



Working Paper No. 129

**MAPPING IDEOLOGIES IN AFRICAN
LANDSCAPES**

by Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz and Dominique Lewis

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Lewis

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Mapping Ideologies in African Landscapes

Abstract¹

Candidate appeals on the basis of what Western observers would call ideology are rare in contemporary Africa. Given this general absence of ideological cues, top-down approaches to the study of the emergence of political attitudinal structures would suggest that most non-elites will likely not self-label ideologically or structure their political attitudes according to identifiable dimensions. However, bottom-up approaches focus on how individuals can structure their attitudinal dispositions in coherent ways, even in the absence of an elite-generated “discursive superstructure.” In this paper, we first explore the extent to which African parties are in fact ideologically distinguishable, by utilizing Afrobarometer survey data on the median attitudes of parties’ bases. We find that, in more than half of the paired comparisons that we observe, major parties are not distinguishable from one another in terms of their adherents’ attitudes towards the proper role of the state in the economy; the same is true in terms of support for democratic norms. This suggests a relative lack of elite-generated ideological discourse. Following this, we attempt to measure the extent to which Africans structure their attitudes on political issues according to identifiably coherent structures in these areas of state involvement in the economy and democratic institutions. Exploratory factor analyses, which we also conduct using Afrobarometer data, suggest little evidence of such structures and high rates of incoherence in individuals’ responses to sets of seemingly related questions. These findings hold for all countries included in the analyses and are consistent across sub-groups divided on the bases of sex, partisanship, education, media access, urban-rural setting, political knowledge, and stated interest in politics.

¹ We gratefully acknowledge Brian Kennedy’s research assistance on this project. Matt Grossman, William Jacoby, Eric Juenke, Dan Lee, Robert Lupton, Sarah Reckhow, and Ani Sarkissian provided valuable advice on conceptualization and analysis issues. We also thank attendees of the 2010 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting for helpful feedback.

Introduction

On April 12, 2010, former Nigerian military ruler Ibrahim Babangida announced plans to stand as a candidate in his country's 2011 presidential elections. Although General Babangida considered himself a member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), his ability to secure that party's nomination was highly questionable from the start, given that the acting president, Goodluck Jonathan, is himself a PDP member. When asked about this potential roadblock, Gen. Babangida replied, "Fortunately, we have about fifty-one political parties in the country...What I'm sure of is that I can always find one party out of fifty-one that I can pitch my tent on."²

Gen. Babangida did not earn the nickname "Maradona"—a reference to the dexterous Argentine soccer dribbler—without reason. Although he eventually withdrew from the PDP nomination race and general contest altogether, his stated political flexibility, while mercenary, would not seem highly out of the ordinary in many African countries, where party switching is exceedingly common. In Senegal, for example, *transhumance*, or opportunistic party switching, was particularly common after Abdoulaye Wade's *Sopi* coalition ousted the long-ruling *Parti Socialiste* (PS) in 2000. While parties in advanced democracies often function as aggregators of individuals with similar ideological dispositions (Wittman 1973), African political parties are often portrayed as vehicles to support the political and material aggrandizement of certain individuals or ethnic groups. Of the three types of linkage strategies enumerated by Kitschelt (2000)—charismatic, clientelistic, and programmatic—the former two are overwhelmingly the norm in African electoral campaigns. Party communications focus on the admirable individual qualities of the paramount figure, usually stressing his benevolence and strong leadership capabilities. Or, electoral competitors signal that political support for the candidate will be rewarded with inclusion in a post-election distributional coalition. Parties, in other words, attempt to convince voters that they have strong, capable leadership that will deliver lucrative patronage as reciprocation for support.

Certainly, programmatic appeals are not absent from political discourse in Africa. Candidates usually advocate for new government initiatives, or revisions to existing policies. However, when they are made, these specific proposals are usually not anchored by broader, distinct themes. For example, during campaigns preceding the 2011 elections in Uganda, all of President Yoweri Museveni's opponents advocated for the adoption of federalism in the country, which they argued would enhance the power of traditional rulers. However, most of these candidates also proposed significant expansions of government-run programs on health, job creation, education, infrastructure, and tourism, most of which would be out of ministries based in Kampala. In other words, most candidates who made federalism a central plank in their campaign did not make significant additional proposals that would limit the spending and oversight powers of the central government.³ This should not suggest that these candidates' platforms were logically incoherent; rather, they made no attempt to market their specific promises of federalism in any kind of broader set of principles that called for a more limited role for the central state.

Such is the norm, we argue, throughout Africa. Politicians there rarely make electoral appeals on the basis of what Western observers would characterize as ideology. Candidates themselves tend not to self-label ideologically, and most parties do not try to establish and communicate stable ideological cores. This situation allows Gen. Babangida and countless other politicians across the continent to change parties, with minimal fear that their own core political values will conflict with those of their new co-partisans. Post-independence mass parties were often associated with clear, ideological labels; socialist and capitalist parties sought to win support, both domestic and foreign, on the basis of their worldviews and prescriptions. Today, however, most parties offer relatively boilerplate promises around non-controversial (i.e., "valence" issues), such as fostering economic development, improving human rights, and combating corruption.

² Interview on BBC World Service's Focus on Africa radio program (13 April 2010).

³ An exception is Beti Kamywa, of the Uganda Federal Alliance, whose manifesto consistently called for significant shifts in powers to local governments, and whose speeches stressed the principle that thorough decentralization would improve citizen efficacy and result in improved governance and democracy.

Given this absence of ideological cues in elite-mass communications in most African countries, many political analysts would expect that, consequently, most African citizens will not structure their political attitudes according to coherent, identifiable structures. Much of the foundational literature on the emergence of ideology in European and North American contexts focuses on the role of elites in generating and transmitting ideologies to the masses. Individual citizens, in turn, find utility in these elite-generated structures. Ideology enhances individuals' ability to process new facts, reduces cognitive dissonance, and improves efficiency in political decision making. According to this perspective, then, ideological entrepreneurs generate and communicate worldviews in order to win and mobilize support, and these worldviews find durability because of the efficiency gains individual citizens' find in adhering to them.

An alternative perspective, rooted in research in political psychology, suggests that attitudinal structures might emerge even in the absence of a "discursive superstructure" established and utilized by elites. Such bottom-up approaches focus on how, in their drive to reduce uncertainty, improve cognitive efficiency, and minimize dissonance, individuals can structure their attitudinal dispositions coherently, even when elites do not provide them with clear ideological schemas. In other words, individuals create their own worldviews, and adjust their specific attitudes accordingly. If there is significant inter-individual regularity in these structures, we might be able to observe patterns empirically. In sum, observable structures of political attitudes, or ideologies, might emerge because elites craft and communicate them, or because individual non-elites develop their own schemas through which to better understand political developments.

While social scientists appear to agree that ideological appeals are not major features of African electoral discourse, little systematic research has been conducted on the extent to which African non-elites might structure their political attitudes along one or more identifiable ideological dimensions.⁴ This project represents an early attempt to begin to fill that lacuna. Using Afrobarometer opinion data from seventeen countries, we conduct exploratory factor analysis in order to identify possible attitudinal structures. In addition, because previous research suggests that certain types of citizens—i.e., the most politically sophisticated—will be more likely to structure their attitudes along coherent, identifiable dimensions, we conduct analyses on certain sub-groups within the overall sample. Our analyses were not able to identify any significant dimensions in the attitudes of respondents; these findings are robust under different specifications of dependent variables and did not seem to differ significantly on the basis of an individual's country, attachment to a ruling party, urban/rural setting, sex, media access, political knowledge, or stated level of political interest.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, we discuss the general dearth of ideological discourse in contemporary African electoral politics. Using Afrobarometer data, we demonstrate that in most of the paired comparisons we observe the membership bases of major parties within the same country are not distinguishable from one another in terms of attitudes on the proper role of the state in the economy or on support for democratic institutions. We also find that, within major parties, attitudes in these areas is usually no less varied than it is within non-partisans in the same country as a group. Since these issues are fundamental sources of ideological cleavage in many political systems, the findings provide further evidence of the non-ideological nature of political discourse in contemporary Africa.

In the second section, we discuss potential impacts of the generally non-ideological nature of African political competition, in terms of the structuration of individuals' political attitudes. Elite-driven approaches would suggest that the dearth of ideologically toned messages would make it unlikely that citizens would structure their political attitudes according to identifiable dimensions. Psychological approaches, on the other hand, suggest higher probabilities of identifying such structures. In the third section, we discuss our

⁴ Norris and Mattes (2003) create a left-right ideology measure using twenty-eight questions from the 1999-2001 Afrobarometer. However, their measure is additive, and they do not report any evidence that individuals' attitudes on these questions are correlated in significant ways. In addition, in regression analyses, their score is associated with support for the ruling party at a statistically significant level in only three countries: Botswana, Ghana, and South Africa.

analytical strategy for examining the extent to which African citizens do, in fact, structure their political attitudes according to identifiable dimensions. Finally, we report our findings—namely, that we cannot identify any latent structures that might influence individuals’ opinions on two or more issues—before discussing broader implications.

Political Ideology and Electoral Competition in African Systems

The years immediately preceding—and immediately following—European colonialism saw political arenas in many African countries filled with explicitly ideological parties.⁵ A number of early post-independence leaders—Luís Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Modibo Kéita of Mali, Samora Machel of Mozambique, Alphonse Massamba-Débat of Congo-Brazzaville, António Aghostino Neto of Angola, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde, Manuel Pinto da Costa of São Tomé e Príncipe, and Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea—developed or adhered to, at least rhetorically, variations of socialist ideologies. And their political parties—the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC), the United National Independence Party (UNIP) of Zambia, *Union Soudanaise-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (US-RDA) of Mali, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), *Conseil National de la Révolution* (CNR) of Congo-Brazzaville, *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA), Convention People’s Party (CPP) of Ghana, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), *Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe* (MLSTP), and *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) of Guinea—crafted electoral appeals or other legitimizing messages accordingly.

Other African politicians in this time period embraced capitalist policies and orientations. Félix Houphouët-Boigny and his mass party, the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d’Ivoire* (PDCI), supported pro-Western policies throughout the continent. In Ghana, J. B. Danquah and Kofi Abrefah Busia, and the United Party (UP), formed the core of the anti-Nkrumahist opposition. And the *Union Camerounaise* (UC) of Ahmadou Ahidjo maintained power in Yaoundé largely because of French patronage, and it supported pro-Western capitalism accordingly (DeLancey 1986). Given the global power politics of the Cold War era, this type of self-identification with a terminal of the capitalist-socialist dimension could provide a party or politician with crucial support from the East or West. For example, the struggle between rival politicians Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), both ethnically Luo, involved both men developing ideological adherences for quite strategic reasons, the former to attract support from the East, the latter from West (Bates 2005: 65-6).

Government leaders commonly developed ideological rhetoric, and they invested heavily in mass communication systems to disseminate propaganda (see Mazrui 1972; Tunstall 1977; Righter 1978: 15-6; Mytton 1983; Tudesq 1983, 1992; Ochs 1986: 16-26; Hechter 1987: 30-4; Bofo 1991; Ziegler and Asante 1992; Bourgault 1995; Linden 1998: 48-67; van der Veur 2002). Of course, the dearth of high-quality public opinion data from this time period means that we can say little about the extent to which non-elite citizens internalized or identified with these ideologies.

Post-Third Wave African politics seem substantially different from the immediate post-independence era in a number of ways, one of the most significant being a decreased emphasis of ideological appeals in elite-mass communications. While many parties have not abandoned ideological rhetoric outright, electoral appeals are most commonly made on the bases of individual leaders’ personal characteristics (Schatzberg 2001), ethnic and other affective identities (Ottaway 1999; Chabal and Daloz 1999: 17-30; Posner 2005), and patronage promises (LeVine 1980; Bayart 1989; Berman 1998; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Lindberg 2003; van de Walle 2007). Detailed programmatic proposals are rarer, and parties prefer emphasizing non-controversial proposals or vague populism during campaigns (see Kaspin 1995; Burnell 2001; Di Lorenzo and Sborgi 2001; Lindberg 2001; Nugent 2001; Carbone 2008: 149). Ideology, then, is not a significant emphasis in the electoral politics of most African states (van de Walle 2003: 304-6).

⁵ For a discussion of ideologies and party formation in pre- and post-independence Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, see Morgenthau 1964.

For example, even in Ghana—a country whose politics were long marked by sharp, ideological rifts between Nkrumahist and liberal camps—the dominant parties are not as distinguishable by ideology as history might suggest. Certainly, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) claims to be the current defender of the “United Gold Coast Convention-UP tradition.” For example, in its 2008 campaign manifesto, the NPP promised to continue to “champion the ideals of...market-oriented economics.”⁶ In contrast, the National Democratic Congress’ Election 2008 Manifesto proclaimed, “The NDC believes that governments must place the needs of the working people before the needs of those who already have more than they need...[A]s a party that is anchored to the social democracy philosophy and espouses the tenets of our ideology unashamedly, all our efforts must be geared towards protecting and supporting the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, the marginalised and the have-nots in society.” Finally, the Manifesto proclaims that the NDC “reaffirms its conviction that social democracy provides the best solution for the evils resulting from unregulated competition and the domination of vested interests.”⁷ However, the founders of the NDC implemented, when leading the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) in the 1980s and early 1990s, a neo-liberal Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) (Jeffries 1992; Green 1998). The NDC’s subsequent embrace of such policies means that, at least broadly speaking, its macro-economic policies do not differ significantly from those of the NPP (Ninsin 2006: 13-4). As one observer of Ghanaian politics wrote, prior to the landmark 2000 elections, “The press put its finger on a striking transformation which had taken place at the heart of the Rawlings regime: erstwhile revolutionaries had started by embracing the logic of market reform and had ended up becoming capitalists in their own right” (Nugent 2001: 419). To a great extent, then, the epic battle between the Nkrumahists and the UGCC-UP tradition has subsided, with the latter camp emerging with the upper hand. Today, political cleavages in Ghana seem to be even more about ethnicity and region, although identity is not the sole determinative factor (Nugent 1999; Frempong 2001; Gyimah-Boadi 2003; Gyimah-Boadi and Asante 2006; Fridy 2007; Arthur 2009).

Like the NDC, other parties that were once staunchly leftist in their ideological rhetoric, such as Angola’s MPLA, Mozambique’s FRELIMO, and Tanzania’s *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), have more or less embraced many aspects of free-market capitalism, at least in practice. Certainly, other parties from the immediate post-independence era, including Ghana’s CPP, Guinea’s RDC, Mali’s US-RDA, and Zambia’s UNIP, still function, but they are mere shadows of their former selves. Finally, a number of parties do communicate identifiable ideological messages, but they remain small and are, for the most part, not electorally viable. Such parties include the *Partido Liberal Democrático* of Angola, *Parti Communiste du Bénin*; Botswana People’s Party; Social Democratic Front (Cameroon); Mazingira Green Party (Kenya); Uganda Green Party; the South African Communist Party; and various socialist workers’ groups in Senegal, such as the *Ligue Démocratique-Mouvement pour le Parti du Travail*, *Parti de l’Indépendance et du Travail*, and *And Jëf/Parti Africain pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme*.⁸

As noted above, quite a few scholars of African politics have referenced this relative paucity of ideology, but none, to our knowledge, have attempted to demonstrate empirically the extent to which ideological discourse is important in inter-party competition. Certainly, survey questions that explicitly ask respondents to position parties on ideological spectra, legislative voting records of party caucuses, or thorough content analyses of party manifestos could yield interesting data in this respect. However, we can conduct an indirect test of the extent to which parties structure their appeals along ideological cues by examining whether their adherents’ attitudes on related issues cluster in distinct ways. Namely, in situations in which ideology is highly salient in elite-mass communications, we would expect that the individuals with similar issue positions will be clustered in the same parties. When ideology is less emphasized, this clustering will

⁶ Manifesto available at <http://ghanaelections2008.blogspot.com/2008/10/npp-manifesto-2008-elections-ghana.html>.

⁷ Manifesto available at <http://news.thinkghana.com/politics/200809/22715.php>.

⁸ Country outliers to this pattern include Mauritius, where major parliamentary parties include the *Parti Travailleiste*, *Les Verts*, *Mouvement Militant Socialiste Mauricien*, *Mouvement Militant Mauricien*, and *Parti Mauricien Social-Démocrate*, and Seychelles, where the socialist Seychelles People’s Progressive Front (SPPF) and liberal Seychelles National Party (SNP) are the main electoral contenders.

be diminished, and there will be a lower probability that the opinion profiles of parties' bases will differ significantly from one another.

In order to examine possible inter-party differences in bases' opinion profiles, we generated two opinion indices using responses to a number of questions that appeared in the third round of the Afrobarometer survey project. The survey was conducted between March 2005 and February 2006 in eighteen Sub-Saharan countries: Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. However, attitudinal questions in Zimbabwe differed significantly from those asked in the other seventeen countries. Therefore, Zimbabwean responses are excluded from all of our analyses. Although instruments contain some country-specific questions, the Afrobarometer project is particularly useful for cross-country comparative work, in that many questions are asked in identical manners in all countries. We draw upon responses to such questions to conduct our analyses.⁹

Survey respondents were asked to provide opinions on various topics, such as the ideal scope of the state; the desirability of neo-liberal economic reform programs; the acceptability of government limitations on freedoms of association, speech, and the press; proper levels of deference to political authority; and the role of women in society. We report response distributions for our pooled data sample (i.e., all seventeen countries) in Appendix A.

For our purposes, we first generated a *state-scope index*, using the following questions:

- [Q1] A.) It is better to have free schooling for our children, even if the quality of education is low, or B.) It is better to raise educational standards, even if we have to pay school fees.
- [Q2] A.) All civil servants should keep their jobs, even if paying their salaries is costly to the country, or B.) The government cannot afford so many public employees and should lay some off.
- [Q3] A.) The costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore abandon its current economic policies, or B.) In order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary for us to accept some hardships now.¹⁰
- [Q4] A.) People should look after themselves and be responsible for their own success in life, or B.) The government should bear the main responsibility for the well being of people.

All questions were preceded by the following prompt: "Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement A or Statement B." Following the respondent's decision, enumerators then asked if they agreed "strongly" or "somewhat" with their choice.

These questions were selected because they all seemed to measure, in various ways, individuals' attitudes on how involved the state should be in the economy and society. Based on responses to these four questions, a *state scope index* was generated for each individual, with possible scores ranging from 0 (low support for

⁹ Survey data, instruments, and details on sampling are available at www.afrobarometer.org.

¹⁰ These reforms usually involved significant reductions in the state's intervention in the economy, through deregulation, privatization, and reduction in the size of the civil service. Therefore, respondents who supported position B could be considered to have a more limited vision of the state's role in the economy.

state involvement) to 3 (high support for state involvement).¹¹ The mean *state scope score* across the entire pooled sample ($N=24,158$) was 1.37 ($sd=.004$).

Second, we generated a *liberal-authoritarian index*, using the following questions:

- [Q5] A.) As citizens, we should be more active in questioning the actions of our leaders, or B.) In our country these days, we should show more respect for authority.
- [Q6] A.) Government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies, or B.) We should be able to join any organizations, whether or not the government approves of it.
- [Q7] A.) Government should close newspapers that print false stories or misinformation, or B.) The news media should be free to publish any story they see fit without fear of being shut down.
- [Q8] A.) Government should not allow the expression of political views that are fundamentally different from the views of the majority, or B.) People should be able to speak their minds about politics free of government influence, no matter how unpopular their views may be.

These questions all seem to measure support for individual rights, even when those individuals present unpopular and/or anti-*status quo* sentiments. We are careful not to use questions here that refer specifically to support for “democratic” institutions or norms, given the somewhat high rates of variance in Africans’ conceptions of that adjective’s meaning (Bratton 2010). Based on responses to these four questions, a *liberal-authoritarian index* was generated for each individual, again with possible scores ranging from 0 (support for individual rights) to 3 (deference to authority).¹² The mean *liberal-authoritarian score* for the entire pooled sample ($N=24,158$) was 1.14 ($sd=.004$).

For each political party (or, in the case of Benin, sometimes political candidates) that could claim at least 5.0% of respondents as adherents,¹³ a mean *state scope* and *liberal-authoritarian score* was generated. Mean scores were also generated for those individuals who did not identify with any political party and for those who identified with any political party that did not receive the support of at least 5.0% of respondents in their respective country. These results are presented in Table 1, while box plots for the same groups are presented in Figures 1 (*state scope*) and 2 (*liberal-authoritarian*). Results are not presented for Madagascar, South Africa, or Tanzania, because only one party in those countries met the threshold for inclusion.

¹¹ In this analysis, as well as all others that follow, we excluded responses of “don’t know” or “agree with neither” (neither of which was given as an option for the respondents). Respondents could choose option A or B, and then were asked to identify whether they supported that option “strongly” or “somewhat.” Therefore, each question had four possible responses. To generate the index, responses were recoded, so that those “strongly” favoring a limited state were coded as 0, those “somewhat” favoring a limited state were coded as 1, those “somewhat” favoring an involved state were coded as 2, and those “strongly” favoring an involved state were coded as 3. The index represents an individual’s mean score.

¹² Scores here were calculated in the same manner as for the *state scope index*.

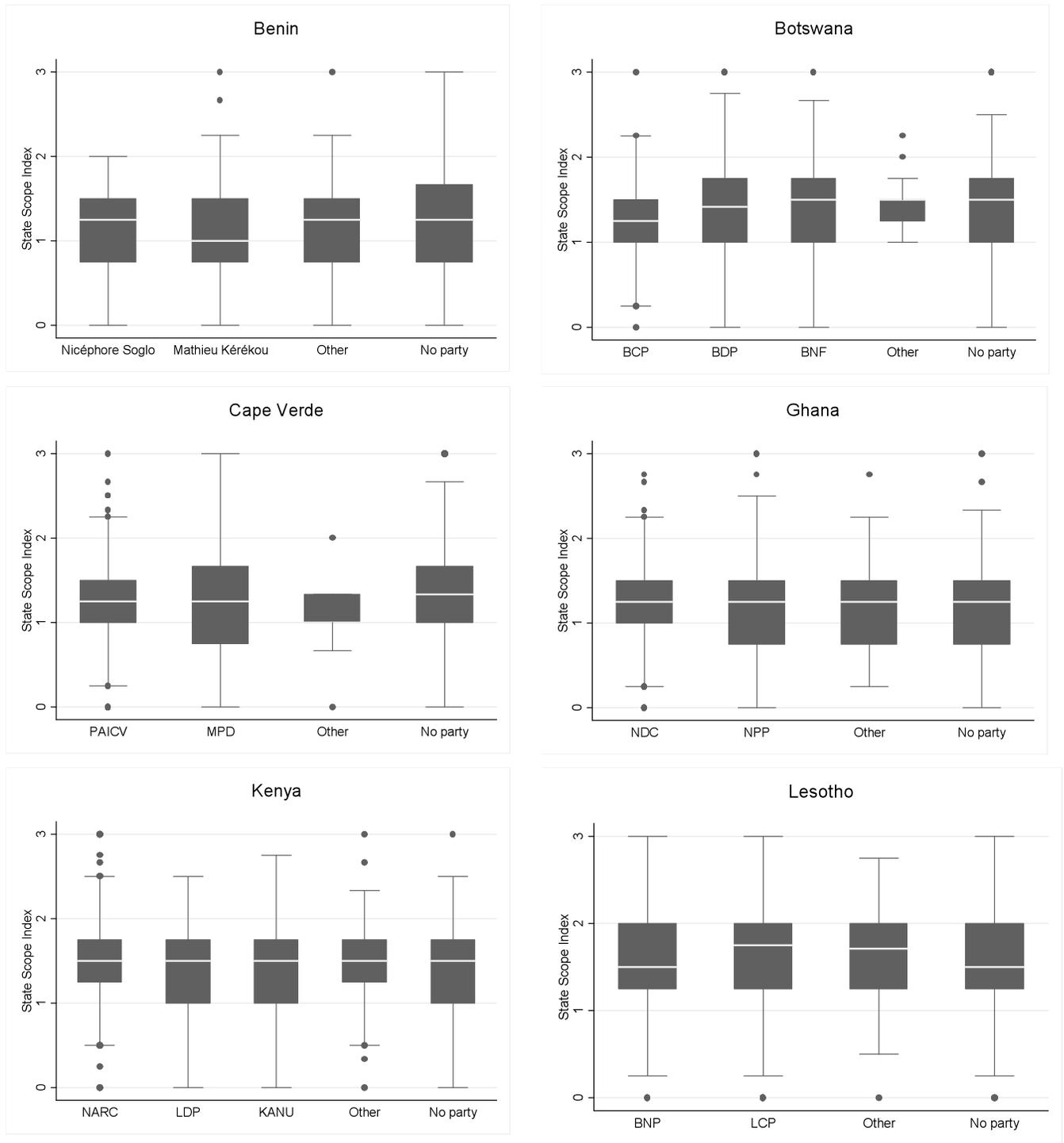
¹³ 37 parties meet this threshold.

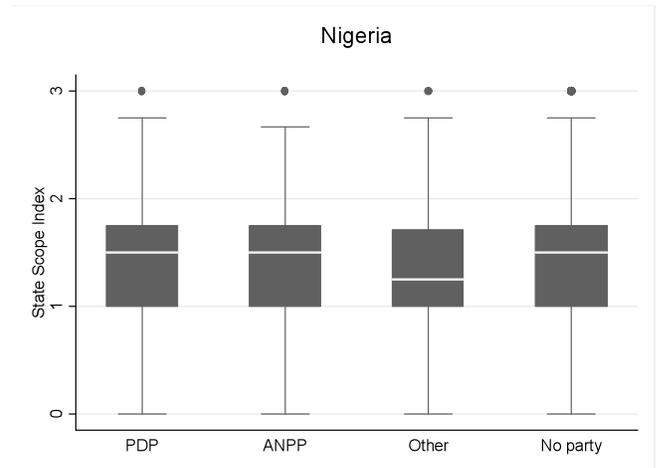
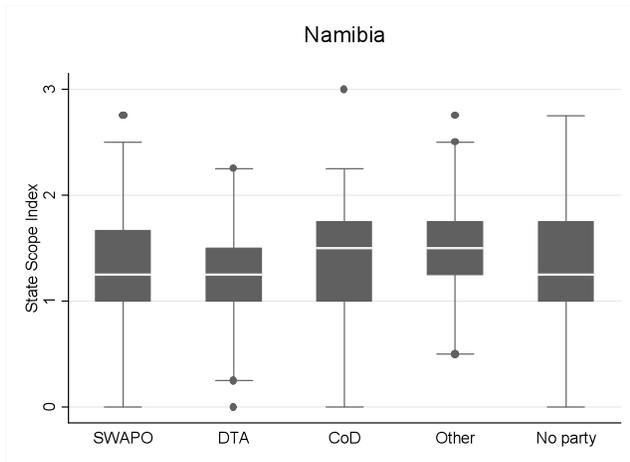
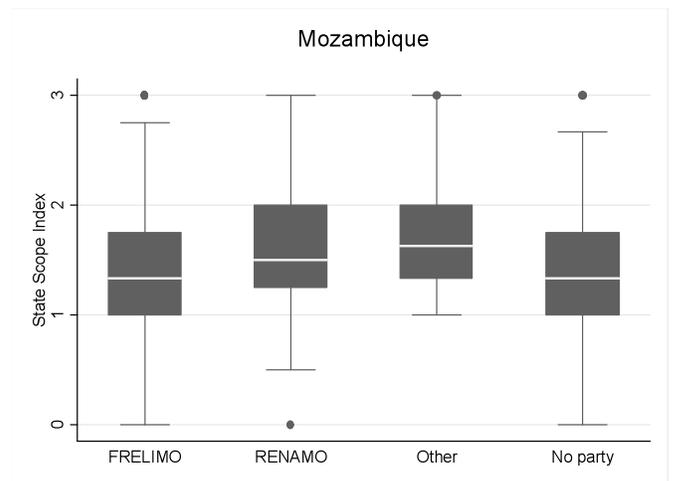
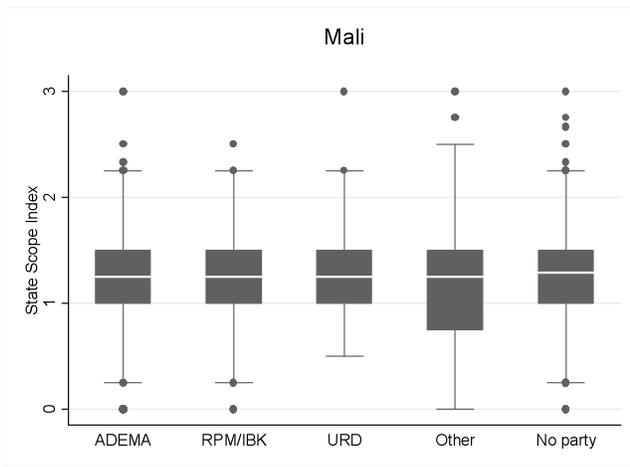
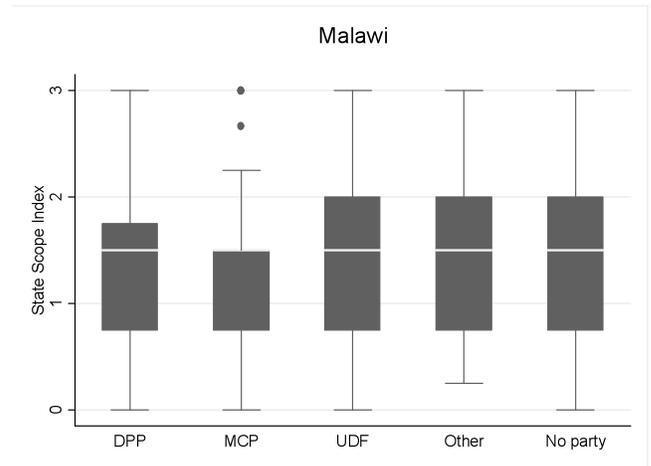
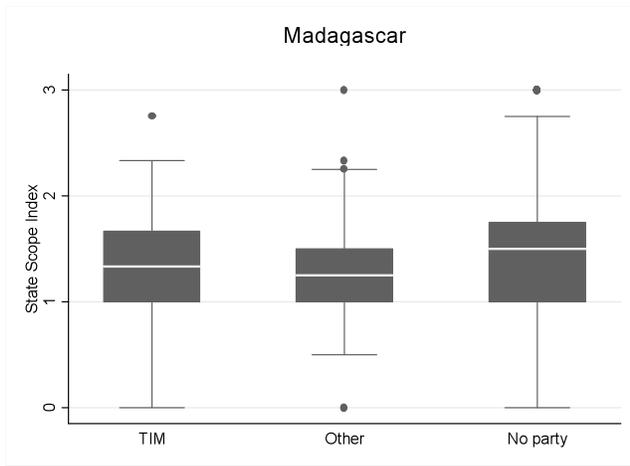
Table 1: State Scope and Liberal-Authoritarian Scores, by Party Grouping

| Country | Grouping | Valid % | State Scope Index (0-3) | | Liberal-Authoritarian Index (0-3) | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Mean | St. Dev. | Mean | St. Dev. |
| Benin | Kérékou | 6.9 | 1.15 | 0.57 | 1.17 | 0.57 |
| | Soglo | 9.5 | 1.10 | 0.47 | 1.04 | 0.55 |
| | Independents | 67.5 | 1.26 | 0.63 | 1.22 | 0.74 |
| | Other | 16.2 | 1.21 | 0.58 | 1.02 | 0.63 |
| Botswana | BDP | 46.3 | 1.36 | 0.56 | 1.07 | 0.61 |
| | BNF | 21.3 | 1.45 | 0.55 | 0.85 | 0.56 |
| | BCP | 9 | 1.26 | 0.48 | 0.95 | 0.55 |
| | Independents | 21.5 | 1.40 | 0.52 | 0.97 | 0.58 |
| | Other | 1.6 | 1.46 | 0.32 | 1.04 | 0.49 |
| Cape Verde | PAICV | 23.4 | 1.25 | 0.56 | 1.16 | 0.57 |
| | MpD | 25.2 | 1.28 | 0.62 | 1.02 | 0.54 |
| | Independents | 50.6 | 1.33 | 0.59 | 1.13 | 0.65 |
| | Other | 0.8 | 1.14 | 0.62 | 0.66 | 0.32 |
| Ghana | NPP | 43.2 | 1.21 | 0.51 | 1.08 | 0.61 |
| | NDC | 20.5 | 1.21 | 0.49 | 0.89 | 0.57 |
| | Independents | 33.7 | 1.22 | 0.52 | 1.07 | 0.66 |
| | Other | 2.7 | 1.26 | 0.60 | 0.89 | 0.64 |
| Kenya | NARC | 34.2 | 1.55 | 0.53 | 1.15 | 0.68 |
| | LDP | 12.6 | 1.41 | 0.48 | 0.78 | 0.51 |
| | KANU | 10.8 | 1.40 | 0.49 | 1.12 | 0.64 |
| | Independents | 36.9 | 1.42 | 0.50 | 1.09 | 0.64 |
| | Other | 5.5 | 1.43 | 0.56 | 0.90 | 0.71 |
| Lesotho | LCD | 61.8 | 1.65 | 0.55 | 1.08 | 0.70 |
| | BNP | 9.7 | 1.51 | 0.65 | 0.95 | 0.67 |
| | Independents | 23.5 | 1.48 | 0.58 | 0.61 | 0.90 |
| | Other | 5 | 1.62 | 0.60 | 0.99 | 0.68 |
| Madagascar | TIM | 22.9 | 1.36 | 0.44 | 1.19 | 0.51 |
| | Independents | 67.2 | 1.45 | 0.50 | 1.20 | 0.51 |
| | Other | 9.9 | 1.32 | 0.48 | 1.09 | 0.47 |
| Malawi | DPP | 20.9 | 1.38 | 0.71 | 1.33 | 0.69 |
| | MCP | 13.9 | 1.28 | 0.65 | 1.09 | 0.73 |
| | UDF | 22.3 | 1.48 | 0.70 | 1.21 | 0.81 |
| | Independents | 39.3 | 1.45 | 0.74 | 1.22 | 0.81 |
| | Other | 3.6 | 1.38 | 0.68 | 1.38 | 0.72 |
| Mali | Adéma | 19.4 | 1.31 | 0.48 | 1.31 | 0.63 |
| | URD | 5.9 | 1.27 | 0.43 | 1.38 | 0.62 |
| | RPM | 9.6 | 1.25 | 0.52 | 1.28 | 0.71 |
| | Independents | 39.4 | 1.33 | 0.47 | 1.45 | 0.62 |
| | Other | 25.6 | 1.28 | 0.52 | 1.35 | 0.58 |
| Mozambique | FRELIMO | 73.4 | 1.34 | 0.55 | 1.22 | 0.62 |
| | RENAMO | 7.7 | 1.60 | 0.65 | 1.12 | 0.60 |
| | Independents | 18.1 | 1.33 | 0.59 | 1.10 | 0.61 |
| | Other | 0.8 | 1.73 | 0.56 | 0.93 | 0.66 |
| Namibia | SWAPO | 64 | 1.32 | 0.50 | 1.40 | 0.55 |
| | DTA | 5.4 | 1.19 | 0.51 | 1.49 | 0.58 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | CoD | 5.5 | 1.33 | 0.58 | 1.28 | 0.62 |
| | Independents | 18.7 | 1.32 | 0.51 | 1.17 | 0.59 |
| | Other | 6.5 | 1.52 | 0.50 | 1.37 | 0.50 |
| Nigeria | PDP | 28 | 1.38 | 0.54 | 1.13 | 0.63 |
| | ANPP | 12.2 | 1.45 | 0.55 | 1.12 | 0.58 |
| | Independents | 53.3 | 1.37 | 0.55 | 1.12 | 0.62 |
| | Other | 6.4 | 1.33 | 0.56 | 1.03 | 0.61 |
| Senegal | PDS | 39 | 1.22 | 0.61 | 1.15 | 0.55 |
| | PS | 6.5 | 1.23 | 0.59 | 1.06 | 0.57 |
| | Independents | 47.6 | 1.27 | 0.58 | 1.15 | 0.55 |
| | Other | 6.9 | 1.23 | 0.59 | 1.08 | 0.51 |
| South Africa | ANC | 53.1 | 1.32 | 0.52 | 1.07 | 0.60 |
| | Independents | 38.3 | 1.29 | 0.57 | 1.02 | 0.65 |
| | Other | 8.6 | 1.23 | 0.55 | 0.93 | 0.58 |
| Tanzania | CCM | 69.7 | 1.39 | 0.63 | 1.53 | 0.69 |
| | Independents | 24 | 1.38 | 0.65 | 1.39 | 0.79 |
| | Other | 6.3 | 1.44 | 0.52 | 1.26 | 0.75 |
| Uganda | NRM | 45.3 | 1.53 | 0.54 | 1.20 | 0.67 |
| | UPC | 6.4 | 1.45 | 0.62 | 0.85 | 0.62 |
| | Independents | 40.1 | 1.49 | 0.58 | 1.09 | 0.63 |
| | Other | 8.2 | 1.44 | 0.51 | 0.89 | 0.66 |
| Zambia | MMD | 19.8 | 1.49 | 0.55 | 0.99 | 0.66 |
| | PF | 7.2 | 1.49 | 0.56 | 0.86 | 0.53 |
| | UPND | 17.9 | 1.42 | 0.52 | 0.93 | 0.56 |
| | Independents | 48.4 | 1.45 | 0.57 | 0.94 | 0.65 |
| | Other | 6.8 | 1.61 | 0.48 | 1.03 | 0.61 |

Figure 1: State Scope Plots, for Selected Party Groupings, by Country





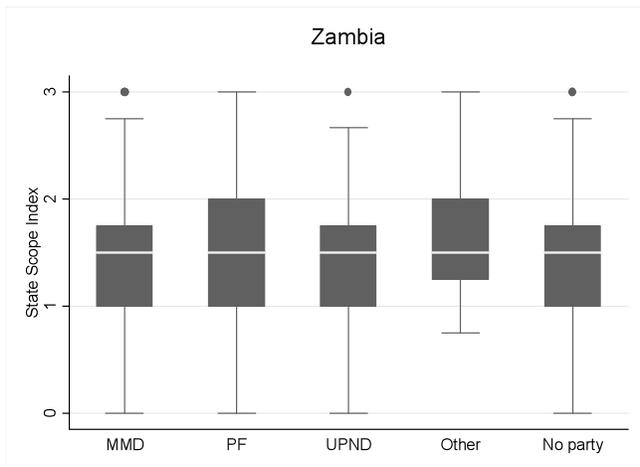
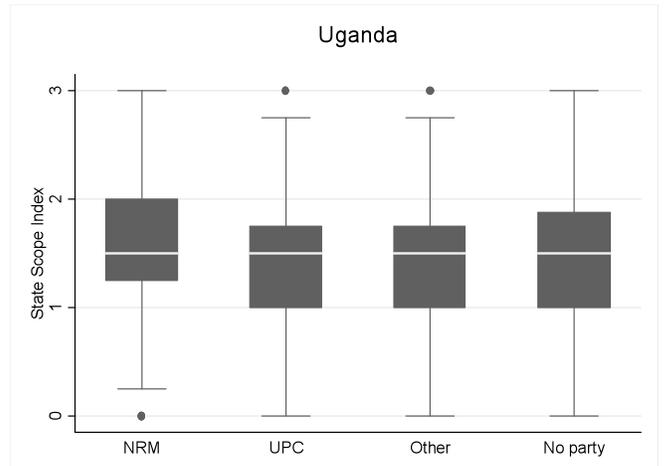
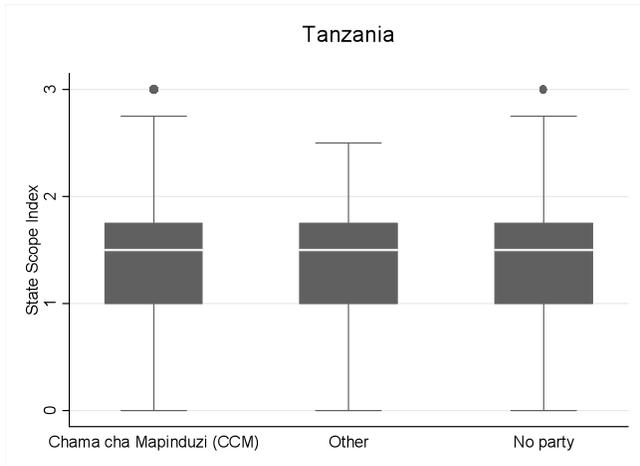
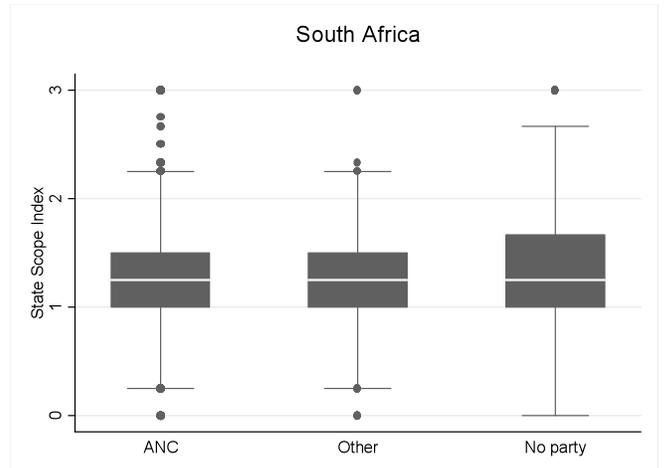
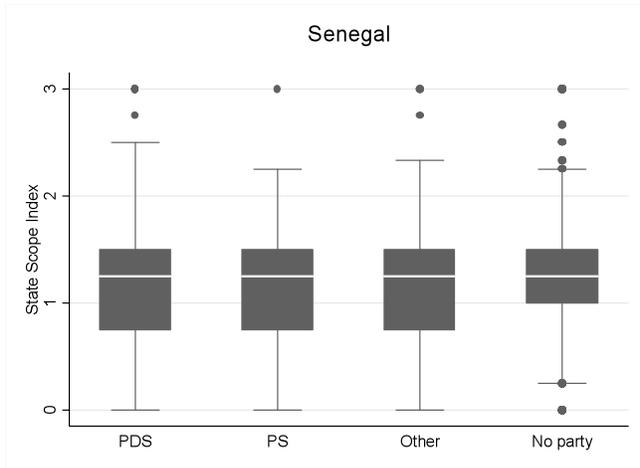
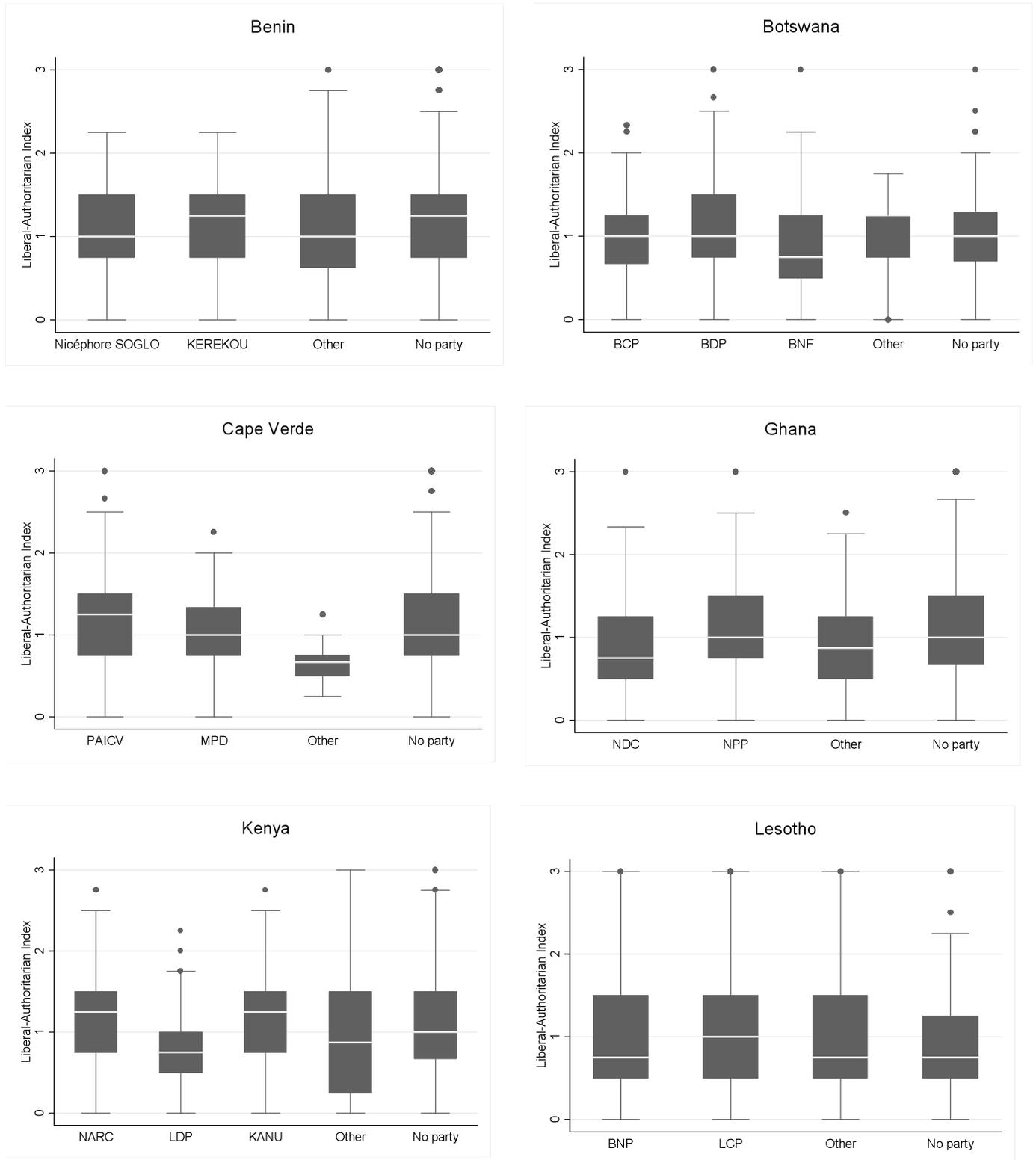
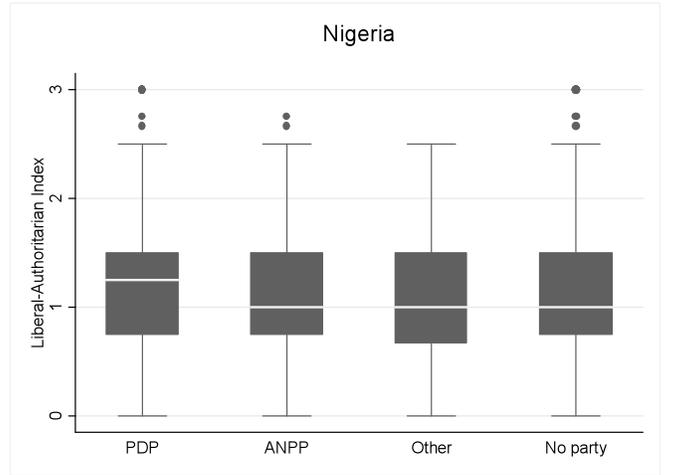
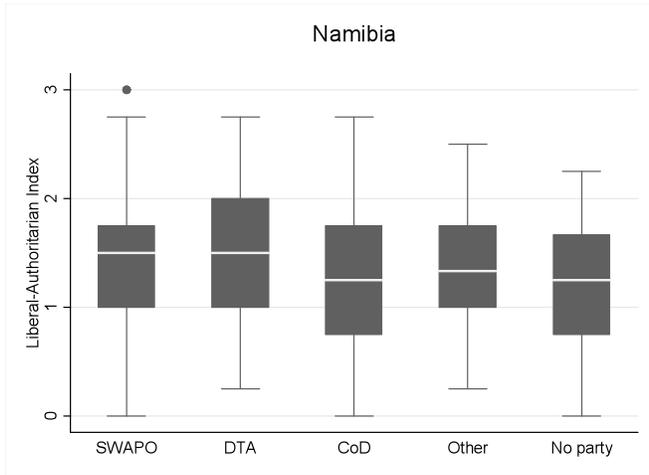
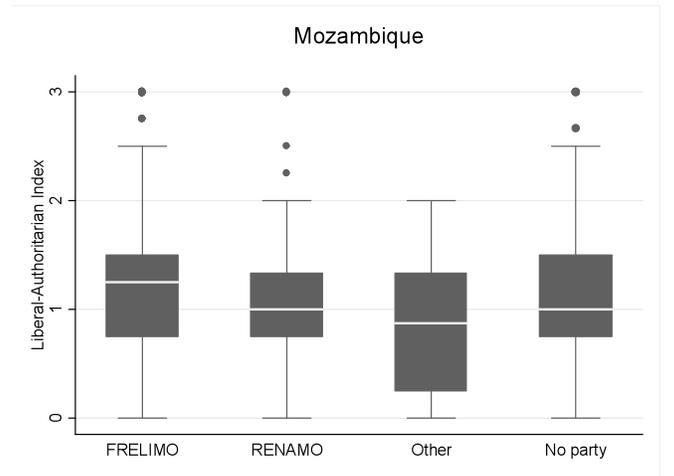
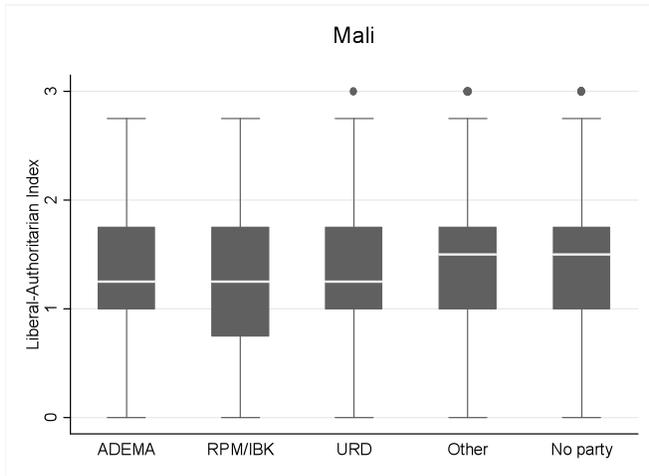
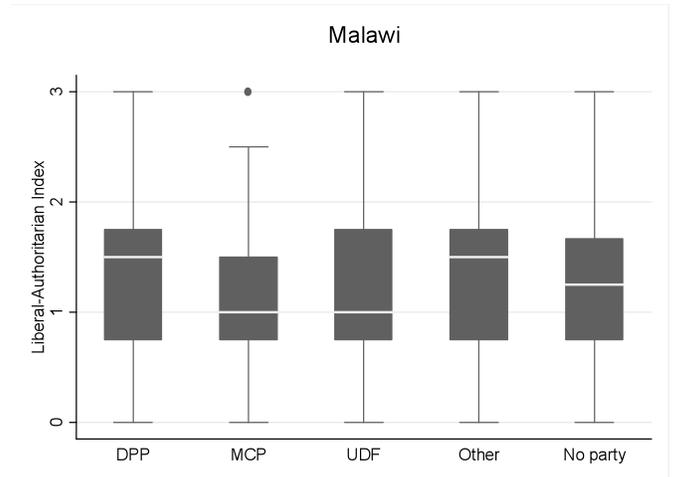
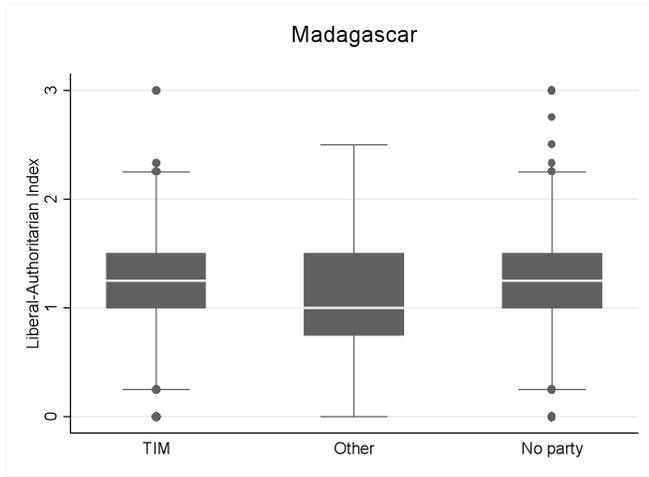
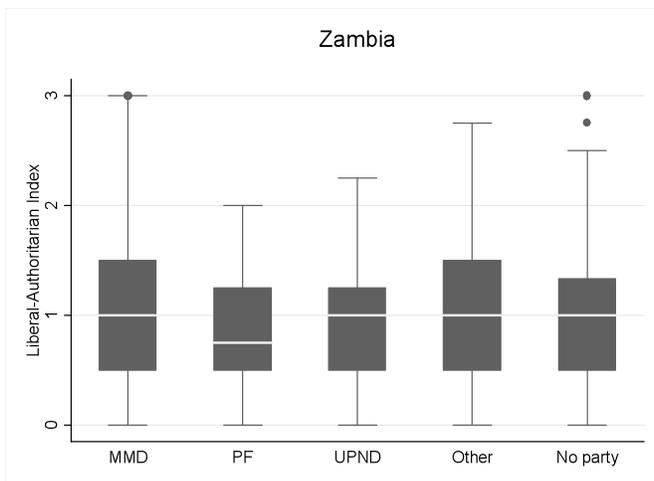
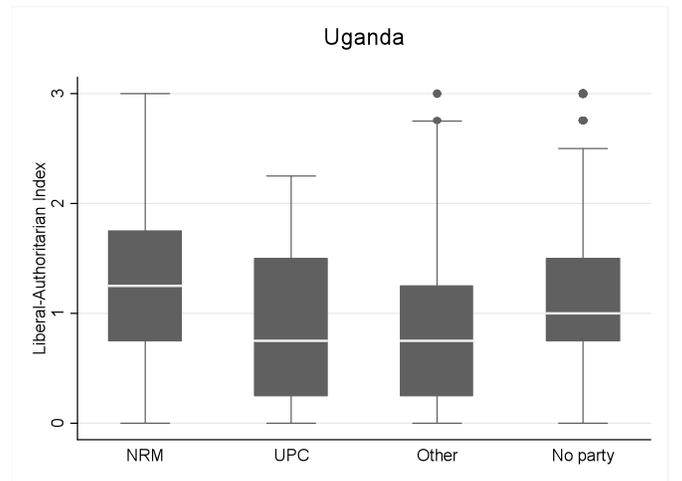
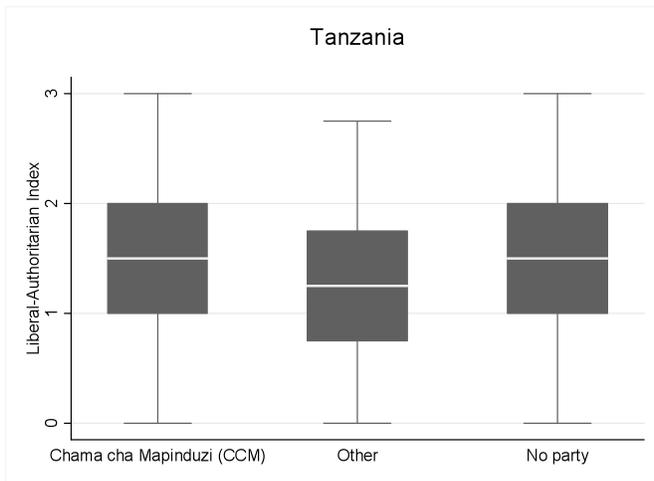
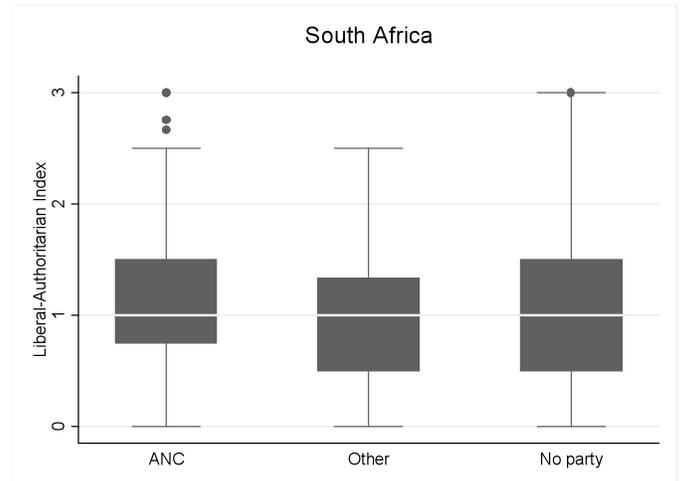
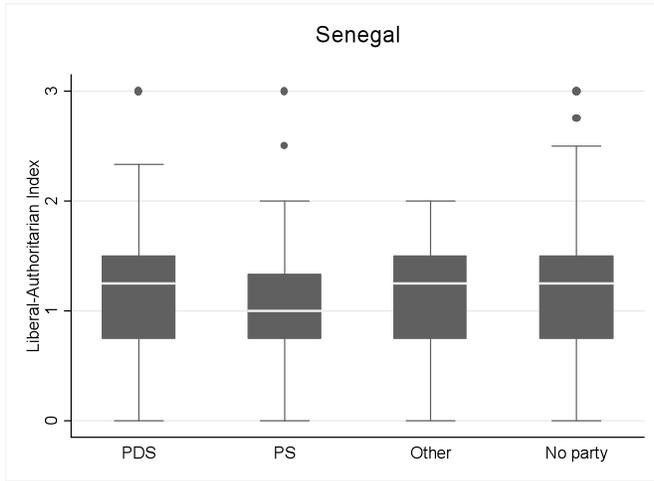


Figure 2: Liberal-Authoritarian Plots, for Selected Party Groupings, by Country







In order to examine differences in parties' bases, we compared the scores of all major parties in each country. Results for T-tests are presented in Table 2. The results suggest that, on the *state scope index*, statistically significant differences at at least the 90% level (2-tailed test) are only present for ten of twenty-six paired comparisons. For example, in Botswana, the Botswana National Front's (BNF) mean *state scope score* is significantly higher than the ruling Botswana Democratic Party's (BDP) and the Botswana Congress Party's (BCP), which split from the BNF in the late 1990s. As the BNF is an observer member of the Socialist

International, this finding is not surprising. Ruling parties in Kenya, Lesotho, and Namibia have higher mean *state scope scores* than their main opposition challengers, while in Mozambique and Nigeria, opposition parties have significantly higher mean scores. This is particularly surprising for Mozambique, where RENAMO's score is significantly higher than FRELIMO's. In a number of countries, including Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia, there is no statistically significant difference in the mean *state scope scores* of major-party pairs. This finding is particularly striking for these countries, given that all of them were ruled by avowedly socialist or Marxist parties at some point in their post-independence histories. And in Ghana, although the NPP and NDC still give rhetorical due to their UGCC-UP and Nkrumahist heritages, respectively, the political preferences of their bases in regards to the proper scope of the state are indiscernible.

A slightly larger number of paired comparisons—twelve out of twenty-six—is significant (at 90%) for the mean *liberal-authoritarian scores*, and here a particularly interesting pattern emerges. In all of these twelve significant comparisons, the bases of ruling parties have significantly higher scores than those of opposition parties, suggesting that incumbent partisans are less supportive of individual rights. One possibility is that Africans' support for liberal values is somewhat limited and, thus, more pro-authoritarian parties tend to win elections. However, the mean *liberal-authoritarian score* for every country in the sample is below 1.5—Mali's is highest at 1.4, while Zambia's is lowest at 0.9—suggesting that most respondents erred toward the liberal pole of the index. Another, and in our view, more plausible, explanation for this finding is that Africans' placement on the *liberal-authoritarian score* is impacted by the relative power position of their favored party. Individuals who support the incumbent party, for whatever reason, are more likely to oppose individuals' rights to question existing authority, while those who support opposition groups view limitations on individual rights as possibly dangerous.

Table 2: Comparisons of Party Means, State Scope & Liberal-Authoritarian Scores

| Country | Paired Comparison | State Scope Index | | | Liberal-Authoritarian Index | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| | | <i>p</i> | 90% Confidence Interval | | <i>p</i> | 90% Confidence Interval | |
| Benin | Soglo vs. Kérékou | .50 | -.17 | .07 | .12 | -.26 | .01 |
| Botswana | BDP vs. BNF | .04** | -.16 | -.02 | .00*** | .15 | .30 |
| | BDP vs. BCP | .07* | -.18 | -.01 | .04** | -.22 | -.02 |
| | BCP vs. BNF | .00*** | -.28 | -.09 | .11 | -.00 | .21 |
| Cape Verde | PAICV vs. MpD | .54 | -.11 | .05 | .00*** | .06 | .21 |
| Ghana | NPP vs. NDC | .94 | -.07 | .07 | .00*** | -.26 | -.11 |
| Kenya | NARC vs. LDP | .00*** | .07 | .22 | .00*** | .28 | .45 |
| | NARC vs. KANU | .00*** | .07 | .24 | .66 | -.08 | .13 |
| | LDP vs. KANU | .85 | -.08 | .10 | .00*** | -.45 | -.22 |
| Lesotho | LCD vs. BNP | .04* | -.24 | -.03 | .07* | -.24 | -.01 |
| Malawi | DPP vs. MCP | .11 | -.00 | .22 | .00*** | .12 | .36 |
| | DPP vs. UDF | .11 | -.20 | .00 | .07* | .01 | .23 |
| | MCP vs. UDF | .00*** | -.32 | -.10 | .12 | -.24 | .01 |
| Mali | Adéma vs. URD | .51 | -.06 | .14 | .39 | -.21 | .07 |
| | Adéma vs. RPM | .30 | -.03 | .15 | .70 | -.10 | .16 |
| | RPM vs. URD | .77 | -.13 | .09 | .30 | -.26 | .06 |
| Mozambique | FRELIMO vs. RENAMO | .00*** | -.38 | -.14 | .14 | -.01 | .21 |
| Namibia | SWAPO vs. DTA | .04** | .03 | .25 | .23 | -.22 | .04 |
| | SWAPO vs. CoD | .95 | -.13 | .12 | .11 | -.00 | .26 |
| | DTA vs. CoD | .14 | -.30 | .02 | .04** | .04 | .02 |
| Nigeria | PDP vs. ANPP | .06* | -.14 | -.01 | .90 | -.06 | .07 |
| Senegal | PDS vs. PS | .83 | -.14 | .11 | .21 | -.03 | .20 |
| Uganda | NRM vs. UPC | .12 | -.01 | .17 | .00*** | .26 | .44 |
| Zambia | MMD vs. PF | .97 | -.12 | .12 | .06* | .02 | .25 |
| | MMD vs. UPND | .13 | -.01 | .16 | .28 | -.03 | .16 |
| | PF vs. UPND | .27 | -.04 | .20 | .29 | -.19 | .04 |

* Statistically significant at 90% (2-tailed test); ** Statistically significant at 95% (2-tailed test);

*** Statistically significant at 99% (2-tailed test)

Finally, if parties in Africa tended to aggregate individuals with similar attitudes on these overarching issues of economic and political liberalism, we should expect that attitudes of those within parties would cluster relatively tightly around some mean position, while attitudes of those outside of parties would be more dispersed. To examine this, we compared variances for the thirty-seven parties included in our previous analyses on both the *state scope* and *liberal-authoritarian* indices to those of non-partisans in their respective countries. Significantly lower variances for parties *vis-à-vis* independents would suggest possible aggregation based on ideological appeals. Results are presented in Table 3. On *state scope*, only five partisan groups—supporters of Nicéphore Soglo in Benin, *Tiako I Madagaskira* (TIM) of Madagascar, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of Uganda—have variances that are significantly lower (at at least 90%, 2-tailed test) than non-partisans in their respective countries. A larger number of partisan groups—fourteen¹⁴—have significantly different variances from non-partisans for the *liberal-authoritarian* index, although in three of these cases—the Lesotho Congress of Democrats (LCD), the *Rassemblement pour le Mali* (RPM), and the NRM of Uganda—the variance within the party is actually *greater* than it is within non-

¹⁴ These include supporters of Soglo and Mathieu Kérékou in Benin, the *Partido Africano de Independência de Cabo Verde* (PAICV) and the *Movimento para a Democracia* (MpD) of Cape Verde, the NDC of Ghana, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Kenya, the LCD of Lesotho, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Malawi, the RPM of Mali, the ANC of South Africa, the CCM of Tanzania, the NRM of Uganda, and the Patriotic Front (PF) and the United Party for National Development (UPND) of Zambia.

partisans. In summary, most parties have memberships that are no more similar to one another in their attitudes, as measured by these two constructed indices, than independents are in theirs.

These findings suggest that parties in Africa more often than not do not aggregate individuals with similar political attitudes, as they are often held to do in developed democracies. Certainly, some political parties, such as the BNF, do seem to have bases whose political opinions differ significantly from those of other parties, but most inter-party comparisons suggested statistically insignificant differences.

A number of possible explanations for the relatively limited salience of ideological appeals in contemporary African electoral politics exist. First, the ascendance of the neo-liberal Washington Consensus, and the coincident vulnerability of debt-ridden African states, resulted in a marked tightening of the spectrum of viable policies in the 1980s. Today, once avowedly Marxist or socialist parties like Mozambique's FRELIMO, Angola's MPLA, Ghana's NDC, Namibia's South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and Tanzania's CCM implement decidedly capitalist policies as governors of their respective countries (although all but the latter are members of the Socialist International). Since significant deviations from neo-liberal economic policies are infeasible, particularly in states dependent on Western assistance, the ideological space in Africa has shrunk accordingly.

Rather than focusing primarily on international pressures, other explanations for the generally low salience of ideology in African electoral politics highlight domestic structural and institutional factors. According to Keefer and Vlaicu (2008), in situations of underdeveloped mass media and non-transparent formal political structures, both of which exist in most African countries, voters' abilities to monitor whether candidates follow through on programmatic electoral appeals are quite limited. They argue that, in such environments, candidates have greater incentives to make clientelistic appeals, which citizens can monitor much more easily. This monitoring problem is one possible explanation for Wantchekon's experimental findings that presidential candidates' programmatic platforms resulted in less electoral success than their clientelistic appeals did (2003). Since voters are therefore unlikely to place much value on programmatic promises, which might seem unenforceable, candidates will be less likely to make them. And ideological appeals are, in many ways, bundles of these types of programmatic appeals.

Table 3: Variance, Parties Compared to Non-Partisans

| Country | Party | State Scope Index | | | Liberal-Authoritarian Index | | |
|--------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| | | Within-groups degrees of freedom | <i>f</i> | <i>p</i> | Within-groups degrees of freedom | <i>f</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Benin | Soglo | 81, 804 | .55 | .00*** | 81, 799 | .55 | .00*** |
| | Kérékou | 112, 804 | .82 | .18 | 112, 799 | .59 | .00*** |
| Botswana | BDP | 549, 255 | 1.16 | .17 | 549, 255 | 1.10 | .38 |
| | BCP | 105, 255 | .85 | .34 | 106, 255 | .91 | .57 |
| | BNF | 255, 255 | 1.11 | .39 | 255, 255 | .94 | .62 |
| Cape Verde | PAICV | 273, 588 | .89 | .28 | 276, 572 | .78 | .02** |
| | MpD | 297, 588 | 1.08 | .44 | 297, 572 | .69 | .00*** |
| Ghana | NPP | 516, 401 | .95 | .56 | 514, 400 | .86 | .12 |
| | NDC | 244, 401 | .88 | .29 | 244, 400 | .75 | .01** |
| Kenya | NARC | 432, 466 | 1.13 | .19 | 433, 464 | 1.13 | .18 |
| | LDP | 159, 466 | .93 | .59 | 158, 464 | .63 | .00*** |
| | KANU | 136, 466 | .95 | .70 | 136, 464 | 1.00 | .99 |
| Lesotho | LCD | 711, 270 | .91 | .36 | 711, 270 | 1.31 | .01*** |
| | BNP | 111, 270 | 1.27 | .12 | 111, 270 | 1.19 | .25 |
| Madagascar | TIM | 285, 835 | .80 | .02** | 285, 805 | 1.01 | .93 |
| Malawi | DPP | 274, 464 | .91 | .43 | 274, 464 | .71 | .00*** |
| | MCP | 164, 464 | .77 | .05** | 164, 464 | .81 | .11 |
| | UDF | 264, 464 | .89 | .28 | 264, 464 | 1.00 | .99 |
| Mali | Adéma | 238, 483 | 1.03 | .78 | 238, 481 | 1.05 | .63 |
| | RPM | 117, 483 | 1.22 | .16 | 117, 481 | 1.31 | .05* |
| | URD | 72, 483 | .82 | .31 | 72, 481 | 1.01 | .92 |
| Mozambique | FRELIMO | 857, 212 | .89 | .25 | 849, 212 | 1.04 | .73 |
| | RENAMO | 87, 212 | 1.22 | .26 | 86, 212 | .96 | .86 |
| Namibia | SWAPO | 760, 221 | .95 | .61 | 759, 221 | .87 | .19 |
| | DTA | 62, 221 | .98 | .95 | 63, 221 | .98 | .95 |
| | CoD | 64, 221 | 1.26 | .22 | 64, 221 | 1.10 | .61 |
| Nigeria | PDP | 661, 1257 | .95 | .48 | 661, 1257 | 1.05 | .44 |
| | ANPP | 285, 1257 | 1.01 | .91 | 285, 1257 | .87 | .16 |
| Senegal | PDS | 457, 562 | 1.10 | .26 | 457, 547 | .98 | .82 |
| | PS | 76, 562 | 1.04 | .78 | 76, 547 | 1.07 | .67 |
| South Africa | ANC | 1219, 873 | .84 | .00*** | 1218, 872 | .83 | .00*** |
| Tanzania | CCM | 897, 308 | .94 | .51 | 898, 304 | .74 | .00*** |
| Uganda | NRM | 1062, 939 | .88 | .04** | 1062, 940 | 1.11 | .09* |
| | UPC | 149, 939 | 1.16 | .22 | 149, 940 | .95 | .69 |
| Zambia | MMD | 234, 573 | .95 | .64 | 234, 573 | 1.03 | .78 |
| | PF | 84, 573 | .99 | .96 | 84, 573 | .67 | .03** |
| | UPND | 211, 573 | .84 | .15 | 211, 573 | .75 | .01** |

* Statistically significant at 90% (2-tailed test); ** Statistically significant at 95% (2-tailed test);
 *** Statistically significant at 99% (2-tailed test)

Another possibility is that contemporary African parties are too weak, institutionally, to operate on ideological bases. Ideological parties must limit how much their candidates and elected officials deviate from certain central tendencies; too much intra-party diversity in elite members' ideological and programmatic appeals undermines the party's claim ability to mobilize on the bases of such appeals (Snyder

and Ting 2002). However, such endeavors require monitoring, and monitoring requires substantial infrastructural resources.¹⁵ Certainly, many parties (particularly those in the opposition) have enough trouble preventing their members from defecting, let alone making sure that they stick to narrow ideological scripts.

Even well-established parties face a large hurdle when it comes to making ideological appeals: finances for sustained communications. Burgeoning private media, particularly in radio broadcasting, are extending parties' capabilities here in many countries, but advertising remains an expensive proposition for many. Certainly, incumbents have an advantage here, given that they have greater resources and often can utilize state-run media and information ministries to highlight their programs.¹⁶ However, if resource-strapped opposition parties are unlikely to be successful in disseminating ideological core messages, there is little incentive for better-positioned incumbents to use their communication advantages to deviate from more broadly appealing rhetoric.

Finally, other possible explanations lie in characteristics of African electorates. Literature on attitudinal coherence in developed democracies suggests that more "politically sophisticated" individuals (i.e., with greater cognitive abilities and more access to information) will be more likely to self-identify ideologically and to structure their political attitudes accordingly (Converse 1964, 2000, 2006; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Sniderman, *et al.*; Zaller 1992; Layman and Carsey 2002; Erikson and Tedin 2003; Bennett 2006; Federico and Schneider 2007; Treier and Hillygus 2009: 693). Of course, access to formal education is severely limited in many African countries, and high-quality political information can be prohibitively expensive (Conroy-Krutz 2009). According to this perspective, African political parties might determine that investing in the development and communication of coherent ideologies would be an inefficient use of already limited resources. Charismatic and clientelistic linkage strategies, with rhetorical pledges on non-controversial issues, will therefore constitute the *modus operandi* of most African parties.¹⁷

Examining these potential explanations in more depth is beyond the scope of this paper, and, in any event, we do not view them as necessarily competing. Regardless of the reasoning, ideology is not as salient in the politics of most African countries as it is in the advanced democracies of North America and Europe, or even in Latin America. In short, anyone interested in developing a sorting mechanism for classifying different African parties from one another would best not choose ideology as a primary criterion.

Understanding the Emergence of Attitudinal Structures

While ideology is one of the most common independent and dependent variables in the social sciences, its definition and origins remain controversial (Gerring 1997). As it is conventionally used in contemporary political science literature, ideology contains two important elements: 1) beliefs about how a normatively "good" society should function, and 2) basic prescriptions about how that society should be achieved (see Downs 1957: 96; Erikson and Tedin 2003). According to David Apter, ideology "links particular actions and mundane practices with a wider set of meanings and, by doing so, lends a more honorable and dignified complexion to social conduct." "Political ideology," he goes on, "is an application of particular moral prescriptions to collectivities" (1964: 16-7). Ideologies, then, involve some structuring of individual values about preferable outcomes and optimal paths to those successes.

Functionalist perspectives suggest that such structures emerge and endure because of their utility (see Apter 1964: 18-21). However, within the functionalist camp, debate exists in regard to whether these structures are created primarily through top-down (read, elite-driven) or bottom-up processes, although their continued salience might stem from their utility to both elites and non-elites.

¹⁵ On party organizational weakness, see Banégas (1998) on Benin and Carbone (2008) on Uganda.

¹⁶ We thank a reviewer for this reminder.

¹⁷ An absence of ideological cues is one of the reasons why Chandra characterizes many political systems, particularly in Africa and South Asia, as "information poor" (2004: 33-6); these informational deficiencies contribute to, in her analysis, the emergence of ethnicized "patronage democracies."

One school—or, perhaps more appropriately, set of schools—treats attitudinal structures as arising largely out of top-down processes (McClosky and Zaller 1984; Feldman 1988; Zaller 1992; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Converse 2000; Sniderman, *et al.* 1991; Layman and Carsey 2002; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Fiorina 2005). According to these perspectives, ideologies are developed and transmitted to legitimize the dominance of an already ruling group (Marx and Engels [1848] 1978; Apter 1964: 18; Elster 1982: 123; Thompson 1984: 86-90; Eagleton 1991: 6; Wilson 1992) or to rally support for an aspirant order (Shils 1967: 66; Putnam 1971: 655; Feuer 1975). According to this set of viewpoints, ideologies might be consciously developed and/or maintained to facilitate collective action (McClosky 1964: 362) and are the “ideas expressed as verbal symbols and utilized in social relations for purposes of persuasion” (Minar 1961: 324). Minar sums up such thinking: ideology’s “function is organizational and not individual; its defining characteristic is not what it does psychologically for actors who are personally involved” (323).¹⁸ The political success of an elite group is largely determined, therefore, by the proportion of the electorate that adheres to its respective ideology.

It follows from these viewpoints that observable attitudinal structures will not emerge or survive in the absence of elite investment. Positions must be developed, articulated, and consistently re-articulated by some critical mass. Groups that hope to mobilize support on the basis of ideological appeals must therefore invest in communications infrastructure and develop mechanisms to ensure that associated elites do not deviate significantly, in word or deed, from certain central tendencies (Snyder and Ting 2002). Such commitments are, in short, necessary—albeit perhaps not sufficient¹⁹—conditions for the emergence and continued salience of particular attitudinal structures. An individual who adopts an elite-generated ideology will be more likely to vote for a candidate whose ideological label matches his or her own and, on specific issues, possess attitudes that are consistent with that ideology (Sears, *et al.* 1979; Sears, *et al.* 1980; Sears and Citrin 1985; Fleischman 1988; Heath, *et al.* 1994; MacKuen, *et al.* 2003). Research on public opinion in the United States suggests that, when elites highlight wide policy gaps between them and their opponents, this increased polarization results in the increased salience of ideological dispositions within the public as well (Hinich and Munger 1997; Levine, *et al.* 1997; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Levendusky 2009).

An alternate set of perspectives on the emergence of attitudinal structures emphasizes what could be called bottom-up processes (Adorno, *et al.* 1950; Tomkins 1963; Judd and Krosnick 1989; Lavine, *et al.* 1997; Jost 2006). Here, the focus is on the utility of such structures to non-elite individuals. Consumers of political information can face significant pressures. New data need to be analyzed, stimuli need to be processed, and judgments need to be made. New entrants into the political arena and policy proposals need to be evaluated. Some of these data might seem to challenge conclusions previously made and updating previously done by the consumer. In short, individuals’ goals in dealing with new political information include improving efficiency in their information-collection and –analysis processes, and minimizing potential cognitive dissonance; utilization of heuristics, or cognitive shortcuts, is therefore common (Tversky and Kahneman 1974). Individuals, therefore, have their own incentives to develop political belief structures in order to minimize the costs of information collection and evaluation. By developing such structures, or *Weltanschauungen*, individuals can improve cognitive efficiency and psychological security. Various traits of the individual—i.e., his or her personality (Adorno, *et al.* 1950; McClosky 1958; Tomkins 1963; Wilson 1973; Block and Block 2006; Jost 2006; Alford and Hibbing 2007; Carney, *et al.* 2008; Mondak and Halperin 2008; Jost, *et al.* 2009: 318-23; Gerber, *et al.* 2010), upbringing, heredity (Olson, *et al.* 2001; Bouchard, *et al.* 2003; Alford, *et al.* 2005; Carmen 2007), and various social and cultural *millieux* help determine the development of his or her political attitudes and, perhaps, structures. If there is significant inter-individual consistency in how these structures are developed, then coherent, identifiable structures should be observable in large population samples.

¹⁸ For excellent overviews of these approaches, see Gerring 1997: 970-3 and Jost, *et al.* 2009: 315-23.

¹⁹ In his seminal piece, Converse (1964) found that non-elites’ issue attitudes were not significantly “constrained” by ideological labels. Similar findings appear in Campbell, *et al.* 1960; Knight 1985; Luttbeg and Gant 1985; Jacoby 1986; and Kinder 2003.

The top-down and bottom-up approaches differ primarily in regard to the role of elites in the development of these structures. According to the former, elite-generated “discursive superstructures” are necessary conditions for the existence of coherent, identifiable structures in populations. In the absence of these ideologies, individuals will not structure their political attitudes in any observable fashion. Under these approaches, individuals use ideological labels, which they select from some menu of options in the accessible political discourse, to structure their own political beliefs accordingly. On the other hand, “discursive superstructures” might not be necessary conditions for the development of coherent, identifiable structures under bottom-up approaches. The individual’s needs for cognitive efficiency, and the emotional comfort that worldviews might provide, might themselves be sufficient for the development of coherent structures.

While the approaches differ in regards to the role of elites, they do not necessarily differ in the sense that, under both, attitudinal structures perform an important function for the non-elite individual. Under the bottom-up approach, individuals develop structures internally in order to improve efficiency in the evaluation of political data and new stimuli, and to reduce cognitive dissonance as new, possibly confounding facts arise. Ideology can play similar functions in top-down approaches, however. Here, ideology is a valuable informational shortcut (Mannheim 1955; Downs 1957: 96-100; Enelow and Hinich 1966, 1982, 1984; Hinich 1978; Hinich and Pollard 1981; Coughlin and Hinich 1984; Calvert 1986; Hinich and Munger 1996; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Federico 2007).²⁰ Citizens can survey the menu of available ideological labels that are salient in their society, evaluate those labels, and then establish identification with the one that is most compatible with their own extant worldview (Conover and Feldman 1981). Subsequently, citizens might conclude that electoral competitors who share their personal ideological self-label are more worthy of their political support, and vote accordingly. By self-labeling ideologically and knowing electoral competitors’ ideological positions, voters can increase their efficiency in political decision-making significantly.

In sum, top-down approaches would suggest that, in “information-poor” African societies where electoral competitors make only limited ideological appeals, we should have low expectations that large segments of populations in most countries will structure their political attitudes in any identifiably coherent way. Individuals will form attachments with political parties on bases other than ideology, such as ethnicity (Horowitz 1991, 1999; Posner 2005; Cheeseman and Ford 2007; Eifert, *et al.* 2010) or clientelistic networks (Hydén 1980; Clapham 1982; Chabal and Daloz 1999; van de Walle 2007), and parties themselves will see significant heterogeneity in their adherents’ political attitudes.²¹ On the other hand, psychological approaches suggest that individuals might develop and utilize attitudinal structures, even in the absence of elite focus on ideological differentiation. If there is any inter-individual regularity in the development of these structures, then we might be able to observe such patterns in public opinion data.

Data and Analysis

In order to examine whether Africans structure their political attitudes in identifiable ways, we again drew upon data from the third round of the Afrobarometer survey project. We selected sixteen questions for inclusion in our analysis. In addition to the eight questions on state scope and support for democratic institutions outlined above, we included the following:

- [Q9] A.) Since leaders represent everyone, they should not favor their own family or group, or B.) Once in office, leaders are obliged to help their home community.

²⁰As Downs writes, “[i]deologies help [the voter] focus attention on the differences between parties; therefore they can be used as samples of all the differentiating stands. With this shortcut a voter can save himself the cost of being informed upon a wider range of issues” (Downs 1957: 98).

²¹ On this last point, see Stimson 1975.

- [Q10] A.) All people should be permitted to vote, even if they do not fully understand all the issues in an election, or B.) Only those who are sufficiently well educated should be allowed to choose our leaders.
- [Q11] A.) We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections, or B.) Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.
- [Q12] A.) Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Nigeria, or B.) Many political parties are needed to make sure that Nigerians have real choices in who governs them.
- [Q13] A.) It is important to obey the government in power no matter who you voted for, or B.) It is not necessary to obey the laws of a government that I did not vote for.
- [Q14] A.) Our elected officials should listen to constituents' views and do what they demand, or B.) Our elected leaders should follow their own ideas in deciding what is best for the country.
- [Q15] A.) In our country, women should have equal rights and receive the same treatment as men do, or B.) Women have always been subject to traditional laws and customs, and should remain so.
- [Q16] A.) Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men, or B.) Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women.

These questions allow us to measure Africans' opinions on a range of issues that are often related to ideological debates, such as the proper role of the state in the economy and society, tradeoffs between respecting the agency and choice of individuals and fostering the well-being of the corporate whole, and the costs and benefits of liberalism versus more authoritarian alternatives. If respondents have pre-established positions on these broad debates upon which they base their political attitudes, then those positions might inform their answers to the aforementioned questions. Responses that draw upon the same positions should then be strongly correlated.

For example, individuals often have long-standing assessments on the proper role of the state in society, generally speaking. These assessments might be guided by elite-generated ideologies that address state scope, or the individual might develop his or her own coherent, durable assessments, based on personality or life experience. If the individual has, for whatever reason, developed a position that favors the well-being of corporate body, over individual agency, and therefore also supports greater state intervention in the economy and society, then we should expect to see him or her favor things like free and universal public education, intensive state regulation of the economy, and a large civil service to accomplish such tasks.

Factor analysis is often an appropriate methodology when the researcher is seeking to identify patterns in data where interrelationships are unknown and possibly complex (see Rummel 1967). For this reason, exploratory factor analysis is particularly common in studies of ideology and attitudinal structures (Herzon 1980; Granberg and Holmberg 1988; Heath, *et al.* 1994; Hayo 2005; Federico 2006). In these cases, researchers might possess many possible indicators of individuals' political attitudes, but expect a relatively large number of measures to have a smaller number of underlying dimensions. An advantage of exploratory factor analysis, of the type we conduct, is that there is no requirement that the researcher possesses any

preconceived notions of what structures might or might not exist. Therefore, it might be particularly useful in studies of transitional societies (on post-Soviet Eastern Europe, see Miller, *et al.* 1995; Todosijević 2008). In our analysis, we utilize a common factor model, which is concerned with defining the patterns of common variation among a set of variables.

Results

Examining inter-variable correlations: As a precursor to the factor analysis, we looked at simple bivariate correlations between each of the sixteen opinion variables included in the study. (In order to be included in this and subsequent analyses, respondents had to provide a valid response to each of the sixteen attitude questions. After non-valid responses are dropped,²² the *N* for the seventeen-country pool is 16,480.) Results are presented in Table 4. None of the correlation coefficients are very large; the highest is between Q15 and Q16 ($r=.53$), both of which relate to women's rights. The weak results here suggest that subsequent analyses are unlikely to extract one or more factors that might be influencing responses on a significant number of issue variables.

Attempting factor extractions: Factor analysis, as its basis, uses this matrix of correlations between observed variables. High correlations indicate that variables are likely influenced by the same factors. We conducted our analyses using both orthogonal and oblique rotations.²³ Factor loadings measure which variables are involved in an identified pattern, and to what degree.²⁴

Previous research has conducted factor analysis utilizing Afrobarometer data to explore whether attitudes on democratic institutions—namely, open elections, multiparty competition, legislative autonomy, and executive constraints—are structured according to any underlying factors (Bratton 2010). Following this, our analysis also fails to identify a distinct dimension on democratic orientations.²⁵ Even using a broader set of questions, however, we are unable to extract even one factor.²⁶ The rotated factor loadings, which are presented in Table 5, are too small to assume that the variables are represented by any particular factor. (As a general rule, factor loadings should be .7 or above.) This suggests that two or more of the issue-position variables cannot be represented by the same underlying structure.

Of course, pooling seventeen countries into the same analysis results in a great amount of heterogeneity in our data. Each country has had a unique post-independence history, in terms of inter-party competition, and has a very different institutional, demographic, cultural, and economic profile. Therefore, it is possible that underlying structures might be observable in some countries, but not in others; those differences would be masked in the pooled data. We might expect that individuals' attitudes will be patterned in more identifiable ways in countries, such as Ghana, in which multiple major parties have historically presented ideological orientations. In order to examine this possibility, we conducted the same analyses with the pooled population separated by country. Results for one country—Ghana—are presented in Tables 6 and 7. In none of the seventeen countries did we see large coefficients in the correlation matrices, nor did the factor analyses suggest underlying structures.

²² These include responses of “don't know,” as well as respondent refusals and any missing results.

²³ Here, each factor is rotated until it defines a distinct cluster of interrelated variables. Orthogonal rotation defines only uncorrelated patterns. In the matrix, variables are not involved in an identified pattern will have a score of 0, with 1 being the theoretical maximum. Oblique rotation, on the other hand, has greater flexibility in searching for patterns regardless of their correlation.

²⁴ The square of the loading multiplied by 100 equals the percent variation that a variable has in common with a factor pattern. Negative loadings mean that scores on that item variable are inversely related to the factor.

²⁵ Bratton's analysis finds two factors with these four questions, two of which—executive constraints and legislative autonomy—we do not utilize because they do not appear in Round 3 data. However, rather than finding that the related pairs are legislative autonomy-executive constraint and open elections-multipartyism, as one might expect, the identified dimensions are legislative autonomy-elections and executive constraint-multipartyism.

²⁶ Our findings held when we dichotomized the dependent variable into pro-A vs. pro-B, rather than using the four-point scale.

We also explored the possibility that individuals who identified as partisans of the ruling party would be more likely than independents or opposition supporters to structure their attitudes along identifiable dimensions. As discussed previously, ruling parties have clear advantages in presenting messages to the public. If supporters of these parties are more receptive to their messages, then we might expect that they will structure their attitudes accordingly. 41.6% of the pooled population was identified as ruling-party supporters; this figure ranged from 10.5% in Benin to 77.1% in Mozambique.²⁷ However, we can identify no structures amongst ruling-party supporters, using either the pooled sample or individual-country samples.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix (for Pooled, 17-Country Sample)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Free schooling? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 2. Civil servants? | .0890 | 1.0000 | | | | | |
| 3. Reform economy? | .1151 | .0560 | 1.0000 | | | | |
| 4. Responsible own well-being? | -.0651 | -.0246 | -.0412 | 1.0000 | | | |
| 5. Question leaders? | -.0189 | .0613 | .0552 | .0874 | 1.0000 | | |
| 6. Ban organizations? | .0387 | .0050 | .0212 | .0398 | -.0302 | 1.0000 | |
| 7. Ban newspapers? | .0246 | -.0028 | .0295 | .0394 | -.0076 | .3005 | 1.0000 |
| 8. Express unpopular views? | .0767 | -.0314 | .0888 | .0675 | -.0644 | .2702 | .2620 |
| 9. Leaders represent whom? | .0110 | .0623 | .0032 | .0556 | .1719 | .0118 | .0054 |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | .0429 | .1417 | .0014 | .0024 | .0714 | -.0280 | .0086 |
| 11. Hold elections? | -.0016 | .1059 | -.0004 | .0552 | .1345 | -.0258 | .0212 |
| 12. Allow parties? | .0779 | -.0326 | .0620 | .0133 | -.0231 | .1431 | .1224 |
| 13. Obey leaders? | -.0036 | .1407 | -.0432 | .0590 | .1265 | .0061 | .0153 |
| 14. Leaders follow constituents? | -.0051 | .1080 | -.0085 | .0233 | .1680 | -.0093 | .0209 |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | -.0721 | .0438 | .0031 | .0940 | .0837 | .0318 | -.0005 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | -.0431 | .0530 | -.0102 | .0887 | .1220 | .0443 | .0273 |
| | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 8. Express unpopular views? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 9. Leaders represent whom? | -.0370 | 1.0000 | | | | | |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | -.0339 | .1165 | 1.0000 | | | | |
| 11. Hold elections? | -.0431 | .0927 | .1705 | 1.0000 | | | |
| 12. Allow parties? | .1740 | -.0212 | -.0422 | -.0735 | 1.0000 | | |
| 13. Obey leaders? | -.0437 | .1271 | .1927 | .2448 | -.0428 | 1.0000 | |
| 14. Leaders follow constituents? | -.0915 | .1356 | .1631 | .2063 | -.0425 | .2421 | 1.0000 |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | -.0069 | .0497 | .1102 | .1129 | -.0361 | .1093 | .0588 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | -.0294 | .0931 | .1496 | .1248 | -.0417 | .1410 | .1244 |
| | 15 | 16 | | | | | |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 16. Elect women to office? | .5263 | 1.0000 | | | | | |

²⁷ Ruling-party supporters identified at the time of the surveys included those who preferred Mathieu Kérékou, then president of Benin; the BDP of Botswana; the PAICV of Cape Verde; the NPP of Ghana; the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and the Democratic Party of Kenya (DPK); the LCD of Lesotho; TIM of Madagascar; the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Malawi; the *Mouvement Citoyen* of Mali; FRELIMO of Mozambique; SWAPO of Namibia; the PDP of Nigeria; the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* (PDS) of Senegal; the ANC of South Africa; the NRM of Uganda; and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) of Zambia.

Table 5: Factor Loadings (for Pooled, 17-Country Sample)

| Variable | Varimax Rotated | | | | Promax Rotated | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 |
| 1. Free schooling? | -.0774 | .0163 | -.0818 | .4074 | -.0038 | -.0266 | -.0281 | .4142 |
| 2. Civil servants? | .0454 | .2477 | .0284 | .2305 | .2411 | .0087 | .0429 | .2312 |
| 3. Reform economy? | -.0013 | .0191 | .0790 | -.2688 | .0391 | -.0448 | .0405 | -.2737 |
| 4. Responsible well-being? | -.1133 | -.0863 | .1019 | .1643 | -.1004 | -.0621 | .1302 | .1714 |
| 5. Question leaders? | .1076 | .2952 | .0369 | -.0152 | .3059 | .0217 | .0147 | -.0205 |
| 6. Ban organizations? | -.0399 | .0008 | .5380 | .0084 | -.0262 | -.0176 | .5429 | .0194 |
| 7. Ban newspapers? | -.0030 | -.0619 | .5236 | .0273 | -.0988 | .0418 | .5366 | .0399 |
| 8. Express views? | .0113 | .1075 | .5258 | -.0878 | .0921 | -.0118 | .5100 | -.0812 |
| 9. Leaders represent? | -.0691 | -.2836 | -.0005 | -.0039 | -.2981 | .0133 | .0193 | .0017 |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | .1369 | .3421 | .0366 | .1320 | .3408 | .0605 | .0321 | .1291 |
| 11. Hold elections? | .1201 | .4216 | .0264 | .0047 | .4398 | -.0008 | -.0026 | -.0030 |
| 12. Allow parties? | .0442 | .0914 | .2761 | -.1006 | .0865 | .0146 | .2582 | -.0989 |
| 13. Obey leaders? | .1180 | .4901 | .0020 | -.0099 | .5167 | -.0268 | -.0346 | -.0200 |
| 14. Leaders follow? | .0698 | .4723 | .0351 | -.0084 | .5008 | -.0699 | -.0005 | -.0176 |
| 15. Equal rights women? | .8313 | .0071 | .0005 | -.0048 | -.0841 | .8591 | .0159 | -.0011 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | .6315 | .1557 | -.0182 | -.0172 | .1005 | .6044 | -.0200 | -.0184 |

Next, research on ideology in advanced democracies suggests that an individual's probability of adhering to an ideology and having that ideology constrain issue positions is affected by a number of individual-level variables, most importantly political sophistication (Converse 1964).²⁸ This literature suggests that individuals who are better educated will generally have more coherent attitudes, as will individuals who have higher motivation and greater political knowledge (Converse 2000, 2006; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Sniderman, *et al.*; Zaller 1992; Layman and Carsey 2002; Erikson and Tedin 2003; Bennett 2006; Federico and Schneider 2007; Treier and Hillygus 2009: 693)

We divided our sample on the bases of education,²⁹ stated political interest,³⁰ access to mass media,³¹ urban/rural setting,³² and political knowledge, as measured by ability to answer six questions about political institutions.³³ In addition, because men are typically more involved in politics in African than women, we might expect that they will be more likely to structure their political attitudes in discernible ways. Therefore, we also conducted analyses that excluded women.³⁴ We performed the analyses for each of these subgroups, using both pooled and individual-country samples. In total, this means that we conducted various versions of

²⁸ We are aware of the debate surrounding this concept (see Luskin 1987). In focusing on education and media access, among other variables, we follow the lead of Moehler and Singh (2007).

²⁹ Individuals who had completed primary education were included in the analyses. This constituted 62% of the pooled sample.

³⁰ Individuals who reported that they were "somewhat" or "very interested" in politics were included in the analyses. This constituted 70% of the pooled sample.

³¹ Individuals who reported at least some access to news from radio were included in analyses. The same strategy was used for separate analyses on newspaper and television. 92% of the pooled sample reported some access to radio, 56% to television, and 47% to newspapers.

³² The analyses were run using urbanites only. This constituted 38% of the pooled sample.

³³ Individuals were asked to identify their local member of the national legislature, their local government councilor, the deputy president (or vice president), and the party with the most seats in the national legislature. They were also asked about executive term limits and formal procedures for determining a law's constitutionality. 15% of individuals in the pooled sample got five or six questions correctly (i.e., "high knowledge"), 41% got three or four correct (i.e., "medium knowledge"), and 31% got one or two right (i.e., "low knowledge"). The analyses were run on each of these subgroups.

³⁴ Men constituted 51% of the pooled sample.

factor analysis on some 216 different samples. Our results were consistent; for none of the subgroups were we able to identify any structures that might be influencing two or more political preferences. This was true even when we focused just on those who were “extremely interested” in politics,³⁵ and on those who have completed secondary school.³⁶

Previous research on attitudinal structuration in advanced democracies suggests, fairly consistently, that identifiable structures are more common amongst political sophisticates. Our inability to identify structures even amongst the best educated, most knowledgeable, and (ostensibly) most politically savvy Africans suggests that elites are generally not making much of an effort to communicate ideological appeals, at least on the types of issues included in the Afrobarometer surveys. If anyone were receptive to ideological appeals, it would be these politically sophisticated individuals. These findings suggest—albeit certainly not definitively—that our ability to identify coherent attitudinal structures in environments lacking elite construction and communication of said structures (i.e., ideologies) will be limited.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix (for Ghana Only)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Free schooling? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 2. Civil servants? | .0324 | 1.0000 | | | | | |
| 3. Reform economy? | .1896 | .0274 | 1.0000 | | | | |
| 4. Responsible own well-being? | -.1609 | .0208 | -.2002 | 1.0000 | | | |
| 5. Question leaders? | -.0812 | .0918 | .0399 | .0504 | 1.0000 | | |
| 6. Ban organizations? | .0023 | -.0060 | -.0007 | .0636 | -.0893 | 1.0000 | |
| 7. Ban newspapers? | -.0488 | .0333 | -.0537 | .0368 | .0157 | .3529 | 1.0000 |
| 8. Express unpopular views? | .1258 | -.1096 | .0507 | -.0273 | -.0881 | .2493 | .1993 |
| 9. Leaders represent whom? | -.1082 | -.0950 | -.0031 | .0800 | .1047 | -.1097 | -.0291 |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | -.0552 | .0625 | -.0359 | .0548 | .0915 | -.0542 | -.0138 |
| 11. Hold elections? | -.0918 | .0809 | -.0924 | .0299 | .1612 | -.0400 | -.0621 |
| 12. Allow parties? | .0596 | -.0275 | .0716 | .0202 | -.1033 | .0983 | .1065 |
| 13. Obey leaders? | -.1427 | .1647 | -.0989 | .0734 | .1358 | -.0652 | -.0268 |
| 14. Leaders follow constituents? | -.0229 | .1323 | -.0550 | .0725 | .1805 | .0028 | .0406 |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | -.0107 | .1201 | .0161 | .0636 | .0691 | -.0531 | -.0442 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | -.0631 | .1059 | -.0339 | .0175 | .1574 | -.1103 | .0475 |
| | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 8. Express unpopular views? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 9. Leaders represent whom? | -.0917 | 1.0000 | | | | | |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | -.0740 | .0470 | 1.0000 | | | | |
| 11. Hold elections? | -.1286 | .0665 | .0833 | 1.0000 | | | |
| 12. Allow parties? | .0885 | .0053 | -.1352 | -.2258 | 1.0000 | | |
| 13. Obey leaders? | -.1560 | .0744 | .1708 | .2657 | -.0623 | 1.0000 | |
| 14. Leaders follow constituents? | -.1099 | .0731 | .0870 | .1550 | -.0515 | .1603 | 1.0000 |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | -.1121 | -.0055 | .2256 | .1674 | -.1810 | .1790 | .0734 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | -.1777 | -.0056 | .1415 | .1590 | -.0813 | .2004 | .1628 |
| | 15 | 16 | | | | | |
| 15. Equal rights for women? | 1.0000 | | | | | | |
| 16. Elect women to office? | .5492 | 1.0000 | | | | | |

³⁵ 41.1% of the pooled sample.

³⁶ 25.2% of the pooled sample.

Table 7: Factor Loadings (for Ghana Only)³⁷

| Variable | Varimax Rotated | | Promax Rotated | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | F1 | F2 | F1 | F2 |
| 1. Free schooling? | -.1997 | .0196 | -.2054 | .0443 |
| 2. Civil servants? | .2314 | -.0182 | .2375 | -.0467 |
| 3. Reform economy? | .1447 | -.0595 | .1533 | -.0781 |
| 4. Responsible well-being? | -.1591 | .1016 | -.1720 | .1226 |
| 5. Question leaders? | .2925 | .0600 | .2921 | .0254 |
| 6. Ban organizations? | .0843 | .6150 | .0256 | .6148 |
| 7. Ban newspapers? | -.0422 | .5893 | -.1008 | .6041 |
| 8. Express views? | .2804 | .3433 | .2520 | .3148 |
| 9. Leaders represent? | .0898 | .1108 | .0806 | .1017 |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | .3130 | .0435 | .3147 | .0061 |
| 11. Hold elections? | .3965 | .0905 | .3951 | .0437 |
| 12. Allow parties? | .2461 | .1562 | .2355 | .1288 |
| 13. Obey leaders? | .4496 | .0553 | .4527 | .0014 |
| 14. Leaders follow? | .3154 | -.0278 | .3241 | -.0666 |
| 15. Equal rights women? | .5371 | .0452 | .5429 | -.0194 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | .5775 | .0275 | .5857 | -.0423 |

Discussion

Elite-mass communication in many African countries contained heavy doses of ideological appeals in the first years after independence, through references to socialist or, perhaps with less frequency, capitalist orientations, and/or by presenting their policies as informed by overarching nationalist, anti-colonialist themes. However, such linkage strategies seem to be less emphasized by electoral competitors in most countries today. Parties like Ghana's NDC and NPP still make note of their respective ideological heritages. However, as governors, there is little practical difference in the parties' broad economic policies, and analyses of Afrobarometer survey data suggest that, on questions of state scope, adherents to the Nkrumahist party are no more "statist" than those loyal to the successor to the UGCC-UP tradition are.

Our analyses of Afrobarometer data support these characterizations more generally. We find that, in the vast majority of cases, the median attitudes of a party's base on the indices we create are not significantly different from those of other major parties in that country. What's more, party bases usually exhibit no less variation in their attitudes on these issues than independents in the same countries do. African parties, for the most part, do not seem to aggregate, at least on the bases of the political attitudes examined here. In short, the rhetoric and reality surrounding inter-party political competition in Africa seems far less ideological than it once did.

Given a lack of emphasis on ideological cues in elite-mass communications, top-down approaches to the emergence and salience of ideology would suggest that Africans will not organize their political opinions according to identifiable value structures. Indeed, this is what we find in the Afrobarometer opinion data. In country after country, and in subgroup after subgroup, we find little evidence of structures that inform individuals' opinions on multiple political issues. In short, most Africans do not seem to adhere to ideologies, or belief structures, that inform their attitudes on specific political issues.

³⁷ For the Ghana analysis, the scree plot suggested a possibility of two or four factors. However, with four factors, the solution was a Heywood case, which is problematic. Since communalities are squared correlations, we should expect them to always lie between 0 and 1. A mathematical peculiarity of the common factor model, however, is that final communality estimates exceed 1. If a communality equals 1, the situation is referred to as a Heywood case, and if a communality exceeds 1, it is an ultra-Heywood case. An ultra-Heywood case implies that some unique factor has negative variance, a clear indication that something in the analysis is wrong. Possible causes include bad prior communality estimates, too many common factors, too few common factors, not enough data to provide stable estimates, and an inappropriate common factor model.

However, we would caution not to interpret these findings as unequivocally supportive of top-down approaches. Rather, there are a number of possible reasons for the lack of identifiable structures in the opinion data, and for the apparent lack of coherence in many individuals' political preferences. Certainly, in the wake of the Converse's (1964) seminal finding of relatively low coherence in U.S. citizens' political attitudes—or, as he put it, an apparent lack of “attitudinal constraint”—many observers of U.S. politics have attempted to explain incoherence. One subset of the literature has focused on the inability of surveys to capture true preferences due to problems of “measurement error” (Achen 1975; Ansolabehere, *et al.* 2008). Vague or ambiguously worded questions, non-exhaustive (or overly similar) response categories, question order, or priming might significantly affect responses and make it more difficult to get accurate measures of individual beliefs (see Zaller 1992: 76-96). In short, researchers' abilities to identify attitudinal structures are often tied to the nature of the questions that are asked.

At other times, respondents might answer questions somewhat randomly because of their lack of knowledge about the issues involved (Bartels 1986; Alvarez 1997; Alvarez and Franklin 1994). If large numbers of respondents answer relevant questions randomly, we should not expect to be able to identify underlying structures to those responses. As political information becomes more available—and their “uncertainty,” to use the field parlance, declines—we might therefore expect that attitudinal incoherence will decrease. And, as stated previously, a dearth of political information is particularly problematic in many African environments. In short, uncertainty means that our surveys are measuring guesses, rather than meaningful attitudes. While we do not think uncertainty is a likely explanation for our findings of widespread attitudinal incoherence—attitudinal structures were not discernible even amongst the most politically sophisticated in the Afrobarometer samples—the relationship between knowledge and attitudes could be further explored with future observational or experimental work.

Finally, respondents might actually have core beliefs that inform their issue positions, but those core beliefs are sometimes in conflict with one another (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Alvarez and Franklin 1994; Alvarez and Brehm 1995). For example, an individual who values multiculturalism and possesses a certain vision of meritocracy might present seemingly incoherent positions on an issue such as affirmative action. In such cases—known in the literature as “ambivalence”—simple factor analysis might not be able to identify latent structures.

Certainly, studies of democratic transition and consolidation, and non-elite political behavior and decision making, has benefited tremendously from the collection of data on individuals' opinions on controversial political issues and their assessments of local political, social, and economic institutions. We would suggest that future research on Africans' political attitudes focus explicitly on possible underlying reasons for apparent incoherence, such as uncertainty or ambivalence. Strategies could involve asking additional questions that might measure “core values,” as well as questions that measure support for certain policy positions under several different scenarios (see Alvarez and Brehm 1995). In addition, the question of longitudinal preference stability remains an open question, and one that could be addressed with commitment to the collection of individual-level panel data. Improved understanding of political decision making in Africa will require concerted attention to questions of value structures and apparent attitudinal ambivalence.

Appendix A: Descriptives on Issue Attitudes (for Pooled, 17-Country Sample)

| Variables | A | | B | | Neither | Don't Know |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|------------|
| | Strongly | Somewhat | Strongly | Somewhat | | |
| 1. Free schooling? | 23.93 | 15.00 | 23.34 | 33.00 | 3.37 | 1.36 |
| 2. Civil servants? | 38.85 | 31.31 | 13.78 | 8.50 | 3.84 | 3.72 |
| 3. Reform economy? | 15.39 | 19.05 | 32.17 | 23.72 | 4.35 | 5.32 |
| 4. Responsible well-being? | 27.26 | 19.65 | 20.50 | 28.57 | 3.30 | 0.73 |
| 5. Question leaders? | 39.94 | 27.67 | 17.10 | 11.95 | 1.91 | 1.43 |
| 6. Ban organizations? | 15.37 | 17.51 | 32.89 | 26.89 | 3.34 | 4.01 |
| 7. Ban newspapers? | 18.14 | 18.75 | 28.89 | 26.23 | 3.58 | 4.43 |
| 8. Express views? | 9.99 | 13.11 | 35.20 | 36.50 | 2.04 | 3.17 |
| 9. Leaders represent? | 44.54 | 24.37 | 13.93 | 13.39 | 2.44 | 1.33 |
| 10. Allow all to vote? | 58.29 | 25.27 | 7.58 | 6.06 | 1.92 | 0.89 |
| 11. Hold elections? | 53.95 | 27.96 | 7.95 | 7.53 | 1.01 | 1.60 |
| 12. Allow parties? | 15.89 | 16.42 | 29.43 | 32.89 | 2.69 | 2.67 |
| 13. Obey leaders? | 54.08 | 32.58 | 6.15 | 4.27 | 1.47 | 1.45 |
| 14. Leaders follow? | 49.42 | 33.00 | 8.63 | 5.43 | 1.77 | 1.74 |
| 15. Equal rights women? | 47.22 | 23.74 | 12.17 | 14.61 | 1.63 | 0.64 |
| 16. Elect women to office? | 50.46 | 24.55 | 10.96 | 12.03 | 1.29 | 0.71 |

Note: Valid percents, excluding missing data

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