Critical citizens, democratic support and satisfaction in African democracies

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Abstract

Worldwide, there is substantial popular support for the ideal of democracy but, on the other hand, there is considerable dissatisfaction with democracy *within* democracies. Democracies are inhabited by many so-called 'dissatisfied democrats': citizens who are strong supporters of the democratic ideal, but are unhappy with the way democracy is working in their country. It is not clear how to explain this phenomenon, but based on a review of the existing literature, two different approaches can be distinguished: an optimistic and a pessimistic one. Subsequently, this article investigates why some people are dissatisfied democrats while others are not in eight African democracies – Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. The empirical evidence seems to support the complex mix of both the optimistic and pessimistic approaches: to be sure, dissatisfied democrats are critical citizens compared with dissatisfied non-democrats, but they are not more politically active than the rest of the population. Future studies need to find out whether dissatisfied democrats can be seen either as a democratic danger or as a democratic defence, but the first findings in this article suggest that a growing group of dissatisfied democrats are a sign of democracy in decline.

Keywords

African democracies, critical citizens, public opinion, support and satisfaction, democracy

Introduction

Never in history have so many authoritarian regimes collapsed and changed in a more democratic direction, particularly since 1989 (see, e.g., Doorenspleet, 2000; Huntington, 1991; Karatnycky, 1999; Mair, 2008; Møller, 2007; Puddington, 2008; Schmitter and Treschel, 2004; Zakaria, 1997). Moreover, for the first time, this recent wave of democratization was truly a global experience,[1] and democracy spread not only to Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America, but also to parts of Africa (see Diamond, 1999; Doorenspleet, 2005; Gisselquist, 2008). Recently, we have seen demands for freedom wash over autocratic rule in the Middle East as well, although it is still too

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early to tell whether these countries will actually democratize, let alone whether there will be democratic consolidation in the region. Apparently, though, there is considerable desire for democracy around the world.

Still, a paradox of our present time is that, on the one hand – quantitatively speaking – democracy is the dominant type of government around the world and there is substantial popular support for the ideal of democracy while, on the other hand, there is considerable dissatisfaction with democracy *within* democracies. People like the idea of democracy and they support this type of regime but, in general, their satisfaction with democracy is much lower. New democracies are inhabited by many so-called 'dissatisfied democrats': citizens who are strong supporters of the democratic ideal but are not happy with the way democracy is working in their country.

It is not clear how we can explain why some people support the ideal of democracy but are not satisfied with democracy. The existing literature is not conclusive on this issue. Some optimistic approaches assume that those dissatisfied democrats are 'critical citizens' wanting more democracy (Norris, 1999a, 1999b, 2010) while other more pessimistic approaches assume that these citizens are disillusioned and confused (cf. Stoker, 2006). As existing studies often rest on assumptions, this article will 'unpack' the actual identity of dissatisfied democrats by focusing on the data of public opinion surveys in eight African democracies – Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. This study employs data from the third round of the Afrobarometer surveys.[2]

The article first seeks conceptual clarification of core concepts such as 'democracy', 'satisfaction and support' and 'critical citizens'. While the concept of 'critical citizen' is well known and common, it has also been poorly defined – let alone measured – in the literature. This article presents a two-dimensional conceptualization of people's opinion about democracy in general, and of critical citizens in particular, by clearly distinguishing between people's *support* of and *satisfaction* with democracy. Although this distinction is not new, but a classic one arising from David Easton's (1965, 1975) work, this fourfold typology has not yet been used systematically in empirical studies. Moreover, an empirical contribution of the article is that it presents a classification of the eight democracies on the African continent; analyses will show that the majority of the people in African democracies can be classified as satisfied democrats. However, these countries are also inhabited by a large group of citizens who support democracy but are not satisfied with how democracy is actually working. There appears to be a gap between support and satisfaction.

Thereafter, this article will investigate the question of why some people are so-called dissatisfied democrats while others are not. The article will present the findings of previous research, and investigate the relevance of the support–satisfaction gap for democracy. Does it matter if a large part of a country's population can be classified as dissatisfied democrats? Subsequently, different types of possible explanations will be reviewed (cf. Bratton et al., 2005: 35–44) while focusing on the 'optimistic' (Norris, 1999a, 1999b, 2010) versus the 'pessimistic' explanations (Stoker, 2006). It has to be emphasized that until now, research has primarily focused on developments in established democracies. There is a lack of theoretical ideas about how to understand the democratic support and satisfaction of people living in less favourable circumstances, particularly in poorer and relatively recently democratized countries. We not only lack knowledge of the level of support and satisfaction in African democracies, but also do not know much about the *gap* between support and satisfaction. Can dissatisfied democrats, for example, be described as active, critical citizens or are they simply passive, delineated democrats? It appears that, as yet, answers have mainly rested on assumptions, while empirical evidence is lacking but clearly needed in order to answer this question.

Empirical evidence in this study will show that both approaches are correct in their claims that people's evaluations of government performance can explain whether they are dissatisfied democrats or not. People with higher expectations of political and economic performance do indeed tend to be dissatisfied democrats. However, the rest of the story appears to be more complex. It will become clear that dissatisfied democrats can be explained by a mix of the pessimistic and optimistic approaches. Although dissatisfied democrats are more critical than dissatisfied non-democrats (supporting the optimistic approach), there is no difference between them and satisfied democrats with regard to their level of education, information and critical attitude. Moreover, they are less interested in politics and are less likely to vote than satisfied democrats (supporting the pessimistic approach).

Core concepts and classifications: Democracy, critical citizens, support and satisfaction

This study focuses only on public opinion in democracies, and the main reason for this choice is a theoretical one. Scholars who are interested in critical citizens and dissatisfied democrats limited their theories to the attitudes and beliefs of citizens in democratic systems, and they did not broaden their thoughts to non-democratic systems (see, e.g., Norris, 2010). There are probably completely different explanations required in order to understand the dynamics in non-democracies, which should be separated from the processes in democracies. Moreover, it is important to select exclusively democracies in one study, as otherwise dissatisfaction with the actual working of the system would sometimes refer to a non-democratic system and sometimes to a democratic system, which would be confusing and would mistakenly mix two completely different underlying issues. Therefore, this article first wants to learn more about the dissatisfied democrats in African democracies; future research can focus on non-democracies as well, and see whether it is true that we need different explanations in such different circumstances.

As the concept of democratic regime determines the case selection in this article, it is important to define this concept. The definition of democracy used in this study is based on Dahl's (1971) ideas. Democracy is a type of political regime in which: 1) there exists competition – institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies at the national level and there are institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive; and 2) there exists inclusive suffrage or the right of participation in the selection of national leaders and policies. Conversely, non-democratic regimes are defined as those political regimes that fail to meet the first requirement of competition and/or the second requirement of inclusiveness (see also Doorenspleet, 2000).

Notice that stability is not incorporated in the definitions of 'non-democratic regime' and 'democracy'. A political system may be more or less stable regardless of whether this system is democratic or non-democratic. In the past, some scholars (e.g. Cutright, 1963; Lipset, 1959) included indicators of stability in their definition of democracy, but nowadays most researchers object to this approach, and indicate that combining measures of stability with measures of political democracy causes several conceptual and methodological problems (see, e.g., Bollen, 1980: 374–375; 1991: 12–13). Stability and democracy do not have identical causes and consequences, so I therefore decided not to include both elements in the same definition. Democratic and non-democratic regimes may emerge, but they may or may not endure (see also Doorenspleet, 2005).

Eight countries on the African continent can easily be classified as 'democracies'[3] in 2005: Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. These eight countries are the only countries in Africa that have both a score higher than 6 on the widely used Polity IV scale,[4] and

were classified as 'free' countries by Freedom House in 2005.[5] In other words, classifying these eight countries as democratic seems to be not only valid, but also quite reliable given the classification consistency between two different sources. This article used the surveys of these in eight African countries, which contain data from more than 10,000 respondents.[6]

Not only democracy, but also the concept of 'critical citizen' needs attention; the use of this concept has become accepted in the literature, particularly after the publication of the excellent book edited by Pippa Norris (1999c), who included this telling and appealing concept in the title. Despite the influential ideas of the book, which stressed the important impact of the so-called critical citizens on the functioning of democracy, it is not fully clear how we should define this crucial concept. What do we mean when we talk about critical citizens? Who are they?

In their studies, most authors appear to use the term 'critical' as being an equivalent for dissatisfied democrats (see Dalton, 2004: 13; Foweraker and Landman, 1997: 243; Klingemann, 1999; Norris, 1999a, 1999b). Critical citizens can, hence, be defined as being supportive of democracy as an ideal, but not very satisfied with how democracy is working in reality (type 3). Hence, logically reasoned, satisfied democrats are citizens who not only support the abstract idea of democracy, but are also satisfied with the performance of democracy in their country (type 1). Moreover, satisfied non-democrats are people who do not support the idea of democracy, but are still satisfied with how it is working in their country (type 2). Finally, dissatisfied non-democrats are people who are neither supportive nor satisfied (type 4). Table 1 presents the two-dimensional conceptualization of people's opinions about democracy, in which the type of dissatisfied democrats clearly can be distinguished from the other types.

So far, so good. Everything seems to be clear; on the basis of previous studies, critical citizens can be defined as dissatisfied democrats. Problematic, however, is that the language of the definition implies an important hidden assumption: it is simply *assumed* that dissatisfied democrats are 'critical'. Since the 1990s, it has been forcefully argued that the new generation of citizens is more critical towards the political system and is not content with how democracy is functioning in practice, while they remain strongly interested in politics and supportive of democracy in general (Norris, 1999a, 1999b, 2010). In other words, critical citizens are not only critical dissatisfied democrats, but also well-informed, interested and involved people who want to improve the functioning of their political system.

This idea that criticism is an indicator of a healthy stable democracy has now become widely accepted. As a consequence, scholars have emphasized the possible *positive* impact of dissatisfied democrats for the strengthening of democracy around the world (see, e.g., Klingemann, 1999: 32). However, we do not *know* whether dissatisfied democrats are critical or not, and it is not wise to make this assumption beforehand. We need to disentangle these concepts, and define them separately. Only by separating the terms 'dissatisfied democrats' and 'critical citizens' can we find out whether it is true that dissatisfied democrats are more critical (i.e. have more

Table 1. Conceptual map of people's democratic support and satisfaction

		Support for democracy	
		Low	High
Satisfaction with democracy	Low	**Dissatisfied non-democrats (1)**	**Dissatisfied democrats (3)**
	High	**Satisfied non-democrats (2)**	**Satisfied democrats (4)**

political knowledge, more political interest and are more critical about the country's performance) compared with the rest of the population. This task will be carried out later – in the empirical part of the article.

We need to define the concepts of support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy as well. Surprisingly, critical comments on both the concepts and measurements of satisfaction with democracy have been scarce.[7] Subsequently, scholars derive data on people's satisfaction from periodic surveys, often called 'barometers', which are nowadays being carried out in a growing number of countries.[8] The analyses in this article will rely on the data from one of the regional democracy barometers: the Afrobarometer.[9] This barometer offers a rich source of data about public opinion on the performance of regimes and the economy.

For example, public opinion surveys in general – and the Afrobarometer particularly – have used several types of questions to assess the support for democracy. The following question has often been used in order to measure people's support for the ideal of democracy:

> With which of the following statements do you agree most? (1) Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government. (2) Under certain situations, a dictatorship is preferable. (3) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic government or non-democratic government.

The respondents who rate democracy as always preferable to its undemocratic alternatives are considered supporters of the ideal of democracy. Satisfaction with democracy is usually measured by asking people: 'Generally, how satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in your country?' The answers to these questions give us – albeit often indirectly – insight into the democratic support and satisfaction of people living in new democracies. This article uses the data of the third – and most recent – round of the Afrobarometer surveys,[10] and the rest of this section presents the empirical results of analysing the fourfold classification (see Table 1) of people living in the eight democracies on the African continent.

The first clear finding is that the majority of people in African democracies are so-called 'satisfied democrats'. Figure 1 shows that 54.6% of the respondents not only support democracy as an ideal, but are also happy with how democracy is working in their specific country. However, almost

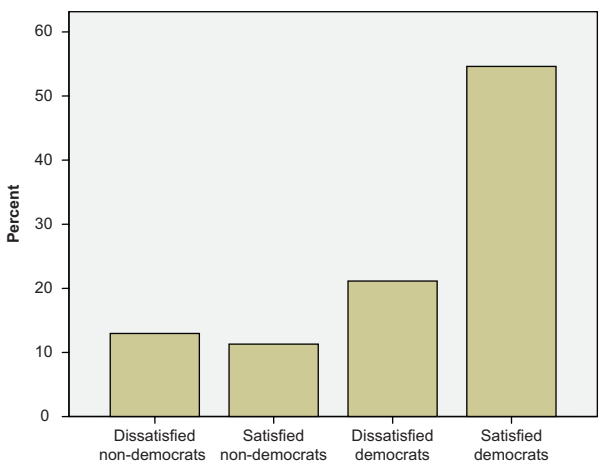

Figure 1. Democratic satisfaction, support and the fourfold classification in all eight African democracies (N = 9212).

a quarter of the respondents do not support democracy, and are so-called 'non-democrats'. Within this group, almost half of the people are satisfied (there are 11.3% satisfied non-democrats) but the majority is not satisfied with how democracy is actually working (there are 13% dissatisfied non-democrats). Still, on average, more than half of the population in African democracies can be seen as satisfied democrats.

The high rate and dominance of satisfied democrats exists not only in the 'older' and relatively stable democracies such as Botswana, but also in more recently democratized countries such as Benin. Against all odds, Botswana was able to construct an electoral democracy in the 1960s. While democracy was still non-existent in Africa in this period, Botswana made a transition to democracy, and for several decades this country has been seen as the exceptional case with a democratic system that is surrounded by authoritarian regimes in the region (a so-called 'deviant democracy'; see Doorenspleet and Kopecký, 2008; see also Sebudubudu and Molutsi (2008) versus Good and Taylor (2008)).

While the majority of the population in Botswana is both supportive of and satisfied with democracy, this is also clear in younger democracies such as Benin. Benin has a long authoritarian history filled with coups and suppression. Through its National Conference in 1990 and presidential and legislative elections in 1991, however, Benin successfully undertook a transition to democracy (see, e.g., Gisselquist, 2008). The success of the fair multiparty elections in Benin won praise internationally, and the majority of the people in Benin are satisfied democrats, despite the fact that democracy is still a relatively recent experience for them.

Popular satisfaction and support is also high in democracies with a challenging recent political past and a lot of ongoing socio-economic inequality, such as South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, unemployment has remained high, despite the enormous political changes and successful transition towards democracy in the 1990s. While many black men and women have risen to the middle or upper classes, overall unemployment did not change between 1994 and 2004, which poses a significant social and economic policy challenge (see Arora and Ricci, 2005: 23–25). Still, despite these social and economic challenges, most South Africans not only support democracy, but are also satisfied with how democracy is working in practice.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that there is also a substantial group of people in African democracies who are supportive of democracy in general but are *not* satisfied with it in practice. In Western democracies, this gap between high support and low satisfaction has already been discussed at length,[11] and my own analyses for this article show that the same pattern of a significant gap between support and satisfaction is visible in African democracies as well. On average, African democracies are inhabited by around 21% of citizens who support democracy but are not satisfied with how democracy is actually working. This is not only the case in older democracies such as Botswana, but also in younger democracies such as Mali. After the coup d'état in 1991 of the military dictator Moussa Traoré, Mali started to democratize and can now be seen as one of the more stable, though still young and vulnerable, democracies on the African continent (see, e.g., Smith, 2001; Wing, 2010). Despite huge support in the country, at least one in five people support democracy but are not satisfied with how democracy is working in Mali.[12]

Before we move on to the next section, it is worthwhile to explore what people in recently democratizing countries mean by 'democracy' when they express support for it. Mike Bratton and his co-authors have already written extensively about the popular meaning of democracy in the African context (see, e.g., Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Bratton et al., 2005). These studies clearly found evidence for the notion that most Africans interpret democracy in universal terms, and value it not only instrumentally, but mainly intrinsically. The majority of Africans define democracy as a system with: multiparty competition; elections; the right to vote; government by, for and of the

people; majority rule; civil liberties; and personal freedoms. Only a minority thinks that it is about social and economic development. The empirical findings also show that there is no major difference between dissatisfied democrats and the rest of the population with regard to how they view democracy, and what they mean by the concept. This result implies that the rest of the analyses are not affected by fundamental differences in views about democracy between the different groups, as dissatisfied democrats seem to have similar ideas in their mind about the meaning of democracy compared to others.

High democratic support and low satisfaction: Does it matter?

The previous section showed that in African democracies, there are many people who are supportive of democracy in general but not satisfied with it in practice. Yet, does it matter? For several decades, the dominant perception among political scientists has been that people's view of democracy does matter, even though scholars from different periods fundamentally disagree about *how* it is relevant. Starting in the 1960s, scholars emphasized that both support and satisfaction are indispensable elements for democratic systems. Only a high level of popular support can ensure that citizens accept and follow government policies; only a high level of popular support can guarantee the stability of the system (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1965). 'As money is to an economic system, so is political support to a political system. Support is the currency of democratic polities' (Rosenau, 1974: 1; cf. Easton, 1975).

The dominant idea was that the lack of both support and satisfaction can easily weaken democratic institutions and lead to serious crises and breakdowns (Coleman, 1965; Lipset, 1981[13]). Support and satisfaction would bring stability, while lack of popular support and satisfaction leads to instability of the democratic system (cf. Almond and Verba, 1963). Weak support and satisfaction would mean weak legitimacy and instability. As a consequence, people who were not happy with democracy in practice were seen as a threat to democracy, while supportive and satisfied citizens were considered to be 'good' for democracy.

Several writers predicted a 'crisis' of Western democracy (see, e.g., Crozier et al., 1975; Habermas, 1973; Huntington, 1981; Norris, 1999a: 3–4), but this dominant quite pessimistic view started to change in the 1990s. The only evidence for the 'crisis' thesis was the cross-national decrease in attachment to political parties, but for the rest there 'is little evidence to support the various theories of crisis, contradiction and catastrophe' (Budge and Newton, 1997: 132).[14] Although people's satisfaction with democracy has always been rather low, the change in public opinion during the 1970s and 1980s in Europe was one of trendless fluctuations and certainly not a clear decline, so why worry (Norris, 1999a: 5)? Moreover, the worldwide democratization wave after 1989 was hardly a sign of a crisis of democracy – quite the opposite (Huntington, 1991). Democracy was not at risk.

In studies conducted in the 1990s, scholars found powerful and consistent evidence that support for democracy has been high and stable over time. There are no major global trends suggesting that people are less supportive of the ideal of democracy (Klingemann, 1999); popular commitment to democratic principles remained strong in (post-)industrial democracies (Dalton, 1999) and, more specifically, there is no decline in satisfaction with democracy in Western Europe (Fuchs et al., 1998). Scholars show that the citizens of West European countries have not withdrawn support from their democracies in recent decades, nor has their level of satisfaction decreased; hence, 'for this reason alone, there can have been no challenge to the representative democracy of Western societies' (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1998: 435).

Moreover, scholars were now less alarmed by low levels of satisfaction or, more significantly, by a *gap* between high support and low satisfaction. On the contrary, a gap is not necessarily problematic at all, and dissatisfied citizens are assumed to be 'critical citizens' (Norris, 1999a, 1999b), who are no longer seen as a threat to democracy, but as a sign of a healthy democracy. Pippa Norris, who explicitly separates the dimensions of satisfaction and support and their respective impact, argued, for example, that we 'have seen the growth of more critical citizens, who value democracy as an ideal yet who remain dissatisfied with the performance of their political systems, and particularly the core institutions of representative government' (Norris, 1999a: 26).

More recently, though, there seems to be a swing back again in the literature towards the more pessimistic view of the 1960s. Gerry Stoker (2006), for one, strongly disagrees with the view that dissatisfaction with democracy is a reflection of the combination of rising citizen expectations and their willingness to be critical. He argues that the scale of discontent, disengagement and disenchantment from politics is such that the goals of democratic politics may be undermined by society's lack of faith in the system. While Mike Bratton and his co-authors (Bratton et al., 2005: 81–84) do not identify low satisfaction levels as necessarily problematic, they still argue that satisfaction and support should be in balance (Bratton et al., 2005: 324–327). When levels of support and satisfaction vary too much, when there are too many dissatisfied democrats and when the gap is too big, democratic consolidation is at stake.

The recent pessimistic approach differs fundamentally from preceding optimistic scholars like Klingemann who argue that 'dissatisfied democrats can be viewed as a force for reform and improvement of democratic processes and structures' (Klingemann, 1999: 32). Hence, there is still no consensus in the literature about whether democratic regimes need popular support and/or satisfaction. Moreover, there are many hidden assumptions about the features of citizens living in a democratic state, and unresolved questions; for example, what are the characteristics of a so-called 'dissatisfied democrat' (an individual who supports democracy but is not satisfied with this type of regime)? In other words, these powerful and widely accepted theoretical ideas have not yet been tested thoroughly in a systematic comparative study.

As existing studies often rest on assumptions, we clearly need further empirical research to test the competing theoretical perspectives. We do not know who is right and who is wrong. We do not know what the views of dissatisfied democrats actually are. We do not know how many dissatisfied democrats there are actually living in the democratic world.[15] Moreover, existing theories mainly focus on established democracies, but we do not know much about recently democratized countries, which are mainly a feature of the developing world.[16] We do not know whether the described theories are valid for more recently democratized countries, for example, on the African continent.

Explaining dissatisfied democrats: Empirical findings from African democracies

So why are some people dissatisfied democrats while others are not? Can dissatisfied democrats be better explained by the optimistic approach (see, e.g., Norris, 1999a) or by the pessimistic approach (see, e.g., Stoker, 2006)? This article will also investigate these explanatory questions, which have not yet been addressed let alone answered in previous studies. I will review and test different types of possible explanations (cf. Bratton et al., 2005: 35–44) while keeping in mind the ideas of the 'optimistic' versus the 'pessimistic' approaches.

To be sure, the optimistic approach of the 1990s seemed to assume that dissatisfied democrats are critical citizens, with high levels of political knowledge and a lot of interest in politics.

Moreover, they are politically active and well-educated. Such citizens have high expectations of democracy, are prepared to defend democratic values and believe that their democratic government should perform better – not only in order to improve the socio-economic (e.g. level of income and quality of health care), but also the political (e.g. extent of freedom), circumstances. In other words, their critical attitude is of an active and constructive nature. According to this 'optimistic approach', such citizens want more instead of less democracy, and in this way they strengthen democracy in their country (see, e.g., Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999a, 1999b).

The pessimistic approach, in contrast, assumes that dissatisfied democrats are not confident or more assertive about politics, but simply more alienated and confused. Dissatisfied people living in democracies do not have enough knowledge about how politics is actually working, and their expectations about politics and the way democracy should work are 'hopelessly and spectacularly unrealistic' (Stoker, 2006: 3). In other words, according to this more 'pessimistic approach', dissatisfied democrats have high expectations as well (just like the optimistic approach argues) but they are not more critical, better informed and more active than the rest of the population. To the contrary, people with a low level of education and cognitive awareness are more likely to be dissatisfied democrats. Moreover, dissatisfied democrats are not more active but very passive citizens; they lost their interest in politics and do not participate in politics.

Both the optimistic and the pessimistic approach refer to similar sets of variables that could explain the existence of dissatisfied democrats, albeit often in a contradictory way. The first type of explanations focuses on the impact of cognitive awareness. This set of variables stresses that individual orientations towards democracy heavily depend on ordinary people's knowledge and awareness of public affairs. Theorists generally agree that democracy is most stable when the people are well informed (cf. Simpson, 1997). To hold political leaders accountable, for example, people need information. Moreover, more education increases people's skills, for example, how to read, write and critically evaluate information provided by the mass media. Hence, we expect that people in Africa also form their basic attitudes according to their levels of education and political knowledge (see Bratton et al., 2005: 35). Therefore, my study uses different measures of cognitive awareness, namely the levels of education, information and critical attitude towards the government (see the Appendix for more information on measurements; see also Bratton et al., 2005).

It is expected that cognitive awareness can explain whether people are dissatisfied democrats or not. However, the optimistic and pessimistic approaches disagree about the direction of the expected influence. The optimistic approach believes that people with a higher level of cognitive awareness are *more* likely to be dissatisfied democrats. According to this approach, dissatisfied democrats understand how democratic systems should work, are able to critically assess their performance and are thus often disappointed. People with a high level of knowledge would support democracy in theory but would not be satisfied with how it is working in practice. In contrast, the pessimistic approach believes that people with a higher level of cognitive awareness are *less* likely to be dissatisfied democrats. According to this approach, dissatisfied democrats are less educated, less informed and less critical than the rest of the population living in a democracy. These citizens lack education and political knowledge about how democracy is actually working, and their expectations are, hence, too high, resulting in dissatisfaction.

What are the empirical findings? The first model in Table 2 shows the impact of the independent variables on the likelihood that people are dissatisfied non-democrats (see type 1 in Table 1) or dissatisfied democrats (see type 3 in Table 1). Since the dependent variable is a dummy variable, logistic regression is used to examine the explanations.[17] Table 2 lists the explanations that were described earlier, while the other columns give the coefficient estimates, together with the significance levels. It appears that dissatisfied democrats have a higher level of education ($p < 0.1$) and

Table 2. Dissatisfied democrats in African democracies and their explanations

Model 1: comparing dissatisfied non-democrats (type 1) and dissatisfied democrats (type 3)

Variable	B	SE	Significance * p < 0.1 ** p < 0.05 *** p < 0.01	Exp (B)
Cognitive awareness				
Education	+.05	.03	*	1.06
Information	+.04	.02	**	1.04
Critical attitude	–.16	.05	***	.85
Participation				
Voting	+.16	.12		1.18
Attending political meetings	+.01	.02		1.01
Contacting politicians	+.004	.03		1.00
Political interest	+.05	.05		1.05
Political empowerment	+.05	.04		1.05
Perceived performance				
Government performance (past)	+.02	.05		1.02
Government performance (now)	+.02	.02		1.02
Government performance (future)	–.02	.06		.98
Political performance (change)	+.07	.02	***	1.07
Socio-economic variables				
Poverty	+.02	.01		1.02
Gender	–.21	.10	**	.81
Age	–.01	.004		1.00
N	1814			
–2 log likelihood	2292.1			
Nagelkerke R2	.05			
% correct predictions	65			

Model 2: comparing dissatisfied democrats (type 3) and satisfied democrats (type 4)

Variable	B	SE	Significance * p < 0.1 ** p < 0.05 *** p < 0.01	Exp (B)
Cognitive awareness				
Education	–.01	.02		.99
Information	–.01	.01		1.00
Critical attitude	–.04	.04		.96
Participation				
Voting	+.50	.10	***	1.65

Table 2. (Continued)

Variable	B	SE	Significance * p < 0.1 ** p < 0.05 *** p < 0.01	Exp (B)
Attending political meetings	–.01	.01		.99
Contacting politicians	–.01	.02		.99
Political interest	+.12	.04	***	1.12
Political empowerment	+.01	.03		1.01
Perceived performance				
Government performance (past)	–.14	.04	***	.87
Government performance (now)	+.23	.02	***	1.26
Government performance (future)	+.35	.04	***	1.42
Political performance (change)	+.11	.01	***	1.12
Socio-economic variables				
Poverty	–.02	.01	***	.98
Gender	+.03	.08		1.03
Age	+.00	.00		1.00
N	4364			
–2 log likelihood	4476.2			
Nagelkerke R2	.19			
% correct predictions	75			

information ($p < 0.05$) while they are more critical as well ($p < 0.01$), compared with the other group of dissatisfied non-democrats. Hence, analyses based on surveys conducted in the eight African democracies show that the optimistic approach has more explanatory power than the pessimistic approach; at least, when we compare dissatisfied democrats with dissatisfied non-democrats.[18]

However, education, information and a critical attitude cannot explain whether people are dissatisfied democrats on the one hand, or satisfied democrats on the other hand. The second model in Table 2 shows the impact of the independent variables on the likelihood that people are dissatisfied democrats (see type 3 in Table 1) or satisfied democrats (see type 4 in Table 1). Since the dependent variable is, again, a dummy variable, logistic regression is used to examine the explanations. Model 2 in Table 2 lists the explanations that were described earlier, while the other columns give the coefficient estimates, together with the significance levels. The findings show that there is no statistically significant difference in cognitive awareness between dissatisfied democrats on the one hand, and satisfied democrats on the other hand.[19] Here, both the optimistic and pessimistic approaches offer no convincing explanations. Dissatisfied democrats are quite similar to satisfied democrats in this respect.

The second set of explanations focuses on the impact of participation. Both the optimistic and the pessimistic approach argue that political participation matters, although, again, in a different way. The optimistic approach believes that dissatisfied democrats are not only better educated and more critical, but they are also more interested in politics and more likely to participate actively in politics. The pessimistic approach, in contrast, argues that dissatisfied democrats are less interested and have a lower level of political participation than the rest of the population, as

they have become frustrated and disillusioned by how their democratic system is working in reality.

So who is right and who is wrong? This study uses different measures of participation, namely whether people voted or not, their levels of interest in politics, whether they attended different types of political meetings, and how often they have contacted different types of politicians during the past year (see the Appendix for more information on measurements; see also Bratton et al., 2005). The first model in Table 2, which compares dissatisfied non-democrats (see type 1 in Table 1) with dissatisfied democrats (see type 3 in Table 1), shows that both approaches are not very convincing. There are no statistically significant differences between the two groups with regard to the five variables of political participation – neither negative nor positive.[20]

On the other hand, when we compare the dissatisfied democrats (see type 3 in Table 1) with the satisfied democrats (see type 4 in Table 1), the pessimistic approach provides the better explanation. The second model in Table 2, which compares the dissatisfied democrats (see type 3 in Table 1) with the satisfied democrats (see type 4 in Table 1), shows that satisfied democrats are generally more likely to vote and have a higher level of political interest than dissatisfied democrats, who are less involved and less active.[21] Dissatisfied democrats might be disillusioned, just as has been argued by the pessimistic approach.

The third group of explanations emphasizes people's evaluations of their government. People calculate the costs and benefits of governmental performance in the past, present and future; the extent to which their own interests are served has an effect on people's judgements. If people think that the promises of politicians are fulfilled, then support and satisfaction will increase. If, on the other hand, people suffer from political repression or unemployment, then they are inclined to evaluate the political and economic performance in a negative way, while their satisfaction with democracy will drop considerably (see Bratton et al., 2005).

Based on both the optimistic and the pessimistic approaches, we would expect that dissatisfied democrats would have more negative perceptions about the political and economic performance of democracy than the rest of the population (see the Appendix for more information on measurements). Compared with satisfied democrats, this is correct (see Model 2 in Table 2): dissatisfied democrats (type 3) give generally much lower ratings for the performance of their government than satisfied democrats (type 4), and their expectations of democracy seem to be much higher. Compared with satisfied democrats, dissatisfied democrats believe that the government's policies have hurt most people and benefited only a few ($p < 0.01$), that the current government is handling the most important problems not very well ($p < 0.01$), that it is not likely at all that the government will solve the problems in the future ($p < 0.01$), and that there has not been any improvement in political performance ($p < 0.01$).

Compared to the dissatisfied non-democrats (type 1) in their countries, however, there are no clear differences in perceived level of performance (see Model 1 in Table 2). Both groups are very negative about the actual economic benefits in their countries, although dissatisfied democrats are more positive about the political performance than dissatisfied non-democrats ($p < 0.01$).

The final set of explanations can be derived from the modernization theory (see Lerner, 1958; Lipset, 1959, 1981; Rostow, 1960) and gives emphasis to a country's social structure in general, and poverty in particular. This influential approach argues that people's values are generally a function of their material, demographic and general life circumstances. Lipset, for example, maintained that when the people arrive at a higher standard of living, they are more inclined to believe in democratic values and support a democratic system. Only in a wealthy society can a situation exist in which 'the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics' and support democracy. Therefore, in Lipset's view, 'the better educated the population of a country, the better

the chances for democracy' (Lipset, 1959: 75, 78). According to this approach, poor people will be less likely to support democracy. Therefore, we would expect that dissatisfied democrats are richer than people who are neither supportive of democracy nor satisfied – the so-called dissatisfied non-democrats.

Based on the ideas of postmodernization, which can be seen as an optimistic approach, we would also expect that richer people are more likely to be dissatisfied democrats.[22] Ronald Inglehart endorsed the claim that citizens are becoming more critical, and he argued that economic development, cultural change and political change go together in coherent and, to some extent, predictable patterns (Inglehart, 1997, 1999). In more wealthy countries, people feel more secure, which ultimately 'reduces the tendency for mass publics to defer to authority' (Inglehart, 1997: 8).[23] In countries enjoying economic growth and development, the people become richer and can 'afford' to change their materialist into 'post-materialist' values. The idea is that these people are more inclined to challenge leaders, they have a more demanding standard for politics and are not quickly satisfied with how democracy is working in practice.[24]

The findings in Model 1 of Table 2, however, show that there is no difference in poverty between dissatisfied non-democrats on the one hand, and dissatisfied democrats on the other hand. Scholars in the modernization approach (cf. Lipset, 1959) would expect differences in poverty levels. However, empirical analyses show that dissatisfied people have the same income level regardless of whether they support democracy or not. Moreover, it appears that people who suffer from high levels of poverty are more likely to be dissatisfied democrats than satisfied democrats ($p < 0.01$). This finding does not support the theoretical ideas of the postmodernization approach. In general, dissatisfied democrats are poorer than satisfied democrats in African democracies.

Having reviewed reviewed the dominant approaches, and conducted the empirical analyses, I believe that African public opinion can best be understood through a mix of the optimistic and pessimistic approaches. It is clear that dissatisfied democrats are people who really believe in the ideal of democracy, but also have high expectations of this type of political system, and are, hence, unhappy with how it is working in practice. According to the optimistic approach, this does not really matter as those citizens are well-informed, well-educated and simply more critical, thus longing for the improvement of existing democratic systems. Compared with dissatisfied non-democrats, these people actually do have a higher level of cognitive awareness, thereby confirming the ideas of the optimistic approach (see Model 1 in Table 2).

While dissatisfied democrats are better informed and more critical than dissatisfied non-democrats, they are, however, *not* more inclined to participate in politics, thereby confirming the ideas of the pessimistic approach as well (see Model 1 in Table 2). Dissatisfied democrats surely seem to feel delineated and frustrated, and they are not prepared to participate actively in politics to improve the existing democracy in their country. Moreover, they are less likely to vote, are less interested in politics, have a lower level of political participation and are less likely to attend political meetings and contact politicians than the satisfied democrats in their country (see Model 2 in Table 2). Finally, they are much more pessimistic about the past, present and expected future performance of their democratic governments.

While it is not the goal of this article, these findings do raise questions about the future of democracy, particularly in countries with a high percentage of dissatisfied democrats. In Senegal, for example, this percentage was exceptionally high at 31.5% according to the surveys of the 2005 Afrobarometer. While this percentage of Senegalese dissatisfied democrats was remarkably high in 2005, at least compared with the other African democracies, it is interesting to note that Senegal has changed from a 'free country' in 2005 to a 'partly free country' since 2009. This suggests that the size of the group of dissatisfied democrats in a country may matter for the

actual development of democracy in a country. The group of dissatisfied democrats in Senegal was big in 2005, but we now know that dissatisfied democrats tend to be critical and educated, but also very passive; hence, it is likely that this is one of the reasons why there was no serious popular plea to improve democracy, and why democracy in Senegal has deteriorated over time. Only recently, Senegalese protesters have taken to the streets nationwide; dozens of people have been killed and injured during protests over President Abdoulaye Wade's efforts to run for a third term in presidential elections on 26 February 2012. Until recently, many people in Senegal were dissatisfied democrats and hence critical but very passive at the same time; now there is sudden outbreak of violent protests and growing unrest, which might mean democracy is at stake. Hence, a substantial group of dissatisfied democrats may be a bad sign for the consolidation of democracy in a country.

In any case, the picture is much more complex than theoretically expected, and the findings support an explanatory mix from both approaches when explaining why some people are dissatisfied democrats while others are not. Dissatisfied democrats evaluate the economic and political performance of their country in a negative way, they are well-educated and critical, but they are also inactive and delineated citizens who are not really interested in politics anymore. In this respect, it is not very likely that dissatisfied democrats are going to fight for more democracy, as they are politically passive despite their critical attitude and dissatisfaction. Moreover, poverty clearly has an impact on the chance of whether people are dissatisfied democrats or not.

Conclusion

Democratic government has increasingly become dominant around the globe. Not only in the richer parts of the world, but also in developing countries is democracy not a rare species anymore. Moreover, most citizens support democracy; however, many of them are not satisfied with the democratic practice in their country. We do not know much about these dissatisfied democrats, and they deserve more attention in my opinion.

Hence, the first contribution of this article is that it presented a two-dimensional conceptualization of people's opinions about democracy in general, by clearly distinguishing between people's support of and satisfaction with democracy. While this conceptual distinction is well known and based on classic studies (cf. Easton, 1965, 1975), it has not yet been systematically used in previous empirical studies, which focused mainly on understanding why people are satisfied with democracy on the one hand, or why people support democracy on the other hand, without investigating a possible interaction between the two dimensions. This study developed a fourfold typology, explored why some people are dissatisfied democrats and others are not, and examined whether they are critical citizens as theorized by several political scientists.

Second, the article analysed the characteristics of critical citizens in eight African democracies – Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. It appears that the majority of the people in those countries can be classified as satisfied democrats. However, these countries are also inhabited by a large group of citizens who support democracy but are not satisfied with how democracy is actually working. There is, accordingly, a clear gap between support and satisfaction.

Third, the article has contributed to the lively debate on critical citizens and dissatisfied democrats in the political science literature. The empirical evidence of this study indicated that dissatisfied democrats could best be explained by a mix of both the optimistic and the pessimistic approaches. When dissatisfied democrats are compared with dissatisfied non-democrats, the optimistic approach gets support. Dissatisfied democrats have a statistically significant higher level of

education, are better informed and have a more critical attitude – for example, the view that citizens should question the actions of political leaders instead of showing more respect for authority (see Model 1 in Table 2). However, when we compare dissatisfied democrats with satisfied democrats, the pessimistic approach is more convincing and stronger (see Model 2 in Table 2). Dissatisfied democrats have a statistically significant lower level of political participation. Compared with satisfied democrats, they are less likely, for example, to vote and are less interested in politics, thereby supporting the pessimistic approach.

To move the democratization field forward, further study of popular satisfaction and support is essential. While it is clear that dissatisfaction with democracy is worldwide and widespread in democratic countries, and while this article shows that dissatisfied democrats in Africa are not only critical, but also politically passive, it is not yet clear what it means for the stability and strength of democracy.[25] Some scholars argue that it would be an exaggeration to call this trend a 'crisis of democratic legitimacy' as 'there is virtually no sign of mass desire for any form of government other than democracy' (Schmitter, 2010: 21). Dissatisfaction with democracy 'may not be as corrosive or dangerous a situation as once presumed' and 'could lead not to autocracy, but to different and perhaps even better forms of democracy' (Schmitter, 2010: 22). Other scholars, however, are more cautious and argue that dissatisfaction has not led to breakdowns of democracy 'so far' (O'Donnell, 2010: 32), even though this could happen soon. This last view seems to be supported by the recent developments in Senegal, which was a country with a large group of dissatisfied democrats in 2005, and a trend of decreasing democratization over time. Future studies should also investigate other democracies over time to discover whether the findings of this article on eight African democracies can be generalized, and they need to dig deeper to find out whether dissatisfied democrats can be seen either as a democratic danger or as a democratic defence.

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Notes

1. Despite the high number of democracies in the world, it is debatable, whether democracy is the only legitimate type of regime, as has been suggested by supporters of the 'end of history' idea (cf. Fukuyama, 1992).
2. The nationally representative samples were drawn via multi-stage, stratified, cluster-sampling procedures. For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org
3. The question of whether scholars should treat the distinction between democracy and non-democracy as a dichotomy or in terms of graduations has been much debated in the literature (e.g. Alvarez et al., 1996; Bollen and Jackman, 1989; Collier and Adcock, 1999; Przeworski et al., 2000; Sartori, 1987). It has to be said that, as Collier and Adcock (1999: 554–556) have already argued, neither categorical nor continuous indicators of democracy are universally preferable: both have advantages for some purposes and disadvantages for others. Sartori (1987), Alvarez et al. (1996) and Przeworski et al. (2000) strongly justified their choice to treat 'democracy' as a dichotomous concept; in my opinion, their arguments are very convincing (see also Doorenspleet, 2005: ch. 2), and I will therefore follow this dichotomous approach in this article. Please notice that a more extensive explanation for the cut-off points can be found in previous publications about the Polity IV scale and the Freedom House scores (see endnotes 4 and 5; see also Doorenspleet, 2000, 2005: ch. 2).

4. Information about the Polity IV scale is available at: http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm
5. For more information, see: www.freedomhouse.org
6. Cape Verde and Sao Tome are not included in my case selection since they have less than one million inhabitants, and since there is a substantial lack of data. Cape Verde, for example, is not included in the Polity IV data set; Sao Tome is not only excluded from the Polity IV project, but also from the Afrobarometer. Senegal is included as this country was classified as democratic by both the Freedom House and the Polity IV projects in 2005, although recent developments indicate that Senegal is moving towards a partly free classification, according to Freedom House.
7. There is a clear lack of studies that critically assess the concepts and measurements of satisfaction of democracy. For notable exceptions, however, see Canache et al. (2001) and Linde and Ekman (2003). Studies on support for democracy have been less uncommon (cf. Dalton et al., 2007; King et al., 2004; Schedler and Sarsfield, 2007; Seligson, 2005; Thomassen, 1995).
8. Examples of such surveys are the Eurobarometer, World Values Studies, Afrobarometer, East Asia Barometer, New Europe Barometer and the Latinobarometer.
9. For the comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa, see: www.afrobarometer.org
10. This third round was carried out around 2005. In 2008, there was a fourth round of surveys in 20 African countries, but these data have not yet been released and, hence, cannot be used in this study. The third round took place in 18 countries on the continent, by drawing nationally representative samples and using comparable standardized questionnaires. This round included a range of different regime types, such as authoritarian states (e.g. Zimbabwe), semi-democracies (e.g. Zambia) and democracies (e.g. South Africa), but my article focuses only on the democracies.
11. See, for example, Norris (1999a, 1999b, 2010), although the gap has not clearly been investigated, as previous studies have focused mainly on one of the two dimensions, namely either satisfaction or support, and explored them separately in separate analyses.
12. While this percentage of dissatisfied democrats is around 21% in African democracies, it is important to note that there is one outlier with a much higher percentage: Senegal. While it is not the goal of this article to explain this remarkable finding, it does raise important questions about the prospects of democracy in Senegal, which will be discussed at the end of this article.
13. According to Lipset (1981: 65), satisfaction is crucial: 'The capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society.'
14. There are few signs of a general decline in trust, confidence in public institutions, political interest, or faith in democracy; nor is there much evidence of an increase in apathy, alienation, or faith in democracy' (Budge and Newton, 1997: 132).
15. But see Figure 1 for findings from African democracies around 2005.
16. For important exceptions, see, for example, Bratton (2002), Bratton and Mattes (2001), Hofferbert and Klingemann (1999), Lagos (2003), Mishler and Rose (1999), Rose et al. (1998, 1999).
17. Logistic regression is used when the dependent variable in question is nominal and consists of two categories. It is used for prediction of the probability of an outcome (e.g. whether someone is a dissatisfied democrat or not) by fitting data to a logit function logistic curve. Multinomial logit regression can be used when the dependent variable in question is nominal and consists of more than two categories. However, it was decided not to use this method, and, hence, not to compare the four categories at once, as the existing theories seem to focus primarily on comparing the dissatisfied democrats with satisfied democrats on the one hand, and dissatisfied democrats with dissatisfied non-democrats on the other hand. The theories mainly seem to focus on these comparisons, and do not mention the category of satisfied non-democrats, which is a difficult category to grasp anyway (What does it mean to be not supportive of democracy but still satisfied with how democracy is working? This category clearly needs to be studied in future theoretical and empirical research). Hence, it was decided to conduct two separate analyses with logistic regression in this article. The analyses in this article will show that the optimistic approach can better explain the difference between the dissatisfied democrats and dissatisfied non-democrats on the one hand (dissatisfied democrats are more critical), while the pessimistic approach can better explain the difference between dissatisfied democrats and satisfied democrats (dissatisfied democrats are less active in politics).

18. Country-specific results of the analyses are similar, although there is one exception: in Senegal, education has a significant negative (instead of positive) impact, which means that dissatisfied democrats are less educated than dissatisfied non-democrats. Within the group of dissatisfied people, people with more education are less supportive of democracy, which is remarkable, and more research is needed to find out why this is the case in Senegal.
19. In some countries, though, some findings are statistically significant. In Benin, for example, education has a negative impact ($p < 0.1$), critical attitude has a negative impact in Lesotho ($p < 0.05$) and the extent of information has a negative impact in Senegal ($p < 0.01$). Still, in general, the country-specific results of the analyses have the same pattern.
20. Also, in the individual countries, there is no impact of political participation, although in Senegal and Botswana, dissatisfied democrats seem to be a bit more active than dissatisfied non-democrats: in Senegal, there is a positive impact of attending political meetings ($p < 0.05$), and in Botswana, there is a positive impact of contacting politicians ($p< 0.05$). Moreover, in South Africa, dissatisfied democrats are more interested in politics than dissatisfied non-democrats ($p < 0.05$).
21. It is interesting to note that the variable 'contacting politicians' is only statistically significant in Benin and Ghana; however, the influence is negative in Benin ($p < 0.05$), while the influence in Ghana is positive ($p < 0.1$). In Benin, the dissatisfied democrats are more active in contacting politicians, while in Ghana, the satisfied democrats are more active. The rest of the country-specific results are similar to the overall patterns, meaning that there is a positive relationship between political participation and satisfied democrats.
22. While the modernization approach has the expectation that richer people are more likely to be dissatisfied democrats when we compare dissatisfied democrats with dissatisfied non-democrats, the postmodernization approach supports this idea when dissatisfied democrats are compared with satisfied democrats. So postmodernization scholars would expect that dissatisfied democrats are generally richer than satisfied democrats.
23. In times of economic crises or social change, people feel insecure and are likely to support authoritarian leaders (see Inglehart, 1997).
24. In this view, these people are critical dissatisfied democrats and can eventually strengthen democracy. As Inglehart (1997: 9) states, 'The rise in postmodern values brings declining respect for authority and growing emphasis on participation and self-expression. These two trends are conducive to democratization.… But they are making the position of governing elites more difficult.'
25. Other next steps are to study what people actually mean by democracy, and how it affects their levels of support and satisfaction with democracy. Moreover, we need to explore whether dissatisfied democrats have a different concept of democracy, and whether this has implications for democracy itself. Also, there are probably cross-national differences that we cannot ignore.

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Appendix: Codebook of the variables and descriptive statistics

Cognitive variables

Education

How much education have you had? The scale ranges from 'no formal schooling' (score of 0) to 'post-graduate education' (score of 9). See question 90 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,755; mean = 2.9; standard deviation = 2.1.

Information

How often do you get information from the following sources: Radio? Television? Newspapers? Never = 0; less than once a month = 1; a few times a month = 2; a few times a week = 3; every day = 4. The combined 'Information' scale for the three items ranges from 0 to 12. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 15a, 15b and 15c. N = 10,620; mean = 6.7; standard deviation = 3.6.

Critical attitude

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose statement A or B. A: As citizens, we should be more active in questioning the actions of our leaders. B: In our country these days, we should show more respect for authority. Agree very strongly with A = 1; agree with A = 2; agree with B = 3; agree very strongly with B = 4. See question 20 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,478; mean = 2.0; standard deviation = 1.0.

Participation variables

Voting

With regard to the most recent national election, which statement is true for you? Did not vote = 0; voted = 1. Recoded on basis of question 30. N = 10,748; mean = 0.8; standard deviation = 0.4.

Attending political meetings

Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance: Attend a community meeting? Join others to raise an issue? Attend a

demonstration or protest march? No, would never do this = 0; no, but would do if I had the chance = 1; yes, once or twice = 2; yes, several times = 3; yes, often = 4. The combined 'Attending political meetings' scale for the three items ranges from 0 to 12. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 31a, 31b and 31c. N = 10,430; mean = 4.7; standard deviation = 2.9.

Contacting politicians

During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem or to give them your views: Contact local government councillor? Contact MP? Contact official of a government ministry? Contact political party official? Never = 0; only once = 1; a few times = 2; often = 3. The combined 'Contacting politicians' scale for the four items ranges from 0 to 12. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 32a, 32b, 32c and 32d. N = 10,667; mean = 1.1; standard deviation = 2.1.

Political interest

How interested would you say you are in public affairs? Not at all interested = 0; not very interested = 1; somewhat interested = 2; very interested = 3. See question 16 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,716; mean = 2.0; standard deviation = 1.1.

Political empowerment

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements: politics and government sometimes seem so complicated that you cannot really understand what is going on? Strongly agree = 1; agree = 2; neither disagree nor agree = 3; disagree = 4; strongly disagree = 5. See question 18a of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,064; mean = 2.2; standard deviation = 1.2.

Perceived performance variables (people's perception of performance)

Government performance (past)

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose statement A or B. A: The government's policies have helped most people, only a few have suffered. B: The government's policies have hurt most people and only benefited a few. Agree very strongly with A = 1; agree with A = 2; agree with B = 3; agree very strongly with B = 4. See question 13 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,164; mean = 2.8; standard deviation = 1.1.

Government performance (now)

Now let us speak about the present government of this country. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters: Managing the economy? Handling creating jobs? Handling improving basic health services? Addressing educational needs? Very badly =1; fairly badly = 2; fairly well = 3; very well = 4. The combined 'Present government performance' scale for the four items ranges from 4 to 16. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 65a, 65b, 65f and 65g. N = 9836; mean = 10.1; standard deviation = 2.5.

Government performance (future)

How likely is it that the government will solve your most important problem within the next few years? Not at all likely = 0; not very likely = 1; likely = 2; very likely = 3. See question 64 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 9897; mean = 1.8; standard deviation = 0.9.

Political performance (change)

Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Freedom to say what you think? Freedom to join any political organization you want? Freedom from being arrested when you are innocent? Freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured? Much worse = 1; worse = 2; same = 3; better = 4; much better = 5. The combined 'Change of political performance' scale for the four items ranges from 4 to 20. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 54a, 54b, 54c and 54d. N = 10,036; mean = 15.8; standard deviation = 2.8.

Socio-economic variables

Poverty

Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? Cash income? School expenses for your children (like fees, school uniforms or books)? Never = 0; just once or twice = 1; several times = 2; many times = 3; always = 4. The combined 'Poverty' scale for the six items ranges from 0 to 24. Recoded and development of new scale on basis of questions 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e and 8f. N = 8963; mean = 6.7; standard deviation = 5.6.

Gender

Male = 1; female = 2. See question 101 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,800; mean = 1.5; standard deviation = 0.5.

Age

In years. See question 1 of Afrobarometer codebook. N = 10,707; mean = 39.1; standard deviation = 15.9.

Biographical note

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