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Author(s): Carolyn Logan

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Selected chiefs, elected councillors and hybrid democrats: popular perspectives on the co-existence of democracy and traditional authority*

CAROLYN LOGAN

Deputy Director, Afrobarometer, and Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Michigan State University, 303 S. Kedzie Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48824, USA

Email: clogan@msu.edu

ABSTRACT

The long-standing debate about the proper role for Africa's traditional leaders in contemporary politics has intensified in the last two decades, as efforts to foster democratisation and decentralisation have brought competing claims to power and legitimacy to the fore, especially at the local level. Questions persist as to whether traditional authority and democratic governance are ultimately compatible or contradictory. Can the two be blended into viable and effective hybrid systems? Or do the potentially anti-democratic features of traditional systems present insurmountable obstacles to an acceptable model of integration? Survey data collected by the Afrobarometer indicate that Africans who live under these dual systems of authority do not draw as sharp a distinction between hereditary chiefs and elected local government officials as most analysts would expect. In fact, popular evaluations of selected and elected leaders are strongly and *positively* linked. They appear to be consistently shaped by each individual's 'leadership affect', and by an understanding of chiefs and elected officials as common players in a single, integrated political system, rather than as opponents in a sharply bifurcated one. Moreover, there is no evident conflict between supporting traditional leadership and being a committed and active democrat. Rather than finding themselves trapped between two competing spheres of political authority,

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Africans appear to have adapted to the hybridisation of their political institutions more seamlessly than many have anticipated or assumed.

INTRODUCTION

The long-standing debate about the proper role for Africa's traditional leaders in contemporary politics has intensified in the last two decades, as efforts to foster democratisation and decentralisation have brought competing claims to power and legitimacy to the fore, especially at the local level. Not only have Africa's traditional leaders survived – often against the wishes, decrees and predictions of their detractors – but in many places they have actually thrived. Yet African governments continue to struggle with how to interact with these leaders, a challenge that becomes particularly acute in those countries that have extended democratic reforms to the local level. Analysts, too, remain uncertain about how the persistence of the chieftaincy will affect the prospects for democratic consolidation.

For years the discussion was dominated by a polarised debate between 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' (Keulder 1998), or 'trivialisers' and 'romanticisers' of traditional authority and institutions (Oomen 2000: 16), that was unrealistic and often unhelpful. But whatever their strengths and weaknesses, the continuing role and influence of traditional leaders is now widely accepted as a given. While there are exceptions, in most countries traditional authority does not by any means appear to be in the process of 'withering away' as the modernists once both hoped and predicted. It thus becomes essential to account for the role of traditional leadership and institutions as part of, or alongside, democratisation processes. This is so not because these authorities are in some way inherently good and democratic (as traditionalists once argued), but because, for better or worse, they are there, and they are clearly important exercisers of 'public authority' on the ground in much of Africa (Lund 2006). As a result, in the last decade the discussion has increasingly shifted to a more pragmatic focus on understanding why these institutions persist, how they have evolved and are continuing to adapt to their changing political environments, and how various governments are coming to terms with them.

But the pragmatic shift in the direction of the debate cannot obscure the fact that there are still fundamental disagreements about whether traditional authority and democratic governance are ultimately compatible or contradictory, and about whether the two can be blended in viable and effective ways. Does cooperating with chiefs put at risk the very principles of democracy? Is democracy threatened, for example, if elected leaders

must compete head-to-head with selected chiefs in what many see as a zero-sum game for control over power and resources? Can the loyal subject of a chief also be a committed democrat? Does engaging with the still patriarchal chieftaincy necessarily undermine the rights and freedoms of women? Does the persistence of traditional systems present a fundamental challenge to the very possibility of consolidating democracy on the continent? Or, on the other hand, is the chieftaincy a potential resource, an asset that can enhance the understanding, acceptance and effectiveness of democratic institutions under the right circumstances?

Survey data collected in Rounds 1 (1999–2001) and 2 (2002–3) of the Afrobarometer offer new insights and a more concrete basis on which to evaluate the merits of these claims. The results from over 35,000 face-to-face interviews in up to fifteen countries can help us to better understand popular perceptions of traditional leaders, how they are formed, and how they relate both to perceptions of elected leaders and to support for a democratic system of government.

Our data indicate that Africans who live under these dual systems of authority do not draw as sharp a distinction between hereditary chiefs and elected local government officials as most analysts would expect. In fact, far from being in competition for the public's regard, traditional leaders and elected leaders are seen by the public as two sides of the same coin. Overall, popular perceptions of traditional leaders are slightly more positive than those of elected leaders. But popular evaluations of both traditional leaders and elected leaders are strongly and *positively* linked. They appear to be consistently shaped by each individual's 'leadership affect', and by an understanding of chiefs and elected officials as common players in a single, integrated political system, rather than as opponents in a sharply bifurcated one. Thus, positive perceptions of chiefs go hand-in-hand with positive assessments of elected leaders, and vice versa. This connection is especially strong between traditional authorities and local government leaders. Far from fighting a pitched battle for public support, the fates of each appear to be inextricably linked. In contrast, an individual's level of modernisation plays a much smaller role in shaping perceptions of traditional authority than we might have expected. And most significantly for the debate about how democratic traditional rule is, there is no evident conflict between supporting traditional leadership and being a committed and active democrat.

Thus, the competition or even contradiction that many assume exists, at least to some degree, between democracy and traditional systems of rule does not appear to exist in the minds of many Africans. Rather than finding themselves trapped between two competing spheres of political

authority, Africans appear to have adapted to the hybridisation of their political institutions more seamlessly than many have anticipated or assumed. Chiefs and councillors, sultans and MPs, kings and presidents all inhabit the single, integrated political universe that, for better or worse, shapes each individual's life. In the perceptions of ordinary Africans, it seems that democracy and the chieftaincy can indeed coexist.

OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

This analysis draws initially on data collected between 1999 and 2001 in seven Southern African countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) during Round 1 of the Afrobarometer. The initial conclusions are then confirmed by analysis of additional data collected across fifteen countries in Round 2 (2002–3) (adding Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda). Each country is represented by a randomly drawn national probability sample in which each adult citizen had an equal chance of inclusion. Sample sizes ranged from approximately 1,200 up to 3,600 respondents per country, although in the descriptive statistics reported here the data are weighted to represent each country equally.[1] Women and men were represented equally in each country sample.

Both across and often within the fifteen countries included in this analysis, there can be wide variation in the details of what being a 'traditional leader, chief or elder' actually means.[2] There is variability in what these institutions looked like historically, in what sorts of rules, roles and relationships were imposed on them by both colonial and post-colonial administrations, and in how they have adapted, both individually and collectively, to the many pressures and often competing incentives that they have faced over the years. In the present, there are substantial differences in terms of the extent to which their positions have been integrated into or marginalised from the state bureaucracy, what resources they command, and the nature and extent of both their official and unofficial roles in governing their communities.

But there are commonalities as well. Despite the many ways in which the institutions have evolved over the years, for the most part, people know who we mean when we refer to their 'traditional leaders'. They generally occupy their posts by virtue of some sort of hereditary (albeit often contested) claim to selection rather than through elections. But more importantly, they are recognised as having connections to their society's cultural and historic roots in ways that official government figures do not. Given the diverse realities that fall under the rubric of 'traditional leader',

some caution is called for in interpreting the broad cross-country results presented here. But these findings nonetheless offer a valuable first cut at understanding how traditional authorities, diverse as they may be, are faring in the hearts and minds of the average African, especially in an era of advancing electoralism.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY IN AN ERA OF DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Mamdani (1996) made the quintessential case against the chiefs, arguing that as long as rural Africans languished under their rule they would remain mere subjects, rather than empowered citizens. Most fundamentally, the absence of voting rights – the most obvious mechanism for ensuring accountability – is seen by many as an insurmountable flaw of institutions of traditional rule. Moreover, in these typically patriarchal systems, the voices of women and youth were largely silenced (Beall 2006; Bowen 1994; Molutsi 2004; Simuyu 1988). Critics further charge that traditional authority places the community ahead of the individual, is based on a coercive 'demand for consensus' and deference, rather than freely given consent, and that, in sum, 'traditional authority constitutes an anti-democratic, or at best a non-democratic form of governance' (Mattes 1997: 5–6). From this perspective, these 'institutional obsoletes' 'impede the development of a virile, prosperous, democratic, and just society, and thus must have no place in any progressive society.'[3] When governments such as the ANC-led administration in South Africa make accommodations with chiefs, critics worry that they are 'put[ting] at risk the principles of democracy for which [they] fought so hard' (Beall *et al.* 2005: 763–4).

In focusing so intently on the lack of elections, however, detractors often neglect other features of traditional systems that may also be relevant to their democratic compatibility. These include the opportunities they offer for everyday participation (as opposed to periodic voting), as well as their simple familiarity and consequent accessibility (Logan 2002). For example, community-wide gatherings common to many African societies, known variously as *pitso* (Lesotho), *kgotla* (Botswana), *shir* (Somalia), *baraza* (Kenya) and by many other names, have long offered an opportunity for a wide array of community members to voice their opinions on community affairs and participate in consensus-based decision-making. And although many historically excluded women or youth from participation, this norm has been changing rapidly in the post-independence era (Beall *et al.* 2005: 770; Chief Linchwe II 1989). Moreover, while heredity typically serves as the basis for selecting leaders, this concept is itself subject to both interpretation and manipulation (Comaroff 1978), and many systems also had formal

mechanisms for 'de-stooling' or otherwise displacing leaders who did not meet with the community's approval (Ayittey 1991: 135–9; Osabu-Kle 2000: 18). And with their absence of semi-permanent hereditary leaders, the continent's more acephalous systems of rule, for example among the Somali and the Nuer, might be seen as more democratic still (Lewis 1961).

The present reality is, however, far more complex than either of these perspectives allows. After decades of manipulation by colonial and post-colonial governments, and response by indigenous leaders, the content of tradition, and often the identity of traditional leaders themselves, is very often contested (see for example Buur & Kyed 2006; West & Kloeck-Jenson 1999). The machinations of colonial authorities and national leadership have had deep impacts on the status and the very nature of these institutions. Co-optation by colonial governments into the British system of indirect rule, for example, could both strengthen and weaken the hand of traditional leadership, sometimes at the same time. And the efforts of modern African leaders to either undermine traditional leaders and allegiances, or to politicise and thereby capture these potential 'vote brokers' (Lawson 2002), have further affected their standing.

The need for chiefs and elders to balance their dependence on local populations for legitimacy, or at least respect, with their desire for the recognition of higher authorities – and the different kind of legitimacy that this implies – may often have produced 'Janus-faced' traditional authorities who were simultaneously respected and suspected by local populations (West & Kloeck-Jenson 1999: 475–6; see also van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1999). Most recently, the chieftaincy in South Africa emerged from under the cloud of apartheid with at best a mixed reputation: some viewed traditional authorities largely as complicit collaborators, while others painted a rosier picture of their essential importance to the stability, solidarity and dignity of their communities.[4] And while some characterise the manoeuvring of traditional leaders as primarily self-serving, others contest that the 'ability of chiefs to straddle the state-society dichotomy' and serve as necessary intermediaries for their people is a strength of the institution that helps to explain its survival (Williams 2004: 121; see also van Kessel & Oomen 1997).

It is hardly surprising, then, that modern African governments have struggled with how best to relate to these institutions. Traditional leaders have both been banned, deposed and jailed, and also courted, coddled and paid state salaries, along with just about everything in between, and sometimes all at the hands of the same governments as these struggle to adapt to their own shifting fortunes. As Lawson (2002: 9) notes, 'at the end of the day, the state remained dependent upon traditional authorities for

access to rural society', so it was not uncommon for new and confident administrations to dismiss traditional leadership in their early days, only to come begging for a boost as their popularity sagged in later years.

The question of how traditional authorities 'fit' into a modern political system becomes particularly acute at the local level, where these leaders exert the most influence on the daily lives of Africans, and where the contest with government authorities for resources and responsibilities appears to be most intense. While at the national level traditional leaders are often limited to cultural, ceremonial or (frequently undefined) advisory roles, at the community level they may compete with local government officials for real power – over land, tax revenues or other resources, responsibility for dispensing justice, and influence over community activities and decisions, and even votes. The battle between traditional leaders and elected leaders for political power and legitimacy is often characterised as a zero-sum game: whatever authority a traditional leader wrenches from the state is treated as a loss for 'official', democratic state leadership, and vice versa. This debate has been particularly heated in South Africa, where the chieftaincy, a 'ubiquitous feature of local politics', has been recognised in the constitution and continues to exercise direct authority in many rural areas (Williams 2004: 114–16). Chiefs and local government officials are often perceived to be in direct competition – like 'two bulls in a kraal' (Oomen 2000: 14) – in a winner-takes-all battle for the hearts, minds and resources of local communities.

In reality, though, it can be difficult to generalise about the relationship between local government authorities and traditional leadership. Even within a relatively small area of South Africa, Oomen (2000: 62) describes traditional authority areas that range from 'veritable nations' to mere 'backdrops'. And it is not difficult to find examples of constructive relationships between local governments and chiefs who have recognised the mutual benefit that may accrue to both from successful cooperation (see *ibid.* on South Africa; Owusu 1996: 340 on Ghana).

It is difficult to deny that traditional leaders have demonstrated remarkable resilience. Their continuing importance in the social and political life of their communities, whether perceived as a positive or a negative, is virtually indisputable.[5] In many places they still play a major role in managing land tenure, adjudicating local disputes, managing property inheritance, and implementing customary law and resolving conflicts. And they are often perceived as the guardians of their communities' culture, playing an important role in cultural events and rituals.

Indeed, traditional authorities may be doing far more than simply surviving. In a number of countries, democratisation appears to be generating

a resurgence or revitalisation of the institution. As elected governments must increasingly respond to demands for services with limited resources, they have in some instances come to rely upon traditional authorities to communicate with and mobilise populations (Murray 2004; Oomen 2000: 63; see also Englebert 2002; de Sousa Santos 2006; West & Kloeck-Jenson 1999). And the benefits of political liberalisation have applied to chiefs as well. De Sousa Santos (2006: 67) notes a 'growing activism' on the part of traditional authorities in Mozambique, and they too have the opportunity to form interest groups, such as CONTRALESA in South Africa,[6] that can advocate on their behalf.

North (1990) offers some insight into why structures of traditional authority should prove to be so resilient. He argues that the institutions that shape societies – including both their formal rules, and the informal norms and values that underpin them – are relatively resistant to change, in part because of the high information and transaction costs that result. Or as Geddes (1991: 50) describes it, traditional norms and values may be persistent because of 'the existence of informal sanctions and rewards that persuaded individuals to continue to behave in culturally approved ways'. Moreover, radical changes in the formal rules or institutions of society –such as the introduction of elections and multiparty politics – will not necessarily be matched by corresponding changes in informal norms and values. Informal institutions can and do evolve and adapt, whether in response to changes in the formal rules (or institutions), or shifts in other incentives. But changes will occur incrementally, and at the margins.

Although he is perhaps overly cautious about the potential adaptability of institutions, North's theory has critical implications for democratisation theory and practice. First, it suggests, as we have seen, that existing institutions will not simply melt away, even in the face of alternatives that are clearly 'better' in the eyes of their proponents. Second, societies may not understand and respond to newly introduced institutions – such as elections and political parties – in the ways that a less culturally and historically rooted theory would predict. Third, North contends that if there is a lack of correspondence or consistency between formal institutions and a society's informal norms and values, the result will likely be a 'disconnect' that produces weak, illegitimate and ineffectual institutions. In sum, North's thesis offers a direct challenge to the assumption that the institutional forms of liberal democracy are easily transferable and universally valid, and the notion that Africans aspire to democratic systems of rule that will look exactly the same as those in the West (see also Ekeh 1975; Englebert 2000; Landell-Mills 1992).

TABLE 1

Have a traditional leader sub-sample

	Total respondents	N for 'yes' (i.e, do have a traditional leader)	% yes
Botswana	1,200	892	74
Lesotho	1,177	1,159	99
Malawi	1,123	1,123	93
Namibia	1,183	781	66
South Africa	2,200	408	19
Zambia	1,198	661	55
Zimbabwe	1,200	683	57
Total	**9,366**	**5,707**	**63**

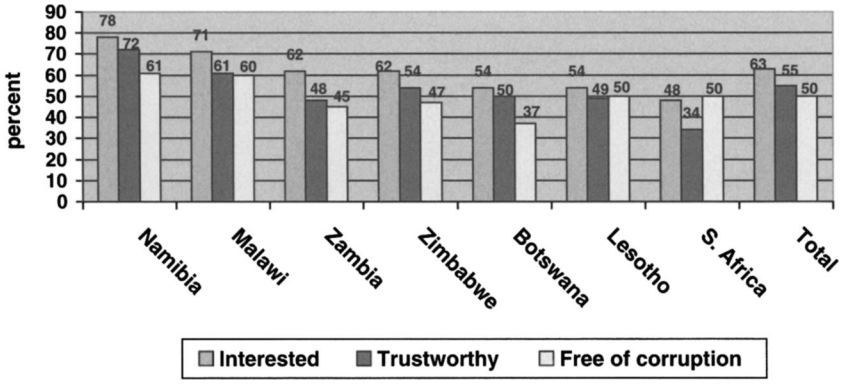
Question: *Do you have a traditional leader, chief or headman?*

But the perspectives of ordinary Africans matter more than those of elites or academics on institutions of traditional rule and their place in contemporary African politics. We are just beginning to gather the kind of information that can tell us where chiefs fit in the socio-political constellation of their publics (see for example Beall 2006; Williams 2004). I now turn to looking at what the Afrobarometer data can contribute to this debate. Are women itching to escape the chauvinistic influence of community elders? Is support for chiefs inherently anti-democratic? Does their continuing legitimacy threaten the consolidation of democracy? Does their exertion of authority undermine democratically elected government officials, especially at the local level?

RATING TRADITIONAL LEADERS: A MODESTLY POSITIVE REVIEW

The seven surveys conducted in Southern Africa as part of Round 1 (1999–2001) of the Afrobarometer provide our most extensive data on popular attitudes towards traditional leaders in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is important to note that this data is also limited in one critical way. Most questions about perceptions of leadership institutions were asked of all respondents. However, the questions about traditional leaders were *only* asked of those respondents who first answered a filter question about whether they 'have a traditional leader, chief or headman' in the affirmative – about two thirds of all respondents in these seven countries.[7] This ranged from a low of just 19% (408 cases) in South Africa,[8] to a high of 99% in neighbouring Lesotho (Table 1).[9]

FIGURE 1
Perceptions of traditional leaders, Southern Africa, Round 1.



Questions:
How interested do you think your local chief is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think? (% interested/very interested)
How much of the time can you trust your local chief to do what is right? (% most of the time/always)
How many chiefs or traditional leaders are involved in corruption? (% some, a few/almost none, none)

For those who do have a traditional leader, the survey then went on to ask about that leader's interest in his constituents, his or her trustworthiness, and to what extent chiefs or traditional leaders generally are involved in corruption. Respondents were then asked similar questions about their national president, members of parliament and local government councillors. All of the results presented in this section (on Round 1) only include the subset of respondents who have a traditional leader. Not surprisingly, this filter introduces some bias into our sample, as those who live under a traditional leader are disproportionately rural, older and less educated.[10] But the analysis of Round 2 results that follows includes all respondents, and it largely confirms the Round 1 findings. So, with this caveat in mind, let us now turn to the substantive findings, starting with the reported perceptions of traditional leaders.

The Afrobarometer began by asking respondents how attentive traditional leaders are to their problems: 'How interested do you think your local chief is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think?' An average of 63% say traditional leaders are either 'interested' or 'very interested' in their concerns, with one in three (33%) saying they are 'very interested' (Figure 1). Namibians show the greatest confidence in the good intentions of their traditional leaders; fully 78% credit them with a real concern for the people. Malawians are not far behind. South

Africans, on the other hand, occupy the opposite end of the spectrum: just 48% (of the already relatively small sub-sample) think their own traditional leaders are interested in their constituents' needs and concerns. The question that followed asked respondents: 'How much of the time can you trust your local chief to do what is right?' Southern Africans who live under these leaders have moderate levels of trust in their chiefs: 55% say that they trust them 'most of the time' or 'always' to do the right thing, while just 12% say they never trust them. Again, South Africans are least trusting (35%), and Namibians (72%) and Malawians (61%) are most.

Finally, the Afrobarometer asked 'How many chiefs or traditional leaders are involved in corruption?' Fifty per cent of respondents believe that the ranks of traditional leadership are relatively free of corruption, responding either that only 'some, a few' or 'almost none/none' are involved in these illegal activities. Less than one in four (23%), on the other hand, believes that all or most of them are corrupt, while another quarter (25%) say they haven't heard enough about them to say. In Botswana, where traditional chiefs are most integrated into the 'modern' political system, we also see the lowest levels of confidence expressed in their integrity. Just 37% think they are relatively free of corruption; however, a surprising 46% say they haven't heard enough about them to say, while just 14% think that many are corrupt. Does this lack of knowledge or an opinion on the matter suggest that Batswana are not as closely linked to their traditional leaders as many analysts have suggested (see, for example, Chief Linchwe II 1989)? Or have Botswana's chiefs, by being integrated into the political system to an unprecedented degree, also been tainted by that system in ways that ordinary Batswana are uncomfortable admitting (see for example Logan 2002)?

Factor analysis indicates that responses to these three questions about the quality and integrity of traditional leaders all draw on the same dimension of attitudes or perceptions about traditional leaders.[11] The three can therefore be combined into a single, five-point *Perceptions Index for Traditional Leaders* that ranges from 1, equivalent to very negative perceptions of traditional leaders, to 5 for very positive perceptions, with 3 reflecting a neutral attitude.

As indicated in Table 2, the mean value of this index across all seven Southern African countries is 3·4; those who live under traditional leaders thus give them a positive rating overall. South Africans give them the lowest ratings in the region, with a mean of 3·0; in other words, on average, those South Africans who live under traditional leaders (just 19% of all South Africans) sit on the fence in their attitudes towards them, evenly balanced between negative and positive views. In contrast, Namibians,

TABLE 2
Perceptions index, traditional leaders

	Mean perceptions index, traditional leaders
Namibia	3·9
Malawi	3·6
Zambia	3·4
Botswana	3·4
Zimbabwe	3·3
Lesotho	3·2
South Africa	3·0
Total	**3·4**

Note: The index averages scores on interest, trustworthiness and involvement in corruption.

some two thirds of whom live under traditional authorities, give these leaders a strong positive rating with a mean score of 3·9.

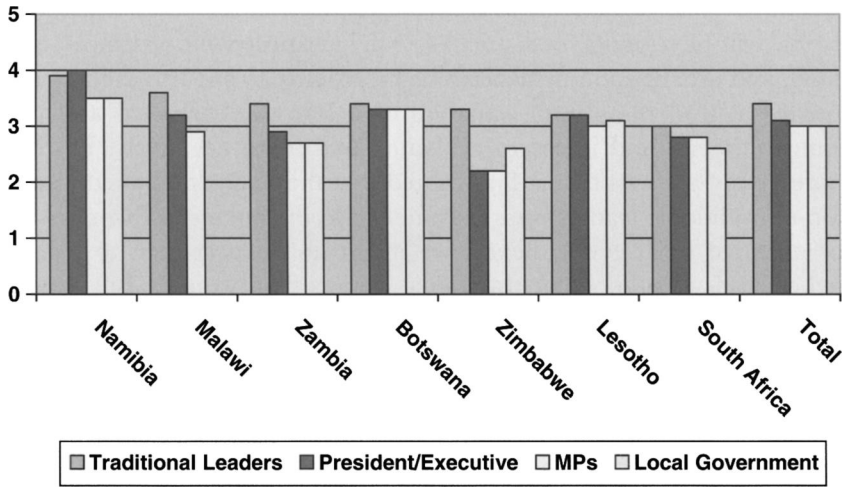
THE SELECTED VERSUS THE ELECTED

How do these moderately favourable perceptions of traditional leaders among those who live under their authority compare with assessments of Southern Africa's democratically elected government representatives? Based on the same three questions about corruption, levels of trust and interest in the people, perception indices were created for local government (except for Malawi, and parts of Namibia, which did not have local government bodies at the time of the surveys), members of parliament, and the president and the executive branch.[12] The results are shown in Figure 2.

Comparing the mean values of these indices reveals that, across seven countries, respondents give traditional leaders moderately but consistently better ratings (seven-country mean of 3·4) than any of their elected officials: local government councillors (mean of 3·0), members of parliament (mean of 3·0), and the president and executive branch (mean of 3·1). While the differences are quite small in Botswana and Lesotho, they are much larger in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe; in the latter, a full point separates traditional leaders from parliamentarians and the president. Only in Namibia does any branch – the executive – score higher than traditional leaders, and even then it is only by one tenth of a point.

The minimal differences between traditional leaders and elected officials in both Botswana and Lesotho may reflect the extent of integration

FIGURE 2
Perceptions indices, all leaders.[19]



Note: The indices average scores on interest, trustworthiness and involvement in corruption for each type of leader.

of the traditional leadership into the 'modern' political system in both of these countries (Englebert 2002: 346), deliberately in Botswana, perhaps more by default in the case of Lesotho. Both are ethnically relatively homogenous societies, and have not experienced the degree of competition between national and local allegiances that may have undermined traditional leadership to some degree in more diverse countries such as South Africa and Zambia. It appears that, in such environments, ordinary citizens may make less of a mental distinction between the government and the traditional leadership.

It is worth nothing that, while South Africans were most critical of their traditional leaders among the seven countries, it turns out that they are even more critical of their elected leadership. Conversely, Namibians are generous not only in their assessments of traditional leaders, but in their evaluation of elected leaders as well. So it is possible that the sizeable difference between these two countries with respect to evaluations of traditional leadership may not reflect vastly different perspectives on traditional leaders specifically, but rather more (South Africa) or less (Namibia) critical inclinations towards leadership in general. I will return to this issue in the following section.

EXPLAINING PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Several hypotheses may explain overall perceptions of traditional leaders. The most obvious is the supposition that an individual's level of modernisation will be a good predictor. We might expect younger, more educated, and urbanised individuals to be more likely to endorse the vision of traditional leaders as representatives of a bygone, backward and pre-democratic era, and hence to evaluate them more negatively. Furthermore, many analysts take it for granted that the male-dominated institution of traditional leadership is detrimental to the interests of women (see for example Beall 2006); hence, we might also expect men to register higher levels of support for traditional leaders than women. But beyond these initial hypotheses, what else might explain these leaders' ratings?

Using multiple regression analysis, we can both further test the modernisation hypothesis and explore other possible explanations. Additional categories of explanatory factors that have been tested include:

- Performance evaluations: Do popular evaluations of the democratically elected government, its leadership, and its performance on key issues, affect assessments of the relevance and reliability of traditional leaders? If, for example, a person rates elected leaders highly and/or sees the elected government as doing a good job in managing the economy and handling land access issues – traditionally a central realm of chiefly influence – is he or she more likely to see the traditional leadership system as irrelevant, and rate it negatively?
- Trust: Do individuals who express higher levels of general trust in their compatriots also tend to trust traditional leaders more?
- Democratic and electoral attitudes: Are those who support democracy and believe in the principle of elected leadership more likely to reject hereditary chieftaincy? And conversely, are those who are willing to accept non-democratic forms of government more favourable towards what some regard as the authoritarian institution of chieftaincy? Do people who believe that voting can really make a difference in the quality of leadership, or who engage directly in electoral campaigns or rallies, have lower regard for non-elected traditional leaders?

I also test for fixed country effects, which indicate the extent to which characteristics specific to each country (e.g. its own particular history, set of institutions, economic characteristics, or other factors not controlled for in the analysis) are important determinants of perceptions of traditional leaders.

Table 3 shows the results of multivariate regression analysis, with the perceptions index for traditional leaders as the dependent variable.

TABLE 3

Explaining the perceptions index for traditional leaders, Round 1

	B (unstandardised)	Beta (standardised)	Adj. block R square
(Constant)	2·117***		
Socio-demographic/modernisation			*0·008*
Age	0·002	0·023	
Education	−0·031*	−0·049	
Urban or rural (1/0, rural excluded)	−0·090	−0·033	
Gender (1/0, male excluded)	−0·046	−0·022	
Govt. performance evaluations			*0·108*
Government handling of economy	0·020	0·028	
Government handling of land	−0·016	−0·022	
Index of perceptions of executive	0·065**	0·069	
Index of perceptions of parliament	0·069**	0·069	
Index of perceptions of local govt.	0·200***	0·204	
General trust			*0·018*
Most people can be trusted	0·070**	0·050	
Democratic attitudes			*0·018*
Support democracy	0·005	0·003	
Index, rejection of authoritarian alternatives	−0·013	−0·012	
Vote matters	0·024*	0·039	
Attend an election rally	−0·005	−0·006	
Work for a candidate or party	0·047*	0·049	
Understand government	−0·013	−0·015	
Country (1/0, Botswana excluded)			*0·058*
Lesotho	−0·051	−0·019	
Malawi	–	–	
Namibia	0·471***	0·147	
South Africa	−0·136*	−0·043	
Zambia	0·187**	0·067	
Zimbabwe	0·184**	0·067	
Adjusted R square, full model	***0·143***		

* $P = < 0{\cdot}05$.
** $P = < 0{\cdot}01$.
*** $P = < 0{\cdot}001$.

The model explains about 14% of the overall variance in perceptions of traditional leaders, so it offers at least a reasonable start in explaining these perceptions, although there is much that remains unexplained. The modernisation hypothesis does not hold up particularly well, making a negligible contribution to the overall model (adjusted block R square = 0·008). Neither age nor urban–rural habitation produce significant effects. Education, in contrast, has significant effects, and they are in the (negative) direction expected, but their magnitude is relatively small.

Note, however, that the bias introduced by respondents' self-selection into the study group (see especially endnote 10) could be a significant factor here. Younger or more urbanised individuals who are more negatively disposed towards traditional leaders may simply have selected themselves out of the study group by rejecting the notion that they have a traditional leader. Nonetheless, these findings make clear that, even if such modernisation effects exist, they are far from universal, since the sub-sample analysed here still included sizeable proportions of urban (18%) and younger respondents (69% under age 45), and these appear to be on the same page as their rural and older counterparts.

The absence of any significant difference between men's and women's views on traditional leaders is particularly noteworthy, given the obvious concerns about the potentially discriminatory aspects of patriarchal traditional institutions. This could be because, as Beall (2006: 468) suggests, women simply tolerate discrimination because it is part of their culture and tradition. But alternatively (or in addition), it may suggest that we have an insufficient understanding of how traditional systems affect women, and the full range of ways in which women engage with and possibly benefit from these systems – even while facing discrimination in some respects. Ensminger (1997), for example, has noted that efforts to reform traditional systems of land tenure in Kenya met with community resistance in part because protections for women embedded in the traditional systems were overlooked and eliminated by the reforms. We should perhaps not be too quick to assume that the effects of traditional authority on women are unequivocally negative compared with electoral politics. This is a topic that needs further investigation and analysis.

By far the most powerful set of explanatory factors is evaluation of government performance (adjusted block R square = 0·108). But perceptions of government handling of the economy and access to land are not significant. Rather, it is the three other perception indices – for the executive, parliament, and local leaders – that offer considerable explanatory power. But note the direction of these effects: perceptions of traditional leaders are *positively* linked to perceptions of all other leaders. Moreover, the relationship is strongest with respect to what many describe as traditional leaders' closest 'competition': local government officials. In fact, the index of perceptions of local government officials is the single most powerful explanatory variable in our model. In other words, in the battle for the public's favour, not only are traditional leaders not in competition with elected government at the national and especially the local level – recall the image of 'two bulls in a kraal' – but, in fact, the two appear to be *mutually reinforcing*.

There are several possible explanations for this finding. One is that, as suggested above with respect to Namibia and South Africa, individuals may display a leadership disposition or 'leadership affect' that is more or less positive, more or less critical, towards all types of leaders – and potentially towards other ordinary citizens as well. Alternatively, whether their role is explicitly recognised or not, this finding may suggest that the public essentially regards traditional leaders as part of a common governing apparatus with elected government authorities, and hence evaluates them on the same criteria as elected leaders. In other words, rather than juxtaposing the government against the traditional system, they may operate based on mental images of a hybrid government. If they are satisfied with the quality of governance, they may attribute this to traditional leaders and government officials equally as components of a single governing system.

The first of these explanations is further supported by the effects of generalised trust, i.e. the feeling that 'most people can be trusted'. The positive sign on this variable is consistent with the suggestion that evaluations of leadership are based at least in part on an individual's general disposition towards leadership, and towards society at large.

But the second explanation also finds support in the lack of evident incompatibility between public attitudes towards democracy and allegiance to traditional institutions. For the most part, an individual's democratic attitudes – whether pro-democracy, or pro- (or at least tolerant of) authoritarianism – are quite poor predictors of leadership evaluations (adjusted block R square = 0·018). Those who support democracy as the best system of government, and those who reject authoritarian alternatives, are neither more nor less likely to have positive views of traditional leaders. The clash that many perceive between traditional rulers and electoral systems of government is not evident to ordinary Africans. And when it comes to engagement with elections, the effects are the *opposite* of what many would predict. Those who believe in elections, stating that how one votes actually matters to the quality of governance, are *more* likely to have positive perceptions of traditional leaders, as are those who have worked for a candidate or party. There is thus no evidence to be found here that adherence to traditional leadership and to democratic attitudes are in opposition to one another. Support for democracy readily coexists with support for traditional leadership.

Finally, note that the second most important category of explanatory factors (adjusted block R square = 0·058) is the fixed country effect, particularly for Namibia.[13] This suggests that attitudes towards traditional leaders are not just attributes of particular individuals or groups, but must

also be understood as a reflection of the shared experiences of whole populations. All of the countries except South Africa (and Lesotho, where the effects are not significant) tend to be more positive about traditional leaders than Botswana. This is somewhat surprising given Botswana's reputation for providing the paradigm of well-integrated traditional and modern political systems. It is consistent, however, with findings reported elsewhere that integration of traditional leaders into a political system may enhance the legitimacy of the system as a whole, while undermining the standing of the traditional leaders themselves. In such situations, traditional leaders may suffer both from their greater potential exposure to corruption and rent-seeking opportunities, and from the greater distance (both literal and figurative) that their new governmental roles may place between them and their home communities (Logan 2002).

RATING TRADITIONAL LEADERS: ROUND 2

In Round 2 (2002–3), only one question evaluating traditional leaders was asked: that of trust.[14] But it was asked across fifteen countries, and it was asked of all respondents in each country. It therefore provides a broader basis for evaluating perceptions of traditional leaders, and an opportunity to test the initial model of perceptions developed using the more limited (in scope) Round 1 data. Ratings of trust in traditional leaders compared to other elected leaders, as well as several key government institutions, are shown in Table 4.

Once again, traditional leaders fare relatively well in comparison with elected leaders in a number of countries. They get the highest rating across these four groups in eight of the fifteen countries. On the other hand, they receive the lowest ratings among the four in South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The biggest surprise, however, is Namibia: for reasons that are not clear, traditional leaders now rank a distant third to the president, in contrast to the neck-and-neck status of the two in Round 1.

We conducted a second multivariate regression analysis using essentially the same model as that developed for the Round 1 Southern Africa data above, but this time applied to all respondents in all fifteen countries, and using trust in traditional leaders as the dependent variable.[15] Table 5 shows the results of this analysis. Note first that, with a more varied sample that includes all respondents (not only those with traditional leaders), the Round 2 model does a considerably better job of explaining the variance in trust in traditional leaders, with an Adjusted $R^2 = 0{\cdot}268$.

Overall, the findings strongly confirm our initial model. The signs and significance of the key explanatory variables, and the relative importance

TABLE 4

Trust in leaders and government institutions, Round 2

	Traditional leaders	President/ prime minister	Parliament/ National Assembly	Local government	Army	Police	Courts
Senegal	79	73	52	51	82	70	68
Mali	78	71	62	51	79	63	50
Malawi	68	48	38	33	72	64	61
Mozambique	62	75	54	42	48	50	59
Lesotho	58	58	49	49	50	51	58
Tanzania	55	79	69	60	72	51	54
Botswana	54	44	37	34	60	57	57
Ghana	54	65	48	38	54	51	45
Zimbabwe	53	46	37	39	55	52	55
Zambia	51	46	40	16	52	42	49
Kenya	49	70	53	36	58	27	37
Uganda	47	61	48	77	51	43	51
Namibia	42	76	47	31*	50	48	42
Nigeria	31	18	11	17	21	11	12
South Africa	19	37	31	20	32	35	39
Total	53	58	45	38	56	48	50

Question: 'How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?' (% a lot/a very great deal).

* Excludes 60% of cases with no local government body.

of the performance, democratic attitudes and country blocks are quite consistent between the two models. The most notable difference is that socio-demographic factors have stronger overall explanatory power in the Round 2 model with all respondents included, offering somewhat more support for the modernisation hypothesis than provided by Round 1. Other things being equal, younger, urbanised and more educated Africans are less likely to trust traditional leaders than their older, rural and less educated counterparts, although these factors are still much less powerful in explaining attitudes than performance evaluations. Moreover, this model again shows that gender has *no impact* on attitudes towards traditional leaders.

The strongest explanations again come from the performance evaluations of other leaders. And as with the first model, it is the ratings, particularly with respect to trust, of local government councillors that act as the most powerful predictors. This confirms the thesis suggested above, that perceptions of traditional leaders are developed largely in conjunction with those of elected leaders – including *especially* local leaders – rather than in contrast to them.[16] The common assumption that almost by

TABLE 5
Explaining trust in traditional leaders, Round 2

	B (unstandardised)	Beta (standardised)	Adj. block R square
(Constant)	1·650***		
Socio-demographic			*0·080*
Age	0·003***	0·026	
Education	−0·067***	−0·096	
Urban or rural (1/0, rural excluded)	−0·159***	−0·055	
Gender (1/0, male excluded)	−0·022	−0·008	
Govt. performance evaluations			*0·172*
Trust the president	0·073***	0·074	
Trust parliament	0·132***	0·127	
Trust local government	0·216***	0·209	
Performance of president	−0·024**	−0·022	
Performance of MP	−0·007	−0·007	
Performance of local government councillors	0·035***	0·032	
Corruption in office of president	−0·020*	−0·017	
Corrupt among elected leaders	0·007	0·006	
Democratic attitudes			*0·005*
Support democracy	0·005	0·003	
Index, rejection of authoritarian alternatives	0·008	0·005	
Understand government	−0·013	−0·011	
Elections best for choosing leaders	0·011	0·010	
Country (1/0, Botswana excluded)			*0·138*
Ghana	−0·205***	−0·034	
Kenya	−0·260***	−0·059	
Lesotho	−0·211***	−0·035	
Malawi	0·432***	0·070	
Mali	0·398***	0·067	
Mozambique	−0·156**	−0·026	
Namibia	−0·551***	−0·058	
Nigeria	−0·372***	−0·085	
Senegal	0·571***	0·093	
South Africa	−0·692***	−0·156	
Tanzania	−0·296***	−0·049	
Uganda	−0·568***	−0·129	
Zambia	0·068	0·011	
Zimbabwe[20]	–	–	
Adjusted R square, Full Model	***0·268***		

* $P=<0·05$.
** $P=<0·01$.
*** $P=<0·001$.

definition traditional leadership and democratically elected leadership stand in opposition to one another does not hold up.

This model also confirms the findings of the Round 1 model that there is no contradiction between commitment to democracy and confidence in

traditional leaders. The explanatory power of democratic attitudes is virtually nil. Even holding a strong belief that elections are the best way to select leaders does not decrease trust in traditional leaders.

As a group, country effects again provide the second most powerful category of explanation. These are significant in all countries except Zambia. There are few surprises, although in slight contrast to Round 1 most countries are more negative about traditional leaders than Botswana. Only Malawi, Mali and Senegal are more positive, which is consistent with observations reported elsewhere (Logan 2008) that identify these three countries as home to the staunchest supporters of traditional leadership. Likewise, Uganda and South Africa are, not surprisingly, strongly negative relative to Botswana.

SELECTION, ELECTION AND HYBRIDISATION

To summarise, the data reveal two key findings. First, Africans do not draw as sharp a distinction between their elected and their selected leaders as most analysts and advocates of liberal democracy would expect. Rather than responding to their political environment as though these two groups are in opposition to one another and they must make an either-or choice between them, our respondents draw a strong *positive* linkage between the two. They appear to evaluate them in the context of a common orientation towards leadership, or 'leadership affect', and treat these dual systems of authority as two parts of a single, integrated whole. Second, we likewise see no evidence of a contradiction between allegiance to traditional rulers and individual commitment to democracy. Contrary to the common expectation, those who offer the most positive evaluations of their traditional leaders are no less committed to democracy than those who reject these leaders. Indeed, supporters may even be slightly more active participants in the democratic system.

North's thesis regarding the tendency of norms and values to change gradually rather than abruptly, and the likelihood that new institutions will be integrated into, rather than replace, existing structures, helps us to make sense of these findings. Electing rather than selecting leaders is perhaps the most central tenet of the liberal democratic model of politics; it is non-negotiable. This is precisely what generates so much antagonism in some quarters towards 'traditional' systems of 'hereditary' (albeit often contested) rule in which elections have no obvious place. But whatever other democratic features they may boast, competitive elections have simply not been a part of Africa's traditional political heritage. North would therefore predict that changing a community's formal

institutions – i.e., introducing competitive elections as a mechanism for selecting leaders – would not necessarily produce corresponding changes in the informal norms of society. In other words, granting the public the right to vote will not automatically generate a popular commitment to elections as the 'only game in town'.

Additional evidence bears this out. Make no mistake: Africans value elections and their increasingly secure right to vote for their leaders. Across eighteen countries surveyed in Afrobarometer Round 3 (2005–6),[17] for example, 82% agree that elections are the best method for selecting leaders. But they have yet to canonise elections in their political understandings of 'the right way to govern' to the extent that the West has. This is evident when we ask people to define democracy (which receives broad support as 'the best form of government'). When the Afrobarometer asked respondents: 'What, if anything, does democracy mean to you?', only 6% of respondents mention voting or elections as their first response, and only another 6% refer to it as a second or third response. Instead, democracy is much more strongly associated with civil liberties and greater personal and collective freedom (31% of first responses). This relatively weak association between the meaning or content of democracy and elections may be due in part to the fact that Africans are still unconvinced about the efficacy of elections. For example, just 47% report that elections 'enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want'. But this lack of efficacy is precisely what North would predict when there is a disconnect between formal institutions such as elections and the prevailing norms and values of society.

The finding that Africans may be somewhat ambivalent – or perhaps, at times, inconsistent – in their attitudes towards elections is confirmed by several local-level studies that have examined the juncture between electoral politics and community norms. In Uganda, Karlström (1996: 497) reports that in comparing attitudes towards traditional leaders and elected local councillors, the distinction between election and selection 'was rarely if ever used by my informants in discussing these issues'. When pressed, respondents acknowledged the difference, and even expressed 'an unqualified preference for popular elections'. But they nonetheless saw the chieftaincy and the council system as more similar than different.[18] In his study of how elections have been 'introduced, interpreted and incorporated' into rural areas in South Africa, Williams (2004: 128) likewise finds that although 'elections are perceived as a legitimate and necessary mechanism to transfer and distribute political power ... it would be a mistake to assume ... that people consider elections to be "the only game in town". Rather, many understand elections to be simply "another

game".' As a result, Williams' informants weren't just tolerant of institutional coexistence: they *expected* it.

These processes of institutional evolution and hybridisation are, of course, ongoing – and change is occurring in both directions. Karlström (1996: 498) notes, for example, that allegiance to elections is growing as Ugandans gain experience with voting as a viable means of achieving society's 'predominant political ideals'. And Williams (2004: 123) observes that, in the face of pressure from local populations, government, and development agencies, 'chiefs have sought to "reinvent" themselves both as crucial intermediaries between state and society during formal elections, and as local-level "democrats" who are willing to adapt local institutions in the face of popular pressure for change'. These adaptations have ranged from opening space for greater participation by previously marginalised groups, especially women and younger men, to introducing elections for local chiefs (*inzinduna*) in some areas. The chieftaincy and democracy are thus engaged in a 'mutually transformative process [that] illustrates the complexity of democratic consolidation, as well as the ability of the chieftaincy to adapt to changing political and social environments without sacrificing its unique claims to authority' (*ibid.*: 113). Similar processes of evolution and transformation have been described elsewhere (Beall *et al.* 2005; de Sousa Santos 2006).

Africans are thus creating for themselves, whether deliberately or by default, hybrid political systems that integrate the traditional systems with which they are deeply familiar and their newly minted electoral regimes. North's analysis suggests that such hybrid systems are an inevitable product of institutional reform. Nonetheless, some fear that any departure from a 'pure' model of liberal democracy is likely a prelude to the failure of the democratization project. But the findings presented here suggest that these concerns are overblown. Ake (1991: 34) contends that it is the principles of democracy – including widespread participation, consent of the governed, and public accountability of those in power – that should matter more than the specific set of institutions in which they are embodied. He suggests that we should accept, or even anticipate, that democratic principles 'may prevail in a wide variety of political arrangements and practices, which naturally vary according to historical conditions' (see also Englebert 2000; Logan 2002; Sklar 1999). And Oomen (2000: 64), too, has observed that if either participation or 'the ability to debate one's destiny' can be regarded as an essential principle of democracy, then traditional administrations may often be more democratic than the elected local governments with which they supposedly compete (see also Owusu 1992). Hybridising political systems in these ways may well

represent a positive step toward deepening democracy in Africa, rather than a step away from 'true' democracy.

All of this highlights the need to further explore and better understand the evolving hybrid political systems that are emerging around the region. A number of analysts have been documenting the complex efforts of various African societies and governments to come to terms with their nations' dual political realities, and explore ways in which the institutions of traditional authority can be effectively blended with the needs of the state, and the principles of democracy. They are also making note of the enormous challenges that these efforts may face (see for example West & Kloeck-Jenson 1999 and de Sousa Santos 2006 on Mozambique; Englebert 2002 on Uganda; Murray 2004 and Williams 2004 on South Africa). It remains to be seen whether democratic principles will indeed prevail in the various African polities included in this study. But our findings at least indicate that allegiance to traditional rulers is not undermining popular commitment to democracy, and the hybrid political systems that are emerging may be contributing positively to the stability and effectiveness of the democratic political experiment.

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Owusu (1996: 329) has argued that traditional leadership is such an important part of the local political fabric in Africa that we cannot talk about democracy from below, from the grass roots, without talking about chieftaincy. But there are no simple solutions to the question of how to define the role of chiefs and elders in African political systems circa 2008. De Sousa Santos (2006: 66) describes the relations between the parallel worlds of traditional authority and the 'official politics of recognition and control' as 'an intense and chaotic web of interlacings among different legitimacies, local powers, legal cultures, and legal practices'. Separating the two spheres is not an option: 'this separation, even if correct – which is debatable – is *impossible to sustain*, given that individuals cannot keep their multiple identities watertight and "uncontaminated"'. Better to recognise 'that contamination and hybridisation between codes is a "natural" condition' (*ibid.*: 61–2, emphasis added). Perhaps, as de Sousa Santos suggests, this integration may lead not to a 'non-modern alternative to Western modernity,' but to 'the expression of a claim to an *alternative modernity*' (*ibid.*: 61, emphasis added).

Liberal democratic purists clearly have legitimate concerns. Traditional systems may be authoritarian and exclusionary. But neither of these is *necessarily* the case. And focusing too intently on the *potential* negatives can

cause us to lose sight of the fact that traditional systems may also have democratic features, and that they can adopt and are adapting to evolving, increasingly democratic, popular norms. Most importantly, we see that Africans clearly recognise traditional authorities as important actors in their political lives, while also displaying a growing commitment to electoral politics. From their perspective, mixed systems that integrate the two are not just an inevitable but a desirable outcome. We would do well to assume that Africans, especially African women, are not simply deluded in feeling this way, and instead continue to try to understand more fully why this is so. We could begin by exploring further how individuals in Africa define their own vision of a 'good' political system, and the ways in which *both* traditional leaders and electoral politics might contribute towards achieving popular political goals.

Williams (2004: 113, 122) contends that 'communities seldom believe that they must make an either/or choice concerning democracy and the chieftaincy', but rather see it as '"commonsensical" that the institution of the chieftaincy and democratic elections can, and should, coexist'. The evidence in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is that societies are often quite adept at integrating seemingly incompatible institutional structures. Citizens in the European and Asian monarchies have been doing it for decades or even centuries, so perhaps we should not be surprised to see that the same may be happening, albeit often on a more local level, in Africa.

NOTES

1. Samples of this size yield a margin of sampling error for country statistics of +/− 2 to 3% at a 95% confidence level. Note that Afrobarometer surveys are concentrated in countries that have undergone at least some degree of political and economic liberalisation, so the results cannot be taken as representative of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. More information on the Afrobarometer, including project history, methodology, data and publications, can be found on the project website: <www.afrobarometer.org>.

2. The English version of Afrobarometer questions typically uses the phrase 'traditional leader, chief or elder' (or sometimes 'headman' is substituted for 'elder') to refer to traditional authorities. Of course, each ethnolinguistic community has its own titles for these individuals, and as West & Kloeck-Jenson (1999) have noted, in local and national debates about traditional authorities, the names used matter, sometimes quite a lot, especially as the terminology itself is at times highly contested. This diversity of nomenclature is captured by the Afrobarometer in that our questionnaires are translated into between one and six local languages in each country. However, for the purposes of the cross-national analysis that is the focus of this discussion, several commonly used terms – including traditional leaders, traditional authorities, elders and chiefs – are used interchangeably. I follow Englebert (2002: 366, n. 1), though, in noting that 'in this paper, tradition is not meant to imply a lack of modernity but refers to institutions that display some level of cultural endogeneity in comparison to the post-colonial state'.

3. Owusu 1996: 330, citing Peter Waterman, 'Introduction: on radicalism in African studies', in P. C. W. Gutkind & P. Waterman, eds., *African Social Studies: a radical reader*, London & New York: Heinemann, 2.

4. Murray (2004) gives a good overview of the debates and accompanying policy changes within South Africa that have sought to define the position and role of chiefs as the country has emerged from apartheid. See also Beall 2006, Beall *et al.* 2005; and Republic of South Africa 2002.

5. See, for example, an earlier version of this paper, published as Afrobarometer Working Paper 93, for data concerning rates of contacts with traditional leaders relative to other leaders, and their perceived importance in conflict resolution. Available at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/abseries.html>.

6. The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, which actually formed in 1987 as an ANC-aligned organisation; see Murray (2004).

7. The 'yes' cases comprise 66 % of the weighted sample.

8. Note that this figure of 19 % living under the authority of a traditional leader in South Africa is far lower than those commonly cited, which are usually in the range of 40–45 %, or even higher. See, for example, Murray (2004: 3) and Williams (2004: 114).

9. Official figures on the proportion of each country's population living under traditional authorities do not appear to be readily available. The original source for the South African estimates of 40–45 % cited in the previous note is not clear; the numbers may simply be based on the percentage of the population that is rural, which according to census figures is approximately 43 %. However, as we can see, in South Africa the proportion of the population that self-identifies as having a traditional leader is much less than this figure; i.e., many rural residents clearly do not see themselves as having a traditional leader. In contrast, in several other countries the proportion self-identifying as having a traditional leader is much higher than the rural population (for example, 74 % with a traditional leader and 51 % rural in Botswana; 99 % and 72 % respectively in Lesotho). For the sample as a whole, 83 % of all rural respondents self-identified as having a traditional leader, compared with 27 % of urban residents. Rural habitation alone is clearly not an adequate proxy for living under the influence of traditional leadership. Rural population estimates for the year 2000 are taken from UNDP 2002: 162–5.

10. Figures for the partial (those with a traditional leader) versus full (weighted) sample are: 82 % versus 63 % rural; 58 % versus 48 % primary education only; and 31 % versus 27 % over age 45.

11. A single factor can be extracted that explains 62 % of total variance, with Eigenvalue = 1·861, and Cronbach's alpha = 0·690.

12. For the perceptions index for the executive, one factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 1·991 that explains 66 % of the variance; Cronbach's alpha = 0·746. For the perceptions index for parliamentarians, one factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 1·928 that explains 64 % of the variance; Cronbach's alpha = 0·721. For the perceptions index for local government, one factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 1·963 that explains 65 % of the variance; Cronbach's alpha = 0·735.

13. Note that, at the time of the Round 1 survey, Malawi did not have local government institutions, so the country drops out of the analysis when the index of perceptions of local government is included. However, rerunning the model either with this index excluded, or with all missing cases in Malawi and elsewhere coded to the mid-point value of 3, has few substantive effects on either the significance or the direction and relative influence of the other variables (although the adjusted R square for the model which drops the local government index is, not surprisingly, reduced).

14. Afrobarometer surveys engage respondents in an extensive interview using a survey instrument that usually numbers around a hundred questions. Over successive rounds of the project, we have sought to strike a balance between maintaining continuity with respect to core questions about attitudes towards democracy, and our desire to explore a host of sub-themes related to the quality of democracy and governance. Attitudes towards traditional leadership were explored in Round 1, but this topic did not feature strongly in the Round 2 and Round 3 surveys. However, a relatively expansive battery of questions on traditional leadership has been included in the Round 4 survey instrument, so data from these surveys, which will be collected during 2008, should provide a rich resource for further study of this topic. The Round 4 questionnaire can be viewed on the Afrobarometer website at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/questionnaires.html>.

15. Because of differences between the two Rounds in the questions that were included, there are some differences in the two models. In particular, as with traditional leaders, the specific questions asked about the leadership attributes and performance of the president, members of parliament and local government councillors varied in Round 2. Thus, rather than the condensed indices developed in Round 1, we replace these three indices with a set of seven variables that separately measure trust, performance and corruption among these leaders. In addition, the 'generalised trust' variable was dropped because the question was not asked in Round 2. The democratic attitudes block was also

modified, but it still includes measures of support for democracy, rejection of authoritarian alternatives, and understanding of government, as well as an indicator of whether respondents rate elections as the best system for selecting leaders.

16. We note the negative sign on the indicators for presidential and MP performance, but these effects are small, and moreover, they are negative *only* when we already control for the much stronger effects of trust in the president and MPs. If the trust variables are removed from the model, for example, the effects of the performance indicators are all positive.

17. Those listed previously, plus Benin and Madagascar.

18. See also Frederic Schaffer's (1998) revealing study of local perspectives on elections in Senegal.

19. Zimbabwe is dropped from the analysis since several of the variables utilised in the regression were not included in the Zimbabwe survey. However, dropping these variables so that Zimbabwe remains in the analysis does not significantly change the results.

20. Like the figures for traditional leaders, the indices for president/executive, MPs and local government presented in Figure 2 are calculated including only those who live under a traditional authority. Note, however, that when all respondents are included in the calculation of these indices, the differences are very small, 2% or less in all but two cases. Thus, there is little difference in evaluations of the executive, parliament and local government between people who live under traditional authorities and those who do not.

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