Meet the Candidates: Information and Accountability in Primary and General Elections

Pre-Analysis Plan

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Abstract

Under what conditions does information about candidates affect voting behavior? This study builds on existing work examining the relationship between information and political behavior, with the goal of identifying some of the conditions under which information affects turnout and vote choice. We contrast the effect of information provided in the form of candidate debates across primary and general elections, and in a public and private setting. Additionally, examine the effect of providing pre-election poll results of expected vote choice on voting behavior during the election. The study takes place in Uganda. To date, we have successfully completed implementation of the experiment.

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1 Introduction

What is the effect of information on political behavior? A number of studies have evaluated the effect of information about incumbent politicians and government performance on political behavior, particularly vote choice. These studies have yielded mixed results, with some finding that political information affects political behavior and knowledge, while others find no effect of information on these outcomes. The Metaketa project on information and political accountability, organized by Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP), aims to identify the conditions under which information matters for political behavior.

This field experiment, one of seven studies in the Metaketa initiative, is conducted in Uganda during the 2015 primary and 2016 general elections, and systematically assesses the conditions under which information about candidates affects voter behavior. We examine two conditions in particular: the political environment (intra vs. inter-party competition) and the public vs. private nature of information provision. We also examine two different sets of information: one that provides information about the incumbent alone, and one that provides information about both the incumbent and challengers. The candidate debates are publicly screened in one set of polling station catchment areas, privately to individuals in another set of polling station catchment areas, while a third set serve as controls. The debates take place in both an intra-party and inter-party electoral environment, in the 2015 primary elections of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), Uganda's ruling party (intra-party), and the 2016 general elections (inter-party) for Member of Parliament.

Uganda is an ideal study site for two reasons. First, this study builds on existing work conducted in Uganda on information and political accountability (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2012). Second, Uganda presents an opportunity to study the role and effect of different types of information in both intra-party and inter-party competitive electoral environments. There is little research on primary elections in the context of developing countries and nascent democracies, and even less on primaries in African countries. Uganda's ruling party holds nation-wide primary elections for Member of Parliament, where all registered party members are eligible to vote. Thus, we are able to assess the effect of information – specifically in the form of candidate debates – on voter behavior in both primary and general elections.

One of the largest studies on information and political accountability in a developing country to date took place in Uganda between 2007 and 2011 (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2012). In this study, the researchers, together with a local NGO, developed a scorecard measuring the performance of Members of Parliament, where the scorecard was disseminated in a randomly selected set of constituencies. Although an estimated half million Ugandans learned about the scorecard in the period leading up to the 2011 general election, and although survey experimental evidence

suggested respondents were receptive to information on the scorecard, the new information about candidates via dissemination campaigns had no effect on voter behavior at the level of the constituency.

While these results appear to paint a disappointing picture, from a normative perspective, of the effect of information on voter behavior and political accountability in Uganda, we view these results as an important starting point for understanding the conditions under which information about candidates will affect voter behavior, particularly in the context of a nascent democracy with a ruling party that is strong relative to opposition parties.

2 Theory

2.1 A Decision-Theoretic Model of Vote Choice

We employ and build upon a theory of change developed as part of the Metaketa initiative. The theory of change is based on a decision-theoretic voting model. The key outcome of interest is vote choice. In the model, voters have prior beliefs about a candidate's quality, or *valence*, along a number of dimensions. Voter then receive information about candidates' quality along these dimensions, update their beliefs about a given candidate, and on this basis make a voting decision.

The effect of information about a particular dimension of candidate valence on vote choice depends on the following: a) the persuasiveness of the signal, b) the variance of priors (uncertainty), c)how much weight a voter places on the dimension as compared to other dimensions of candidate quality, and d) whether or not the information provided is "good news" or "bad news." Good news is defined as information about a candidate that is as good or better than a voter's prior beliefs about that dimension of that candidate, while bad news is defined as information about a candidate that is worse than the voter's priors about that dimension of that candidate.[1]

Since priors, information, posteriors and voting decisions are specific to a candidate, our unit of observation is the voter-candidate dyad. We also analyze data at the polling station level, where the unit of observation becomes the polling station-candidate dyad.

2.2 Two Dimensions of Valence: Policy and Image

In this study, information about candidate valence is provided in the form of a video recording in which candidates for the office of Member of Parliament answer a set of questions about their policy preferences, qualifications for office, personal characteristics, and relevant experience. We have selected questions that we expect to provide voters with information along two primary di-

[1] See Section 7.1 for more details on defining good and bad news.

mensions: *policy* and *image*. Policy includes candidates' policy positions on several important policy issues. Providing information about candidates' positions allows voters to determine the extent to which policy alignment exists between the voter and the candidate on a set of three issues: 1) constituency policy priorities, 2) the creation of new administrative units (districts), and 3) the legal consequences for those convicted of vote buying.

Additional questions allow candidates to share information about their qualifications and performance. Questions on qualifications and performance, together with the overall image a candidate displays in the course of the video, contribute to a voter's knowledge about the second dimension, candidate image. We employ the definition of candidate as suggested by Hacker (2004), a cognitive representation made in the process of voter perceptions of candidate messages. In accordance with the literature, we further distinguish between sub-dimensions of candidate image, specifically, *competence*, *trustworthiness*, and *goodwill* (McCroskey and Teven, 1999). A discussion of the measurement of the extent of policy alignment and candidate image is provided in Section 7.1. The precise wording of the questions asked of candidates can be found in Appendix A.

While there are several potential explanations for the divergence in findings about the role of information on political behavior and accountability to date, we focus on two in particular: the political environment and the role of publicly versus privately provided information. By political environment, we specifically refer to whether an election is taking place in an intra or inter-party environment. By public versus private we refer to whether or not information is provided in a public setting, where multiple individuals are receiving the same information at the same time, and are subsequently aware that this information is held by a group of people, rather than by themselves alone. Public information is contrasted with private information, which is information that is provided to a single individual at a time, and there is no expectation that others hold the same information.[2]

2.3 Intra vs. Inter-Party Environments

For information about a candidate's valence to sway a voter's decision, this information must trump other considerations voters take into account when making a choice over a set of candidates, including ethnic, religious, partisan, or other identities. Thus, political information is less likely to matter in extremely polarized environments along any of these dimensions. In the case of Uganda, politics at both the local and national level is characterized by the existence of a dominant ruling party, the National Resistance Movement, which has held power since 1986.

[2]This is an important assumption that we will return to. It is possible that even with information provided on an individual basis, there is an expectation that others are also receiving this same information on an individual basis. However, the certainty that others have received this information, and knowledge of who specifically has received this information, will necessarily be lower with private rather than public provision. We use several questions in the survey to assess individuals assessments of how widely information they receive is held.

The NRM comprises a majority of seats in parliament (68%), a majority of district chairpersons (77%), and a majority of sub-county chairpersons (71%).[3] A large percentage of the remaining seats at all levels are held by independents, many of whom are NRM leaning. Combined, the six opposition parties only hold 19% of seats in Parliament. At the same time, a recent opinion poll found that 75% of respondents stated they would likely vote for the same party as they voted for in the previous election if the election was held that day.[4] Thus, partisan considerations are very important for vote choice, likely more so than other identities, such as ethnicity, particularly at the local level where constituencies are relatively ethnically homogeneous.

Given the strong position of the ruling party and consistency in voting, many observers argue that the real electoral competition occurs during NRM primaries rather than in the general election. More generally, candidates' party identification can affect a voter's assessment of the quality of the candidate, and the voter's prior belief about the candidate. In different contexts, party identification can signal different kinds of candidate attributes of candidate quality, ranging from their likely policy positions to their likelihood of being able to access state resources. Parties with a longer track record or who have comprised a relatively larger proportion of successful candidates previously are likely to produce stronger prior beliefs about the current candidate in question. If party identification strongly signals candidate quality and predicts prior beliefs about candidates, the effect of additional information is likely to be relatively small. Thus, we expect the effect of information to be greater when party identification cannot be used in this way. That is, we expect that the effect of information about candidate valence on vote choice will be greater during the primary elections (an intra-party environment), where party affiliation is held constant, than in the inter-party environment of the general election.

Our research design is specifically set up to test this hypothesis, by randomly assigning individuals to receive information about candidate valence in either the primary or general elections.[5] While it is the particular nature of party politics and partisanship in Uganda that has led us to focus on the role of political environment in mediating the relationship between information and voter behavior in our research design, we suggest that similar dynamics may be at play in other countries with dominant ruling parties, or where partisanship is known to be a strong predictor of vote choice, such as in the U.S. context.

In the American politics literature, party primaries have been found to result in the election of candidates at extreme ends of the ideological spectrum, which some have argued has contributed

[3]Calculations based on official data from the Electoral Commission as of 2011.

[4]Opinion poll commissioned by the daily newspaper, the *Daily Monitor* and implemented by Research World International, Ltd., in April 2014.

[5]As described in greater detail in Section 4, our variation is inter- not intra-subject. We assign voters to receive either information about primary or general election candidates or none, since we are concerned that receiving information about primary candidates would affect respondents' response to information on general election candidates, thus limiting comparability across the two study arms.

to increasing polarization in the American political environment. In the context of a two-party system in American politics where preferences are ideologically oriented on a left-right spectrum, candidates for political office are posed with a strategic dilemma: how to appeal to their party constituency on either the right or left side of the ideological spectrum while remaining competitive in the general election where the preferences of the median voter are closer to the center (Brady, Han and Pope, 2007). In other words, politicians must determine where to place themselves along the ideological spectrum bearing in mind that the preferences of the electorate in the primary election are distinct from those in the general election. Voters, meanwhile, in deciding which candidate to vote for, must balance candidate "purity" in terms of ideology with candidate "electability" in a general election (Hall, 2015).

While our understanding of how party primaries affect representation, polarization, and voter behavior is far from complete in the American context, the effect of party primaries on political behavior and candidate selection is even more limited in the context of developing countries and nascent democracies. The role of political ideology is downplayed altogether, particularly in the study of African politics, where ethnic voting remains the dominant narrative, with good reason in many countries, for explaining vote choice. Political parties are often weak, or considered so, and the practice and implementation of party primaries rarely studied.[6] We argue that, just as in American politics, party primaries are an important part of the electoral process – in particular in countries with dominant parties, where primaries may be more influential in selecting political leaders than general elections.

There are important differences, however, between primaries in the American context and that of nascent democracies. While in American politics, the study of legislators focuses largely on their positioning on an ideological spectrum, in the context of emerging democracies, there is rarely a unidimensional policy space (if one indeed can be said to exist anywhere) on which political parties place themselves. The manifestos of political parties often look quite similar. There may be some issues on which political parties distinguish themselves, but it is difficult to place this issues on a unidimensional spectrum, and the issues may vary considerably over time and across countries. Thus, in emerging democracies, we care about primaries not primarily because of how they might affect ideological polarization, but rather because of how they might affect the pool of candidates running in the general election. If higher quality candidates are elected in primary elections, the average candidate quality in the general election will be higher as well.[7]

As noted previously, we are investigating the role of political information in the context of

[6]Important exceptions include Ichino and Nathan's work on the determinants of adoption and the effects of legislative primaries in Ghana (Ichino and Nathan, 2012, 2013).

[7]It is important to note that losing in a primary election does not necessarily preclude one from participating in the general election, although political parties try to prevent this from occurring. In Uganda, for example, candidates who lose in the NRM primaries frequently run as independents in the general elections.

intra-party vs. inter-party electoral environments because we believe that in a dominant party system, voting in the general election is largely determined by party affiliation. Of course, party affiliation is itself a proxy for other things, such as likelihood of getting transfers from the state. What are the relevant dimensions along which voters are evaluating candidates in the context of a primary election? Candidate quality in terms of effort, integrity, alignment with policy positions, are investigated as well as co-ethnicity and clientelism, in line with the mediators and substitution variables as specified in the meta pre-analysis plan. We also suggest that in the primaries, voters will prefer candidates whom they believe are more likely to be able to access resources from the state.

Outside of the Ugandan context, when might we expect the political environment to matter in terms of its effect on the role of political information in voter behavior? While this is a question that is not addressed through our research design, we expect that political environment matters in the context of a dominant ruling party. Dominant ruling parties occur frequently in Africa, in both democratic and autocratic settings, including Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Botswana, and Namibia. In the context of a dominant ruling party, information about candidates will do little to shift voting behavior if party affiliation is strong. While political parties in Africa are frequently considered weak relative to their counterparts in developed democracies, strong party allegiance may mean that information in an inter-party electoral environment does little to shift voting behavior.

2.4 Public vs. Private Information

Next, we discuss the second dimension we vary across treatments: public vs. private provision of information. In the private provision condition, individuals view the pre-recorded debates in the privacy of their own homes and will be told a small number of other people in their village will also view the debate. In the public condition, community members from the area surrounding the polling station (the unit of randomization) are invited to attend a group screening of the debate. They then view the debate in a central and public location together with other members of their community.

We expect that the information provided will be more salient, and thus have a larger effect, in the public than in the private condition. This is a common expectation with other studies in the Metaketa initiative. We expect that the signal will be more salient in the public condition because the information is reinforced to a greater extent than in the private condition. In a similar study, Bidwell, Casey and Glennerster (2014) also find that the magnitude of the treatment effect in the group screening is larger than that of the private screening for knowledge of candidate characteristics, knowledge of candidate policy positions, and moving into policy alignment. They

find that there is no difference between group and private screenings in terms of general political knowledge, suggesting that the difference between public and private screenings is not simply explained by differences in comprehension.

Reinforcement may occur through deliberation among viewers, who, through discussion raise the salience of the information provided and help one another process the information. Under conditions of deliberation it is also possible that opinion leaders are able to sway beliefs about candidates, such that viewers in the group setting will hold more similar assessments of candidates after discussion than viewers who did not have the chance to discuss and hear others' interpretation of information.

In the private condition, the effect of the information operates only in relation to the viewer's prior beliefs about candidates, and is not affected by the beliefs of others, at least in the short term. It is possible that subsequent to the viewing, the individual discusses the debate with others in their community, but we expect that even if discussion takes place, the ability to interpret and overcome cognitive barriers to incorporating new information will be less when only one party has received the information first hand.

Another possible mechanism through which public provision of information might affect vote choice in theory is through improved voter coordination. In particular, public viewing of information creates the possibility for the production of common knowledge. This means that an individual knows that not only themselves, but others have the same information they have received, and others know that they have this information. A voter's preference over a set of candidates may change as a result of the information he or she receives, but that voter may be unwilling to change his or her vote unless they know that other voters are making the same decision.

3 Description of Treatments

Treatment 1: Candidate Debates - Public

The objective of the candidate debate treatment is to provide information to voters about candidates' policy positions and candidate image. To do so, we invite all candidates for are MP in a given constituency into a TV studio in Kampala to respond to a set of standardized questions about their policy positions and qualifications. The responses are then edited to produce one candidate 'debate' video per constituency. The video also provides some information on the minimum qualifications, roles and responsibilities of members of parliament, and encourages viewers to vote on election day. These videos are then screened publicly in a randomly selected set of polling stations within the constituency, in a "village road show". This intervention is similar to the one studied by Bidwell, Casey and Glennerster (2014) in Sierra Leone.

The debates center on two dimensions, policy and image:

1. Policy
    (a) Policy priorities for the constituency
    (b) Position on a contentious issue: District splitting
    (c) Position on a contentious issue: Legal consequences of vote buying
2. Image
    (a) Qualifications (education, career history, community experience)
    (b) Personal characteristics that best prepares them for office
    (c) Performance: Achievements that show the candidate will be a good representative

The specific questions asked of the candidates are provided in Appendix A. The questions are designed in collaboration with implementing partners and shared with candidates prior to the recording of the debates.[8]

For both primaries and general elections, trained moderators facilitate the candidate debates to ensure uniformity of treatment across constituencies. MP candidates are invited to a professional TV studio in Kampala several weeks prior to the election. Moderators ensure that each candidate answers every question and each candidate receives equal time. Candidates have a set number of seconds to respond to each question to ensure fairness. All candidates appear in front of the same neutral background. Debates are held in local languages. The recording are professionally edited to give the appearance of a debate: After brief introductions, all recorded candidates answer one question in turn before moving on to the next question. Their names and party affiliations are blended in to increase name and face recognition.

The debates are then screened in selected polling station catchment areas through a road show. Teams are sent to villages in the catchment areas of treatment polling stations with equipment to screen the debate at a large community meeting. Community members are mobilized several days in advance. Since we are working in remote areas where televisions in general and large screenings in particular are still a rarity, we expected high attendance rates.[9]

A baseline survey, discussed further in Section 7, is conducted with 20 randomly sampled voters in treatment and control villages prior to the screening. It collects, amongst others, respondents' prior beliefs about candidates. At the conclusion of the baseline survey, all respondents are told

[8]Despite best efforts, it is possible that some candidates choose not to participate. In the case of a candidate not participating, the final version of the film notes that they are a candidate, but that they chose not to participate.

[9]This expectation was born out during the primary screenings: about 80% of sampled survey respondents attended the screenings. In total, an average of 100-150 people attended each screening.

that they will receive an incentive of phone airtime (2,000/= UGX, or about 60 US cents) if they make themselves available to answer a call on the evening of the election. Additionally, those in the public treatment group are given an invitation card to attend the screening and participate in a second follow-up survey. They are told that upon completion of the follow-up survey they will receive 2,000/= in airtime (about 60 US cents).

In compliance with the Public Order Management Act, the route plan of the screenings is sent to the national Inspector General of Police. Prior to beginning the screening in a district the team gathers letters of approval from the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) and the local internal security organization. One police or security officer is assigned by the district to attend and safeguard the screenings.

Treatment 2: Candidate Debates - Private

During the general elections, we also conduct individual-level, private screenings in some polling station catchment areas. In these areas, a subset of individuals are randomly assigned to receive the private candidate debate treatment. These respondents receive a survey, and in the course of the survey privately view the recorded debate on tablets brought by enumerators. Respondents view the debate on tablets in the course of conducting a household survey. As in the public debate treatment, we will also collect the contact information of respondents, with their permission, to allow us to follow up with them after the election takes place. An independent auditor back check about 10% of all surveys conducted across the different treatment arms, and among other things ensures that interviews were indeed conducted privately.

Treatment 3: Poll results

In addition to the individual screening debate treatment, we have a second individual-level treatment arm. This treatment arm will be compared to the individual control group as a stand-alone experiment. The treatment is to provide respondents with a poll of expected vote choice for member of parliament in their constituency. The data for the content of the poll is gathered in the baseline survey conducted for the public treatment arm in the same constituency. Polling results for all candidates in a constituency, ranked by expected vote share, will be presented to respondents in this treatment arm in a simple format.[10]

It has been long acknowledged in American politics that polls can influence voter preferences and potentially voting behavior. This phenomenon is frequently referred to as the "bandwagon"

[10]Although we will collect priors on electoral support, we will define the treatment as absolute information about a candidate's expected vote share, rather than expected vote share relative to a respondent's priors, as we do in other parts of the experiment. What matters in this context is whether someone is leading or not, not whether someone is leading relatively more or less than anticipated. The existing literature also uses absolute information.

effect. In previous research, voters were provided with information on levels of support for candidates for political office, or with public opinion data on policy issues. Learning information about how other voters plan to vote can affect the voting behavior of the recipient of that information through several potential channels:[11]

a) *Affinity*. People prefer winners to losers.

b) *Signal about candidate quality*. Voters may think that others have better information about a candidates quality. Hence, if (many) other voters evaluate a candidate well, this provides a signal of candidate quality, thus causing the recipients of information to update their evaluation of the front running candidate positively.

c) *Closeness of race*. The poll is necessarily providing information about the closeness of the race. If voters are rational and weigh the cost of voting against the probability of their vote affecting the outcome, then voters should be more likely to turn out to vote in close races.

d) *Coordination/bloc voting*. Voters in clientelistic systems have an incentive to vote with the winner, else they face the risk of being punished after the election. In a context where the individual vote may not be observable, the aggregate vote at a higher level (e.g. village, polling station, parish) may be. If a voter receives information that a certain candidate is leading in the constituency, she may have an incentive to vote for that person – hoping that others in her village do the same – so that our village will not be punished for voting against the winner.

This component of the project makes several contributions. First, although the bandwagon effect has been studied in the context of the U.S. and other developed democracies, to our knowledge, it has not been studied in the African context, even though public opinion polling has been on the rise in Africa.[12] Second, although much of the literature on the bandwagon effect uses voting intention as the main outcome variable, our study will include both voting intention before the election as well as self-reported vote choice from an exit poll immediately following the election, allowing us to examine the persistence of poll effects on voter behavior. Third, unlike most public opinion polls in Uganda, our poll provides information on candidates standing for member of parliament, rather than candidates standing for president. The fact that there are currently no polls on member of parliament and that this poll is conducted and dissemination controlled by the research

[11] See Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994), citetaronson2005, and Deutsch and Gerard (1955).

[12] The Afrobarometer is conducted regularly in more than thirty African countries. In Uganda, media houses regularly conduct opinion polls on political affairs, as do international organizations such as the International Republican Institute.

team means that we can rule out the possibility of indirect effects of polling that occur when polls are known to the public (i.e. polls influencing reporting about candidates).

4 Experimental Design

We examine the effect of candidate debates, screened publicly, on political knowledge and behavior in primary and general elections. Within general elections, we examine the effect of candidate debates screened publicly on political knowledge and behavior compared to two individual-level treatment arms: 1) private debate screenings, and 2) poll results (see Figure 1).

4.1 Randomization

Constituency Selection and Assignment

The candidate debates take place in a total of 11 constituencies. The sample of constituencies eligible for selection into either the intra or inter-party treatment condition was determined by assessing the competitiveness, likelihood of violence, and other factors affecting the ability of project consortium to screen the film. First, a set of 58 rural constituencies were selected using the following criteria for competitiveness: (a) having different winning parties in the past two elections (2006 and 2011) (b) not having the same Member of Parliament serve for two different parties, and (c) having average vote margins across the past two elections of 20 percent or lower. Urban constituencies, i.e. constituencies located within city or municipal boundaries, were excluded from the sample.

Then, the research team conducted interviews with a set of key informants, including journalists, members of political parties, political analysts, and staff at Innovations for Poverty Action to gather information on past violence and the likelihood of violence, whether a constituency was located in a difficult to reach area, and whether the presence of multiple languages would prohibit the screening of the film in a single language (thereby preventing a subset of constituents from being able to understand the information being provided). After excluding constituencies for the

aforementioned reasons, a total of twenty-seven constituencies remained eligible for inclusion.[13]

Of the remaining constituencies, we randomly assign 11 constituencies for inclusion in the study, and the remainder serve as controls, which will be employed to assess downstream effects of the intervention, as discussed in Section 4.2. We block sampling on (a) region and (b) whether the incumbent's party is an opposition party or not (defined as NRM or Independent). From the resulting strata, we stick as closely as possible to drawing 1 out of 3. This implies oversampling of the non-opposition strata in the North (2 out of 4) and of the opposition strata in the West (1 out of 2). In cases where a constituency had to be replaced, this was done following the random order, i.e. with the constituency with the next smallest random number within the same strata.[14] [15]

Of the 11 constituencies, four are selected for the individual treatment arms. Due to logistical and budget reasons, it is not possible to implement the individual study arms in all 11 constituencies. Criteria for selection are: (a) Luganda speaking (largest language group in our sample) and (b) balance on (i) whether the incumbent is running and (ii) whether the incumbent is a member of the ruling party.

Polling Station Assignment to Treatment

The primary unit of randomization is the polling station. In the 11 study constituencies, we randomly assign polling stations to one of the following: a) primary elections - public screening, b) primary elections - control, c) general elections - public screening, d) general elections - control, and e) general elections - individual treatment. In each constituency, we randomly assign half of the eligible polling stations to receive a public debate screening and half to serve as control, for a total of 120 treatment and 120 control polling stations in each election round.

[13] In one constituency, Bugweri, the incumbent had served the previous term, violating criteria a). However, this constituency was included because the original result tally showed a different party winning the 2011 election. The result was eventually overturned. In any case, this series of events shows the constituency to be highly competitive.

[14] Three constituencies were ultimately replaced with a control constituency from the same strata. One because the constituency was likely to be split, and two others because the NRM data available at the time of final sample selection showed zero or one contestant.

[15] In the lead up to the general elections, a number of new constituencies were created. We expect split constituencies to decrease in competitiveness, and therefore exclude any constituency which was listed in the relevant parliamentary committee report. Source: Report by the Sectoral Committee on Public Service and Local Government on the Motion for a Resolution of Parliament to Create New Counties. Office of the Clerk to Parliament, July 2015.

To ensure that polling stations are geographically distributed in the constituency and that no adjacent villages are selected into the sample, we randomize in two stages. First, parishes are assigned to one of four treatment conditions. To ensure orthogonality across the survey rounds, and to enable us to measure interaction effects between the two election rounds, we use a factorial design, with the treatment and control assignment in the general and the primary elections, respectively, being the two dimensions.[16]

		Primaries	
		Treatment	Control
General Elections	Treatment	TT	TC
	Control	CT	CC

Table 1: Randomization Two-by-Two

In each study round, primaries and general elections, only one polling station per parish is included in the "public" sample – and assigned to the public treatment or control condition – in order to minimize spillover.

Within each parish, we select the three polling stations with the highest overlap between a polling station catchment area and its 'main' village.[17] We define the main village as the village contributing the highest number of voters to a polling station according to the updated voter register of the National Electoral Commission (2015). Overlap is defined as the percentage of voters in a given polling station that come from its main village. For example, a polling station where 90% of voters come from the village contributing the highest number of voters is considered to have higher overlap than a polling station where only a maximum of 20% of voters come from one village. We choose this strategy to maximize overlap between a village and a polling station catchment area in the general elections.[18]

[16]Eligibility criteria for parishes are: At least two polling stations in the parish, only one randomly selected parish per urban area (town council).

[17]To minimize spillover, we exclude polling stations from the sample which: (a) are part of the sample of the other Metaketa Uganda team, and/or (b) have a main village where voters are registered in polling stations in two different parishes.

[18]The zoning of primary polling stations is different in the primary elections, where one village typically corresponds with a village, rendering high overlap in the general elections all the more important for the sake of comparability of results across the two rounds of elections. We will invite voters from other but the main village to attend the public screening during the general elections.

The three sample polling stations per parish are then randomly assigned to be part of the primaries sample, the general election public sample, or – potentially – the general election individual sample. Only 'individual' polling stations in parishes in the control group of the general election (cells TT and TC above) are included in the sample, to minimize the risk of spillover from the public treatment to respondents in the individual treatment or control groups.

Randomization is blocked at the constituency level. Since the elections we analyze are held at the constituency level, this strategy effectively blocks on legislative performance of the incumbent, level of electoral competition, quality of service delivery, performance of the incumbent in the debate, number of challengers, and other constituency level characteristics. The randomization strategy is summarized in the graph below.

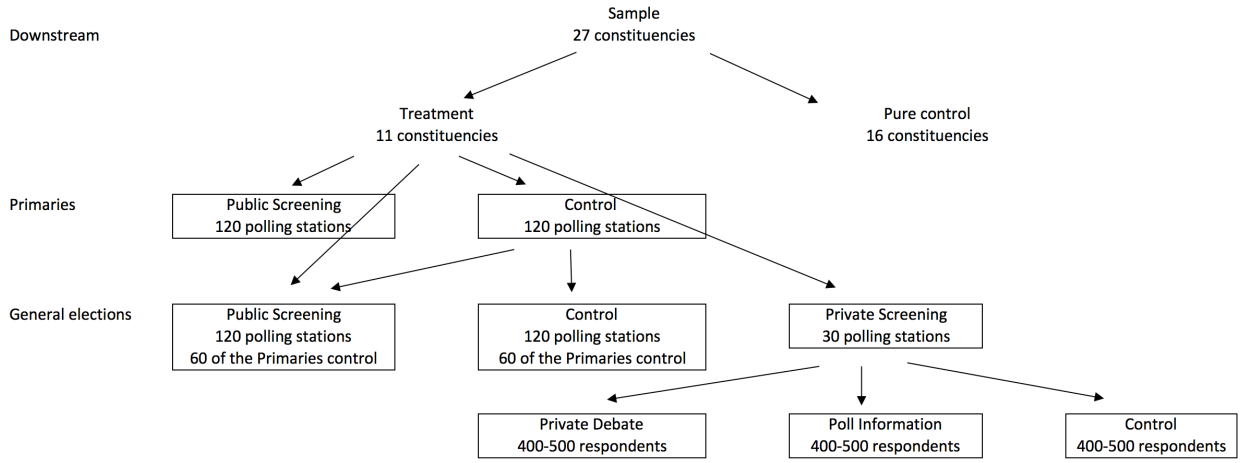

Figure 1: Randomization strategy

For the NRM primary elections, each gazetted village in Uganda serves as a polling station. For the general elections, each polling station serves several villages, with an average of 580 voters per polling station in the 2011 general elections. There were nearly 24,000 polling stations, with an average of 214 polling stations per constituency, in the 2011 general elections.

Respondent Assignment to Treatment

We sample a random subset of 20 voters in each polling station assigned to a group treatment or control to participate in the survey. We rely on official voter registers for the process of random-

ization at the level of the respondent. For the NRM primaries, only those eligible to participate in the primary elections, that is, registered NRM voters, are eligible for participation in the study. For the general elections, only registered voters are eligible for participation in the study. Since endline data collection is done per phone, we restrict our sample to those having access to a cell phone, whether owned or shared.

In the general election we also select 25 polling stations, spread across four constituencies, to receive individual level treatments. Individual respondents within these polling stations are randomly assigned to one of three treatment conditions: a private screening of the debate (n=400), poll results (n=400), and control (n=400).

Risks and Mediation Strategies

Randomly assigning polling stations *within* a constituency to be either treated in the primaries or the general elections is necessary in order to have statistical power to compare treatment effects across the two types of elections. One challenge, however, is that the winner of the NRM primaries will be invited to participate in debates twice – in the primaries and in the general elections, thus potentially modifying part of the treatment. We do not expect debates to affect which candidate wins. However, just participating in debates in the primaries may affect the behavior of the NRM candidate in the debates we organize in the general elections (or the strategies s/he uses in reaction to the debates). We will collect survey and observational measures of the performance and strategies used by the different candidates in both elections.[19] If debates during the general election favor lesser known candidates, i.e. the opposition, improved performance by the NRM candidate would bias us against finding a treatment effect during the general election.

We minimize spillover between treatment and control polling stations by only working in one polling station per parish in each election round.[20] Carry-on effects from the primaries to the

[19]We separately plan to assess the extent to which candidates alter their campaign rhetoric and promises in an intra- vs. inter-electoral environment.

[20]With the exception of polling stations assigned to the individual treatment, which only be located in parishes assigned to the control group of the public intervention during the general elections, thus making spillover from public to individual very unlikely. We are not concerned about spillover from the individual treatment, since a relatively small

general election are another concern. In other words, respondents in the general election sample may hear of the debate performance of candidates during the primaries, and adjust their expectations about the winning primary candidate in the general elections accordingly. Note that carry-on effects will be balanced across treatment and control groups by design (see Figure 1), so this is an issue of external not internal validity. We are not too concerned about carry-on effects, since we consider it unlikely that respondents will learn about the specific information relayed in the debates. Three to four months will pass between the primaries and the general elections debate screenings. We will get some measures of carry-on effects during the endline survey for the general elections, by asking respondents whether they heard about the debate and whether according to their knowledge any candidate performed better than the others. Hence, while we cannot completely rule out spillover and carry-on effects, we can minimize the risk, measure spillover and formulate expectations in which direction it may have affected the average treatment effect in the general election round.

4.2 Analysis of Downstream Effects

Although the main outcome variable of interest is vote choice, we also seek to determine whether participation in Meet the Candidates sessions affects politician behavior. In order to assess the downstream effects of the intervention, we compare long-term behavior of the politicians ultimately elected in treatment versus control constituencies. In order to do this, we will conduct a survey of all candidates in treatment and the control constituencies in the summer of 2016[21] which includes the same questions about policy preferences as in the main candidate survey, questions about constituency relationships, as well as questions about the perception of the debates for treatment candidates. We will follow candidate behavior over the course of the next parliamentary term (2016-2021) to examine whether candidates who publicly commit to campaign promises are more likely to fulfill these promises than those who do not commit publicly via the recorded and

number of people per village will be treated individually in private.

[21] It would have been ideal to conduct the survey with control MP candidates prior to the elections, but this was logistically not feasible.

screened sessions.

We will also examine whether there are differences in campaign promises across candidates from the same party running in general and primary elections. If there are differences, it may suggest that candidates are strategic in tailoring and targeting messages to the electorate in question.

Finally, we will compare winning candidates in control and treatment constituencies on the following:

1. Participation in parliament (statements made in plenary, committee attendance)

2. Statements, petitions, or serving on committees for issues areas noted in the candidate survey/debate

A more detailed addendum to the PAP will be filed for this study component.

5 Data

Data on the primary outcomes of interest, vote choice and turnout, will be collected in two ways. First, we will obtain official voting records disaggregated at the polling station level for both the primary and general elections. Second, we will obtain individual level voting outcomes through a phone survey on the evening of the election for all treatment and control groups. In addition to the exit poll, we will conduct a baseline survey in all treatment arms and a posterior survey in the treatment group only.[22] In polling stations assigned to the private treatment or the private control, data on baseline characteristics, priors and posteriors will be collected in the same session, just before and after the private viewing of the screening.

The stages of interaction with the primary respondents, i.e. all those sampled for the household survey, are outline below.

(1) Baseline survey to elicit baseline characteristics and priors. At the end of the baseline survey, respondents are given an invitation card to attend the debate screening. The invitation card

[22] Ideally we would conduct the same posterior survey for the control group, but unfortunately lack the resources to undertake this activity.

contains their respondent ID. They are told that if they attend the debate and are willing to conduct a brief interview afterwards, they will receive a small compensation in the form of airtime (about USD .50) conditional on presenting the invitation card. (2) Public debate screening. The debate screening will be held at a central location in the polling station catchment area, will be open to the public and advertised in advance. We expect 150-200 viewers per debate. (3) Posterior survey. Within 24 hours of the debate screening we will conduct a posterior survey with respondents from the primary sample. (4) Exit poll. All respondents in the primary sample will be called in the evening of election day to ask about their individual voting behavior.

In control areas, steps (2) and (3) are skipped. For respondents assigned to the individual treatment, the public debate screening (step 2) is replaced with an individual display of the information on a tablet and steps (1)-(3) are combined.

Below we briefly summarize the content of each survey. Measurement and survey items are discussed in greater detail in Section 7.

5.1 Baseline Survey

The baseline survey will be conducted with 20 individuals randomly selected from voter registers in each polling station. For the NRM primaries, respondents will be selected from a single village, as each village has its own polling station. For the general elections, respondents will be selected from the polling station catchment area, which includes 2-3 villages on average. The baseline survey will collect information on the following:

#	Topic
1	Demographic information and eligibility
2	Controls and moderators
3	Political knowledge and behavior
4	Policy preferences
5	Priors on candidates' quality and policy positions
6	Saliency of candidate qualities, weights and partisanship
7	Intended vote choice
8	Community-level variables

5.2 Posterior Survey

Voter evaluation of candidates (posteriors) will be measured after the dissemination of information. Respondents will be asked questions about how they evaluate the different candidates along a number of dimensions and whom they perceived to win the debate. They will also be asked whether they intend to vote and if so, for which candidate.

In public screening polling stations, respondents from the baseline survey will be interviewed within 24 hours of the screening, individual treatment respondents will be asked questions immediately after seeing the screening. In order to incentivize respondents in public screening polling stations to attend the screening and to respond to a survey afterwards, they will receive an invitation to the debate at baseline, indicating their respondent ID. Upon registering with a staff member at the screening they will receive a small remuneration. The posterior survey will collect information on the following:

#	Topic
1	Confirm attendance of debate screening
2	Assessment of candidate quality
3	Knowledge of candidates policy positions and qualifications
4	Intended vote choice

5.3 Exit Poll

We will collect individual level data on turnout and voting behavior through a phone-based exit poll on the evening of the election. Since overreporting of turnout is a concern respondents will be asked a set of simple factual questions which they are more likely to answer correctly if they did in fact vote. These include questions about the ballot or voting procedures that those who voted are more likely to answer correctly. In a robustness check, only respondents who answered these questions correctly will be considered. For the individual level treatment we have to purely rely on self-reported voting behavior.

For a random subset of respondents we will conduct an 'exit poll plus' which also elicits political knowledge, perceived likability of the candidates and information on candidate behavior in the polling station catchment are. The phone survey will cover the following:

#	Topic
1	Vote choice
2	Verification question
3	Political knowledge (exit poll plus)
4	Perceived likability of candidates (exit poll plus)
5	Candidate behavior, including number of visits and gifts given (exit poll plus)

5.4 Attrition

Attrition is a concern for both the posterior survey and the exit poll, the latter in particular as it is phone-based. We have three strategies for dealing with attrition. First, we oversample respondents at baseline. Our power calculations suggested we require at least 10 respondents per polling station, and we have randomly selected 20 respondents per polling station, in anticipation of attrition. Second, as discussed above, we employ participant incentives. Those in the treatment group receive an incentive in the form of phone credit if they turn in the respondent card given to them at baseline during the screening. Those in both treatment and control receive phone credit if they

answer our phone call on the evening of the election. Respondents are told of both of these incentives at the conclusion of the baseline survey. Third, we assess the randomness of attrition, or missingness in the exit poll data, by comparing those who complete the exit poll with those who do not on baseline characteristics. We believe that these three strategies together will minimize attrition and help us determine the extent to which the exit poll data we collect is representative of the baseline sample.

5.5 Electoral Data

The data for candidate vote share and turnout comes directly from official polling station electoral returns. For the general election, data on both outcome variables are collected by the Electoral Commission and available at the polling station level. For the primaries, we collected election returns directly from the polling station returning officers the evening of the election by phone. They expected our calls – we called them two days in advance of the election – and received a small compensation (5,000/= UGX or about USD 1.20). Data on vote share and turnout are also collected by the NRM Electoral Commission, which has agreed to share their data. We consider the official data secondary to the directly elected election returns for the primaries.

5.6 Intervention surveys

At each screening, enumerators will conduct a short survey including the time of day of the screening, number of attendees, gender composition, and note any events or incidents that may have affected the treatment.

6 Hypotheses

We have several sets of hypotheses. Some are held constant across studies in the larger Metaketa project, some are specific to this project.

6.1 Primary Hypotheses

H1a Positive information increases voter support for politicians (subgroup effect). (Metaketa)

H1b Negative information decreases voter support for politicians (subgroup effect). (Metaketa)

H2 The effect of political information (exposure to debates) will have a larger effect on vote choice in an intra-party than an inter-party environment.[23] (Project-specific)

6.2 Hypotheses on Secondary Outcomes

H3a Good news about the intended vote choice, as identified at baseline, increases voter turnout. (Metaketa)

H3b Bad news about the intended vote choice, as identified at baseline, decreases voter turnout. (Metaketa)

H4 Bad news about the intended vote choice reduces turnout in an inter-party environment to a greater extent than in an intra-party environment. Confronted with bad news about their preferred candidate, voters will feel more comfortable voting for a different candidate instead in an intra-party contest, where both are from the same party. In an inter-party contest, voters confronted with bad news will instead opt to abstain if they have a strong partisan attachment. (Project-specific)

6.3 Hypotheses on Intermediate Outcomes

H5 Positive (negative) information increases (decreases) voter beliefs in candidate integrity. (Metaketa)

H6 Positive (negative) information increases (decreases) voter beliefs that a candidate is hard-working. (Metaketa)

[23] We plan to test this hypothesis with two samples: 1) everyone assigned to the public debates and control in each election, and 2) those assigned to the public debates and control who are members of the NRM

H7 The intervention increases voters' political knowledge. (Project-specific)

H8 Politicians mount campaigns to respond to negative information. (Metaketa)

For the following hypotheses we do not have an expectation about the direction. Politicians and their parties may increase campaign efforts in treatment areas – to counter negative information or to capitalize on positive information – or direct their efforts to other areas, since treatment areas have already been 'covered'. We will explore this through the survey data and qualitative interviews.

H9 Politicians' campaign effort is affected by the treatment. (Project-specific)

H10 Party officials' campaign effort is affected more by the treatment in an inter- versus intra-party environment. (Project-specific)

6.4 Hypotheses on Voter Specific Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

H11 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters that do not share *ethnic identities* with a candidate. (Metaketa)

H12 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters with weaker *partisan identities* in the general election.[24] (Metaketa)

H13 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who *value individual merit* over party ID in the general election. (Project-specific)

H14 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who have not received *clientelistic* benefits from any candidate. (Metaketa)

[24]The dynamic is a different one in the primaries: Voters with strong partisanship may be closer to the local party elite and therefore to be more likely to follow the party recommendation for a candidate in the primaries, if there is one. Hence, the information effects should also be weaker for them. We will test this, but consider it a secondary hypothesis.

H15 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who do not report expecting to receive *personal favors* from any candidate in the future.[25] (Project-specific)

H16 Informational effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who believe the *ballot to be secret*. (Metaketa)

H17 Informational effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who have *poor information* about candidates in the absence of the intervention, defined as either not having priors about a candidate on a specific dimension or as having factually wrong information. (Project-specific)

H18 Informational effects—both positive and negative—are stronger for voters who have *uncertainty* about candidates in the absence of the intervention, defined as how informed the respondent feels about a given candidate. (Project-specific)

6.5 Intervention Specific Heterogeneous Effects

H19 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger when the *gap* between voters' prior beliefs about candidates and the information provided is larger. (Metaketa)

H20 Information effects—both positive and negative—are stronger when information is provided in *public settings*. (Metaketa)

H21 For voters holding the same party ID as the incumbent[26], negative information about the incumbent will depress turnout to a larger extent when information is provided in an *inter- versus intra-party environment*. (Project-specific)

6.6 Poll Results (Bandwagon) Hypotheses

The primary hypothesis is what we term the bandwagon hypothesis:

[25] Secondary hypotheses: Information effects are stronger among voters who value programmatic policies over personal favors. Information effects are stronger among voters who have received, are expecting to receive, or are valuing personal favors highly.

[26] For independent candidates, we will code party ID if they are clearly associated with one party.

Bandwagon: Receiving information about polls makes individual voters more likely to vote for the candidate who is leading in the poll.

Waste: Compared to those in the control condition, those who receive the poll treatment are less likely to "waste" votes on candidates who are shown in the poll to have little chance of winning.[27]

We also hypothesize a set of heterogeneous treatment effects, listed below:

Investment: If the preferred candidate is competitor for a top spot in a close race (defined as above), voters are more likely to turn out, since they are weighing the cost of voting against the probability that their vote affects the outcome of the election.

News content: The effect of information is stronger if the information is different from priors (news content of info).

Uncertainty: The effect of information is stronger if a respondent is uncertain about vote choice at baseline (weak partisanship and/or self-reported certainty about intended vote choice).

Reverse accountability: The effect of information is strong among those individuals who believe that winning candidates reward/punish areas that supported/did not support them.

6.7 Interaction between Primary and General Elections – Secondary Hypotheses

In addition, we will test a set of secondary hypotheses on the interaction between primary and general elections.

Anchoring: The act of voting for a candidate provides a further psychological anchor. Those who voted in the primaries are less likely to change their vote as a result of information than those who did not.[28]

Landslide: Landslide victories in the Primaries (elections in which the winner won with 70% or more of the vote[29]) discourage opposition voters from turning out in the General Election.[30]

Turnout: Low turnout in the Primaries mobilizes opposition voters to turnout in the General Election.[31]

[27] Defined in terms of the predicted vote share of a candidate being more than xx% lower than the predicetd vote share of the winning candidate. The exact cutoff will be empirically determined based on baseline data.

[28] To test this, we compare primary voters with people who wanted to vote but were not able to due to plausibly exogenous reasons (self-reported). We will check balance on baseline characteristics.

[29] We investigate the robustness of findings at different cutoff points.

[30] Analysis at the constituency level, using official voting data from all of Uganda.

[31] Analysis at the constituency level, using official voting data from all of Uganda.

Learning: Voters learn about candidates through Primaries.[32]

Candidate policy: NRM candidates adjust their policy statements from the Primary to the General Election debate. In particular, their policy positions become more informed, i.e. closer to constituent preferences.

7 Key Variables and Measurement

7.1 Defining Good and Bad News

Our debate intervention necessarily bundles different types of information, some of which are inherently qualitative and need to be 'coded'. Our definition of good and bad news therefore needs to solve the issues of aggregation and of appropriate coding. For each of them, we consider two alternative approaches, summarized below. Coding will be done by an expert panel ('objective') and by respondents in the treatment group ('subjective'). With regard to aggregation, we construct a weighted average of good vs. bad news across a number of dimensions ('constructed') as well as use an overall assessment of debate performance ('overall'). For reasons outlined below, we deem the objective constructed indicator our primary measure of good vs. bad news.

	Objective	Subjective
Constructed (weighted avg. across dimensions)	a	b
Overall	c	d

Coding

Since information provided in debates is inherently qualitative, we have to code the information content. To do so, we take two different approaches. First, we ask a panel of Ugandan experts, consisting of journalists and researchers, to code the debate performance of each candidate along

[32]To test this, we compare voter knowledge about new entrants at Primary baseline with knowledge about the same candidates at the General Election baseline. To compare across parties, we compare voter knowledge about NRM new entrants at the Primary baseline with voter knowledge about new entrants in the opposition at the General Election baseline. A new entrant is defined as someone who has not run for an MP seat in this constituency before.

a number of dimensions, which we discuss below. The advantage of this approach is that it is relatively objective and that it allows us to make predictions about which voters should receive positive and which should receive negative news about a given candidate through the debate, given their priors about a candidate. Voters' priors about individual candidates are assessed at baseline using the same scales and dimensions as during the expert assessment. We call this approach the 'objective' approach and consider it our primary measure of good and bad news. This approach is applicable to both the treatment and the control group.

Second, to directly assess how the debate influenced voter perceptions we ask respondents in the treatment group whether the debate video affected their assessment of a given candidate on a given dimension positively, negatively, or not at all, again using the same dimensions as during the baseline and the expert assessment.[33] This posterior survey is conducted within 24 hours of watching the debate video. These measures gives us a 'subjective' coding of good news and bad news for respondents in the treatment group. For obvious reasons we cannot ask control respondents the same questions. We therefore use baseline characteristics, including demographics, priors, partisanship and past voting behavior, to predict the posterior assessments, and use predicted values for both treatment and control group.[34][35]

Dimensions

We think of our information treatment as providing information along two different dimensions, candidates' policy platforms and candidates' characteristics (commonly referred to as *candidate image* (Hacker 2004)).[36] In the debate, we have three questions related to each dimension. The policy questions ask candidates to describe their policy priority sector for the constituency, for

[33] In lab settings in the US, respondents are commonly asked their candidate assessments immediately before and after watching the debate. Since a before-after test is both cost-prohibitive and logistically unfeasible in our setting we rely on asking about *change* in assessments after the debate screening.

[34] "Don't know" responses on priors will be considered an answer choice for the purpose of prediction. Updated July 2, 2016.

[35] We use a least absolute shrinkage and selection operator (LASSO) to enhance prediction accuracy. See Tibshirani (1996). Updated July 2, 2016.

[36] American Politics has a rich literature on voters' perceptions of candidate characteristics and the importance of debates for shaping them (Schill and Kirk 2013, Brubaker and Hanson 2009, Benoit et al 2003).

the nation and their position on a controversial policy, district splitting. We are interested in the degree to which the positions of a given candidate align with the preferences of a given voter, which we assess at baseline. Here, good and bad news can be objectively defined by comparing a respondent's prior preference on whether a candidate's policy position aligns with the actual alignment revealed in the debate. This approach is applicable to both the treatment and the control group.

With regard to candidate characteristics, we differentiate between three different categories: competence, understanding of policy issues, and eloquence. For each of them, we collect priors, voters' posteriors (in the treatment group) and expert assessments, all measured on the same scale.[37]

Aggregation Since our treatment is a bundle of information along candidate image and policy dimensions, we construct a weighted average of good/bad news across the different categories. To do so, we ask each respondent at baseline how they weight the different categories of information when deciding how to vote.[38] We then use these weights to construct a respondent specific average of the type of information they receive.

For the policy dimension, we define news as

$$L_{ijk} = P_{ijk} - Q_{ijk}$$

[37]For the subjective measure we also consider two categories stressed by McCrosky and Teven (1999): trustworthiness and genuine interest in voters' interests (goodwill). We are skeptical that these measures can be coded up objectively by an expert panel and therefore consider them additional dimensions for an expanded (alternative) subjective measure.

[38]The survey question reads: "There are many factors people take into consideration when deciding how to assess a candidate. I'm going to read you a few such factors. For each of them, please tell me how important you consider them in your personal evaluation of candidates for area MP – very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant. *List of criteria:* (a) Whether a candidate thinks that the same issues are a priority for your constituency as you do. (b) Whether a candidate has the same policy priority for Uganda as a whole as you. (c) Whether a candidate holds the same position as you on whether or not more districts should be created in Uganda. (d) How well a candidate understands policy issues. (e) How well qualified, considering education, job, and life experience a candidate is to represent your constituency. (f) How well a candidate can express him/herself. (g) How likable a candidate is as a person. (h) Whether you can rely on a candidate to follow through on what they say."

where we consider news as good if $L_{ijk} \geq 0$ for individual i, politician j, and category k, and as bad news otherwise. For the candidate image dimension, we directly measure L_{ijk} for the treatment group and estimate it for the control group, as discussed above. We then rescale L_{ijk} to [-1, 1] and aggregate the news for the six categories, using the weights w_{ik} collected during the baseline survey.

$$L_{ij} = \sum^{k} (weight_{ik} * L_{ijk})$$

Since we have a measure of the 'true' news content as perceived by the individual for the treatment group (overall assessment), we also consider tweaking this algorithm to better match the agnostic measure. We refer to this measure as the *constructed indicator*.

Dimension	**Category** (k)	**Weight** (w_k)
Policy	Alignment on constituency policy priority	a
	Alignment on national policy priority	b
	Alignment on position on district splitting	c
Candidate image	Competence	d
	Understanding of policy issues	e
	Eloquence	f
	Trustworthiness*	g
	Goodwill*	h

*expanded subjective measure only

For the constructed indicator, we consider different aspects of the information contained in the debate screening separately.

Policy dimension We measure the priors (P_{ijk}) and the information content (Q_{jk}) for each of these categories k for each politician j and individual i. For policy positions, we consider it as good news if a candidate's policy preferences are more aligned with those of the voter than anticipated, or are as aligned as anticipated (thus offering greater certainty), and as bad news otherwise. The distance (N) between the prior and the information provided determine the degree to which news

are good or bad. We consider it "very good news" if a voter had a prior that a candidate's policy position was not aligned, but the position is indeed aligned (+++), as "good news" if a voter didn't have a prior on whether the policy positions were aligned and finds out that they are aligned (++) and as "weakly good news" if a voter's prior that policy positions are aligned is confirmed, thus reducing uncertainty (+). Conversely, we consider it "very bad news" if a voter had a prior that policy positions were aligned but the information reveals that they are not (—), as "bad news" if a voter did not have a prior and the information reveals that they are not aligned (–) and as "weakly bad news" if a voter's prior that policy positions are not aligned is confirmed (-). This is summarized in the table below.[39]

		Information	
		Align	Non-align
	Align	+	—
Prior	Non-align	+++	-
	Don't know	++	–

Candidate image Defining good and bad news with regard to candidate image issues is more difficult, since the perception of information conveyed about candidate quality in a debate clip is to a degree subjective. Since we cannot have respondents in the control group give us a rating of the candidates performance, we have to rely on prediction.

To do so, we ask experts to assess the performance of each candidate along each dimensions, and compare it to a voter's prior. For the subjective assessment, we will ask respondents in the treatment group whether watching the debate screening changed their mind on the three categories – competence, trustworthiness and goodwill of a given candidate – and if so in which direction and to which degree. We then use this data to construct ratings of each candidate's performance with regard to each of the three categories.

[39]We also assess the possibility that candidates convince voters to change their policy preferences. To do so, we ask respondents after watching the debate what their policy preference is. If it is different from the one reported at baseline, we ask them what made them change their mind.

Overall assessment We also assess respondents' priors, posteriors and expert assessment with regard to the overall debate performance. [40] The overall assessment treats the debate as a black box. Let L_{ij}^{+} be good news and L_{ij}^{-} be bad news for individual i and politician j. After the screening, we ask respondents in the treatment group to tell us on a five point scale the degree to which they were positively or negatively surprised by the performance of a given candidate. This gives us a subjective measure of good or bad news for each candidate-respondent dyad in the treatment group, where a positive surprise is considered good news and a negative surprise is considered bad news. Since we cannot gather this data from respondents in the control group, as we do not have an endline survey in control areas, we predict it based on baseline characteristics.

For the objective approach, we compare an individual voters' prior about a candidate expected debate performance with the expert assessment of the candidate's performance.

Ranking of measures

We deem the objective measure by dimension to be the primary measure of good and bad news, for three reasons: First, the objective expert assessment allows us to make predictions on how we expect voters should react to news. Second, the objective assessment is closest to approach used by the other Metaketa projects. Third, we deem it more structured to construct the indicator rather than using overall performance.

If we construct the indicator well, it should correlate highly with respondent's subjective assessment on whether the debate provided them good or bad news on a given candidate. To tie our hands on the construction of the good news/bad news indicator before analyzing outcome data but still take advantage of the fact that we have a 'true' measure of the degree to which each respondent was positively or negatively surprised by a given candidate[41], we will update the preanalysis plan with the final indicator construction after having analyzed the posterior data but prior to having access to the data from the exit poll. If the constructed indicator does not correlate well with

[40] Similarly to the subjective candidate image assessments, we use baseline characteristics to predict voters' overall subjective assessment of a candidate for the control group.

[41] Assuming they respond truthfully to the question above.

the agnostic measure – which could be the case if (a) respondents misreported the weight they attach to different considerations in assessing a candidate, (b) the weight changed, or (c) we are not measuring important information content conveyed in the debates – we will rely on the overall measure from expert assessments instead, and report results with the constructed indicator in the Appendix.[42]

When respondents did not have a prior on a given candidate and dimension, we code good news/bad news based on their response in the posterior survey when we ask them whether the debate video changed their views about a certain candidate and dimension positively or negatively.

7.2 Dependent Variables

The main dependent variables of interest are vote choice and turnout, which we will collect at the polling station and individual level.

Polling Station-Level Outcomes

We will collect polling station level official election results for both the NRM primaries and general elections:

1. *VoteShare*: The vote share of each candidate, calculated at the level of the polling station.

2. *TurnoutShare*: The percentage of registered voters who voted on election day. The denominator for the primaries comes from the NRM voter registration list, and for the general elections comes from the national voter register. The numerator is the number of valid votes.

Individual-Level Outcomes

1. *Vote*: Vote choice is a binary variable for each voter-candidate dyad, which takes the value 1 if voter i reported voting for candidate j in the exit poll and 0 otherwise. "Which candidate did you vote for for member of parliament of your constituency?"

[42] To be decided and registered prior to having access to outcome data.

2. *Turnout*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if the respondent reports that they voted on election day, 0 otherwise.

Polling Station-Level Outcomes – Secondary Dependent Variables

In addition to these primary dependent variables, we examine another set of secondary dependent variables, collected from a random subset of respondents[43] during the exit poll survey, and aggregated at the level of the polling station:

1. *CandResponse*: Composite index indicating candidates' response to the intervention, consisting of the two variables below:
   - *CandVisits*: Number of visits to a polling station catchment area each candidate made in the previous month.
   - *CandSpend*: Amount reported spent per candidate on individual respondents in the form of sugar, salt, fuel and money in the course of the campaign.
2. *PartyResponse*: Measure of party's response to the intervention. A count variable of the number of times a party representative has visited the village, as reported by a subset of respondents in the exit poll.

Individual-Level Outcomes – Secondary Dependent Variables

The following are another set of secondary dependent variables, collected from a random subset of respondents[44] during the exit poll survey, and measured at the individual level:

1. *PolKnow*: An index consisting of the variables listed below. We report results both for the index and for individual survey items.

[43] Due to budget constraints these questions will only be collected from a subset of respondents. The exact number is yet to be determined, pending additional funding.

[44] Due to budget constraints these questions will only be collected from a subset of respondents. The exact number is yet to be determined, pending additional funding.

- *MinRequirements*: Count variable of correctly identified minimum qualifications for individuals contesting as member of Parliament. Wrong answers enter negatively.

- *MPResp*: Count variable of correctly answered true-false questions on MP responsibilities.

- *CandKnow*: Count variable (0-5) of correctly answered questions about individual, randomly selected MP candidates, including: percentage of candidates correctly named, party (for general election), policy position on district splitting, priority area for constituency, position on banning candidate engaged in vote buying.[45]

7.3 Independent Variables

7.3.1 Treatment Variables

1. *T*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if respondent is assigned to receive any treatment, 0 otherwise.

2. *Public*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if respondent is assigned to receive the public (group screening) treatment, and 0 otherwise.

3. *Private*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if respondent is assigned to receive the individual (private screening) treatment, and 0 otherwise.

4. *Poll*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if a respondent is assigned to receive the poll treatment, and 0 otherwise.

5. *Watch*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if respondent attended the public or watched the private screening, and 0 otherwise.

[45] One concern is that candidates may take different positions in the debates than they do elsewhere in the campaigns, and thus voters receive conflicting information on candidate positions. This is indeed possible, but very difficult to measure since candidate statements are infrequently recorded in the media, as they are in the US context. If candidates do provide conflicting information, this would bias us against finding a treatment effect.

6. *Change (N)*: Distance between priors and information received, $L_{ij} = P_{ij} - Q_{ij}$. The construction of this variable is described in detail in Section 7.1.

7. *GoodNews (L^+)*: An indicator variable taking the value 1 if a respondent received – or would have received, in the case of the control group – good news during the screening, relative to the respondent's priors, i.e. $L_{ij} \geq 0$. The construction of this variable is described in detail in Section 7.1.

8. *t*: Number of days passed between the screening and the election.

9. *N*: Strength of news, defined as the distance between Priors (P) and information content (Q), as defined by the expert panel.

7.3.2 Individual Characteristics and Moderators

1. *CandInfo*: Count variable (0-8) consisting of: Does respondent feel informed about a candidate, whether correctly identifies candidate's highest level of education, religion, ethnicity, main occupation and policy positions.[46]

2. *PolKnow*: Count variable (0-9) of the political knowledge of a respondent at baseline, including: The number of public offices for which a respondent can correctly tell the name of the office holder, including district councilor, district chairperson, current MP and speaker of Parliament. A count variable of correctly answered true-false questions on MP responsibilities.

3. *OfferGifts*: A variable indicating whether a respondent has been offered any gifts from a candidate during this election campaign.

4. *ExpectFavor*: A variable indicating whether a respondent expects to receive any personal favors from a candidate if elected.

[46]This is a more comprehensive version of the outcome variable CandKnow. Since we collect CandKnow during a short phone based interview on election night we can only include a subset of the baseline questions in the outcome measure.

5. *SecretBallot*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent is confident in the secret ballot, 0 otherwise.

6. *PartyID*: Extent to which respondents are attached to one party relative to others (self-reported).[47]

    - *PartyMember*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent is a member of the political party and 0 otherwise

    - *PartyOpenness*: Count variable 1-7 of how open the respondent is to voting for the party they are a member of/feel close to.

    - *PresMPCongruence*: Count variable for past voting behavior. 0 if the respondent did not vote for the MP or presidential party candidate in the previous election, 1 if they voted for either the MP or the presidential party candidate in the previous election, and 2 if they voted for both the MP and presidential party candidate in the previous election.

7. *CoEthnic*: 1 if respondent and candidate are co-ethnics, 0 otherwise.

8. *VoteNext*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent plans to vote in the upcoming elections, and 0 otherwise.

9. *PastTurnout*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent reported voting in the previous parliamentary elections, and 0 otherwise.

10. *PastTurnoutPrim*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent reported voting in the previous parliamentary primary elections, and 0 otherwise.

11. *PastVoteParty*: Which party did you vote for in the last Parliamentary elections?

12. *PastVoteCand*: Which candidate did you vote for in the last Parliamentary elections?

13. *IntendedVote*: Intended vote choice (candidate) as reported at baseline.

[47] The sum of openness (1-7) to other parties that they do not consider their preferred party)

14. *PastSupport*: Takes a value of 1 if the respondent reported having voted for a given candidate in either the 2010 or 2015 primary elections or the 2011 Parliamentary elections.

15. *VoterNRM*: A measure that takes a value of 1 if respondent is part of the eligible sample of the primaries (registered NRM members), and 0 otherwise.

16. *AccessInfo*: We assess respondents' self-reported interest in consuming political information as well as more objective measures of media consumption for different outlets (radio, newspapers, and TV) (composite index).

17. *Clientelism*: How likely is it that the candidate will offer something, like for example sugar, salt, fuel or money, in return for votes in the upcoming (NRM primary) election for area MP?

18. *SecretBallot*: How likely do you think it is that powerful people can find out how you personally vote during the upcoming (NRM primaries) elections, even though there is supposed to be a secret ballot in this country?

19. *Fair*: How likely do you think it is that the counting of votes during the upcoming (NRM primary) elections will be fair?

20. Salience: Takes value 1 if the respondent considers "Whether the candidate shares my political views", "Whether the candidate is effective at delivering services and bringing benefits to this community", or "The personal characteristics of a candidate" , i.e. topics the debates provide information about, as the most salient information in response to the question "I am going to read you a list of possible information you could learn about a candidate running for area MP for this constituency. Suppose you could receive information about ONE of these things. I'd like to ask you to tell me about which of these you would most like to receive information." Other response options are "How well a candidate performs his/her duties in Parliament, for example, attendance in plenary sessions and council or committee

meetings", "Whether the candidate has been accused of committing a crime", and "Whether the politician has been engaged in corruption".

21. Source: Respondent's ranking of debates as preferred source of information about a politician, relative to others listed.

22. Primary: Takes value 1 if the respondent was part of the primary elections phase of the study.

23. *Demographics*: Age, education, gender, assets, marital status, household composition, employment status.

24. *Certainty*: A respondent's self-reported certainty, measured on a 5 point scale, where they are asked how well informed they feel about a given candidate.[48]

25. *t*: Number of days between screening and election.

26. *Results*: Whether or not endline data was collected before (0) or after (1) results were officially announced.

27. *ResultsCorrect*: Whether respondent can correctly name the announced winner.

28. *PerceivedWinner*: Takes value 1 if a respondent reports that a certain candidate has been announced as winner regardless of whether that's true.

29. *Winner*: Takes value 1 if a candidate is the winner of the election.

30. *Incumbent*: Takes value 1 if a candidate is the incumbent.

7.3.3 Manipulation Check

Only respondents who report attending the screening will be included in the posterior survey. Even so, we employ the following variables as additional manipulation checks that the respondent

[48] In piloting we asked certainty about each prior on a given candidate, but found that respondents became frustrated with these questions. Unlike other projects in the Metaketa, we provide not only multiple pieces of information but also information about many candidates, such that asking about the certainty for each candidate-prior pair is not feasible.

received the treatment. First, we ask questions related to non-political content of the video. Second, for half the respondents in the posterior survey, we will ask a short set of questions relating to candidate knowledge.[49]

1. *Manipulation check 1*: Variable that = 1 if the candidate answers correctly a question about non-political content of the video, such as the color of the background, and 0 otherwise.

2. *Manipulation check 2*: Count variable (0-5) of correctly answered questions about information included in the debate about individual, randomly selected MP candidates, including: total number of MPs running, party (for general election), policy position on district splitting, priority area for constituency, position on banning candidate engaged in vote buying.

8 Analysis

This section describes the empirical strategy we will be used to test the hypotheses generated above.

8.1 Main Analysis

For the main analysis and the estimation of heterogeneous treatment effects use the same estimation strategy as laid out in the metaPAP.[50] The primary outcome variable is vote choice, a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 0 or 1, measured at the level of the voter-candidate dyad.

There are two core estimating equations. The first, Equation 1 is estimated for the set of voter-candidate dyads where the voter receives good news about a candidate. This set of voters, our treatment subjects, is denoted as L^+, defined as the set for whom $Q_j > P_{ij}$ or $Q_j = P_{ij}$ and $Q_j \geq \hat{Q}_j$, where P_{ij} denote the prior beliefs of voter i over political information on a particular attribute (policy or image) of candidate j, and where Q_j denotes the information provided about

[49] We ask these questions in only half to test whether asking respondents immediately after viewing the screening contributes to a treatment effect.

[50] From which we are heavily borrowing below.

candidate j on that attribute. $\hat{Q}_j$ denotes the median value of Q_j. The second, Equation 2, is estimated for the set of voter-candidate dyads where the voter receives bad news about a candidate. This set of voters, L^-, are the remaining subjects.

N_{ij}^+ denotes the difference between information and individual i's prior ($Q_j - P_{ij}$), defined for all subjects in L^+ and standardized by the mean and standard deviation of $Q_j - P_{ij}$ in the L^+ group in each constituency. N_{ij}^+ is therefore a standardized measure of "good news" with mean 0 and standard deviation of 1. Let N_{ij}^- denote the same quantity but for all subjects receiving bad news. Thus, the two core estimating equations are the following:[51]

$$E(Y_{ij}|i \in L^+) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 N_{ij}^+ + \beta_2 T_i + \beta_3 T_i N_{ij}^+ + \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_i^k + \psi_k Z_i^k T_i) \quad (1)$$

$$E(Y_{ij}|i \in L^-) = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 N_{ij}^- + \gamma_2 T_i + \gamma_3 T_i N_{ij}^- + \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_i^k + \psi_k Z_i^k T_i) \quad (2)$$

where $Z_1, Z_2, ..., Z_k$ are covariates as specified below, standardized to have a 0 mean.

The average treatment effect of information for L^+, voters receiving good news, is represented by β_2. Meanwhile, γ_2 is the average treatment effect of information for L^-, voters receiving bad news.

For the secondary analysis of polling station results, we use the same specification with dependent and independent variables aggregated at the polling station level. Here, the unit of analysis the polling station-candidate dyad.[52]

8.2 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

Heterogeneous treatment effects will be estimated using interaction analysis using the following equations, where X denotes the variable of interest, which – for this purpose – is not included in the set of other covariates Z.

[51] Note that these equations are as specified in the meta-preanalysis plan for the Metaketa initiative.

[52] Added July 2, 2016.

$$E(Y_{ij}|i \in L^{+}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 N_{ij}^{+} + \beta_2 T_i + \beta_3 T_i N_{ij}^{+} + \beta_4 X_i + \beta_5 T_i X_i + \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_i^k + \psi_k Z_i^k T_i) \quad (3)$$

$$E(Y_{ij}|i \in L^{-}) = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 N_{ij}^{-} + \gamma_2 T_i + \gamma_3 T_i N_{ij}^{-} + \gamma_4 X_i + \gamma_5 T_i X_i + \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_i^k + \psi_k Z_i^k T_i) \quad (4)$$

The heterogeneous effects of the impact of positive information, for average news levels, are given by β_5 and the heterogeneous effects of negative information are given by γ_5.

For H7, we are interested in the effect of providing any information on political knowledge, and therefore estimate the following simplified equation, where δ_1 is the parameter of interest:

$$E(Y_i) = \delta_0 + \delta_1 T_i + \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_i^k + \psi_k Z_i^k T_i) \quad (5)$$

To test H9 we estimate the same equation, but since the outcome variable is measured at the polling station level we use the polling station as our unit of analysis.

Similarly, to test H10 we estimate:

$$E(Y_{psj}) = \delta_0 + \delta_1 T_{ps} + \delta_2 T_{ps} GE_{ps} + \delta_3 GE_{ps} \sum_{j=1}^{k} (\nu_k Z_{ps}^k + \psi_k Z_{ps}^k T_{ps}) \quad (6)$$

where ps stands for polling station and GE for general election.

8.3 Hypothesis and Variable Mapping

The mapping between hypotheses (Section 6) and measures (Section 7) is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Specifications, Hypotheses and Measures

Family	#	Abbreviated Hypothesis	Y	X	Interact'n	Controls	Subset	Spec
Primary	H1a	Good news effects	Vote	T		§	L^+	Eq1
(1)	H1b	Bad news effects	Vote	T		§	L^-	Eq2
	H2	Stronger in Primary	Vote	T	Primary	§	L^+	Eq3
	H2	Stronger in Primary	Vote	T	Primary	§	L^-	Eq4
Secondary	H3a	Turnout	Turnout	T		§	L^+	Eq1
(2)	H3b	Turnout	Turnout	T		§	L^-	Eq2
	H4	Weaker in Primary	Turnout	T	Primary	§	L^-	Eq4
Intermediate	5a	Integrity)	Integrity	T		§	L^+	Eq1
(3)	5b	Integrity	Integrity	T		§	L^-	Eq2
	6a	Effort	Effort	T		§	L^+	Eq1
	6b	Effort	Effort	T		§	L^-	Eq2
	H7	Overall knowledge	PolKnow	T		✓	L	Eq5
	H8	Candidate response to neg news	CandResp	T		✓	L^-	Eq2
	H9	Candidate response to any info	CandResp	T		✓	L	Eq5
	H10	Party response stronger in GE	PartyResp	T	Primary	✓	L	Eq6
Ind. Het.	H11	Non coethnics	Vote	T	Coethnic	✓	L^+	Eq3
(4)	H11	Non coethnics	Vote	T	Coethnic	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H12	Partisanship	Vote	T	PartyID	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H12	Partisanship	Vote	T	PartyID	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H13	Prefer individual merit	Vote	T	IndMerit	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H13	Prefer individual merit	Vote	T	IndMerit	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H14	Clientelism	Vote	T	Clientelism	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H14	Clientelism	Vote	T	Clientelism	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H15	Expect clientelism	Vote	T	ClientExpect	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H15	Expect clientelism	Vote	T	ClientExpect	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H16	Secret ballot	Vote	T	SecretBallot	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H16	Secret ballot	Vote	T	SecretBallot	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H17	Low info	Vote	T	CandInfo[53]	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H17	Low info	Vote	T	CandInfo	✓	L^-	Eq4
Intervention	H19	Information content[54]	Vote	T	Distance	✓	L^+	Eq1
	H19	Information content[55]	Vote	T	Distance	✓	L^-	Eq2
(5)	H20	Public Channels	Vote	T	Public	✓	L^+	Eq3
	H20	Public Channels	Vote	T	Public	✓	L^-	Eq4
	H21	Party ID & Turnout	Turnout	T	Primary, PartyID	✓	L^+	Eq3

Here, §indicates that we will present results with and without controls.

Where CONTROLS are:[56]

- for individual level specifications: Age, Coethnic, Cogender, Gender, Education, Assets, PartyID, PastTurnout, CandInfo, IntendedVote, PastSupport, Clientelism, SecretBallot, Fair, AccessInfo, Salience, Source, t, Primary

- for cluster level specifications: averages of Age, Coethnic, Cogender, Gender, Education, Assets, PartyID, PastTurnout, CandInfo, IntendedVote, PastSupport, Clientelism, SecretBallot, Fair, AccessInfo, Salience, Source, t, Primary.

8.4 Correction for Multiple Hypotheses Testing

To correct for multiple hypotheses testing, we will use the Benjamini-Hochberg (1995) False Discovery Rate correction, defining families of hypotheses as outlined in table 1. This simple sequential Bonferroni-type procedure is slightly less punitive than a Bonferroni correction since it focuses exclusively on correcting for the false discovery rate. We will show results with the uncorrected and the corrected p-values.

8.5 Additional checks

8.5.1 Attrition rates across treatments

One difference across treatment arms is that those assigned to the public debate screening received more money than those assigned to control. Those assigned to the screening were given Ushs 2,000 (about USD 1.20) in airtime if they turned in a card at the screening and made themselves available for the posterior survey. We will examine whether there are difference across treatment groups in attrition.

[56] Controls were slightly edited for consistency with the MetaPAP on July 2, 2016 before looking at outcome data.

8.5.2 Anchoring and bias

It is possible that those voters who express an intention to vote for a candidate at the outset are "anchored" toward that candidate and have more positive assessments of the performance of the candidate in a debate setting regardless of how a candidate performed. We will examine this possibility by comparing the performance assessments, by constituency, of those who do and do not express a voting intention prior to watching the debates.

8.5.3 Subgroup analyses

We will conduct subgroup analyses with respect to the gender of respondents, and with respondents who share the same ethnicity as the candidate. If there appear to be differences in the effect of the treatment between men and women, we will conduct another subgroup analysis at the level of the village, taking into account the percentage of women/men who attended the screening.

8.5.4 Sample comparison

To ensure our effects are comparable across the two rounds of elections, we will also conduct the analyses on the general election sample with the sample restricted to voters who were eligible to vote in the NRM primaries.

8.5.5 Treatment effects conditional on voting

We will run the main specifications with the pool of respondents who report having voted in the respective election round to assess the effect of the intervention on voting behavior conditional on having voted.[57]

8.5.6 Analysis as in Casey et al. 2016

We will also conduct an analysis that mirrors that of Casey, Glennerster and Bidwell (2016). This analysis examines vote share for the person perceived by (a) the largest number of respondents and

[57] Added July 2, 2016.

(b) by the expert panel as the "winner" of the debate (person who performed best).[58]

9 Implementation issues

Note: this section was added after the completion of all data collection with respondents and after both the primary and general elections were held, but before the PIs had access to the outcome data. We discuss implementation issues that may affect analysis.

9.1 Delay of voting in Nakifuma during NRM primaries

One of the constituencies in the sample, Nakifuma, experienced a delay in voting during the primary election, such that the election was held on [insert date]. The reasons for the delay were [insert]. We expect that this may affect results for this constituency in the following ways [insert].

9.2 Endline delay during general election

Endline data collection during the general election was paused after day 1 (Feb. 18, 2016) due to security issues, and resumed on Feb. 21, 2016. Results for parliamentary races were announced between Feb. 19 and [insert] for the constituencies in the sample. Because we anticipate the announcement of results may affect responses regarding vote choice, were people are more likely to say they voted for the winner after the results are known, we will conduct two analyses. First, we will compare results on vote choice on the first day of endline data collection as compared to data collected on all subsequent days, and second, we will compare results on vote choice among those who report knowing the outcome of the election (are able to name the winner) and those who do not. Since the order of calls was random, we will be able to determine the effect of data collection timing (which combines announcement of results with other time-variable factors) on reported vote choice.

[58] Added July 2, 2016

10 Power Analysis

We conducted three different sets of power calculations for this study. First, for vote choice measured through institutional voting records: With an average of 500 voters per polling station and 120 polling stations assigned to each treatment and control, and a conservative rho of 0.1, the minimum detectable effect size is 0.12 standard deviations (sd) at 0.8 power and 0.14 sd at 0.9 power. With a less conservative rho of 0.05 the minimum detectable effect size is 0.08 sd at 0.8 power and 0.1 sd at 0.9 power, thus allowing us to detect also relatively small effects.

Second, for the outcome variables measured through survey data, i.e. vote choice, candidate evaluation (posterior) and political knowledge, the minimum detectable effect size with 10 respondents[59] per polling station and rho of 0.1 is 0.16 sd at 0.8 power and 0.18 sd at 0.9 power. With a rho of 0.05, our minimum detectable effect size is 0.14 sd with 0.8 power and 0.16 sd with 0.9 power.

Finally, for the individual level randomization we need 400 respondents per treatment arm in order to be able to detect an effect size of 0.2 standard deviations at 0.8 power, implying a total individual sample of 1,200 respondents, who will be evenly distributed across 30 polling stations.

11 Timeline

Polling stations assigned to receive the public debate screening will receive screenings 1-3 weeks prior to the primaries and 1-3 weeks prior to the general election. Polling stations assigned to the private information treatment, debate screening and the scorecard/incumbent only screening, will also receive treatments 1-3 weeks before the election.

Primaries

August 2015: Recording of primary debates

August 2015: Baseline survey

September 2015: Public debate screenings and posterior survey

[59] Making a very conservative estimate on attrition, considering that we have a very short time window to reach voters in rural areas by phone.

September 2015: Party primaries[60]

September: Phone based exit poll of respondents[61]

General elections

December 2015: Recording of general election debates

January 2016: Baseline survey

Late January 2016: Public debate screenings, private debate screenings and information score-card/incumbent only screening

February 2016: General elections

February 2016: Phone based exit poll of respondents

12 Partnership and Human Subjectss

This project is a collaboration between the principal investigators and a consortium of partners, including:

- Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)
- The Department of Political Science at Makerere University
- The Agency for Transformation, a civil society group conducting projects that promote economic development in Uganda
- Leo Africa Forum, a civil society group organizing regional and national policy debates.

The project was designed in consultation with the Uganda Electoral Commission and the NRM Electoral Commission. We have obtained letters of support from both of these organizations.
IRB protocols have been approved at Stanford University (Protocol ID: 33547), Yale University (Protocol ID: 1504015711) and Innovations for Poverty Action (Protocol ID: 5898). The project

[60] Postponed to October 2015
[61] Postponed to October 2015

has received local human subjects approval from the Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee and approval from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (Protocol ID: SS 3781) and the Ugandan Office of the President.

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Appendix

A Script for Debates

Introduction

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Welcome to this "Meet the Candidates" session! Today, NRM parliamentary candidates in the primaries for [insert constituency name] answer questions about their background, qualifications and positions on important policy issues.

These candidates are competing in the primary elections of the National Resistance Movement, which are scheduled for the end of September. The winner from this race will become the NRM flagbearer for [insert constituency name] in the February 2016 general elections. Before we hear from your candidates, there are a few things you should know about your Parliament.

WHAT DOES PARLIAMENT DO?

Your government is made up of three branches. These are: the Parliament, the Executive, and the Judiciary. These three branches all have different roles but they work together.

Parliament, which is made up of Members of Parliament, makes the laws that govern Uganda.

The Executive branch, which includes the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet, implements and enforces the laws written by Parliament.

It is important to know Members of Parliament are not responsible for implementing laws or government programs, and do not control district budgets. This means that Members of Parliament are not directly responsible for engaging in development projects in their constituencies, such as the construction of roads, schools, or health facilities.

SO WHAT DO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DO?

Your Member of Parliament represents your interests by participating in the making of laws that guide the government. He or she does this by . . .

1. Raising and debating issues of national importance
2. Following up on the implementation of government programs in your constituency
3. Attending Local Council meetings to observe implementation of government programs
4. Making petitions to Parliament on your behalf
5. Helping to decide how funding is allocated in the national budget

Anyone who wants to stand for member of Parliament must have a minimum set of qualifications. In order to stand for Member of Parliament, a person must:

1. Be a citizen of Uganda
2. Be a registered voter
3. Completed a minimum formal education of Advance Level standard or its equivalent

And now, we are excited to introduce – your candidates!

[SHOW: CANDIDATE PHOTOS AND NAMES]

[Note: in case any candidates do not appear, include the following: Candidate[s] X, Y , Z were offered the opportunity to participate in this session but did not]

[PRESENTED BY]

This event has been made possible by a group of civil society organizations and academic institutions, and is supported by the NRM and national Electoral Commission.

Now, let's get started!

BACKGROUND [30 seconds]

Thank you for participating in this "Meet the Candidates" session. Please begin by telling us a little bit about your **background** and **qualifications** for running as Member of Parliament for [insert constituency name].

CONSTITUENCY PRIORITIES [2 minutes]

Members of Parliament have the opportunity to influence which **policy issues** are prioritized. It is important to prioritize because there are limited resources available to tackle problems, and so some issues will receive more attention than others from government. Here is a list of key sectors.

- Education
- Infrastructure, like roads and bridges
- Security, like the police and military
- Healthcare
- Agricultural development
- Energy supply
- Creation of jobs
- Water and sanitation

In your opinion, what is the single most important issue for the people in your constituency?
If elected as Member of Parliament, what concrete actions will you take to address this issue?

DISTRICT CREATION [2 minutes]

In the last ten years, many **new districts** have been created in Uganda. The debate about district creation is ongoing. Some people support and others oppose the creation of more districts in the

coming years. What about you? Do you support or oppose the creation of more districts in Uganda, and why?

MONEY AND POLITICS

Some people argue that **money plays too large a role** in politics in Uganda. For example, money is sometimes used to buy votes, which is illegal but common. Do you think that candidates convicted of vote buying should be banned from contesting any elections for five years? Why or why not?

PERFORMANCE [2 minutes]

Please tell us about any **achievements** that show that you will be a **good representative** for the people of this constituency.

CHARACTERISTICS [1 minute 30 seconds]

Individuals may have many characteristics that make them good candidates for elected office. What is the **most important characteristic** of yours that makes you the best person to represent this constituency?

CLOSING

Thank you to all of our candidates for participating in this Meet the Candidates session. We wish you the best with your campaigns.

Thank you to our viewers for watching this program. **Your vote matters!**

Election day for the NRM primaries is scheduled for the end of September. If you have questions about voting, or questions about the NRM primary election, please contact your local NRM official.

Thank you and good evening.