Taking It Personally: The Effect of Ethnic Attachment on Preferences for Regionalism[*]

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Abstract

This paper presents three related findings on regional decentralization. We use an original dataset collected in Uganda to establish, for the first time in a developing country context, that individuals have meaningful preferences over the degree of regional decentralization they prefer, ranging from centralism to secessionism. Second, this variation is partly explained at the district and ethnic group levels. The preference for regional decentralization monotonically increases with a group or district's average ethnic attachment. However, the relationship with a group or district's income is U-shaped: both the richest and the poorest groups desire more regionalism, reconciling interest and identity-based explanations. Finally, higher ethnic attachment causes an increase in regionalist preferences, consistent with work in social psychology that stresses the importance for politics of non-material factors. We employ several identification strategies to that effect, including a co-ethnicity instrumental variable and a new matching method for general treatment regimes.

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1 Introduction

What explains preferences for regionalism? In particular, is ethnic attachment—namely how much one prioritizes one's ethnicity over one's national identity—only correlated with or does it actually affect one's preferred power-sharing arrangement? Extant literature posits that variation in preferences for regionalism is in part explained at the group level (Horowitz, 1985; Hechter, 1974), such that some groups prefer a federal arrangement while others desire a centralized government. However, there is very little empirical work on this topic, especially in developing countries. Rather, researchers have focused on the pervasive inuence of ethnicity in political economy outcomes.[1]

There has also been much academic and policy debate on constitutional engineering and institutional design in response to its numerous territorial cleavages.[2] In essence, 'planners' try to determine what is optimal for a country, where optimality involves maximizing some function of interest, often implicitly. Amoretti and Bermeo (2004, p. 11) suggest federalism maximizes political stability by accommodating territorial cleavages. Other authors are less optimistic. For Roeder (2005, p. 51), long-term stability is maximized by a non-federalist 'power-dividing' arrangement that ensures the rights of ethnic groups through universalistic civil liberties. In a similar mode, developing country scholars believe the "marriage of ethnicity and federalism [to be] unwise because it is bound to exacerbate difficulties SSA countries already face" (Selassie, 2003, p. 56; see also Snyder, 2000, p. 4). Others try to minimize the distance between the type of goods demanded by groups and the public goods provided by governments. From that efficiency perspective, decentralization is a solution to satisfy demands for diverse public goods in ethnically heterogeneous societies (Alesina and Spolaore, 2003).

While the literature on ethnic politics and on institutional engineering is abundant, there is at least one important shortcoming. Institutional design articles prescribe "solutions" from a normative or an efficiency point of view while ignoring actual preferences of those citizens for whom the institutional design is intended. Designing power-sharing institutions that groups and individuals want is important, since citizens condition the legitimacy and often the

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[1]For example, ethnic diversity undermines economic performance and public good provision (Easterly and Levine, 1997; Habyarimana et al., 2007); ethnic polarization is associated with civil war onset (Garcia-Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005); ethnic boundary institutions negatively affect government responses to pandemics like HIV/AIDS (Lieberman, 2009); ethnic groups often drive secessionist movements (Horowitz, 1985; Hechter, 2000); and national leaders tend to favor their own ethnic group (Franck and Rainer, 2012; Kramon and Posner, 2012).

[2]A territorial cleavage exists when a self-conscious minority is geographically concentrated (Amoretti and Bermeo, 2004, p. 2).

success of any government's regional decentralization program. Imposing centralized political systems where at least some regions desire a decentralized arrangement has political risks. Marginalized groups (Horowitz, 1985) and "ethnoregional" groups (Wimmer et al., 2009) that are excluded from any decision-making sometimes turn to expressing their preferences violently. That is especially the case in developing and less stable countries where such groups have fought either for more autonomy or secession, such as with East Timor, Eritrea, Mali and South Sudan in recent decades. Yet not only does the empirical evidence explaining variation in citizen preferences for regionalism remains extraordinarily thin outside Europe and North America,[3] previous scholarship on citizen preferences has only focused its attention on areas with strong regionalist or secessionist intentions such as Catalonia or Scotland, rather than on countries as a whole.[4] The consequence of this dual gap in the literature means that we have very little information on both citizen preferences for regionalism in the developing world, as well as very little understanding on how multiple groups or regions within a single country differ in their average preferences for regionalism.

Using original data from a nation-wide representative survey in Uganda, we present three related findings on regional decentralization. First, we establish that there is meaningful group and individual variation over the preferred degree of regional decentralization, ranging from centralism to secessionism. Second, we show that part of this variation is explained at the district and ethnic group levels, as expected. In particular we show that, while preference for regional decentralization monotonically increases with a group or district's ethnic attachment, the relationship with a group or district's average wealth is U-shaped. Third, individual preferences for regionalism can be explained by individual ethnic attachment, thereby establishing within-group variation. We show that prioritizing one's ethnic identity over one's national identity causes a 22% decrease in the probability of being centralist, while it increases the probability of being a federalist by 23% and a secessionist by 66%.[5] Other individual factors are relevant, notably wealth: all else equal, richer individuals prefer more regional decentralization. While this article focuses on identity-based explanations, we argue that identity-based and interest-based explanations are not competing but complementary instead.[6]

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[3]A number of recent articles attempt to explain variation in preferences for regionalism in Spain, Belgium, Russia, the UK and the US (Boylan, 2015; Burg, 2015; Costa-Font and Tremosa-Balcells, 2008; Dodeigne et al., 2014; Hagendoorn et al., 2008; Muñoz and Tormos, 2015; Pattie et al., 1999).

[4]The one nation-wide study of preferences for devolution or regionalism comes from a study of Belgian MPs (Dodeigne et al., 2014).

[5]The 66% is not statistically different from 0 because the number of secessionists in Uganda is low regardless of the level ethnic attachment.

[6]See Sambanis and Milanovic (2011) for a brief literature review.

We use four empirical strategies to identify the effect of individual ethnic attachment on preferences for regional decentralization. First, we model the relationship with district and ethnic group fixed effects to account for geographic and group variation plus a set of relevant individual-level controls. Individual-level omitted variable bias and reverse causality may still exist, however, so we present three additional strategies. Our second strategy eliminates reverse causality by using an ascriptive index of identity.[7] Third, we exploit whether interviewer and respondent share their first language to instrument ethnic attachment.[8] Sharing the same first language constitutes an interviewer effect that activates a respondent's ethnic identity. Finally, we take advantage of a new matching method for general treatment regimes developed by Ratkovic (2012) that balances ethnic attachment, an ordinal variable, on over 80 relevant individual and group-level variables, including wealth, ethnicity, district and partisanship. This allows us to compare individuals that are equivalent in all those respects and yet differ in their ethnic attachment. The magnitude of the effect is similar across modeling strategies.

2 Ethnic identity and regionalism

2.1 Regionalism as a deviation from a centralist status quo

Gellner (1983, p. 1) defines nationalism as "a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent". When such congruence is amiss, a secessionist movement aimed at remedying the situation might emerge. Along the same lines, Hechter (2000, p. 9) argues nationalism is different from regionalism, "which entails collective action designed to change the existing balance of rights and resources between the center and the periphery". If such demands do not include sovereignty, "then [regionalism] fails to qualify as a type of nationalism".

We define regionalism as a principle which holds that the differences between the political and the ethnic unit should be reduced.[9] A regionalist is an individual or group who holds that principle. Consider the following definitions to illustrate the differences between autonomy, federation and secession as quantitative rather than qualitative. An autonomist

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[7]The index measures how distant an individual is from the Ugandan President in four traits: language, ethnicity, religion and region of origin.

[8]The correlation between first language and ethnicity of the respondent in the sample is 0.83.

[9]We do not wish to engage with the large literature on the definition or conceptualization of ethnicity here, except to note that we conceptualize ethnicity as a communal identity based around the idea of common descent (which may or may not be based in fact).

is an individual who desires some regional decentralization. A federalist desires more: a federal state. Finally, regionalist individuals or groups that believe differences between the political and the ethnic unit should not be reduced but instead eliminated are rightly called secessionists, consistent with Gellner's definition of nationalism that implies a will to secede from the larger political unit.

There exists a difference in degree between autonomists, federalists and secessionists, but they all reject centralism.[10] Intuitively, an autonomist is closer to centralism than a federalist, who in turn is closer to centralism than a secessionist. We can easily characterize phenomena generally seen as dichotomous—tribalism vs. nationalism, regionalism vs. centralism—in a manner that allows for finer theory and measurement. This definition of regionalism also implies that, all else equal, the larger the gap between the degree of regionalism an individual or group desires and the degree of regionalism granted by the state, the more the individual or group will be alienated against the state.

2.2   Group demands for regionalism

It has long been established, most notably by Horowitz (1985, p. 233), that the combination of large regional differences in levels of wealth and the high salience of identity among a politically excluded ethnic group is conducive to preferences for regionalism. He rightly notes that interest in separatism can come from groups in both backward and advanced regions. The logic is straightforward: groups in richer regions would prefer to keep their wealth rather than subsidize poorer regions (such as with Sikh Punjabis in India in the 1980s or Catalonia in Spain), while those in poorer regions have nothing to lose by demanding more autonomy (as in North-East India, South Sudan and Sri Lanka). In contrast—although Horowitz does not spell out this logic explicitly—groups that have levels of wealth close to the median have much less to gain in demanding more autonomy than those in the poorest regions, and would be unlikely to keep more of their income under a more regional government. Thus we should expect a U-shaped relationship between group/regional wealth and demands for regionalism.[11]

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[10]Many developing countries have undertaken administrative decentralization efforts, which facilitates governance while keeping decision-making centralized at the national level.

[11]Horowitz also distinguishes between backward and advanced groups, such that there are advanced groups in backward regions and backward groups in advanced regions. However, in both cases he correctly notes a general lack of interest in secession or separatism due to a more complex calculation of costs and benefits.

2.3 Individual demands for regionalism

Group and regional level variation should exist if section 2.2 is at least partly correct. And yet we also know ethnic groups are intrinsically diverse. This article proposes theoretically and establishes empirically that within-group variation in attachment to one's identity affects individual preferences for regional decentralization of power. Indeed, "if the demand for sovereignty [or regionalism] is a function of its net benefits, then it should vary between individuals in a given nation [or region]" (Hechter, 2000, p. 122-3).

We can posit three ways in which within-group variation in demands for regionalism should exist. First and foremost, the strength of one's ethnic identity should correlate positively with the demands for regionalism in a context where regions will be created along ethnic lines. Indeed, there is now a substantial body of literature suggesting a robust relationship between ethnic/regional identity and support for regional devolution or secession in Belgium (Dodeigne et al., 2014), Russia (Hagendoorn et al., 2008), Spain (Boylan, 2015; Costa-Font and Tremosa-Balcells, 2008; Muñoz and Tormos, 2015) and the UK (Pattie et al., 1999).[12]

The reason for this congruence between ethnic/regional identity and attachment to regionalism lies in the dominance of nationalism and ethno-national identity as the pre-eminent modern form of state legitimacy (Gellner, 1983; Mann, 2005; Wimmer, 2002). More specifically, while in the pre-modern past state rulers were legitimized according to class and society was divided horizontally such that class trumped ethnicity, some argue that in the modern era states have instead become legitimized by ethnic or national identity and society has thus become vertically stratified such that ethnicity or nationality now trumps class.[13] Thus according to this logic, we should expect individuals to prefer to situate political power at the level of their stated level of ethno-national identity, such that those who identify more with the nation would grant political power to the nation-state, while those who identify more with a sub-national ethnic group within the nation-state would prefer more political autonomy at the local level.[14]

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[12] In all of these cases the data was collected after a regional government had already been established; but one would expect to see the same relationship between ethnic attachment and regionalism among groups without any such government yet.

[13] Note that this view is not homogenous within the social sciences; Hechter (2013), for instance, notes the ways in which alien or non-native rulers can become legitimate through effective and fair governance. Yet Hechter is in many ways the exception rather than the rule: even non-modernist scholars of nationalism like Smith (1991, pp. 74-76), who argues that many modern national identities have pre-modern and even ancient roots, agree that the ideology of nationalism—in particular the idea that the world is divided into nations and that each nation should have some form of political autonomy—is a modern phenomenon.

[14] An alternative means to the same end is posited by Alesina and Spolaore (2003), who suggest that the size and borders of states are drawn by trading off economies of scale and heterogeneous preferences. The

A second potential variation in demands for regionalism depends on the relative size of each ethnic group. Indeed, unless a region is ethnically homogeneous or evenly fragmented, the largest group in the region stands to benefit the most from regional decentralization. However, smaller groups in the region might very well be indifferent between a centralist government and a new regional government they cannot control either. Therefore, the effect of ethnic attachment might depend on whether the group is a majority or a minority in that region.

Third and finally, within-group variation might exist not only in degree of attachment to one's ethnicity but also in material conditions. We know richer regions and ethnic groups tend to prefer fiscal federalism to keep a larger share of the revenue they generate (Sambanis and Milanovic, 2011; Alesina and Spolaore, 2003) even if these demands might generally fall short of secessionism (Horowitz, 1985). At the individual level richer individuals within a region might prefer more regionalism hoping to (i) retain a larger share of personal and business revenues in the region and (ii) enjoy the political spoils such as the newly created jobs of an expanded bureaucracy (Breton, 1964). Thus we would expect to see a positive relationship between individual wealth and preference for regionalism.
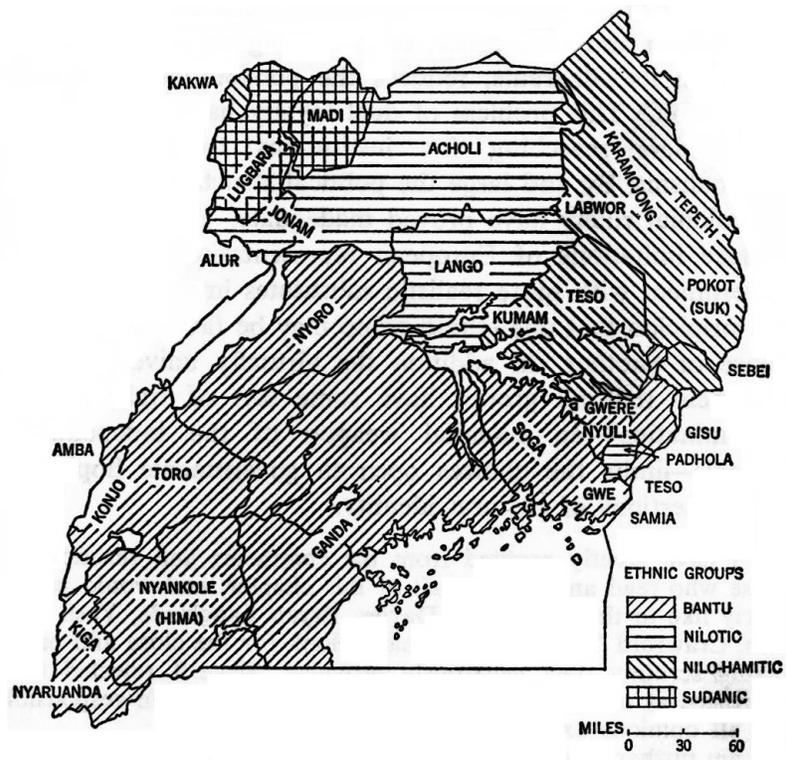
3   Research design

We investigate the questions above using original data from a nationally representative survey conducted in Uganda in the summer of 2012. Uganda is a country that extends 236,040 km^2 and populated by around 35 million inhabitants. It is very ethnically diverse, with 65 ethnic groups or "indigenous communities" recognized by the constitution. Ethnicity usually coincides with an individual's first language in Uganda but there is religious diversity within ethnic groups. For example, an Acholi in the Northern region speaks Acholi and a Muganda in the Central region speaks Luganda, but they might be Catholic, Muslim or Protestant. Figure 1 shows that the West, the East and the North contain multiple ethnic homelands. Only the Central region, the homeland of the Buganda Kingdom, is ethnically homogeneous, albeit with numerous migrants from other parts of the country and surrounding countries.

The low number of people per ethnic group combined with the geographic concentration of ethnic groups makes Uganda a case of potentially high within-group homogeneity. As a result of small size and geographic concentration of groups, we should expect more within-group

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more people in a given area prioritize a certain type of identity (national vs. ethnic), the more these same people will share preferences and tastes and thus prioritize the political unit that corresponds with that identity.

Figure 1: Main ethnic groups in Uganda (1972)

ETHNIC AND LANGUAGE GROUPS IN UGANDA
Source: Department of Geography, Makerere University.

homogeneity than in many other African countries. Further, according to Eifert et al. (2010), the salience of ethnicity is lowest right after an election. The effect of ethnic attachment on outcomes such as regionalist preferences might be a lower-bound estimate right after elections. This could be the case of Uganda since the last general elections in Uganda took place in February 2011, the survey was conducted in June and July of 2012 and the next general election is due in 2016.

While recent decades have been peaceful, Uganda's past has been rather tortuous. The country was initially colonized in the late 19th century as the area surrounding the kingdom of Buganda, which lent both its name and capital city to the colony as a whole. However, the country eventually encompassed four other kingdoms in the South and South-West as well as stateless societies in the East and North. In the run-up to independence Buganda kingdom leaders fought hard for more autonomous rule, even threatening to secede from the country in 1960. As a result Britain left Uganda upon independence in 1962 with a strange mix of a federal state for the kingdom of Buganda, a semi-federal system for the country's other four traditional kingdoms and a unitary system for the rest of the country. Yet after only four years Prime Minister Milton Obote stage a coup d'etat and deposed the then President, the Kabaka (king) of Buganda, leading to another futile declaration of independence by the kingdom government and the eventual exile of the Kabaka to Britain. Obote then introduced a new completely unitary system of local government under a new constitution and abolished the kingdoms as political entities. The next two decades proved to be incredibly disastrous for the country as a whole due to Idi Amin's misrule and a prolonged civil war; at no point then or since, however has there been any return to secessionism among the Baganda or any other group.[15]

Since the 1990s, the country has undergone a radical program of local decentralization under President Yoweri Museveni, the head of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), which took power by force in 1986.[16] While prominent figures in development circles such as Mahmood Mamdani first praised the program, it has been criticized in the last decade as a covert form of patrimonialism or generally as a scheme that grants political spoils but very little fiscal autonomy to the districts, the number of which has increased from 39 to 112 over the past two decades (Green, 2008; Grossman and Lewis, 2014). The main independent newspaper, the Daily Monitor, has echoed the criticism of "district inflation"

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[15]The lone exception was a brief attempt at secession among the Bakonjo and Baamba of the Rwenzururu region in western Uganda in the early 1960s.

[16]The President is a Munyankole from the Ankole Kingdom in the Western region and speaks Runyankole, the language of the Banyankole—plural for Munyankole.

by local politicians and some MPs,[17] as have members of opposition parties as well as donors (Green, 2010).

The result of the rapid increase in the number of districts in Uganda—which now has more highest-tier local governmental units than any other country in the world[18]—is that there has been increased interest in a regional tier of government. Indeed, in 2005 the Uganda Parliament passed a constitutional amendment that allowed districts to cooperate to form new regional governments. Despite no explicit mention of ethnicity in the amendment, the identified regional tiers—notably Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, Acholi and Lango—are all ethnic homelands, which suggests that a future regional tier of government would divide up the country along ethnic lines (Government of Uganda, 2005). However, despite a subsequent Regional Governments Bill in 2009 which sought to provide for the establishment of regional governments (cf. Goodfellow, 2014), the tier has yet to be created and thus Uganda continues to fit the modal African country where centralism is the status quo.

Indeed, whatever the shortcomings of local decentralization may be, Uganda's centralism under Museveni has up until now prevented ethnicity from having an institutional role. The strategy of the NRM can be understood in part as a reaction to Uganda's tumultuous past, restoring the former kingdoms of Bunyoro, Busoga and Toro in the early 1990s merely as cultural institutions with no political power.[19] Over the past two decades various groups around the country have organized themselves non-violently to receive district status with the prospect of receiving more transfers from the central government. This has led to a strategy of political rather than ethnic competition since ethnic and district borders need not coincide.

In spite of the relative peace, mostly disturbed by the Lord's Resistance Army, sharp regional economic differences remain (see Table 1). Buganda, or the Central region, is the richest region and yet the Kabaka is very much subordinate to a regime that many Baganda argue does not respect their cultural and land ownership rights (Kasfir, 1972; Federo, 2013).[20] Conventional wisdom of Ugandan politics suggests that support for regionalism—and specifically federalism—should be very high in Buganda, where the movement for the restoration

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[17]Two vignettes in the appendix allude to the financial under-provision that district governments suffer (Figure 7) and to the clientelistic use of new districts (Figure 8).

[18]The second-highest number is in Russia, with 85 federal subjects (of which two lie in what is internationally recognized as Ukraine).

[19]The only kingdom not restored was Ankole, which happens to be the home territory for President Museveni. The ostensible reason given for not restoring Ankole was its local unpopularity; however, some have speculated that another reason was that the Omugabe (king) of Ankole would be, if restored to his position, politically superior to Museveni himself according to traditional norms.

[20]Figure 9 in the appendix depicts the Baganda, personified in the Kabaka, as net contributors to the country's revenue base who receive little in return.

Table 1: Poverty and Development by Region, 2012-2013

Region	Monthly Consumption Expenditure per capita (2005USH)	Poverty Incidence (in %)
Central	73,060	4.7
East	35,906	24.5
North	31,140	43.7
West	53,657	8.7

Source: UBOS (2014, pp. 28, 30). Central region excludes Kampala.

of a federal state has been dubbed federo. While the North was peripheral during the colonial administration, from 1966 until 1986 Northern leaders were in power through military means: Obote (ruled 1966-1971 and 1980-1985) was a Lango, Idi Amin (1971-1979) a Kakwa and Tito Okello (1985-1986) an Acholi. Yet these twenty years were marred by conflict that caused zero or negative growth and did not help develop the North, which remains the poorest region today.

Thus, returning to the logic of group demands for regionalism, we should observe high support for regionalism in the poorest region, namely the North, as well as the richest one, namely Buganda. In contrast, the West is a fast growing region with a developed infrastructure and tourism industry. Since poverty is below average, a fiscal federalism rationale implies many Westerners might support federalism, like the Baganda. However, they have in part enjoyed this growth because of the discretionary spending of a centralized pro-Western government, since that is where Museveni and many core NRM members come from. Because they are the political core, they should be the least supportive of regionalism among the four regions.

Before closing this section, we should note two further predictions. First, demands for greater regionalism should not be specific to Buganda among the kingdom areas. Inhabitants of the other four kingdoms, all else equal, are expected to be more supportive of regionalism and federalism. Indeed, Buganda kingdom leaders looking to create a federal system have often sought political support from leaders of the other kingdoms (Green, 2008, p. 51). Second, a simple ethnic majority-minority logic implies that individuals who belong to the ethnic majority in their region should prefer a higher degree of regionalism since presumably their kin would hold the positions of power through elections—which do occur and are more democratic at the district level than at the national level. We test these predictions in the next section.

3.1 Data and measurement

Surveys were conducted by over 80 Ugandan enumerators grouped in 9 teams. Field work and data collection were designed and supervised by six graduate students and three professors in the summer of 2012. Only the Ugandan nationals conducted surveys to avoid any "white man" interviewer effect (Cilliers et al., 2012). Qualitatively, the research was also informed by interviews conducted with presidential candidate Betty Kamya (Uganda Federal Alliance), Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki, USAid expert in decentralization Robert Kalemba, Professor Frederik Ssempebwa, and two focus groups. The random sample includes 42 of the 110 districts, with around 10 districts per region to achieve regional balance. This resulted in a sample of individuals from over 20 ethnic groups, 19 of them with over 30 respondents each. The survey asks the following questions verbatim to determine preferences for degree of regional decentralization and for ethnic attachment:

I will now present to you several ways in which Uganda could be politically organized. Do not tell me which one is possible or likely. Instead, tell me which one you prefer the most:

1. *A Uganda where most decisions are taken by the national government. That is how Uganda is currently organized.*

2. *A Uganda where the regions have administrative power but most decisions are still taken by the national government.*

3. *A Uganda where the regions have political power. This could be a federal Uganda where some decisions are taken by the national government and others by regional governments.*

4. *A Uganda where the regions have political power and where the national government allows regions the option of full autonomy or secession from Uganda.*

Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a Ugandan and being [ethnicity of the respondent inserted here, e.g. Ateso]. [21] *Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings?*

1. *I feel only Ugandan*

2. *I feel more Ugandan than [respondent's ethnicity]*

3. *I feel equally Ugandan and [respondent's ethnicity]*

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[21]We were able to insert the ethnicity of the respondent from a previous answer thanks to using around 80 tablet computers, one for each Ugandan enumerator. This question about ranking ethnic and national identity is identical to one asked in Afrobarometer surveys; elsewhere it has become known as the "Moreno question" after the Spanish political scientist who pioneered its use in Scotland and Catalonia.

4. I feel more [respondent's ethnicity] than Ugandan

5. I feel only [respondent's ethnicity]

The ethnic attachment question was asked within the first 15 minutes of the survey. The question on preferences for regionalism, on the other hand, was asked towards the end of the survey. This ordering prevents the latter question from directly affecting the former.[22] However, respondents might not have understood the question. 44% of our sample had not finished primary school, and 80% of interviewees were from rural areas, in line with the national average. Hence, the question on regionalism might be difficult to understand for people with low levels of education. In-depth discussion with the focus groups and results in Section 4 suggest otherwise. With regards to education, decentralization preferences by region are almost identical between the 44% that did not finish primary and the 56% that did.

Furthermore, we conducted two focus groups with Ugandans from all four regions to check whether the questions were meaningful to the average respondent. The focus groups confirmed that the four regions are common knowledge and so is the distinction between region and district. However, some members in the focus group suggested respondents might be thinking of more cultural concepts such as sub-region (Figure 3) or kingdom when asked about regionalism, especially if they come from an area where there is a kingdom. This is understandable as neither regions nor sub-regions exist as administrative units. The survey prevents such misunderstanding by directly asking individuals about their region of origin early in the survey. The only four possible answers were Central, East, North and West, and there was no missing data on that question.

Focus groups and decentralization expert Mr. Kalemba suggested the word "federalism" would reduce the support for that option everywhere in the country except in the Central region. They indicated that some respondents might switch their response from federalism to regionalism because federalism has historically been associated with Baganda privileges, although this understanding of federalism is changing. Support for federalism should thus be interpreted as a lower bound outside the Central region.

3.2   Group-level results

The bar plots show variation in institutional design preferences among the four regions. Almost 40% of individuals support federalism in the Central Region and close to 30% in

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[22]Most of the survey took place between the two questions and was unrelated to ethnicity.

the Northern region. 6.8% of Northerners favor secession while in any of the other regions support is below 3%, in line with Horowitz's claim that backward regions are more likely to be secessionists. Federalism in the North is supported mainly by members of the Acholi (35%) and Langi (34%) ethnic groups, the two largest groups in that region. These rates are equivalent to the Central region, where support is 30% overall and 36% among the Baganda, the ethnic majority in the region. Among the Banyakole, Museveni's ethnic group, only 12% support federalism.

The focus groups showed patterns consistent with the bar graphs. No participant was secessionist and most were autonomist. They explained how regional governments might be a positive check on Museveni's authority and improve accountability. Not everyone agreed, however. A Muganda from the Central region was quite vocal in his defense of federalism, while a Westerner with links to Museveni's NRM was a staunch centralist, arguing that thanks to centralism ethnic conflict had mostly disappeared in Uganda. It became clear that, while there is little prospect of regional decentralization, some citizens can have very strong positions on the issue.

These descriptive results are important because they empirically show there is large aggregate variation in line with existing theories. Even in the West and the East, 70% of the population want some form of regional government which presently does not exist. Figure 3 shows further geographical variation. The map presents three variables: regionalism, ethnic attachment and the ethnic distance index (explained in detail in Section 4.1). Ethnic attachment varies geographically and is especially high in the Acholi and Lango sub-regions. Ethnic distance from President Museveni is smallest in the Southwest, where he is from, and largest in Acholiland and Karamoja, in the Northeast.

The next step is to determine whether there is a correlation between group-level ethnic attachment and group regionalism, as identity-based explanations would predict, and between group-level income and group regionalism, as interest-based explanations would predict. We group the data at the ethnic group and district levels. Since the number of observations is $J = 19$ for ethnic groups (we only include groups with 30 or more observations) and $K = 40$ for districts, identifying the causal effect of ethnic attachment and income on regionalism at the group level is rather challenging. However, the correlations are novel and interesting in themselves.

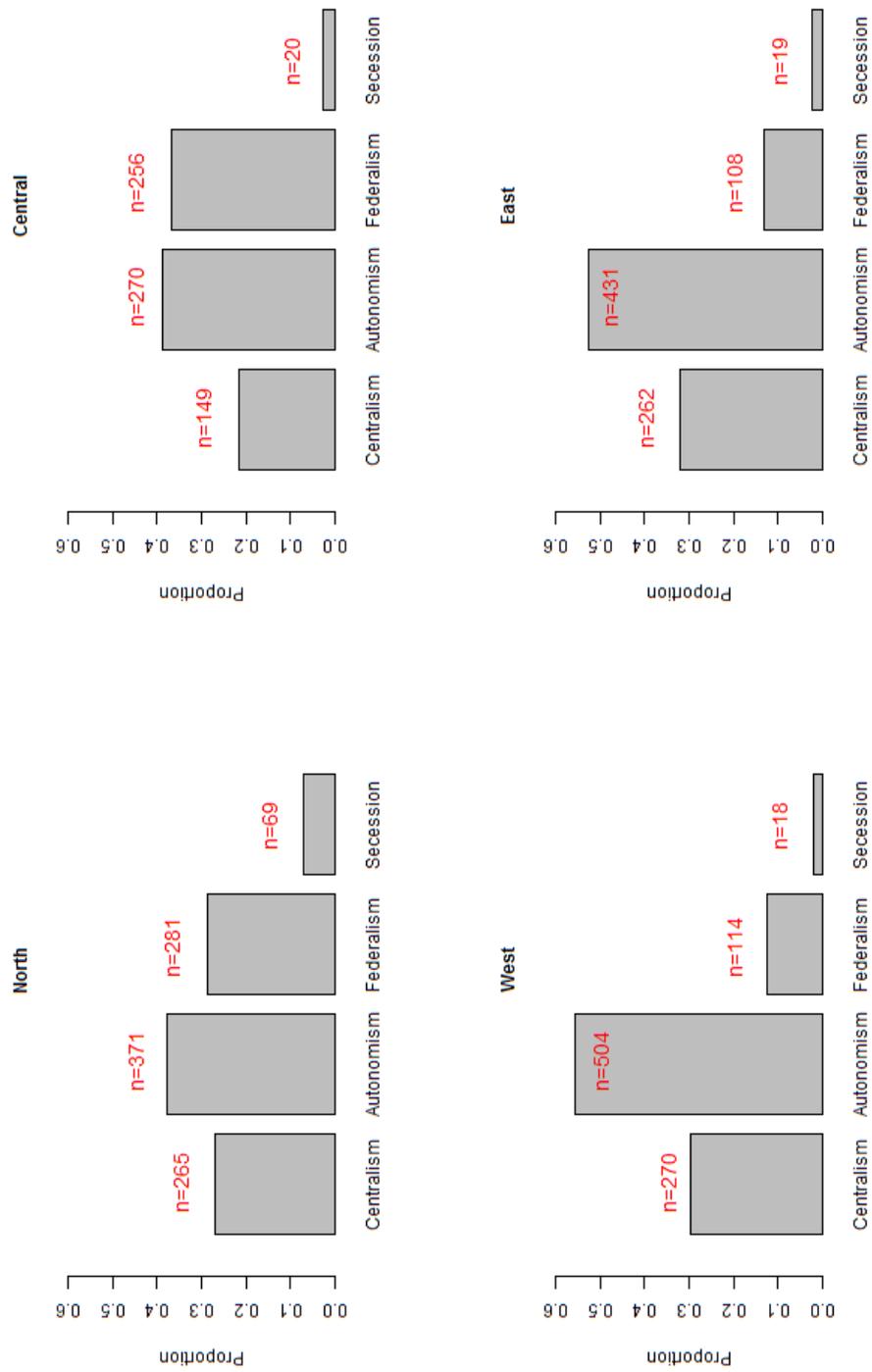Figure 2: Regionalist preferences by region

Figure 3: Regionalism and ethnic attachment by sub-region

Regionalism

- Most centralist
- Centralist
- Regionalist
- More regionalist
- Most regionalist

Ethnic attachment

- Most Ugandan
- More Ugandan
- Equally Ugandan and ethnic
- More ethnic
- Most ethnic

Ascriptive ethnic distance from Museveni
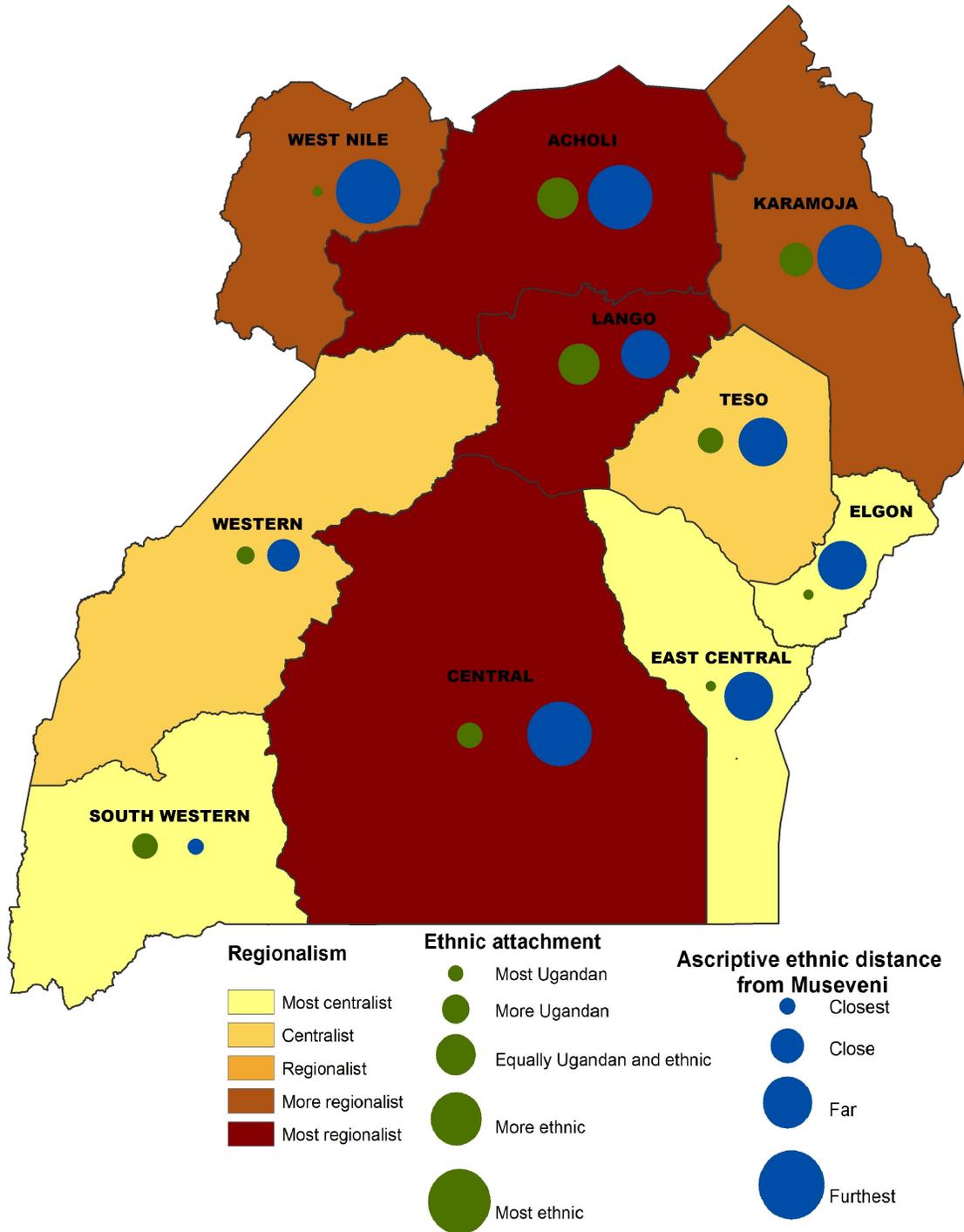
- Closest
- Close
- Far
- Furthest

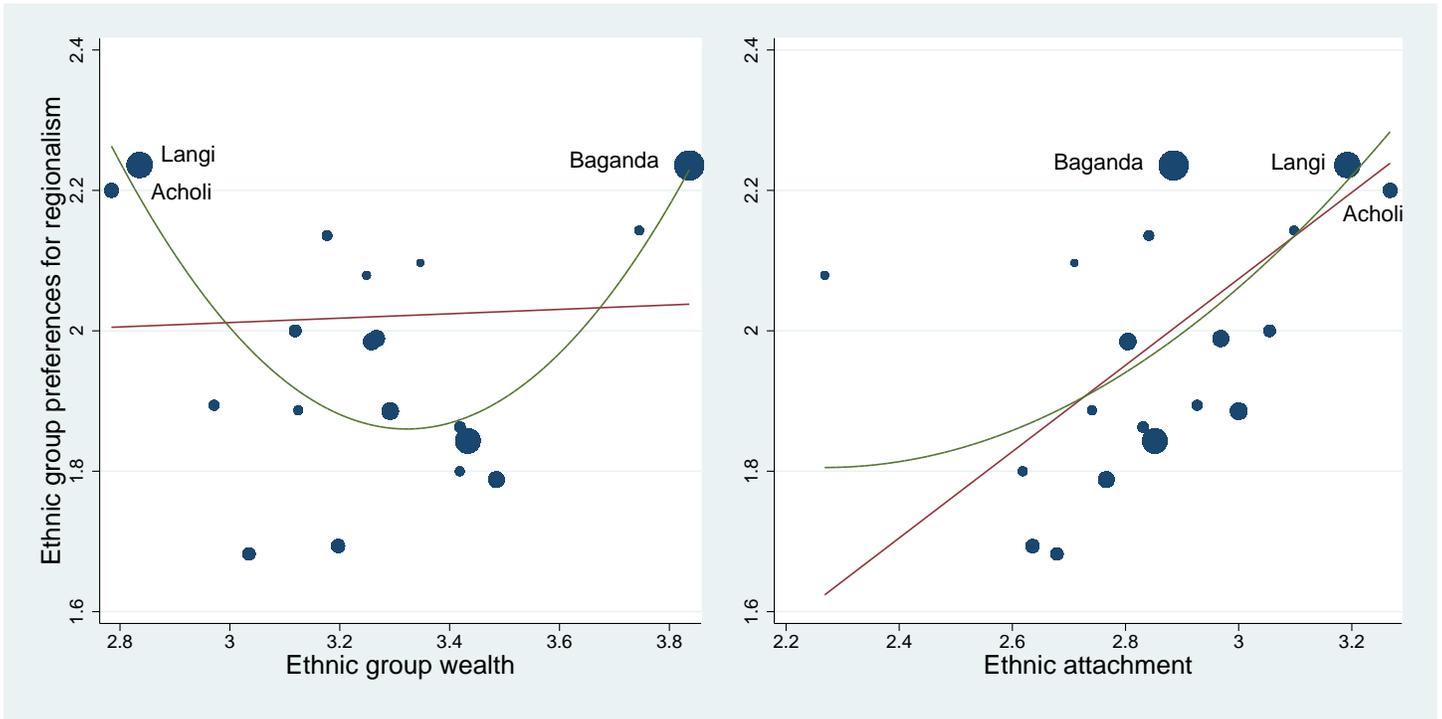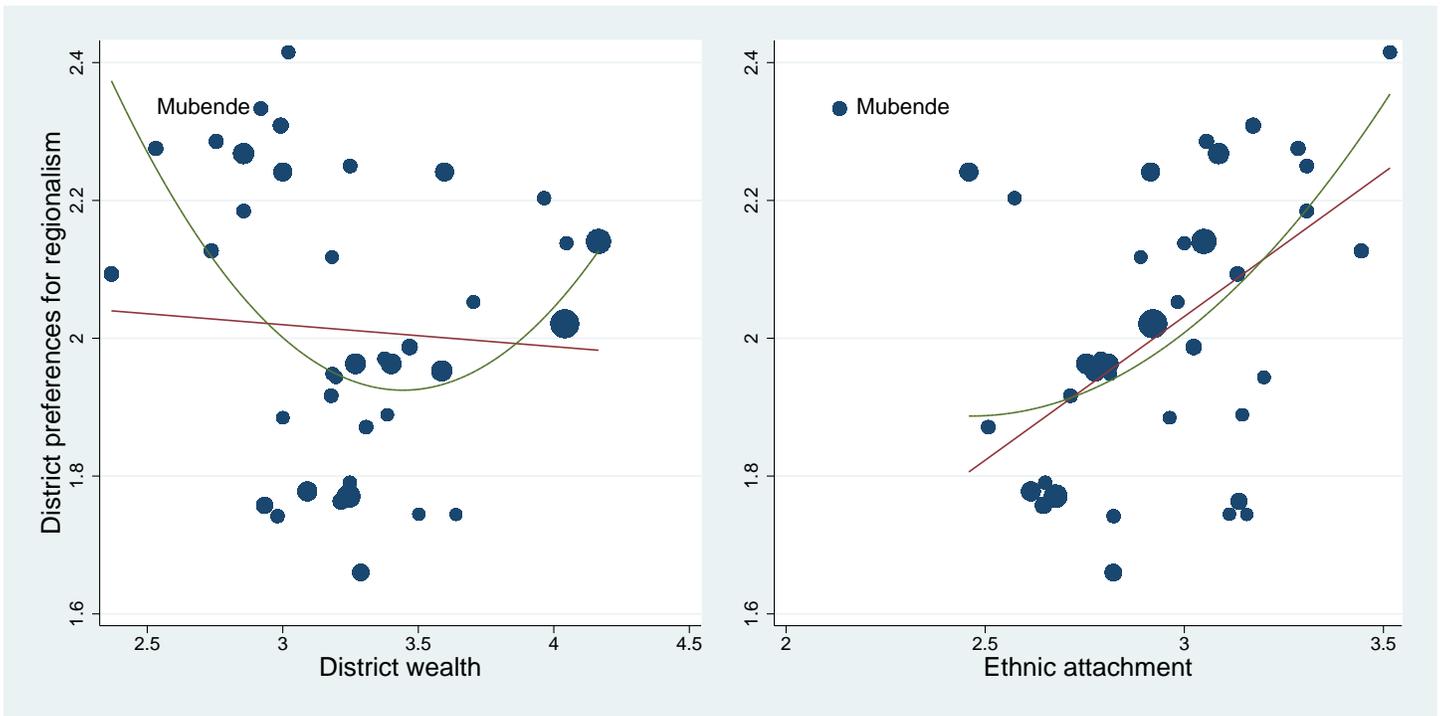Figure 4: Regionalism by ethnic group

Figure 5: Regionalism by district

The plots convey two interesting points. First, when ethnic group is the unit of analysis, regionalism as a function of ethnic attachment is clearly linear but income somewhat U-shaped. The U-shaped relationship is mostly driven by the Acholi and the Langi on the low income side, and by the Baganda on the high income side. Ethnic attachment, wealth and wealth squared alone explain 39% of the variation in preferences for regionalism (adjusted $R^2 = 0.27$, results available but not shown).

Second, and reassuringly, the U-shaped pattern holds when we analyze the data by district. As expected, preference for regionalism as a function of ethnic attachment remains linear.[23] Ethnic attachment, wealth and wealth squared alone explain 20% of the variation in preferences for regionalism (adjusted $R^2 = 0.13$, results available but not shown). This exercise quantifies insights uncovered in interviews and, most importantly, provides evidence for Horowitz's (1985) theory of secessionism from section 2.2.

4   Estimation methods and econometric results

Thus far, we have shown there is interesting variation at the ethnic group and district levels that explains preferences for regionalism. This section tests whether higher individual ethnic attachment causes an increased preference for regionalism conditional on group level factors in the previous section and other individual-level variables. To identify the effect, we use several econometric models that rely on different assumptions.[24]

4.1   Fixed effects and ascriptive ethnic index models

In Section 2.1 we defined regionalism as a deviation from the centralist status quo. The four ordered categories of the dependent variable can be interpreted as increasing distances between the status quo and the individual's ideal point. The dependent variable is a latent variable representation of that deviation (Y^*) for which four outcomes are observed. Hence, $Y_i \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ with each corresponding respectively to centralism, autonomism, federalism and secessionism. Each individual chooses the institutional design closest to his ideal point Y_i^*. We use the following estimation equation for the ordered logit model:[25]

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[23]The linear and quadratic fits in the right scatterplot of Figure 5 do not include Mubende, an extreme outlier likely due to small sample size.

[24]This section shows the main results. Additional results are available upon request.

[25]Models are robust to an ordered probit specification.

$$Y_{ijk}^* = \alpha + \beta T_{ijk} + X_{ijk}\gamma + \delta_j + \eta_k + \epsilon_{ijk}, \qquad \epsilon_{ijk} \sim logistic(0,1) \tag{1}$$

where we model the outcome for individual i of ethnic group j and where k stands for region in model 1 and district in model 2 of Table 2.[26] We denote ethnic attachment by T and β is the main coefficient of interest. X includes the remaining variables of what we term the 'ethnic or identity model', as well as the 'interest model' and the other individual level controls listed at the bottom of Table 2. The ethnic group fixed effects are denoted by δ, the region/district fixed effects by η. We include ethnic group fixed effects because we know from section 3.2 that there is variation at the ethnic group and district levels.[27]

Second, the effect of individual ethnic attachment in models 1 and 2 is significant and remains very similar in magnitude regardless of whether we include fixed effects for ethnicity, region or district, or both ethnicity and region or district. The results imply that most between-group variation is captured by either of the two sets of controls, which is reasonable given ethnic groups in Uganda are very geographically concentrated.[28] The interests model includes individual wealth, evaluation of services in the respondent's district and the number of days the respondent worked in the last month, assuming those with stable jobs prefer less institutional change. Increased wealth is associated with a desire for more regionalism. Both ethnic attachment and the wealth index are 1 to 5 ordinal variables, so the effects are similar in magnitude (see Section 4.4 for predicted probabilities).

Models 1 and 2 could be suffering from reverse causality. To address that problem, model 3 replaces the ethnic identity model—the first four variables in models 1 and 2—with an ascriptive measure of ethnic identity. We know the effects of ethnic favoritism by political leaders are large and widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa (Franck and Rainer, 2012). We construct a measure of ethnic distance between a given respondent and Museveni based on the individual's ethnicity, language, religion and region of origin. If the individual shares all four traits with Museveni, his distance is 0. If he does not share any of the traits, he scores

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[26]Note regions are a linear combination of districts, so regional variation is by definition accounted for in Model 2.

[27]In generalized linear models like an ordered logit, β might not be consistent if the number of groups j is large and the number of observations i is small. Because of the large sample size ($n > 2700$), including 40 district indicators and 27 group indicators simultaneously should not affect consistency.

[28]We ran models 1 and 2 with an interaction between ethnic attachment and ethnic regional majority to ascertain whether the effect of ethnic attachment depended on majority-minority relationships [results not shown]. The effect was only significant in model 1. Once we include district fixed effects the interaction becomes insignificant ($p = 0.26$).

Table 2: Determinants of preferences for regionalism

	(1) 4 regions	(2) 42 districts	(3) Ascriptive index
Ethnic identity model			
Ethnic attachment	0.138** (0.0264)	0.142** (0.0500)	
Ethnic distance index			0.0822† (0.0451)
Regional ethnic majority	0.361** (0.111)	-0.0120 (0.181)	
Kingdom	0.285** (0.0620)	0.872** (0.293)	
Interest model			
Wealth index	0.161** (0.0369)	0.191** (0.0478)	0.187** (0.0438)
Quality of services	0.110† (0.0630)	0.0828 (0.0685)	0.130* (0.0608)
Days of work/month	-0.0122* (0.00541)	-0.0114** (0.00330)	-0.0162** (0.00385)
Cut 1	0.0947	0.5198	-0.3876
Cut 2	2.2096	2.6801	1.6386
Cut 3	4.342	4.8285	3.7206
N	2828	2741	2871

Standard errors in parentheses and clustered at the district level.

All models include survey weights at the regional level.

$†p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The dependent variable has 4 categories: centralism, regionalism, federalism and secessionism. Additional controls: age, male, education, corruption, trust battery, ethnic group dummies, region dummies in (1) and district dummies in (2).

4.[29] Hence the model is similar to equation 1 except that it omits the fixed effects and ethnic distance replaces the ethnic model:

$$Y_i^* = \alpha + \beta D_i + X_i \gamma + \epsilon_i, \qquad \epsilon_i \sim logistic(0,1) \qquad (2)$$

where D is ethnic distance and β is the coefficient of interest. Model 3 shows that as ascriptive distance from Museveni increases, so does the preferred level of regional decentralization. This is what we descriptively saw in the map. The blue circles in the West are the smallest because Museveni is from the West—hence a respondent can at most score 3—and 39% are Anglican or Protestant like Museveni. Hence, 39% of the Westerners score between 0 and 2. The opposite is true for Karamoja, geograhically at the other end of Uganda. Karamojong are Northerners, 80% of whom are Catholics in the sample, and they obviously do not share ethnicity nor language, so most people score a 4. The next two subsections present an instrumental variable approach to alleviate reverse causality and a matching method to alleviate omitted variable bias.

4.2   Language match as an instrument

Models in Table 5 contain the same individual controls as Table 4 but use two-stage least squares (2SLS). The high linguistic diversity in Uganda, which is very correlated to its high ethnic diversity, allows me to instrument ethnic attachment as a function of whether interviewer and interviewee share the same first language.[30] The survey asks for the enumerator's first language rather than his ethnicity, but using first language rather than ethnicity captures most of the intended relationship because a respondent's ethnicity and first language are very correlated in the sample ($\rho = 0.83$).

When designing field work, the intention was to match as many enumerators as possible with their co-ethnics to ease surveying by splitting our 9 teams of enumerators along linguistic lines. Because ethnolinguistic diversity is so high, only 1,731 respondents were interviewed by enumerators with the same native language while 1,753 were not. Hence, this unintended even split means that for half the sample the instrument equals 1 and for the other half it equals 0. An example of a real district illustrates the process. In Kampala district there are many different ethnic groups. Three Batooro were interviewed by co-ethnics; six were

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[29]We thank John Londregan and Michael Donnelly for suggesting this index. Because this ethnic index is ascriptive, the measure is not significant if we incorporate district or ethnic group dummies since there is almost no variation left from which to identify the effects.

[30]We thank Brandon Miller for the conversation in which we devised the instrument.

not. On the contrary, 60% of the Baganda were interviewed by co-ethnics, which is to be expected given Kampala is in the Central region. The rationale for the instrument comes directly from the in-group vs. out-group distinction in social psychology, and the following passage by Brewer (2007, p. 730-2) illustrates how ethnic attachment not only could but should be affected by the interviewer:

> *Attachment to groups must be understood within the context of the profoundly social nature of human beings as a species. [...] A consequence of in-group identification and intergroup boundaries is that individuals modify their social behavior depending on whether they are interacting with in-group or out-group members.*

This is precisely what some recent papers in political science find. Cilliers et al. (2012) show this effect when they randomly switch the interviewer's race between black and white. Adida et al. (2014) show interviewer effects in multiple countries using African survey data.[31] The mechanism is intuitive: a person is likely to feel, or at least report feeling, more Acholi when he is interviewed by an Acholi than otherwise. The stages of the 2SLS are:

$$T_i = \alpha + \beta M + X_i \gamma + \epsilon_i \tag{3}$$

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_{IV} \widehat{T}_i + X_i \gamma + \epsilon_i, \tag{4}$$

where M stands for match and equals 1 if interviewer and respondent are co-ethnics and 0 if they are not. Next, we denote the original T as $\widehat{T}$ to mean instrumented ethnic attachment. β_{IV} is the main coefficient of interest, and X is the set of controls. Instrumented ethnic attachment predicts preferences for regionalism in model 1 of Table 3, which controls for the individual level covariates of the previous models. The instrument is balanced across covariates but not geographically. Model 2 includes the rest of the ethnic model and regional fixed effects to account for this non-random factor. While the point estimate becomes closer to the models in Table 4, it is not robust to the inclusion of region or district fixed effects. In sum, the estimates for ethnic attachment in the two baseline models are significant and robust to alternative specifications, but they cannot rule out endogeneity. The ascriptive index and the instrument prevent reverse causality, but the ascriptive index cannot prevent omitted variable bias and the instrument is not precisely estimated when including regional or district controls. Below we employ a matching method to provide further evidence.

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[31]Their opening quote makes the point clearly: "To accept a guest into your house and then proceed to explain that you neither trust nor feel friendly toward people of his race probably takes more *chutzpah* than the average respondent possesses."

Table 3: Instrumenting ethnic attachment with language match

	(1)	(2) 4 regions
Ethnic attachment	0.410* (0.200)	0.100 (0.238)
N	2867	2867

Standard errors in parentheses and clustered at the district level.
Both models include survey weights at the regional level.
$\dagger p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Additional controls: kingdom and district ethnic majority (in model 2), wealth index,
services battery, days of work/month, trust battery, corruption, age, male, education.

4.3 Matching method using an ordinal treatment regime

The matching method for general treatment regimes used here and developed by Ratkovic (2012) is different from traditional matching techniques, such as propensity score matching.[32] Traditional matching methods force researchers to dichotomize the variable of interest. That is sometimes unfortunate and more often unjustifiable. Ratkovic's method can balance ordinal, numerical and categorical variables. We balance ethnic attachment, the ordinal variable of interest or treatment (T), on over 80 pre-treatment covariates, including individual variables and district and ethnic group indicators as explained in equation 1. To ease computation, we reduced ethnic attachment to three categories: (1) feeling only Ugandan or more Ugandan than ethnic ($n = 851$); (2) equally Ugandan and ethnic ($n = 1,922$); and (3) only ethnic or more ethnic than Ugandan ($n = 695$). Balancing the treatment on these relevant covariates greatly alleviates omitted variable bias. Ratkovic's (2012, p. 1) non-parametric method "adapts the support vector machine classifier to identify a balanced subset of the data."

The method has two key properties. First, the joint distribution of the pre-treatment covariates is balanced across the three categories of the treatment. Further, tables 7 and 8 in the appendix show the full sample is similar to the balanced sample. For example, the average years of education for the full sample is 7.03 and for the balanced sample it is 6.86 years. "Within-sample balance" is not and cannot be a property of the method, but the full-sample results in Table 4 and the matching results in Table 6 are more credible as a result.

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[32]We are grateful to Marc Ratkovic for allowing us to use his code. See reference for details on the method.

The second property of the method is to keep the largest balanced subset of the data, that is, the largest subset of the data that does not predict ethnic attachment. In this case, we keep over 55% of the observations after matching the data. In other words, when we use the full data set the outcome is clearly not conditionally independent of the treatment because ethnic attachment is not randomly assigned. This matching method removes the bias caused by observable confounders so that, for the largest possible subset of the data, the treament is balanced across covariates.[33]

Model 1 in Table 4 (eq. 5) is a simple bivariate ordered logit. Model 2 (eq. 6) includes the over 80 pre-treatment covariates (the controls and fixed effects of equation 1) which are used to balance ethnic attachment:

$$Y_i^* = \alpha + \beta T_i + \epsilon_i, \qquad \qquad \epsilon_i \sim logistic(0,1) \qquad (5)$$

$$Y_{ijk}^* = \beta T_{ijk} + X_{ijk}\gamma + \delta_j + \eta_k + \epsilon_{ijk}, \qquad \epsilon_{ijk} \sim logistic(0,1) \qquad (6)$$

The little change in point estimates and standard errors of models 1 and 2 is due to nearly perfect balance.[34] Because log odds coefficients are not intuitive, we provide predicted probabilities for the results below.

Table 4: Ordered matching method

	(1) No controls	(2) All controls
Ethnic attachment	0.189*	0.164*
	(0.077)	(0.074)
N	1605	1605

Standard errors in parentheses and clustered at the district level.
$\dagger p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Model 2 controls for over 80 pre-treatment covariates, including
district and ethnic fixed effects and the individual-level controls.

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[33]Using potential outcomes notation, the problem is that $Y_i(t) \not\perp\!\!\!\perp T_i | X_i \quad \forall t \in T$. The method ensures that for an ordinal variable T_i, at least with respect to observables, we have that $Y_i(t) T_i | X_i \quad \forall t \in T$.

[34]The effect size is larger than in Table 4 models because we reduced the variable to three categories.

4.4 Predicted probabilities plots

The four plots present the predicted probabilities of Model 1 in Table 6 for each type of respondent with all covariates at their means. The average person that identifies mostly or uniquely as Ugandan supports centralism with a 32% probability. The probability this same person is a centralist if he identifies mostly or uniquely with his ethnicity is only 25%. This 7% difference is equivalent to a 22% decrease. Thus, high ethnic attachment causes a 22% decrease in the probability of being a centralist. This difference is statistically and substantively significant. The opposite is true for federalism. Only 17.8% of those who identify as Ugandans support federalism, while there are 23.3% of federalists among ethnic identifiers. This 5.5% difference represents a 22.5% increase.
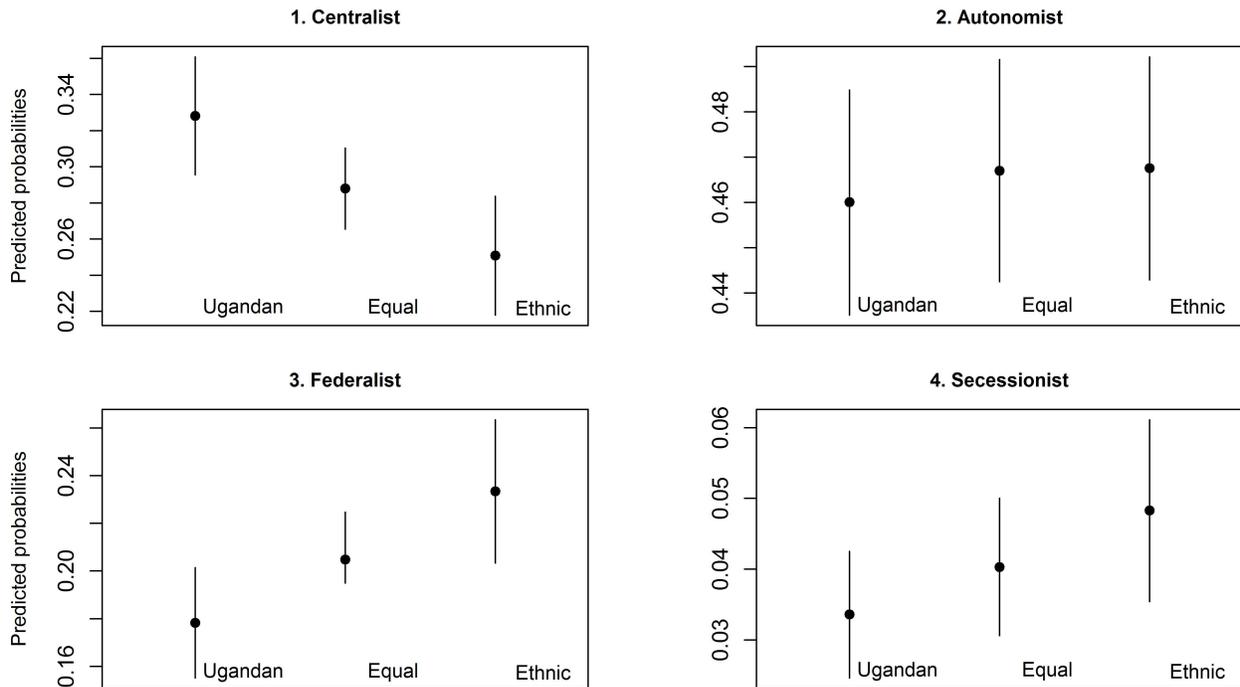
The vertical axes show autonomy is the modal outcome, with around 47% of Ugandans supporting it. The autonomist category is appealing to all those who dislike the centralist status quo but fall short of being federalists. Since both Ugandan and ethnic identifiers can reasonably support that category, the predicted percentage of autonomists is similar across categories. Finally, logic tells us secessionists should be ethnic rather than Ugandan identifiers. This is indeed what the point estimates suggest, moving from around 3% to 5%. This 66% increase is large but not statistically significant because very few people in Uganda are secessionists to begin with, which makes the point estimates less precise. To recapitulate, this empirical analysis shows that individuals have meaningful preferences about an issue as abstract and yet as essential as the territorial organization of their polity.

5 Conclusion

Given the pervasiveness of ethnicity for many political economy outcomes, this article focused on the association between ethnic identity and institutional design. We began by asking two questions. First, do preferences for regional decentralization vary simply by ethnic group or region? Secondly, does ethnic attachment—specifically how much one identifies with one's ethnicity compared to one's national identity—affect one's preferred power-sharing arrangement?

In answering this first question, we find that regionalism as a function of ethnic attachment is linear for both districts and ethnic groups, as identity-based explanations would suggest. Nonetheless, in accordance with Horowitz's predictions, regionalism as a function of income is U-shaped: both poorer groups, presumably due to marginalization, and richer groups, presumably due to fiscal interests, desire more regional decentralization. Small ethnic group

Figure 6: Predicted probabilities by degree of regionalism

Legend   *Ethnic*: respondent feels more attached to his ethnicity; *Equal*: respondent feels equally attached to his ethnicity and Uganda; *Ugandan*: Respondent feels more Ugandan. All point estimates include 95% confidence intervals. Note that differences in point estimates between two categories can be statistically significant even if the confidence intervals of the point estimates overlap. Also note that, by visual necessity, ranges of Y-axis across plots differ.

and district sample size does not allow us to test these competing theories, but at least we can show for the first time that both logics could be at work within the same country. Group ethnic attachment and group wealth alone explain 39% of the variation in preferences for regionalism when the units are ethnic groups, and 20% when the units are districts.

To answer the second question on individual preferences, we used four strategies: fixed effects, an ascriptive index of ethnicity, an instrumental variable and a new matching method for general treatment regimes. While they rely on different assumptions, these methods collectively provide strong support for the main hypothesis. In particular, identifying with one's ethnicity over one's national identity causes a 22% decrease in the probability of being centralist, while it increases the probability of being a federalist by 23% and a secessionist by 66%.[35]

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[35]As already mentioned, the 66% is not significantly different from 0 because the number of secessionists in Uganda is low regardless of the level ethnic attachment.

Our results have important implications for institutional design, particularly in the developing world. Indeed, this paper marks the first effort to examine what type of regional government individuals desire in a developing country context, as well as the first attempt to ask a sample of individuals across an entire country about their preferences for regionalism. This gap existed largely because research on institutional design is often prescriptive, from either a normative or an efficiency viewpoint, and has tended to ignore actual preferences of citizens for whom the institutional design is intended. This is unfortunate since citizens condition the legitimacy and success of any government's regional decentralization program.

At least three policy suggestions emerge from our research. An obvious one is to allow the creation of regional/federal governments for those areas which desire them, which would lead to a system of asymmetrical regionalism/federalism such as existed in Uganda in the early 1960s or Russia, Spain and the UK today. However, such a system would have high potential for political instability viz. the non-advantaged regions, as seen both conceptually (Roeder, 2005) as well as historically in countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda (Zuber, 2011). A second solution would be to reduce regional and ethnic inequalities and thus eliminate the extreme ends of the U-shaped relationship between ethnic/regional wealth and preferences for regionalism. Indeed, there is now strong evidence that there is a robust positive relationship between horizontal ethnic inequalities and the outbreak of interethnic conflict, including secessionism (Bakke and Wibbels, 2006; Cederman et al., 2011; Deiwiks et al., 2012; Gellner, 1983; Hechter, 1975).

Finally, governments could work to reduce demands for regionalism by de-emphasizing ethnic attachments. Previous cross-national work on understanding the determinants of national vs. ethnic attachments has shown that urbanization, formal employment and education are all positively correlated with national over ethnic identification (Green, 2012; Robinson, 2014), at least in the African context. Thus, governments interested in reducing the salience of ethnic identity and consequent divergent preferences for regional government may want to focus on these key developmental issues.

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6   Appendix

6.1   Vignettes

Figure 7: Daily Monitor Cartoon, July 27

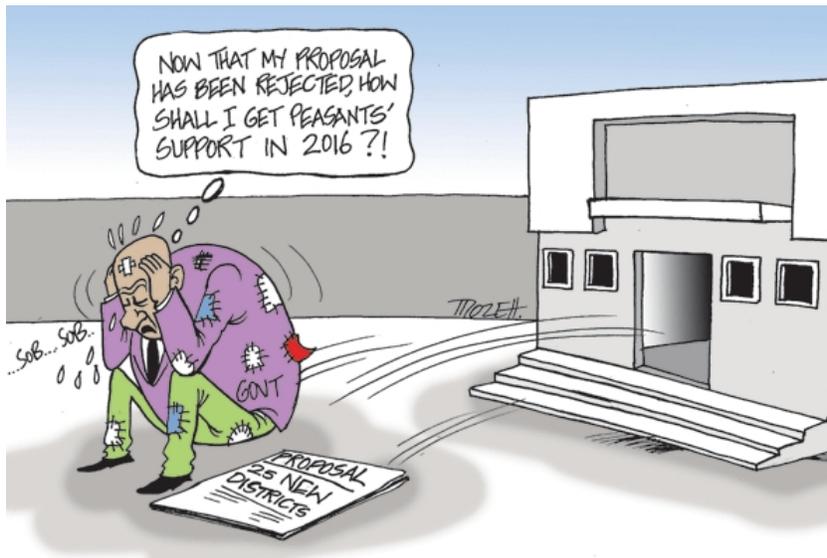Figure 8: Daily Monitor Cartoon, July 28

Figure 9: The Kabaka Demanding Redistribution

Source: Federo

6.2 Summary statistics

Table 5: Summary statistics for the complete dataset

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Regionalism	2.019	0.805	1	4	3320
Ethnic attachment	2.902	0.992	1	5	3468
District ethnic majority	0.745	0.436	0	1	3484
Kingdom	0.304	0.46	0	1	3484
Ethnic distance index	2.972	1.279	0	4	3484
Wealth index	3.327	0.893	1	5	3435
Quality of services	4.037	0.695	1.375	5.875	3296
Days of work/month	9.550	12.102	0	31	3466
Trust in coethnics	3.208	0.832	1	4	3465
Trust in LC3	3.067	0.886	1	4	3305
Trust in NRM	2.891	1.093	1	4	3369
Corruption	1.953	1.425	1	5	3435
Age	34.427	12.056	18	64	3476
Male	0.485	0.5	0	1	3484
Years of education	7.031	4.067	0	19	3480

Table 6: Summary statistics for matched data

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Regionalism	1.982	0.801	1	4	1584
Ethnic attachment (3 categories)	1.874	0.769	1	3	1625
District ethnic majority	0.702	0.457	0	1	1625
Kingdom	0.29	0.454	0	1	1625
Ethnic distance index	2.955	1.264	0	4	1625
Wealth index	3.218	0.841	1	5	1625
Quality of services	4.093	0.680	1.375	5.875	1625
Days of work/month	10.88	12.286	0	31	1625
Trust in coethnics	3.222	0.812	1	4	1625
Trust in LC3	3.083	0.887	1	4	1625
Trust in NRM	2.978	1.053	1	4	1625
Corruption	1.924	1.42	1	5	1625
Age	34.59	11.633	18	64	1625
Male	0.516	0.5	0	1	1625
Years of education	6.859	3.829	0	17	1625

6.3 Codebook

Table 7: Codebook

Variable	Description
Regionalism	1 = centralism, 2 = autonomism, 3 = federalism, 4 = secessionism
Ethnic attachment	Increasing (1-5) in attachment to ethnic group over Ugandan identity
Regional ethnic majority	1 if respondent belongs to the largest ethnic group; 0 otherwise
Kingdom	1 if respondent lives in an area where there is a kingdom, 0 otherwise
Ethnic distance index	Number of characteristics shared with Museveni: ethnicity, religion, language and region
Wealth index	Composite of 6 measures: food, clean water, medicines, fuel for cooking, cash income and school expenses 1 = always lacked all of the above; 5 = never lacked any of the above
Quality of services	Composite of ease of access to 6 government services: identity document, piped water, electricity, primary school, medical treatment and police. 1 = excellent; 6 = does not exist
Days of work/month	Number of days worked in the last month
Trust in co-ethnics	For all trust measures: 1 = do not trust and 5 = trust a lot
Trust in LC3	Trust in Local Council Chairman (1-5)
Trust in NRM	Trust in National Resistance Movement (1-5)
Political corruption	1-5 where 1 = Strongly agree to "current government leaders take government money to benefit themselves and their friends" 5 = Strongly agree to "current government leaders use government money to benefit everyone in the country"
Age	Age of respondent
Male	1 = male; 0 = female
Years of education	Number of years of education