is an extension of rational material interests available to ethnic identifiers.

In countries where partisanship ostensibly exists as a label only, why do parties not just campaign on ethnic cues? Ethnic cues can be unspoken, but still explicit in much of partisan campaigning. For example, a shared group with a candidate can sometimes be observed from language or surnames and the direct appeal is left implicit. Others argue that open appeals to ethnic groups bear what Weitz-Shapiro (2014) calls "audience costs", costing candidates credibility or favor with members of one social group by appealing to too narrow of a base (Gadjanova, 2021). A weakly-aligned ethnic group may correctly perceive a clientelist appeal, but respond less enthusiastically if it is directed to a copartisan ethnic group. Yet others point to social and political preferences against ethnic, racial, or religious chauvinism as disincentivizing direct appeals to ethnicity. Parties may be perceived as backward or undemocratic by being too open in their courting of an ethnic vote and suffer electorally (J. Horowitz & Klaus, 2020; Kim & Horowitz, 2022).

4.2.4 Affective partisanship

The prevailing theory of affective political belonging has been popularized by political psychologists studying American partisanship (Campbell et al., 1960; Green et al., 2002).[28] In this perspective, belonging matters less as a coordinating mechanism and more as a system of attitudes, beliefs, and affective biases that is integrated into a voter's psychology (Huddy et al., 2015; Kalin & Sambanis, 2018) and activate intrinsic motivations. With little concrete or explicit material or ideological rewards, heightened partisan salience causes voters remain close and committed to their party's success (West & Iyengar, 2022).

In practice, this view has manifest in a growing number of studies in the developing world that seek to establish the presence of social identities. For example, Cammett et al. (2022) study the impacts of ethnic social identities on perceptions in Lebanon, Samuels & Zucco (2014) study the impact of partisanship in Brazil on policy preferences and attitudes, Adida et al. (2017) explore the effects of ethnic motivated reasoning in Benin, Laebens & Öztürk (2021) study partisanship's effects on voters' sense of security in Turkey, Carlson (2016) studies partisanship's impact on perceptions of performance in Uganda, and Lupu (2013) finds party brands themselves are psychologically salient in Argentina. Regardless of how they became attached to a party, voters are assumed to have integrated their position on a political identity cleavage into their sense-of-self and are motivated by the subjective or psychological rewards that belonging provides.

These studies are unique in that they afford significant impact to a politicized social identity, but do so while explicitly focusing on a single affective tie to politics, be it ethnic, religious, racial etc. Without explicitly discounting the possibility of dual or multiple affective belongings, this approach assumes that the variation of interest can be explained by the presence or strength *an* affective tie— one need only know if or when a voter is driven by this class of non-material rewards. The central conclusion of the literature so far is that social identities are present and

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[28] In the study of post-colonial democracies, a superficially similar set of theories remained popular through the 21st Century, known as the primordialist or expressive approach. They differ from SIT (Social Identity Theory) in that their underlying mechanisms were often ill-defined and relied on tribalist tropes (Horowitz, 1985).

affect intergroup attitudes, individual behavior, and cognition and therein the electoral success of parties in the developing world.

4.2.5 Coalitional partisanship

Many studies focusing on voting behavior and group relations adopt a focus on superordinate and subordinate political identities in developing democracies. While a fundamental identity (like ethnicity) may be a voter's road into politics, it soon intersects with a broader (or superordinate) ingroup, the party. That identity becomes distinct from the non-partisan identity and the primary frame through which voters identify and are identified (by party and peer) in politics. At the same time the subordinate identity does cease to exist or become irrelevant to behavior or party strategy.

For example, the concept of *comparative fit* has been used to describe how members of the same coalition may also identify with it differently; while some for some their subordinate identity may nest cleanly within their partisanship, for others the superordinate or partisan tie may develop from less-aligned or potentially conflicting identity in the case of cross-ethnic voters (Dulani et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2005). This has been hypothesized to have implications for who is targeted with material benefits within a coalition (Gadjanova, 2021), as well as the types of rhetoric or cues that politicians may use (Adida, 2015). This perspective has also yielded insights as to how intergroup attitudes shift in response to becoming members of the same political coalition-- non-coethnic copartisans tend to view each other more favorably than non-copartisan non-coethnics (González et al., 2008).

4.2.6 Multiple belongings

Across most studies exploring the role of social identities in developing democracies' politics, there have been only limited attempts to parse partisanship from other social identities. This has largely carried forward the assumption that politics is organized around one fundamental cleavage. That tendency is not without cause— partisanship has clear links to ethnicity. Most centrally, candidate co-ethnicity has been irrefutably documented as a heuristic for selecting candidates and partisan sorting (Cammett et al., 2022; Ichino & Nathan, 2013).

However, traditional and ethnic leadership (where present) can be voters' main source of political cues (Baldwin & Mvukiyehe, 2015; Koter, 2016; Nathan, 2023) and political competition can shape not only the degree to which someone identifies with their ethnic group (Eifert et al., 2010; Michelitch & Utych, 2018), but even shape which identity becomes salient (Posner, 2005) Evidence from elsewhere supports this definition as well; Westwood & Peterson (2020) show that aligned racial and partisan attitudes are subject to "parallel updating", meaning for most voters they are not separable identities.

However, many social and political psychologists argue the shared origin or alignment of two or more identities does not prevent them from existing as independent social identities for a given voter (Brewer, 2001). This can be true, whether they are aligned (subordinate and superordinate) or conflicting (Settles 2004). Not only do most individuals hold multiple social identities, but those identities may change in relative salience or centrality depending on the social context (Engelhardt, 2021; Settles, 2004). They can also come more into alignment with each other over time, sometimes causing the suppression of one identity (Egan, 2020; Levendusky, 2018; Mason, 2018). Therein, identities can also be cued independently of one another (J. Horowitz, 2022; Klar, 2013). Lastly, they can lend different psychological and social frames that guide a given individual toward certain affective and behavioral responses (Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023).

I argue that in democracies with an observable alignment of ethnicity and partisanship, partisanship and ethnicity can move independently for many, and that the cultural framing of partisanship should lend itself to being more effective channel for mobilization in politics. This is supported by key findings from Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT), which notes that while humans naturally seek out a sense of belonging, the drive for individuation is similarly strong. As a result, when a group identity fails to distinguish the individual, they may pursue new or additional group ties to maintain self-esteem or satisfaction 5/22/2023 5:42:00 PM. Partisanship is form of self-categorization and identity that lends itself to such positive distinction (Greene, 2004). While it typically fluctuates with electoral cycles, for many voters ethnicity is a generally stable feature (K. Ferree & Chandra, 2012).

But there are also cultural motivations for why political identities may differ and partisanship may be best suited to mobilization. Across many societies there is a widely held taboo against ethnic, religious, or racial chauvinism (J. Horowitz, 2016; Young, 1979). But, across partisan categories, there are weaker norms against prejudice and animosity, meaning discrimination may only represent fair play (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). This allows would-be ethnic voters to more freely engage in the animating exchange of insult and accusation against outgroup members (Mason, 2018). Relatedly, ethnicity is constructed and practiced in many subtle or banal contexts of daily life (Habyarimana et al., 2009). Partisanship, in turn, is implicitly defined as a vehicle for intergroup competition and status (Huddy et al., 2015). This distinction again should favor a more emphatic engagement through partisan channels.

With elections begin many opportunities for voters to experience subjective rewards through partisanship from building new social connections (Anderson et al., 2012), to exposure to richer emotional appeals in media targeting their identity (Brader, 2006; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Thus, in considering ethnicity and instrumental incentives alone, scholars may fail to identify many elements of how voters respond to uniquely partisan and non-material incentives.

4.3 The case: Ghanaian voters

Both main parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), cannot credibly campaign on programmatic policy reforms (Nathan, 2019). In place of this, campaigns focus on universally-liked principles, such as fighting corruption and growing the economy, leaving few differences in either party's platform (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2013). At the same time, both parties are regularly revealed to be involved in corrupt enterprises at most levels of the party structure (Luna, 2019). In this equilibrium, voters are said to be courted through the provision or promised provision of clientelist benefits to people like them or their community (Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Paller, 2019). However, as I show in Chapter 3, Ghanaian voters' political behavior appears to also be motivated by subjective rewards extending from social identities.

The partisan alignment of major ethnic groups is also common knowledge in Ghana, such that both voters and party organizers can assume and strategically respond to it (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). Members of ethnic groups falling under the Akan language group (the Asante and Akyem, especially) tend to vote for the NPP and expect to benefit from their victories, while Ewe people are equally or more reliable voters of the NDC (Friddy, 2007). These two groups represent around 47.5% and 14% of all Ghanaians respectively (Hoffman & Long, 2013). Other groups, including some within the Akan language group (e.g., Fante) are less aligned and swing from one election to the next. Though difficult to estimate, among highly-aligned groups around 70% of members vote with their ethnicity (Hoffman & Long, 2013).

The parties reach voters in several ways. They have relatively deep historical roots, having competed for and exchanged power in mostly free elections since 1996, and also having inherited geographic bases that extend back to the independence period (Nathan, 2023). They also have commonly known brands and ideological associations, though this ideological difference is rarely reflected in their policy (Bob-Milliar & Paller, 2022). Both parties also rely on widespread networks of local party offices to achieve substantial direct contact with voters, offices they are required to maintain to compete for national office (Riedl, 2014). While many voters commonly petition their local party elites for assistance and jobs (Paller, 2019), relatively few are contacted by the party or actually receive such benefits (Brierley & Kramon, 2020; Lockwood et al., 2023).

Although Ghana has a stable party system relative to some other developing democracies, it is a useful case to advance the study of social identities in politics. Within countries surveyed by Afrobarometer, it appears to be unremarkable in terms of party ties: for 14 out of the 33 countries in the sample, the rate of affirmative responses to the Afrobarometer (Round 7) question "do you feel close to any particular political party?" was greater or within 5 percentage points of Ghana's. To the extent that it is a unique case to study partisanship and ethnicity, exploring these questions in a context that furnished many key examples of an instrumental model of ethnic voting should be a priority for scholars (e.g., Schatzberg 2001, Bates 1983, Ichino and Nathan 2013, Brierley and and Kramon 2020). While this area of research will ultimately be refined with

results from a more diverse set of cases, directly relating it to the evidence behind current theories.

Lastly, the respondents that participated in the survey at the core of this paper live in peri-urban areas. The literature on electoral politics in younger democracies has often focused on rural cases, but is increasingly extending to urban populations, which represent more than half of Ghana's citizenry (Nathan, 2019). Urban and rural politics are distinct, with rural communities tending to be more ethnically and politically homogeneous, as well as led by local chiefs and headmen (Atwell & Nathan, 2021; Goldstein & Udry, 2008; Nathan, 2023). I focus on peri-urban areas as geographic contexts support the dynamics of both urban and rural politics, though they are also independently interesting as a rapidly growing slice of Ghanaians settle in such areas (Afriyie et al., 2014; Cheeseman, 2022). A descriptive table of community-level covariates is available in Appendix A. `Sample Balance Table`.

4.4 The survey and experimental prime

I sampled respondents six areas within three hours of Ghana's capital (Accra) in December 2021. Areas were selected to ensure variation in the local political context related to voting. Namely, I considered whether an area is a stronghold for either party or competitive (Paller, 2019) and whether an area is dominated by one of Ghana's largest ethno-linguistic groups (Ichino & Nathan, 2013). I conceptualize this by selected pairs that are NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds, and competitive, and whether it has more than 65% and less than 35% of one of Ghana's most politically relevant ethnic groups.[29]

4.4.1 Separating aligned cleavages

To generate causal clarity over the four hypotheses, I rely on an original lab-in-the-field experiment. The design targets the elevation of the salience of a respondents' partisan or ethnic identity, while suppressing the salience of the other aligned identity. In doing so, I am able to artificially separate partisanship from ethnicity and understand the relative behavioral stakes of

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[29] I describe my sampling procedure in detail in Appendix C. Survey Details.

being socially identified with either, if there are any. The intervention itself is modeled on real world stimuli in which canvassers, media, and social interactions can play into polarization (Conroy-Krutz et al., 2016; Michelitch, 2015; Moehler & Conroy-Krutz, 2016).

Respondents were assigned to one of three possible versions of a behavioral game: an identity-neutral control condition, a condition heightening partisan identity salience while suppressing ethnic identity salience, and a condition that heightens ethnic identity salience while suppressing partisan identity salience.[30]

Concretely, respondents participated in a multi-round dictator game. In each round, the *allocator* could freely allocate 5 Ghanaian Cedis (or roughly $1.25 USD at the time of the survey) between themselves and the player and include a brief message if they so choose. Unbeknownst to the respondent, the player opposite them, who was distinct in each round, was always simulated (the debriefing process is described in Section 4.4.3). By including simulated respondents, I can link a type of play with a specific outgroup. To lower an identity's salience, respondents had a positive affective experience with an outgroup member on that cleavage, building solidarity, reducing prejudice, and narrowing notions of difference and competition (Lewis, 2011). To raise salience, respondents met a negative affective experience via spiteful play from an outgroup member on that cleavage, sharpening prejudice and expanding notions of difference and competition (Brewer, 1999). In the final round, they were the allocator with a different member of the same outgroup as the previous round.

For each respondent, the simulated player in the first round was altruistic, giving 4 of 5 cedis with the explanation that "people who assist their friends also prosper." In the second round, a different simulated respondent gives 0 of 5 cedis with the explanation that "[a] [respondent's group] should take care of a [respondent's group]." Finally, in the third round the respondent was able to allocate 5 cedis to a new player and give their own motivation for how much they gave.[31]

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[30] The design draws inspiration from Broockman et al. (2020), West & Iyengar (2022), and others who experimentally alter polarization and partisan animosity among respondents in the US.

Condition	Round 1 Altruistic player	Round 2 Spiteful player	Round 3 *Resp. gives*	*n*
Neutral	No label	No label	No label	304
Toward ethnicity	Non-copartisan	Non-coethnic	Non-coethnic	293
Toward partisanship	Non-coethnic	Non-copartisan	Non-copartisan	345

Table 11. Treatment conditions

Respondents had either (1) an altruistic non-coethnic followed by a spiteful non-copartisan, (2) an altruistic non-copartisan followed by a spiteful non-coethnic, or (3) an altruistic generic respondent followed by a spiteful generic respondent. In each case, in Round 3 they were matched with someone of the same group as the player from Round 2, though were informed it was a different individual. Conditions are summarized in Table 11. Respondents had an equal probability of being assigned to each condition.

Because the manipulation is relatively subtle, I anticipated experimental effects could decay quickly and randomly varied the order of outcome measures. This helps avoid the possibility of false negatives with outcomes asked later due the attenuation of effects under constant ordering.

4.4.2 Manipulation checks

My primary manipulation check predicts the difference in post-treatment evaluations of the in- and outgroup on the relevant cleavage. For example, the outcome for those in the partisan social identity condition is the evaluation of their party (and its members) *minus* their evaluation of the other party (and its members).[32] If, for example, the ethnic prime was successful, either the ethnic ingroup favorability should rise, the outgroup favorability should fall, or both, all of which should be reflected in a larger difference in the outcome measure. I compare evaluations against the control condition by regressing these outcomes on a treatment indicator, with demographic controls and constituency fixed effects. The identity prime clearly worked for partisanship and

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[32] I asked respondents, "would you say you feel more unfavorable or favorable toward _____ [people/and its supporters]?" In the few cases in which a respondent supported a third party, I randomly assigned on of the two main parties as a reference outgroup.

both identities when pooled but is marginally not significant for the ethnic prime ($p = 0.101$), although signed in correct direction. Figure 10 plots these estimates.

I proceed with pre-registered analyses as planned despite the manipulations not appearing unanimously successful. In Appendix L. `Dropping "never takers"`, I demonstrate that respondents with low baseline identity strength had on average weaker responses to treatment and this appears to drive the null result on the ethnic identity manipulation check. This closely mirrors a central finding from Samuels & Zucco (2014), who found Brazilian nonpartisans did not react to partisan priming cues for lack of a salient partisan identity. When dropping the lowest quartile of identifiers in their respective treatment groups, I find each manipulation was successful and the signs and significance of my results remain the same (though the point estimates become more extreme and standard errors smaller).[33]
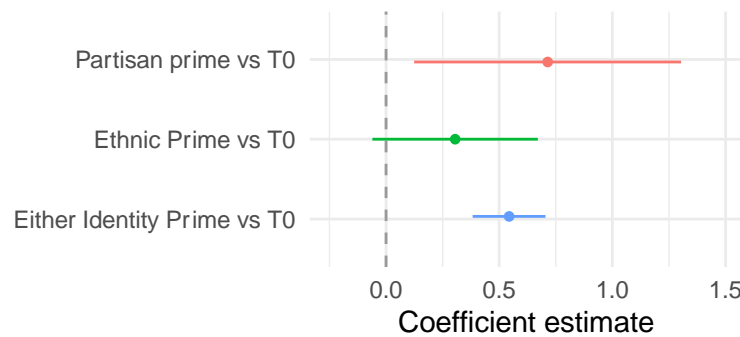
Figure 10. Estimates of the difference in post-treatment in- and outgroup favorability evaluations (-9—9). For the partisan prime I compare evaluations of co- and non-copartisans, and for the ethnic prime I compare evaluations of coethnics and the members of the ethnic group most-closely aligned with the other party. For the pooled comparison, I take the average of the two evaluation gaps as an outcome.

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[33] I include a second manipulation check which asked, "of all the identity groups to which you belong, which one is most important to your identity?" The results of this test would suggest neither prime was successful, though I argue that because it is a very coarse measure (asking respondents to re-prioritize their primary identities) it can be ignored with little loss to internal validity.

4.4.3 Study ethics

Sampled individuals were informed of expected risks and benefits of participation as outlined in a protocol approved by Health and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board of the University of Michigan. Respondents were not directly compensated for participation, but the listed benefits included the possibility of receiving a small amount of money during an activity. In fact, they received the full endowment of the three rounds of the activity, such that there was no real-world punishment for altruism in the third round with a simulated individual. Because of the deception involved in the design respondents were thoroughly debriefed following the survey, with great attention given to our belief that a no given ethnic or partisan group is more, or less discriminatory than any other. Lastly, this research was conducted among populations largely unvaccinated against Covid-19. While compliance was not universal, enumerators were firmly instructed to wear medical masks, maintain distance, and conduct interviews outdoors. There was no known incident of respondents or enumerators contracting the virus.

4.5 Outcomes and predictions

I parse the three hypotheses' experimentally using three outcomes that represent different dimensions of electoral mobilization and social identification. Specifically, I test if treatment status is linked to (1) higher levels of tit-for-tat discrimination against members of an outgroup member, (2) the degree of motivated reasoning around perceptions of party performance, and (3) the likelihood of expressing definitive support for one's party in future elections. Each of these concepts span behavior and psychology and serve as an important mechanism by which an individual may remain close to their party when performance is poor. The main comparison will yield directional estimates of the effect of being assigned the partisan prime versus the ethnic prime, though I also compare each prime to the control group.

The first outcome, group boundary policing, is operationalized through the notion of petty discrimination. Such discrimination, violence, and general transgressions are an important dimension by which identifiers can spontaneously and independently engage in interactions that affirm their own belonging, as well as raise the threat of punishment of defectors (Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). This is a common occurrence in the developing

world, as Michelitch (2015) shows in Ghana. In my own interviews, a number of Ghanaian respondents reported being hesitant to reveal their partisanship for fear they would suffer exactly this kind of discrimination in public life. In one case, a woman who lived in a stronghold of the other party reported avoiding political discussions and highlighting her support as she had been previously harassed by neighbors to the point of being frightened (Voter in Ogbodjo, Interview, Mar. 2022). In another case, a market worker and strong partisan living in an area that favors her party noted that she would still lose many customers if she wore clothing with party symbols (Voter in Madina, Interview, Nov. 2021).

The second, motivated reasoning in assessing party performance, relates to a broad literature linking partisan social identities to several ingroup cognitive biases. Strongly identified individuals tend to perceive the world around them in ways that are favorable to their individual and/or group esteem. This includes seeking out information from favorable places (Levendusky, 2018), evaluating information more favorably when it aligns with group attachments (Adida et al., 2017; Bisgaard, 2015; Lodge & Taber, 2005), and recalling more favorable information (Bartels, 2002). To the extent that a voter casts her vote based on retrospective evaluations, those evaluations can be influenced by wide deviations from objective indicators of performance. This also was readily reflected in many interviews in which respondents admitted they dismiss bad news about their party out of hand as propaganda from the other party, as well as a consistent practice of describing the other party as corrupt and predatory.

Lastly, I observe willingness to commit to supporting the party in the future through the surety of vote choice in the next general election. While furthering a party's cause can take myriad forms, including attending a rally, attending community meetings, or volunteering for local party development efforts, being more certain of one's vote choice indicates a high level of commitment to the primary goals of the party—winning. This may draw on a sense of linked fate (Donnelly, 2021), subjective goals like exacting envy (McClendon, 2018), or attempts to elevate/maintain the status of the group (Groenendyk & Banks, 2014). Though this outcome may ultimately carry an element of "cheap talk", I argue that increases in vocalized support as a result of a minor prime still reflect a useful outcome to party mobilization efforts in real world exchanges.

Table 12 describes how I evaluate the four hypotheses. If I observe no effects from either prime on any of my main outcomes, I conclude that *hand-in-glove* and an instrumental perspective is sufficient to explain the role of identity. If I observe only effects on the ethnic prime, this would support the coalitional partisanship view as it would demonstrate the presence of expressive motives extending from the more fundamental cleavage. If I observe significant results from the identity primes, but cannot distinguish the role of either cleavage, this would indicate support for the affective partisanship perspective, which predicts subjective motives from an unspecified bundle of identities. Lastly, if I observe experimental effects from both, and can distinguish them this would support the *multiple belongings* view.

	Electoral motive	
	Instrumental	**Affective/Expressive**
Single identity	(1) No effects	(2) Indistinguishable effects
Multiple identities	(3) Effect on ethnicity only	(4) Distinct effects

Table 12. Experimental expectations

I also note that when interpreting results from either prime when compared to the control, this is not just the effect of that identity being primed, but that identity with some of the overlap with the other stripped away. Results can plausibly be interpreted as the effect of one identity prime while having partially "partialed-out" the other.

4.6 Results

To assess the impacts of the two primes relative to the control condition, I regress outcomes on a treatment indicator that takes the value of 1 if they were in the relevant identity prime condition and 0 if in the control condition. To then test whether there were meaningful differences between the two primes, I regress outcomes on a treatment indicator that takes on the value 1 if assigned to the partisan treatment and 0 if in the ethnic condition. In each case, the model takes the following form:

where is a binary indicator for treatment assignment, is a sampling area fixed effect, and is an idiosyncratic error term. I include several demographic controls including *log(*age), an assets index (0-8), gender, and education. To avoid spurious results due to ordering effects and the decay of treatment, the outcomes were asked in one of six possible orders, and I include a factor variable to capture which version respondents were asked. For hypotheses *1* and *2* I report OLS estimates. Because the outcome in hypothesis *3* is binary (as pre-registered), I estimate effects using logit regression. For each estimate, standard errors are clustered at the constituency-level ($n = 3$).

I first compare the effect of each prime against the control group. If an identity is strictly or mostly instrumental in nature, it should have no bearing on respondents' behavior or thinking in responding to prompts that have no impact on expectations of material returns to partisanship or voting. In other words, we should not observe experimental effects as a result of having primed that identity. Instead, in Table 13 I find that the partisan prime produced significant results on my main three outcomes and ethnicity did so on the final outcome (vote surety). This casts doubt on both the *hand-in-glove* and *coalitional partisanship* hypotheses as potentially explaining the breadth of group ties.

Y_i	$treatment_i$	β	p
Amount sent (0–5 GHS)		-0.10*	< 0.05
Party performance eval. gap (-9–9)	In partisan prime (vs. control) (0,1)	0.55***	< 0.0001
Vote surety (0,1)		0.56**	< 0.01
Amount sent (0–5 GHS)		-0.08	0.178
Party performance eval. gap (-9–9)	In ethnic prime (vs. control) (0,1)	0.09	0.454
Vote surety (0,1)		0.08**	< 0.01

Table 13. Comparing primes to the control

I now turn to my comparison of the partisan and ethnic social identities. While my design does not allow me to compare the magnitude of effects of each identity in true isolation, the two treatment conditions partially "partial out" one from the other. Thus, these comparisons represent directional tests of the impact of feeling *more like* a partisan or *more like* an ethnic identifier.

Results are reported in Table 14. I find on average respondents gave slightly less as a result of being in the partisan condition, but this result is not statistically significant ($p = 0.65$). The gap in respondents' evaluations in the partisan treatment were 1.11 points wider than those in the ethnic treatment ($p < 0.0001$), reflecting heightened motivated reasoning. I find respondents were significantly more likely to be certain of their vote choice ($p < 0.01$).[34] Taking these secondary results together, there is strong evidence that the ethnicity and partisanship primes were distinct in their impacts, making every hypothesis except *multiple belongings* insufficient frames for understanding the role of identity in defining and sustaining group ties.

Hypo.	Y_i	$treatment_i$	β	p
1	*Amount sent* (0–5 GHS)		-0.10	< 0.001
2	*Party performance eval. gap* (-9–9)	In an identity prime (0,1)	1.15	< 0.0001
3	*Vote surety* (0,1)		0.57	< 0.001
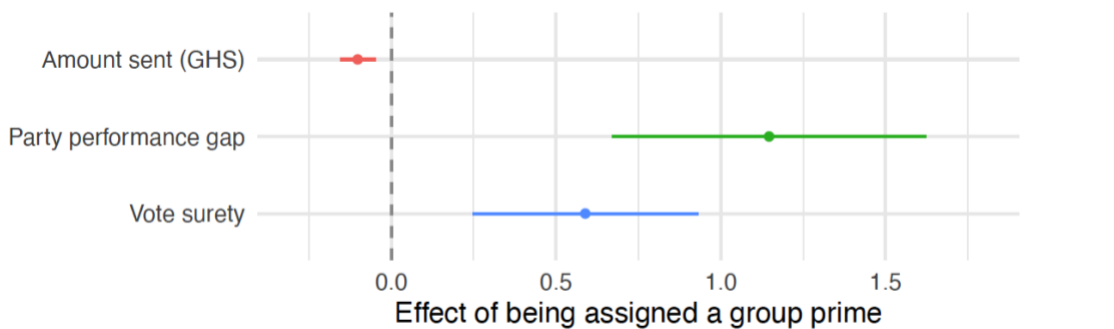
Table 14. Partisan versus ethnic social identity prime. The x-axis represents the coefficient on the independent variable in each model. The first two models are estimated with OLS and the third is estimated with logistic regression. Each model includes demographic controls and sampling area fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.

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[34] Precisely, they had a 73% increase in the odds of expressing certainty. While this may not reflect eventual vote choice in the subsequent election (which falls almost three years after the survey) the result is noteworthy. In semi-structured interviews after the 2020 election, but especially in interviews before the same election, a plurality of respondents quickly defaulted to saying it was "too early" to talk about the elections, let alone to know for whom to vote.

4.7 Discussion and exploratory analysis

My results so far favor the "multiple belongings" hypothesis. I support this finding by exploring along two related points. First, I confirm that I successfully ethnicity and partisanship and that the partisan prime was not priming both ethnicity and partisanship. Second, I conduct sub-group analyses to show these results hold regardless of whether respondents belong to one of Ghana's most-aligned ethnic groups.

4.7.1 Are they **really** *distinct?*

The directional comparison of partisanship and ethnicity shows priming partisanship has a greater effect than priming ethnicity on two of three outcomes. This runs counter to much of the literature on ethnic voting which favors the *hand-in-glove* hypothesis (Keefer, 2010). Is the partisan prime *still* cuing the more essential ethnic belonging, creating a stacked treatment? If this is the case, and respondents in the partisan identity prime on average report higher favorability of their partisan ingroup, they should also do the same for their ethnic ingroup. Regressing the group favorability outcomes on a treatment indicator (with controls and fixed effects) I find evidence of the opposite being true. Respondents assigned to the partisan prime updated both group evaluations to a statistically significant degree. However, though they updated their copartisan evaluations upwardly ($= 0.09$, $p < 0.05$), they updated coethnic evaluations downwardly relative to the control condition ($= -0.10$, $p < 0.05$). From this, it appears very unlikely that this was a stacked treatment, and the two cleavages were handily separated by the design.

4.7.2 Does it matter which ethnicity?

To the extent that partisanship and ethnicity are overlapping, the amount of overlap and therefore separability could plausibly vary from one ethnic group to another. in Ghana, each party benefits from the strong on of certain ethnic groups; the Asante and Akyem tend to support the NPP, while Ewe voters along with the Mole-Dagbani typically favor the NDC (Hoffman & Long, 2013; Ichino & Nathan, 2013). It would therefore be plausible that my results are partially or mostly driven by the roughly 45% of my sample that does not have any tie to those groups.

I find this is not the case. I repeat my main directional comparison within two sub-samples, one of respondents belonging to a strongly aligned group and one of all other respondents. The groups I code as strongly aligned are select Akan groups (Asante, Akyem, and Fante), Ewe, and Mole-Dagbani, each of which Hoffman and Long (2013) found to have supported one party by 15 percentage points or more than the other in the 2008 national election. In Table 15 I present the effects of being the partisan treatment (instead of ethnic). Two out of three *multiple belongings* results hold in direction and significance among the strongly aligned groups and one of the results holds in the weakly-aligned respondents. Though, these are not well-powered estimates and I interpret them with measured caution, it is indicative of robustness. More precisely, they suggest the relevance or experience of partisanship is conditioned by the nature of one's ethnic group, but it does not indicate that a low degree of overlap between the categories is necessary to separate them. Therein, I expect this pattern of results to carry quite far with respect to variation in ethnic group in-voting.

	Y_i	X_i	β	p	n
	Amount sent (0–5 GHS)		0.12***	< 0.001	286
Strong align	*Performance eval. gap* (-9–9)	Partisan prime (vs. ethnic)	0.45	0.08	286
	Vote surety (0,1)		0.56*	< 0.05	287
	Amount sent (0–5 GHS)		-0.17	0.25	250
Weak align	*Performance eval. gap* (-9–9)	Partisan prime (vs. ethnic)	0.08	0.14	250
	Vote surety (0,1)		0.79***	< 0.001	251

Table 15. Experimental effects by ethnic group alignment

I further explore this question by examining the mean (pre-treatment) identity *strength* of respondents within the same subgroups. Contrary to the previous robustness check, it may be the case that identities are only separable where partisanship identity is significantly strong. This would most likely be true among strongly aligned groups, which as core groups of electoral support are potentially most often exposed to campaigns and other mobilizational experiences. I assess partisan and ethnic attachment using a affective measure of group identification adapted from studies like Bankert et al. (2017), Huddy et al. (2015), and (Laebens & Öztürk, 2021). Respondents answered to what extent they agree or disagree with each of statement six statements (strongly disagree-strongly agree). These items are presented in Appendix D.

`Partisanship Measure Further Details`. Each index is produced by mapping responses to a 1-5 scale, averaging responses and re-scaling that vector to fall between 0 and 1.

Table 16 presents the statistical relationships between being in a strongly aligned group and identity strength. Coefficients are estimated from a model including demographic control and sampling-area fixed effects via OLS. Results suggest that only neither partisan nor ethnic social identification is responsive to group size. This undermines the hypothesis that my main results hinge on the strong overlap between ethnicity and partisanship.

Y_i	X_i	$\hat{\beta}$	p	n
Ethnic identity (0–1)	Strongly-aligned (0,1)	-0.01	0.37	960
Party identity (0–1)		0.01	0.60	786

Table 16. Association of identity strength and overlap. Models include demographic controls, sampling area fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency-level.

Lastly, I let respondents speak for themselves. Immediately after asking the items that feed into the identity strength measures, respondents were asked "how similarly do you think [the typical member of your ethnic community or tribe] would answer the questions about their party?" Roughly 75% of respondents suggested dissimilarity or neutrality. This would indicate that voters in Ghana not only experience ethnicity and partisanship as distinct social categories, but there is a surprisingly strong conscious assumption that ethnicity does not have a deterministic relationship with how voters feel about their partisanship.

4.8 Conclusion

The shift toward an instrumental view of identity and political belonging has furnished a much richer and complete understanding of individual behavior as well as higher-order outcomes like quality of governance. However, while the earlier expressive frames it replaced lacked precision and grounding in cognitive science and psychology, an expressive or *social identity* approach appears compatible with instrumental motivations. This paper has shown that in considering how

psychological attachments to a party or social group impact behavior, scholars should exercise care when choosing which identity matters and how.

I identify four common hypotheses in the literature that present different views of how overlapping identities relate to each other. The first (*hand-in-glove*) casts political identities as instrumental, unlikely to impart any psychological or affective elements, and a relabeling of a more essential social cleavage. The second, (*affective partisanship*) allows voters to have affective attachments, but focuses on specifically the affective party tie, largely not considering the intersection of multiple affective ties. Thirdly, I consider the approach of some scholars who appear to explore intergroup relations through the prism of a superordinate partisan identity (*coalitional partisanship*). Lastly, I consider a "multiple belongings" hypothesis in which some scholars allow for affective attachments to multiple identities, potentially with different effects on behavior and cognition.

Through an original lab-in-the-field experiment that saw 973 Ghanaian voters have their affective attachments to partisan and ethnic groups briefly manipulated, I provide clear evidence to parse the three hypotheses. Over three outcomes that each represent different channels by which voters become or remain polarized in their cognition and behavior, I show that both partisanship and ethnicity function as social identities. In addition, I show that partisanship has a greater impact than ethnicity on two of these three outcomes. Together, this suggests (1) scholars are right to consider the electoral relevance of social identities, (2) should remain aware of how those identities intersect and overlap, and (3) should not overlook partisan social identities, even in young and clientelist democracies.

I contextualize these findings and show that results are, in fact, reflective of an artificial separation of ethnic and partisan identification. Though many of my respondents belong to ethnic groups with high rates of ingroup voting, on average my brief intervention was able to move the salience of the constituent identities in opposite directions. I also explore whether experimental effects tended to differ according to whether a respondent belonged to one of Ghana's strongly aligned groups. I find little evidence of this, noting only higher rates of motivated reasoning among members of strongly aligned groups in the partisan prime.

In broad terms, this study should encourage the application of theories from political psychology in the developing world, as well as those from sociology. While allowing for behavior and psychological biases that extend from group attachments adds important nuance to comparative political behavior, many such approaches have maintained imprecision as to how or why an identity matters. Without adding greater structure to how identities differ, it remains difficult to predict for whom psychological and behavior biases will be more active and present. Identifying conditions where partisan social identification is higher may also shed light on when party consolidation and stability is likely to emerge.

As a stable two-party democracy, Ghana appears to be a most-likely case to study the effects of social identities in politics, perhaps suggesting need for caution when establishing the external validity of the above findings. However, while Ghanaians have had more time to vote for the same party, this has not made Ghana exceptional in basic indicators of partisan attachment in Afrobarometer data as shown in Section 4.3.

To the extent that evidence of instrumental voting from Ghana can be carried to other countries in the Global South, I argue my evidence might be extended similarly. However, I arrive at my results despite the relatively low strength of partisan identities (as measured in the middle of the electoral cycle) and subtle nature of my experimental manipulation. I also find differences between the two social identity treatments despite the ethnic outgroup in the ethnic prime being the group most closely aligned with the opposing party (i.e., the group most likely to also prime partisan categories). Lastly, my sample is a diverse set of electoral constituencies, suggesting my findings are not, for example, firmly limited to areas of low or high ethnic diversity.

Appendix A. Sample Balance Table

Community	NPP		Competitive		NDC		Mean
	AS1	AS2	ES1	ES2	GS1	GS2	
Wealth index (0-8)	3.90	4.37	4.31	4.50	4.23	5.25	4.43
Pct. Ewe	0.51	0.11	0.12	0.39	0.53	0.23	0.32
Pct. Akan	0.36	0.81	0.45	0.38	0.17	0.44	0.43
Pct. JSS completed	0.62	0.70	0.73	0.66	0.62	0.78	0.69
Pct. NPP voters	0.37	0.55	0.37	0.24	0.31	0.42	0.38
Pct. NDC voters	0.50	0.22	0.42	0.51	0.54	0.37	0.43
Pct. women	0.52	0.49	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.51
N	166	166	139	140	173	177	961

Table 17. Sampling area demographic characteristics.

As initially planned 1,056 respondents were contacted. Only five individuals did not consent to be interviewed.

Because of technical issues with the survey programming on certain tablets, additional 29 respondents were not asked a number of outcome questions and are dropped in analyses where the relevant outcome is missing. Another 9 were dropped as they appeared to have been completed outside of sampling areas. Last, out of an abundance of caution, another 70 were dropped having been submitted by an enumerator that was found to have falsified at least several interviews. Although it is very unlikely more than a handful would have been altered, I cannot be certain beyond a few cases which ones are affected and hence drop all forms submitted by that individual. In most analyses, 973 or 961 respondents.

However, because a number of respondents either did not reveal their partisanship or had no party, I was not able to measure the strength of the affective partisan tie in every case. Concretely, I analyze responses of 785 respondents in most models. This corresponds to a response rate to the partisan question of around 80%, which is exceeds response rates to a similar Afrobarometer question when asked in Ghana.

Appendix B. Akan Voters and Partisan Identity

I next consider whether belonging to one of Ghana's most partisan-aligned ethnic groups is correlated with identity strength. In Table 18, I regress party and ethnic affective identity scores on an indicator of whether a respondent was Akan (versus Ewe), including demographic controls, sampling area fixed effects, and standard errors clustered at the constituency level. I show that being Akan (instead of Ewe) is not associated with higher rates of party attachment. Thus, while my sample favors Akan voters (mostly because of ethnic geography), this bias does not seem immediately likely to have an immediate impact on my analyses or conclusions.

	Ethnic identity salience	Partisan identity salience
	(1)	(2)
Akan (0,1)	−0.022	−0.004
	(0.020)	(0.015)
Observations	654	653
Adjusted R^2	0.081	0.008

$^*p<0.1;$ $^{**}p<0.05;$ $^{***}p<0.01$

Note: I include demographic controls and sampling area fixed-effects, and cluster standard errors at the constituency level.

Table 18. Are Akan respondents more partisan?

Appendix C. Survey Details

The survey was fielded with some logistical assistance from CDD-Ghana, a non-partisan Ghanaian civil society organization. CDD (Center for Democratic Development) is one of the most trusted survey-fielding organizations throughout Ghana, conducting all surveys for Afrobarometer in Ghana. With CDD's assistance, a team of 15 enumerators was hired to conduct this survey. In each sampling area, a team of five enumerators set out from a common point in opposite directions, contacting every fourth house. Data was collected using an electronic form on a small tablet. Forms were coded, loaded, and filled out in Open Data Kit (ODK), an open-source application and platform for the electronic collection of data. In initiating each interview, they requested to speak to either a woman or man (alternating from the gender of the previous respondent) and collected the ages of all adults of that gender. From that list, an individual was randomly selected by age in the app. If that respondent was not available, the enumerator would attempt to recontact the selected individual later on the same day before replacing them with a new household. Interviews lasted 20-30 minutes on average.

Appendix D. Partisanship Measure Further Details

All respondents were asked the following six items that were used to calculate the ethnic identity strength measure. Being asked the partisan battery was contingent on being able to ascertain partisanship. Despite enumerators clearly stating that the survey is non-partisan, many survey respondents refuse to answer these questions. In the last Afrobarometer survey in Ghana (2019), around 26% refused this question. In my survey, 25% refused the initial question. To avoid losing potentially a full quarter of my sample, after refusal I inferred partisanship if respondents rated the favorability of one party above the midpoint of the scale and rated that party at least two points above the other. After imputing partisanship from the thermometers, only 19% of the sample did not have a party (i.e., I recovered the partisanship of 62 respondents). Among those that I did impute, there was no notable difference in the actual party that was inferred (26 were flagged as NDC supporters and 36 flagged as NPP).

Lastly, because it is not uncommon that as an interview continues respondents become more open or passively reveal their partisanship, I included a question that allowed enumerators to report whether they thought the respondent genuinely had no party or were just reticent to share. Roughly half (51%) of those who refused the partisanship question were judged by enumerators to have a party affiliation they preferred to not reveal.
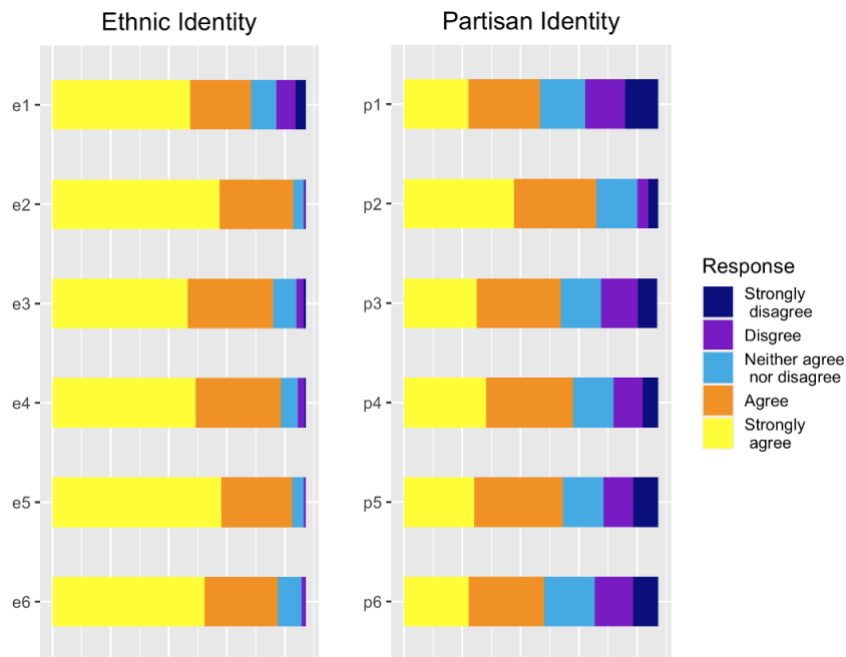

Figure 11. Distribution of responses to each item in identity strength measures. Each bar represents items presented in the same order as they appear in Table 3.

Appendix E. Variable Definitions

The following table presents all the main predictors included in my primary analyses. Columns describe the survey item with basic summary statistics, including the sample mean and standard error of each variable.

Variable	Question/Definition	Range	Mean	Std. Error
Knowledge index	# of correct answers to: the vice president's name, number of seats in parliament, number of supreme court justices	0-3	1.1	0.02
Ethnic outgroup therm	"Would you say you feel more unfavorable or favorable toward [ethnic group] people?"	1-10	6.1	0.08
Ethnic ingroup therm	"Would you say you feel more unfavorable or favorable toward [ethnic group] people?"	1-10	8.2	0.08
Woman	Coded 1 if woman	0,1	0.5	0.02
Age	log(age)	18-83	37.2	0.01
Wealth	Number of the following assets owned/accessed: smartphone, electricity gas stove, motorcycle, bicycle, radio, livestock, formal housing	0-8	4.43	0.05
Education	Completed Junior Sec. School	0,1	0.7	0.01
Core constituency	Lives in a stronghold constituency	0,1	0.5	0.02
Incumbent supporter	Supports the New Patriotic Party (NPP)	0,1	0.5	0.02
Clientelism (personal)	Sometimes party figures will give voters assistance or jobs. If the NPP won the next election, how much more likely is it that someone like you would receive such benefits compared to if NDC won?	0,1	0.57	0.02
Clientelism (local)	Sometimes party figures will provide things like better roads, electricity, community buildings or other resources to areas that support them. If the NPP won the next election, how much more likely is it that someone like you would receive such benefits compared to if NDC won?	0,1	0.53	0.02
Core ethnicity	Belongs to Ashanti, Ewe, Fanti, or Mole-dagban	0,1	0.8	0.01
Inherited party	"The party I support today is the same party most adults in my home voted for when I was growing up"	0,1	0.5	0.02
Voting consistency	Affirmative evaluation of the prompt, "I have always voted for the same party"	0,1	0.7	0.02
Practice index	In the last two months: attended a rally, met with a party official, or wore party clothing	0-3	0.5	0.03
Partisan radio	Reported listening to radio that "completely", "mostly", or partly favors their preferred party	0,1	0.5	0.02

Table 19. Definitions of independent variables

Appendix F. Main Regression Table

In the first column I report the full regression model that yields Figure 2 in the main text. In the second column, I show that results are generally stable to estimating it without predictors that fall in the category of demographic variables. All significant predictors in the preferred specification remain significant. I note only that being in a swing constituency and having a *higher* opinion of a cross-partisan ethnic outgroup become significant. In the main model (with controls), these were only marginally insignificant. In Appendix H, I replicate this significance in examining their unconditional correlation with affective partisan identification. However, in estimating their individual relationships with partisanship in

Appendix G, I find only the swing constituency variable remains significant.

	Party ID strength	
Incumbent supporter	0.005	0.004
	(0.017)	(0.013)
Practice index	0.053***	0.052***
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Inherited party	0.078***	0.073***
	(0.012)	(0.018)
Vote consistency	0.079***	0.083***
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Knowledge index	-0.006	-0.015
	(0.014)	(0.018)
Ethnic ingroup therm	0.006	0.005
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Ethnic outgroup therm	0.003	0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Clientlism (personal)	0.065*	0.068**
	(0.029)	(0.025)
Clientlism (local)	0.027	0.024
	(0.042)	(0.043)
Swing constituency	0.015	0.021*
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Core ethnicity	0.024***	0.021**
	(0.007)	(0.008)
Woman	0.023**	
	(0.009)	
Education	-0.014	
	(0.034)	
log(age)	0.048	
	(0.045)	
Wealth	0.000	
	(0.004)	
Num.Obs.	785	785
Sampling Area FE's	✓	✓

Models include sampling area fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency-level. Both include an indicator for random assignment to discussing partisanship before ethnicity and vice versa. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 20. Regression tables of main model, with and without demographic controls.

Appendix G. Individual Models

This table presents results of regressing my partisan identity strength measure on each class of predictor independently as an alternative to the "kitchen sink" approach that features in the main text. All point estimates maintain the same sign. I replicate the finding that expectations of personal clientelism are associated with stronger identification while local clientelism is not. I also find that being in a swing constituency is now significant, while belonging to a core ethnic group is no longer.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Incumbent supporter	0.00 (0.02)								
Practice index		0.06*** (0.01)							
Inherited party			0.09*** (0.02)						
Vote consistency			0.11*** (0.01)						
Ethnic ingroup therm				0.01 (0.01)					
Ethnic outgroup therm				0.00 (0.00)					
Knowledge index					0.01 (0.02)				
Clientlism (personal)						0.08* (0.03)			
Clientlism (local)						0.03 (0.06)			
Swing constituency							0.11*** (0.01)		
Partisan radio								0.10*** (0.03)	
Core ethnicity									0.03 (0.02)
Num.Obs.	786	786	786	785	786	786	786	786	786
Dem. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sampling Area FE's	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 21. Individual models of main predictors.

Appendix H. Correlogram of IV's

To further examine the relationship between independent variables and my main outcome, partisan identity strength, I present unconditional correlations between all variables in Figure 2. Cells which are colored blue indicate a positive and significant correlation between those variables, while cells which are colored red are negatively and significantly correlated. A cell with an X indicates that the *p*-value on the t-test of those two variables' correlation was above 0.05, and therefore not significant.
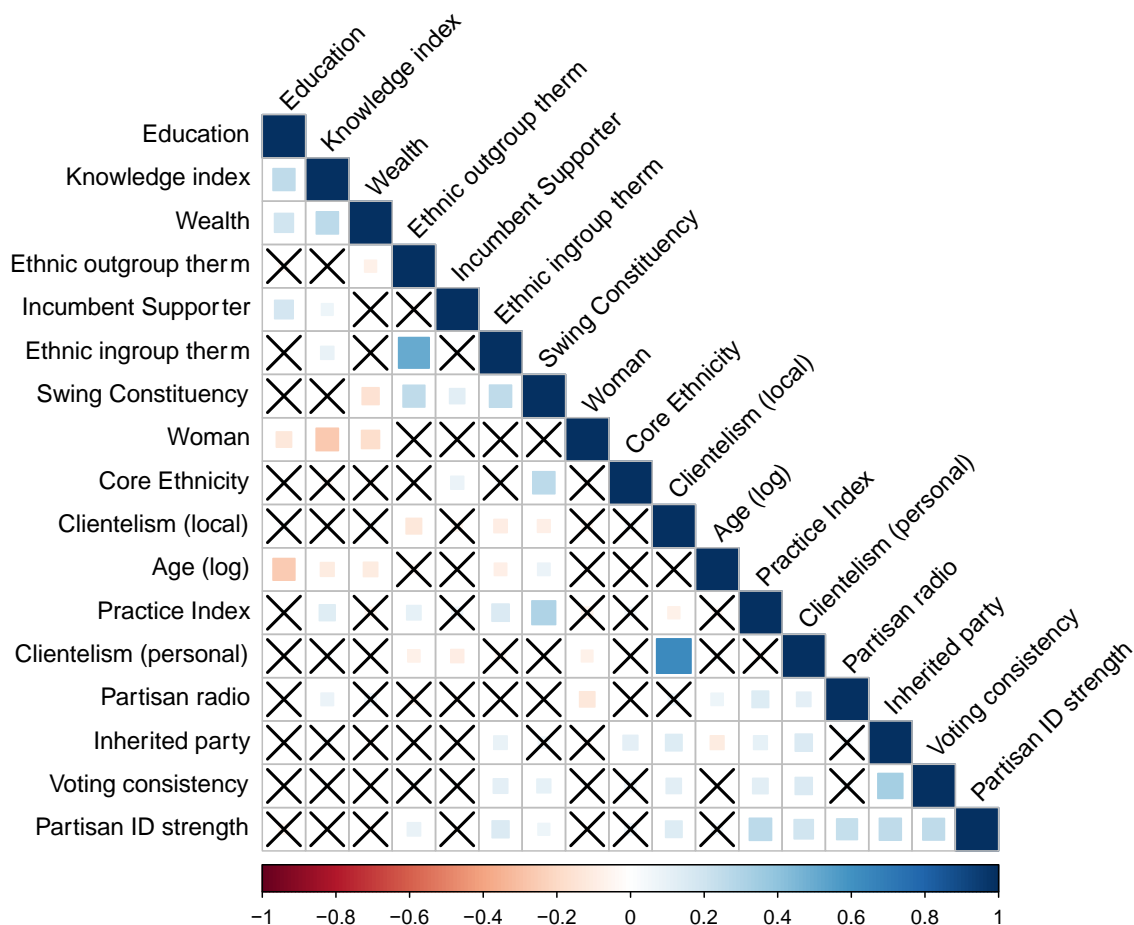

Figure 12. Correlogram of main predictors.

Appendix I. Media and Emotions

Here I examine the effect of partisan identity strength on item gauging emotional dispositions asked later in the interview. Following experimental assignment in a priming activity, respondents were asked "to what extent do you feel _____ when you think about Ghana today" in reference to *happiness*, *pride*, *anger*. These three emotions are commonly associated with *approach behaviors* in the psychology literature (Brader and Marcus 2013). *Approach* emotions broadly describe states of feeling that support openness and engagement. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale (1-5), where higher responses reflect greater prevalence of that feeling. To calculate the index, I took the average of the responses and rescaled respondents' scores to fall between 0 and 1.

Controlling for experimental assignment, I examine the relationship between respondents' affective tie to the party and their emotional disposition in model estimated with OLS, including demographic controls and sampling area fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the constituency-level. I find listening to partisan radio is linked to greater expression of these activating emotions.

	Approach emotions (0,1)
Partisan radio	0.041***
	(0.010)
Woman	0.001
	(0.004)
Education	-0.011
	(0.009)
log(age)	-0.010
	(0.020)
Wealth	0.003
	(0.005)
Num.Obs.	814

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 22. Association of partisan radio exposure and approach emotions

Appendix J. Treatment Balance Table

To ensure that there are no substantively significant differences in pre-treatment covariates between treatment groups, I present mean values of several variables in Table 23. Respondents were assigned to treatment with equal (1/3) probability. Of note, is the partisan condition seems to have a higher number of Akan respondents and fewer Ewe. The primary concern for inference is if objective belonging in either treatment group is associated with stronger identity strength. To clear this possibility, I subset to only respondents that are Ewe or Akan and regress ethnic and partisan identity scores on a variable that equals 1 if they are Akan and 0 if Ewe. Results are presented in Appendix B. Akan Voters and Partisan Identity I find no significant association with either outcome and do not consider this detrimental to my conclusions.

Condition	T_0	T_1 (Ethnic)	T_2 (Partisan)	Mean
Wealth index (0-8)	4.45	4.42	4.43	4.43
Pct. Ewe	0.35	0.34	0.27	0.32
Pct. Akan	0.42	0.41	0.46	0.43
Pct. JSS completed	0.74	0.66	0.66	0.69
Pct. NPP voters	0.47	0.45	0.47	0.46
Pct. NDC voters	0.5	0.53	0.52	0.52
Pct. women	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.51
N	313	306	342	322

Table 23. Treatment balance tables

Appendix K. Activity Script

Respondents were introduced to the prime with the following script:

> As a part of this survey, you have an opportunity to receive money from people we have already interviewed and also give money to people we will later interview. Who you are matched with will be randomly and anonymously determined from our long list of people we interview. When we give someone money to share, we tell them what kind of person that we will deliver it to. For example, we might say "you have been selected to share your money with a Northerner". Later when we interview a Northerner, we see how much they were given and we give them that amount. Sometimes you may be matched with someone similar to you, but sometimes it is someone from a different group. Every round is someone new. If you are the giver, you are given 5 <u>cedis</u> for that round. You can give all, some, or none of this money to the recipient (0-5) and a brief reason. Whatever you don't give, you can keep.

Round	Experience type	Respondent's role	Resp. gets	Sim. player gets	Given motivation
1	Positive	Receives	4	1	"People who assist their friends also prosper."
2	Negative	Receives	0	1	"A [resp.'s group] should take care of a [resp.'s group]."
3	–	Sends	5-x	x	–

Table 24. Description of Dictator Activity

The activity itself was guided with the following script:
1. Earlier you said or hinted you are an [party] supporter and a [ethnic demonym]. I will enter this so later other people can know something about you and I know what you receive.
2. For the first round you were matched to receive from a [non-target outgroup] person who was asked to share with a [non-target ingroup]. They were given 5 cedis and sent 4 cedis. They said that people who assist their friends also prosper.
3. Next, you can receive again. You were matched with someone who described themselves as an [target outgroup] who was asked to share with a [target ingroup]. Let's see! I am sorry they decided to send you 0 of the 5 cedis. They kept all 5 and said they prefer to let a [target ingroup] take care of a [target ingroup].
4. We will switch now and you can give. We would like to pair you with an [target outgroup] to share. You can give them between 0 and 5 cedis. How much do you wish to give to them? Do you want to share why you gave them the amount you gave them?

5. There is no one else available on the system at this time, so I am instructed to end the activity. Out of a possible 15 cedis, you have ended with [final sum] cedis. Thank you for participating in this short activity.

Appendix L. Dropping "never takers"

My main pre-registered manipulation check showed the ethnic identity prime was not successful in widening the gap in group evaluations. In favor of the prime, the sign is correct and the *p*-value approaches significance (0.101). Nevertheless, in this section I explore a theory of heterogeneous treatment effects that can account for this null and adds nuance to our understanding of for whom identity-based mobilization will be most impactful.

A fair number of voters in pre-survey interviews and piloting very clearly had a very weak connection to a party, if any connection at all. I argue that weak identifiers are less like to have their identities primed by my design for two possible reasons: (1) their identities were unmoved because they lacked any social or psychological proximity to that group to be pushed toward it, and (2) they may have moved away from that identity, because in this case, belonging appeared costly given the exposure to discrimination in round 2 of the activity. This mirrors an observation from Samuels and Zucco (2014) that Brazilian voters in their experiment who had no party could not be cued toward being a stronger partisan.

To explore this possibility, in Figure 13 I present my manipulation checks over a subset of my respondents. Namely, I drop the lowest quartile of pre-treatment identity scores on the relevant cleavage. This is an objective and clear rule that allows me to define low identifiers who are likely to be *never takers* in the case of the experiment. I find both primes pass the second manipulation check, likely affirming that low identifiers were washing out the successful prime in the rest of the sample.
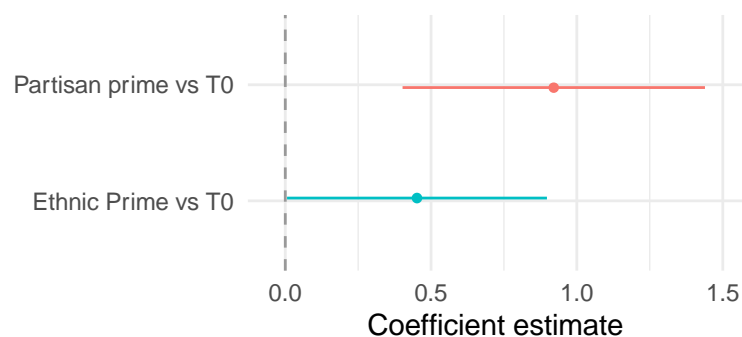

Figure 13. Manipulation checks dropping never-takers

Because the pre-registered checks were nearly successful, I use the full sample in my main analyses. However, in Table 25 I present my hypotheses estimated without the lowest quartile a

robustness check. All experimental results hold in significance and with the exception of one, which becomes significant. In addition, in all but three cases the magnitude of effects are slightly larger, further suggesting that respondents with low baseline identity strength were generally unmoved by treatment relative to the rest of the sample.

Hypo.	Y_i	X_i	β	p
1a	*Amount sent* (0–5 GHS)		-0.19	< 0.0001
1b	*Party performance eval. gap* (-9–9)	In an identity prime (0,1)	0.67	< 0.0001
1c	*Vote surety* (0,1)		0.69	< 0.001
2a	*Amount sent* (0–5 GHS)		-0.060	0.337
2b	*Party performance eval. gap* (-9–9)	In partisan (vs eth.) prime (0,1)	0.45	< 0.0001
2c	*Vote surety* (0,1)		0.682	< 0.05

Table 25. Robustness to dropping never-takers

I also check whether being a strong party identifier at baseline produces a similar pattern of results to the partisan identity prime. If they are similar this would generally suggest that what was primed is conceptually similar to what the identity strength measures are capturing. I regress my main three outcomes on whether or not the respondent was in the upper two quartiles of the partisan social identity measure, including my demographic controls and sampling area fixed effects and controlling for treatment assignment. At baseline, higher levels of partisan social identities produce the same pattern of results. I find being in the partisan social identity prime and having higher levels of partisan identification produce the same pattern of results. This is an important endorsement of my experimental design; the experimental priming of identity has similar effects.

	Dependent variable:		
	Amount sent	Performance eval. gap	Vote surety
	OLS	*OLS*	*logistic*
Strong identifier (0,1)	−0.209*** (0.040)	1.964*** (0.239)	1.110*** (0.521)
Observations	727	702	729
Adjusted R^2	0.006	0.097	
Residual Std. Error	1.209 (df = 714)	3.051 (df = 684)	

Note: All models include a full battery of demographic controls and sampling area fixed-effects. Standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.　　　*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 26. Main outcomes predicted from baseline identity strength.

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