

AFRO BAROMETER

Working Paper No. 91

**“UNCRITICAL CITIZENSHIP” IN
A “LOW-INFORMATION”
SOCIETY: MOZAMBICANS IN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

by Robert Mattes and Carlos Shenga

**A comparative series of national public
attitude surveys on democracy, markets
and civil society in Africa.**



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“Uncritical Citizenship” in a “Low-Information” Society: Mozambicans in Comparative Perspective

Abstract

High levels of poverty along with underdeveloped infrastructure greatly inhibit Mozambicans’ ability to participate in politics and assess the quality of governance in their country. Particularly, low rates of formal education, high levels of illiteracy and limited access to news media reduce the flow of political information that would allow citizens to make informed opinions about the way democracy functions. Data from the Afrobarometer demonstrates that relatively high proportions of Mozambicans are unable to answer questions pertaining to the performance of government or to offer preferences about what kind of regime Mozambique ought to have. Citizens who are able to offer answers most often uncritically overrate the performance of the new democratic regime. This paper explores the extent to which Mozambicans’ pattern of “uncritical citizenship” is a function of living in a “low-information society”. We find that this profile of “uncritical citizenship” is characterized by low levels of political information, relatively high levels of “don’t know” responses, and extremely positive evaluations amongst those who do have opinions. Moreover, there exist high levels of satisfaction with the supply of democracy juxtaposed with low levels of demand for democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Mozambique is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped societies in the world. While poverty and the lack of infrastructure have many social and political consequences, perhaps the most important from the standpoint of the country's democratic development are the limitations these obstacles place on the ability of its people to act as full citizens. Yet even compared to other poor societies, Mozambicans suffer from extremely low levels of formal education (the adult literacy rate is 46 percent, compared to an average of 61 percent across all low income countries),¹ and extremely low levels of access to public information: the country has just three newspapers per 1,000 people (compared to 44 for low income countries), 14 television sets per 1,000 (compared to 84), and 44 radios per 1,000 (compared to 198).² Extremely low rates of formal education, high levels of illiteracy and limited access to news media strike at the very core of the cognitive skills and political information that enable citizens to assess social, economic and political developments, learn the rules of how societies and governments function, form opinions about political performance, and care about the survival of democracy.

As we will detail in this paper, data from the Afrobarometer demonstrates that relatively high proportions of Mozambicans are consistently unable to answer many key questions about the performance of government or the democratic regime, or to offer preferences about what kind of regime Mozambique ought to have. Those Mozambicans who are able to offer opinions grant their political leaders and institutions high levels of trust and approval, and perceive low levels of official corruption. They offer these glowing views even as many respondents tell interviewers they are critical of what their government has done in several different policy areas, have great difficulty working with government agencies, are dissatisfied with their personal circumstances, and live in desperate poverty. Most importantly, those Mozambicans who are able to offer opinions exhibit some of the lowest levels of commitment to democracy measured by the Afrobarometer across 18 African multi-party systems. At the same time, Mozambicans are some of the most likely to say their country is democratic. Thus, there are many reasons to suspect that Mozambicans uncritically overrate the performance of their new democratic regime.

In a comprehensive overview of public opinion in older democracies, Pippa Norris (2000: 3) has traced a growing tension between the promise of democracy and the reality of the performance of democratic institutions to the:

emergence of more 'critical citizens,' or 'dissatisfied democrats,' who adhere strongly to democratic values but who find the existing structures of representative government, invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to be wanting as we approach the end of the millennium.

Such "critical citizenship" requires citizens who offer their leaders neither "blind trust" nor cynical, knee-jerk distrust, but rather display a healthy skepticism (Almond & Verba, 1962; Mishler & Rose, 1997). However, the combination of Mozambicans' very high levels of trust in leaders and institutions with very low levels of commitment to democracy means that they present precisely the opposite archetype: that of "uncritical citizenship."

In this paper, we explore the extent to which Mozambicans' apparent pattern of "uncritical citizenship" is a function of living in a "low-information society" (with the primary features being a lack of schooling and limited access to news about politics and public affairs). While modernization theory has classically cited education and the development of cognitive skills as one of a broad bundle of "social requisites of democracy" (alongside urbanization,

¹ "ICT Dialogue: Mozambique," *World Development Data*.

² *World Bank Development Report* (2005): 310-312.

industrialization, affluence, and the expansion of the middle class) (Lipset, 1959; Almond & Verba, 1963; Inkeles & Smith, 1974), Geoffrey Evans and Pauline Rose (2007: 2) demonstrate that the actual evidence of the impact of education in developing societies is “surprisingly thin.” And while there is a great deal of evidence of a positive link between education and pro-democratic attitudes in older, developed democracies (as well as increasing evidence from Eastern Europe),³ some American political scientist now argue that the role of knowledge and cognitive skills is overstated. They claim that the poorly informed tend to reach the same political opinions and decisions as the well informed, largely because they utilize “low information reasoning” using personal experience of commonly accessible information (like prices, joblessness, housing construction etc...) as heuristic cues to evaluate government performance (Popkin, 1994; Lupia & McCubbins, 2000). And latter day modernization scholars see education more as a “marker” of material security which is actually the main driver of pro-democratic values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

But we also consider alternative explanations. We ask whether such a set of uncritical public attitudes may reflect not so much a lack of education and information as the fear created by sixteen years of civil war, the domination of a range of potential alternative sources of political information by Frelimo (the governing party), as well as Frelimo’s recent electoral gains that threaten to entrench its electoral dominance. We also investigate whether the “uncritical” mindset reflects a socially embedded and culturally transmitted set of orientations shaped by indigenous tradition and two centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, orientations that conflict with and thus inhibit the extent to which Mozambicans embrace the values that underlie democracy? Finally, we probe the extent to which Mozambique’s electoral system contributes to this syndrome of attitudes by removing critical cognitive linkages between citizens and the political system.

Mozambicans’ Awareness and Evaluations of Government and Democracy

Our main purpose in this paper is to explore the linkages between key characteristics of a “low information society” -- especially Mozambique’s schools and mass news media -- and key elements of democratic citizenship. In particular, we are interested in assessing the extent of Mozambicans’ *political information*, or the extent to which they are able to provide a range of basic political facts and the identity of key leaders. Second we assess Mozambicans’ degree of what we call “*opinionation*,” or the extent to which people are able, or willing to offer assessments of the democratic regime and state. Third, we assess what we here call “*criticalness*,” or the extent to which those respondents who are able to offer substantive opinions offer negative, or critical assessments. Finally, as implied in the introduction, we assess two distinct dimensions of popular attitudes to democracy. On one hand, we assess the Mozambicans’ *perceived supply of democracy* provided by their multiparty regime, and the extent to which they exhibit a *demand for democracy*.

Political Information

To what extent are Mozambicans aware of the identity of their leaders and the larger political process? Measuring citizens’ information is always a tricky affair; findings often differ sharply depending on whether researchers ask respondents to recall certain facts from memory, or recognize them from a list of several possible answers. Thus, because the Afrobarometer uses the recall method, one should be aware that our findings might understate the actual level of awareness.

³ See Evans & Rose (2007: 2-6) for an excellent overview of this literature.

Mozambicans are relatively well aware of the identity of the largest political party in the country: 68 percent were able to offer the name of Frelimo as the largest party, which puts the country right around the median point of the Afrobarometer country rankings. Yet while 73 percent of Frelimo identifiers can provide this information, just 56 percent of independent voters (those who identify with no political party) and an even lower 46 percent of opposition identifiers are able to do so.

However, Mozambicans are relatively unaware of several other key political facts. For example, just one in five (20 percent) -- the lowest of all 18 Afrobarometer countries -- were able to tell interviewers how many terms the President is allowed to serve (two terms), with the level dropping to 16 percent in rural areas. By way of contrast, nine in ten Namibians and Batswana were able to supply the correct answer for their country. And just eight percent (4 percent in the countryside) were able to tell interviewers that it was the responsibility of the courts to ensure that legislation was constitutional. While this very low figure was similar to the tiny minorities measured in over half the Afrobarometer countries, it was far lower than the 45 percent of Nigerians who were aware of the role of their courts in judicial review.

Figure 1: Political Knowledge -- Biggest Party?

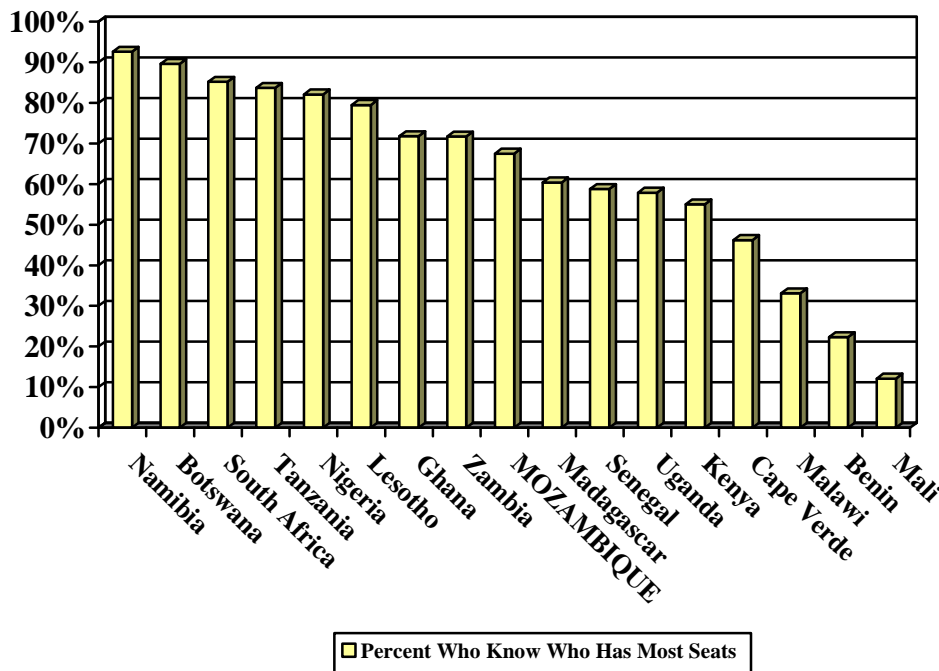


Figure 2: Political Knowledge -- Term Limits

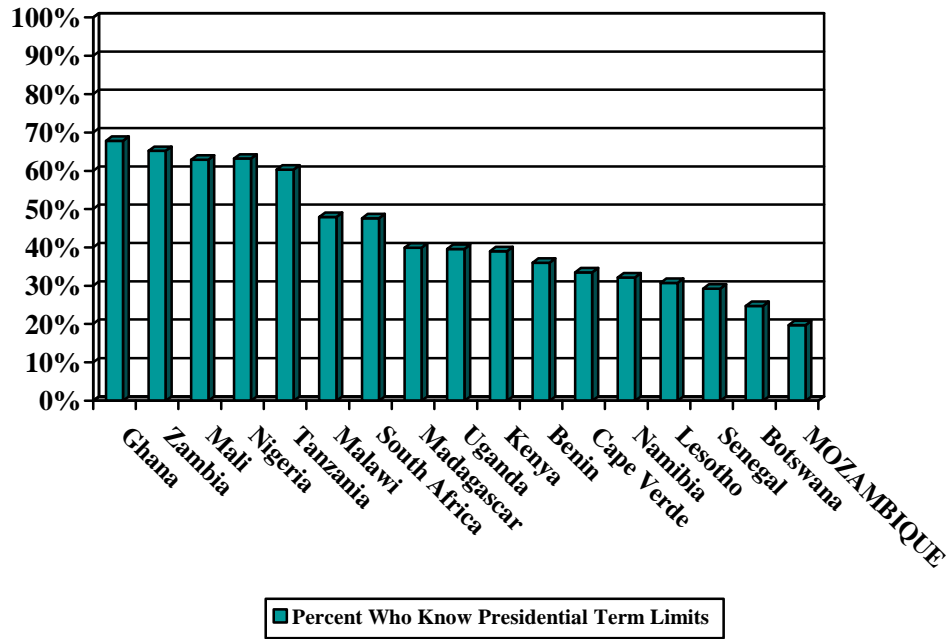
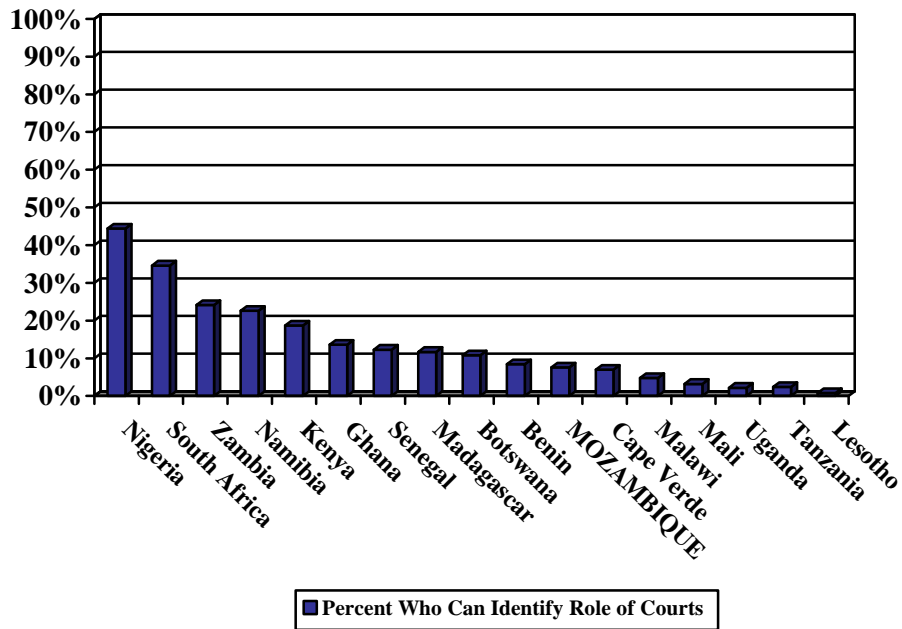


Figure 3: Political Knowledge -- Role of Courts



Just one in four Mozambicans were able, when asked, to provide interviewers with the correct name of the President of the National Assembly (25 percent). City-dwellers were twice as likely to know this (37 percent) than rural (15 percent). Mozambicans also have some of the weakest grasps of the identity of their MPs and local councilors. One third (30 percent) were able to offer the correct name of their local councilor, and one in ten (13 percent) were able to give the correct name of an MP who represents their province (in Mozambique’s system of proportional representation, MPs are elected on provincial lists). Information about local councilors is relatively similar across party identification, and rural and urban status, but awareness of MP identity is not: 18 percent of people living in urban areas know their MPs name compared to 10 percent in the countryside. The impact of partisan identification also reverses: 21 percent of opposition supporters can provide the correct name of their MP compared to 14 percent of Frelimo identifiers and 8 percent of independents.

Figure 4: Incumbent Awareness -- Deputy President

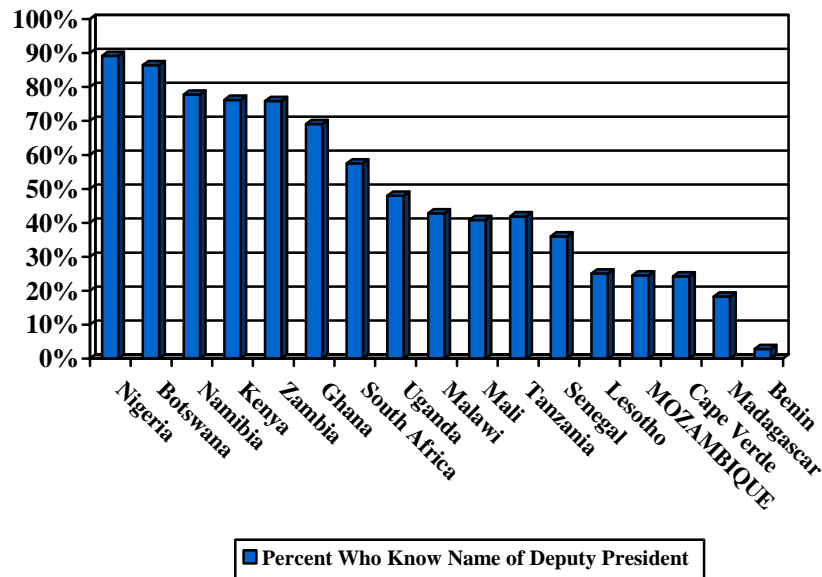
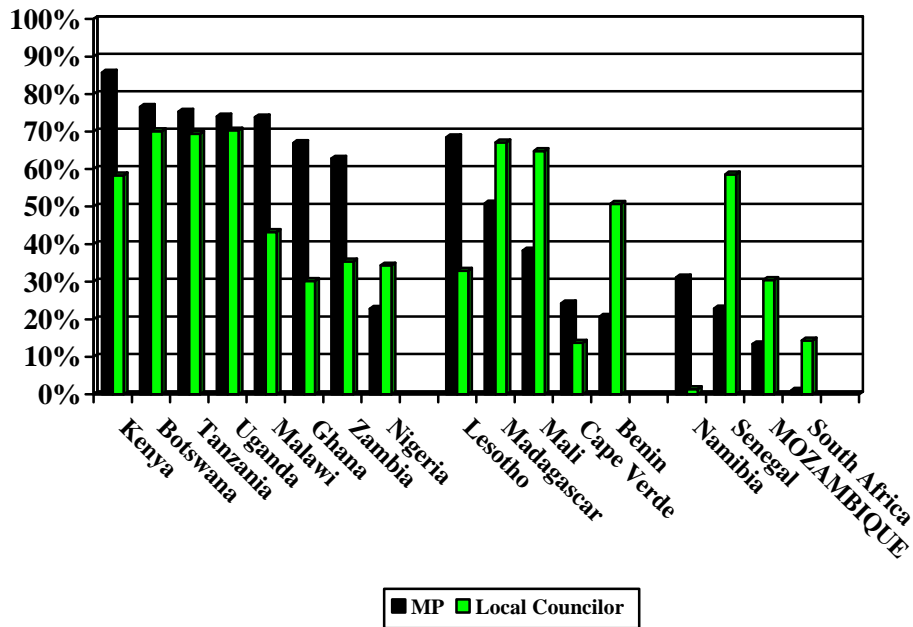


Figure 5: Incumbent Knowledge -- MPs and Councilors



From these individual question items, we can build a broader additive index that is both reliable and valid and runs from 0 to 6 for the number of correct answers each respondent is able to provide to these questions.⁴ Fully 23 percent of all Mozambicans were unable to provide a correct answer to *any* of these questions. The average (mean) Mozambican was able to provide 1.6 correct answers to the six questions (with the score ranging from 1.4 in rural areas to 2.0 in urban), which puts it third last ahead of Cape Verde and, again, Benin

⁴ Factor analysis identified two factors, the first of which explains 36.2 percent of total variance with an Eigenvalue of 2.17. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .64) is acceptable (n=22,600). Also a comparison of questions on awareness of incumbents with previous surveys suggests a high degree of test-retest reliability.

Figure 6: Correct Answers Provided by Mozambicans To Questions on Incumbent Identity and Key Political Facts

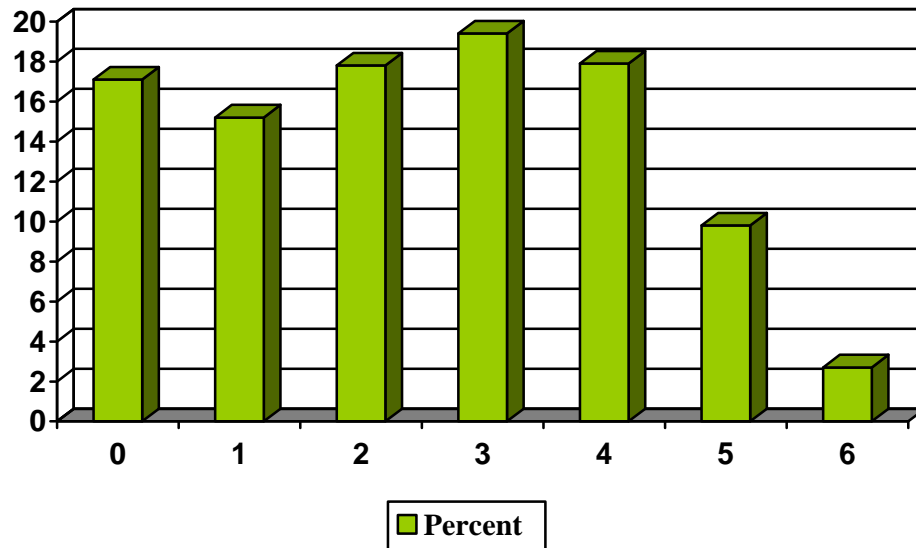
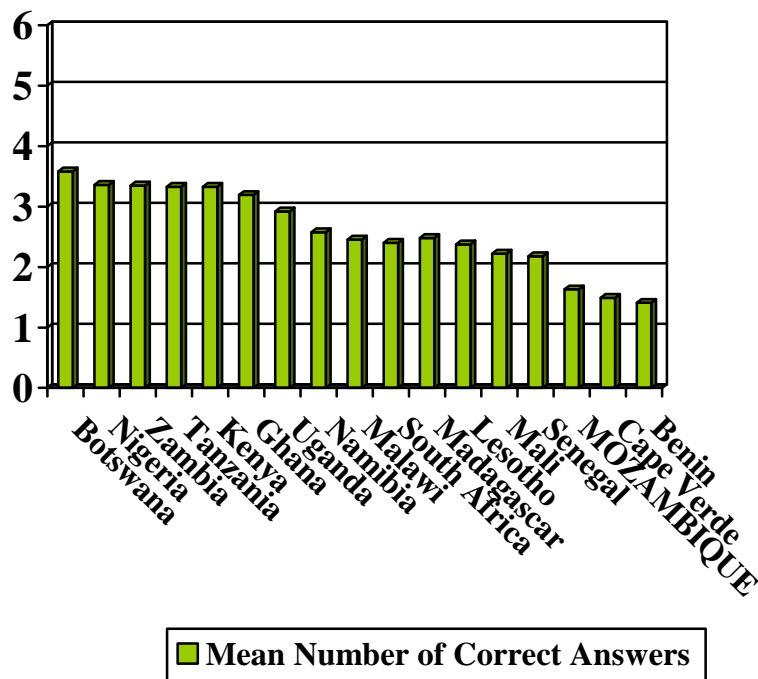


Figure 7: Citizen Awareness of Incumbent Identity and Key Political Facts



Opinionation

Beyond their grasp of factual information about the political process, to what extent are ordinary Mozambicans able to offer substantive preferences and opinions about key issues of democracy and governance? To a large degree, the answer depends on whether people are being asked for their normative preferences or for empirical assessments, as well as the immediacy with which the issue affects their personal lives.

A broad overview of responses to questions located across the entire Afrobarometer questionnaire reveals that Mozambicans are quite willing and able to state their value preferences when they are provided with both sides of a conflict of political or social values. For instance, when asked to indicate whether they agreed with Statement A (“People should look after themselves and be responsible for their own success in life”) or Statement B (“The government should bear the main responsibility for the well-being of people”), just 3 percent said they did not know and another 3 percent stated they agreed with neither option. On none of many similar items contained in the Afrobarometer did the combined percentages who said they “don’t know” or “agree with neither” go above 15 percent, and most were well below 10 percent.

However, people were far less able to state their values when the question either did not provide a balanced set of “forced-choice” alternatives, or when the question dealt with a more abstract concept like democracy. Thus, when asked whether they would approve or disapprove of a range of non-democratic alternatives to multi-party elections, 16 percent of Mozambicans had no view on the possibility of military rule, and one in five (19 percent) were unable to offer an opinion when it came to the issue of abolishing elections and parliament to allow for presidential dictatorship. And fully one quarter (24 percent) had no opinion on whether democracy was preferable to all other forms of government. In fact, the term “democracy” is unfamiliar to significant proportions of the populace. While only 8 percent simply had no response opinion to

the question “What, if anything, does ‘democracy’ mean to you?,” an additional 20 percent admitted that they could not understand the word “democracy,” either in Portuguese or when translated into a local language.

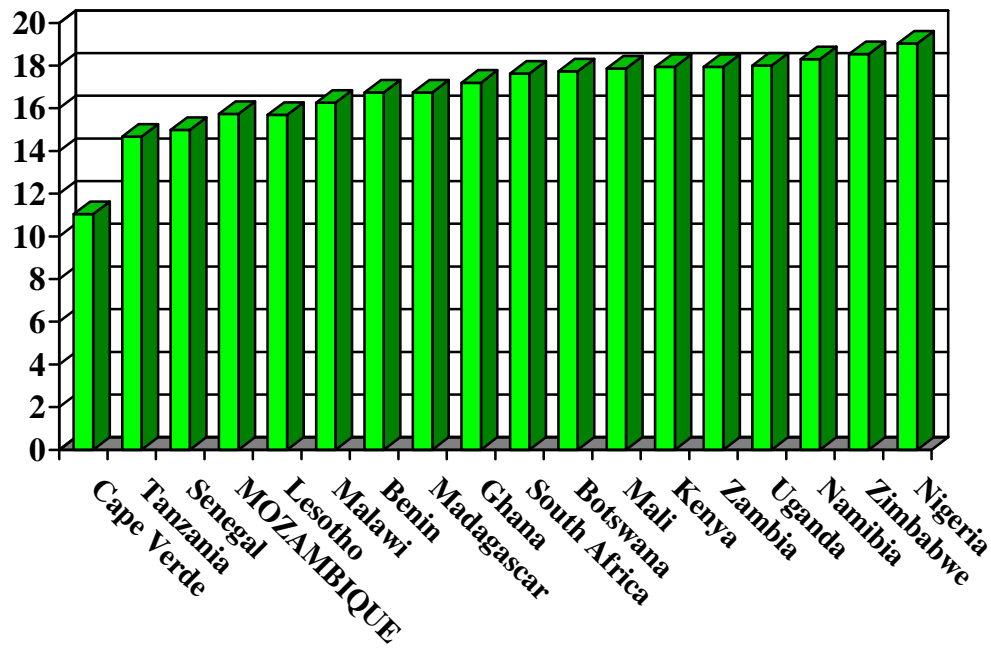
By contrast, Mozambicans are able to offer evaluations about a range of economic trends or government performance on issues that directly affect their personal lives. For example, just 1 percent were unable to tell interviewers about their current living conditions, and only 5 percent could not offer a view on the present situation of the national economy. But the numbers of those unable to offer an opinion about political and economic conditions also increased consistently and substantially as the object of the question grew more distant from the daily purview of the respondent. For example, 12 percent could not judge the performance of President Armando Guebuza, the dominant figure in Mozambican politics (though at the time of the survey, Guebuza had only been in office for five months). One in five (19 percent) could not offer an opinion on the performance of Parliament, and one in three (29 percent) could not judge the performance of their local councils. One in five were unable to say whether members of parliament (18 percent) or local councilors (21 percent) “try their best to listen to what people like you have to say.”

And once we move to more remote institutions or sensitive issues, the percentages rise even higher. One quarter were unable to say how well the country’s electoral system did in allowing people to replace bad leaders (28 percent) or ensure that the members of parliament reflects public opinion (24 percent). At least one in four were unable, or unwilling to offer an assessment of how many officials in the Presidency (26 percent), MP’s (26 percent), local government officials (26 percent) or local councilors (30 percent) were involved in corruption, rising to as many as 30 percent for judges and magistrates. And while just 10 percent were unable to offer a view on whether the 2004 elections had been free and fair, 16 percent could not rate their level of current satisfaction with the way democracy works, and 21 percent could not rate the level of democracy in the country.

In order to compare Mozambicans’ ability to offer opinions with other Africans in an efficient way, we created two valid and reliable summary measures of the extent to which respondents offer opinions (whether positive or negative). The first index simply sums the number of substantive opinions (positive or negative) that respondents were able to offer across 20 question items on the supply of democracy (the freeness and fairness of elections, satisfaction with democracy, and the extent of democracy), and the supply of good governance (the extent of official corruption, the responsiveness of elected representatives, the degree to which the electoral system produces accountability, and the overall job performance of key incumbent leaders).⁵ Based on this, Mozambicans fall well below the Afrobarometer average (fourth lowest) in terms of being able to offer views on the supply of governance and democracy (a score of 16.3 out of a possible total of 24).

⁵ Factor analysis identified five factors, the first of which explains 40.1 percent of total variance with an Eigenvalue of 8.03. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .91) is very high (n=22,600).

Figure 8: Opinionation on Democratic and Government Performance

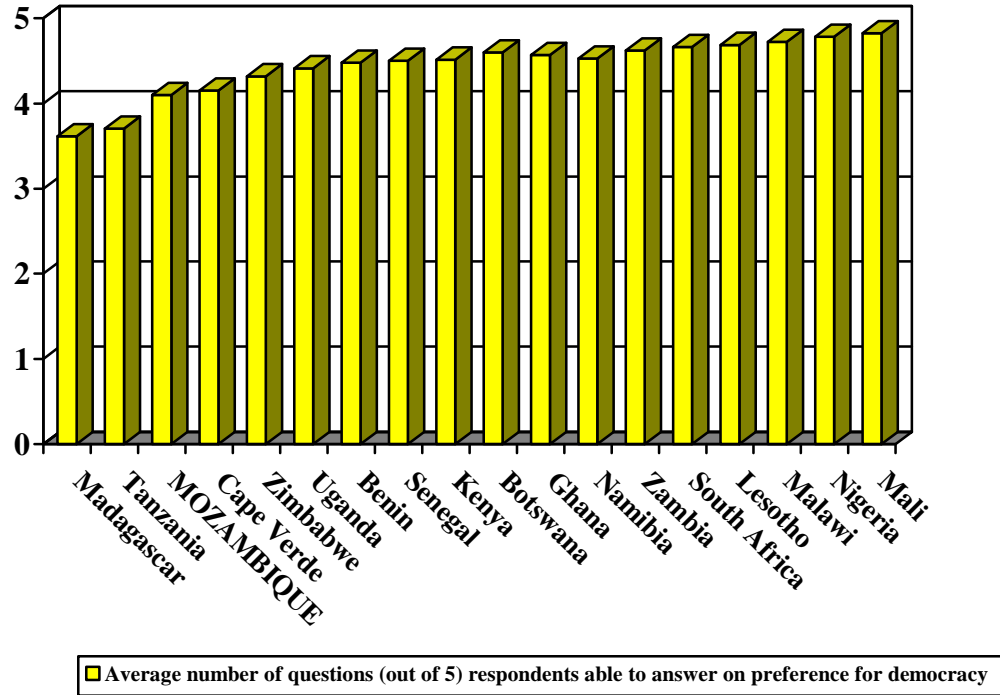


■ Average number of questions (out of 20) respondents able to answer on the supply of democracy, corruption, responsiveness, incumbent performance, the conduct of the last election, and the degree of government accountability

The second index measures people’s ability to tell interviewers whether or not they demand democracy, by summing whether or not respondents were able to offer a meaning of democracy, and provide preferences about democracy and non-democratic alternatives across 5 survey items.⁶ In these terms, Mozambicans were tied for third lowest amongst the 18 Afrobarometer countries (with a mean of 4.1 out of a possible five questions).

⁶ Factor analysis identified two factors, the first of which explains 43.9 percent of total variance with an Eigenvalue of 2.20. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .62) is acceptable (n=22,600).

Figure 9: Opinionation on Preferences for Democracy



Criticalness

Not only are many Mozambicans unable or unwilling to offer opinions, those who *do* offer opinions are also especially unlikely to be critical of the performance of the multi party regime, institutions or leaders. For instance, eight in ten respondents said they trust the President (81 percent) and approved of his performance in the previous twelve months (81 percent). And three quarters said they trust Parliament (75 percent) and approved of its overall job performance (73 percent).

Not only are Mozambicans far more likely to express trust than distrust, they are also very likely to place *total* trust in their political leaders, choosing the most extreme response category available. Two thirds of all respondents (67 percent) said they trusted the President “a very great deal” while only 14 percent trusted him “a lot.” This pattern also applied to the public’s view of Parliament (56 percent trusted it a “great deal” and only 19 percent “a lot”). In fact, for every single institution that the Afrobarometer asks about, the modal response was one of total, rather than qualified trust.⁷

Levels of approval of government performance in specific policy areas were relatively lower, but still high in absolute terms, ranging from 70 percent approval of government handling of health and educational policy (with job creation, keeping prices stable, combating HIV/AIDS all

⁷ This distinction is inspired by the work of William Mishler and Richard Rose (1997) who pointed out the importance of such differences on the other end of the scale, differentiating between distrust, skepticism and blind trust to understand how Eastern and Central Europeans viewed post communist institutions.

receiving over 60 percent approval) to a low of 42 percent approval of its job in narrowing income gaps. And even though both Transparency International (2006) and the World Bank rate Mozambique as one of the most corrupt countries in the world,⁸ a relatively modest 19 percent of Mozambicans feel that “all” or “most” national government officials are involved in corruption.

Yet these high levels of trust in political leaders and general incumbent approval co-exist with relatively critical views on a range of other issues. For instance, while 61 percent said they approved of government performance in job creation, 68 percent also said job opportunities had become worse over the past few years. And even as 59 percent gave the government positive marks for managing the economy, four in ten (40 percent) agreed that “government’s economic policies have hurt most people and only benefited a few,” and 51 percent said the gap between the rich and poor had widened.

But, more commonly, popular responses revealed a pattern of internal contradiction, in which people expressed trust in institutions even in the face of poor performance. Three quarters of people (71 percent) said they trust the police even though four in ten (40 percent) said it was “difficult” or “very difficult” to get help from the police, and another 17 percent reported being victimized in the past twelve months by a police demand for a bribe or a favour. And 65 percent said they trust their local government council, though only 57 percent approved of its overall job performance, and though 40 percent said their council was handling local road maintenance “fairly” or “very badly,” and 34 percent said they were doing a bad job keeping their communities clean.

And given what we learned in the previous section, the ratio of positive-to-negative responses would be even greater if we were to exclude those respondents unable to offer a substantive opinion. In fact, we create such a scale that measures the balance of positive versus negative views *amongst only those who offer an opinion*. When viewed in these terms, Mozambicans rank as second last among the 18 countries in terms of their propensity to offer critical views about the supply of good governance,⁹ and one of the four lowest countries in terms of offering critical views of the supply of democracy.¹⁰

⁸ See Transparency International (2006) *Corruption Perceptions Index* (www.transparency.org).

⁹ Factor analysis identified five factors, the first of which explains 35.0 percent of common variance with an Eigenvalue of 8.40. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .91) is very high (n=22,600).

¹⁰ Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.00) which explains 66.7 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .74) is high (n=22,600).

Figure 10: Critical Opinions on Political Performance

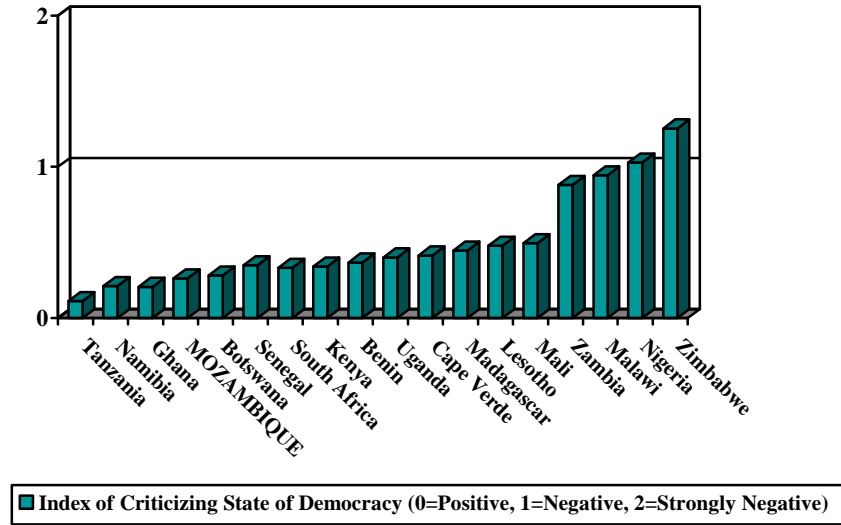
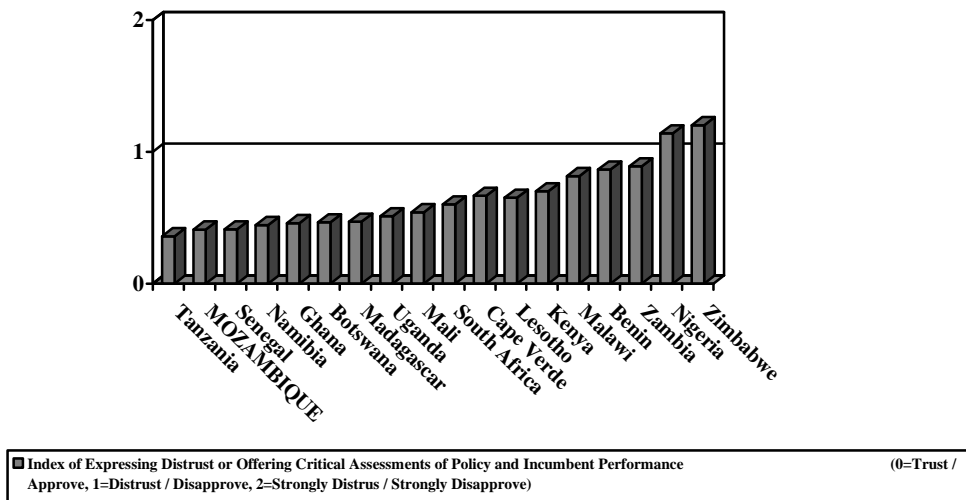


Figure 11: Critical Opinions on Democracy



Democracy: Supply and Demand

Following earlier work (Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Mattes & Bratton, 2007), we assess the extent to which Mozambicans feel they are living in a democracy and also measure the degree to which Mozambicans say they want to live in a democracy. On the supply side, Mozambicans perceive a relatively high degree of democracy in their country today. Three quarters of Mozambicans told interviewers that the country's 2004 election was either "completely free and fair" (57 percent) or "free and fair, but with minor problems" (20 percent). And three quarters believe that the country is "a full democracy" (35 percent) or "a democracy, but with minor problems" (29 percent). Three in five were either "very" (31 percent) or "fairly satisfied" (28 percent) with the way democracy works in Mozambique.

On the demand side, however, significantly large minorities -- and sometime pluralities -- of Mozambicans remain uncommitted to democratic government. While 80 percent agree that "we should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections," they are not yet completely sold on the necessity of multi-party elections. Fully one-third (33 percent) agree in a separate question item with the statement that "Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Mozambique." Similarly, one third (33 percent) approve of an alternative form of government where "only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office."

Many Mozambicans are also quite comfortable with the idea of very strong, even dictatorial leaderships. One third (34 percent) agree that "Since the President was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong"; four in ten (42 percent) would approve of an alternative system of governing the country whereby "elections and the parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything"; and one in five (19 percent) would approve of the alternative where the army "comes in to govern the country."

We develop valid and reliable scales of supply and demand out of smaller subsets of these items. On the *supply side*, we calculate the percentage of people who think they are living in a democracy *and* are satisfied with the way democracy works. Just under one half of all Mozambicans could be classified as feeling "fully supplied" (48 percent). This lagged behind only Ghana (64 percent), Namibia (61 percent), Botswana (54 percent) and South Africa (53 percent).¹¹ On the *demand side*, we calculate the percentage of people that reject presidential dictatorship, military rule and one party rule, *and* prefer democracy to non democratic forms of government.¹² By this measure, just one quarter of Mozambicans (27 percent) can be classified as "committed democrats." In sharp contrast to perceptions of supply, where Mozambicans have some of the highest levels in Africa, this figure is tied for the *lowest* level amongst the 18 Afrobarometer countries, statistically indistinguishable from the 24 percent of Namibians who are committed. Obviously, there are many Mozambicans who think they live in a democracy, but do so from a perspective of not being terribly concerned about whether or not they want to live in one.

¹¹ The two items are sufficiently correlated (Pearson's $r = .61$) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = .76) to warrant the creation of a two item average construct ($n=22,600$).

¹² Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.88) which explains 46.9 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .62) is acceptable ($n=22,600$).

Figure 12



As argued at the start of this paper, Norris (2000: 3) has documented the growth of “critical citizens” in Western democracies, that is, people who support democracy but increasingly find the existing structure of government wanting. In contrast, the combination of very high levels of trust in leaders and institutions with very low levels of commitment to democracy demonstrates that Mozambicans present precisely the opposite archetype: that of “uncritical citizens.” In order to operationalise the concept of critical citizens, we create an individual level measure of whether or not a respondent received the level of democracy they desired by taking each person’s average scores for both supply and demand (which was scaled to run from 0 to 4), and subtracted the supply score from the demand score. This yields a new score that runs from +4 (indicating a sharply critical democrat who deeply wants democracy but perceives absolutely no democracy) to -4 (indicating a completely uncritical, acquiescent citizen who has absolutely no desire for democracy, but feels his or her country is completely democratic). Across 18 countries and 21,500 respondents, the average (mean) score is + .61 (with a standard deviation of 1.5), indicating that the average African wants slightly more democracy than she or he thinks they are receiving. Yet it also indicates that a large proportion of African responses generate scores below the “0” point, meaning that these respondents’ perceived supply of democracy outstrips their desire. The average (mean) Mozambican, however, has a score of -.55, the *lowest* of all 18 countries (though Namibians are in a statistical dead heat at -.50).

Mozambicans' Levels of Cognitive Awareness of Politics

The rest of this paper focuses on the connections between the “low information” nature of Mozambican society and its relatively distinctive profile of public attitudes toward governance and democracy. To do this, we begin by describing various constituent elements of a broad concept that we have elsewhere called “cognitive awareness” about politics and democracy (Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Mattes and Bratton, 2007). Cognitive awareness includes not only the amount of information that people possess about politics and democracy, but also their exposure to information through typical sources such as the broadcast and print news media or through alternative sources such as friends and neighbors, the associations to which they belong, and the community leaders with which they may come into contact. It also includes the cognitive skills acquired through formal education, or alternatively, through an abiding interest in politics and regular interpersonal discussion of politics that provides motivation to acquire and process information.

Formal Education

We begin by examining the basic social institution that provides a society with the cognitive skills with which to acquire and process information: the school system. How much formal education have Mozambique’s citizens enjoyed? The survey results indicate that Mozambique has the lowest level of schooling amongst its adult population in Southern Africa, and one of the lowest in Africa. As of mid 2005, 28 percent of all adult Mozambicans said they had *no* formal education (though 8 percent say they have had some informal schooling).¹³ One in three (33 percent) have only had some primary education, 14 percent have completed primary school, and just one in ten adults have completed a high school education. A total of three percent have gone beyond high school, but just 0.03 percent had completed a university education.

This is clearly a reflection of the legacy of Portuguese colonialism which provided Africans with only primary education in Catholic schools which required Africans to abandon their given name for a Portuguese one and to convert to Catholicism.¹⁴ Only Europeans, Asians and a few “assimilated” Africans were able to attend secondary and high schools.¹⁵ The situation was further exacerbated after independence by 16 years of brutal civil war which destroyed much of the existing educational infrastructure.¹⁶

Yet there is also some good news in these statistics. First of all, while 28 of this sample of citizens 18 years and older had no formal schooling as of 2005, other analysts have estimated that

¹³ In other countries, such as Senegal and Mali, we have found that “informal schooling” largely reflects Islamic Koranic schooling. However, in Mozambique, Moslems are no more likely to have attended “informal schooling” than Christians.

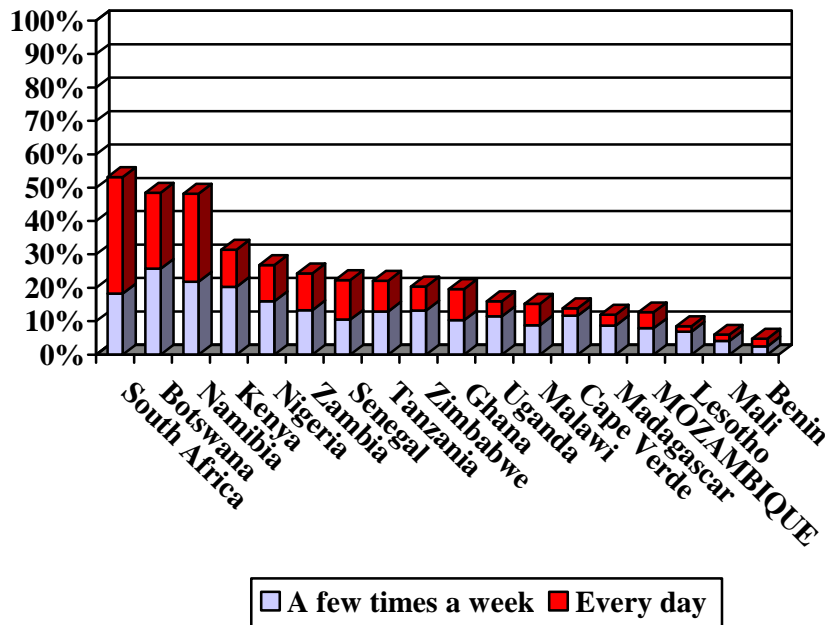
¹⁴ After independence, most skilled Portuguese workers left the country due to Frelimo’s nationalization policy, leaving the public administration without qualified human capital. To keep government institutions functioning, the Frelimo government imported skilled workers from the Soviet Union. Students with secondary school, but no teacher training, were compelled to become teachers.

¹⁵ Assimilated natives were those who had been socialized in western culture. Most of these were “coloured,” children of unions between Portuguese fathers and Mozambican women.

¹⁶ The existing school infrastructure was destroyed and all 17 years and older had to do compulsory service in the army. By the end of 1980, Renamo guerrillas controlled two-third of the country leaving the government confined to provincial capital cities. In these cities the few school vacancies were reserved for the most successful students. Other students lost their vacancies in favor of younger students or transferred to alternative night schooling. While night schooling attempted to be more inclusive, it often could not function due to constant electricity cuts in many capital cities. Some cities went as many as six months without electricity.

as recently as 2000, 64 percent of the population 15 years and older had no schooling.¹⁷ The sharply improving trends implied by this finding are indeed visible in the Afrobarometer data once we disaggregate by age. While none of the figures are as high as those estimates, it shows that 48 percent of those aged 56-65 had no formal schooling, while only 15 percent of those aged 18 to 24 fell into this category.

Figure 14: Newspaper Readership



While Mozambique’s level of education is the lowest in southern Africa, it is still considerably higher than in Benin, Mali and Senegal (though about one in five Senegalese and Malians say they have had informal schooling).¹⁸ We note, however, that citizens of all three of these countries are consistently far more likely than Mozambicans to offer opinions, offer critical evaluations, and demand for democracy than Mozambicans.

News Media Use

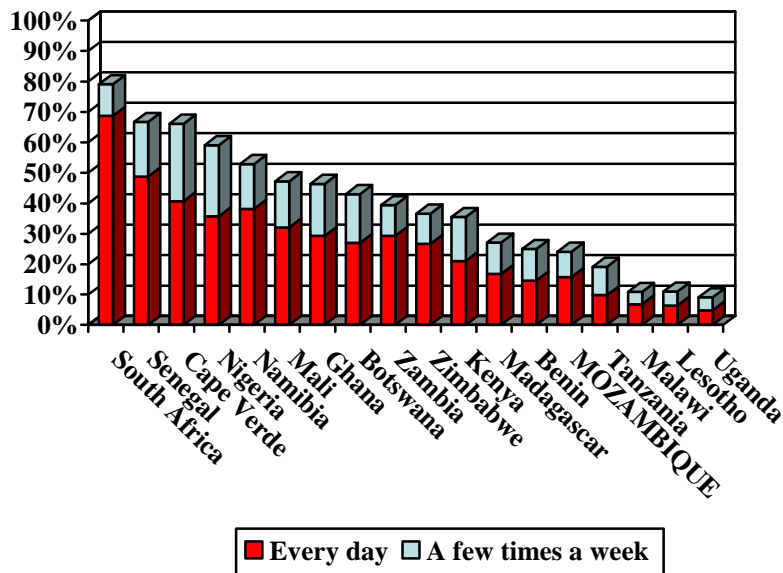
Not only do adult Mozambicans possess low levels of formal education, they also have very low rates of access and use of formal news media. Just thirteen percent regularly read newspapers (8 percent every day, and 5 percent a few times a week), a figure higher only than Lesotho, Mali and Benin. Again, much of this reflects the legacies of the Portuguese colonial state which bequeathed Mozambique with a very weak mass media network: just one radio station (*Rádio Moçambique*), and two daily newspapers (*Diário de Moçambique* and *Notíciais*) and one weekly newspaper (*Domingo*). Though the country now has greater media pluralism than before, few people have access to newspapers. According to the World Bank, Mozambique as of 2000 had just 3 daily newspapers per 1,000 people, significantly lower than the sub-Saharan average of 12; higher than Mali (1), but far lower than Ghana (14), Zambia (22 percent), Botswana (25) or South

¹⁷ Barro-Lee, 2000. Found at http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/ThematicDataOnEducation/CountryData/total_age15.xls.

¹⁸ In terms of high school attainment, however, Mozambique is not any better off than these countries.

Africa (26).¹⁹ Moreover, very few are distributed outside of provincial capital cities leaving many towns, boroughs and rural area without any access to print media. While one in five city dwellers (23 percent) read newspapers on a regular basis, just 5 percent of rural citizens do so. Just one quarter say they regularly watch news programs on television (16 percent everyday and 8 percent a few times a week). This proportion is lower than in all countries surveyed except Tanzania, Malawi, Lesotho and Uganda. Television was only introduced in Mozambique in 1982, with a single public station that was accessible only in the Maputo area. Access was broadened to reach the country's second biggest city (Beira) in 1994, and has now spread to provincial capital cities and some towns and boroughs. Accordingly, 44 percent of those in urban areas said they get news from television on a regular basis compared to just 9 percent in the countryside. Viewership is also limited by the availability of affordable sets: just 19 percent of Mozambicans say they own a television and most of these people are located in the cities (32 percent live in urban areas, compared to 9 percent for rural).

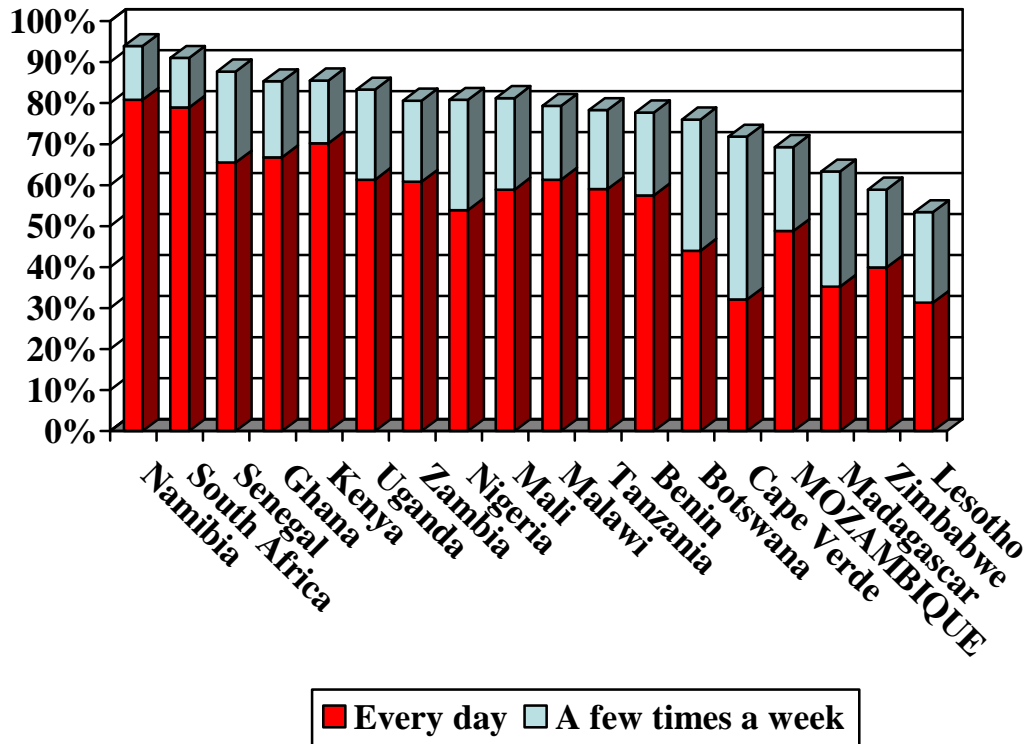
Figure 15: Television News



Mozambique's public and private radio stations are by far the most accessible and widely used form of news media. Yet while two thirds of all adult Mozambicans say they get news from the radio either every day (49 percent) or a few times a week (21 percent), this figure ranks ahead of only Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. Radio listenership is limited by the supply of radio stations. The only radio station that comes close to covering the entire country (*Radio Mozambique*) is owned by the state. Community based stations are owned both by the state and civil society agencies. Many rural areas still remain without any radio coverage. But it is also limited by the supply of affordable radio sets. Only two thirds (66 percent) said they own a radio, far lower than the 81 percent of South Africans and, perhaps surprisingly, the 80 percent of Senegalese and Malagasy who do so.

¹⁹ World Bank, 2005 *World Development Indicators*, p. 312-313.

Figure 16: Radio News Use



Cognitive Engagement

We have thus far seen that relatively few Mozambicans are regularly exposed to news about politics or public affairs via the print or electronic news media. Yet even if large numbers were regularly exposed, we have also seen that few people have the advanced cognitive skills provided by formal education that would enable them to process and interpret the information about public affairs provided by the news media. It is possible, however, that some citizens can make up this deficit in education and news media exposure. In the absence of a formal education and the news media, they can remain mentally engaged with politics and public affairs by taking an active interest in and regularly talking about politics with their spouses, families, neighbors or co-workers, adding their experiences to those of others (Richardson & Beck, 2004).

The Afrobarometer data suggests that people living in a “low information society” like Mozambique can still remain relatively engaged with the political process. Two thirds of respondents said they are either “very” (38 percent) or “somewhat interested” (29 percent) in politics and public affairs. A similar two thirds said they talk about politics with friends and family “frequently” (25 percent) or “occasionally” (43 percent). Both figures put Mozambicans around the Afrobarometer country average.

Figure 17: Interest in Politics

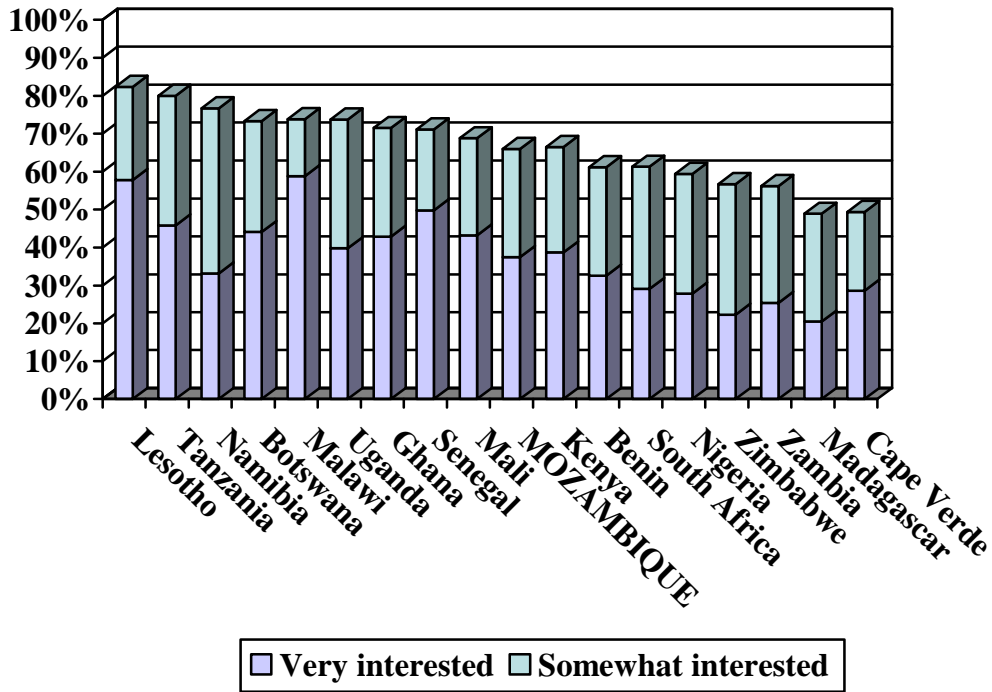
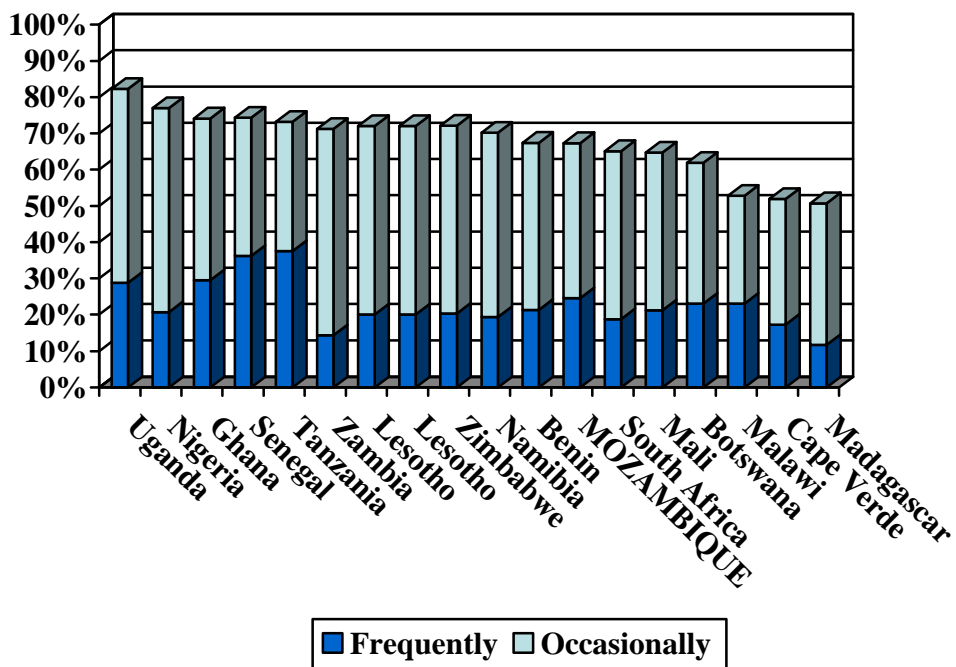


Figure 18: Political Discussion



Alternative Sources of Information and State Domination

Citizens in a “low information” society like Mozambique not only have alternative ways to develop cognitive political skills, but also may access political information from sources other than the news media. They can glean important information about the larger political world from the secondary associations they join, or from the government or community leaders with which they come into contact. Yet in a country like Mozambique, not all of these alternative sources of information are equal, especially in the degree to which they contribute to democratic citizenship. The specific informational environment where people get their information may have an important effect on political attitudes that can be more, or less conducive to democratic consolidation. Gunther, Montero and Torcal (2006), for example, focus on the nature of intermediation in a wide variety of democratic systems distinguishing between informational intermediaries that are explicitly partisan from those that are ostensibly apolitical and non-partisan. However, a different distinction may discriminate between formal and alternative informational sources that are aligned with the state or ruling party versus those that remain relatively independent (Shenga, 2007).

This is especially relevant in a country like Mozambique where ruling party and government officials have been moving the political regime *away* from democracy over the past few years (Shenga, 2007). Mozambique has regressed from being categorized by Freedom House as an “electoral democracy” to what Diamond (2002) has called an “ambiguous” regime. Freedoms are limited and corruption is high (CPI, 2005; Freedom House, 2005). Organizational leaders or party or state officials who are actively subverting the quality of democracy are likely to transmit messages to their members or constituents that are detrimental to democracy.

On the other hand, influential community leaders and opposition party officials that remain outside the orbit of state control are more likely to convey messages that are more conducive to forming positive attitudes to democracy. They are more likely to be critical about the conduct of government and more likely to desire political goods like accountability, competition, rule of law, and inclusive participation, if only as a way to achieve their own political goals.

Mozambique’s particular conundrum is that not only do its citizens possess relatively low levels of information about public affairs, but the three decades of monopoly over formal political power by the Marxist oriented Frelimo party (first through an explicit one party system, then through growing electoral dominance under multi-partyism) means that available information about public affairs is often conveyed by or through sources that are anything but fronts of independent and critical information.

First, large sections of the electronic broadcast and print news media are under the control of the state: we have already mentioned *Radio Moçambique*; but the major television station (*TVM*), and largest daily (*Notícias, Diário de Moçambique*) and weekly (*Domingo*) are also state controlled.²⁰ Second, significant sections of civil society are explicitly or implicitly aligned with the state. For example, the predominant trade unions (such as *Organização dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos-Central Sindical* (OTM-CS) are explicitly pro-government, having either been created, dominated or historically favored by Frelimo. The business community is also largely pro-government, consisting of a significant proportion of the old bureaucratic elite of the Frelimo one party state who have since taken advantage of their positions and now run or manage newly privatized companies that often benefit from state bank loans granted either at nominal interest rates, or with

²⁰ *Savana, Demos, Embondeiero* are some of the independent weekly newspapers with significant circulation. A new media bill is currently being drafted by the state Information Office that would require all news journalists to register with the government and carry an official card (Mosse, 2007).

no expectation of repayment at all. This community's "main capital is precisely their link with Frelimo and its state" (Pereira & Shenga, 2005: 56). Thus, citizens affiliated to these types of organizations are more likely to receive information favorable to the state, rather than critical of it.

The range of the community, party or state leaders through which citizens ordinarily might learn something about politics are also likely to be aligned to the Frelimo party-state system. This applies not only to the typical array of Frelimo party officials and officials of government ministries, but also to local councilors and traditional leaders. While there are a healthy (though declining) number of opposition party MPs which citizens may contact, the electoral system (Provincial List Proportional Representation) reduces the incentives of both MPs and citizens to contact one another. MPs must please party bosses rather than citizens, and citizens come to discover that MPs may have limited ability to deliver goods to constituents or turn their preferences into policy outcomes. And since Renamo boycotted the country's first local government elections in 1998 over irregularities in voter registration, the opposition has been poorly represented in municipal councils. There were absolutely no opposition councilors across the country from 1999 to 2003, though independents won some seats in Maputo City. Since 2004, Renamo has controlled just four of 33 municipalities. Thus, any information about politics and democracy obtained from contact with local elected representatives will mostly have a Frelimo tint to it. Traditional leaders also collect local taxes and have been officially described in Government Decree Number 15/2000 as a continuation of the state bureaucracy at the community level.

On the other hand, church or community development or self-help organizations are more independent and less dominated by the state. Thus, not only do Mozambicans have relatively little low levels of access to the development of cognitive skills and the usual sources of political information in the news media, but they are also probably more likely than other Africans to get the little information that they do have from state aligned sources.

Membership in Secondary Associations

We now turn to establish the number of Mozambicans who might be able to make up the deficit of formal education and news media exposure by joining and interacting with secondary associations or by contacting community and political leaders. We first examine civil society membership. Significant numbers of people belong to the types of civic associations that in Mozambique are more likely to be aligned with the state. One in four (23 percent) are affiliated with either a trade union or farmers' association (with 12 percent active members and 1 percent official leaders), and a surprising 16 percent who say they are affiliated with a business or professional group (with 8 percent active and 1 percent a leader). Both figures put Mozambique around the middle of the 18 Afrobarometer countries.

But a far larger proportion (81 percent) of Mozambicans told interviewers that they are affiliated with some form of religious association. While about a third (31 percent) characterize themselves as "inactive members," 44 percent say they are active in these groups, and another 6 percent say they are an official leaders. This also places Mozambique around the middle of the 18 Afrobarometer countries.

Figure 19: Active Membership Trade Union / Farmers Association

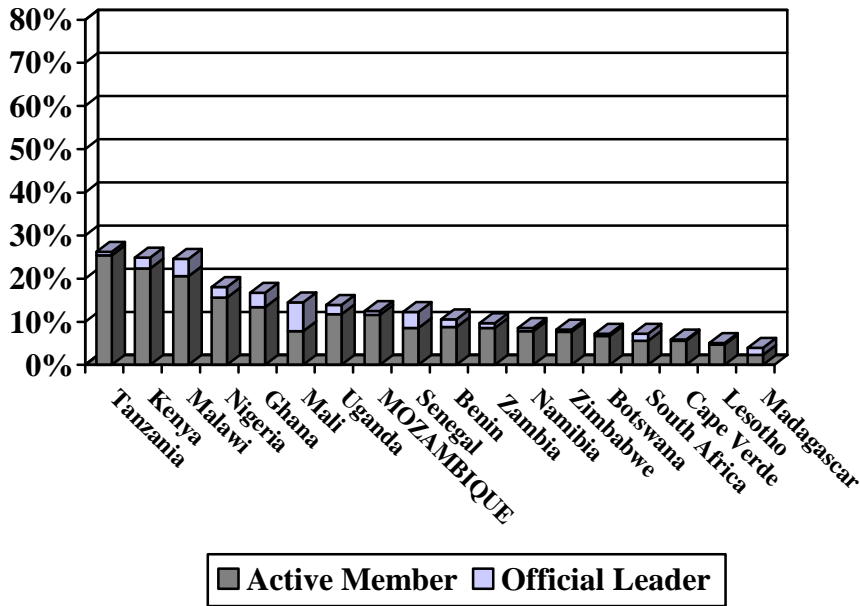


Figure 20: Active Membership Professional / Business Association

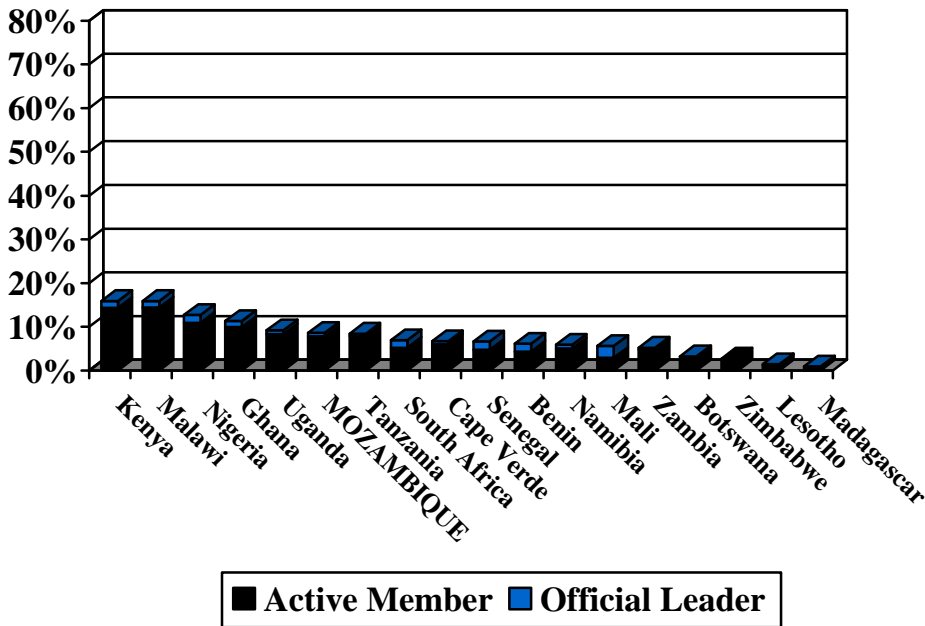
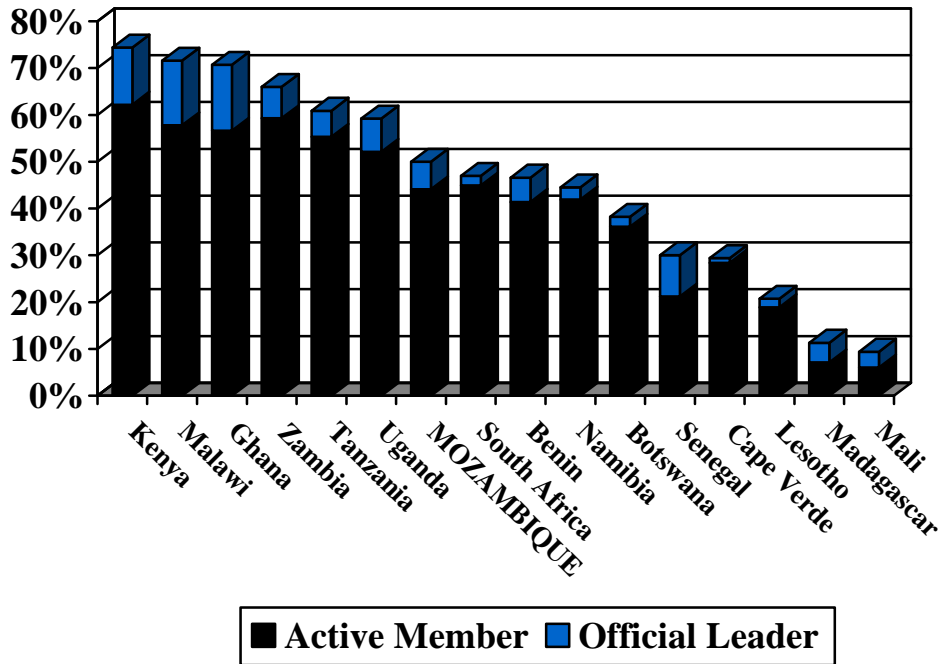


Figure 21: Active Membership Religious Groups



Just one in five (19 percent) say they are affiliated in some way with a group that is involved with community development issues, and just one in ten are active (9 percent active leader, 1 percent official leader). This figure places Mozambique in the bottom half of our 18 countries, and is twice as low as places like Tanzania, Senegal and Nigeria, and four times lower than Kenya and Malawi.

Figure 22: Active Membership Community Development Groups

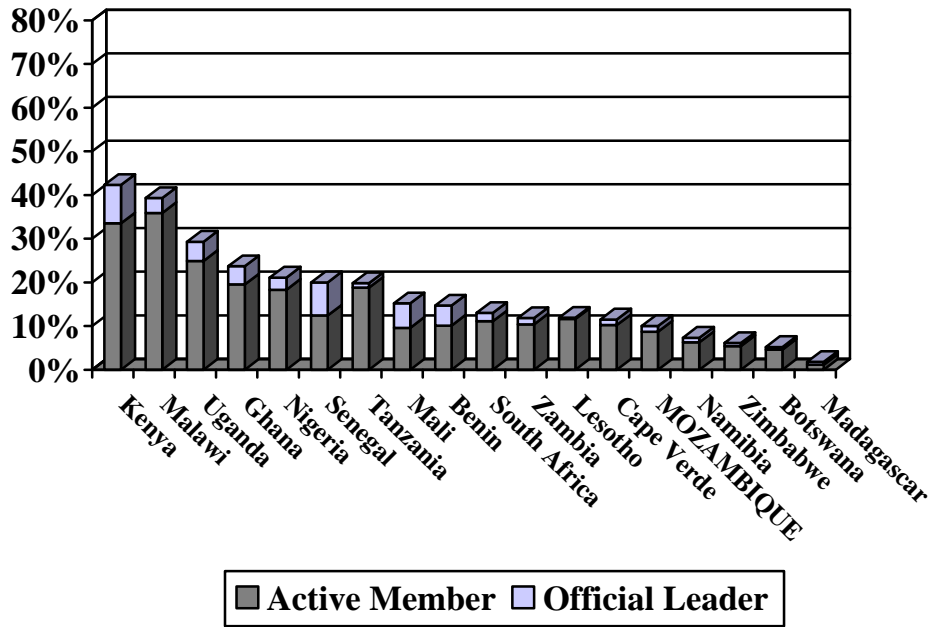
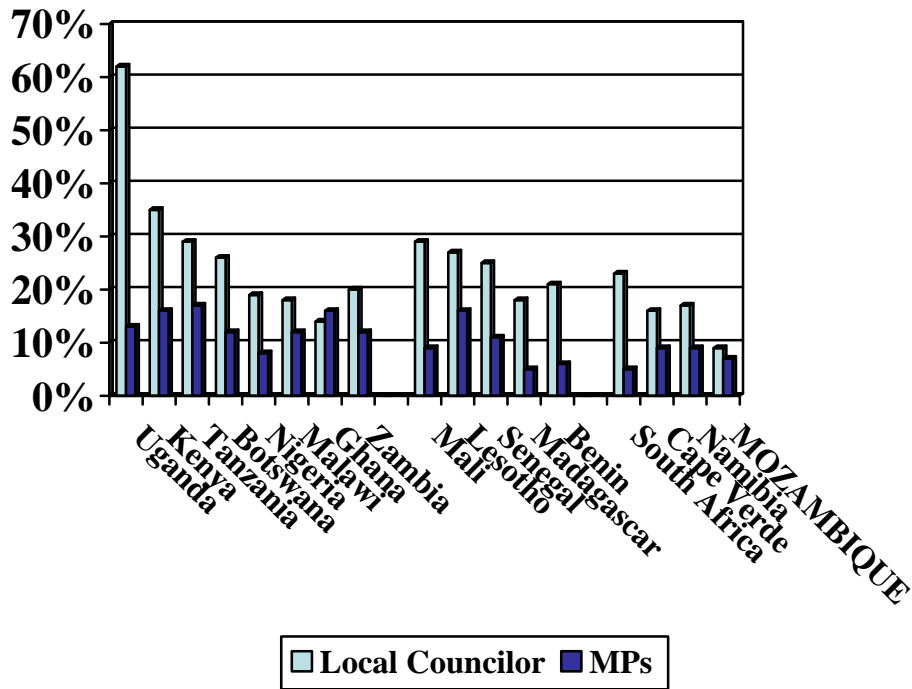


Figure 24: Public Contact With Elected Officials



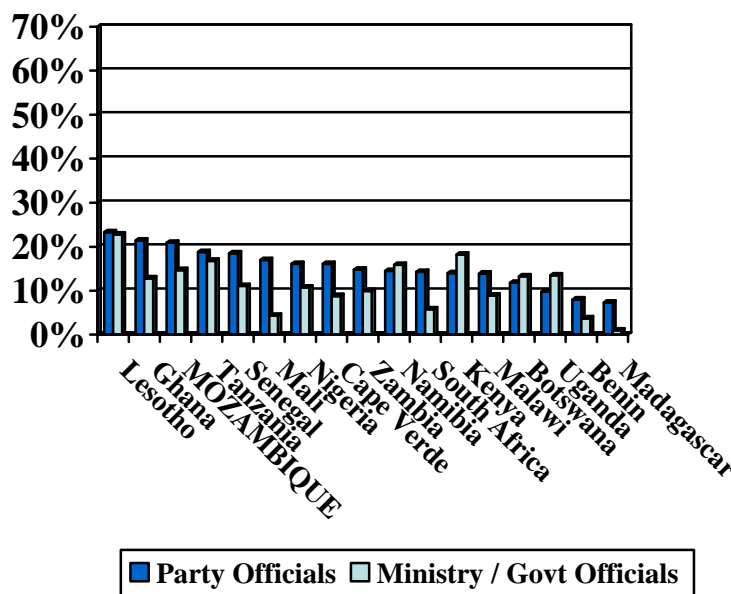
But regardless of whether or not they formally belong to any organized associations, three quarters of Mozambicans (76 percent) say they attended a community meeting in the previous year (with 37 percent saying they'd done so "often"), and a similar 69 percent reported "getting together with others to raise an important issue" (28 percent did so "often"). The latter figure is tied with Madagascar for the *highest* levels of community participation. Thus, there appears to be no evidence of any ingrained predisposition against getting involved in community affairs.

Contacting Community and Political Leaders

And to what extent are Mozambicans able to gather information by speaking with political and community leaders? The answer is "not much," if we view the question in terms of elected leaders. Mozambicans have extremely low rates of contact with elected leaders. They have the lowest rate of contact with local councilors of all 18 Afrobarometer countries (just 9 percent had contacted one in the previous year). And just seven percent of Mozambicans said they had contacted an MP, which was a statistical tie for the lowest ranking position with Benin (6 percent), South Africa (5 percent) and Madagascar (5 percent).

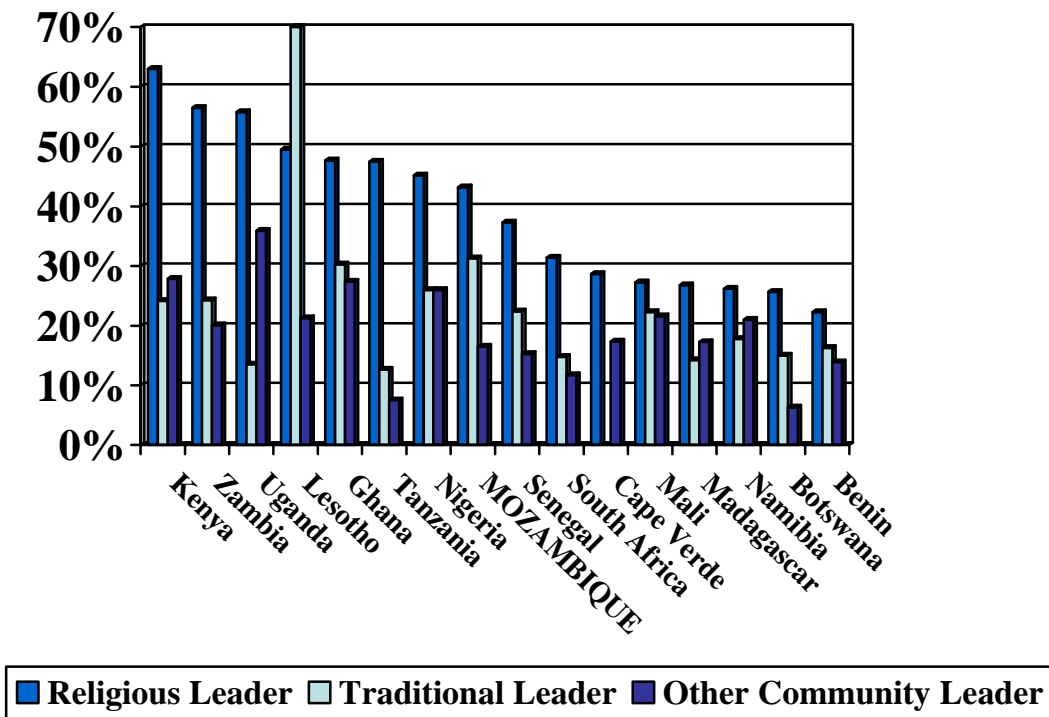
Yet when it comes to non-elected leaders, Mozambicans have relatively high rates of contact. One in five respondents (21 percent) said they had made contact at least once with a party official in the past year (7 percent did so "often"), which statistically ties Lesotho (23 percent) for the highest recorded rate in the Afrobarometer. And 15 percent said they had made at least one contact with a ministry or government official (with 4 percent "often"). Frelimo supporters are more likely to contact elected representatives: nine percent made contact with a local councilor, compared to five percent of opposition supporters; eight percent contacted an MP (compared to six percent for opposition, and 16 percent made contact with a government or ministry officials (double the rate of opposition supports, seven percent). Interestingly, there is no difference between the rate of contact with party officials between opposition (23 percent) or Frelimo (22 percent) supporters.

Figure 25: Public Contact With Government and Party Officials



Mozambicans' rate of contact with community leaders lies right around the Afrobarometer midpoint. One in two people (53 percent) said they had contacted a religious leader at least once in the past year (with 19 percent doing so "often"), one in three (31 percent) contacted a traditional leader (13 percent "often"), and 17 percent had contacted some other community leader (6 percent often). Traditional leaders are the one institution with which rural dwellers (36 percent) are more likely to contact than their urban counterparts (24 percent).

Figure 26: Public Contact With Community Leaders



In summary, we have seen that extremely few adult Mozambicans have had any substantial schooling, let alone high school or university degrees. And beside the radio, only small minorities have regular exposure to news about politics or public affairs. Yet, at the same time, they are relatively motivated to engage with the political process through interest and interpersonal discussion.

While a majority belongs to a religious group, only small minorities belong to community associations, trade unions or business groups. Yet large majorities say they have attended a community meeting and joined with others to accomplish something in their community. And while very small proportions come into contact with elected leaders, larger minorities get to see government or party leaders, and a relatively large number of people are in contact with community leaders, many on a fairly regular basis.

Connecting Cognitive Awareness and Democratic Citizenship in Mozambique

While the first section of this paper described four separate cognitive aspects of democratic citizenship (political information, opinionation, criticalness, and attitudes to democracy), this final section attempts to explain these attitudes by first focusing on the role of formal education

and news media use, and then considering a range of alternative explanations such as values, political fear, actual political and economic developments, and the electoral system.

The Role of Cognitive Awareness

We use a series of multiple regression models to assess the extent to which Mozambique's distinctive pattern of public attitudes are a function of the lack of formal education, access to the news media, and political information. Furthermore, we probe whether relatively poorly informed citizens are able to use more experiential means like interpersonal discussion, attending group meetings or contacting officials to make up cognitive deficits and gain additional information about politics and public affairs. Finally, we examine whether it matters if citizens use news media, belong to associations, or contact officials that are aligned with the state or governing party.

The results displayed in Table 1 indicate that *political information* is not a random, meaningless ability to answer "quiz-show" type questions about political trivia. Examining the first column in Table 1, we can see that political information in Mozambique is driven first and foremost by formal education. But even taking the impact of education into account, watching news programs on television and listening to them on radio (but, notably, not by reading newspapers) also makes an important, independent and positive contribution. But the results also demonstrate that people with no formal education or who never make use of news media can make up some of their informational deficit through interpersonal discussion, joining collective action groups and, surprisingly, contacting officials from government ministries.

Looking across the first row in Table 1, we can see that political information is, in turn, a very potent predictor of several other important variables. Even after controlling for Mozambique's large rural-urban divide, and the privileged position of those who speak Portuguese, knowledge of incumbents and facts about governance and democracy greatly increases Mozambicans' ability to offer opinions about the performance of government and the democratic regime, as well as their ability to form preferences about political regimes or demand democracy.

As we have seen above, the *formal education* possessed by small minorities of the Mozambican population plays a crucial role in helping them become more informed about the political system. But even after adding political information to the model, formal education continues to play an important role in contributing to people's ability to offer opinions on performance, form regime preferences and demand democracy. While radio and television news do make important contribution to the accumulation of political information, *news media use* has extremely few effects on cognitive elements of citizenship or attitudes to democracy. Newspaper readership does contribute to demand for democracy, but those who obtain news from television (which is largely state dominated) are actually *less* committed to democracy.

Cognitive engagement has effects on most of the dependent variables assessed in the various models in Table 1. However, interest in politics is consistently more important than interpersonal discussion. But while interest is almost always an important part of the explanation, its contribution to democratic citizenship is not always positive. Political interest enables people to offer more opinions and preferences, yet among those respondents with opinions, interest in politics reduces the likelihood that they will offer critical opinions. And while it increases demand for democracy, it also increases Mozambicans tendency to (over)rate the extent of democracy in their country.

Our analysis finds few consistent contributions from *interpersonal contact* or *organizational affiliation*. Membership in a community development group does enable people to form opinions

about performance of government and democracy, but it also leads those who do have opinions to be less critical of performance, and leads all members to be more likely to perceive a higher supply of democracy. Attending community meetings enables more opinionation, but also detracts from a sense of critical democratic citizenship. And while joining collective action groups contributes to political knowledge, it also leads to less critical views of performance. The only positive impact with any real consistency comes from citizen contact with religious leaders. Net all other influences, those citizens who most frequently seek out religious leaders for help solving important problems are more able to form preferences about democracy, more likely to demand democracy, and more likely to be a critical democrat.

Overall, cognitive factors explain a significant share of the variation in political information (Adjusted $R^2 = .243$), and more modest shares of opinionation about performance (Adj. $R^2 = .183$) and political regimes (Adj. $R^2 = .168$) and demand for democracy (Adj. $R^2 = .116$). However, they explain little about whether or not those Mozambicans' who have opinions are more or less critical.

Table 1: Consequences of Cognitive Awareness and Alternative Information Sources in Mozambique

	Political Information	Opinionation (Supply of Governance & Democracy)	Opinionation (Demand for Democracy)	Criticalness (Supply of Governance)	Criticalness (Supply of Democracy)	Demand for Democracy	Supply of Democracy
<i>Cognitive Awareness</i>							
Political Information	--	.211***	.190***	NS	-.083*	.096**	.139***
Formal Education	.297***	.110***	.107**	NS	NS	.177***	NS
Radio News	.077**	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Television News	.131***	NS	NS	NS	NS	-.080*	NS
Newspapers	NS	NS	.072*	NS	NS	.096***	NS
Interest in Politics	NS	.107***	.170***	-.093*	-.095**	.106***	.143***
Political Discussion	.127***	.103***	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
<i>Alternative Sources</i>							
Member, Religious Group	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	.061***	NS
Member, Development Group	NS	.058*	NS	-.117*	NS	NS	.141***
Member, Trade Union	NS	.087**	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Member, Prof Group	NS	NS	.108***	NS	NS	NS	NS
Attend Community Meetings	NS	.103***	.085**	NS	NS	NS	NS
Joined With Others	.058*	NS	NS	-.125**	-.132***	NS	NS
Contact, Rel Leader	NS	NS	.068**	NS	NS	.090***	NS
Contact Govt Official	.088**	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Contact Trad Leader	NS	NS	NS	NS	.072**	NS	NS
<i>Control Variables</i>							
Rural	-.070*	-.183***	-.031 ^{NS}	-.068 ^{NS}	-.092*	-.089**	.070*
Portuguese	-.003 ^{NS}	.002 ^{NS}	-.060*	-.060 ^{NS}	.066*	-.056 ^{NS}	-.038 ^{NS}
Adjusted R ²	.243	.183	.168	.045	.045	.116	.070
N	1199	1197	1198	480	883	1199	1199

Table reports standardized (Beta) regression coefficients

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS?

We now turn to consider whether alternative approaches offer better explanations of Mozambique's distinctive profile of public opinion. We pay particular attention to the issue of whether the impact of cognitive factors remains or diminishes once we take these other explanations into account?

Values

We begin by examining the role of values. A culturally oriented explanation would argue that Mozambique's profile of "uncritical citizenship" is rooted in a syndrome of orientations that are the consequence of both indigenous traditions and two centuries of Portuguese rule and which undermine the values necessary for a democratic society (see Chazan, 1993; Owusu, 1992; Mamdani, 1996; Etounga-Manguelle, 2000). First of all, popular emphases of the communal good combined with the history of traditional rule may lead people to see themselves as clients dependant on neo-patrimonial "big men" to provide for their welfare. Second, popular emphases on the communal good may also mean that the generation of just outcomes is valued over the rule of law. Third, the patriarchal nature of many African polities may undermine the commitment to equality. Fourth, emphases on consensus may breed intolerance of dissent or at least popular acceptance of government crackdowns on expression. And finally, centuries of colonial autocracy may lead people to see themselves as passive, deferential subjects of external forces rather than as agents, or democratic citizens with the right to question authority and accountability (Mattes & Shin, 2005).

The Afrobarometer asked a range of questions to tap these various facets of political culture. Taken together, the responses suggest that images of a subject political culture in a place like Mozambique may need to be reconsidered. For instance, in order to measure *clientelism*, the Afrobarometer asked people about the provision of welfare. While a significant number of Mozambicans still see themselves as dependent on the state, the figures are not overwhelming. Just over one half (53 percent) agree that "The government should bear the main responsibility for the well-being of people." And just a little more than one third (38 percent) agree with a classic feature of clientelism that: "Once in office, leaders are obliged to help their own community."

To tap popular support for the *rule of law*, we asked three questions, the answers to which form a valid and reliable index. Again, people are far more likely to support the pro-democratic value than the conventional wisdom might suggest. Eight in ten agreed that "It is important to obey the government in power no matter who you voted for" (81 percent), and that "it is better to find legal solutions to problems even if it takes longer" (79 percent), and seven in ten said that "the use of violence is never justified in Mozambican politics today" (69 percent).²¹

In contrast to the typical view, political and gender *equality* are also strongly valued by Mozambicans. Again, eight in ten feel that "All people should be able to vote, even if they do not fully understand all the issues in an election: (82 percent) and that "women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men" (81 percent), while three quarters agree that "women should have equal rights and receive the same treatment as men" (just 14 percent

²¹ Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.58) which explains 52.6 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .55) is acceptable (n=21,592).

agree with the proposition that: “Women have always been subject to traditional laws and customs, and should remain so” (76 percent).²²

To be sure, significantly smaller proportions of Mozambicans support *freedom of expression*. Two thirds (66 percent) agree that “the news media should be free to publish any story that they see fit without fear of being shut down” (but one fifth -- 21 percent -- say that “Government should close newspapers that print false stories or misinformation”). Just over half (55 percent) of all respondents say that “People should be able to speak their minds about politics free of government influence” (while one third (35 percent) support the view that “Government should not allow the expression of political views that are fundamentally different from the views of the majority). And one half (49 percent) agree that “We should be able to join any organization, whether or not the government approves of it” (and over a third -- 37 percent -- support the idea that “Government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies”).²³

The typical view of political culture in a place like Mozambique does, however, resonate much more strongly when it comes to public values about citizen *agency* and their duty to hold leaders *accountable*. Just over one half (55 percent) say that “we should be more active in questioning the answers of our leaders.” And when asked who was responsible for “making sure that, once elected,” Members of Parliament or councilors “do their jobs,” just 8 percent and 11 percent respectively answered that it is “the voters” task to hold elected leaders accountable. In contrast, the most frequent reply was that this was the President’s job (46 percent for monitoring MPs, and 39 percent for local government). Around one fifth answered “the parliament” (21 percent) or the “local council” (21 percent), and about one tenth pointing to the political party (10 percent and 11 percent respectively).²⁴

Political Fear and Intimidation

From a completely different perspective, one might suspect that Mozambicans’ tendencies to decline to provide opinions and, or provide rose-coloured assessments of political performance when they answer are not reflections of deeply held values, but rather of the political fear and intimidation that endures from a decade and a half of civil war and increasing electoral dominance of the country’s ruling party. In order to assess the impact of political fear and perceived intimidation on the survey response, we first asked people for their partisan identification (73 percent said Frelimo, up substantially from 2003, 8 percent said Renamo, and 18 percent said they do not feel close to any political party). We also asked people about how often they feel people “have to be careful of what they say about politics?” Over two thirds answered that people “always” (41 percent) or “often” (28 percent) have to curb their speech in Mozambique. At the same time, just under two thirds (63 percent) say the “freedom to say what you think” in Mozambique is better now than a few years ago. Finally, we asked people in the very last question posed during the interview: “Who do you think sent us to do this interview?” Well over half of all respondents felt that the fieldworker was sent by the government (57 percent).

²² Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.54) which explains 51.2 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .51) is low and barely acceptable (n=20,389).

²³ Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.58) which explains 52.8 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha = .55) is acceptable (n=21,588).

²⁴ The two items are strongly correlated (Pearson’s $r = .74$) and strongly reliable (Cronbach’s Alpha = .84) warranting the creation of a two item average construct (n=21,600).

Performance Satisfaction

Finally, a third alternative explanation might simply conclude that Mozambicans' optimistic assessments of government and democratic performance are simply a reflection that things are, in fact, getting better – at least in terms of the direct experiences of ordinary people. Thus, we turn to a range of questions that tap people's reported experiences with a range of economic developments such as everyday poverty,²⁵ and economic trends,²⁶ as well as ill-health²⁷ and personal loss due to AIDS related deaths.²⁸ We also identified a series of measures of people's experience with political phenomena such as the existence of freedom and rights,²⁹ the ease with which they are able to work with state agencies,³⁰ and the extent to which they are victimized by bureaucrat and police demands for extortion payoffs.³¹ However, we specifically avoided using more subjective assessments of proximally distant phenomena such as job performance evaluations, or perceptions of corruption in government.

Discussion

The results displayed in Table 2 demonstrate that values matter. The narrow majority of Mozambicans who value *freedom of expression* are significantly more likely than those who support government suppression of dissent to have opinions, to demand democracy, and are less likely to say they are living in a democracy. Similarly, the seventy to eighty percent of respondents who value *rule of law* are also more likely to have opinions and demand democracy, though they are not as critical of the supply of democracy. Finally, the narrow majority who believe that *citizens should question leaders* are more likely than those who say we should have

²⁵ The questions asked people how many times in the past year they had gone without food, water, medical care, cooking fuel, and a cash income. Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.59) which explains 51.9 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .77) is very high (n=21,562).

²⁶ Three questions assessed people's personal living conditions now, over the past year, and in comparison to other people. Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.80) which explains 60.3 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .67) is very high (n=21,536). Two questions measured people's assessments of national economic conditions now and over the past year. The two items are sufficiently correlated (Pearson's $r = .41$) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = .58) to warrant the creation of a two item average construct (n=21,580). Finally two items measured people's expectations of improvements in both their personal living conditions and the national economy. The two items are strongly correlated (Pearson's $r = .77$) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .87) is very high (n=21,586).

²⁷ The questions asked people how much work they had missed in the past month due to their physical health and how often they had felt tired or exhausted due to worry or anxiety. The two items are strongly correlated (Pearson's $r = .59$) and strongly reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = .74) warranting the creation of a two item average construct (n=21,592).

²⁸ The question asked people whether they knew a close friend or relative who had died of AIDS.

²⁹ Four questions asked people whether they were freer now than a few years ago to join organizations, vote the way they wanted, and whether they were freer from crime or from arbitrary arrest. Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.38) which explains 59.7 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .76) is very high (n=21,577).

³⁰ Five questions asked respondents how easy they found it to obtain identity documents, household services and medical treatment from state agencies, a place in school for their children, and help from the police. Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.10) which explains 42.0 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .65) is acceptable (n=21,577).

³¹ Five questions asked respondents how many times in the past year they had to pay a bribe in order to get an identity document, a place in school for children, household services, medical treatment, or to avoid a problem with the police. Factor analysis extracted a single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.52) which explains 50.4 percent of the common variance. Index reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .75) is high (n=21,584).

more respect for authority to have opinions, to criticize the supply of democracy, and to demand democracy.

Is there any evidence of the impact of explicit fear or more implicit political pressure on respondent answers? We find that those respondents who thought the interviewer was from a government agency were actually *more* likely to provide an opinion about democracy and its alternatives, but otherwise exhibited no other significant difference. The same finding applies to those who said that it is not safe to speak their minds about politics in the country today. We also find that those who perceive a declining level of freedom of speech over the past few years are less likely to demand democracy, but as we will see below, so are those who perceive declines in other rights and freedoms. Finally, we observe strong partisan impacts with Frelimo identifiers more likely to offer opinions on performance or form regime preferences, but less likely to offer critical opinions (compared to non partisans). Opposition supporters are also more likely to form regime preferences (than non partisans) but much more likely to criticize the performance of the democratic regime.

To what extent is Mozambique's distinctive profile of uncritical citizenship simply a result of citizens' actual experiences with an improving society? We find that those Mozambicans who experience a greater supply of political freedom and think the national economy is improving are less likely to criticize the supply of governance and democracy. And those who have positive experiences interacting with state agencies are also less likely to be critical. Finally, those who have been victimized by extortion at the hands of state bureaucrats and police are more likely to offer opinions, and are more demanding of democracy (yet, oddly, are also more likely to think the country is democratic).

Overall, the addition of cultural values, perceptions of political fear or pressure, and economic and political experiences greatly increases our ability to account for levels of critical evaluations among those Mozambicans with opinions, and the perceived supply of democracy amongst all respondents. But cognitive factors retain a strong effect (net all these other influences) in the models explaining opinionation, demand for democracy, and the supply of democracy. Political information remains the single strongest predictor of opinionation and, along with formal education, continues to have a large impact on demand for democracy.

Table 2. Explaining Attitudes to Democracy in Mozambique: Cognitive, Cultural, Political, and Pressure Factors Compared

	Opinionation (Supply of Gov & Democracy)	Opinionation (Demand for Democracy)	Criticalness (Supply of Governance)	Criticalness (Supply of Democracy)	Demand for Democracy	Supply of Democracy
<i>Cognitive Awareness</i>						
Political Information	.155***	.183***			.073*	.108***
Formal Education	.080*	.119***			.156***	-.061*
Interest in Politics	.148***	.074*		-.060*	.104***	.097***
Political Discussion		.088*				
<i>Alternative Sources</i>						
Member, Trade Union		.081**	-.092*		.071**	
Member, Business Group	.127***	.078**				
Attend Community Meetings		.084**				.112***
Joined With Others			-.091*	-.086**		
Contact Religious Leader	.089**				.084**	
<i>Values</i>						
Freedom of Expression (I)	.092***				.202***	-.070**
Rule of Law (I)	.121***	.090***		-.097***	.160***	.058*
People Should Question Leaders		.058*	.120**		.076**	
Leaders Should Treat All Equally					-.069**	
<i>Citizen Experiences</i>						
Lived Poverty (I)	-.097***					
Personal Loss to AIDS					.065*	
Personal Economic Conditions (I)						.083*
National Economic Conditions (I)			-.148***	-.146***		.108***
Increased Economic Goods (I)				-.111***		.084**
Relative Deprivation			-.134***		-.053*	
Easy to Work With State			-.143***	-		
Official Victimization (I)	.090***	.122***			.084***	.060*
Increased Freedoms (I)			-.245***	-.096***		.136***
<i>Fear and Intimidation</i>						
Identifies W/ Governing Party	.071*	.089**	-.147***			.068*
Identifies W/ Opposition		.081**		.317***		-.148***
Less Freedom of Speech					-.073**	
Have To Be Watch What You Say		.099***				
Thinks Interviewer From Govt		.106***				
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Rural	-.028 ^{NS}	-.089***	-.025 ^{NS}	-.037 ^{NS}	-.053 ^{NS}	-.049 ^{NS}
Portuguese	.051 ^{NS}	-.002 ^{NS}	-.043 ^{NS}	.084**	-.033 ^{NS}	-.045 ^{NS}
Adjusted R ²	.188	.237	.248	.252	.201	.208
N	1075	1196	470	870	1188	1181

Table reports standardized (Beta) regression coefficients

Electoral System

Finally, we wonder whether Mozambicans' cognitive deficits in politics have been exacerbated by the country's choice of electoral system. Because list proportional representation systems, such as Mozambique's, place inordinate power in the hands of party leaders who control the lists, legislators' have far more of an incentive to please their party bosses than any identifiable group of voters. Thus both MPs and citizens have little motivation to actively seek out each other, exchange information and learn from one another, either by expressing policy preferences or sharing experiences of problems.

While all previous models in Tables 1 and 2 have focused within Mozambique, assessing the impact of a variable that affects an entire country (like a national electoral system) requires that we expand the scope of our analysis to compare respondents across countries (see Table 3). Once we do so, we find that even after holding constant for a multitude of cognitive, cultural, partisan and performance related factors, the electoral system has a very important impact. In fact, list PR (measured here as a dummy variable, with single member district systems as the excluded category) has the single strongest impact on political information. Moreover, its impact is negative. In other words, compared to citizens who live in single member district systems, those Africans who live in countries that use proportional representation are systematically less able to provide the name of their member of parliament (which would be expected). But, less predictably, they are also less able to give the correct name of their local councilor, the Deputy President or the largest party in the legislature, know the correct limit on presidential terms or understand the role of the courts. And perhaps most importantly, over and above the effect of political knowledge, PR also decreases people's ability to offer opinions or form preferences on issues of governance and democracy, decreases the frequency with which those with opinions will offer critical evaluations, and decreases the demand for democracy.

Table 3: Explaining Attitudes to Democracy in Africa: Cognitive, Cultural, Political, Pressure and Electoral System Factors Compared

	Political Information	Opinionation (Supply of Gov & Democracy)	Opinionation (Demand for Democracy)	Criticalness (Supply of Governance)	Criticalness (Supply of Democracy)	Demand for Democracy	Supply of Democracy
<i>Cognitive Awareness</i>							
Political Information	X	.128	.140	.128	..066	.166	-.055
Formal Education	.308	.161	.112			.114	
Radio News Use	.089	.086	.103				
Television News Use	.068		.076			.111	
Newspaper Readership	.071						
Interest in Politics			.059	-.062			
Political Discussion	.090	.103	.061	.050		.085	
<i>Alternative Sources</i>							
Member, Development Group			.053				
Attend Community Meetings	.088			-.066			
Contact Local Councilor	.083						
Contact Traditional Leader			.058				
<i>Values</i>							
Equality (I)			.070		-.071	.054	
Freedom of Expression (I)						.120	
Rule of Law (I)			.060		-.093	.151	.095
Accountability (C)		.054	.083				
People Should Question Leaders						.073	
<i>Citizen Experiences</i>							
Lived Poverty				.059	.064		
Personal Loss to AIDS		.085					
National Economic Conditions (I)				-.164	-.146		.137
Increased Economic Goods (I)			-.055	-.252	-.141		.157
Relative Deprivation				-.073	-.059		
Easy to Work With State				-.146			.059
Official Victimization (I)		.117					
Increased Freedoms (I)			.063	-.231	-.120		.135
<i>Fear and Intimidation</i>							
Identifies W/ Governing Party	.138			-.156	-.169		.148
Identifies W/ Opposition	.080		.070			.053	
Less Freedom of Speech					.094	-.071	-.071
Thinks Interviewer From Govt		.080					

<i>Electoral System</i>							
List Proportional Representation	-.311	-.092			-.075	-.135	.073
Mixed System	-.185				-.064	.061	
<i>Control Variables</i>							
Rural	.000 ^{NS}	-.004 ^{NS}	-.055***	-.046***	-.017^{NS}	-.034^{NS}	-.043^{NS}
Adjusted R²	.360	.179	.177	.426	.262	.233	.236
N	20,343	21,264	18,047	8925	13,128	20,317	21,508

While more research is clearly necessary to probe this fascinating and consequential finding, it appears that proportional representation in Mozambique (and other similarly designed political systems) has had the effect of, in the current vernacular, “dumbing down” the body politic. Besides simply reducing the incentives for interaction and mutual learning, removing any clear connection between elected representatives and identifiable geographic constituencies eliminates an important “cognitive hook” with which citizens might otherwise obtain a firmer handle on the political process and on which they can hang other pieces of information about government and public affairs. Legislators in constituency based systems constitute a key “linkage institutions” that connects citizens (especially those in deep rural areas) with the state (see Barkan, 1995).

Conclusions

We have demonstrated that Mozambicans exhibit a distinctive and problematic structure of public attitudes toward democracy and governance. This profile of uncritical citizenship is characterized by low levels of political information, relatively high levels of “don’t know” responses, and extremely positive (and possibly unreflective) evaluations amongst those who have opinions. This syndrome is accompanied by high levels of satisfaction with the supply of democracy juxtaposed with low levels of demand for it. Based on popular estimates that they view their basket of economic and political goods is larger now than a few years ago, Mozambicans are satisfied with the progress of Mozambique’s democratic experiment. Yet, paradoxically, this optimism stops short of creating a widespread demand for democracy.

We have established that a series of cognitive factors (political information, formal education and interest in politics) have an important impact, even after taking into account the considerable impact of values, on Mozambicans’ abilities to provide opinions and form preferences, and on their perceived supply of and demand for democracy. These findings suggest that a significant share of the fate of Mozambique’s fledgling democracy will rest on the speed and degree to which the government and donors are able to expand educational opportunities and access to news media, particularly independent media, in order to build critical skills across the body politic. Finally, we have found strong evidence that Mozambique has chosen an electoral system that does nothing to reverse, and rather probably exacerbates, the deleterious effects of a low information society. By removing any identifiable links between voters and elected representatives, list proportional representation appears to reduce citizens’ ability (or incentive) to learn other key facts about the political system, and thus reduces their ability (or incentive) to offer opinions and demand democracy. Consequently, electoral reform also ought to occupy a central place on the reform agenda of Mozambican democrats.

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