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**ETHNICITY AND THE WILLINGNESS TO
SANCTION VIOLENT POLITICIANS:
EVIDENCE FROM KENYA**

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Abstract

Ethnicity and the Willingness to Sanction Violent Politicians: Evidence from Kenya

Introduction
Since the early 1990s, many countries in Africa and Asia have experimented with multi-party democracy, but the quality and character of electoral competition in these countries varies widely. In a handful of countries, such as Ghana and Benin, we can speak of well-institutionalized party systems and elections that are free, fair, and genuinely uncertain. Elsewhere, elections have been characterized to different extents by vote-buying, violence, and other violations of democratic norms. A growing body of work examines public opinion in these "hybrid regimes" (Bratton 2008; Bratton & Kimenyi 2008; Bratton & Masunungure 2007). This work has yielded several insights into vote choice and trust in government institutions; importantly, research has often found that popular evaluations of acceptable political behavior remain surprisingly fluid. Violations of democratic norms have differential effects on satisfaction with democracy and trust in government institutions depending on a respondent's position within or outside the governing coalition (Moehler 2009; Moehler & Lindberg 2009; Logan et al 2003). Attitudes toward clientelism and violence are also malleable, as suggested by recent research that examines the impact of civic education campaigns (Collier & Vicente 2008; Vincente 2008; Wantchekon 2008). Citizens in hybrid regimes value democracy, but they are also aware of the compromised political landscapes that they navigate. How do they manage the trade-offs between the democracy they might want and the democracy that is provided? Are attitudes toward violations of democratic norms uniform, or do they vary across groups within a given polity? More pointedly, do citizens adjust their expectations of politician behavior depending on contextual cues? In other words, we might expect that individuals would treat a co-ethnic politician more leniently than they would an ethnic stranger, or they may be more accepting of fraud in one type of election but not in another.

This paper addresses the role that ethnicity plays in shaping individuals' willingness to sanction or disapprove of politicians who violate democratic norms. More specifically, I rely on data from a survey-embedded experiment conducted in six slums in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2009. The paper will address two separate questions. First of all, it examines whether individuals use ethnicity as an informational cue when assessing politicians who are known to have used violence or intimidation in the past.[1] In political settings where ethnicity is salient, individuals are more likely to evaluate co-ethnic politicians more positively than those with whom they do not share an ethnic identity.[2] Kenya experienced large-scale political violence in 2008 that was largely structured around ethnicity. In Kenya and other highly polarized contexts, we might expect this "co-ethnic advantage" to extend to greater tolerance of violence or fraud by politicians from an individual's own ethnicity. Secondly, the broader project seeks to examine the degree to which co-ethnic effects are mediated by social setting. In particular, if individuals have more diverse discussion networks, do they cease to differentiate between violent politicians based on ethnicity? If individuals are of minority status within a neighborhood (or if they perceive themselves to be greatly outnumbered), are they more or less likely to exhibit co-ethnic effects? The data collected in 2009 allows us to examine these and other aspects of social setting, as well as whether there are sub-neighborhood patterns in attitudes toward violent politicians. In this paper, I will examine the effect of one aspect of social setting, the level of violence in an individual's neighborhood of residence.

The questions examined in this paper are relevant to those interested in public opinion in semi-democratic or "hybrid" regimes, but they also address a larger debate in comparative politics and the study of conflict. This debate centers on the role that insecurity and violence plays in increasing the salience of ethnicity or

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[1] I follow other political scientists in viewing ethnicity as one of several possible attachments. See the discussion in Chandra 2006; Posner 2006. Because it is often easily observable, it can serve as a powerful and relatively low-cost informational signal (Chandra 2004). The effect of ethnicity on political outcomes, however, is often inconsistent or weaker than presumed (e.g., Chandra 2004; Keefer 2010).
[2] In some contexts, of course, other forms of identity may be equally or more important than ethnicity, or the salience of different attachments may shift over time. See Posner 2004; Posner 2006; Dunning & Harrison 2010.

triggering ethnic polarization. In much of the literature on ethnic conflict, there is a base assumption that increased uncertainty, fear of victimization, or episodes of violence will generate an "ethnic security dilemma" (e.g., [Posen, Barry 1993 #2245]; [Hardin, Russell 1995 #2246]). Where ethnicity retains political or social salience, groups cannot credibly commit to not attacking one another, and conflict is likely to ensue. A strong state can serve as a guarantor of a group's safety and thereby prevent conflict escalation.[3] Should state institutions weaken, or should the state be unwilling to mediate group relations, episodes of violence are typically presumed to intensify individuals' attachment to ethnicity. Inter-personal trust becomes a more important factor in social interactions, and the diversity of an individual's contacts correspondingly shrinks. Uncertainty may lead individuals to inflate the threat posed by the opposing side, or they may assign greater credibility to the claims made by politicians and other "ethnic entrepreneurs" (De Figueiredo & Weingast 1999; Snyder 2000; Brass 1997).   Individuals in polarized settings are more likely to limit interaction to those to whom they are related by blood, who come from the same home area, or who can be more effectively sanctioned by informal enforcement networks, such as those provided by ethnicity.[4] The tendency toward residential segregation in the aftermath of conflict is indicative of this general shrinking of social worlds.

This model of ethnic conflict spins out several testable implications for those interested in ethnicity, elections, and violence. In this paper, the survey is designed to assess whether violence plays an ethnic "priming" role. The instrument asked respondents, all of whom were Kenyan slum-dwellers, a series of questions about a hypothetical politician who is running for councilor, a local elected position. The three treatments changed only the name of the politician and, in one script, assigned the politician a partisan affiliation. Respondents are therefore asked about a Luo politician, a Kikuyu politician, or a Kikuyu politician who supports a party that is closely associated with Luos and other western Kenyan tribes (the 'traitor treatment'). The survey script subsequently reveals that the hypothetical candidate had hired youths and used intimidation during elections in the past. If violence and insecurity intensify in-group attachment and inter-ethnic animosity, we would expect individuals to be more likely to approve of politicians from their own ethnic group and disapprove of politicians from ethnic groups that are viewed as threatening. When confronted with evidence that a politician has violated a norm, we would assume that individuals would be affected by the ethnic identity of the politician when evaluating the severity of the norm violation. This would generate the following hypotheses:

> H[1]   In violent electoral contexts, individuals will assess co-ethnics more positively than politicians from other ethnic groups.

> H[2]   When provided information about the use of violence by a politician, individuals will be more forgiving or tolerant of co-ethnics.

We would expect these relationships to be stronger or weaker across contexts, depending on the level of violence or insecurity. Individuals in relatively violent neighborhoods may be more accustomed to violence, so they may be less likely to express punitive attitudes toward politicians who use violence. The converse might also be true: those living in violent neighborhoods might have borne the direct costs of violence in the past, so they may be less tolerant of politicians who increase the likelihood of these costs in future. If past violence occurred at least partly on ethnic lines, we would expect political dynamics to conform more closely to the expectations of an ethnic security dilemma model. In non-violent neighborhoods, where group insecurity presumably would be lower, we might expect co-ethnic effects to be smaller or less significant. If this logic is sound, we would expect support for the following hypothesis.

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[3] This is not to suggest that the escalation of conflict is automatic in settings where there exists both group polarization and weak state institutions. Several scholars have pointed out that the outbreak of conflict is fairly rare, and non-state institutions can play a role in policing inter-group relations and preventing violence (e.g., Fearon & Laitin 1996).
[4] The relationship between violence, ethnic polarization and limited cross-group interaction is, of course, recursive. One could argue that segregated civic life produces ethnic conflict or allows inter-group conflicts to escalate (e.g., Varshney 2003).

H₃   Co-ethnic effects are stronger in violent neighborhoods than in relatively less violent neighborhoods. In violent neighborhoods, individuals will express less punitive attitudes toward the use of violence by co-ethnic politicians.

If individuals use information about the national political environment rather than their own place of residence to assess group threat, then we would expect no difference in the strength or significance of co-ethnic effects across violent and non-violent neighborhoods.

Nairobi slums are a particularly suitable setting for the study. In some slums, violence has been a routine feature of political competition for several election rounds. Slum-dwellers also have more tolerant attitudes toward the use of political violence than the general Kenyan population. For instance, my survey duplicates a question asked in the Afrobarometer that probes respondents' attitudes about the acceptability or legitimacy of violence. The question asks respondents to agree with one of two statements, one of which maintains that violence is never justified with the other suggesting that violence may sometimes be necessary. In my sample, slum-dwellers agree with the statement "it is sometimes necessary to use violence in support of a just cause" at twice the rate of the Afrobarometer's national sample (49 percent versus 23 percent in the Afrobarometer).[5] There are also other striking differences between slum-dwellers and the general Kenyan population. In the Afrobarometer's national sample, 78.9 percent of respondents agreed with the statement "democracy is preferable to any other kind of government;" in the Nairobi slum sample, only 61 percent agreed with the same statement.[6] Slum-dwellers tend to express higher levels of political alienation. In the same "democracy is preferable" question, 20 percent of the sample agreed with the statement "for someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have" versus less than six percent of the Afrobarometer sample. In terms of trust in government institutions and politicians, levels of distrust of the president, of other politicians, and of other government institutions are two times or more higher in the slum sample than in the Afrobarometer sample.[7] Slum-dwellers also consistently report lower levels of political participation, ranging from voting to meeting with politicians to attending community meetings. Because slum-dwellers are more politically alienated, we might expect them to have less attachment to democratic norms (or less incentive to publicly espouse these norms). Similarly, because fewer slum-dwellers categorically reject violence, we are likely to see a higher degree of tolerance toward violent politicians. Put simply, we can expect to see greater variation in attitudes toward the hypothetical candidate in this population than in a more representative sample. Slum-dwellers are the Kenyans who are most likely to "give a pass" to politicians who use violence, but we would still expect this tendency to differ depending on the identity of the respondent and the assigned identity of the candidate.

In addition to the distinct qualities of slum-dwellers, running the pilot in six Nairobi slums improves our ability to examine the effect of context as well as individual-level characteristics on the propensity to sanction violent politicians. The six neighborhoods selected vary in terms of exposure to political violence, and they also vary in ethnic composition. Three of the selected neighborhoods were relatively less affected – or were not affected at all -- by the 2007-2008 post-election violence that consumed Kenya. These neighborhoods also experienced relatively less political violence during the pre-election campaign period and in preceding election periods. The other three neighborhoods have been consistently characterized by higher rates of violence from at least 1997 to the present, and they were heavily affected during the post-election

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[5] All comparisons are between my July 2009 survey and the most recent round of the Afrobarometer, which was conducted in November 2008. It seems unlikely that differences are due to the eight months between the two surveys. Both were conducted after the violence, after a power-sharing agreement was implemented, and after the bulk of resettlements of the displaced had been completed.

[6] The differences are even more marked between the Afrobarometer's urban sample and the slum sample. In the Afrobarometer, 87 percent of urban-dwellers – who are presumably more educated and with greater access to media – agree that democracy is always preferable.

[7] The police are a notable exception, in that both populations express equally high levels of distrust. Roughly half of Kenyans and half of slum-dwellers say that they "don't trust [the police] at all".

violence.[8] In the next section, I will discuss the dynamics of political violence in Kenya in order to give the reader a sense of the role that violence plays in election periods.   The basic point of this section is to underline that the post-election violence of 2008 was an escalation of established patterns of violent group competition. Since the transition to multi-party politics in 1991, violence has been a consistent feature of election campaigns.

The Setting
On December 27, 2007, Kenyans went to the polls to vote in the country's fourth presidential and parliamentary elections since the return to multi-party competition in 1992. Early election results favored the opposition presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, but late returns from more distant constituencies swung the final result to the sitting president, Mwai Kibaki. There were well-grounded allegations of vote tampering (Gibson & Long 2009). Within hours of Kibaki's swearing-in, opposition supporters took to the streets. The following weeks were marked by large-scale ethnic violence, which ultimately took approximately 1200 lives and displaced up to half a million Kenyans.[9] Violence only ended with the signing of a power-sharing arrangement between Kibaki and Odinga in late February. During the violence, international observers often commented on the surprising nature of the violence, given Kenya's supposed status as one of the "most stable" states in East Africa. This commentary neglected the degree to which violence in Kenyan politics had become normalized. Episodes of political violence in 1991-1997 – termed "tribal clashes" by the government -- had forged a polity that was more deeply divided on the lines of ethnicity than it had been during the multi-party era. The use of violence, intimidation and vote-buying during elections had also created an entire class of "specialists in violence," over which political parties and elites gradually lost control. For this paper, it is important to underline that violence had two main effects in Kenya. First of all, episodes of political violence reinforce and activate ethnic cleavages. Elections tend to trigger heightened group insecurity, as violent evictions are used to mobilize constituencies and are organized on ethnic lines. Secondly, unlike some other African hybrid regimes (e.g., Zimbabwe, Cameroon), violence is not associated with the ruling party or with one group of political aspirants alone. Violence was organized in the early 1990s by the ruling party and served to keep that party in power. Since then, as I will suggest in a moment, violence has become a more generalized campaign strategy, used by opposition and ruling party politicians alike. In addition, changes in the organization of perpetrators have made violence a more regular and routine feature of political competition, both during general elections and intra-party primaries.

From the beginning of the multi-party era, political violence in Kenya has been organized on the lines of ethnicity. Though violence in the 1990s was intended to serve narrow political aims, politicians used ethnicity and ethnic grievances to recruit perpetrators. Appeals to political loyalties or partisanship were absent.[10] From 1991 to 1997, ethnic clashes took over 1500 lives and left 300,000 internally displaced persons, many of whom have yet to be resettled.[11] The clashes served very specific political purposes: they were used to remove likely opposition voters from particular areas, thereby advancing the agendas of the local elites who were involved in their planning as well as the overall electoral aims of the ruling party, KANU (HRW 1993; Republic of Kenya 1992; Republic of Kenya 1999; KHRC 1998). Both local and

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[8] The violent neighborhoods are Dandora, Kayole, and Kibera; the three neighborhoods with lower levels of violence are Githurai, Kangemi, and Kawangware. Though the latter three neighborhoods had less direct experience of violence, this does not mean that they are unaffected. Kawangware experienced some sporadic clashes "by outsiders" during the early period of post-election violence, but these did not result in serious injuries or displacement. Focus group, Kawangware market women, May 2008. The neighborhood served as a host community for those displaced from elsewhere in Nairobi, notably Kibera.

[9] See, for instance, Human Rights Watch, "Ballots to Bullets: Organized Political Violence and Kenya's Crisis of Governance," March 2008, available at http://hrw.org/reports/2008/kenya0308/. For more on the elections and their aftermath, see Cheeseman (2008) and the other contributions to the special issue of the *Journal of East African Studies* published in July 2008.

[10] This was a very different pattern than that practiced, for instance, in Zimbabwe.

[11] The death toll from these clashes is only marginally higher than the number killed during the January-February 2008 post-election violence in Kenya. Though I do not discuss the 2008 violence here, its scale supports my argument about the broader institutionalization of violence into party competition in Kenya.

national Maasai and Kalenjin leaders reminded their "minority tribe" followers that the Maasai, Kalenjin, and smaller tribes had been disadvantaged during the rule of President Jomo Kenyatta. During this period, "outsiders" like the Kikuyu were allowed to move into the Rift Valley and take the smaller tribes' land. Multipartyism, according to these KANU officials, raised the specter of Kikuyu predominance once again; unless resisted, the Kikuyu, Luo, and other large tribes would take even more land from the Kalenjin and other pastoralist tribes.[12] The result of these calls for Kalenjin and Maasai self-defense was a campaign that was termed "ethnic cleansing" by some observers, as ethnic groups perceived as voting against KANU were forced to flee to urban centers, safe constituencies, and camps for the internally displaced (Kamau Kuria 1994). As others have pointed out, ethnic clashes capitalized on local grievances, particularly land hunger ([Kahl 2006: Chapter Four). In Maasai and Kalenjin areas, perpetrators of violence were told to disregard Kikuyu land titles, and ruling party provincial officials set up area committees to redistribute land seized from those forced out of their home areas by violence (KHRC 1998: 30). Perpetrators were often recruited via ethnic networks, and they were dressed as traditional warriors and, often, armed with traditional weapons.[13] They were paid by politicians for the destruction of property and the displacement or killing of members of particular targeted groups (Republic_of_Kenya 1992; Republic_of_Kenya 1999; HRW 1993; KHRC 1997). Because evictions were organized on an ethnic basis, violence reinforced ethnicity as the salient political identity in Kenya. It created inter-group animosity, particularly between the small tribes of the ruling party coalition and the ethnic groups that tended to support opposition parties. Conflict did not create opposition unity: though Luo, Luhya and Kikuyu composed the bulk of victims of these early clashes, the political loyalties of these groups remained split across multiple opposition parties.

By the late 1990s, violence had become institutionalized into electoral practice in Kenya. High levels of electoral violence also contributed to a general erosion of rule of law and increase in conflict in Kenya (e.g., Mkutu 2008). Individuals who were recruited by politicians to serve as "specialists in violence" found occupation for themselves in non-electoral periods, and quasi-political organizations became involved in organized crime. Gradually, political elites lost control over the networks of "violence specialists" that they had helped produce, and violence ceased to produce the same clear-cut electoral dividends for the ruling party (Mueller 2008; Kagwanja 2003; Anderson 2002). Mungiki, now Kenya's most notorious criminal gang, is a case in point. The organization had started (and continues to be) a religious sect centered in Kenya's Central Province, which focused on reviving Kikuyu traditional religious practices and which also served as an informal ethnic militia. In the 1990s, because of its Kikuyu base, it was viewed as a threat by the ruling party; prior to the 2002 elections, however, the association's leadership announced that the movement would back the ruling party and even field electoral candidates on the KANU ticket (Kagwanja 2003: 48). David Anderson suggests that the movement's reversal had much to do with its migration from its ethnic heartland to the cities, where it became involved in organized crime and gradually evolved into yet another urban vigilante group-for-hire, making vulnerable to cooptation by elements within KANU (Anderson 2002). Following the 2002 elections, political control over Mungiki collapsed entirely, as the organization became immersed in bloody battles over *matatu* (commuter bus) routes, arms caching, and homicidal attacks on "defectors"(Kagwanja 2006).   In addition to Mungiki, other urban-based vigilante groups were formed in the late 1990s in Nairobi and Kisumu, including *Jeshi la Mzee*, the Bagdad Boys, and 42 Brothers. Many of these militia originally drew their members from the ruling party youth brigade, and in 1997, they violently disrupted rallies for constitutional reform and attacked opposition leaders (KHRC 1998: 35-36). By the 2002 elections, however, vigilante groups had splintered, and individual politicians – belonging to both KANU and the opposition – either hired or organized vigilante groups to attack opponents or forcibly disenfranchise ethnic groups that were seen as opponents (Mutahi 2005: 78-86). Notably, violence associated with militias was as intense during party primaries, including those of the opposition coalition, as it was during the general elections. In an attempt to regain lost control over the urban militia, the Kenyan state outlawed all vigilante groups and ethnic militia in March 2002, but this had little effect on their operations.

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[12] For a more detailed account of the rhetoric and appeals deployed during the clashes, see HRW 1993.
[13] Klopp notes that many of those dressed as traditional warriors in Narok North were actually police and army personnel (Klopp 2001: 496).

The cumulative effect of these developments was the normalization of violence into periods of electoral competition. Though the election-related violence of early 2008 substantially differed in scale from past periods of violence, few Kenya specialists were surprised about its occurrence or the areas in which it was concentrated. Ethnic clashes in the common flashpoint areas in the Rift Valley had started up to three months prior to the December elections, and campaign-related violence – little noted by the international community – was more common and more intense than in the 1997 or 2002 elections.[14] In conversations prior to the 2007 elections, local and national politicians alike suggested that candidates had become trapped in a violent "race to the bottom": as soon as one candidate in a given field hired youths or organized militia, other candidates felt compelled to "organize security" for themselves as well. Semi-organized militia took advantage of the increasing market for their services, and interviews in 2006-2008 suggest that both militia and less organized violence specialists had developed fairly sophisticated means of price differentiating across political candidates. Overall, the picture I intend to paint is of an opportunistic and well-institutionalized economy of political violence. Electoral violence in Kenya often takes on an ethnic cast, particularly in contested areas in the northern and central Rift, but it is not exclusively structured around ethnicity. We cannot presume, therefore, that ordinary Kenyans will view the political use of violence through a purely ethnic lens. Political violence in Kenya is a more general phenomenon than ethnic conflict, and we might therefore expect that insecurity – and, in terms of this study, evaluations of candidates -- may be more ethnicized in some areas than in others.

The Study
The 600-respondent survey was conducted in six Nairobi slums in July 2009.[15] The slums vary in terms of overall levels of political violence: three were sharply affected by the post-election violence in 2008 (and generally had higher levels of pre-election violence as well), while the other three were significantly less affected. Though all are mixed demographically, they were intended to be matched pairwise in terms of violence and ethnic composition. Thus, one of the two neighborhoods believed to be predominantly Luo and Luhya was a violent neighborhood, while the other was relatively non-violent. The pilot's results suggest that initial expectations regarding neighborhood ethnic composition were roughly accurate. Kibera, for instance, is viewed by its inhabitants and by outsiders as a Luo zone, a perception no doubt reinforced by its location in the home constituency of current Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who is Luo. The sample in Kibera was roughly 48 percent Luo, and other "Western" tribes (Luhya, Kisii) composed an additional 37 percent of the sample. Kayole and Kangemi, both described as split roughly evenly on ODM-PNU lines, conformed to expectations, as did majority-Kikuyu Githurai and majority-Luhya Kawangware. There were, however, some surprising results. Dandora, which is located in the violent and sharply contested constituency of Embakasi, was the site of substantial ethnic "cleansing" (i.e., relocations) during the 2008 post-election violence. Though it was majority Kikuyu in our sample, as expected, Luos and Luhyas still composed 23 percent of the sample. Secondly, in most neighborhoods, Luos were less well represented than had been expected. Respondents also consistently overestimated the percentage of Luos in their own neighborhoods.[16] This might suggest that there were significant shifts in neighborhood composition during 2008 and the first half of 2009. Small temporary IDP camps did spring up in several Nairobi slums in January-February 2008, and Luos were anecdotally presented as having borne the brunt of evictions in the "Eastlands" slums of Dandora, Huruma, Kariobangi, Kayole, and Mathare. But it is unlikely that dislocations substantially shifted the ethnic composition of Nairobi neighborhoods. Only 4 percent of our sample reported that they had left their homes due to the violence and had been unable to return. There were

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[14] This fact alone casts doubt on the habituation thesis associated with Staffan Lindberg (Lindberg 2006): the idea that the holding of repeated elections (even if flawed) will promote elite 'buy-in' and lead to improvements in the quality of elections, democracy, and human rights conditions in a particular country.

[15] These slums are Dandora, Githurai, Kangemi, Kayole, Kawangware, and Kibera.

[16] Two of the pilot's exploratory questions asked respondents to judge the percentage of inhabitants in their own neighborhood who were Luo and who were Kikuyu. Respondents were generally poor judges of the ethnic composition of their own neighborhoods. In all neighborhoods, the proportion of inhabitants who were Luo was substantially inflated; in only three neighborhoods did the confidence interval of respondents' estimates include the observed sample proportion of Kikuyu.

no respondents in Kibera who reported moving into the neighborhood from elsewhere in Nairobi, even though Kibera would be the likely recipient of Luo refugees from elsewhere. In other neighborhoods, 10 to 15 percent reported moving into the slum from elsewhere in Nairobi, but intra-slum movements were more common. In Kayole, where violence was especially pitched, 32 percent of the sample reported moving within the neighborhood. The survey did not ask about reasons that individuals moved,[17] but the data suggests that intra-slum movements were likely to have been as significant as cross-slum movements as responses to the 2008 violence. Qualitative research from 2007 to the present backs up this assertion, with slum-dwellers themselves asserting that movements were either temporary or tended to establish more ethnically segregated zones *within* neighborhoods.

Before proceeding to the empirical analysis, let me make a final point about ethnicity and violence in these Nairobi neighborhoods. On the one hand, violence and intimidation during election campaigns has not always been structured on the lines of ethnicity in Nairobi. According to focus groups in a number of slums, during the 2002 and 2007 election campaign periods, party primaries were characterized by violence, intimidation, and vote-buying to a greater extent than general elections. Candidates in party primaries tend to be from the same ethnicity, even in mixed slums, so ethnic animosity is not the source of the kind of institutionalized electoral violence discussed above. The January 2008 violence was, however, sharply ethnicized, and ethnicity became the primary means of sorting individuals into "safe" or "suspect" categories. In Huruma, one of the slums in the violent Mathare Valley of Eastlands, informants told of roadblocks set up by youths to screen individuals by language or by accent.[18] Text messages that circulated during the violence reported that individuals were being targeted and killed on the basis of ethnicity, and (false) rumors circulated that "terror gangs" and Mungiki were being sent to slum areas to massacre opponents ([Osborn, Michelle 2008 #2247]). In terms of how this affects survey responses, it muddies the treatment slightly. Respondents are told that the candidate used youths during the party nominations (primaries). This would mean that the likely targets of violence and intimidation would have been rival candidates who were from the same ethnicity. On the other hand, should respondents be faced with a politician from a different ethnicity, it is likely that they would think of the violence as taking on inter-ethnic dimensions. For instance, because of experiences during the 2008 post-election violence, Luos are likely to think of themselves as the likely targets of a violent Kikuyu politician, and vice-versa.

The Survey Experiment
The dependent variable used in this paper is taken from a survey experiment that addresses respondents' normative disposition toward politicians who use violence. Like other studies, the experiment provides information about a hypothetical politician with slight variations across treatments (e.g., Dunning & Harrison 2010; Krutz 2008).[19] Respondents are told that the politician will contest a by-election for a vacant local government councilor seat in their area in a few weeks time. The script was developed over the course of several focus groups in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi, Kenya's three largest cities, and it was also informed by other qualitative research in Nairobi slums.[20] The full script is reproduced in the Appendix. The script, which comprises four questions, is written in order to minimize a few problems that would have emerged with a simpler or more transparent script. First of all, focus group participants in these neighborhoods tended to be very negatively predisposed to politicians, and the standard descriptors used in survey experiments – involving education and past experience, for instance – generated strong and immediate negative orientations among respondents. In order to ensure that there was variation in responses after information about use of violence was revealed, the introductory script was written to create a baseline

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[17] The other primary reason that individuals might move would be increases in rent, which did occur following the violence. In our sample, rent increased by between 10 and 30 percent in different neighborhoods between 2007 and July 2009.

[18] Focus group with youths, Huruma, July 2008.

[19] Other survey-embedded experiments similarly rely on small variations in wording or script in order to assess the effects of race and other identity markers, though they do not focus on hypotheticals or on politicians per se. See Sniderman et al 1991; Kuklinski et al 1997; Peffley, Hurwitz & Sniderman 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn & Prior 2004; also, Frye 2007.

[20] I particularly benefited from discussions in Huruma and Kibera, both in Nairobi, about the experiment.

positive orientation toward the candidate.[21] Two additional questions, which are related to likely voting behavior, were included to allow respondents an opportunity to express disapproval of behaviors associated with "typical politicians."   Secondly, the script avoided some language that could be interpreted as normatively loaded. Generally, phrases like "used violence" or "bought thugs" are employed by slum-dwellers to describe the actions of political opponents, while phrases like "created hassles" or "hired some youths" are more politically neutral and are also used to describe the actions of parties and politicians that individuals support. "Hassles" might include violence severe enough to shut down polling stations, so differences in language do not generally indicate differences in the scale of violence. The script uses the more neutral language, so respondents can be expected to express higher levels of toleration of violent politicians than would have been the case if more direct language had been used. Youths are also hired by politicians to buy votes, but the references to intimidation and creating hassles are sufficient to signal that the politician's use of youths falls on the more violent, coercive end of the spectrum of campaign activity. The final question, used for the analysis here, asks respondents to agree with one of five normative statements. These range from "everyone was using youths during that time. This would not affect my opinion of [the politician]" to "people like [the politician] should not be allowed to run for office."

Respondents were randomly assigned one of three versions of the experiment. Because the versions of the question are assigned randomly, populations are presumed to be similar across treatments. We would, therefore, expect differences in responses to be due to the manipulated treatments alone.   As suggested above, the experiment leverages differences in the ethnicity and partisan affiliation of the hypothetical candidate. The candidate's name changes across the three treatments: in the first, he is given a transparently Luo last name, and in the second he is given a common and transparent Kikuyu last name. In the third treatment, which I term the "traitor treatment," the candidate is Kikuyu but is said to be contesting the councilor seat on the ticket of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), a political party with very few Kikuyu supporters and members.   Though ODM is cross-ethnic, it is particularly associated with the Luo and Luhya, two ethnic groups from Western Kenya, and its presidential candidate in 2008 was Luo. The "wrongness" of the Kikuyu-ODM pairing is intensified by the perception that ODM political leaders, notably William Ruto, were partly responsible for the violent targeting of Kikuyus in Rift Valley during the 2008 post-election violence. Overall, the 2008 political violence was organized on partisan and ethnic lines, and Luos and Kikuyus were on opposite sides of the divide.[22] In order to avoid priming respondents to think in ethnic terms, questions about ethnicity were asked only after the experiment; questions preceding the experiment focused on participation, party campaigning, and insecurity and past violence. During focus groups and pre-testing, respondents did not seem to focus on the ethnicity of the candidate overtly when presented with one of the treatments, but they all immediately picked up on the candidate's ethnic identity and its likely effect on responses once they were presented with all three versions of the script.

First and foremost, the majority of respondents strongly rejected the use of political violence or intimidation, but a sizable proportion of the sample had more tolerant views regarding the use of violence. Over 50 percent of the sample chose one of the two most punitive responses, answering that either they personally would never vote for such a politician or that politicians of this kind should not be allowed to run for office. On the other hand, nearly 10 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that "everyone was using youths during that time" and the information would not affect their votes; another 21 percent of respondents said that the candidate should not have used youths but they would like to learn more before making a decision regarding their votes. We would expect these proportions to be higher in Nairobi slums than in other areas of the country, since slum-dwellers express lower levels of opposition to the use of violence than

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[21] For instance, the candidate's promise to continue living in the neighborhood is a direct response to the highly-emotive and near-universal complaint in Nairobi slums that councilors "disappear" and move to middle-income neighborhoods immediately after election.

[22] The positioning of other tribes, notably the Kamba and the Kalenjin, is slightly more complicated. There are, however, fairly few members of these tribes in the sample. For my purposes here, and given the 2009 survey date, Luhyas are treated as ethnic allies of the Luo. Merus and Embus are closely related to Kikuyus, and they have consistently similar voting patterns. Together, Kikuyus, Merus, Embus, Luos, and Luhyas comprise 82.7 percent of the survey sample.

other Kenyans, as mentioned above. Secondly, an abstract commitment to non-violence does not seem to translate into more punitive responses in the experiment. Individuals who had earlier answered that the use of violence was never justified did not sanction the hypothetical candidate at greater rates than their less categorically-inclined counterparts.[23] This claim is tentative, as it is based entirely on eyeballing the data. Regression analysis incorporating individual-level controls will be undertaken in future drafts in order to examine whether this and other attitudes have significant effects on expressed attitudes regarding the hypothetical politician. Finally, there are no significant differences in overall responses between populations that live in violent neighborhoods versus those living in less violent neighborhoods. If insecurity or exposure to violence affects individuals' propensity to sanction politicians, it seems likely to occur through differential assessments of co-ethnics versus non-co-ethnics (i.e., differences across treatments). I will address this question in a moment.

Treatments were assigned randomly, so we can assume that populations for each treatment are otherwise comparable. For the rest of the paper, I will use analysis of variance to establish whether differences in response means are substantial and statistically significant. Comparison across the original treatments finds that the differences in mean responses are not statistically significant. Though means may not be substantially different, comparison across the treatments shows significant movement at the top and the bottom of the response scale. The graph below displays differences across treatments in the most and least punitive responses. Readers might keep in mind that Kikuyu respondents formed a sizable proportion (41.7 percent) of the overall sample.

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[23] As suggested above, respondents were asked to agree with one of the following two statements: "In Kenya, the use of violence or physical force is never justified" or "In Kenya, people sometimes need to use violence or physical force in support of a just cause." The mean response of those who said they agreed with the first statement was marginally less punitive than the mean for respondents who agreed with the second (difference in means = 0.16, $p < 0.10$).

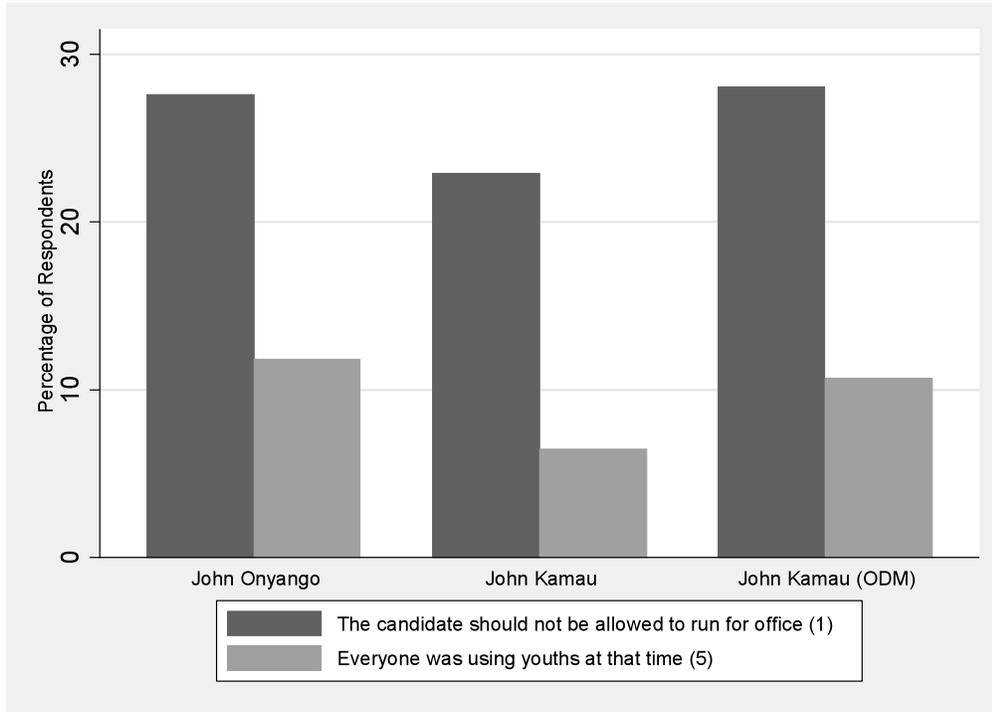*Graph 1: Variation in most and least punitive response rates across treatments*

Table 1 displays differences in response patterns across the treatments by showing the three main ethnic group's differential tendency to "give a pass" or excuse the behavior of co-ethnics or, in the case of the Luhya and Kisii, co-regionals. The proportions reported are the percent of respondents of a particular ethnic group who report agreement with either the most violence-tolerant statement ("this would not affect my opinion") or the second most tolerant statement ("I would learn more about him before making up my mind").

Table 1: Differences in proportion of respondents selecting statement 1 or 2, by ethnic group

	Luo treatment	*Kikuyu treatment*	*"Traitor" / Kikuyu-ODM treatment*
Kikuyu	30.3	36.3	28.8
Luo	32.3	22.9	34.2
Luhya	35.6	20.8	33.3
Kisii †	50.0	35.7	44.4
Other groups	28.6	36.8	29.2

† Proportions for Kisii are based on a small number of responses, only 9-14 per treatment.

The "traitor" treatment operates as an intermediate category between the two pure coethnic treatments. Respondents for the three western ethnic groups (i.e., Luhya, Luo, and Kisii) are less willing to sanction the Kikuyu ODM candidate than they are the Kikuyu candidate, but the mean response for these groups is still lower than for the Luo candidate. For Kikuyus, on the other hand, the coethnic effect disappears, and Kikuyu respondents evaluate the Kikuyu ODM candidate similarly or slightly more harshly than they do the Luo candidate.

There is a relational element to the embedded experiment that is not captured by comparisons of whole populations across different versions of the experimental script. In order to capture the effect of co-ethnicity

and other relational pairings, I redivided the population so that treatment assignment corresponds to the match between respondents and the hypothetical candidate in terms of ethnic identity and political alliance. Co-ethnicity is self-explanatory, but respondent-candidate assignments can also vary depending on whether the respondent belongs to an ethnic group that is in political alliance with the candidate's ethnic group. In other words, as readers will have already noted above, response patterns for Luo, Luhya and Kisii are fairly similar to one another. At the time of the survey, these groups were backing the ODM and can be considered a solid political alliance. Though there were ethnic groups that were in similar – albeit less solid – political alliances with the Kikuyu, these groups were not significantly represented in the slum sample. The matrix in Table 2 clarifies the interaction between co-ethnicity and common political alliances. For the first two versions of the experiment script, the new treatment assignment proceeded as follows: Luos and Kikuyus would all fall in the upper left-hand quadrant; Luhyas, Kalenjin, and Kisii fall in the bottom left quadrant for the first (Luo) treatment but in the bottom right quandrant for the second (Kikuyu) treatment. The third treatment is more complicated. Since the candidate is Kikuyu and an ODM candidate, the four ODM allies (Luo, Luhya, Kalenjin and Kisii) would view him as a non-co-ethnic but as a political ally (lower left quadrant), while Kikuyu respondents would view him as a co-ethnic and political adversary (upper right quadrant). Table 2 suggests that political alliance trumps co-ethnicity in terms of explaining whether respondents will be more forgiving or more punitive toward politicians who use violence. This pattern was also suggested in Table One, as assigning the Kikuyu candidate an ODM party affiliation swung the proportion of more forgiving responses back to levels similar to that of the Luo candidate.

Table 2: Average Orientation toward Politician, across Respondent Types

	Respondent belongs to ethnic group in alliance with politician	Respondent belongs to ethnic group not in alliance with politician	**Difference of means**
Respondent and politician co-ethnics	3.31 (0.13)	3.55 (0.14)	**- 0.24****
Respondent and politician not co-ethnics	3.22 (0.11)	3.46 (0.08)	**- 0.24****
Difference of means	**0.08**	**0.09**	

Means of responses to question asking respondent's attitude regarding candidate. See appendix for full question and response text. Estimated standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.010$

Partisanship or imputed partisanship is more important in determining respondent willingness to sanction violent politicians than is coethnicity. The average normative orientation toward a violent politician was, on average, 0.24 points more forgiving if the politician was in real or presumed political alliance with the respondent's ethnic group. In contrast, mean responses were not significantly different based on whether the respondent was assigned a co-ethnic or a politician from a different ethnic group, once one takes into account the effect of political alliance. Overall, however, these are fairly weak effects. Mean responses only shift by one-quarter of a point on a five-point scale.

As suggested in the introduction, there may be differences in individual deicison-making depending on the respondent's place of residence and that neighborhood's propensity toward violence. There are two ways of assessing the effect of residence in a violent neighborhood on individuals' willingness to sanction violent politicians. First of all, we could run the analysis above separately for non-violent and violent neighborhoods. If our null hypotheses is that the strength and significance of co-ethnic and political alliance effects should not differ according to the neighborhood's propensity to electoral violence, we would have to reject the null hypothesis. As Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate, place of residence does have an effect on the

significance of co-ethnicity. In violent neighborhoods, those who are asked about a co-ethnic politician do not assess him differently depending on whether he belongs on the "wrong" side of the political divide. In other words, Kikuyus in violent neighborhoods assess Kikuyu politicians similarly, regardless of whether the politician belongs to the rival ODM or not. Secondly, in violent neighborhoods, shared ethnic identity has no appreciable effect on individuals' willingness to sanction violent politicians. Individuals assess co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics according to the same criteria, as is reflected in the small differences in means and in their lack of statistical significance.

Table 3: Mean Orientation toward Politician, across Respondent Types, in Violent Neighborhoods

	Respondent belongs to ethnic group in alliance with politician	Respondent belongs to ethnic group not in alliance with politician	**Difference of means**
Respondent and politician co-ethnics	3.34 (0.16)	3.31 (0.21)	**0.03**
Respondent and politician not co-ethnics	3.20 (0.17)	3.47 (0.11)	**- 0.27****
Difference of means	**0.14**	**0.09**	

Means of responses to question asking respondent's attitude regarding candidate. See appendix for full question and response text. Estimated standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.010$

The picture is quite different in *nonviolent* neighborhoods. Contrary to initial expectations, ethnicity plays a much stronger role in shaping individual assessments in slums that were relatively less affected by the 2008 post-election violence or by earlier episodes of electoral violence. In these neighborhoods, however, an individual's assessment of a co-ethnic who has crossed to the other side of the political divide is 0.34 points more punitive than for a non-co-ethnic who is not a political ally. In other words, individuals are, on average, significantly more negative toward a co-ethnic "traitor" than they are toward a politician with whom they have nothing in common. If we compare the average treatment of a traitor to a co-ethnic who is on the "correct" side of the poltical divide, we see an even larger difference in means, which is again statistically significant. In nonviolent neighborhoods, respondents do not seem to give their co-ethnics a pass on the basis of co-ethnicity alone: there is no substantial difference in average responses between pairs that share ethnicity and those who have nothing in common. However, residents of non-violent neighborhoods harshly penalize co-ethnics who violate expectations of ethnic loyalty.

Table 4: Mean Orientation toward Politician, across Respondent Types, in Nonviolent Neighborhoods

	Respondent belongs to ethnic group in alliance with politician	Respondent belongs to ethnic group not in alliance with politician	**Difference of means**
Respondent and politician co-ethnics	3.25 (0.21)	3.79 (0.14)	**- 0.54****
Respondent and politician not co-ethnics	3.25 (0.16)	3.45 (0.11)	**- 0.21**
Difference of means	**0.0**	**0.34****	

Means of responses to question asking respondent's attitude regarding candidate. See appendix for full question and response text. Estimated standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.10$

The above suggests that nonviolent neighborhoods may be characterized to *a greater* extent than violent neighborhoods by the kinds of dynamics we would expect to find in ethnically polarized contexts. But would we find similar patterns if we tested co-ethnicity alone across the two kinds of neighborhoods? Absent the complicating factor of political alliances, do individuals assess co-ethnics differently than they do politicians from other ethnicities? As readers may have noted above, individuals did not differentiate between co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics, so long as they shared political loyalties.

In order to directly test the strength of co-ethnic effects, I excluded the third treatment, which is the joint priming of ethnicity and partisanship. I also recoded the ethnic variable into one "western" group (composed of Luo, Luhya and Kisii); Kikuyu; and all other ethnicities. There are drawbacks to doing this, as I lose one-third of my sample and I also collapse variation within the western ethnic groups. Table 5 clearly shows, however, that respondents significantly treat co-ethnic politicians differently than they do non-coethnics *in non-violent neighborhoods but not in violent neighborhoods*. In other words, co-ethnicity shifts the respondent's evaluation of the hypothetical candidate in a more forgiving direction by 0.37 points (on a 5-point scale). In violent neighborhoods, the effect of coethnicity is insignificant.

Table 5: Effects of Co-ethnicity on Mean Orientations toward Violent Politician, by Neighborhood Type

	Respondent lives in non-violent neighborhood	Respondent lives in violent neighborhood	**Difference of means**
Respondent and politician co-ethnics	3.11 (0.16)	3.33 (0.14)	**- 0.22**
Respondent and politician not co-ethnics	3.48 (0.11)	3.49 (0.12)	**0.00**
Difference of means	**- 0.37****	**- 0.15**	

Means of responses to question asking respondent's attitude regarding candidate. See appendix for full question and response text. Estimated standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$

Conclusions

The broader intuition behind this paper is that individuals' reliance on particular informational cues is shaped by the social world they inhabit. This paper has provided some preliminary support for this argument, particularly by suggesting that differences in neighborhood-level factors (propensity to violence) can lead to differences in individual attitudes. There remain, however, several questions. Is it the experience of living in a violent neighborhood that makes an individual less inclined to use ethnicity as an informational short-cut? Or are residents of violent neighborhoods different in some systematic way from their neighbors in less violent neighborhoods? As the diversity of individuals' social networks increase, would we expect reductions in differences in responses across treatments? Perhaps most simply, what are the strongest determinants of an individual's propensity to sanction violent politicians?

Though it remains preliminary, this paper has made three arguments that enhance our understanding of how individuals evaluate politicians who are associated with political violence. First of all, I have argued that the influence of co-ethnicity on individual assessments of politicians is conditional. Individuals assess violent politicians from the same ethnic background more positively than they do non-co-ethnics only if these politicians conform to expected political behavior. When politicians violate the norms of their community by associating themselves with rival groups (e.g., by running on the ticket of a party associated with those groups), their co-ethnics will sanction them as harshly as they would politicians with whom they have no shared characteristics.

Secondly, the paper's findings suggest that political alliances and shared partisanship may play as important a role in shaping individual decision-making as co-ethnicity, as is suggested in Posner's work. For instance, in the analysis above, the mean responses of Luhyas and Kisii did not differ significantly from those of Luos. When respondents from these groups were assigned a non-co-ethnic Luo politician, they expressed more tolerant attitudes. When they were assigned a non-co-ethnic Kikuyu politician, they sanctioned him more harshly than they did the Luo. When they were assigned a Kikuyu ODM candidate, they expressed nearly the same average level of toleration as when assigned a Luo politician. Political loyalties seem to sometimes trump ethnic considerations in determining when individuals will sanction politicians who violate democratic norms. This is especially surprising in Kenya, where politics has long been highly ethnicized and where party alliances are exceptionally fluid.

Thirdly, the paper has suggested that contextual factors matter. In contrast to initial expectations, respondents who lived in more violent neighborhoods did not differentiate between co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics when evaluating politicians who used violence. Much of the literature on the subject assumes that violence primes ethnic identity and reinforces ethnic polarization. This study has found little evidence that increases in exposure to violence (measured by level of violence and insecurity in a given neighborhood) increase respondent's reliance on ethnicity or distrust of other ethnic groups. In terms of why this might be the case, residents of violent slums have repeatedly suggested to me that they are more clear-eyed and skeptical of politicians than ordinary Kenyans. Because these populations have borne the direct costs of politically-orchestrated violence, they may be less susceptible to the campaigns of the "ethnic entrepreneurs" who feature prominently in most models of ethnic conflict.

APPENDIX: EXPERIMENT SCRIPT

The script was identical except for the following differences across treatments.

VERSION A: Candidate name is "John Onyango," an easily identifiable Luo name.
VERSION B: Candidate name is "John Kamau," an easily identifiable Kikuyu name.
VERSION C: Candidate name is "John Kamau." The initial introduction includes the following additional sentence: "John Kamau has received the ODM party's support, and he will run as the ODM candidate for councilor." The fourth question refers to him as both "John Kamau" and "the ODM candidate."

QUESTION 1: Imagine for a moment that there is a vacancy in your local government council, and there will be a by-election held in a few weeks time. John Onyango is a well-known community leader in this area, and he has decided to run for the council seat. He has always helped with problems and development projects here in the community in the past. He says that communication is very important, and he says, if elected, he will continue to live in _____(name of slum) and will hold regular meetings with the community. How positive do you feel toward John Onyango as a candidate?
[Responses on five point scale from "Very positive" to "very negative"]

QUESTION 2: Now let me tell you a bit more information. John Onyango ran for the council seat in the elections in 2007, but he was unsuccessful. Would you be more or less likely to vote for John now that you know he has past experience? [Enumerator: probe for intensity. 'Does this information affect your opinion a lot?']
[Responses on five point scale from "Much more likely to vote for him" to "Much less likely to vote for him"]

QUESTION 3: During the 2007 election campaign, John hired youths and used them to create hassles and intimidate some people during the party nominations. Now that you know this about John's last campaign, would you be more or less likely to vote for him? How much does this new information change your mind?
[Responses on five point scale from "Much more likely to vote for him" to "Much less likely to vote for him"]

QUESTION 4: You now have some information about John Onyango: he is a well known community leader, he has helped with development projects in the past, he ran unsuccessfully for councilor in 2007, and at that time he hired some youths. I am now going to read you 5 statements. Given everything you know about John, which of these statements best expresses how you feel about John as a candidate?

1	Everyone was using youths during that time. This would not affect my opinion of John
2	John should not have used youths like this. But I would learn more about him before making up my mind about my vote
3	This information makes me much less likely to vote for John
4	Personally, I would never vote for a politician like John
5	People like John should not be allowed to run for political office

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