

The Rise and Fall of Ethnically Dominated Party Systems: A Supply-Side Explanation

Robert A. Dowd

Abstract: In many countries that have long been under some kind of authoritarian rule, the (re)introduction of multiparty politics during the 1990s has been accompanied by the rise of ethnically based parties and ethnically dominated party systems. This is particularly true in sub-Saharan Africa. However, there is variation to explain. The extent to which party systems reflect ethnic cleavages varies across countries and time within countries. Previous theories explain the rise and fall of the political salience of ethnic identity and ethnically dominated party systems largely as a function of changes in popular demand. In this paper, I suggest that there are reasons to think that instead variation in the extent to which party systems are ethnically dominated is largely the result of the political elite's ability to control the supply of ideology offered in the party system. Certain conditions, namely the number of ethnic groups and the potential for class conflict in a society, combine to make it more or less likely that elites will try to collude and limit the control of ideology available in the system to the ethnic issue dimension. Where there is a greater potential for class conflict, and fewer ethnic groups, I argue that party leaders are more likely to try to reinforce the political salience of ethnic identity, limit the supply of ideology to the ethnic issue dimension, and to be more successful at doing this than where there is less potential for class conflict and many major ethnic groups. Evidence from 20 African countries supports the plausibility of this hypothesis.

This paper is devoted to explaining the rise and fall of ethnically dominated party systems. Ethnically dominated party

systems are party systems where the major parties are differentiated from one another almost exclusively according to *who* they represent rather than *what* they represent (see Horowitz 1985; Gurr 2000). In ethnically dominated party systems, party identification is mostly, if not exclusively, based on identities such as region of origin, language or race, rather than ideologies that cut across such identities.

While this paper is devoted to explaining the causes, rather than the effects of ethnically dominated party systems, there are good reasons to think that the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated affects the quality of democracy in a country. Where and when parties are ethnically based parties, members of the electorate who are of a particular ethnic group may be expected and pressured to affiliate with a particular party. Where party loyalty and ethnic boundaries are coterminous, fixity sets in that may foster stalemate or fears of permanent domination (Horowitz 1985). There is a growing body of evidence to indicate that this is often the case, particularly in the new multiparty systems of Africa (see Diamond 1999; Olukoshi 1998; Throup and Hornsby 1998; Mbaku and Ihonvebere 1998; Gardinier 1997).

While many of the previous arguments explain the rise and fall of ethnically dominated party systems largely as a function of popular demand, I propose that the rise and fall of such party systems is, under certain circumstances that are especially prevalent throughout Africa, largely a function of supply. I argue that party leaders always and everywhere attempt to limit the supply of political ideology available to the electorate in a way that maximizes their chances of sustaining and furthering their political careers. Party leaders are likely to try to limit the ideological supply to ethnic issues when and where appealing to ethnic cleavages has gotten them to where they are in the first place [i.e., party leadership] and appealing to other cleavages, especially class cleavages, threatens their own collective interests. In the first section I review demand-side explanations for the rise and fall of ethnically based party systems. I then present my supply-side theory. I test a hypothesis implied by the supply-side argument against hypotheses implied by competing explanations on data from 20 African countries. In conclusion, I discuss the results and suggest directions for further research.

Demand-Side Theories

The most prominent explanations for the rise and fall of ethnically dominated party systems center around modernization theory. Electoral systems are often used to explain why party systems more or less reflect ethnic cleavages (see Cox 1997). However, assuming that electoral systems are designed and implemented by politicians themselves (see Geddes 1995), this paper is devoted to identifying the conditions that make politicians more or less likely to implement electoral systems designed to discourage or encourage ethnically-based parties in the first place.

There are two ways of relating the rise and fall of ethnically based party systems to "modernization." The first is to view ethnically dominated party systems as largely the consequence of a lack of modernization. The second is to view ethnically based party systems as a result of modernization itself. In either case, both kinds of modernization-centered explanations focus on how demographic changes give rise to political demands that political parties in multiparty settings seek to meet.

According to the first variant of modernization theory, ethnically dominated party systems are more likely to emerge where ethnic identity is most politically salient and that ethnic identity is likely to be most politically salient where there is less "modernization"; where ethnic identity and geographic region are coterminous, the economy is agriculturally based, and educational attainment and economic development are relatively low (see Pye 1966; Apter 1972). Where there is more modernization; where geographic regions contain a mix of ethnic groups, the economy is industrializing or industrialized, and educational attainment and economic development are relatively high, ethnic identity is expected to become less politically salient and ethnically based parties are expected to give way to class-based parties. The premise is that as people move to the cities and begin working with other people of various ethnic groups ethnic identity becomes less politically salient and other social cleavages, especially socio-economic class, become more politically salient. People are expected to identify politically with people who do the same kind of work, live in the same neighborhoods, go to the same schools and pray in the same churches, regardless of their ethnic identity. It is thought that where political

parties are allowed to form, leaders of political parties will seek to meet a growing demand for parties that are class based.

According to the second variant of modernization theory, it is "modernization" itself that increases the political salience of ethnic identity and gives rise to ethnically dominated party systems (see Deutsch 1961; Melson and Wolpe 1970; Young 1976; Bates 1974). Modernization is thought to give rise to intense competition that prompts people to rely more on people with whom they are most familiar, who, in a newly modernizing society, are likely to be members of their own ethnic group who hail from the same geographic region. As people move from ethnically homogeneous geographic regions to ethnically heterogeneous urban areas and work places, inter-ethnic competition intensifies. People rely on ethnic connections to obtain housing, and secure employment and education. It is thought that, where multiparty politics is allowed, parties are likely to arise to meet a rising popular demand to represent ethnic groups vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in the competition for the goods of modernization.

While theoretically powerful, there is evidence, especially from Africa, to indicate that there is a great deal of variation that both modernization-centered explanations fail to explain. Ethnic identity has appeared to be more or less politically salient across various levels of modernization. As multiparty competition was (re)introduced in most African countries during the 1990s, observers have noted that ethnically-dominated party systems have arisen in relatively "modernized" and "not-so-modernized" countries (Ingham 1990; Gardinier 1997; Olukoshi 1998; Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995).

Perhaps the modernization-centered explanations fail to explain a great deal of the variation in the extent to which party systems are ethnically dominated because they fail to consider that party leaders may not only seek to meet political demands but to shape or even control those demands. This is especially true in single-party settings, such as those that prevailed in Africa and elsewhere from at least the mid-1960s until the early 1990s, but it also can be expected to hold true in multiparty settings. In the single-party settings, party leaders are less likely to try to meet political demands as they are to "shape" those demands through some kind of indoctrination. The leaders of the ruling party in single-party state can be expected to define the ideological landscape or control the

supply of ideology in a way that allows them to maintain control over the party and allows the party to control the state (see Widner 1992; Gardinier 1997). The political competition that typifies multiparty settings is likely to make party leaders more interested in shaping their parties or supplying ideology to meet popular demand. However, it is reasonable to expect that party leaders in multiparty settings continue to be interested in shaping that demand in a way that allows them to maintain or increase their control over their parties and or preserve or improve their parties' positions of influence vis-à-vis other parties (see Throup and Hornsby 1998).

A Supply-Side Theory

In short, I argue that the rise and fall of ethnically dominated party systems is, under certain circumstances that are especially prevalent throughout Africa, largely a function of supply. I propose that party leaders always and everywhere attempt to limit the supply of political ideology available to the electorate in a way that maximizes their chances of sustaining and furthering their political careers. In accord with this argument, we can expect party leaders to try to limit the ideological supply to the ethnic issue dimension when and where appealing to the ethnic dimension has gotten them to where they are in the first place (i.e., party leadership) and appealing to other dimensions, especially the class dimension, threatens their own collective or class interests.

The logic underlying this argument is simply that politicians who aspire to be party leaders, as individuals, tend to focus on issue dimensions that they think will get them elected or acclaimed party leaders and, once they become party leaders, politicians, as a group, will do their best to prevent other politicians from "creating" or focusing on other issue dimensions that might detract from their support and cost them their party leadership positions and/or places in government.

Although party leaders as individuals are capable of creating or capitalizing on new or latent issue dimensions, doing so is typically costly to established politicians who usually have carved out an ideological niche for themselves within their parties. Creating or capitalizing on a new issue dimension, I argue, is typically the last resort for individual politicians who have established themselves as party leaders. The first resort is typically to continue to focus on

issue dimensions upon which they have built successful political careers.

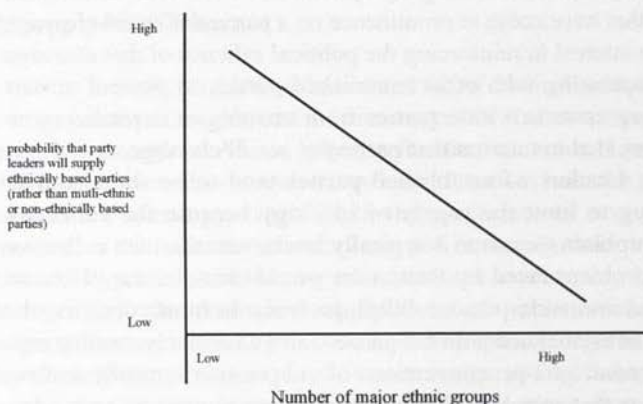
Further, I argue that leaders of established parties (i.e., effective parties or parties that have usually won a significant number of seats in the legislature), as a group, typically collude to prevent the entrance of new parties that threaten to supply ideologies and capitalize on new issue dimensions that cut across the old issue dimensions that have served established parties so well. Just as party leaders have carved out an ideological niche for themselves within their parties, the established parties have carved out an ideological niche for themselves in the party system. In other words, established parties that have come to prominence on a particular social cleavage have an interest in reinforcing the political salience of that cleavage and cooperating with other established parties to prevent upstart parties or upstarts within parties from creating or capitalizing on cleavages that cut across that particular social cleavage.

Leaders of established parties tend to be successful in colluding to limit the supply of ideology because the collective action problem they face is typically less severe than the collective action problem faced by those who would create or capitalize on untapped and widespread political demands. In most countries, the leaders of established political parties form a relatively small group. Within small groups, conventions of cooperation typically evolve. The costs that members of small groups can impose on each other are often sufficient to prevent individual members from abandoning the small group (see Olson 1965). On the other hand, cooperative solutions to collective action problems involving very large number of people cannot be expected to evolve incrementally (Ibid.). Consequently, the kind of mass movement that would more or less force leaders of established political parties to respond to popular demand cannot be expected to develop spontaneously. Collective action problems frequently involve inducing people to cooperate in a new and risky game at the expense of an old predictable one (see Geddes 1994). Therefore, under ordinary circumstances, we can expect a rather small group of people who have frequent direct contact with each other, leaders of established parties, to organize and hold off the demands of a rather large group of people, citizens or voters, who have little or no direct contact with each other.

In accord with the argument proposed here, I suggest that party leaders are likely to try to limit the ideological supply to the

ethnic issue dimension when and where appealing to the ethnic dimension has gotten them to where they are in the first place (i.e., party leadership), when and where it promises to be a good way to maintain and further their political careers, and when and where appealing to other issue dimensions, especially the class cleavage, threatens their own collective or class interests.

Figure 1.
Stylized Illustration of Supply-Side Theory



Note: According to the supply-side theory, the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated will depend crucially on the number of major ethnic groups. Where the number of major ethnic groups is high, we would expect party leaders to form alliances across ethnic lines in order to win political influence.

It is likely that limiting the supply of ideology to the ethnic cleavage will maximize their chances of maintaining and advancing their political careers the most when and where the number of major ethnic groups is few and the groups are of roughly equal size. I illustrate this in Figure 1 to make the point clearer. When and where there are many large ethnic groups of roughly equal size, it is less likely that any one ethnic party can win power by going it alone. When and where there are many large ethnic groups of roughly equal size, party leaders are less likely to base their parties exclusively on ethnic cleavages because they need more support than any one ethnic group can provide in order to maximize the probability of gaining political influence in the country as a whole. Therefore, where the

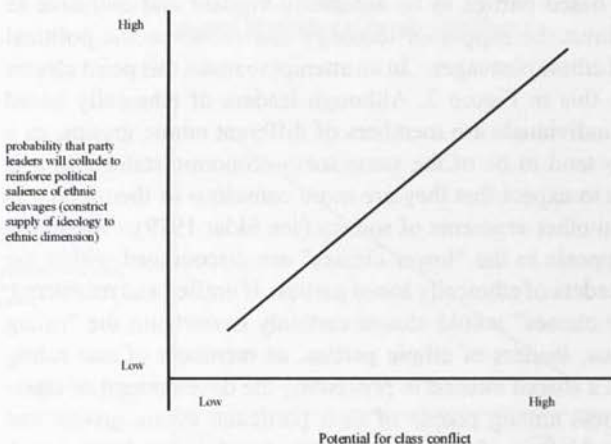
number of major ethnic groups is greatest, we can expect party leaders to supply ideology that cuts across at least some ethnic identities in order to win the support necessary to win elections and gain influence over government. Thus I suggest that we can expect to find ethnically dominated-party systems to be more prevalent when and where the number of major ethnic groups is fewer.

Further, and perhaps most provocatively, I suggest that as the potential for class conflict increases, we can expect leaders of ethnically based parties to be especially vigilant and collusive in trying to limit the supply of ideology and reinforce the political salience of ethnic cleavages. In an attempt to make this point clearer I illustrate this in Figure 2. Although leaders of ethnically based parties as individuals are members of different ethnic groups, as a group they tend to be of the same socio-economic status and it is reasonable to expect that they are more conscious of themselves as a class than other segments of society (see Sklar 1979). Therefore, populist appeals to the "lower classes" are discouraged within the group of leaders of ethnically based parties. If unified and mobilized, the "lower classes" would almost certainly overwhelm the "ruling class." Thus, leaders of ethnic parties, as members of one ruling class, have a shared interest in preventing the development of class-consciousness among people of their particular ethnic groups and ethnic parochialism, if not outright encouraged, is not discouraged. Those party leaders who dare to appeal to class to mobilize support (i.e., J.M. Kariuki and Oginga Odinga in Kenya) usually find themselves marginalized at best and eliminated at worst.

The logic that underlies why party leaders may be successful in limiting the supply of ideology to the ethnic issue dimension is basically the logic of collective action. All else equal, leaders of established parties or the "ruling class" will tend to be successful in colluding to limit the supply of ideology to the ethnic issue dimension because the collective action problem they face tends to be less severe than the collective action problem faced by those who try to generate or tap latent class-consciousness among the masses. In ethnically based party systems, ethnic identity has structured party politics as an old and predictable game. It is important to note that not only have party leaders benefited from this old and predictable ethnic competition, but so have many ordinary party members. Those who would try to convince those affiliated with an ethnically-based party that they have more to gain from joining and

supporting a class-based party have a great deal for work cut out for them.

Figure 2.
Stylized Illustration of the Supply-Side Argument



Note: According to the supply-side theory, as the potential for class conflict increases, leaders of ethnically based parties are likely to collude to reinforce the political salience of ethnic cleavages and, therefore, we can expect party systems to be more ethnically dominated as the potential for class conflict increases.

The chances that not enough people would support that class-based party to carry it to electoral victory, thus leaving the people who do defect from ethnically based parties high and dry without the support (i.e., access to patronage) of an established party, is likely to prevent a critical number of people from joining or supporting the class-based party in the first place. The rewards may not be great for being a member of an ethnic party, but they are immediate and certain. This is especially true where major parties are supported in part by state funding. The rewards for creating or joining a class-based party are distant and uncertain. This helps explain why, once an ethnically dominated party system emerges, leaders of ethnically based parties can effectively control the ideological supply to the ethnic issue dimension.

The question is, then, does this supply-side theory explain

the variation in the rise and fall of ethnically-dominated party systems that the modernization-centered theories fail to explain? As is often the case in the social sciences, we cannot test the theory directly. We cannot get into the heads of politicians to determine exactly what prompts them to supply the ideology they supply to the electorate. We cannot get into the heads of voters to determine exactly what kind of political parties they would truly prefer. However, it is possible to test a hypothesis implied by the theory. Counting the number of ethnic groups over 5% of the population is one way of measuring ethnic heterogeneity. The degree of socio-economic equality in a society is one way of measuring the potential for class conflict [i.e., conflict that cuts across ethnic identity]. If the theory presented above provides a good explanation, we would expect ethnically dominated party systems to be most prevalent when and where major ethnic groups are relatively few and inequality, here used as a measure of the potential for class conflict, is relatively high.

A Test of the Supply-Side Theory

The task at hand is to test the hypothesis implied by the supply-side argument vis-à-vis hypotheses implied by demand-side arguments. If the supply-side argument is a better explanation for the rise and fall of ethnically dominated party systems than demand-side or modernization-centered arguments, we should expect to see that the extent to which a country's party system is ethnically dominated depends more on the number of major ethnic groups and the degree of socio-economic equality than on urbanization, the rate of urbanization, or the level of economic development. The hypotheses implied by the arguments are tested using OLS regression on a data set of 20 African countries where there has been at least one multiparty election between 1990 and 2000.

Measuring the dependent variable, the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated, is fraught with difficulties. Virtually nowhere do parties publicly claim to be ethnic parties, including Africa (see Horowitz 1985). Yet anecdotal evidence from several African countries and quantitative evidence from a few African countries indicates that ethnic identities do affect party affiliation and voting patterns (see Throup and Hornsby 1998; Posner

1998; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut 1999). Data on the ethnic breakdown of voting patterns is not readily available for most countries. Further it is difficult to obtain some kind of comparative and objective measure of the descriptive evidence since much of the descriptive evidence is focused on particular countries.

Recognizing the difficulties, I use the difference between the number of 'major parties' and the number of 'major ethnic groups' as an objective and comparative measure of the extent to which party systems are ethnically dominated. I define the number of major parties as the average number of parties fielding presidential candidates who received at least 5% of the popular vote in elections during the 1990s, as reported in *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook* (Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut 1999). I define the number of major ethnic groups as the number of ethnic groups that make up at least 5% of the total population, as reported in *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (Morrison, Mitchell and Paden 1989). Where the number of major political parties is roughly equal (i.e., within 1) to the number of major ethnic groups, I consider there to be an ethnically-dominated party system.

Table 1 shows how the countries break down according to the criteria employed. The countries where the party systems are most ethnically dominated include Benin, Congo(B), Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania and Niger. Countries with party systems that are less ethnically dominated include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It should be made clear that I am not arguing that ethnic identity is not at all politically salient in countries that fall in the latter category, such as Ghana, Malawi or Zambia. Nor am I suggesting that ethnic identity does not play a role in how people choose to vote in these countries. It is not a question of whether a party system is ethnically dominated or not, but the degree to which the party system is ethnically dominated. For the sake of this paper, the most ethnically dominated party systems are defined as party systems where there is one major party per major ethnic group. The less ethnically dominated party systems are, with the exception of Chad, where there are more parties than ethnic groups, generally characterized by fewer major parties than major ethnic groups or, in other words, some multi-ethnic parties. This of course does not mean that ethnic identity is not important for determining which party people will support in countries considered

to have party systems that are less ethnically dominated.

Table 1.
Variation in Extent to Which Party Systems are Ethnically Dominated

Countries with most ethnically dominated party systems:

Benin (1)
Congo(B) (0)
Guinea (0)
Kenya (-1)
Mauritania (0)
Niger (0)

Countries with party systems that are less ethnically dominated:

Burkina Faso (-4)	Guinea-Bissau (-2)
Cameroon (-4)	Malawi (-2)
Central African Republic (-2)	Mali (-2)
Chad (2)	Tanzania (-6)
Cote d'Ivoire (-6)	Togo (-4)
Gabon (-2)	Zambia (-3)
Ghana (-2)	Zimbabwe (-2)

Note: The numbers in parenthesis indicate the difference between major ethnic groups and major parties. 'Major ethnic groups' are defined as the number of ethnic groups that make up at least 5% of the total population. 'Major political parties' are defined as the average number of political parties that fielded presidential candidates who received at least 5% of the popular vote during multiparty elections of the 1990s. A negative number denotes fewer parties than ethnic groups. Zero indicates that the number of major ethnic groups and the number of major political parties are equal.

In any country, especially in African countries, members of various ethnic groups rarely distribute themselves randomly among parties (see Horowitz 1985). However, for the sake of this paper, I consider that where there are at least some multi-ethnic electoral alliances or coalitions, the party system is less ethnically dominated than where there are no such alliances or coalitions. Nonetheless, in an attempt to shore up my categorization and confirm the difference in degree that I hope to measure, I consulted descriptive evidence of multiparty competition in Africa during the 1990s, using *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook* (Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut 1999), *Economist Country Profiles* (Economist Intelligence Unit 1999), *Encyclopedia of Africa South of the Sahara* (Middleton 1997) and issues of *Africa Confidential*. I found that where the difference between the number of major parties and number of major ethnic groups has been minimal (i.e., within 1), descriptive evidence generally indicates that party competition has been more ethnically based than where the difference has been relatively large (i.e., more than 1).

The independent variables include, ethnic heterogeneity,

degree of socio-economic inequality, urbanization, rate of urbanization, and level of economic development. Ethnic heterogeneity is measured as the number of ethnic groups that make up at least 5% of the population as reported in *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (Morrison, Mitchell and Paden 1989). The degree of socio-economic equality is measured as the average percentage of income held by the poorest 20% of the population between 1986 and 1996 as reported in *African Development Indicators 2000* (World Bank 2000). Urbanization is measured as the absolute urban population as a proportion of the total population as of 1997 and the rate of urbanization is measured as the percent change in urban population between 1980 and 1997 as reported in *World Development Report 1999* (World Bank 1999). Level of development is measured according to the Human Development Index (HDI) as of 1997 as reported in *Human Development Report 1999* (United Nations Development Program 1999). HDI is used as a good over all indicator of quality of life, including access to clean water, shelter, food, basic healthcare and education.

Results

The results, as displayed in Table 2, indicate that ethnic heterogeneity and socio-economic equality typically do a better job of explaining why party systems are ethnically dominated than do urbanization, rate of urbanization and level of development. The results of Model A shown in Table 2 account for roughly 56% of the variance in the extent to which a country's party system is ethnically dominated. However, the bulk of that 56% is accounted for by the degree of ethnic heterogeneity. Most of the variance not accounted for by ethnic heterogeneity is accounted for by the degree of socio-economic equality, as indicated in Model B shown in Table 2.

Ethnic heterogeneity shows the expected relationship and its effect on the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated is both substantively and statistically significant. The greater the number of major ethnic groups, the less likely there is to be an ethnically- dominated party system. Model A in Table 2 shows that for every one ethnic group that makes up at least 5% of the population, we can typically expect approximately one less political party away from being perfectly equal to the number of major ethnic groups.

Table 2.
Results of OLS Regression

MODEL A

	Slope	Beta	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Ethnic Heterogeneity	-.91	-.845	.248	.008
Degree of Socio-economic equality	-.20	-.180	.251	.473
Urbanization	-.03	-.184	.044	.456
Rate of Urbanization	.04	.075	.131	.772
Level of Development	-.02	-.079	.006	.751

Dependent Variable: ethnically-dominated party system

N=20

R-Square: .744

Adjusted R-Square: .561

MODEL B

	Slope	Beta	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Degree of Socio-economic equality	-.55	-.520	.373	.179
Urbanization	.01	.071	.067	.847
Rate of Urbanization	.22	.407	.196	.305
Level of Development	-.06	-.022	.010	.957

Dependent Variable: ethnically-dominated party system

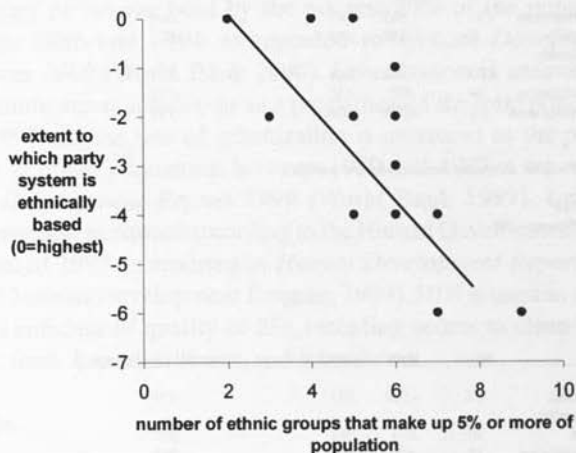
N=20

R-Square: .242

Adjusted R-Square: -.137

Figure 3 provides a clearer picture of the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated. The degree of socio-economic equality also shows the expected relationship and its effect on the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated is substantively, but not statistically significant. As socio-economic equality increases, the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated typically decreases. As Model A in Table 2 shows, for every 1% decrease in the share of income held by the poorest 20% of the population, the number of major

Figure 3.
Extent to Which Party System is Ethnically Dominated
and Ethnic Heterogeneity

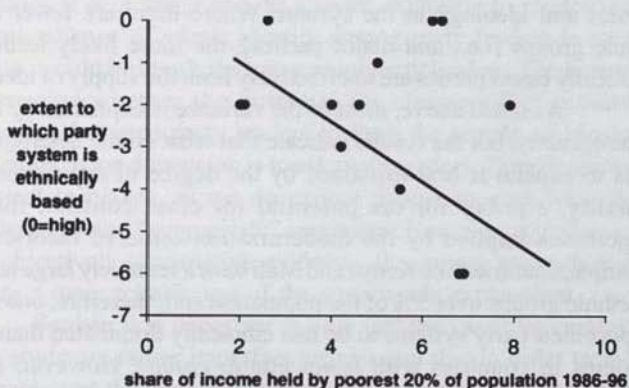


political parties typically decreases by roughly .20 away from being perfectly equal to the number of major ethnic groups. When ethnic heterogeneity is excluded, socio-economic equality's effect is even greater. This is shown in Model B. For every 1% increase in the share of income held by the poorest 20% the number of parties decreases away from being an ethnically dominated party system by roughly half a party or .55. Thus, where there is greater equality, where the poorest 20% have a greater share of income, ethnically dominated party systems tend to be less prevalent. Where there is more inequality, where the poorest 20% have a lesser share of income, ethnically dominated party systems tend to be more prevalent. I have provided Figure 4 to more clearly illustrate the relationship between the degree of socio-economic equality and the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated.

The factors that modernization-centered theories lead us to think would be most important prove to be neither substantively nor statistically significant. However, it is interesting to note that

the size of the urban population seems to be negatively related to the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated and the growth in the urban population is shown to be positively related to the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated. Although neither modernization-centered theory is supported here, the second variant, focusing on modernization [measured here as rate of urbanization] as a cause of the political salience of ethnic identity, appears to have more empirical validity than the first.

Figure 4.
Extent to Which Party System is Ethnically Dominated
and Potential for Class Conflict



Discussion of the Results

The question then is, what do the results tell us about why ethnically dominated party systems rise and fall? How well do the results support the supply-side explanation proposed in this paper and how might future research fill the gaps in this study and pick up where it leaves off?

The results do not indicate that popular political demand does not shift with "modernization", but only that it is plausible that

certain conditions make it more likely that leaders of ethnically based parties will effectively collude to limit competition to their own parties and the supply of ideology to the ethnic dimension in spite of shifts in that demand. These conditions include the degree of ethnic heterogeneity [i.e., the number of major ethnic groups of roughly equal size] and the potential for class conflict in a society. The greater the degree of ethnic heterogeneity, the greater the incentives that party leaders have for establishing multi-ethnic or class-based parties rather than ethnically based parties and, all else equal, the lesser the extent of ethnic heterogeneity, the less incentive there is for party leaders to form anything but ethnically-based parties. The greater the potential for class conflict or any kind of conflict [i.e., other than ethnic conflict] that threatens to destabilize the ethnically-based party system, the greater incentives that leaders of ethnically based parties have to collude and limit the supply of parties and ideology in the system. Where there are fewer major ethnic groups [i.e., and major parties], the more likely leaders of ethnically based parties are to effectively limit the supply of ideology.

As noted above, most of the variance is explained by ethnic heterogeneity, but the results indicate that what ethnic heterogeneity fails to explain is best explained by the degree of socio-economic equality, a proxy for the potential for class conflict, than by hypotheses implied by the modernization-centered theories. For example, countries like Kenya and Mali have a relatively large number of ethnic groups over 5% of the population and, therefore, one might expect their party systems to be less ethnically dominated than party systems in countries with fewer ethnic groups. However, socio-economic inequality in Kenya and Mali has been relatively severe and growing during the 1990s. The results indicate that it is plausible that, even where there are many large ethnic groups, an ethnically dominated party system is more likely to rise and endure if there is a significant gap between the rich and the poor than if there is a less significant gap. The results indicate that multi-ethnic parties are more likely to arise where the gap between the rich and the poor is less pronounced. Therefore, it is plausible that one of the major factors that keep most ethnically dominated party systems ethnically dominated is the gap between the rich and the poor or the potential for class conflict. Conversely, where there are few ethnic groups, but the difference between the rich and the poor is less pronounced and/or closing, I suggest that party systems that are ethnically

dominated are less likely to arise and, where they have already arisen, ethnically dominated party systems are more likely to fall. Although I admit that there is a great deal of further research necessary in order to confirm whether this relationship between the potential for class conflict and ethnically-dominated party systems is in fact true, the results indicate that this argument is very plausible.

While the method employed to test the supply-side explanation in this paper is largely statistical, in order to test the explanation thoroughly the statistical test must be supplemented with qualitative evidence. Perhaps the best way to confirm that the results of the regression presented here indicate what I suppose them to indicate, that in spite of popular demand for other types of parties party leaders are colluding to limit the supply of parties to ethnically-based parties, would be to conduct survey research. The best way to determine whether the political salience of ethnic identity among the masses is decreasing and, as a result, collusion to reinforce the political salience of ethnic identity among party leaders is on the increase, would be to ask the masses and party leaders. The best way to determine whether the potential for class conflict promotes cooperation between party leaders to limit the supply of ideology to the ethnic issue dimension is to ask party leaders. Survey research is subject to biases, as we do expect people to give what they consider to be the "appropriate" responses. However, together with more objectively quantitative evidence, the survey research might serve as a more reliable test of the supply-side explanation.

Further, it is important to note that the variables employed in this study are rather imperfect proxies and that in order to more thoroughly test the supply-side explanation it is necessary to focus on developing more reliable measures of the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated and the potential for class conflict.

As noted above, the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated is difficult to measure. The measure employed in this paper is admittedly crude. Ideally, accurate presidential election returns would be available. Especially where ethnic groups tend to be clustered geographically, these election returns would be a good indication of the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated. However, such data is not readily available for most countries. Another measure of the extent to which party systems are ethnically dominated would be to count the number of presidential candidates from different ethnic groups. Where there are at least

two candidates from the same ethnic group, this would be considered evidence that the party system is not as ethnically dominated as party systems where each candidate has a different ethnic identity. This too is not a perfect way of measuring the extent to which a party system is ethnically dominated. However, until more reliable electoral data becomes available, we might continue to explore more accurate ways of measuring the extent to which party systems reflect ethnic cleavages.

The potential for class conflict is also difficult to measure. In this paper socio-economic equality, defined as the percentage of income held by the poorest 20% of the population, is used to measure the potential for class conflict. One might reasonably argue, however, that this in and of itself does not provide a good measure of the potential for class conflict and that a more comprehensive measure is necessary. Socio-economic inequality alone does not class conflict make. There has always been a great disparity of wealth in Africa since at least the beginning of the colonial era and there has been little in the way of what westerners would call class conflict. It seems reasonable to assume that as long as most of the interpersonal contact that the vast majority of people had was with people who were of roughly the same socio-economic status, and contact with people of significantly different socio-economic status was rare and mutually beneficial [i.e., that is, although some were made better off than others, all were made better off than they would have been without any contact], the potential for class conflict was naturally low. However, as people begin to have more frequent contact with people of different socio-economic status increases, and if they think the contact that they have makes them worse off, class conflict becomes more likely. Perhaps a more comprehensive measure would include socio-economic equality in urban areas, where people of all kinds have more contact with people who are of different socio-economic status. It might also be wise to include occupational and educational differences in a measure of class differences, recognizing that perceived class differences may not necessarily be about wealth per se. Further study may experiment with different measures of the potential for class conflict.

If it is true that the potential for class conflict makes it more likely that leaders of established ethnic parties will collude to limit the supply of political ideology, how long can we expect leaders of established parties to successfully limit the supply of ideology?

Although the leader of an established ethnically based party would risk a great deal by defecting or bucking the ethnic system in order to appeal to latent class-consciousness and/or other cleavages that cross cut ethnic cleavages, the rewards are potentially great. Although leaders of ethnically based parties as a group have an incentive to forego appeals to cross-cutting cleavages and to reinforce the political salience of ethnic cleavages, as individuals there is an incentive to be among the first party leaders to capitalize on cross-cutting cleavages that emerge such as class. Politicians in ethnically-dominated party systems, where cross-cutting cleavages such as class appear to become increasingly politically salient, face a dilemma: Stand firm with party leaders as a group and forego supplying ideological appeals to the cross-cutting cleavages that are emerging or defect and attempt to reap the potentially huge benefits that might come with attempting to supply ideology to meet popular demand that has long gone untapped.

*My work on this project has benefited from conversations with Edmond Keller and Daniel Posner of the Department of Political Science and James S. Coleman African Studies Center.

Appendix: DATA

country	number of ethnic groups over 5% of population	average annual percent of income held by poorest 20% of pop. 1986-96	percent of pop. urban 1997	growth in urban population 80-97	HDI 1997	difference between average number of pres candidates receiving at least 5% vote and number of ethnic groups over 5%
Benin	4		40	13	421	1
Burkina Faso	7	5.5	17	8	304	-4
Cameroon	6		46	15	536	-4
CAR	6	2	40	5	378	-2
Chad	3		23	4	393	2
Congo	5		60	19	533	0
Cote d'Ivoire	7	6.8	45	10	422	-6
Gabon	5		52	18	607	-2
Guinea	4	6.4	31	12	398	0
Guinea-Bissau	6	2.1	23	6	343	-2
Ghana	5	7.9	37	6	470	-2
Kenya	6	5	31	14	519	-1
Malawi	5		14	5	399	-2
Mali	6	4.6	28	9	375	-2
Mauritania	2	6.2	54	17	447	0
Niger	4	2.6	19	6	298	0
Tanzania	9	6.9	26	11	421	-6
Togo	5		32	9	469	-4
Zambia	6	4.2	44	4	431	-3
Zimbabwe	3	4	33	11	560	-2

Note: Number of ethnic groups over 5% of population gathered from *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (Morrison et al. 1989). Average annual percentage of income held by poorest 20% of population is gathered from *African Development Indicators 2000* (World Bank 2000). Percent of population in urban areas and growth in urban population is taken from *World Development Report 1999* (World Bank 1999). Human Development Index (HDI) is taken from *Human Development Report 1999* (United Nations Development Program 1999).

Sources

- Apter, David. 1972. *Ghana in Transition*, 2nd rev. edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bates, Robert H. 1974. "Ethnic Competition, and Modernization in Contemporary Africa". *Comparative Political Studies*, (January): 457-84..
- Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deutsch, Karl. 1961. "Social Mobilization and Political Development." *American Political Science Review*, 55: 493-514.
- Diamond, Larry, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset. 1995. "Introduction: What Makes for Democracy?" In *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, 2nd edition., eds. Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset.
- Diamond, Larry. 1999. *Developing Democrac: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gardiner, David. 1997 "Gabon: Limited Reform and Regime Survival". In *Political Reform in Francophone Africa*, eds. John F. Clark and David E. Gardinier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1995. "A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe". *Comparative Political Studies*. (July) 239-274.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1994. *Politicians Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000. *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1964. "Political Cleavages in Developed and Emerging Polities". In *Cleavages, Ideologies, Party Systems and Modation*, eds. Erik Allardt and Yrjo Litunen. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ihonvabere, Julius and John Mbaku. 1998. "General Introduction". In *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change: Constraints to Democratization in Africa*, eds. John Mbaku and Julius Ihonvabere. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Ingham, John 1990. *Politics in Modern Africa: The Uneven Tribal Dimension*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Meslon, Robert and Howard Wolpe. 1970. "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective". *American Political Science Review*, 64: 1112-30.
- Middleton, John (ed.). 1997. *Encyclopedia of Africa South of the Sahara*, vols. 1 & 2. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons.
- Morrison, John, Robert Mitchell and John Paden (eds). 1989. *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook*. New York: Paragon House.
- Nohlen, Dieter, Michael Krennerich and Bernhard Thibaut. 1999. *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Olukoshi, Adebayo. 1998. "Economic Crisis, Multipartism, and Opposition Politics in Contemporary Africa". In *The Politics of Opposition in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Adebayo O. Olukoshi. Stockholm, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Posner, Daniel. 1998. *The Institutional Origins of Ethnic Politics in Zambia*. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Government, Harvard University.
- Pye, Lucien. 1966. *Aspects of Political Development*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Sklar, Richard. 1979. "The Nature of Class Domination in Africa". *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 17, 4. 531-552.
- Throup, David and Charles Hornsby. 1998. *Multiparty Politics in Kenya*. Athens, OH: James Currey.
- United Nations. 1999. *Human Development Report 1999*. New York: United Nations Development Program.
- Widner, Jennifer. 1992. *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya: From Harambee to Nyayo*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- World Bank. 2000. *African Development Indicators 2000*. Washington, DC: The International Bank for Development and Reconstruction.
- World Bank. 1999. *World Development Report 1999*. Washington, DC: The International Bank for Development and Reconstruction.
- Young, Crawford. 1976. *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.