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LEARNING ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA: AWARENESS, PERFORMANCE, AND EXPERIENCE

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Democracy in Africa Research Unit

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Learning about Democracy in Africa: Awareness, Performance, and Experience

Abstract[1]

Conventional views of African politics imply that Africans arrive at political opinions largely on the basis of their positions in the social structure or enduring cultural values. In contrast, we argue that Africans form attitudes to democracy based upon what they learn about what it is and what it does. We test this argument with a unique data set known as Afrobarometer Round 1, which is based on surveys of nationally representative samples of citizens in 12 African countries that have recently undergone political reform. Specifically, we test our learning hypothesis against competing sociological and cultural theories to explain citizens' demand for democracy (legitimation) and the perceived supply of democracy (institutionalization). We provide evidence of learning from three different sources. First, people learn about the content of democracy through cognitive awareness of public affairs. Second, people learn about the consequences of democracy through direct experience of the performance of governments and (to a lesser extent) the economy. Finally, people also draw lessons about democracy from their country's national political legacies.

Introduction

On what basis do Africans form attitudes toward democracy? Conventional interpretations of African politics assume that people form their political opinions based on either fixed social circumstances or enduring cultural identities. Analysts rarely allow that people may flexibly choose whether or not

[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented to a conference on 'The Consolidation of Democracy: What Have We Learned?' Uppsala University, 8-9 June 2002; the conference on 'Diagnosing Democracy: Methods of Analysis, Findings and Remedies,' Santiago, Chile, 11-13 April 2003; a regional conference of the World Association for Public Opinion Research, Cape Town, South Africa, 8 May 2003; a seminar at the Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town, South Africa, 22 May 2003; the World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Durban, South Africa, 3 July 2003; and a conference on 'How People View Democracy: Public Opinion in New Democracies,' Centre for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, 21-22 July 2003.

to support political regimes on the basis of what they learn about their content and consequences.

By probing the origins of mass attitudes to democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, we are able to extend the analysis of public opinion into understudied contexts and also to contribute to an understanding of regime consolidation. Public attitudes about democracy are crucial to the process of political legitimation. Democracies become consolidated only when, in Linz and Stepan's incisive turn of phrase, all significant elites and an overwhelming proportion of citizens see democracy as "the only game in town" (1996: 15; see also Diamond, 1996). In other words, a sustainable democracy requires citizens who *demand* democracy, a feature that can be measured in public attitude surveys.

But democratic consolidation is also widely explained as a consequence of the capacity of political institutions to *supply* democracy (Grindle, 2000; Huntington, 1991; O'Donnell, 1995; and Rose and Shin, 2000). Democracy, above all, is a system of rules and procedures by which leaders, groups and parties compete for power, and in which free and equal people elect representatives to make binding decisions. A consolidated democracy is one in which these arrangements develop into permanent, consistent, and autonomous institutions governed by justiciable rules (Karl, 1990). The list of institutions that define democracy is well known: periodic elections, fixed terms for officeholders, independent legislatures and judiciaries, a professional bureaucracy, political parties, and civilian control of the military. "Institutionalization" proceeds to the extent that these structures effectively and impartially fulfill their functions, whether to make laws, oversee the executive, prosecute criminals, or deliver public services. (Huntington, 1968: 12-26).

As well as measuring legitimation, public opinion offers a valuable vantage point on institutionalization, a critical element of which is whether the citizenry considers that political institutions *produce an acceptable degree of democracy*. No matter how well or badly international donors or academic think tanks rate the extent of democracy in a given country, this form of regime will only consolidate if ordinary people themselves believe that democracy is being supplied. For the most part, we hold that the members of the general public are good judges of qualities such as the availability of freedom, the fairness of elections, and the extent of democracy. It is possible, of course, that uncritical citizens may be overly generous toward under-performing institutions, or conversely that inflated popular expectations outstrip the capacities of a country's political institutions. But in either case, citizen's perceptions of the supply of democracy will be more salient to democracy's actual prospects than any objective country score of rights or freedom compiled by experts.

In sum, we assume that democracy has a low probability of breakdown where two conditions are met, namely that citizens demand democracy as their preferred political regime, and that leaders are seen to have internalized and to be following democracy's institutional rules. Aggregate indicators of the popular demand for democracy and mass perceptions of its supply (as well as trends in these indicators over time), should therefore provide insight into the prospects for the consolidation of democracy.[2] This article tests theories about the micro-level processes that underlie these aggregate dispositions. Why do Africans demand democracy and how do they judge whether they are being supplied with it?

Data

We test competing theories against an original, comprehensive data set known as the Afrobarometer. Round 1 of the Afrobarometer was conducted between mid-1999 and mid-2001 in 12 sub-Saharan African countries that had introduced a measure of democratic and market reforms: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa; Ghana, Mali and Nigeria in West Africa; and Tanzania and Uganda in East Africa. The findings for each country are based on nationally representative samples (a minimum of 1200 respondents) and a total of over 21,500 face-to-face, local-language interviews using a standardized questionnaire instrument (see Appendix A for information on sampling and fieldwork). While the findings accurately portray each country's adult population, we recognize that the Afrobarometer does not represent sub-Saharan Africa as a whole: it under-samples countries with official languages other than English; it ignores unreformed autocracies; and it does not take account of countries embroiled in civil war. With these caveats, the Afrobarometer casts light on popular attitudes to democracy among Africans, a subject on which almost nothing is otherwise known.

Measuring Demand for and Supply of Democracy

In a transitional society, popular demand for democracy (or legitimation) takes the form of a choice between competing regime types with which people have some degree of familiarity. Thus, we resist asking people how much they like

[2] Following Przeworski, et al. (1996), we understand democracy to be consolidated when there is little or no probability of reversal or breakdown. (see also Mattes and Thiel, 1998; and Hadenius 2002).

democracy in the abstract (for example, through agreement or disagreement with a one-sided Likert scale of statements).[3] Instead, following the approach of Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998), we offer respondents realistic choices between democracy and its alternatives. In this paper, *demand for democracy*, (or legitimation) is measured by a battery of such questions. The first component is a question widely used in cross-national research (e.g., Dalton, 1999; Lagos, 2001) to track support for democracy that asks: "Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? A) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government; B) In certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable; or C) To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have."

While it is necessary for committed democrats to profess support for democracy, it is not sufficient. Respondents may have differing ideas of what democracy actually is, thus threatening the comparability of any two responses. Or their ideas may differ from those of the analyst, thus threatening our ability to infer the meaning of the response. Democrats must therefore go beyond paying lip service to democracy; they must also reject real world alternative regimes. To measure these attitudes, we tell respondents that "our current system of governing with regular elections and more than one political party" is not the only one this country has ever had. Noting that, "some people say we would be better off if we had a different system of government," we then ask respondents to approve or disapprove a range of non-democratic alternative regimes. Specifically, we ask about one-party rule, military government, and presidential dictatorship,[4] all forms of government with which most Africans are familiar and to which they can form experience-based responses. In our formulation, a committed democrat is someone who *both* believes that democracy is always preferable *and* rejects all three forms of authoritarian rule. [5]

[3] Reliance on one-sided statements with no forced choice has led to inflated estimates of overt support for democracy. For example, based on responses to World Values Survey statements that 'Having a democratic political system' is a 'very good' or 'fairly good' 'way of governing this country,' and that, 'democracy may have problems but its better than any other form of government,' Inglehart (1993) has concluded that 'lip service to democracy is almost universal today.' Norris (1999) argues that, 'by the end of the twentieth century, overwhelming support is given to the principle of democracy as an ideal form of government, even among citizens living under flawed regimes characterized by widespread abuse of human rights and civil liberties, such as Nigeria, Peru and Turkey.' In South Africa, for which we have comparable data, Klingemann (1999: 45) reports that an average of 85 percent of South Africans agree with the two statements. Yet the Afrobarometer finds that just 60 percent of South Africans say that 'democracy is preferable' when also given the choice of an authoritarian system, or saying that it doesn't really matter.

[4] This scale was adapted from Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998).

[5] While the measures differ significantly, this is conceptually analogous to what Norris (1999) refers to as 'support for regime principles.'

We next measure the perceived *supply of democracy* (or institutionalization). To restate: we do not simply use public opinion as a proxy in lieu of conceivably better measures of the institutional supply of democracy. Rather, we argue that in the final analysis, whether citizens believe that their institutions are delivering democracy is what really matters. The Afrobarometer measures the extent of democracy by asking people whether "the way" their country is governed is, "on the whole," "a full democracy," "a democracy with minor problems" " a democracy with major problems," or "not a democracy." Second, we use the commonplace measure of satisfaction with democracy, which asks people how satisfied they are with "the way that democracy works" in their country.[6] In our formulation, a citizen is supplied with democracy if he or she *both* believes that the country is completely or mostly democratic *and* is very or fairly satisfied with the way democracy works there.

Demand and Supply in Africa: Findings

Democracy enjoys a significant base of popular support in the countries we surveyed. More than two out of three citizens (70 percent) across 12 African countries say that they prefer democracy to other forms of government. A majority expresses support in 11 out of 12 Afrobarometer countries, with Batswana, Tanzanians and Nigerians being most supportive (above 80 percent). This distribution marks a solid base of pro-democracy sentiment in post-transition regimes on a continent that is usually held to lag behind the rest of the world in indicators of democracy and development. The mean score for democracy for the Afrobarometer falls between the mean scores for Western Europe (80 percent in the 1990s), and new democracies in Latin America (59 percent in 2000) and East Asia (56 percent in 2001-2003).[7] As in Latin America and East Asia, however, cross-country variance in country scores is wider than in Western Europe, suggesting an African region whose populations have yet to

[6] This measure has been criticized on the ground that it blurs the distinction between regime and incumbent support (Canache, Mondak and Seligson, 2002). However, we feel that the real problem lies with the attempt to use it as a generalized measure of 'support' at either level. If the Eastonian framework is used, analysts need to separate measures of the 'input' of support from measures of satisfaction with 'output.' This item should be used as a measure of the performance of the regime rather than support for the principles of the regime (Norris, 1999). For empirical evidence of such a distinction in seven new democracies in Asia, South America and southern Europe, see Gunther, Montero and Torcal, 2003.

[7] For Eurobarometer results, see Dalton (1999: 70). Note that we have calculated this mean from scores based only on directly comparable question used in the Eurobarometer 1993-1997, and excluded reported scores based on a quite different question from the World Values Survey. For Latin America, see Lagos (2001: 139). For East Asia, see Chu, 2003 (the East Asia scores excludes Japan, an older democracy, where support was measured at 69 percent).

agree fully about the virtues and vices of democracy.[8] In short, however, the form of government that respondents understand as democracy clearly attracts wide support in various sub-Saharan countries.

But what do Africans mean when they profess a high degree of support for a regime they understand as democracy? Do they support the practices commonly associated with democratic rule, such as civilian leadership, elected government, multiparty competition, and an executive restrained by the legislature? Put another way, does support for democracy mean a firm rejection of non-democratic alternatives that have often enjoyed the label of "democracy" in Africa, such as a "people's democracy" under the enlightened guidance of a dictatorial strongman or a vanguard party? Taking the responses to each item on its own, as many or more people reject various forms of non-democratic rule than support democracy. Eight of out ten Africans (81 percent) repudiate military rule and presidential "one-man" dictatorship (80 percent). The proportion that rejects one-party rule (69 percent) is statistically indistinguishable from the proportion that says democracy is always preferable. Several decades after political independence, citizens in many African counties appear to have arrived at the conclusion that government by military or civilian strongmen is no longer tolerable.

However, these sizeable proportions overestimate the degree of consistent opposition to authoritarian alternatives. Many Africans "pick and choose" among varying types of authoritarian rule and are often willing to live with some but not others. When we re-calculate the proportions that disavow *all* alternatives to democracy, we see that just 48 percent of Afrobarometer respondents reject all three forms.[9] Thus, many of those who agree that, "democracy is preferable to any other form of government" are willing to tolerate one or more forms of non-democratic rule. And when we calculate the proportions that *both* say democracy is preferable *and* reject all three authoritarian alternatives, only a minority (46 percent) can be labeled as "committed democrats." This result warrants a sober assessment of the depth of democratic legitimacy in Africa.

Turning to the perceived supply of democracy, we find that the Africans we interviewed have a relatively realistic impression of recent political progress.

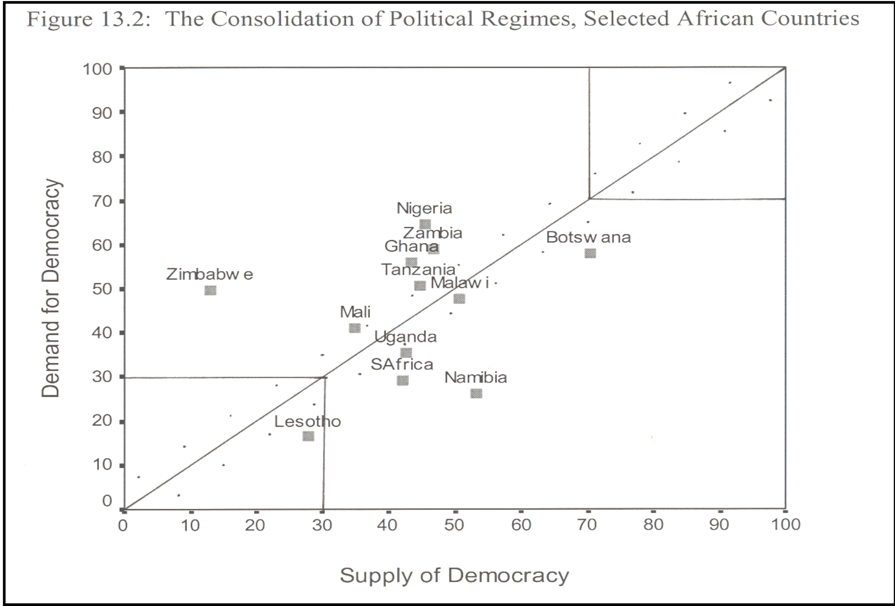
[8] Note that the range of country scores on support for democracy is almost identical in sub-Saharan Africa (from 39 percent in Lesotho to 83 percent in Botswana) and Latin Americas (from 39 percent in Brazil to 84 percent in Uruguay). In Latin America, however, the entire region is comprised of neo-democracies, so the countries surveyed are representative of the continent as a whole, whereas the 12 Afrobarometer countries are unrepresentative of the entire continent as non-democracies are excluded. The Western European scores range from 93 percent in Denmark to 65 percent in Ireland. The East Asia scores range from 84 percent in Thailand to 40 percent in both Taiwan and Hong Kong.

[9] Our thanks to Larry Diamond for suggesting this procedure.

Overall, less than one-quarter (23 percent) say that their own country is fully democratic. Added together with the 27 percent who say that it is " a democracy with minor problems," one-half of all respondents rate their country as relatively democratic. Another one-fifth (21 percent) feel that while their political system is still a democracy, it has "major problems," and an additional 10 percent bluntly tell us that their country is "not a democracy."[10] Meanwhile, almost six in ten are very (21 percent) or somewhat (37 percent) satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. Combining these measures, we find that 45 percent of our respondents feel fully supplied with democracy, meaning that they both perceive their country to be acceptably democratic and are relatively satisfied with how democracy works.

While a full discussion of national responses lies beyond the scope of this paper (see Afrobarometer Network, 2002: 5-17), Figure 1 depicts how each of our 12 countries ranks in terms of the combination of demand and supply. In only one of the 12 Afrobarometer surveys (Botswana) have we found both relatively high levels of democratic legitimacy and relatively high levels of perceived democratic institutionalization. Other than that, we simply point to the quite substantial cross-national variations in the distribution of demand and supply, an issue to which we later return.

Figure 1.



[10] Cross-national survey evaluations of the extent of democracy are strongly correlated with Freedom House estimates of the status of freedom (Pearson's r = .70).

Explaining Demand for and Perceived Supply of Democracy

What factors lead Africans to demand democracy for their country and to conclude that the regime is supplying it? Broadly speaking, relevant hypotheses about how Africans arrive at such political attitudes can be derived from at least five theoretical traditions: sociological, cultural, institutional, cognitive, and rational. We briefly review these different approaches and argue that African public opinion can best be understood through a lens of political learning, which combines elements of cognitive awareness with rational evaluations of performance, conditioned also by national institutional legacies.

Social Structure

A highly influential approach to the study of the developing world assumes that people's values, preferences and behaviors are generally a function of their material, demographic or other life circumstances. Modernization theory in particular focuses on the factors that account for social mobility, which in turn promotes the adoption of progressive mass attitudes (Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Pye, 1990). From this perspective, widespread *poverty* in Africa may provide a barrier or disincentive to participate, not least because poor people have fewer stakes in society. Or, given the imperative to satisfy basic survival needs, the poor may have little reason to worry about satisfying "higher order" needs like self-government, freedom and equality (Inglehart, 2000). Thus, the lack of a sizable *middle class* is widely cited as major stumbling block to sustainable democracy (Huntington, 1991).

A sociological approach also emphasizes the demographic structure of society. *Age* has been seen to play a key role. On one hand, young people may not have developed the mature set of values and attitudes that encourage responsible citizenship. Alternatively, young people may be more open to new ideas, less captured by traditional values, and have more time for political participation (Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Niemi and Barkan, 1987; and Seligson and Booth, 1996;). *Residential location* is also conventionally singled out as a key factor since rural and urban people are exposed to varying levels of diversity and competition in intellectual and public life (Nie, Powell and Prewitt, 1969). Some commentators portray rural Africans as mere "subjects," who are marginalized from public life and repressed by customary law and traditional authority (Mamdani, 1996).

Gender is also seen as an important structural divide: women may face constraints imposed by tradition, internalizing those constraints themselves (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978; Nelson, 1987; Reynolds, 1999a; and Norris and Inglehart, 2001). Alternatively, they may specialize in different forms of participation than men, focusing on more informal community-based activities (Randall, 1987; and McDonough, Shin, and Moisés, 1998). Moreover, women may bring a distinctive array of policy concerns such as children and families, opposition to violence, and demands for human rights and basic needs (Conover and Sapiro, 1993; but also see Schlozman, et al., 1995).

Finally, given the multicultural nature of most post-colonial states, *ethnicity* is often seen to structure society along lines of dominant and minor societal groups, either because of simple numbers, or because of ethnic favoritism practiced by strongman presidents or dominant ruling parties (Horowitz, 1985; Salih and Markakis, 1998).

To the extent that theories of social structure can successfully account for variation in public opinion, there is little ground for optimism about democratization in African societies. Its people are largely impoverished, its middle classes are too small, and its societies are too rural; and the female half of society is further marginalized by patriarchy, especially in rural areas. To the extent that we find popular demand for democracy and satisfaction with its supply, structural analyses would predict these attitudes to be concentrated in small pockets among younger, urbanized men who belong to numerically or politically dominant ethnic groups.

We argue, however, that the demographic categories that comprise social structure (e.g., men and women, urban and rural dwellers) only crudely represent the complex characteristics of various social actors. We agree with Achen (1992) that correlations between demographic factors and political preferences do not explain those preferences; rather, the correlations themselves need to be explained. Demographic variables provide clues, rather than answers. Social scientists need to specify other, more proximate factors that make some groups of people think or act differently than others. Thus, we expect that any observed demographic differences in attitudes to democracy will largely disappear once we control for other considerations.

Cultural Values

An alternative explanation of attitudes toward democracy proceeds from values that are culturally embedded and socially received (Almond and Verba, 1963 and 1980). A political culture approach is based on the argument that, in the

words of Ronald Inglehart, "the publics of different societies are characterized by durable cultural orientations that have major political and economic consequences" (Inglehart, 1988). Applied to Africa, a culturalist approach focuses on communitarian values produced by centuries of life in small villages under conditions of environmental scarcity, seasonal uncertainty, and group solidarity. These values might generate at least three types of orientations detrimental to democracy.

First, African cultures have been said to emphasize the communal good over individual destiny, leading people to think and act as passive, deferential and dependent clients of external forces rather than as active agents with some degree of control over their own lives or the wider polity. Thus, Africans may lack a sense of *individual responsibility* for personal well-being or *risk tolerance* that is necessary for democratic citizenship (Chazan, 1993; Etounga-Manguelle, 2000).

Second, because colonial mapmakers divided and recombined homogenous local communities into heterogenous national societies, many analysts have concluded that Africa has insufficient levels of *national identity*. Democracy presumes at least some prior agreement on the identity of the political community that is to govern itself (Rustow, 1970 and 1990; Gellner, 1983; and Linz and Stepan, 1996). Social identities have been portrayed as largely primordial and relatively resistant to post-independence leaders' attempts to construct new overarching identities (Lijphart, 1977; Connor, 1990; Horowitz, 1991). Low levels of national identity may thus deny young democracies of the necessary "political glue," turning every element of political contestation into a zero-sum, group-based conflict, and threatening the very stability of the polity.

Third, people who retain *traditional* identities (based on language, ethnicity or hometown) rather than *modern identities* (such as class or occupation) may develop antipathies to "others" and be less likely to accept a democracy that necessarily includes competing groups (Gibson and Gouws, 2000). Such a culture may also limit the radius of *interpersonal trust* in fellow citizens to the immediate scope of the village, neighborhood or clan, thus reducing the development of social capital (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Lin, Cook and Burt, 2001) as well as political cooperation and participation (Inglehart, 1988, 1990).

However, we expect cultural values to play, at best, a limited and indirect role. The introduction of democratic reform agendas has disturbed prevailing views of authority and created normative disorientation. As Inglehart argues, culture is by definition a deep, enduring set of values that cannot explain short-term shifts in attitudes, such as those that occur during intense periods of social volatility,

like democratic transitions. As Eckstein (1988: 796) predicts, "changes in political cultures that occur in response to social discontinuity should initially exhibit considerable formlessness" (see also Alexander, 1997). We suspect that cultural values will be less coherent, with more limited influence on attitudes to democracy than theories of political culture would have us believe.

Institutional Influences

A third theoretical approach sees attitudes to democracy as a *consequence* of the organizing principles of formal and informal institutions. According to this approach, mass attitudes and behaviors are ruled by incentives embedded in forms of state (unitary or federal), constitutional systems (e.g., presidential or parliamentary), or electoral systems (majoritarian or proportional) (March and Olsen, 1984; Lijphart, 1984 and 1999; Steinmo, Thelen and Longstreth. 1992; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Remmer, 1997; and Muller and Seligson, 1994. For applications to Africa, see Horowitz, 1991; and Reynolds, 1999b).

Without fully accepting an institutionalist position, we acknowledge that a person's organized affiliations and behaviors are likely to profoundly influence his or her attitudes. *Partisan identification*, especially with the *winning party*, can lead to greater satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Guillory, 1997). Moreover, *membership in civic* or *religious organizations* lends shape to the attitudes, practices and skills that individuals apply in other, larger political arenas (Nie, Powell and Prewitt, 1969; Cohen and Rogers, 1992; Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; McDonough, Shin and Moisés, 1998; Shin, 1999; but also see Waltz, 1990).

We even go so far as to propose that acts of participation in formal procedures like *voting, working for parties or candidates*, *attending election rallies, attending community meetings*, *joining with others to raise issues* or *contacting elected leaders* can themselves have an educative effect. There is growing evidence that the very act of voting increases a person's interest in politics and sense of political efficacy (Finkel, 1985 and 1987) and can build support for democracy (Blair, 2000; Bratton, et al., 1999; Finkel, Sabatini and Bevis, 2000). Because voting and other forms of democratic participation are relatively novel acts in Africa's young multiparty systems, we might expect to find increased levels of demand and perceived supply of democracy among people who have partaken in these rituals of institution building. And because most electoral systems in sub-Saharan Africa are majoritarian, "winner take all" arrangements within unitary states, we would also expect to find large differences in democratic attitudes between "winners" (those who voted for the government) and "losers" (those who voted for others).

However, we wonder whether arguments about the behavioral consequences of political institutions are applicable in a setting like Africa that is poorly institutionalized. Can African political institutions reliably influence individual behavior and attitudes under conditions where the capacity of the state is weak and in decline? Can fledgling political parties and a nascent civil society effectively and reliably incorporate citizens into a polity?

Cognitive Awareness

Democracy works best when "the people" are well informed. The quality of citizenship improves as citizens learn to identify their leaders, understand the procedures of the political system, and become exposed to contemporary policy debates. We expect that a growing number of Africans have undergone a process of "cognitive mobilization" (Dalton, 1988) leading to "civic literacy" (Milner, 2002), which is reflected in higher levels of interest and knowledge about politics and democracy – or what we call cognitive awareness.

The attainment of cognitive awareness in Africa rests on several dynamics. First, while trends have been uneven across countries, access to *formal education* has expanded in post-colonial Africa. In general, formal education should increase popular support for democracy by increasing citizens' knowledge of the way that governments work, by diffusing values of freedom, equality and competition throughout the population, and by boosting the confidence of individuals to engage in public life (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry, 1996; for a summary, see Diamond, 1999). We recognize, however, that the potential effects of formal education in Africa are limited by offsetting factors: official school systems are organized along the elitist lines of colonial public education with authoritarian features (Harber, 1997); they tend to operate on instruction models of rote learning with little emphasis on practical skills or independent thought; and the quality of schooling over the past two decades has been undercut by economic crisis.

Second, whatever their level of education, Africans now enjoy unprecedented access to mass media. Electronic media penetrate even remote parts of the continent; daily and weekly print publications have proliferated in major cities; and the privatization of media houses has led to the emergence of independent FM radio stations. While concentrating heavily on music, sports and religion, these outlets also sponsor independent news analysis and interactive forums for discussing public affairs (Hyden, Leslie and Ogundimu, 2002). Increased *news media use* may expand the range of considerations people bring to bear in making political judgments (Mutz, 1998). The impact of media may be even greater during periods of rapid social change, like political transitions, when people increase their dependence on news sources for information, orientation

and certainty (Ball-Rokeach and De Fluer, 1976 cited in Schmitt-Beck and Voltmer, 2003). News media tell people about not only the outcomes of political competition (e.g., the delivery of economic and political goods), but also the processes by which these outcomes occur. People gain some basic awareness of procedures such as candidate nominations, the working of electoral systems, cabinet deliberations, parliamentary debates, and judicial scrutiny.

Third, even without exposure to formal education or mass media, ordinary Africans can develop a degree of *cognitive engagement*, by which we mean interest in local or national public affairs and active discussion of political events and policy issues with family, friends, and neighbors. Some may even express a sense of internal political efficacy to the extent that they claim to find public affairs easily comprehensible. They can also acquire important bases of *political information*, for example, simply by knowing the identity of incumbent leaders, which can create a point of contact with the political system and foster closer attention to decision-making processes. Zaller uses the term "political awareness" to refer to "the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered." (1992: 21).

Performance Evaluations

A final theoretical approach assumes that people demand democracy and evaluate its supply based pragmatically on the actual performance of democratic institutions and leaders. Whereas a cultural theory would say that democracy works because people possess democratic norms, and a cognitive theory would emphasize political information, rational choice theory says people develop attachments to democracy because democracy works (Evans and Whitefield, 1995: 489).

The principle of rational choice states that individual behavior is purposive and considered, rather than random or determined by larger social forces. People compare the costs and benefits associated with different regimes and align themselves with arrangements that best serve their individual and collective interests. If citizens feel that elected governments fulfill campaign promises of prosperity, support will increase, not only for the government of the day, but also for democracy. If, however, they suffer inflation or unemployment, support will decrease. In Elster's (1993: 268) blunt words, "democracy will be undermined if it cannot deliver goods in the economic sphere." Such predictions resonate well with prevailing perspectives on African politics as the "politics of the belly" (Bayart, 1993).

In general, approaches based on rationality have focused on people's short-term economic evaluations (Przeworski, et al., 1995), including their present, past,

and future evaluations of *micro- and macro-economic trends* (Kitschelt, 1992; Dalton, 1994; Anderson, 1995; Mattes and Christie, 1997; and Norris, 1999), g*overnment economic performance*, and perceptions of the *equity of economic adjustment* (Dalton, 1994; McDonough, Barnes and Pina, 1994; Anderson, 1995).

At first glance, a rational choice approach would seem to engender little optimism for Africa's young democracies given the continent's continuing economic crises. Elected leaders have inherited huge public debts and negative economic growth rates as a result of macroeconomic mismanagement by previous post-colonial governments. Their ability to deliver immediate income and welfare benefits is limited by the necessity of taking measures of economic structural adjustment. Moreover, dominant-party systems in most African democracies make it very difficult for dissatisfied voters to "throw the bums out." Thus one wonders how long people will remain patient with a political regime that they see as incapable of improving their conditions in the very near future.

Towards Political Learning

While we agree that ordinary Africans are above all pragmatic, a strict form of rational choice theory – as typically applied – suffers a range of limitations. Most importantly, conventional theories of public choice tend to be based on an image "of a person motivated primarily by short-term self interest" (Tyler, 1990: 166). But voters who base their commitment to and evaluation of democracy solely on the short-term economic performance of a particular elected government would operate on a very naïve form of rationality. Put simply, rational behavior should lead people to throw out the democratic baby with the economic bathwater.

While Africans do learn about the performance of democratic government through their own immediate and national economic conditions, we expect that voters will use a broader range of performance criteria (or utility functions), which we discuss below. First, they take account of the delivery of political goods as well as the quality of prevailing economic conditions. Second, they learn about democracy by comparing it with the previous authoritarian regime, or even the longer institutional legacy of the postcolonial period. Third, and finally, to the extent that they understand democracy as a set of procedural political guarantees, they develop intrinsic attachments to democracy that are quite independent of any consideration of economic performance. It is this combination of performance evaluation, institutional legacies, and cognitive awareness that amounts to political learning.

Political Goods

Linz and Stepan (1996b: 442) argue that citizens are able to make "separate and correct" distinctions between "a basket of economic goods (which may be deteriorating) and a basket of political goods (which may be improving)." For people all too familiar with repressive and kleptocratic military and civilian dictators or racial oligarchies, the human dignity provided by basic civil liberties may also be a fundamental need in Africa. To be sure, it may not be possible to eat political liberties; but these rights may be as important to one's sense of dignity and quality of life as eating. To the extent that new democracies can protect peoples' ability to speak their minds without fear, to move about without being asked for identity documents or harassed by police roadblocks, or to conduct business with the state free of extortion, citizens will calculate that democracy is in their interest. Thus, we agree with Evans and Whitefield's (1995: 501) argument that "citizens' commitment to democracy may be less a function of how the market is perceived to work than of how democracy itself is experienced . . . [P]eople support democracies because they are seen to work . . . rather than on the basis of a simple 'cash nexus.'"

From this perspective, the proper criterion for judging democracy is not so much the delivery of improved material welfare, but public perceptions of the *availability of free speech*, *free and fair elections*, *fair treatment* (especially of one's identity group), *the level of government corruption*, *government responsiveness*, *the performance of elected representatives*, *the performance of the president* and one's *trust in state institutions*. In fact, those researchers who have included political factors in their multivariate statistical models of support for democracy have consistently found that they have stronger impacts than economic factors, and that the influence of economic variables is always considerably reduced (Gibson, 1996; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998; Shin, 1999; Norris, 1999; and Gunther, Montero and Torcal, 2003).

Comparing Regimes

Rather than simply using current evaluations of the new regime and asking "what have you done for me lately?" (Popkin, et al., 1976) we also expect that voters in emerging democracies will draw on a medium-term calculation that compares the relative performance of old and new regimes. This is what Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998) call the "Churchill hypothesis": regardless of what people think about the performance of the current democratic regime, they will support it if it performs better than its predecessor. Even in a low information environment such as Africa, we believe people are quite capable of assessing whether they have an *improved quality of life* and *increased political rights*, whether they *feel safer*, or whether there is *less government corruption*. We also

believe that such considerations are profoundly important to people's lives, and that people will be able to attribute any perceived shifts in freedom and safety directly to the performance of the new regime.

Understandings of Democracy

Central to this inquiry are the extent and nature of popular expectations. The most fundamental cognitive step in political learning is that people attain a basic *awareness of democracy* in the sense of being able to attach some kind of meaning to the concept. Beyond basic awareness, however, much depends on the content that people project onto the regime. Many analysts imply that Africans will have very high expectations because they hold a *substantive understanding* of democracy (MacPherson, 1967; Owusu, 1992; Sono, 1993; Ake, 1996; Schaeffer, 1998). By this criterion, democracy is only attained when material benefits are broadly delivered and equality is attained throughout society. Substantivists set themselves up for disappointment when, inevitably, democracy alone proves incapable of delivering broad socioeconomic gains.

But we believe that at least some Africans have come to develop a more modest *procedural understanding*, according to which democracy is a set of political procedures for limiting the power of the state by guaranteeing civil liberties, convening competitive elections, and enabling people to have a voice in how they are governed. Providing these lower expectations are met, proceduralists are more easily satisfied with regime performance and become more fully committed to democracy. Thus, while substantivists obtain a purely instrumental view of democracy, valuing it only for what it delivers (what it *does*), proceduralists are likely to also value democracy intrinsically, that is, as an end worth pursuing in its own right (what it *is*).[11]

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[11] *Intrinsic* support is a long-term commitment 'for better or worse,' with the potential to sustain a fragile regime even in the face of economic downturn or social upheaval. Like Easton's (1965) notion of diffuse support, it does not have to be earned, but rather inheres in the qualities of democracy itself. In contrast, support is *instrumental* when it depends on democracy as a means to other ends, such as the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of living standards. Like Easton's specific support, an instrumental commitment to democracy is conditional. If attitudes to democracy are empirically linked to the satisfaction of a desire for *any* public good or service, whether political or economic, we see this as evidence of instrumentalism.

Table 1: Variables in the Analysis

Variables
Social Structure
Gender (Female)
Age
Residential Location (Rural)
Lived Poverty
Ethnicity
Peasant Class
Working Class
Middle Class
Cultural Values
Modern Identity
National Identity
Individualism
Risk Tolerance
Interpersonal Trust
Institutional Influences
Member of Religious Group
Member of Other Association
Identifies with Political Party
Identities with Winning Party
Voted in Last Election
Communing and Contacting
Participated in Demonstration
Contacted Informal Leader
Cognitive Awareness
Formal Education
Media Exposure
Cognitive Engagement
Political Information
Awareness of Democracy
Understands Democracy as Political Procedures
Understands Democracy as Socio-Economic Substance
Economic Performance Evaluations
Government's Policy Performance
Performance of the Economy
SAP Creates Inequality
Political Performance Evaluations
Perceived Government Corruption
Performance of the President
Performance of Representatives
Trust in State Institutions
Government Responsiveness
Government Performance on Crime and Safety
Identity Group Treated Fairly
Availability of Free Speech
Free and Fair Elections
Regime Comparisons
Improved Standard of Living (Economic Goods)
Government Corruption Worse
Increased Safety
Increased Political Rights

Determinants of Attitudes to Democracy

We tested these competing explanations as follows. We operationalized all the concepts italicized in the foregoing discussion, using factor and reliability analyses to guide the creation of multi-item indices. We then grouped the concepts theoretically (see Table 1) and regressed the two dependent variables of *demand for democracy* and *supply of democracy* on each set of variables using the block-wise ordinary least squares methodology. (For full question wording and results to these questions, see Afrobarometer Network, 2002; a description of latent constructs and indices can be requested from the authors).

We also addressed a problem of missing data. The combined effects of a large number of variables, non-responses for various small subsets of respondents on each question, varying proportions of "don't knows" across questions, and the fact that some questions were not asked in specific countries, meant that typical list-wise deletion methods would result in loss of an unacceptably large number of cases from the analysis. Moreover, list-wise deletion produces biased estimates (King, et al., 2001; see also Allison, 2001). Wherever possible, therefore, we first recoded "don't know" responses to theoretically defensible places on response scales. Otherwise, we used procedures outlined by Honaker, et al. (2001), and a data management program known as *Amelia* to impute missing values. Analysis was then conducted on all 21,531 cases (see Appendix B).

Table 2:

Demand for Democracy: Summary of Block Wise OLS Regression (Summary)

	(1) Social Structure	(2) Cultural Values	(3) Institutional Influences	(4) Economic Evaluations	(5) Political Evaluations	(6) Regime Comparisons	(7) Cognitive Awareness
Adjusted R^2	.037	.100	.139	.141	.157	.171	.245
St. Error of Estimate	.544	.526	.515	.514	.509	.505	.482

Supply of Democracy: Block Wise Ordinary Least Square Regression (Summary)

	(1) Social Structure	(2) Cultural Values	(3) Institutional Influences	(4) Economic Evaluations	(5) Political Evaluations	(6) Regime Comparisons	(7) Cognitive Awareness
Adjusted R^2	.018	.035	.091	.238	.337	.345	.348
St. Error of Estimate	1.160	1.150	1.116	1.022	.953	.948	.946

From Table 2, which reports the variance explained (cumulative adjusted R^2) for the blocks of variables representing theoretical approaches, we quickly arrive at two general conclusions. First, once all blocks of variables are entered, the

overall models work quite well. Given that surveys were conducted in 12 linguistically and culturally diverse countries that are marked by low levels of education and literacy, and that we asked people about newly formed opinions – including on abstract concepts like democracy – our models work remarkably well. We can explain 25 percent of the variance in demand for democracy, and 35 percent for its perceived supply. These results are at least as powerful as those in other studies of regime support and democratization in Eastern Europe (Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998: 242) and South Korea (Shin, 1999: 157).

Second, democratic demand and supply have quite different roots. Let us first examine *demand for democracy*. Social structural variables combine to account for no more than 4 percent of variance. Adding in cultural and institutional considerations, we can increase the variance explained to about 14 percent. Short- and medium-term performance evaluations (economic and political evaluations, plus regime comparisons) now allow us to explain 17 percent. But the most important increase in the success of the overall model comes when we add the indicators of cognitive awareness, allowing us to account for 25 percent of the variance in demand.

While demand for democracy appears to be best accounted for by cognitive factors, its perceived supply is clearly a function of performance evaluations. Taken together, measures of social structure, cultural values, and institutional influences account for just 9 percent of variance. The major increase in explanatory power occurs once we add in current economic and political performance (adjusted R^2 jumps to .34). Thereafter, medium-term regime comparisons and cognitive factors improve the model only slightly (adj. R^2 = .35).

Tables 3 and 4 report the most important individual predictors of demand and supply, grouped theoretically. Again, we look first at the predictors of demand for democracy. While few Africans are integrated into a modern economy, or belong to working or middle classes, this does not appear to detract from (or contribute to) demand for democracy. In fact, as the only sociological variable with any impact, members of the peasant class (Beta = .06) are most likely to demand democracy (though see below).

The limited impact of culture is felt through two specific variables. Net all other influences, those Africans who are willing to take risks are more likely to demand democracy (Beta = .09). The other important cultural factor is interpersonal trust, which is low in the 12 African countries surveyed (an average of just 18 percent say you "can trust other people"). Contrary to common wisdom, however, interpersonal trust *decreases* commitment to democracy (Beta = -.06). Rose (2002) interprets this anomaly to mean that, in

societies characterized by low levels of trust, people who express trust in others are the weakest and most dependent. Trusting in others in an untrustworthy society is antithetical to the type of social confidence implied in theories of social capital.

Other than that, we find few important cultural impacts on attitudes to democracy based, for example, on whether or not a respondent values individual responsibility. And given Africa's ethnic diversity and the widely held political salience of group identities, we also find few differences in demand for democracy based on the relative size of one's ethnic group, the expression of traditional or modern identities, or whether people are proud of their national identity.

Turning to institutional influences, we find that demand for democracy is enhanced by one's prior participation in a range of communal activities (i.e., working for campaigns, attending rallies and community meetings, working in local single issue groups, or contacting an elected leader) (Beta = .06). However, the impact of other institutional factors produces a second important anomaly, at least from the perspective of social capital theory. According to expectations, membership in religious groups contributes to demand for democracy (Beta = .09); however, membership in other types of civic groups (such as community self help and welfare groups, trade unions or farmer groups, or business groups) *detracts* from such commitment (Beta = -.08).

Our most startling finding is the total absence of any economic performance evaluations from the explanation of demand for democracy. We find no evidence that democracy in Africa (at least from the demand side) is hostage to the "politics of the belly." Variables measuring satisfaction with macro-economic trends, relative deprivation, or the ability of the new regime to improve quality of life are simply missing from the list of substantively important factors. But two *political* performance evaluations do have an impact. To the extent to which the people feel that government is responsive (Beta = .09), and that personal freedoms and rights have increased under the new regime (Beta = .11), they are more demanding of democracy.

As expected, five separate elements of cognitive awareness have important impacts on demand for democracy. The most important are whether people understand democracy as a set of political procedures (Beta = .18), have high levels of political information (.14) and are aware of democracy (.11). Formal education (.07) and cognitive engagement (.07) also make positive contributions to democratic demands.

Table 3: *OLS Estimates of Predictors of Demand for Democracy*

	Bivariate Correlations (r)	*Unstandardized Coefficients (B)*	*Std. Error*	*Standardized Coefficients (Beta)*
Constant		-.415	.038	
Social Structure				
Peasant Class	.048	.070	.008	.060
Cultural Values				
Risk Tolerance	.188	.038	.003	.091
Interpersonal Trust	-.073	-.084	.009	-.057
Institutional Influences				
Member of Religious Group	.160	.110	.007	.093
Member of Other Association	.001	-.052	.004	-.080
Communing and Contacting	.173	.048	.006	.057
Political Evaluations				
Government Responsiveness	.183	.033	.002	.093
Regime Comparisons				
Increased Political Rights	.182	.079	.005	.108
Cognitive Awareness				
Formal Education	.191	.042	.004	.070
Cognitive Engagement	.201	.056	.006	.065
Political Information	.257	.067	.003	.141
Awareness of Democracy	.241	.146	.009	.109
Understands Democracy as Political Procedures	.276	.109	.004	.177
St. Error of Estimate	.482			
Adjusted R^2	.244			

Turning back to the perceived *supply of democracy*, we now see that, with one exception, it is driven by performance evaluations. The exception is institutional: those who support the winning political party (Beta = .06) are more likely to offer positive assessments about the supply of democracy, providing some evidence that partisan considerations color African worldviews. In contrast to demand for democracy, however, economic performance plays a marked role in its perceived supply. Satisfaction with economic trends (Beta = .08), and approval of government economic performance (.08) increase the supply of democracy as people experience it. However, if people feel that economic adjustment has worked to detriment of most people (Beta = -06), they are less likely to say their country is a democracy.

Table 4: OLS Estimates of Predictors of Supply of Democracy

	Bivariate Correlations (r)	*Unstandardized Coefficients (B)*	*Std. Error*	*Standardized Coefficients (Beta)*
(Constant)		-.617	.005	
Institutional Influences				
Identifies with Winning Party	.239	.096	.010	.057
Economic Performance				
Government Policy Performance	.379	.092	.008	.084
SAP Creates Inequality	-.235	-.040	.004	-.055
Performance of the Economy	.352	.110	.009	.080
Political Performance				
Performance of the President	.463	.134	.007	.148
Identity Group Treated Fairly	.268	.054	.006	.059
Perceived Government Corruption	-.299	-.107	.007	-.092
Trust in State Institutions	.346	.086	.007	.075
Availability of Free Speech	.062	.045	.005	.052
Free and Fair Elections	.389	.138	.006	.156
Regime Comparisons				
Increased Political Rights	.293	.105	.010	.068
Standard Error of Estimate	.946			
Adjusted R^2	.348			

Note, however, that the delivery of *political* goods has an even larger impact. The performance of the president (measured as a construct of trust and approval) is a very strong predictor of whether people think their country is democratic (Beta = .15). While this complements the common wisdom about the central role of the "big man" in African politics (which this finding reinforces), we nonetheless discover that Africans do not focus solely on the performance of the president. In deciding how much democracy they are getting, people also look to the trustworthiness of state institutions (.08), the level of government corruption (-.09), whether the government treats their group fairly (.05), and whether or not prevailing political conditions allow them to speak their mind without fear (.05). They also make a Churchillian calculation of whether they are freer and have more rights under the new regime (.07). In fact, the single strongest impact on people's perceptions of democracy is whether they think their most recent election was free and fair or (Beta = .16).

Adding "Country"

Before interpreting these results, we pause to recall that a demand-supply model of democracy was introduced earlier to gauge the aggregate impact of public opinion on regime consolidation. We now probe the substantial cross-national

differences in demand and supply displayed in Figure 1. Do these variations simply reflect peculiar national distributions along each of the independent variables just reviewed, or are there larger "country" impacts not measured by our existing models? In other words, does "country" have an impact over and above the total influence of individual-level considerations? We address this by creating an additional block of eleven dummy variables signifying national citizenship (with Batswana –citizens of Botswana – as the excluded category). Table 5 reveals meaningful "country" effects because the variance explained in attitudes toward democracy increases from 25 to 30 percent on the demand side and from 35 to 39 percent on the supply side.

In addition, the inclusion of "country" eliminates some previously important predictors. With respect to demand, belonging to the peasant class no longer matters, suggesting that it was probably an artifact of the rural character of national populations in places like Botswana and Tanzania. Interpersonal trust no longer matters, again suggesting that it was tapping the especially low levels of demand in places like Namibia, which have higher than average levels of trust. Moreover, institutional influences disappear completely once we control for national differences. With respect to perceptions of democratic supply, the impact of perceptions of government treatment of your group, and the ability to speak your mind without fear, also disappear once country is added to the model.

How should we understand these aggregate impacts on individual attitudes? Are they evidence of twelve unique patterns of collectively shared orientations passed down through national school curricula or the state media? To consider this, we first ask about the grounds on which we would expect to find such a subjective meeting of minds? Socialization theory, which was originally developed to explain national political stability through the intergenerational transfer of pro-system norms, would lead us to focus on the transmission of norms supportive of democracy. But with the exception of Batswana, few Afrobarometer respondents would have grown up under democratic regimes that consciously tried to transmit democratic values to younger generations. If anything, the differences we observe might result from the residue of pro-system norms that were supportive of the one-party state (such as in Zambia or Tanzania), or the strong leader (like Malawi's Banda), but that are now detrimental to democracy.

Table 5: Adding "Country"

	Demand		*Supply*	
	Without Country	*With Country*	*Without Country*	*With Country*
Constant	(-.415)	(.132)	(-.320)	(-.279)
Structure				
Peasant Class	.060	--	--	--
Culture				
Risk Tolerance	.091	.073	--	--
Interpersonal Trust	-.057	--	--	--
Institutional Influences				
Identifies with Winning Party	--	--	.057	.065
Member of Religious Group	.093	--	--	--
Member of Other Association	-.080	--	--	--
Communing and Contacting	.057	--	--	--
Economic Performance				
Government Policy Performance	--	--	.084	.092
SAP Creates Inequality	--	--	-.055	-.052
Performance of the Economy	--	--	.080	.082
Political Evaluations				
Performance of the President	--	--	**.148**	**.167**
Identity Group Treated Fairly	--	--	.059	--
Perceived Government Corruption	--	--	-.092	-.071
Trusts in State Institutions	--	--	.075	.071
Availability of Free Speech	--	--	.052	--
Free and Fair Elections	--	--	**.156**	**.137**
Government Responsiveness	.093	.085	--	--
Regime Comparisons				
Increased Political Rights	**.108**	**.123**	.068	.064
Cognitive Awareness				
Formal Education	.070	.075	--	--
Cognitively Engagement	.065	.067	--	--
Political Information	**.141**	**.101**	**--**	**--**
Awareness of Democracy	**.109**	**.109**	--	--
Understands Democracy as Political Procedures	**.177**	**.172**	--	--
Nationality				
Basotho		-.065		-.085
Malawian		--		-.061
Malian		**-.114**		**-.147**
Namibian		**-.151**		-.083
Nigerian		--		**-.149**
South African		-.193		-.055
Tanzanian		.053		**-.128**
Ugandan		-.077		**-.127**
Zambian		--		--
Zimbabwean		--		**-.148**
Standard Error of Estimate	.482	.466	.946	.918
Adjusted R^2	.244	.295	.348	.385

But a cursory examination of the standardized regression coefficients associated with the country dummy variables produces no support for this line of argument. Take the country effects on demand for democracy: instead of negative coefficients associated with being Malawian, Zambian or Tanzanian, we see that being from Malawi or Zambia makes no significant difference, and being Tanzanian actually has a positive impact (in comparison to the excluded category of Batswana). In contrast, the strongest negative country effects are associated with being citizens of South Africa and Namibia.

We suspect that the impact of country reflects lessons people have learned about *both* authoritarian *and* democratic rule from differently performing previous regimes. If this is true, we should be able to replace country names with a smaller set of theoretically derived variables that apply across countries, since different countries often have similar political legacies (Whitefield and Evans, 1999; Przeworski and Teune, 1970). We know that the success rate of African transitions from authoritarian rule to free and fair founding elections depended a great deal on whether the previous regime had some history of multiparty rule, was a one-party regime that allowed some degree of internal competition, simply renewed its legitimacy through non-competitive plebiscites, ruled through military force, or limited political participation to European settlers (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). We now ask whether these differing types of *ancien regimes* leave a legacy that influences present day attitudes to democracy.

If national differences in attitudes toward democracy result from differing institutional legacies, then at least three different modes of learning may be at work. We distinguish "generational," "lifetime" and "collective" mechanisms.

First, the most fundamental and enduring lessons about political regimes could be learned during formative periods of late adolescence and early adulthood: lessons that then structure or filter subsequent political learning (Mannheim, 1952; Easton and Dennis, 1969; Eckstein, 1997). If true, we should expect to find significant and considerable differences in regime preferences between cohorts, or "generations" who grew up under different types of regimes (Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992; Silver, 1987; Bahry, 1987; Miller, Hesli and Reisinger, 1994; and Abramson and Inglehart, 1998. But see also Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998; and Shin, 1999).

Second, perhaps people constantly acquire new information, developing a running tally of lessons about political regimes accumulated over an entire lifetime. Where the theory of short-term rationality implies that new information drives out old, a "lifetime" learning model assumes that new information is integrated into existing understandings and accumulated experience (Achen,

1992; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998). If true, the lessons learned about authoritarian or democratic regimes should differ not by generation, but according to cumulative individual experience with a range of differing regimes. Third, a notion of "collective" learning would point to historical "period effects" that impart a set of common lessons across all people in a country regardless of age or generation (Barner-Barry and Orenwein, 1985). The dramatic events of political transitions, such as the total breakdown of the institutions and value structures of the *ancien regime*, or the founding election of a new regime, might provide such effects, creating a common *re*-socialization across all people and a society-wide transfer of regime loyalties (Bermeo, 1992; Schmitt-Beck and Voltmer, 2003; Gunther, Montero and Torcal, 2003).[12] As such, the macro-level crystallization of mass public attitudes in a new democracy may resemble the types of micro-level attitude change that occur in early adulthood in stable regimes (Jennings, 1989; Gibson and Gouws, 2003: 180).

We then tested whether any of these types of popular learning help to explain the country effects we observe in our data. We first operationalized "generation" by creating dummy variables that measured whether the respondent turned 18 years of age under a "settler," "plebiscitary," "military," "competitive one-party," or "multiparty" regime. Second, to assess "lifetime" learning effects, we created variables that calculated the total number of years (past the age of 18) that each respondent would have lived under each type of regime. Finally, to test for "collective" socialization effects, we ascertained the dominant post-colonial regime type for each country, indicated by a dummy variable for four of the five regime types.[13]

To summarize our findings, we find no evidence for the generational or lifetime learning hypotheses, but strong evidence for a collective socialization hypothesis. First of all, when we add the four generational dummy variables (with turning 18 during a multiparty regime as the excluded category) to the base model, adjusted R^2 goes from .24 to .27 (compared to .30 with the 11 country dummies). Moreover, when the country dummies are put in the same model as the generational variables, the generational variables all turn

[12] Gunther, Montero and Torcal (2003: 22) find that formerly right wing Spaniards and Greeks, as well as Hungarian communists, have embraced democracy in a relatively short period of 'intense resocialization that occurred at crucial, formative stages of the transition to democracy.'

[13] We date the beginning of the 'post colonial era' as 1957, the date of Ghana's independence. We determined that 'multiparty regime' was the dominant post colonial regime type in Botswana (1966-99), Ghana (1957-64, 69-72, 79-81 and 92-99) and Zimbabwe (1980-99); 'military regime' dominated in Nigeria (1966-79, 83-99) (although Nigeria also experienced significant interludes of multiparty politics); 'competitive one-party regimes' were predominant in Tanzania (1962-90), Malawi (1964-80) and Zambia (1972-1991); a 'plebiscitary regime' led in Mali (1960-68, 79-91), Uganda (1967-71, 80-96) and Lesotho (1970-86); and 'settler regimes' were the primary regime type for Namibia (1957-89) and South Africa (1975-1994).

insignificant. Similarly, the five variables measuring cumulative experience with each type of regime raise adjusted R^2 from .24 to .26, and all but one become insignificant when entered simultaneously with the country variables.

However, when we enter four dummy variables measuring the *dominant post colonial regime type* (with multiparty regime as the excluded category, see Table 6), adjusted R^2 goes from .24 to .29, meaning that we can account for virtually the same amount of variance in demand for democracy by reference to a small number of dominant former regime types as we can by referring to 12 different national histories.[14] Coming from a country with dominant postcolonial legacies of settler (South Africa, Namibia) or plebiscitarian regimes (Mali, Uganda, Lesotho) sharply depresses demand for democracy in comparison to the excluded category of a multiparty regime type. In fact, growing up in a country with a settler regime legacy now becomes the single strongest statistical predictor of democratic demand (Beta = -.22) in the model.

Stated in the inverse, a legacy of multiparty competition, whether continuous (as in Botswana) or interrupted (as in Ghana, Nigeria[15] or Zimbabwe) has a strongly positive impact on democratic legitimation, an issue that has been widely speculated but rarely tested in the literature. Even a past experience with limited political competition within a one-party regime (as in Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi) has salutary effects on demand for democracy in the present.

We find exactly the same pattern when we examine the perceived supply of democracy. No generational dummy variables are significant, and only two life cycle measures are statistically significant, but add nothing to the overall explanatory power of the model.

In contrast, the dominant regime type variables turn out to be significant and important. However, despite this they did not, on their own, appreciably improve the overall power of the model. In trying to understand why these variables did not appear to be adding as much to the explanation of supply as they did to demand, we wondered whether Zimbabwe's recent political shocks were having a conflating effect. On one hand, 19 years of (at least formal) multiparty rule (from 1980 to 1999) increased Zimbabweans' demand for democracy. But the more recent traumas of an increasingly dictatorial regime may have depressed the sense of supply (the Zimbabwe survey was conducted in September 1999, before the worst brutalities of the Mugabe government had

[14] When we enter the dominant regime path dummy variables and the country dummy variables simultaneously in the same model, we encounter severe multi-colinearity, which we interpret as evidence that the variables are measuring virtually the same thing.

[15] Having a military regime as the dominant type does not have a significant impact, perhaps because Nigeria, the only country with this type dominant, also had a significant legacy of multipartyism.

begun). Thus, we tested the model again, adding one single dummy variable representing being Zimbabwean, and found that the combination of our dominant regime type model and one single indicator for Zimbabwe increase adjusted R^2 to .37. While this falls short of the 39 percent of variance in supply explained by a model including all country dummies, we feel that a slightly lower measure of R^2 is a reasonable price to pay for a more parsimonious and theoretically comprehensible model.

Table 6: From Country Differences to Dominant Regime Types

	Demand for Democracy (Beta)	*Supply of Democracy (Beta)*
Constant	(-.197)	(-188)
Culture		--
Risk Tolerance	.071	
Interpersonal Trust	-.057	
Institutional Influences		
Identifies with Winning Party	--	.069
Economic Performance		
Government Policy Performance	--	.096
Performance of the Economy	--	--
SAP Creates Inequality	--	-.055
Political Evaluations		
Performance of the President	**--**	**.147**
Free and Fair Elections	**--**	**.145**
Perceived Government Corruption	--	-.077
Trust in State Institutions	--	.076
Government Responsiveness	.087	--
Identity Group Treated Fairly	--	.054
Regime Comparisons		
Increased Political Rights	**.112**	.065
Cognitive Awareness		
Understands Democracy as Political Procedures	**.164**	--
Awareness of Democracy	**.103**	--
Political Information	**.100**	**--**
Formal Education	.083	--
Cognitive Engagement	.078	--
Dominant Regime Type		
Settler Regime	**-.222**	--
Plebiscitary One-Party Regime	**-.117**	**-.120**
Competitive One-Party Regime	--	-.061
Nationality		
Zimbabwean	--	**-.137**
Standard Error of Estimate	.468	.933
Adjusted R^2	.290	.365

Examining the specific coefficients, we see that the perceived supply of democracy is sharply depressed by living in Zimbabwe, or a country with a dominant legacy of plebiscitary or competitive one-party rule. And while the coefficient for settler regimes is less than .05, and therefore is not shown in Table 6, the sign is also negative. In other words, net all other influences respondents in Botswana, Ghana and Nigeria (countries with histories or interludes of multiparty rule), are significantly more likely than all others to offer positive evaluations of the degree to which their political system supplies democracy.

We discuss the substantive implications more fully below, but for now conclude that we have been able to make sense of national differences in attitudes to democracy without having to resort to a dozen different narratives national histories, but rather by reference to a single theoretically derived variable of post-colonial regime type. We conclude that people living in countries with similar institutional legacies learn similar lessons that shape their level of demand for democracy and how they judge its supply. These lessons appear to be absorbed by all people in society regardless of the generational cohort to which they belong, and regardless of their individual cumulative life histories. Learning about democracy in Africa is a broadly collective experience.

Discussion

Reflecting the influence of anthropology and history on African studies, the study of African politics has been dominated by accounts based on the deep structure of society – such as the forging of new nations and the transformation of peasants into urban dwellers – or enduring cultural values – like ethnic identities and communal customs. Yet we find that social structure and cultural values have little to offer in directly explaining how Africans form key attitudes toward democracy. Rather, Africans – much like people elsewhere in the world – appraise democracy on the basis of what they know about, first, its content, and second, its performance.

The pattern of effects displayed in Table 6 provides a surprisingly elegant and parsimonious explanation of demand for, and perceived supply of, democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. First, demand for democracy is largely a principled affair, resting on a group of Africans who have developed cognitive awareness of the democratic process. It leads to intrinsic support for democracy by virtue of what it *is*. The perception of supply, by contrast, is almost wholly performance driven, an instrumental attitude driven by what democracy *does* (or fails to do). Both

are also shaped in important ways by institutional legacies. Second, within the broader area of performance, evaluations of political performance matter far more than economic considerations in shaping supply as well as demand. Third, the impact of popular comparisons between present and former regimes and the shared legacies of national institutional types demonstrates that Africans do not simply evaluate democracy on the basis of what is has done lately, but also bring to bear longer-term perspectives.

Thus, we conclude that the combined effects of cognitive awareness, performance evaluations, regime comparisons, and dominant regime types support a popular learning model of the formation of attitudes to democracy. Through direct experience with the fruits of political performance, by developing greater cognitive awareness, and through national experiences with political competition, people can learn both about the content of democracy as well as its consequences.

It is instructive to consider the various facets tapped by our expansive construct of cognitive awareness. On one hand, it captures the extent to which people *think about* the democratic process in terms of interest and interpersonal discussion. These factors increase popular engagement with the process of democracy at its most basic level. On the other hand, cognitive awareness also taps the impact of *what* people know about politics and democracy: their levels of formal education, their awareness of the identity of leaders, and their ability to provide a definition of democracy. Information about incumbent political leaders creates a point of vicarious contact between citizens and the political system, as well as a means by which they can better follow the process of decision making.

Finally, our notion of cognitive awareness also reveals *how* people view democracy. Those who see it through a procedural lens are much more likely to be committed to democracy than those who think these things are unimportant. Consider that two-thirds (66 percent) of those Africans who say free speech, multiparty competition, regular elections and majority rule are essential elements of democracy are committed to democracy, compared to just one in ten (12 percent) of those who say that these things are unimportant. In contrast, whether or not people think democracy entails substantive outcomes are important makes no difference whatsoever to whether or not they support it.

Why are such understandings of democracy so important? First, let us disclose our biases and admit that we believe a procedural understanding of democracy is simply more valid than a substantive one. Second, we argue that viewing democracy through a procedural lens sensitizes people to the rights and freedoms that it can provide and increases the probability that they will reject

those regimes that cannot guarantee such rights. Third, viewing democracy principally as a set of procedures for making collective decisions lowers expectations that it will provide other things: things like economic security that democracy alone simply cannot guarantee. Finally, as Schumpeter (1942) argued over a half century ago, a substantive view of democracy allows one to accept as democratic any system that appears to deliver the economic goods, regardless of whether or not it is freely elected or respects individual rights. Thus, to borrow a phrase from Schmitter and Karl (1991), discovering "what democracy is not" may be the single most important lesson a citizen in a young democracy can learn.

Yet, while cognitive awareness about the content of democracy is crucial to demand, there is no evidence that awareness is necessary to learn about its consequences. It appears that all people can evaluate the state of democracy in their country regardless of their cognitive sophistication. Even the relatively unaware can draw upon direct experience of personal and local conditions to reason about democratic performance, even if focusing only on the most salient "low information" cues (Popkin, 1994) such as the track record of the national president or the quality of the most recent election.

The predominance of political (rather than economic) performance evaluations also suggests that the perceived supply of democracy is judged as much in procedural as substantive terms: *how* democracy works is just as important as (or more important than) *what* it produces. This confirms Diamond's observation that "judgments about the quality of democracy may significantly shape beliefs about its legitimacy" (Diamond, 1999: 76). Simply put, the data suggest that Africans attach great value to things like honest elections, clean government, free speech, and personal freedoms. It also means that few Africans will easily accept elite claims about the state of democracy simply because they are being fed, nourished or housed. Neither will they castigate a well-functioning democratic regime simply because leaders fail to deliver the economic goods.

Lastly, mass publics in countries who have histories of multiparty competition seem to have drawn a collective lesson about the value of such competition. They are both more demanding of democracy, and – possibly because they have more realistic expectations – more tolerant of its shortcomings.

All of this embodies a process of learning that shifts citizens' focus from the immediate outcomes of the democratic game to the way that the game is played. People come to understand democracy as an ongoing game with an ever-extending horizon. Just as the players in a game cooperate as long as they cannot see the horizon (Axelrod, 1984), cognitively aware citizens are less likely to

defect from democracy because of short-term adverse trends because they know that the game will go on.

Finally, we consider what our results say about the kind of democrats required to support new democracies (Mattes and Davids, 2001). Much of the literature has emphasized the necessity of a citizenry that possesses various combinations of psycho-cultural dispositions such as open-mindedness, trust, tolerance and efficacy (e.g., Almond and Verba, 1963; Dahl, 1971; Gibson, 1996), social capital (Putnam, 1993), or an emphasis on self-expression over survival (Inglehart, 2003). In contrast, Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998) have argued that new democracies can survive without high levels of these cultural orientations as long as citizens conclude that their new democracy works better than the old regime.

Our findings support neither interpretation, at least fully. On one hand, we do find that “Churchillian” comparisons of the new and old regime have an impact on popular demand for democracy. We also find that the nature of previous regimes has a significant impact on public support for the new one. Yet we also discover that previous regimes do not help to legitimate successor democracies equally well: past experience with multiparty systems facilitates more political learning than a history of settler or plebiscitary regimes. But we do not contend that new democracies will be able to live off of the deficiencies of the old regime forever. At some point, citizens will begin to ask: “what has democracy done for me lately?”

Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the micro-level processes that underlie a demand and supply model of regime consolidation. By distinguishing the demand for democracy from perceptions of its supply, we see that each is important for the consolidation of democracy, but also that each has very different attitudinal roots. It has also surprisingly revealed the intrinsic nature of demand for democracy, obscured in previous models that have used satisfaction with democracy as a predictor of demand (Bratton and Mattes, 2001). We believe we have now found a more theoretically useful location for this widely used but controversial variable as a component of democracy’s supply.

The evidence produced by this model supports a new interpretation of how Africans form attitudes to political regimes, and therefore also offers new insight into the prospects of democracy on the continent. It demonstrates that Africa’s democratic hopes are not doomed by the existing structure of its society. While many of its people live in poverty, and are marginalized in rural areas or by

gender discrimination, there is little evidence to suggest that these factors play any direct role in inhibiting (or contributing to) democratic consolidation. People are complex, and their preferences and behaviors are much more than a simple reflection of the objective material circumstances in which they find themselves.

At least as of this juncture, the endurance of Africa's nascent democracies does not appear to be foreclosed by the continent's continuing economic crisis. Africa's nascent democratic systems do not have to achieve economic miracles to survive. Rather, in order to move up the path towards more stable and even possibly consolidated democracy, they need to achieve two relatively simpler objectives.

The first is to enlarge the pool of cognitively sophisticated citizens. More than half of the Africans we interviewed were psychologically disengaged from politics, and a similar proportion possessed low levels of political information. Low levels of cognitive awareness remain a serious impediment to the development of a more extensive commitment to democracy in the countries in question. Some of this might be achieved simply by increasing access to formal education and independent news media. But it might also be necessary to inject civic education content into the school curricula and mass media, content that both informs people about the players and rules of the democratic game, and reduces unrealistic expectations of what democracy can deliver. Finally, electoral engineers should pay careful attention to devising electoral systems for Africa that increase contact between citizens and elected representatives. We reiterate a plea first made 40 years ago by Almond and Verba (1963: 503-504) who called on the new democracies of the early post-colonial ear to concentrate on the rapid expansion of cognitive skills, arguing that the diffusion of democratic values via socialization would simply take too long to build support for democratic development.

The second objective is that governors must secure the rule of law, protect individual rights and freedoms, control corruption, and ensure that elections are above reproach. While these are issues commonly lumped today under the rubric of "good governance" and associated with external pressures from the World Bank and IMF, they also appear to be very important to ordinary Africans. Put another way, the failure to achieve good governance will imperil much more than access to foreign loans, it will threaten the very prospects of popular support for democracy. To the extent that new democracies can open up and protect space for people to live their lives free of interference by overweening states, they may be able to begin a "virtuous cycle" of democratic development.

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38/03	*Reservation Wages-Measurement and Determinants: Evidence from the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain(KMP) Survey*	By R. Walker
39/03	*The "Risk Gap", Its Determinants and Economic Implications*	By P. Anderson
40/03	*Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy and Risky Sex: Is there a Link?*	By N. Nattrass
41/03	*Panel Attrition in Survey Data: A Literature Review*	By U. Lee
42/03	*Providing Antiretroviral Treatment for All Who Need it in South Africa*	By N. Nattrass & N. Geffen
43/03	*Unemployment and Aids: The Social-Democratic Challenge for South Africa*	By N. Nattrass
44/03	*Young People's Social Networks, Confidants and Issues of Reproductive Health*	By A. Bakilana & F. Esau
45/03	*Who Does the Housework? Examination of South African Children's Working Roles*	By R. Bray
46/03	*HIV/AIDS Stigma: The Latest Dirty Secret*	By J. Stein
47/03	*Sorrow makes Children of us all: A Literature Review on the Psycho-Social Impact of HIV/AIDs on Children*	By J. Stein

The Centre for Social Science Research

The CSSR is an umbrella organisation comprising five units:

The Aids and Society Research Unit (ASRU) supports quantitative and qualitative research into the social and economic impact of the HIV pandemic in Southern Africa. Focus areas include: the economics of reducing mother to child transmission of HIV, the impact of HIV on firms and households; and psychological aspects of HIV infection and prevention. ASRU operates an outreach programme in Khayelitsha (the Memory Box Project) which provides training and counselling for HIV positive people

The Data First Resource Unit ('Data First') provides training and resources for research. Its main functions are: 1) to provide access to digital data resources and specialised published material; 2) to facilitate the collection, exchange and use of data—sets on a collaborative basis; 3) to provide basic and advanced training in data analysis; 4) the ongoing development of a web site to disseminate data and research output.

The Democracy In Africa Research Unit (DARU) supports students and scholars who conduct systematic research in the following three areas: 1) public opinion and political culture in Africa and its role in democratisation and consolidation; 2) elections and voting in Africa; and 3) the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on democratisation in Southern Africa. DARU has developed close working relationships with projects such as the Afrobarometer (a cross national survey of public opinion in fifteen African countries), the Comparative National Elections Project, and the Health Economics and AIDS Research Unit at the University of Natal.

The Social Surveys Unit (SSU) promotes critical analysis of the methodology, ethics and results of South African social science research. One core activity is the Cape Area Panel Study of young adults in Cape Town. This study follows 4800 young people as they move from school into the labour market and adulthood. The SSU is also planning a survey for 2004 on aspects of social capital, crime, and attitudes toward inequality.

The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) was established in 1975 as part of the School of Economics and joined the CSSR in 2002. SALDRU conducted the first national household survey in 1993 (the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development). More recently, SALDRU ran the Langeberg Integrated Family survey (1999) and the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey (2000). Current projects include research on public works programmes, poverty and inequality.