

Working Paper No. 162

Language, education, and citizenship in Africa

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Abstract

African states are known for their linguistic diversity. Few have spread a single official language widely through their education systems. The preservation of many local languages seems a benefit in terms of minority rights, but some fear that fragmentation may inhibit national cohesion and democratic participation. This article examines language competence of individuals in 10 states in Africa, highlighting distinctions in types of education systems. It also assesses their attitudes about citizenship and democracy, using Afrobarometer survey data. It shows that immersion systems appear much more effective in spreading a standard language, but that national sentiment has very little to do with proficiency in this official language. It also reveals that citizens armed with literacy in local languages tend to be more participatory, more demanding of greater accountability in government, and more critical of authoritarian rule.



While virtually all states in Africa have chosen a European language as the official language of education, proficiency in these languages within states across the continent remains low. Certainly there is variation, but very few states have managed to spread a standard language through education. The benefit is that many local languages have been preserved; the question is what this means for citizenship and democracy.

This article will do three things: First, it will investigate proficiency in European languages across the continent and highlight the factors that make individuals more likely to speak these official languages. Second, it will ask how language proficiency and type of education may influence citizens' national sentiments compared to their ethnic attachments. Finally, it will ask how these factors relate to individuals' political participation and democratic attitudes.

Unsurprisingly, higher levels of education are associated with greater proficiency in European languages. Assessing different *types* of education, the study finds that individuals schooled in immersion vs. initial mother-tongue medium settings are more likely to learn European languages. And yet, proficiency in an official language has an ambivalent connection to individuals' sentiments toward their ethnic group and nation. National sentiment is strong within mother-tongue systems as well as immersion systems. In mother-tongue settings, however, citizens maintain attachments to their ethnic identity while *at the same time* declaring loyalty to the nation, whereas citizens in immersion settings more readily drop the ethnic attachment. Finally, mother-tongue settings appear to provide some advantages when it comes to political participation and support for democracy. This may be due to networking opportunities in language associations as well as the confidence and creativity that students acquire in mother-tongue classrooms.

Expectations from the literature

This study engages with two strands of literature: one on national identity and social cohesion and another on language policy in education. The literature on national identity and social cohesion is concerned centrally with the dangers of **ethnolinguistic fragmentation**.¹

While casual observers usually equate ethnolinguistic fragmentation with higher violence, careful work has isolated specific configurations that lead to greater conflict. Horowitz (1985, 2000) attributes greater violence potential to settings with two or three large groups. Bates (1999) shows that ethnic politics are most volatile when an ethnic bloc is sufficient in size to permanently exclude others from the exercise of power (see also Collier & Hoeffler, 1998). This kind of testing treats language identities as rather static, however, only expecting differentiation based on size and linguistic distance among groups.

My question is more specific. I am trying to discover whether the differences in education systems – established by colonizers and largely continued through the independence period to the 1990s – have had different effects on identities. Does a particular language *policy* – the use of mother tongues in education – contribute over the long term to the creation of insular groups with divisive tendencies? The mechanism would be that as groups become more “ideologized,” in the words of Young (1976, p. 45), they would become more (sub)nationalist, and therefore more likely to demand their autonomy. Previous work (Albaugh, 2014, Ch. 7) found that violence was *not* in fact more prevalent among communities in which local-language education was privileged. Resonating with the work of Horowitz and Bates, violent mobilization over language has to do with the potential permanent inequality that can arise if one group's language is chosen and others are not. Therefore, mother-tongue education would only contribute to conflict insofar as it reinforces the privilege of a particular group that enjoyed an early head start. Where this has occurred

¹ Easterly & Levine, 1997; Alesina, Baqir, & Easterly, 1999; Collier & Gunning, 1999; Rodrik, 1999; Keefer & Knack, 2002. Even studies using more nuanced fractionalization measures concur that linguistic fractionalization (Alesina *et al.*, 2003) and politicized ethnic diversity (Posner, 2004) harm growth. But see Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, & Weinstein, 2007.



– Sudan, Malawi, and Uganda to some extent – there have been rumblings from excluded groups. But by and large, mother-tongue education has been more inclusive than exclusive, which is why it generally has not been linked to violence.

Even if scholarship has found that violent outcomes are more likely only where there is great intergroup inequality or permanent exclusion, we still want to know how education policies impact citizens' sense of national identity. Ali Mazrui posited that the recognition of chiefdoms and native rulers in anglophone Africa helped to increase ethnic consciousness within subgroups, reducing the likelihood of an emerging national consciousness. "British approaches to colonial rule, by being culturally relative and ethnically specific, helped to perpetuate and in some cases create the kind of ethnic consciousness which could seriously militate against nation building" (Mazrui, 1983, p. 29). This paper will therefore look at whether this increased attention to ethnic identity through mother-tongue education indeed prevents the emergence of national sentiment.

A second strand of literature includes normative and practical theories about **language policies in education**. These literatures often overlap, as empirical arguments seem to follow normative predispositions. Normatively, the question is whether the goal should be uniformity or diversity. Those who advocate uniformity argue that national unity and inclusive participation is best served when all speak the same language (Pogge, 2003; Blake, 2003; Archibugi, 2005). Those who advocate diversity argue that inclusivity comes with recognition of minorities, and the imposition of a single language threatens to undermine unity (Phillipson, 2008; Ives, 2010; May, 2012). These latter theorists similarly argue that their chosen method will enhance participation: namely that mother-tongue education, by rectifying unchosen inequalities, will allow minority voices to be heard. Practically speaking, those who advocate uniformity argue that immersion is the most efficient way for minorities to learn a common language, while those advocating diversity say that the use of the mother tongue is not only more inclusive, but it is also more effective for teaching a second language in the long run (Collier & Thomas, 2004, Wong Fillmore, 2004).

Of course, there is more nuance to these positions, as the classification by Stephen May (2012) demonstrates.² He distinguishes between those policies that perpetuate an "ideology of contempt" (p. 187) toward minority languages (anything that aims toward a monolingual nation-state) and those that envision a different endpoint (ideally an ethnolinguistic democracy). But a tendency toward polemical terminology and maximalist goals may damage the cause of diversity advocates. As language-rights advocates urge more expansive and uncompromising priority in the curriculum for minority languages, they make the policy more difficult to adopt. An alternative strategy – one taken recently by many francophone scholars – is to endorse mother-tongue education on the basis of its ability to facilitate the transition to a second language. This efficiency argument can easily be reconciled with the nation-state model, but is often rejected by purists as being "covert linguicide" (May, 2012, p. 181). While a host of research has advocated late-exit over transitional/early-exit mother-tongue programs, this paper can only evaluate the general effectiveness of early-exit mother-tongue education systems against the effectiveness of immersion programs in learning a European language.

Even if the jury is still out on the effectiveness of each system in teaching a second language, another argument in favour even of early-exit mother-tongue education has to do with its side effects, in particular its participatory benefits (Kymlicka, 2001). My research (Albaugh, 2014, pp. 203-208) gives some support to the notion that groups exposed to their languages in written form are just as likely to trust other groups, and more likely to criticize the government. Where mother-tongue education is practiced, language committees have facilitated group solidarity, the practice of associations, and opportunities to network. Further, Barbara Trudell finds much evidence that using mother-tongue education evokes more interaction in the classroom. Mother-tongue classes are "noisier, more participatory

² Wiley (2014) provides a similar categorization: from repression-oriented to promotion-oriented policies.

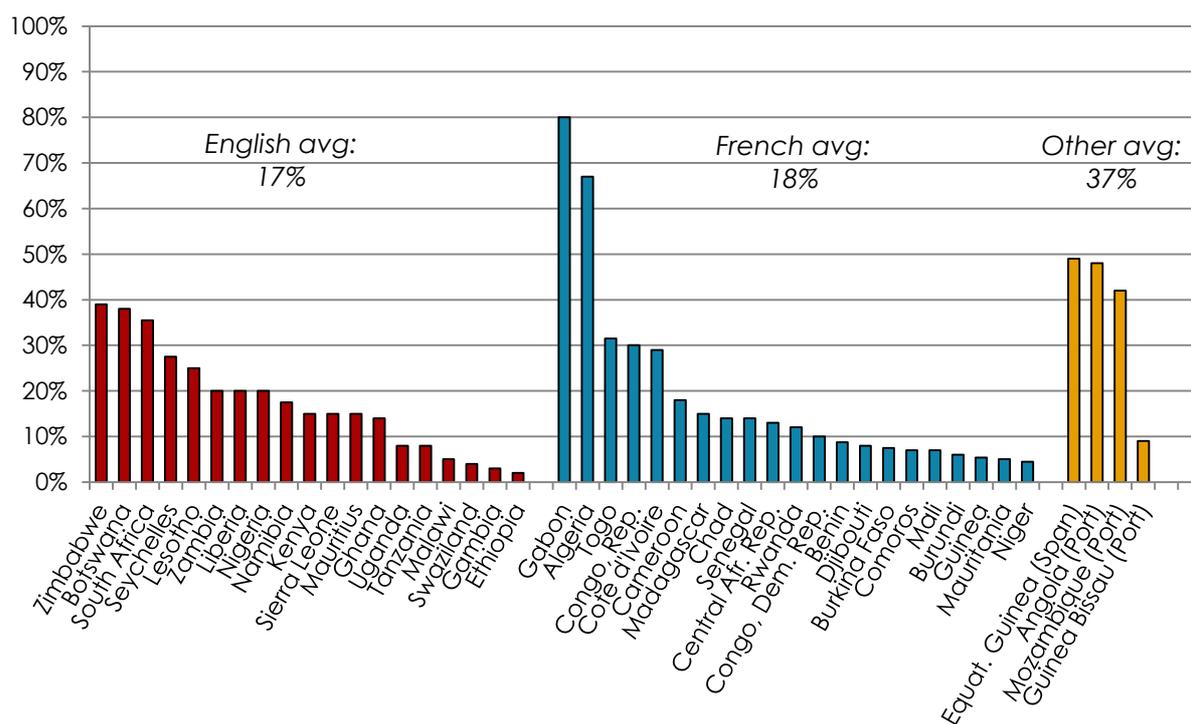


and less characterized by strict discipline than the English-only classes" (2005, 10). These types of psychological and behavioural attitudes seem very likely to translate into more confident and active citizens. As Ngugi (1986) argued, learning the colonizer's language facilitates *elites'* participation, as it allows them to join national or international conversations. The "masses," however, are still excluded.

The potential for participation through mother-tongue education is contested by those who see a European language as giving greater personal efficacy and pragmatic access to the formal political process that comes with facility in the language of government. Jaimie Bleck (2015), for example, shows some qualitative evidence that individuals speaking the former colonial language in Mali engage in more difficult participation, such as running for office and navigating government bureaucracy.³ Her study builds on the contradictory findings of Mattes and Mughogho (2009) that did not find formal education to have direct effects on participation such as voting. This article will look more broadly at citizens across several cases who are schooled in mother-tongue vs. immersion systems, to assess their attitudes and political participation.

African states are often compared unfavourably with the nation-state that arose in Europe (Herbst, 2000). Whether one blames or credits the European model, one of its central elements was language standardization. The lack of attention to standardization among African states is evident in Figure 1, which plots the European-language proficiency within all states in Africa. These are estimates based on several expert sources.⁴

Figure 1: Portion of the population speaking a European language⁵



³ She admits that her sampling did not allow her to test separately the impact of individuals in community schools who would have been exposed to mother-tongue education (personal communication, 6 November 2015)

⁴ Among general sources: Adegbiya, 1994; Graddol, 1997; Baker & Jones, 1998; Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2007; Leclerc, 2009-2011. Sources for individual countries are listed in the appendix to Albaugh, 2014.

⁵ From Albaugh, 2014, p. 221. The book's appendix lists sources.



Aside from two exceptional cases, Gabon and Algeria,⁶ French and English retain a relatively precarious status among African masses, with an average of less than 20% proficiency in any European language across the continent.

Certainly, some states are doing better than others, and this has much to do with differences in school enrollment, which began in the colonial period (Albaugh, 2014, Ch. 2). We would expect that the longer one remains in school, the more likely one is to speak a European language. We want to know, however, how the type of education system affects language proficiency. The percentages plotted in the graph are from expert estimates, but they are not based on surveys. Unfortunately, census information that includes language capabilities is not uniformly available for each country. Recent work by Carolyn Logan (2015) shows claimed proficiency frequencies among respondents in Round 4 (2008/2009) of Afrobarometer surveys, which are certainly higher than the expert estimates.

To look at individuals' claimed proficiency in speaking a unifying language, I profited from the same open-ended question in the 2008/2009 Afrobarometer surveys. This question (Q88E) asked respondents to list the languages they spoke well. By disaggregating the respondents by their exposure to education and their facility in a European language, one can see how effective the education system in the country has been in its stated goal of diffusing the official language. While far from perfect, the biases would be similar across all respondents. I coded these free responses into a 0/1 variable, 1 indicating that the respondent listed English, French, or Portuguese among the languages he or she spoke well. Though surveys are available for 20 countries, I restricted my selection to the 10 most representative cases for my purposes: in particular, those that most consistently demonstrated the typical "francophone" (immersion) and "anglophone" (mother-tongue) approach to education, prior to some shifts in the last decade. I also include Mozambique as a representative of Portuguese policy, more similar to the francophone cases in its non-use of local languages.⁷ Historically, British colonies and the independent states that succeeded them relied on local languages in early education, while French and Portuguese colonies and subsequent states generally used these European languages from the beginning of primary school (Albaugh, 2014, Ch. 2). In the past 15 years, many francophone and lusophone states have shifted to the use of local languages, but adults surveyed in 2008 would have been schooled in the original systems: typically mother tongue for anglophone and immersion for francophone and lusophone.

The following 10 countries make up the sample: Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana (anglophone/mother-tongue education); Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal (francophone/immersion); and Mozambique (lusophone/immersion).

Findings: European language proficiency

While proponents of mother-tongue education argue that it is ultimately more effective in transitioning children to a second (European) language, the length of time these languages are used make the mother-tongue systems "early exit" programs across the board. I suspect it is more likely that students exposed to a European language earlier will claim some proficiency.

⁶ Gabon, with a population of only half a million at independence, began with an unusually high number of missionaries and the highest proportion of children attending school in francophone Africa. Its high proficiency is a reflection of this head start. Algeria also began with a relatively high number of children enrolled in school, but interestingly, its official policies aimed to spread Arabic at the expense of French. Close proximity to France, frequent emigration and return, and more recent spread through TV programs have increased French proficiency more than deliberate government policy.

⁷ Future research will expand the sample, though the inclusion of less "pure" cases may make the relationship less clear.

Figure 2 shows that the percentage of the population who included English as one of the languages they spoke well was much higher in the anglophone sample of countries (53%) than the proportion of the francophone sample who included French among the languages they spoke well (32%).⁸

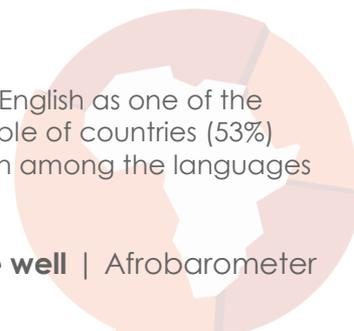
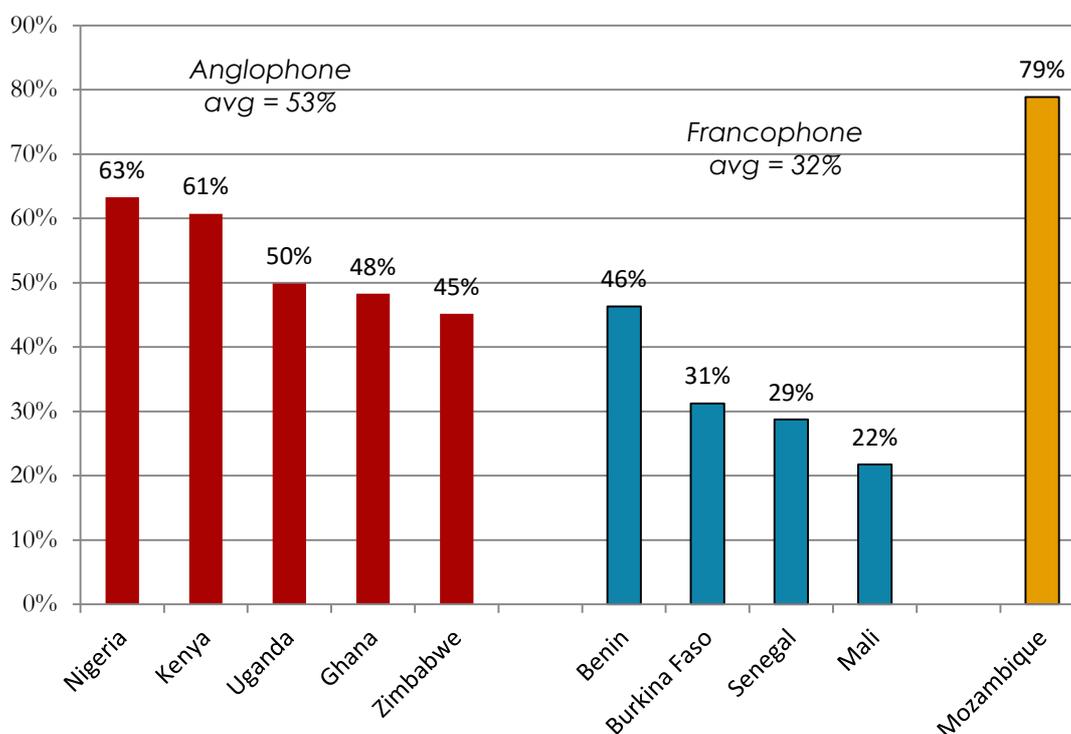


Figure 2: Percent claiming to speak English/French/Portuguese well | Afrobarometer | 2008



This finding mirrors the continual observation of low literacy rates in francophone states, and it has often led to a disparaging assessment of the French system of education – the use of French rather than local languages as the medium of instruction. It has probably led to these states' willingness to consider other methods. But this may not be the appropriate interpretation.

The Afrobarometer surveys attempt to include as representative a sample of the population in each country as possible. Because literacy rates in anglophone Africa are much higher than in francophone Africa (average rates for the countries in this sample are 76% vs. 36%), a random sample will naturally capture a higher percentage of educated respondents in surveys done in anglophone Africa. In fact, the average percentage of survey respondents with some education was 87% in anglophone Africa vs. 43% in francophone Africa – twice as many respondents had exposure to some education in the former as in the latter. We need, then, to account for level of education.

As further controls, we want to include some demographic variables. Considering the diversity of language groups in these states, it would be reasonable to expect that individuals from small language groups would have more incentive to learn a European language to increase their communication potential, compared with individuals from large language

⁸ Mozambique is an interesting outlier. Its high Portuguese proficiency may be due to its much longer historical contact with Portuguese or, as I argue elsewhere (Albaugh, 2015), it could reflect the long-term experience with a civil war, which spread the language more widely than did the school system.

⁹ World Development Indicators: Adult Literacy Rate, data from 2006-2009.

groups, who already have more communication partners (de Swaan, 2001). I calculated this control variable based on language size figures from *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Lewis, Simons, & Fenning, 2014), adjusting the numbers to 2010 estimates. "Size of respondent's language group" is the portion of the country's overall population that speaks the respondent's language as a mother tongue.¹⁰ It is predicted that individuals from larger indigenous groups will be less likely to need to learn a second language. I also include an urban/rural dummy, believing that urbanization should increase one's exposure to a European language. I speculate that men may be more likely than women to travel and therefore need to use European languages. Finally, I expect that young people are more likely to be learning European languages through greater interaction with media. Values for these final three variables are taken from the Afrobarometer 2008 responses.

The following logit regression results support these expectations. In the first model, I include only education level as an explanatory variable, and it is clear that each additional year of education increases one's odds of speaking a European language by 2.5 times.

Table 1: Claim to speak a European language | logit regression¹¹

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coeff	Exp(B)	Coeff	Exp(B)	Coeff	Exp(B)
Constant	-2.82	.060	-2.58	.076	-2.33	.098
Education level	.94** (.015)	2.56	1.12** (.018)	3.07	1.10** (.020)	3.011
Mother-tongue education			-1.29** (.056)	.277	-1.25** (.058)	.288
Size of respondent's language group					-2.22** (.124)	.109
Urban					.359** (.052)	1.431
Male					.542** (.048)	1.719
Age					-.057* (.018)	.944
N	14269		14269		14086	
R ²	.402		.427		.444	
-2 log likelihood:	12438.371		11843.660		11269.881	

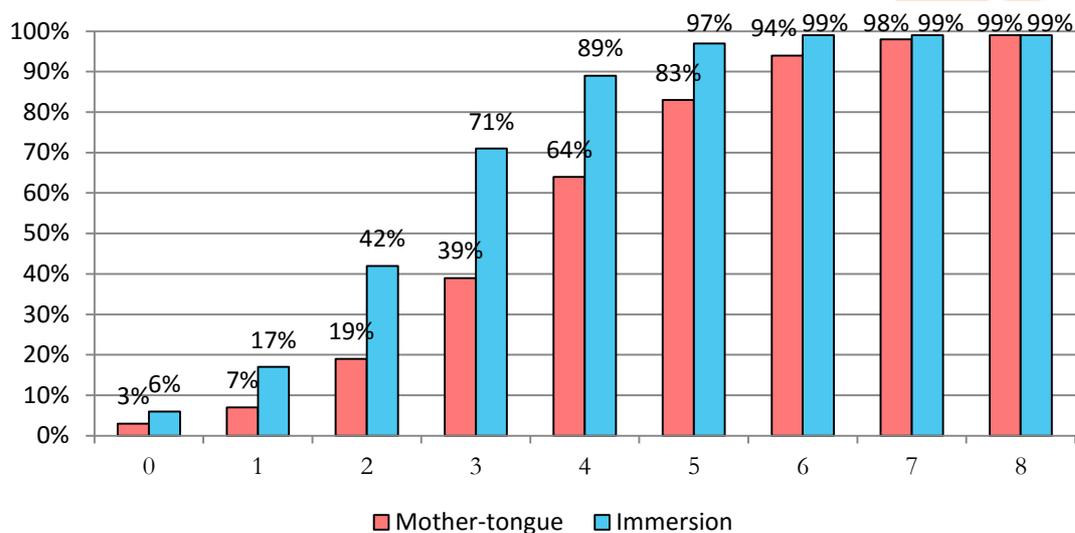
** Significant at the .001 level

Model 2 adds a dummy for type of education system – 0 for immersion and 1 for mother-tongue. It indicates that mother-tongue settings are *less* likely to produce individuals who claim proficiency in a European language at any given level of education. Figure 3 separates respondents by level of education to show the distinction in predicted probabilities.

¹⁰ The Afrobarometer languages had to be carefully matched to the *Ethnologue* languages, which were often named differently (this was possible because alternate names are listed in *Ethnologue*). I also aggregated languages that were split in *Ethnologue*, such as Dogon varieties in Mali or languages listed as members of the Oluluyia (Luhya) macrolanguage in Kenya.

¹¹ I include the coefficients for information, but the more intuitive figure is the Exp(B) "odds ratio," which gives the increased (or decreased) odds of speaking a European language contributed by every unit change in the variable.

Figure 3: Predicted probability of claiming to speak a European language | by level of education (0-8) and education system



Considering only the level of education and the mother-tongue or immersion setting, it is clear that at every level, individuals in mother-tongue settings are less likely to claim to speak a European language well. After two years of education, for example, individuals in anglophone states are half as likely (19%) to say they can speak English well than are individuals in francophone states to say they can speak French well (42%). The gap narrows as education increases, particularly after the fourth grade, when anglophone states would typically make the transition to all English. After five years of education, individuals in anglophone states have an 83% probability of saying they speak the European well, compared to 97% in francophone or lusophone states. Finally, with seven years of education, the probability becomes nearly the same, at 98% and 99%.

This seems to confirm the warning that early-exit programs are the least effective method of imparting a second language. Model 3 adds the demographic controls, confirming that larger groups are less likely to speak a European language, while males and those in urban areas are more likely to. Age has an almost negligible effect. We can check the marginal effects of education in each setting while assigning the other variables specific values. For each subset, I asked for predicted probabilities, setting the urban/rural variable to 0 (rural) and gender to 0 (female). When these were returned, I sorted by level of education and then by language size, and I took the average predicted probabilities within each language-size grouping. Figures 4 and 5 graph the likelihood that rural women at different levels of education will speak a European language.

With two years of education in immersion settings, the probability of claiming to speak a European language varies with the size of a respondent's language group. The larger the group, the less likely a member will claim to speak a European language. Rural women from tiny language groups have a 44% probability, whereas those from the largest groups have only a 20% probability. After four years of education, the gap is narrower, but still pronounced: Women from tiny groups have an 88% probability, compared to 71% for those from the largest groups. Above six years of schooling, the size of the group does not change the probability, which is about 99% across the board.

Comparing these findings to mother-tongue education settings, we see the same patterns, but with lower probabilities overall. With two years of education in mother-tongue settings, rural women from tiny groups have only a 17% probability of claiming to speak English, and those from the largest groups only 4%. After four years of education, women from very small groups have a 67% probability, compared to 31% among those in the largest groups. It is only after seven years of schooling that the gap seems to shrink.

Figure 4: Predicted probability of claiming to speak a European language
| rural women in immersion systems

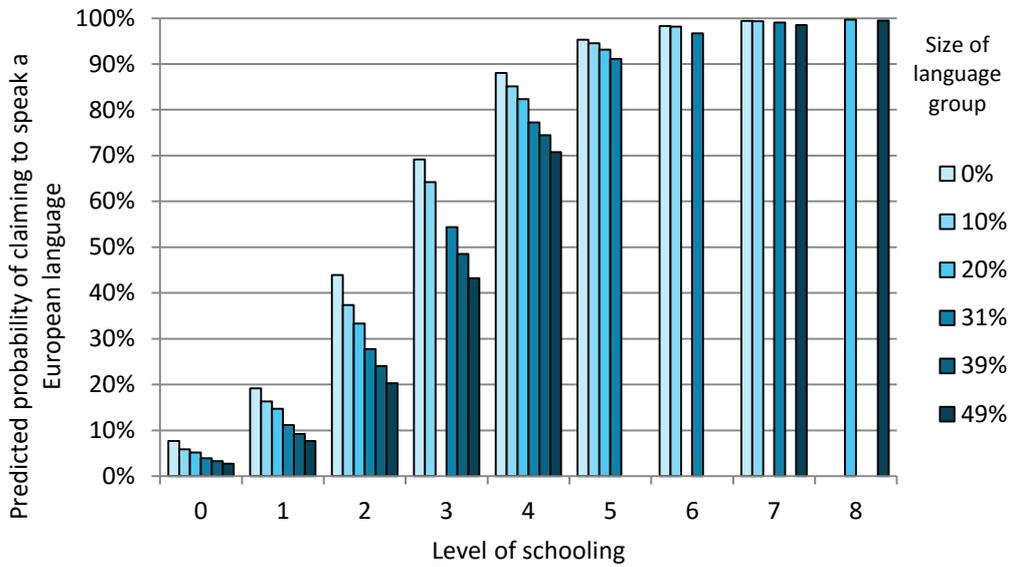
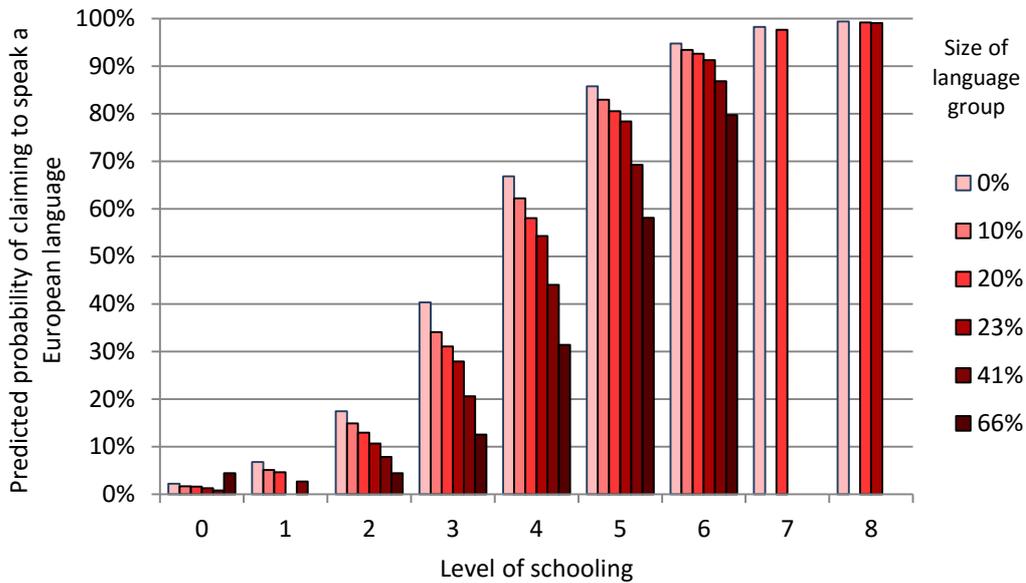


Figure 5: Predicted probability of claiming to speak a European language
| rural women in mother-tongue systems

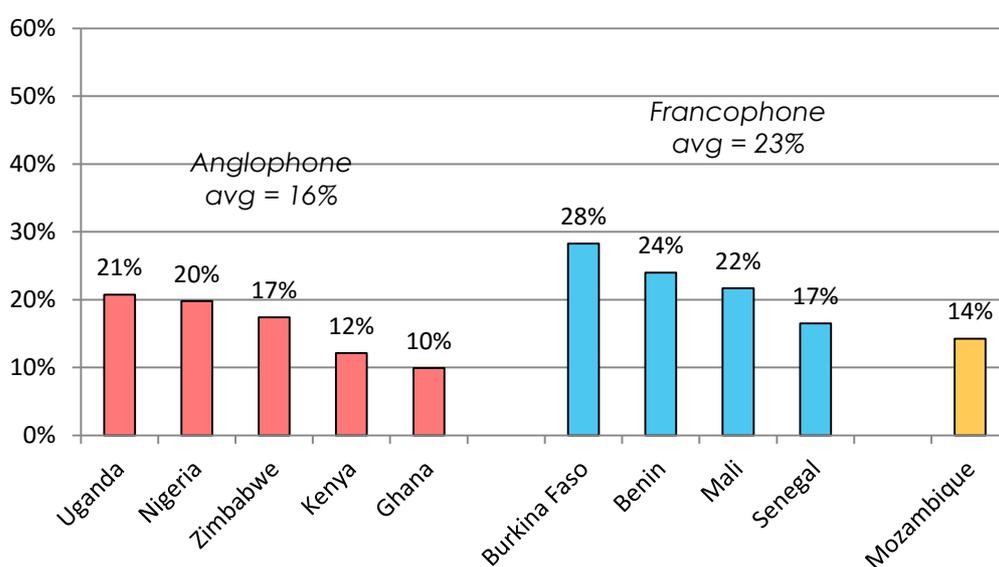


It seems evident that people in immersion settings are more likely to claim to speak a European language. As explained at the outset, the reason proficiency remains so low in francophone settings is that a smaller proportion of the population has been enrolled in school since the colonial period. Literacy rates, therefore, are higher in anglophone settings. But literacy in a European language may not be the underlying outcome of concern. The main arguments in favour of a single language in education are to promote a national (instead of ethnically divided) citizenry and to enable participation through common communication. We therefore need to look more closely at attitudes and actions within these cases to see if in fact the immersion settings are delivering those benefits. First, does speaking a European language make one more committed to the nation?

Findings: Citizenship sentiment

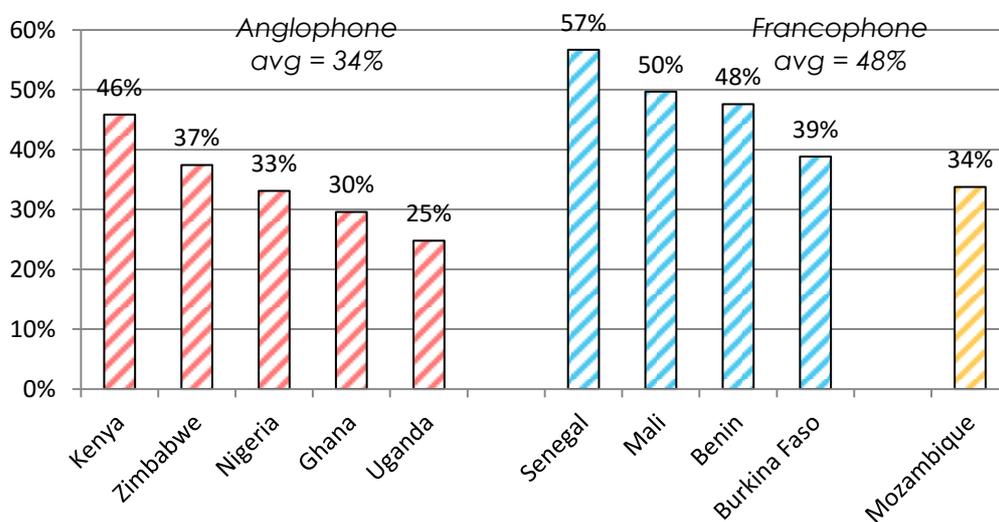
What does speaking a former colonial language have to do with citizenship and national identity? Afrobarometer 2008 again contributes some insights. Question 83 asked respondents to choose among several options regarding their identities. They could choose to identify 1) only with their ethnic group, 2) mostly with their ethnic group, 3) equally with their ethnic group and the nation, 4) mostly with the nation, or 5) only with the nation. Figure 6 graphs the proportion of respondents who chose higher identification with their ethnic identity than with their national identity, dividing the cases between states that used mother-tongue education (anglophone) and those that practiced immersion (francophone and lusophone). It shows that there is actually lower ethnic attachment in states that practiced mother-tongue education than in states that did not. Contrary to common belief, mother-tongue education does not appear to result in greater attachment to one's ethnic group.

Figure 6: Identify “only” or “more” with ethnic identity



At the same time, as Figure 7 demonstrates, there is also greater *national* attachment in francophone states.

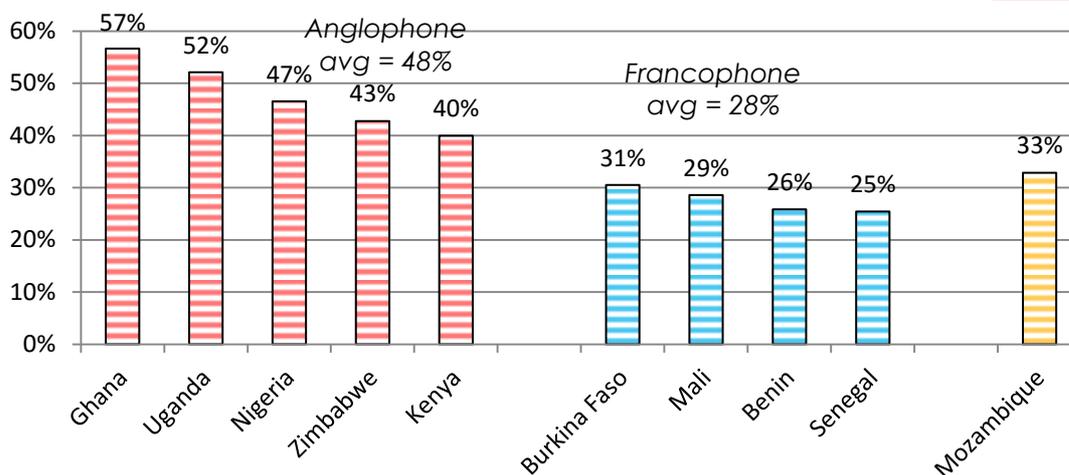
Figure 7: Identify “only” or “more” with national identity



This means that francophone states have a significantly higher proportion of respondents who identified with national identity *as well as* a higher proportion identifying with their ethnic group. So how do we explain this? There is a third option: Individuals from states where mother-tongue education is used have significantly higher *equal* attachments (Figure 8). This shows that rather than choosing either ethnic or national loyalties, citizens are capable of dividing them equally.



Figure 8: Identify equally with ethnic and national identities



Mother-tongue education in the anglophone systems seems to have done a good job of cultivating greater national sentiment while preserving ethnic ties. When we divide respondents into those with no education exposure and those with some education, we find that any exposure to education was associated with about a 10-percentage-point reduction in ethnic attachment, no matter what the type of schooling (immersion or mother-tongue). The question is where this attachment was then placed. Education exposure is associated with a shift to national identity in the francophone cases, whereas it is associated with a shift to equal attachment in the anglophone cases. Figure 9 shows a greater increase in *national* attachment when comparing citizens with no education and some education in the francophone cases, while Figure 10 shows a greater increase in *equal* attachments when comparing citizens with no and some education in the anglophone cases.

Figure 9: Identify “only” or “more” with national identity | by education exposure

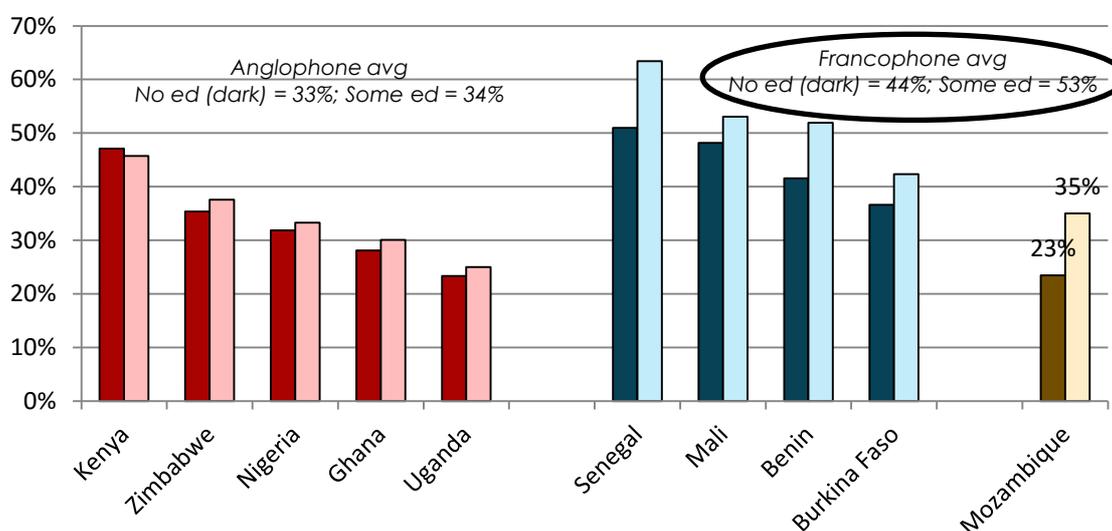
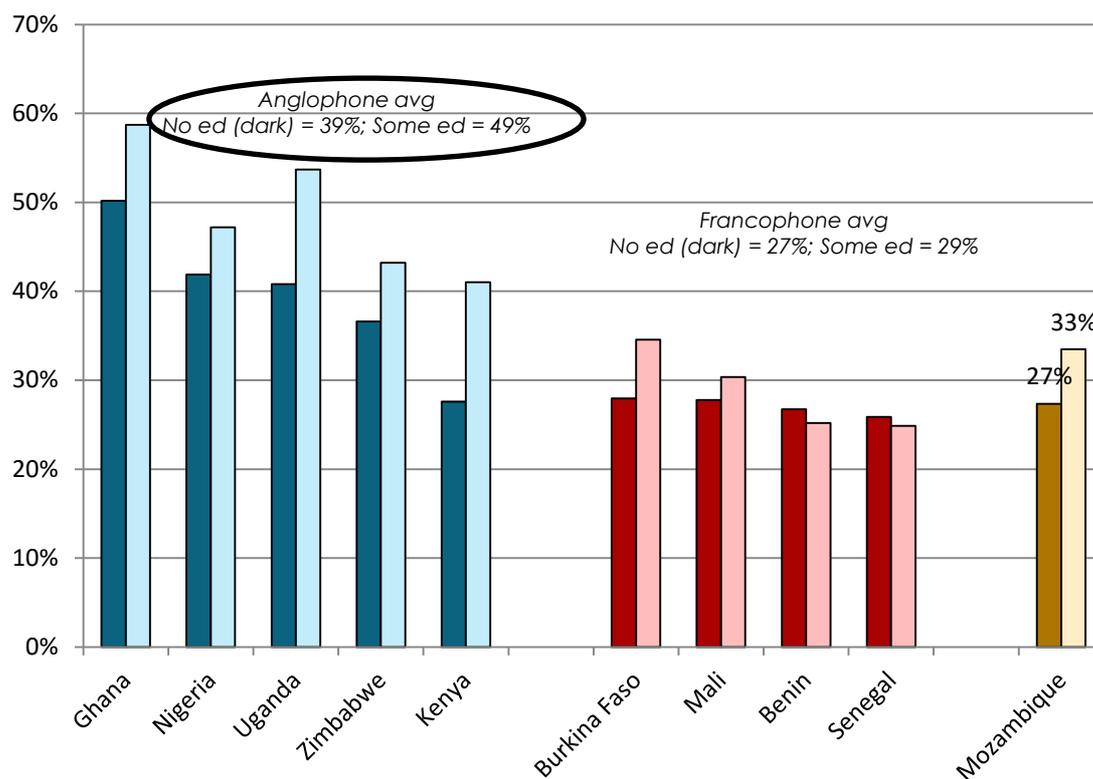


Figure 10: Identify equally with national and ethnic identities | by education exposure

These figures seem to indicate a clearly different effect of education on citizenship sentiments between these sets of countries.¹² Education in francophone states, while perhaps more effective at teaching French (even if limited in spread), seems to ask individuals to drop ethnic attachments in favour of national ones. If education in the immersion method were to continue in these cases, we would expect it to result in “modern” civic citizens, who left their ethnic ties in favour of a national identity. Education in anglophone Africa seems to instill more broadly equal attachments, a very different model of nationhood.

We can analyze the variables concurrently in a straightforward way with an OLS regression, shown in Table 2 (a more appropriate but less intuitive multinomial logit is presented in the appendix). For the OLS regression, the outcome is ethnic vs. national identity, and the possible choices are 1) ethnic identity only, 2) ethnic identity more, 3) ethnic and national equally, 4) national identity more, or 5) national identity only. The OLS regression reveals that the immersion cases “behave” as expected, while the mother-tongue cases do not.

Looking first at the immersion cases, in Model 1 education level is strongly associated with a tendency to identify more with the nation in both subsets. Education continues to matter, along with urban and male categorization, in the immersion cases in models 2 and 3. Age does not seem to play a role, and individuals from larger language groups seem weakly more inclined to identify with the nation. Speaking a European language, while barely significant, seems correlated with less identification with the nation.

¹² These figures reflect the more general notions of national identity, rather than the specific political citizenship or active participation that are discussed later in the paper. See Bratton (2013) for a nuanced discussion of citizenship.

Table 2: Ethnic vs. national identity | comparison of OLS regressions

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Immersion	M-tongue	Immersion	M-tongue	Immersion	M-tongue
Constant	3.38 (.025)	3.24 (.027)	3.24 (.058)	3.15 (.044)	3.25 (.058)	3.15 (.044)
Education level	.084^{***} (.009)	.020^{**} (.006)	.068^{***} (.010)	.017^{**} (.007)	.084^{***} (.014)	.005 (.008)
Urban			.086[*] (.041)	.017 (.027)	.087[*] (.041)	.010 (.027)
Male			.187^{***} (.038)	.008 (.025)	.196^{***} (.038)	.003 (.025)
Age			.008 (.013)	.000 (.009)	.006 (.013)	.001 (.009)
Size of respondent's language group			.206 (.111)	.498^{***} (.062)	.172 (.113)	.521^{***} (.063)
Speaks European language					-.095 (.053)	.082^{**} (.032)
N	6032	8088	5724	8088	5724	8088
Adj R ²	.014	.001	.019	.009	.020	.009

^{***}Significant at .001 level; ^{**}Significant at .01 level; ^{*}Significant at .05 level; **Bold**=Significant at .1 level

The mother-tongue education cases behave very differently. First, education level has only one quarter the impact in models 1 and 2, and no impact at all when all variables are included in Model 3. None of the other variables seem to matter, except for the size of one's language group: If an individual is from one of Nigeria's largest groups – Yoruba, Hausa, Ibo – he or she may be much more likely to feel ownership of the nation and indicate a stronger attachment to it. And, unlike the immersion cases, speaking a European language seems to have a positive association with one's attachment to the nation.

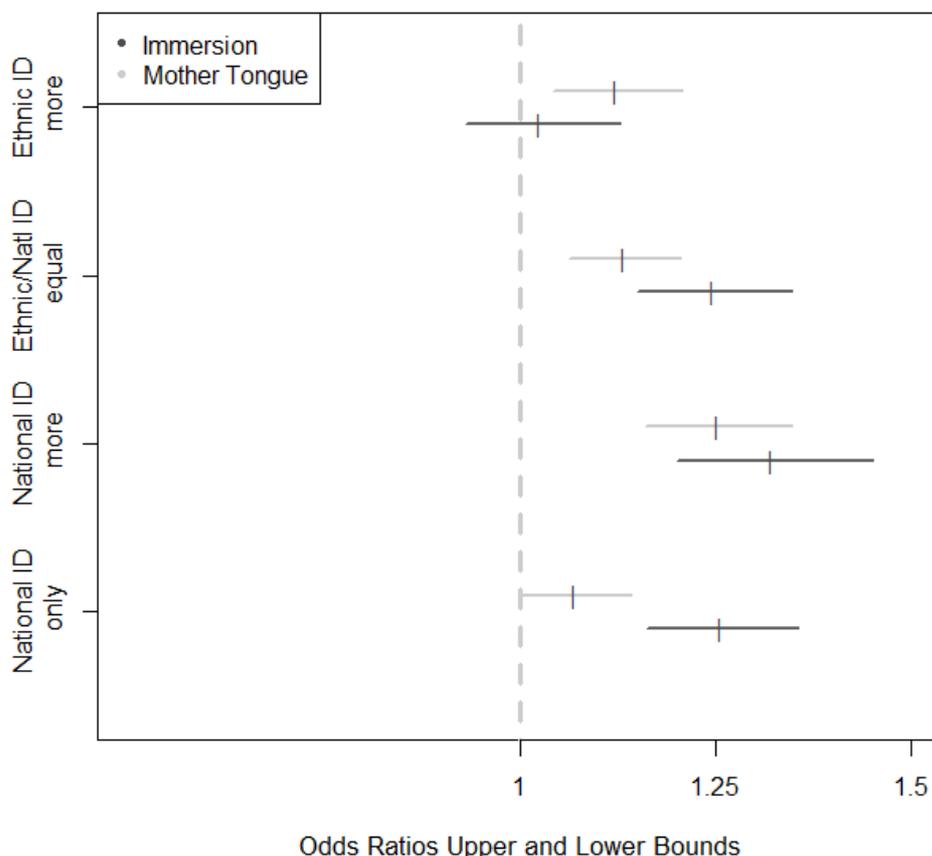
Because I hypothesize that the outcome in the anglophone cases is not linear – that is, higher education does not uniformly lead individuals toward identifying only with the nation but maybe instead toward settling on identifying with ethnic and national identities equally or with national identity more – a multinomial logit regression on each sub-group can be more precise than the OLS models. The appendix reports the numerical results, while Figure 11 shows the findings more graphically. The figure demonstrates the effect of education on the likelihood of respondents choosing options other than "Ethnic ID only." We see that higher levels of education have very different effects in immersion and mother-tongue settings. It is particularly evident in the comparison of "National ID Only" that each additional year of education has a strong effect in immersion settings but almost no effect in mother-tongue systems.

These figures and regression results point to a different role for education in each setting. Immersion systems have indeed done a better job of spreading a European language. And achieving higher levels of education is associated with individuals' stronger attachment to the nation over their ethnic identity, but the ability to speak the language itself does not add to their national sentiment. Mother-tongue settings – early-exit systems – seem not to have

been as effective at spreading European languages. They produce citizens who rarely choose to identify with the nation exclusively, preferring to maintain their ethnic identity at the same time.



Figure 11: Education level and ethnic vs. national identity



Findings: Participation and attitude toward democracy

Finally, we want to know what influences individuals' likelihood of participating politically and attitudes toward democracy. Tilly defines democratic government as "broad, relatively equal citizenship affording citizens considerable protection from arbitrary state action as well as significant collective control over the personnel and decisions of government" (1997, p. 246). In situations where "big-man rule" has become the norm, it is important to identify citizens' ability to question this patrimonialism. I selected five questions from the Afrobarometer survey, two pointing toward participation and three indicating democratic attitudes. I discuss each briefly below and then run simple OLS regressions to see which variables correlate with these outcomes.

First, proclivity toward political participation might be seen in individuals' belief that they can get together to make their local assembly member listen to their grievances (Question 24A).¹³

¹³ "In your opinion, how likely is it that you could get together with others and make your elected assemblyman/woman listen to your concerns about a matter of importance to the community?" The possible responses to this question were 0 (not at all likely), 1 (not very likely), 2 (somewhat likely), and 3 (very likely). Overall, in the total sample of more than 14,000 respondents, 19% said it was not at all likely, 20% said it was not very likely, 28% said it was somewhat likely, 29% said it was very likely, and 6% said they did not know. (Due to rounding, the total does not add up to 100%).



More direct participation could be seen in respondents' actually contacting a local government council member (Question 25A).¹⁴ Second, support for democracy could be demonstrated in Question 29C¹⁵ and Question 30.¹⁶ The first was essentially rejecting one-man rule, indicated by disapproval of a proposition that elections and Parliament be abolished so that the president or prime minister could decide everything. The second asked respondents to indicate their support for democracy.

Overall, 72% agreed with the statement that democracy was preferable to any other form of government; 10% said that in some circumstances, non-democracy is preferable; 10% said that it didn't matter; and 7% said they did not know. I ran the regression with the "I don't know" cases dropped, but I also ran it with these cases recoded to a "0.5" since it seems this response may be a weaker version of "It doesn't matter." This provided stronger results in the same direction as when responses were dropped, and is reported in Table 3.

Finally, Question 34¹⁷ asked citizens to judge the role of opposition parties by agreeing with one of two statements: 1) Opposition parties should regulate and examine government or 2) Opposition parties should cooperate with government. Overall, 33% agreed strongly that opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating; 26% agreed that opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating; 18% agreed that opposition should regularly examine and criticize government; and 21% strongly agreed that opposition should examine and criticize.

The following series of OLS regressions shows the association of the outcomes with the variables of interest, particularly the type of system, the ability to speak a European language, and the size of the respondent's language group.

¹⁴ "During the past year, how often have you contacted your local government councillor about some important problem or to give them your views?" Possible responses were 0 (never), 1 (only once), 2 (a few times), and 3 (often). Overall, nearly 70% had never contacted a local council member; 10% had done it only once, 14% had done it a few times, and 7% had done it often.

¹⁵ "There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament/National Assembly are abolished so that the president/prime minister can decide everything." I flipped the original numbering so that the signs in the regression would be more intuitive: Respondents could choose 1 (strong approval for abolishing elections); 2 (approval), 3 (neither approval nor disapproval), 4 (disapproval), or 5 (strong disapproval). Overall, 3% strongly approved, 7% approved, 6% neither approved nor disapproved, 31% disapproved, and 53% strongly disapproved of one-man rule.

¹⁶ "Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable. Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have." Again I flipped the numbers so that the signs in the regression would be intuitive. Choosing the statement "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government" was coded 3, the statement "In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable" was 2, and "For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have" was 1.

¹⁷ "Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement 1: Opposition parties should regularly examine and criticize government policies and actions. Statement 2: Opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating with government and helping it develop the country." Again I flipped the response numbers: 0 was "agree with neither statement;" 1 was "agree very strongly with Statement 2"; 2 was "agree with Statement 2"; 3 was "agree with Statement 1"; and 4 was "agree very strongly with Statement 1."

Table 3: Participation and support for democracy | OLS regressions

	Participation		Attitudes		
	<i>Get together to make assembly member listen</i>	<i>Contact local govt council member</i>	<i>Reject one-man rule</i>	<i>Support for democracy</i>	<i>Opposition parties examine / criticize govt</i>
Constant	1.411 (.032)	.086 (.027)	3.881 (.030)	2.230 (.024)	2.090 (.035)
Education level (1-9)	.009 (.007)	.019** (.006)	.042** (.006)	.029** (.005)	-.004 (.007)
Urban (0/1)	-.169** (.021)	-.253** (.018)	.088** (.019)	.038* (.016)	-.007 (.022)
Male (0/1)	.196** (.019)	.263** (.016)	.098** (.018)	.172** (.015)	.102** (.021)
Age (1-7)	.037** (.007)	.089** (.006)	.029** (.007)	.015* (.005)	.014 (.008)
Mother-tongue system (0/1)	-.056* (.021)	.107** (.018)	.143** (.020)	.095** (.016)	.062* (.023)
Claim speak Europ. language (0/1)	.090** (.025)	.050 (.021)	-.023 (.024)	.087** (.019)	.071* (.027)
Size of language group (.01 - .69)	.523** (.051)	.215** (.043)	-.007 (.048)	-.250** (.038)	-.132 (.055)
N	13503	14189	13525	14286	13782
Adj R ²	.025	.061	.022	.039	.004

**Significant at .01 level; *Significant at .05 level; Bold=Significant at .1 level

In terms of participation, higher levels of education do not have a significant correlation with confidence that one can get together to make assembly members listen, but it does seem to correlate with actually contacting a local government council member. Interestingly, rural respondents were *more* likely to engage in both types of participation, perhaps, as Lauren MacLean (2011) has found, because they have been more negatively affected by reduced government services and work harder to press for their return (see also Bratton, 2008). Unsurprisingly, older males demonstrate higher participation. Mother-tongue systems seem to have an ambivalent relationship with participation: Individuals in these systems are less likely to *believe* they could get together to make their assembly member listen but more likely actually to have *contacted* a local representative. This may reflect greater pragmatism (or cynicism) within the anglophone systems. The ability to speak a European language increases one's confidence to participate and barely seems correlated with actually contacting representatives, but both show very little substantive impact. Individuals from larger language groups are significantly more likely to think they can join to effect change as well as more likely actually to have contacted their local government council member. Neither is surprising because of the larger pool of fellow language speakers with whom to join and the higher probability that the council member is from one's own group.

Attitudes toward democracy are fairly consistent. Higher levels of education and urbanization are associated with higher disapproval of one-man rule and support for democracy over all other systems, though effects on attitudes toward the role of the

opposition are not significant. Male respondents uniformly demonstrate stronger democratic and oppositional attitudes, as do older respondents. Mother-tongue systems show the strongest correlation on the “reject one-man rule” question, but they also show a significant influence in support for democracy and critical opposition. The ability to speak a European language does not show any relationship with rejecting one-man rule, though it does correlate with increased support for democracy against all other systems as well as support for strong opposition. Finally, larger groups (e.g. Akan, Wolof, Shona, Buganda) show *less* supportive attitudes toward democracy, I would suggest because they may be more likely than smaller groups to benefit from a less-than-democratic system.

Except for the confidence that one can get together with others to make an assembly member listen, all of these results point to the superiority of mother-tongue education settings for participation and democratic attitudes. The large-n study cannot tell us precisely why, but I speculate, as discussed earlier, that this may be because of the networks built upon language committees that often provide the pedagogical tools for these classrooms and contribute to participatory socialization. It may also be the type of learning that can take place when students are speaking in their own language from the start – an exploratory and creative process, rather than a rote one – that produces more autonomous and confident citizens.

Conclusion

Scholars have long observed that British colonization left a firmer foundation for democracy (Bernard, Reenock, & Nordstrom, 2004; Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2002; Woodberry, 2012; all following earlier theorists such as Lipset, Seong, & Torres, 1993, and Bollen & Jackman, 1985). This has variously been attributed to good institutions, geography, or Protestant missions.

This paper has looked specifically at the type of education and its role in language acquisition, citizenship, and democratic attitudes. It has found that immersion settings – elitist and limited as they are – do a better job of instilling foreign-language proficiency in school-leavers. And these schools more uniformly produce citizens with stronger national vs. ethnic sentiments.

Rather than creating the opposite – citizens attached more firmly (and perhaps dangerously) to their ethnic identities – mother-tongue systems produce citizens who hold on to their ethnic and national identities in tandem. And as for democracy, mother-tongue systems seem to offer an advantage. Citizens are more likely to contact local government officials, reject one-man rule, support democracy over any other system, and believe opposition should criticize rather than cooperate with government. Many African states suffer from a democratic deficit; governments are suspended above, rather than connected to, their population. In this setting, it is confident, active, and oppositional citizens who might compel deeper accountability from their leaders.

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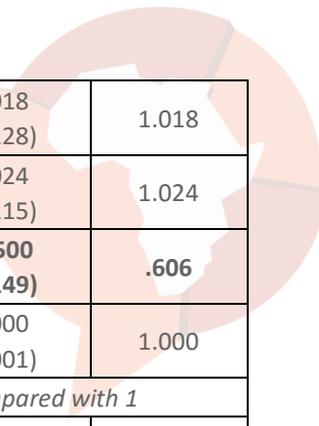


Appendix

Multinomial logit regressions

The following table divides respondents into mother-tongue and immersion settings and compares respondents' choices among several options regarding their identities. They could choose to identify 1) only with their ethnic group, 2) mostly with their ethnic group, 3) equally with their ethnic group and nation, 4) mostly with their nation, or 5) only with their nation. The table reports comparisons with the base category of 1 (identify only with their ethnic group).

Immersion systems			Mother-tongue systems		
Variable	Coeff.	Exp(B)	Variable	Coeff.	Exp(B)
<i>2 (more ethnic) compared with 1</i>			<i>2 (more ethnic) compared with 1</i>		
Intercept	.268 (.227)		Intercept	.640 (.231)	
Education level	.025 (.049)	1.025	Education level	.115 (.038)	1.122
Size of language group	-.011 (.004)	.989	Size of language group	-.021 (.003)	.980
Rural	-.144 (.133)	.866	Rural	-.005 (.128)	.995
Female	-.260 (.118)	.771	Female	.204 (.114)	1.226
Do not speak a European language	.584 (.176)	1.793	Do not speak a European language	-.264 (.148)	.768
Age	-.001 (.000)	.999	Age	.000 (.001)	1.00
<i>3 (equal ethnic/national) compared with 1</i>			<i>3 (equal ethnic/national) compared with 1</i>		
Intercept	.949 (.189)		Intercept	1.961 (.196)	
Education level	.220 (.040)	1.246	Education level	.125 (.032)	1.133
Size of language group	.000 (.003)	1.00	Size of language group	-.005 (.002)	.995
Rural	-.175 (.113)	.840	Rural	-.031 (.110)	.970
Female	-.363 (.101)	.695	Female	.091 (.098)	1.096
Do not speak a European language	.232 (.144)	1.261	Do not speak a European language	-.402 (.127)	.606
Age	-.001 (.000)	.999	Age	-.001 (.001)	.999
<i>4 (more national) compared with 1</i>			<i>4 (more national) compared with 1</i>		
Intercept	-.508 (.240)		Intercept	.135 (.235)	
Education level	.278 (.048)	1.321	Education level	.224 (.038)	1.252
Size of language group	.004 (.004)	1.004	Size of language group	-.006 (.003)	.994



Rural	-.302 (.140)	.738	Rural	.018 (.128)	1.018
Female	-.609 (.128)	.544	Female	.024 (.115)	1.024
Do not speak a European language	.633 (.183)	1.883	Do not speak a European language	-.500 (.149)	.606
Age	-.001 (.000)	.999	Age	.000 (.001)	1.000
<i>5 (only national) compared with 1</i>			<i>5 (only national) compared with 1</i>		
Intercept	1.233 (.184)		Intercept	1.176 (.208)	
Education level	.228 (.039)	1.256	Education level	.067 (.034)	1.070
Size of language group	-.001 (.003)	.999	Size of language group	.006 (.002)	1.006
Rural	-.242 (.110)	.785	Rural	-.048 (.117)	.953
Female	-.521 (.098)	.594	Female	.101 (.104)	1.106
Do not speak a European language	.422 (.141)	1.525	Do not speak a European language	-.385 (.134)	.680
Age	-.001 (.000)	.999	Age	-.001 (.001)	.999

In immersion systems, higher levels of education systematically increase the probability of choosing 3, 4, and 5, rather than 1. Females are less likely to choose 3 and much less likely to choose 4 or 5, indicating that women identified more than men with ethnic identities over national. Rural respondents are less likely to choose a national identity more or only. Interestingly, a *lack* of proficiency in French or Portuguese strongly *increases* the likelihood of choosing 2 or 4, increases somewhat the likelihood of choosing 5, and has no impact on the likelihood of choosing 3. This seems unusual, but it shows that proficiency in a common official language may not contribute to stronger feelings of nationhood. Age has a marginally negative impact; younger respondents are slightly more likely to choose 2, 3, or 4. Size of the language group does not appear significant in this subset.

In mother-tongue systems, higher education levels slightly increase the likelihood of choosing 2 or 3 and more strongly increase the likelihood of choosing 4, though in none of the cases is this effect as strong as in immersion systems. Importantly, higher levels of education do *not* increase the likelihood of choosing 5 (only national identity) over 1 (only ethnic). This is a significant distinction compared to the immersion cases. Unlike in the immersion setting, being female does not reduce the likelihood of choosing away from ethnic identity; the coefficients are in fact positive, though not significant. Being rural does not have any effect; nor does age. Larger language groups are just slightly less likely to choose 2, 3, or 4 than 1 but are slightly *more* likely to choose 5. One might speculate that large groups such as the Akan in Ghana cluster at either “ethnic identity only” or “national identity only” because they feel that in a sense they “own” the state’s national identity. Finally, the inability to speak English does *reduce* the likelihood of choosing 3, 4, or 5 in these mother-tongue settings. Those unable to speak English feel less attachment to the nation than to their ethnic group.

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