Do Ethnic Groups Retain Homogenous Preferences in African Politics? Evidence from Sierra Leone and Liberia

Fodei Batty

Abstract: It is frequently argued that ethnic groups across Africa retain homogenous preferences stemming from a sense of collective identity and shared destiny, and that they unvaryingly prefer the same outcomes in zero-sum competitions for scarce resources. This article presents results from comparative field surveys examining these claims in Sierra Leone and Liberia following postconflict elections. In contradiction with conventional expectations, the results show corroboration on several issues across voters from several ethnic groups as well as heterogeneity in preferences among voters from the same ethnic groups in both countries. The implications for democratization and conflict resolution in Africa are discussed. E-mail: fbatty@colgate.edu

Résumé: On avance souvent que les groupes ethniques à travers l'Afrique conservent des préférences d'homogénéité provenant d'un sens d'identité collective et d'une destinée partagée, et qu'ils favorisent les mêmes opinions dans la concurrence pour les ressources limitées. Cet article présente les résultats de sondages comparatifs mettant en question ces affirmations en Sierra Leone et au Libéria, à la suite du vote d'élections après un conflit. Contre toute attente, les résultats montrent un esprit de collaboration sur plusieurs questions entre les membres d'ethnies différentes, ainsi que des différences d'opinion entre les membres des mêmes ethnies, dans les deux pays. Cet article aborde les implications de la démocratisation et des processus de résolution des conflits en Afrique.

Political outcomes such as electoral results, resource distribution, and most civil wars and other violent events in sub-Saharan Africa are typically explained as consequences of collective actions taken by reciprocally

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antagonized ethnic groups (see Basedau, Erdmann & Mehler 2007; van de Walle 2003). In the narrative that follows most events, one ethnic group or the other is portrayed as taking action to seek its own exclusive interests at the expense of broader national interests. The dominant assumption is that ethnic groups maintain homogenous preferences in seeking such outcomes and there are little to no collective action dilemmas within the group. Comparatively less scholarly attention is devoted to the analysis of internal group dynamics among co-ethnics to determine levels of support for actions that reflect group preference or to explain why all ethnic groups do not mobilize similarly in pursuit of comparable outcomes. Thus, in spite of the huge literature that is devoted to the analysis of political behavior in sub-Saharan Africa since the end of the colonial era, at the country level we still know very little about the individual motivations of members of ethnic groups who may be less amenable to violent mobilizations, for example, on behalf of the group.

In this article I explore the issue of assumed ethnic group homogeneity by examining whether voters from ethnic groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia expressed the same preferences on a range of electoral issues during critical postconflict elections. In doing so, I engage the literature on political behavior in African societies in regard to the behavior of ethnic groups. Ethnic census theories argue for the primacy of ethnic identity during political mobilization. Judging from such theories, there are hardly any valence issues or positions on which the majority of electorates across Africa uniformly agree or disagree; elections are mere censuses of ethnic support for co-ethnic party elites in zero-sum conflicts for scarce resources, and voters do not trust elites of other ethnic groups to deliver on electoral promises (see Horowitz 1985; Posner 2005; Udogu 2001).

Given this assumption, an understanding of a rank ordering of voter preferences and why voters may trust only the elites from their own ethnic groups to deliver on electoral promises is, arguably, a critical factor in understanding political behavior. Pertinent questions to address in this process include the following: do ethnic groups maintain homogenous preferences on all issues, or are there internal differences and dilemmas of collective action that point to group heterogeneity? How do elites mobilize ethnic support in the face of countervailing efforts by elites of other ethnic groups? Do ethnic groups believe that co-ethnic elites and their political parties are more competent to run the affairs of state than elites of other political parties? Do the members of all ethnic groups identify equally with the actions that are purportedly taken on their behalf by the elites of their ethnic groups?

These questions are important for scholars, election observers, peace negotiators, and mediators with regard to intervening in and resolving conflicts on the continent as well as reaching a general understanding of political mobilization in sub-Saharan Africa. Arguably, it is easier to address individual culpability than collective responsibility during conflict resolu-

tion, but it is always more challenging to identify and deal with the former in the face of assumptions about the homogeneity of group preferences. Certainly, not enough has been done by both scholarship and practitioners to determine what segments of ethnic groups are less likely or more likely to mobilize with co-ethnics, or endorse or even engage in violent action against other groups. In a manifestation of the problem, belligerents such as the former warlord Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone, who claimed to act on behalf of "his people," frequently battled dissidence within his own movement during the civil war and sometimes used the most brutal force against his own supporters to put down such dissidence (see Gberie 2005; Abdullah 2004). Yet following the cessation of hostilities, the assumption of group homogeneity made it difficult for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to determine culpability for war crimes and who really supported Sankoh and others like him among the followers of the Revolutionary United Front.

In view of the dearth of empirical evidence about the motivations of members of the same ethnic groups, I employed surveys following postconflict elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2002 and 2005, respectively, to explore the voting outcomes for five major political parties and the voting preferences of eleven ethnic groups in both countries. I find and report evidence of group heterogeneity over a range of issues as well as an important distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic interests. The latter is not a deterministic explanatory variable of vote choice among co-ethnics, as is frequently assumed in the literature. I argue that with the exception of Lindberg and Morrison (2008) and the Afro Barometer studies, most studies neglect the exploration of voter motivation in African societies, and thus commonly interchange identity for interests because such analyses are not anchored in appropriate data that are geared toward exploring internal group dynamics.

In what follows, I proceed with a brief background of the two postconflict elections, followed by a discussion of assumed group homogeneity in existing analyses of political behavior in African societies. I then make a conceptual distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic interests before presenting my findings from the surveys. I conclude by discussing the implications of the findings for the scholarship on ethnicity and politics, conflict intervention, postconflict institutional design, and democratization in multiethnic societies in sub-Saharan African.

Postconflict Elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia

In this study I explore dimensions of decision-making among ethnic groups as a means of testing explanations of ethnic census voting and homogenous preferences among co-ethnic voters. An application of ethnic census theories about political behavior to the cases of postconflict elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia reveals a gap between such theories and the evidence

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Table 1. Results of the 2002 Elections in Sierra Leone

Political Party	Total Votes	% of Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote for President	Parliamentary Seats
SLPP	1,293,401	67.6	70.06	83
APC	409,313	21.4	22.35	27
PLP	69,765	3.6	3.00	2
RUFP	41,997	2.1	1.73	—
GAP	25, 436	1.3	0.59	—
UNPP	24,907	1.3	1.04	—
PDP	19,941	1.0	—	—
MOP	15,036	0.7	0.55	—
NDA	6,467	0.3	—	—
YPP	5,083	0.2	0.20	—
Totals	**1,911,346**			**112**

Source: African Elections. http://africanelections.tripod.com/lr.html

offered by the results of those elections. Following violent civil war in the nineties, Sierra Leone held multiparty presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002 to cap a negotiated peace deal. For the parliamentary election, stakeholders settled upon a proportional representation (PR) electoral system that is intended to reward multiple political parties with vote shares (see Duverger 1954). The major issues in the electoral discourse included sustaining the still fragile peace, the rule of law and law and order, economic development and reconstruction of the heavily damaged infrastructure, jobs, and corruption (see Kandeh 2003).[1] While political parties of diverse dispensations formed to take advantage of the political space, the electorates largely ignored those parties to concentrate their voting preference around the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and its leader, the incumbent, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, as the party and leadership deemed most likely to consolidate peace. The SLPP won 70 percent of the votes cast for a total of eighty-three seats in a 112-seat legislature. Table 1 presents the results of the elections of 2002 in Sierra Leone.

Ostensibly, the SLPP draws most of its support from the Mende ethnic group that populates the south and the east of Sierra Leone (see Kandeh 1992, 2003). Yet the party won significant portions of votes from all regions of the country, even in regions dominated by other ethnic groups and considered political strongholds of parties with ties to those other ethnic groups. The puzzle that the SLPP win presents for ethnic census theories is that the Mendes make up less than 34 percent of the population of Sierra Leone, which consists of fifteen other ethnic groups. Thus, to win by the margin it did, the SLPP had to have secured the votes of other ethnic groups across the country. The question we must ask is why members of other ethnic groups cast their vote for the SLPP in spite of the presence of

other political parties on the ballot that could be considered more legitimate expressions of the interests of their ethnic groups?

A useful contrast to the Sierra Leone case is Liberia and the postconflict elections held there in 2005. The final results of the first round of voting diffused votes across twenty-two political parties that took part in the elections. The diffusion was so wide that no presidential candidate from the parties gained the constitutionally stipulated 50-plus-1 percentage of the votes to claim outright victory. A runoff election was held on November 8, 2005, in which the frontrunner following the first round of elections, George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), lost to Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the Unity Party (UP), who came in second following the first round of voting. Johnson-Sirleaf became the first elected female head of state in Africa. The broader campaign themes during the elections were similar to those in Sierra Leone three years earlier and included postwar reconciliation and rebuilding and youth unemployment. An additional issue here was the magnetic but polarizing candidacy of Weah who, as a relatively wealthy national soccer star, inspired a cross-ethnic national youth following unlike any that had been seen anywhere before in the West African subregion, even though the Liberian intelligentsia considered him uneducated and therefore unfit for the presidency (see Sawyer 2008; Harris 2006).[2] Table 2 presents the results of the 2005 elections in Liberia.

Variations in the electoral outcomes in Sierra Leone and Liberia suggest that there are differences in the ways ethnic groups mobilize politically, and such differences may point to greater heterogeneity than what is typically inferred in the literature on political behavior in Africa. Further, it may potentially capture distinctions between groups that are amenable to interethnic cooperation and those that are not during conflict mediation and resolution.

Ethnic Group Homogeneity in the Literature on Politics in Africa

What distinguishes a twenty-year-old Mende voter in the southern Sierra Leone city of Bo from a seventy-year-old Mende voter in the eastern Sierra Leone city of Kenema; or a male Yoruba voter from a female Yoruba voter in southwestern Nigeria? We are likely to gather from much of the scholarship that all these different demographic categories have the same preferences because they have a sense of common identity and shared destiny as Mendes and Yorubas, respectively. Consequently, they are much more likely to vote for someone from their ethnic group than otherwise in a given electoral contest. Arguably, it could be inferred from much of the existing literature that sociotropic calculations, or considerations for the state as a whole, are precluded in political decision-making in African societies (see Berman, Dickson & Kymlicka 2004; Ottaway 1999; van de Walle 2003). Instead, influential arguments suggest that considerations for narrow communal benefits underlie most aspects of political behavior and are the

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Table 2. Results of the 2005 Presidential Elections in Liberia

		First Round		Second Round	
Presidential Candidate	**Political Party**	**Votes**	**%**	**Votes**	**%**
George Opong Weah	CDC	275,265	28.3	327,046	40.6
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf	UP	192,326	19.8	478,526	59.4
Charles Brumskine	LP	135,093	13.9		
Winston Tubman	NDPL	89,623	9.2		
Varney Sherman	COTOL	76,403	7.8		
Roland Massaquoi	NPP	40,361	4.1		
Joseph Korto	LERP	31,814	3.3		
Alhaji G. V. Kromah	ALCOP	27,141	2.8		
Togba-Nah Tipoteh	APD	22,766	2.3		
William S. Tubman	RULP	15,115	1.6		
John Morlu	UDA	12,068	1.2		
Nathaniel Barnes	LDP	9,325	1.0		
Margaret Thompson	FAPL	8,418	0.9		
Joseph Woah-Tee	LPL	5,948	0.6		
Sekou Conneh	PRODEM	5,499	0.6		
David Farhat	FDP	4,497	0.5		
George Kieh Jr.	NDM	4,476	0.5		
Armah Jallah	NPL	3,837	0.4		
Robert Kpoto	ULD	3,825	0.4		
George Kiadii	NATVIPOL	3,646	0.4		
Samuel R. Divine Sr.	Independent	3,188	0.3		
Alfred Reeves	NRP	3,156	0.3		

Source: African Elections. http://africanelections.tripod.com/lr.html

prime indicators of how ethnic groups vote (see Horowitz 1985), engage in conflict (see Nnoli 1998), and make everyday political decisions in life (see Joseph 1999). Hence, inefficiencies in resource distribution resulting in sub-Saharan Africa's comparatively weak economic growth rates and accompanying underdevelopment, electoral outcomes, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and irredentism are all partly or wholly explained as consequences of similarly mobilized ethnic groups engaged in zero-sum conflicts.

From much of the analysis of political behavior in Africa we gather, for example, that since independence in 1960, Ibos in southeastern Nigeria, Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria, and the Hausa-Fulani in northern Nigeria all have divergent homogenous preferences and a zero-sum perception of resources accruing from the state based upon their sense of ethnic identity, not their identity as citizens in a larger, all-encompassing Nigerian state. Hutus engaged in indiscriminate massacre of Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 in a demonstration of "Hutu Pawa." Luos and Kalenjins were perpetrators of the violence against Kikuyu following disputed elections in Kenya in 2007 because all Kikuyu stood to benefit from the corrupt rule of Mwai Kibaki. Or, members of the Mende and Temne ethnic groups

who respectively reside in southeastern and northern Sierra Leone have homogenous preferences for the All People's Congress Party (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party as the political engines of their respective ethnic mobilization into national politics (see Kandeh 1992,2003).

With reference to political campaigns in Zambia, Posner (2007:1105) captures well a theoretical reasoning upon which much of these conclusions are based. According to him, "ethnicity assumes a position of prominence during election campaigns in Africa because it helps voters distinguish between promises that are credible from those that are not." Several assumptions inherent in this statement are yet to be subjected to rigorous empirical examination by much of the scholarship. The first one is that only co-ethnics are believed to deliver valuable resources from the state in the forms of roads, schools, and local clinics to their respective regional communities: thus the preference for ethnic elites and their political parties. Second, it is assumed that ethnic elites actually channel benefits to their local communities even though those same elites are frequently accused by the masses of massive corruption and failing to deliver electoral promises. If local ethnic communities are the beneficiaries of "pork" from the center by ethnic elites, then it is puzzling that rural areas in Africa have remained the poorest, most undeveloped, and most marginalized sectors of the continent, even though they are the communities to which they make the strongest claims.

Closely related to the preceding, other analyses ascribe political behavior and the flow of benefits into local communities to neopatrimonialism, patron–client networks, and clientelism (see Bayart 1993; Reno 1995; Orvis 2001). This strand argues that centralized state structures enable patrons, oftentimes ethnic patrons, to dictate political behavior from the center by dishing out favors in return for votes at the ballot box. Underscoring this vein of thought, Orvis (2001:7) points out that "ethnic and clan-based voting in many parts of Africa attests to patron-client networks' ability to act collectively; patrons can mobilize clients for political purposes." Separately, Reno (1995) and Liebenow (1987) discuss centralized state corruption in pre–civil war Liberia and Sierra Leone politics in these terms. According to the two, decision-making was carefully controlled from the center through elaborate patron–client networks of ethnic hegemonies woven, respectively, by the True Whig Party and Doe regimes in Liberia and the All Peoples Congress party in Sierra Leone.

Such has been the prevailing depiction of political events on the continent. Regrettably, much of the scholarship misses an important explanatory dynamic in the behavior of ethnic groups by suppositions of group homogeneity and an absence of dilemmas in undertaking collective action. If ethnic groups have homogenous preferences, why are members of the same ethnic group often at odds with one another? In some cases, such within-group differences are more pronounced and potentially more disruptive than disputes with outside groups. In Sierra Leone, members of the

Mende ethnic group in the eastern district of Pujehun engaged in a "mini civil war" during the 1980s, a bloody fratricide labeled the "Ndorgborwusoi Affair," which cost the lives of hundreds of residents in the area (see Gberie 2005).

In the case of the genocide in Rwanda, as another example, comparatively much less scholarly attention has been devoted, since the horrible events, to understanding why some Hutus disagreed with their co-ethnics about the status of Tutsis and subsequently paid for such disagreements with their lives while protecting Tutsis or refusing to engage in the massacres of 1994 (see Prunier 1995). In view of such contradictions, it is reasonable to suggest that all ethnic groups do not maintain homogenous preferences on the same issues. There are important differences in character among co-ethnics that potentially help explain why some groups engage in violent action in the name of the group while others refrain from such action even if they may feel similarly disaffected.

Donald Horowitz's (1985) influential work reinforced assumptions about ethnic group homogeneity in the study of African politics. Using evidence accumulated from various multiethnic societies in Africa and elsewhere, he argued that a direct relationship existed between ethnicity, party systems, and voting behavior in developing societies. According to him, elections were like an ethnic census in African societies and others across the world divided by race, language, and religion, taking into consideration an observed tendency of the "segments" of such societies to give large proportions of their votes to "ethnic parties" associated with those segments. He defined "ethnic parties" as political parties that draw support largely from an identifiable ethnic group and serve the interests of that group in return for electoral support. Ethnic parties and the party systems in which they operate exacerbate ethnic divisions in African countries leading to a zero-sum competition for state resources, he argued further.

Some scholars have raised a number of conceptual and methodological issues with Horowitz's analysis and similar studies that have advanced arguments in the same vein. Mattes and Gouws (1998) have cast doubt on his findings and question the clarity of his definition of an "ethnic party," asking what percentage of votes a group has to give to a party for that party to be referred to as an ethnic party. But the biggest concern they raise with Horowitz's analysis is his use of district-level aggregate data to make inferences about individual behavior, which they argued results in ecological fallacy. Using data from the South African elections of 1994, they claim to find little evidence of voting approaching an ethnic census.

Post–Cold War democratization in Africa, beginning with Benin and Zambia in the early nineties, attracted a number of studies examining elections and voting behavior on the continent, including Bratton and van de Walle (1997), Conteh-Morgan (1997), Sisk and Reynolds (1998), Udogu (2001), and Bekker, Dodds, and Khosa (2001). There are differing positions from this set of studies, but most reached conclusions similar to those

of Horowitz. Ottaway (1999), for example, noted that in the new political dispensation of democracy, "people became free to choose their own representative and they did so using ethnicity." A comparatively smaller number of studies pointed out that groups that mobilized against authoritarian regimes to pursue democratization following the end of the Cold War were often broad based and transethnic, citing instances in Benin, Zambia, Kenya, and Nigeria (see Joseph 1991; Oyediran & Agbaje 1991; Bratton 1992; Gerkie 1993).

Ethnicity as a Dependent Variable: Concept and Measurement

Arguably, the main reason that research has accounted more for group homogeneity and less for internal group dissension and potential heterogeneity in African societies is that the majority of the data has been captured and explored at the aggregate level, as pointed out by Mattes and Gouws (1998) in their critique of Horowitz's influential work. Until the initiation of the recent Afro Barometer studies, much of the existing studies failed to address or capture individual motivation. Most do not ask African voters why they voted for a particular candidate or why they support a particular position. Instead, conjectures about group behavior are frequently inferred from aggregated polling data showing regional dispersion of votes given patterns of ethnic settlements across countries.

Conceptual clarity about what constitutes the ethnic group is also lacking across various studies, and this has been unconstructive in attempts to make relevant inferences about ethnic groups from the scholarship. Horowitz (1985:53) cited "real or imagined shared ancestry" as a group referent identifying the in-group. Chandra and Wilkerson (2008:519) refer to the concept as an umbrella term under which scholars have included "identity categories associated with one or more of the following types: religion, sect, language, dialect, tribe, clan, race, physical differences, nationalities and case."

Indeed, much of the obfuscation of what are intended to be ethnic categories in the scholarship on African politics has revolved around the use of one or the other category to describe ethnic group action. In addition to "shared ancestry," some scholars have identified ethnic groups as groups that use and share the distinctive features of language, religion, physical features, or even cohabitation of a distinct geographical boundary (Hutchinson & Smith 1996).

There are particular challenges in applying referent categories to group behavior in most societies in Africa. Distinctions such as religion are not givens in terms of identifying membership in ethnic groups. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, it is possible to find members of the same ethnic group, indeed even members of the same family, that belong to different religions (see Moran 2006). Another frequently used determinant of ethnic identity—language—has its own shortcomings, because most Africans

today speak several languages and can identify equally with maternal or paternal lines. Young (1993:5) struck a note of caution that "ethnic identity does not always require a distinct language." He points out Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia where, respectively, Hutus and Tutsis speak the same language and Serbs and Croats do likewise. Intermarriages between members of different ethnic groups complicate attempts to conceptualize the ethnic group further because not all within a specified in-group may speak the same language.

In view of these examples of challenges to conceptual clarity in determining what constitutes ethnicity, the focus on the exploration of group preferences makes self-identification the optimal approach in group delineation. It is more useful to establish a dependent variable of ethnic identity by including individuals with the groups that they identify with and on whose behalf they are ready to act than it is to assign them to designated ethnic referents on the basis of physical features, geographic cohabitation, and other factors that have previously been used to determine what constitutes ethnic identity.

Looking beyond Ecological Inference in Determining Ethnic Voting

An interesting point about the literature on political behavior in African societies is that this scholarship built largely upon the bases, concepts, and accompanying theoretical constructs of work carried out by the pioneers of survey research methodology in the United States, such as the Columbia University and Michigan studies, without employing much of the methodological rigor that characterized those studies of voting behavior in America.[3] Some scholars have advanced reasons for this shortcoming. Cowen and Laakso (2002:9) point out that part of the problem in the early days of the scholarship on electoral behavior in African societies was cost concerns and the assumed complexity of organizing the sample survey in such societies. Nohlen, Krennerich, and Thibaut (1999) cite the inaccessibility of the geographical areas of interest as a limitation in studying elections in Africa, and some scholars were in disagreement over the right approach to be adopted in studying the emergent countries. These problems were only partially overcome by enlisting the use of the data that was easily available for analysis, which came in the forms of aggregated returns from demarcated polling zones over several elections. With little to work with, it is unsurprising that the analyses and insight provided by such scholarship was severely constricted by a limitation to group-level inference.

In the case of Sierra Leone, it was argued that the SLPP was historically a "Mende man's party" while the APC was founded to counteract the Mende hegemony of the SLPP. Sir Milton Margai, one of the founders of the SLPP, was a Mende man and the party drew heavy support from the Mendes, while the APC was founded to counteract the Mende hegemony of

the SLPP and the majority of Temne northerners voted for the APC in the 1967 elections (see Kandeh & Hayward 1987; Cartwright 1978). In the case of Liberia, the National Democratic Party of Liberia, founded by Samuel Doe to contest the 1985 elections, was a "Krahn Party" because Doe was from the Krahn group in Grand Gedeh County and members of his ethnic group benefited inordinately from his regime (see Liebenow 1987).

Following the 1967 elections in Sierra Leone, one fallacy of such arguments about the ethnic biases in the parties was in the conclusion that heavy polling for the APC in electoral precincts located in northern Sierra Leone or for the SLPP in southeastern Sierra Leone constituted a pattern of ethnic voting (see Salih 2001). If northern Sierra Leone was the traditional homeland of Temnes and the region voted overwhelmingly for the APC, or vice versa for the case of the SLPP and Mendes in southeastern Sierra Leone, then Temnes and Mendes, respectively, rejected the SLPP and the APC and were guilty of ethnic voting because the polling returns showed that the opposition party did not do as well in each of the opposing regions. Subsequently, the inevitable conclusion reached was that ethnic identity was the major predictor of political behavior and vote choice in Sierra Leone and similar societies emerging from colonialism.

In view of such assumptions, the requisite empirical confirmation requires observation of the outcomes of head-to-head electoral contests between Temnes and Mendes in Sierra Leone. For example, if in a given electoral contest a Temne candidate ran against a Mende candidate, and the all-Mende voters came out in uniform support for the Mende candidate while the all-Temne voters came out in similar support for the Temne candidate, then we may have an actual ethnic census. A mere headcount of the ethnic identity of voters in the given electoral constituency should be sufficient in revealing the winner of the contest, and for that matter the winner of similar contests for the foreseeable future as long as the respective distribution of Temnes and Mendes among the population in such a locality held constant.

However, the demarcations of administrative districts along lines of ethnic settlement, since colonial times, as a means of diffusing ethnic tensions, preclude such an electoral scenario because electoral constituencies for parliamentary elections are carved out of delineated districts. Thus, in any given election in Sierra Leone since the first multiparty elections for the legislative council in 1957, a typical electoral constituency featured several candidates from the same ethnic group who represented different political parties. The choice for voters during elections lay not between different ethnic groups but different political parties in either incumbent roles or challengers. Thus, in view of the correlations between regions, electoral constituencies, and ethnic groups, the basic support underlying previous assumptions of ethnic voting is violated by the very nature of electoral constituencies in Sierra Leone. The same argument applies to Liberia, as well,

Figure 1. Map Showing Ethnic Settlements in Sierra Leone

Source: Redrawn from Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

where administrative counties were delineated to accommodate ethnic settlements. The maps in figures 1 and 2 showing ethnic distributions in Sierra Leone and Liberia put this point into visual perspective.

In the Sierra Leone case, ethnicity is an identity variable when it is what defines *how* the people of a particular district, region, town, or other locality vote given correlations between such district, region, town, or locality and their ethnic identity and pattern of settlement. On the other hand, ethnicity is an issue variable if considerations for the preservation of the interests of any given ethnic group are the admitted and compelling reasons *why* electorates voted the way they did. If we go back to the examples of electoral constituencies I have referred to earlier, an analysis of survey data

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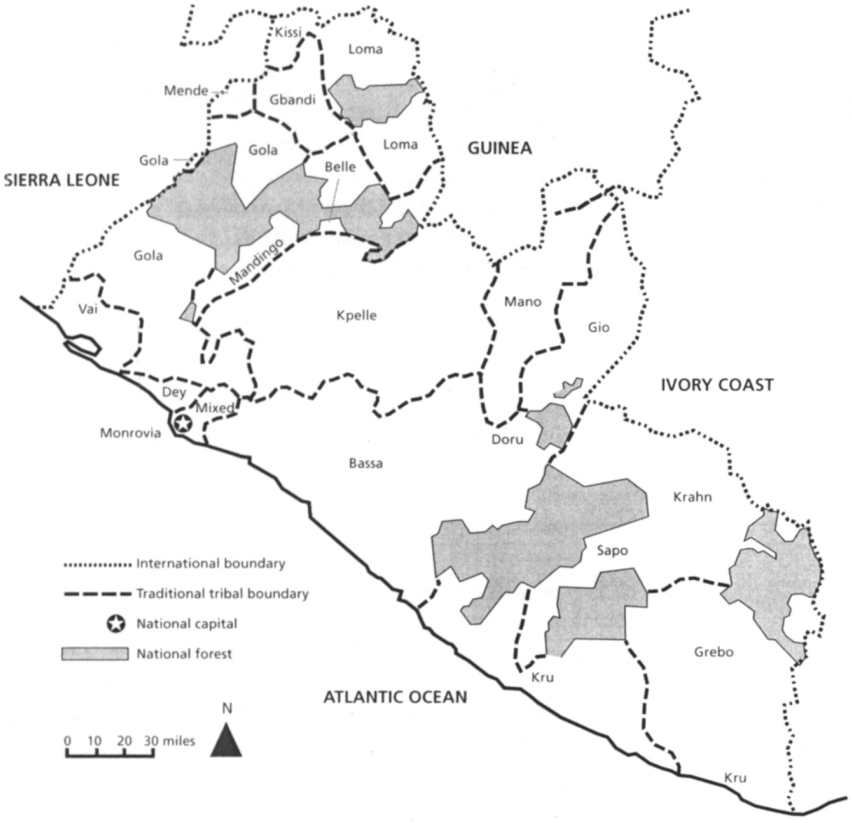

Figure 2. Map Showing Ethnic Settlements in Liberia

Source: Redrawn from Global Security.org

out of those areas asking the electorate how they voted is likely to reveal a largely skewed pattern of voting regardless of how the people voted. The results, if they turn out to be polling returns from southern Sierra Leone, would most likely reveal an SLPP victory showing Mende support for that political party as is likely to be the case for the APC in the North.

As an identity variable, ethnicity shows how people vote given their geographical distribution over an electoral constituency and their support for political parties within that geographical spread. By contrast, as an issue variable, ethnicity shows *why* as a collective electorates may have voted the way they did. The former could be determined by an assessment of aggregate data, which accordingly has resulted in charges of ecological fallacy

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Table 3. Political Parties on the Presidential and Parliamentary Ballot in the 2002 Elections of Sierra Leone

Political Party	Presidential Flag Bearer	Ethnic Group of Presidential Flag Bearer
All People Congress Party	Ernest Bai Koroma	Temne mother & Limba father
Citizens United for Peace and Progress	Raymond Kamara	Temne
Grand Alliance Party	Raymond Bamidele Thompson	Krio
Movement for Progress	Zainab Bangura	Temne
Peace and Liberation Party	Johnny Paul Koroma	Limba
Revolutionary United Front Party	Alimamy Pallo Bangura	Temne
United National Peoples Party	John Karefa Smart	Temne or Loko*
Sierra Leone People's Party	Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	Mandingo father & Mende mother
Young People's Party	Andrew Turay	Limba
Peoples Democratic Party	Osman Kamara	Temne**
National Democratic Alliance	Alhaji Amadu Jalloh	Fullah**

* Karefa Smart's ethnicity was always the subject of much speculation in Sierra Leone despite his long presence in the politics of the country. Up to his death in 2010 there is no public record of him clarifying the issue of his ethnic identity.

** Did not contest the presidential elections but political party was on the ballot in the parliamentary elections.

leveled by scholars such as Mattes and Gouws against the works of Horowitz and others who largely saw ethnic groups in conflict following such assessments. A determination of the latter entails going beyond that outward appearance of mass support for political parties within the geographical areas and exploring, deeply, the linkages between the elected representatives and those who vote for them or not from among co-ethnics.

Data Collection and Methodology

To undertake the prescribed task, the study was conducted using surveys consisting of open and close-ended questions on questionnaires that were administered by trained personnel of local nongovernmental organizations and civil society groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia during twenty months of fieldwork between 2006 and 2008. The sampling frames consisted of the voting eligible members of the populations who voted in the postconflict elections of 2002 and 2005, respectively, drawn from all twelve administrative districts in Sierra Leone and all fifteen administrative counties in Liberia. The ethnic units in the sampling frames were distributed to proportionately reflect ethnic group dispersion among the population of each country. Out of these, the surveys randomly targeted twelve hundred respondents per country. Following the initial round of surveys, questionnaires with unusable responses were thrown out and replacements were

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used to ensure proportionality until a satisfactory and statistically reliable number of usable responses were collected, reaching N = 910 for Liberia and N = 905 for Sierra Leone. The research had two focal points: (1) understanding how political elites recruit party membership in the postconflict environment, and (2) understanding how electorates respond to parties' and candidates' messages in addition to other cues and ultimately decide which to support. The article reports the second focus that was captured by the surveys in measuring preferences among voters. Among several objectives, the questions on the surveys generated data about the motivations of individual members of ethnic groups as they participated in the elections.

The Dependent Variable

The outcome that is explained in the study is the preferences of respondents, who are voters from the same ethnic group, for a number of parties on the respective ballots based on the perceived capability of each party to deliver on a series of critical issues facing the electorate when controlling for the ethnic identity of the central figure associated with each political party. Table 3 lists the parties that were on the ballot in the elections of 2002 in Sierra Leone as well as the presidential flagbearer of each party. Table 4 does the same for Liberia.

In the general survey, vote choices were measured as a vote for any of the eleven political parties that took part in the elections in Sierra Leone, and for Liberia, any of the twenty-two political parties that participated in the elections of 2005. However, in order not to make the analysis unwieldy, the findings reported here are based on the analyses of the votes for only the major contenders in each election and the voting preferences of the largest and most influential ethnic groups. Thus, in the case of Sierra Leone, the study reports the vote choices for the Sierra Leone People's Party and the All Peoples' Congress party, the two political parties that have alternated civilian governance of the country since independence in 1961. Vote choice was coded such that "1 = voted for the SLPP," and "0 = voted for the APC." The SLPP and the APC also polled the highest number of votes in the elections of 2002 and placed first and second, respectively.

For Liberia, the study reports analyses of the votes for the Unity Party, the Congress for Democratic Change, and the Liberty Party (LP), the three political parties that polled the highest number of votes in the country following the elections of 2005. Vote choice was coded as a dependent variable representing the preference among the three parties that polled first, second, and third following the first round of elections held on October 11, 2005.

For ethnic groups, the study reports the preferences of Mende and Temne respondents in Sierra Leone who constitute the two largest ethnic groups in the country. The preferences of members of the Kru, Bassa, Kpelle, Gola, and Vai ethnic groups are included among the ethnic groups reported for Liberia because the presidential flagbearers of the three par-

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Table 4. Political Parties, Presidential Candidates and Counties of Origin in the 2005 Liberia Election

Political Party	Presidential Candidate	County of Origin
Liberia Destiny Party	Barnes, Nathaniel	Maryland
Liberty Party	Brumskine, Charles	Grand Bassa
Progressive Democratic Party	Conneh, Sekou	Lofa
Independent Candidate	Divine, Samuel	Montserrado
Free Democratic Party	Farhat, David	Grand Bassa
National Party of Liberia	Jallah, Armah	Gbarpolu
Unity Party	Johnson-Sirleaf, Ellen	Bomi
National Vision Party of Liberia	Kiadii, George	Grand Cape Mount
New Deal Movement	Kieh, George	Margibi
Liberia Equal Rights Party	Korto, Joseph	Nimba
Union of Liberian Democrats	Kpoto, Robert	Lofa
All Liberia Coalition Party	Kromah, Alhaji	Lofa
National Patriotic Party	Massaquoi, Roland	Lofa
United Democratic Alliance	Morlu, John	Lofa
National Reformation Party	Reeves, Alfred	Gbarpolu
Coalition for Transformation of Liberia	Sherman, Varney	Grand Cape Mount
Alliance for Peace and Democracy	Tipoteh, Togba Nah	Sinoe
Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia	Tor-Thompson, Margaret	River Cess
National Democratic Party of Liberia	Tubman, Winston	Maryland
Reformed United Liberia Party	Tubman, William V.S.	Maryland
Congress for Democratic Change	Weah, George	Sinoe
Labor Party of Liberia	Woah-Tee, Joseph	Bong

ties that polled the highest votes following the elections of 2005 are affiliated with these ethnic groups. The Kpelles are the exception; they are included in the analyses because they constitute the largest ethnic group in Liberia, accounting for slightly over 20 percent of the population even though they did not produce a candidate for president in any political party.

Independent Variables

The independent variables used in the larger study represent the potential influences on the voting decisions of individuals of ethnicity, region, religion, the "big person," a vote for peace, and a vote for development and reconstruction following the civil war. Explanatory variables such as ethnicity, region, and religion were measured both as variables describing identity and also as variables capturing motivation as the reasons that a respondent voted for a political party. Ethnicity, region, the "big person," and the religious variable represent existing and older explanations of voting behavior in the literature. The vote for peace and the vote for development and reconstruction represent relatively recent explanatory factors which scholars such as Lyon (1999), Harris (1999), and Kandeh (2003)

argue influence voters in societies emerging from conflict such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. The statistical analysis reported here includes three of the six explanatory variables: ethnic interests, the vote for peace, and the vote for development and reconstruction.

To capture motivation, each explanatory variable reflecting identity was measured at two levels. Besides identification with an ethnic group, region, or religious group, each respondent was also asked why they voted for a political party and prompted with six reasons that reflect the explanatory variables. For example, to reflect ethnic motivation, each respondent was first asked: "why did you vote for the political party that you voted for in the elections?" They were then offered a range of response options, including "I voted for them because they are the political party most likely to represent the interests of my ethnic group." The responses on this option were captured on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Following an initial look at the data, I recoded the responses to reflect "not strongly agree," and "strongly agree" because there were no differences between the "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "agree" categories with regard to the dependent variable, but the "strongly agree" category was different from the rest of the responses in the relationships.

The goal is to explore patterns of ethnic group preference for political parties taking into consideration several factors representing decisions that influenced the vote choice during the postconflict elections. Based on the voting outcomes, the main assumption I make is that the patterns of ethnic group preference for political parties are more heterogeneous than homogenous, as typically assumed. I ran several estimations using various models but I report here only the analyses based on CLARIFY, a program developed by Gary King and others that amplifies tests of discrete binary variables and maximizes the reporting of the results to highlight within- and between-group differences in models capturing binary preferences (see King, Tomz, & Wittenberg 2000). The objective of using CLARIFY is to see if there are differences or variations in vote preference between respondents from the same ethnic groups that point to group homogeneity or heterogeneity.

To use the example of Sierra Leone, the models test the likelihood of vote choice if the respondent is Mende or Temne and strongly agreed or did not strongly agree with the statement, suggesting a reason that they would have voted for the political party for which they voted. CLARIFY reports the outcome variable as the quantity of interests with mean values of the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Each model tested the within-group probabilities of vote choice taking into consideration the individual's preferences on the issue variables that were suggested to them. In addition, I included, but do not report here, several interactions into each model in order to control more effectively for the interaction between the identity of different ethnic groups and their particular preferences on these variables. So, for example, one interaction term controlled for the relationship between Mendes alone and their preferences on the peace vote when

Table 5. "They are the party most likely to secure the interests of my ethnic group."

	Probability of Vote for the SLPP	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Mende	.95	.96
	(.02)	(.02)
Temne	.12	.36
	(.08)	(.03)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; P< .001

the variables for Mende, Temne, and that for the peace vote are included in a model at the same time. To manage the analyses, I report only the calculated probabilities for vote choice by members of each ethnic group, leaving out the much longer outputs of the results of the tests of each model.

In all of the tests, the research expectation is that there would be no difference among all members of the same ethnic group in their respective votes in view of suggestions in the literature that ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa tend to display homogenous preferences in vote choice.

Results

Sierra Leone

Table 5 reports the calculated effects of the probability of vote choice for the SLPP by Mende and Temne voters in view of their responses to the statement that they voted for a party because they believed it was the party most likely to secure the interests of their ethnic group.

The results show that there are no differences in vote choice among Mendes but there is for Temnes given their answers to the statement. Mendes who strongly agreed with the statement and those that did not strongly agree with the statement were more likely to vote for the SLPP, which supports previous assertions that the SLPP receives the bulk of its support from the Mendes. Among the Temnes there is a 24 percent difference in the probability of voting for the SLPP between those who strongly agreed with the statement and those who did not, demonstrating that there was a difference among Temnes on this issue and also that Temnes cast votes for the SLPP where they were not expected to do so.

Table 6 addresses the important question of which political party in postwar Sierra Leone was deemed most capable of preserving the peace and reconciling the country. Discourse around the time of the elections suggests that sustaining the peace was the most important issue. All campaigns leading up to the vote touted the capability of each party to maintain

Table 6. "They are the party most likely to secure the peace."

	Probability of Vote for the SLPP	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Mende	.97	.83
	(.01)	(.07)
Temne	.36	.19
	(.04)	(.07)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; P< 0.001

the hard-earned peace. Civil society movements in the country and members of the electorate also indicated that this was the most important issue for them. But how did the voters react to these campaigns? The table shows the pattern of support within the Mende and Temne voters taking into consideration their preference on the issue of peace.

Unlike the issue of the vote for ethnic interests, the result shows a significant gap between the vote choices of Mendes who strongly agreed with the statement on the vote for peace and those who did not agree. A similar gap exists between the calculated probabilities of vote choice for Temnes who strongly agreed with the statement and those that did not strongly agree. One suggestion that could be deduced here is that the peace vote was a more important factor in determining vote choice among the two groups, whereas it mattered less where the respondents stood on the other explanatory variable of ethnic interest, as it did not make a great difference in their vote choice.

Table 7 presents the results exploring within-group patterns in vote choice in view of the calculated probabilities of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement that they voted for a political party because they believed it was the party most likely to develop their country by rebuilding its infrastructure. Here perceptions about corruption and trust in elected officials to manage postwar reconstruction funds formed a part of the political discourse going into the campaigns that balanced the concerns for peace.

Although it is not as large as the differences in the preceding tables, the result here shows within-group differences for Mendes and the vote choice. Mendes who did not strongly agree with the statement were less likely to vote for the SLPP than those who agreed strongly with the statement. The result also shows that Temnes were more likely to vote similarly whether they agreed with the statement or not. This suggests, first, that Temnes were less influenced by ethnic identity interests in their vote choice, and second, that those who voted for the party were influenced more by other reasons, such as the vote for peace, not because they expected the party to develop the country

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Table 7. "They are the party most likely to develop the country and undertake postwar reconstruction."

	Probability of Vote for the SLPP	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Mende	.97	.90
	(.01)	(.06)
Temne	.33	.37
	(.04)	(.09)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; P <. 001

and rebuild its infrastructure following the civil war.[4] More important, the results demonstrate heterogeneity in vote choices among the voters.

Liberia

The next set of tables reports findings of models estimated in CLARIFY for vote choices for the CDC, UP, and LP by members of the Kpelle, Bassa, Kru, Gola, Loma, Grebo, Krahn, and Kissi ethnic groups. Each model displays the preferences of voters from the same ethnic group using the independent variables discussed in the Sierra Leone case earlier. In this case, taking into consideration the diffusion of votes following the Liberian elections in 2005, I estimated three separate models of the vote for each political party as dependent variables. For example, the first model estimated the probability that a respondent voted for the CDC if that respondent was Kpelle, Kru, Bassa, or any of the ethnic groups and if they agreed or disagreed with the statement that the political party for which they voted was the party most likely to secure the interests of their ethnic group. Table 8 reports the calculated probabilities of voting for the three political parties in view of ethnic identity and interests.

The table reveals differences and, in some cases, consensus among voters from the same ethnic groups in their vote choices taking into consideration their position on the vote for ethnic interests. The highest mean predicted probabilities of voting for the LP and the CDC are with the Bassa and the Kru, respectively, the ethnic groups from which the respective leaderships of the two political parties hail. The predicted probability of members of the Kissi ethnic group to vote for the UP is also rather high, which lends additional support to ethnic census theses because the running mate to Johnson-Sirleaf, Joseph Boakai, hails from the Kissi ethnic group.

However, it is also evident from the results that significant differences exist between members of the same ethnic group who strongly agreed with the statement with which they were presented and those who did not and

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Table 8. "They are the party most likely to secure the interests of my ethnic group."

Ethnic Group	CDC Vote		UP Vote		LP Vote	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Kpelle	.09 (.09)	.21 (.03)	.09 (.08)	.24 (.04)	.09 (.08)	.07 (.02)
Bassa	.05 (.03)	.24 (.04)	.08 (.03)	.24 (.04)	.85 (.04)	.36 (.05)
Kru	.80 (.09)	.56 (.06)	.07 (.07)	.25 (.05)	—	—
Gola	— (.26)	— (.09)	.50	.20	—	—
Loma	— (.13)	— (.07)	.71 (.11)	.35 (.04)	.12	.11
Grebo	— (.18)	— (.07)	.25	.31	—	—
Krahn	.58 (.19)	.55 (.08)	—	—	—	—
Kissi	— (.15)	— (.09)	.80	.48	—	—

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. P <. 001

the probabilities of their vote choices for the political parties associated with their ethnic groups. In the case of the Bassa, there is a .49 difference between the predicted probabilities of the vote choice of the members of that group and their vote for the LP. There is a .32 difference between Kissis who strongly agreed with the statement and those who did not, suggesting heterogeneity.

Table 9 reports the calculated probabilities of voting for the three political parties in view of their ethnic identity and peace interests. The table shows that the predicted probabilities of voting are higher for parties if respondents strongly agreed with the statement that their desired vote was for the political party they felt was most likely to secure the peace in Liberia. However, there are some noticeable exceptions to this tendency. The results suggest that in some instances, members of the Bassa, Grebo, Loma, Kru, Kissi, and Gola ethnic groups cast ballots for a political party even when they did not believe that it was the party most likely to secure the peace. Of particular note are the Kissi, Grebo, and Loma votes for the UP,

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Table 9. "They are the party most likely to secure the peace."

Ethnic Group	CDC Vote		UP Vote		LP Vote	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Kpelle	.20	.09	.23	.14	.07	.09
	(.03)	(.09)	(.03)	(.09)	(.02)	(.09)
Bassa	.15	.16	.16	.22	.58	.65
	(.03)	(.10)	(.03)	(.11)	(.04)	(.11)
Kru	.66	.53	.16	.33	.07	.08
	(.06)	(.10)	(.05)	(.11)	(.04)	(.08)
Gola	—	—	.19	.51	—	—
	(.08)	(.26)				
Loma	.38	.19	.38	.57	.07	.27
	(.07)	(.11)	(.07)	(.14)	(.04)	(.13)
Grebo	.48	.49	.29	.51	—	—
	(.07)	(.26)	(.06)	(.26)		
Krahn	.57	.38	.11	.36	—	—
	(.08)	(.23)	(.05)	(.22)		
Kissi	—	—	.51	.70	.04	.29
	(.09)	(.20)	(.05)	(.19)		

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. P <. 001

and the Bassa vote for the LP. The result suggests also that more members of the Kru ethnic group voted for CDC, the party of one of their own, even when they did not believe that it was the party most likely to secure the peace. Further, the results suggest that there was greater heterogeneity in the votes for the UP and the CDC than was the case for the LP.

The third model examined the preferences of members of ethnic groups in view of the consideration for reconstruction and development. Like the vote for peace, the vote for development and reconstruction required sociotropic calculations and an assessment beyond considerations for the narrow interests of one's ethnic community, since postwar reconstruction entails benefit to the country as a whole. Table 10 reports the calculated probabilities of voting for the CDC, the UP, and the LP by members of the ethnic groups in view of their preferences on the development and reconstruction variable.

The results show that there was more homogeneity among members of most of the ethnic groups than previous findings suggest, if the vote for

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Table 10. "They are the party most likely to develop the country and undertake postwar reconstruction."

Ethnic Group	CDC Vote		UP Vote		LP Vote	
	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Strongly Agree
Kpelle	.20 (.04)	.19 (.08)	.25 (.04)	.12 (.07)	.07 (.02)	.05 (.01)
Bassa	.16 (.03)	.09 (.06)	.15 (.03)	.23 (.08)	.57 (.04)	.68 (.09)
Kru	.61 (.07)	.64 (.08)	.16 (.05)	.27 (.08)	—	—
Loma	.41 (.07)	.22 (.09)	.36 (.07)	.55 (.11)	.10 (.06)	.12 (.08)
Kissi	— (.09)	— (.21)	.55 (.06)	.50 (.20)	.05	.28
Grebo	.47 (.07)	.50 (.14)	.25 (.07)	.50 (.15)	—	—
Krahn	.57 (.08)	.50 (.18)	.12 (.05)	.22 (.16)	—	—
Vai	.25 (.08)	.21 (.17)	—	—	—	—

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; P <. 001

development and reconstruction is taken into account. They also show that members of some ethnic groups voted for political parties with which they are not otherwise affiliated or led by elites from their ethnic group. This suggests that ethnic groups are capable of making pragmatic decisions that reflect broader national interests beyond the mere considerations for the interests of their ethnic groups.

Conclusion

This study was designed to find out if ethnic groups retained homogenous preferences in view of assumptions derived from the literature about the behavior of ethnic groups in African politics. Liberia and Sierra Leone are particularly useful case studies to test such assumptions because of the dispersion of ethnic groups and the competition for scarce resources following civil war. The results from the tests suggest that there are differences

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within groups following the elections in both countries. The differences are visible both between and among voters from the ethnic groups examined here and the vote choices that they made. We can also infer that peace was a valence issue for electorates in both countries. The results provide less support for the claims that collective actions such as voting in African societies is largely a predetermined homogenous outcome contingent on group identity rather than a process that is fraught with the typical dilemmas of collective action.

Identity-based explanations of group preference have abounded because of overreliance on aggregated data of regional voting patterns, which severely limited the findings in previous works into reaching conclusions about the homogeneity of ethnic preferences. However, even when guarding against ecological fallacy, explanations of political behavior in African politics may still fail to account for the voting pattern in cases where electoral lines are contingent upon predetermined administrative districts, some dating back to the colonial era. In order to gain a fuller understanding of why communities across sub-Saharan Africa show similar preferences in vote choice, and thus why they have come to be identified with support mainly for one political party or the other that is associated with their co-ethnic elites, the scholarship needs to develop a complex understanding of structural variables such as electoral districts within which individuals exercise their choices as well as the motivations that drive those choices.

Indeed, notwithstanding advances in technology and new methodology to undertake the empirical understanding of voting trends, the tendency to characterize political behavior in most sub-Saharan African societies along conventional conceptions of ethnically and regionally divided entities with much disregard for the complexities inherent within such societies persists, clouding our understanding of democratizing trends on the continent. The analyses demonstrate some of the inadequacies inherent in such a tendency by revealing the marked within-group differences among voters from the same ethnic groups in both countries.

The findings discussed here hold implications for policy regarding conflict resolution, institutional design for managing postconflict societies, and overseeing democratic reform in sub-Saharan African societies. There is often a vigorous debate over the suitability of proportional representation versus other types of electoral systems for African societies based on the assumption that such societies are divided along a range of identity cleavages that influence political behavior. The PR system is argued to have the advantage because it allows greater representativeness and inclusivity in national legislatures (see Reynolds 2002; Sisk & Reynolds 1998; Southall 1999). Others caution against the use of the PR system, arguing that it exacerbates ethnic tensions with incentives for separatist tendencies by rewarding diverse segments of the population with vote shares, however minute those may be. The findings of this study suggest that the type of electoral system employed during elections may matter little for achieving the outcome of representation in Afri-

can legislatures. The critical postconflict elections were conducted in Sierra Leone using the PR system, but voters from diverse ethnic and other identity backgrounds voted in a manner that showed a concentration of votes around a preferred political party and presidential candidate in spite of the presence of other political parties and presidential candidates on the ballot who could be considered more representative of their various identity interests.

Most important, the results show variation in the preferences of voters from diverse ethnic groups, suggesting that universal descriptions of political behavior in Africa may not be appropriate for the way we approach conflict resolution or think about politics on the continent.

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Notes

1. Interestingly, whereas sustaining peace was the major issue of the elections in 2002, corruption became "the issue" in the second postconflict elections of 2007 in Sierra Leone. The SLPP, which was viewed favorably by the electorate earlier on the first issue of peace, was subsequently deemed as a corrupt political party by the electorate and voted out of office after eleven years in office. The main opposition to the SLPP, the APC party, which did not do well in the polls of 2002, made a comeback to win at the polls in 2007 on the momentum of support in run-off elections from the largely Mende-based Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) party, which had splintered from the SLPP to throw its electoral weight behind an ostensibly Temne-based party in the APC.
2. George Weah's candidacy inspired many youths to cross the "ethnic divide." Harris (2006:384) reports that he "was an inspiration to many youths. His financial support for the national [soccer] team was seen as patriotic and public-spirited. . . ."
3. The Columbia University and University of Michigan studies of voting behavior comprise several landmark studies of the American electorate that were conducted beginning around the early 1940s by researchers at the two universities. For a useful chronology of these studies and their findings, see Niemi and Weisberg (2001).
4. The second analytical inference is supported by a model, not reported here, in which the logged odds of voting for the SLPP by Temnes is much higher when predicted by a variable for the peace vote than by that for the vote for development and reconstruction.