Comparative Government

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Weel 2: Organising

Today's plan

- Logistics: Attendance, class duration and etc
- Recap: "Doing Comparative Politics" (30 mins)
- Refresher lecture and Q&A (1-1.5 hr)
  - Regimes, states (and countries), governments (and governance)
  - States, nations and nation-states
  - How states vary: State capacity and economic development
- Reading exercise: "Democracy and Varieties of Nationalism" (1 hr)

International

Wednesday, 30 April 2025

Winners in the fight for Africa's democracies are getting hard to find

https://observer.co.uk/news/international/article/winners-in-the-fight-for-africas-democracies-are-getting-hard-to-find

Recap: “Doing Comparative Politics”

- What is this about? Why is the issue/question this news article attempts to "discuss" or "explain?"
- What are the "factors" highlighted by the author? How "convincing" are they?
- What is the comparative method used here?

Question: The “strange” case of democracies in Africa

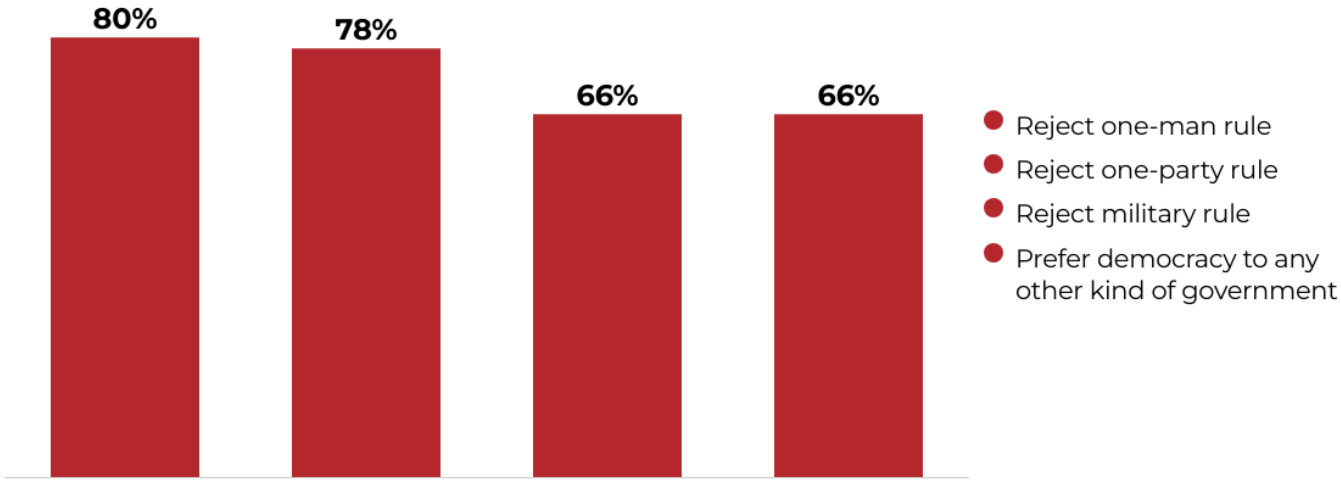
- Many democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa have "reverted" back to authoritarianism, as illustrated by a rising number of
  - coups
  - rigged elections
  - opposition leaders facing changes or even being "jailed"

Report: "African insights 2024" (Afrobarometer 2025)

- Support for democracy remains strong but declining
  - 66% prefer democracy; large majorities reject authoritarian alternatives
  - Yet support dropped 7 percentage points over a decade (30 countries), with steep declines in South Africa (-29) and Mali (-23)
- Military rule gaining acceptance
  - Opposition to military rule weakened by 11 percentage points, especially in Mali (-40) and Burkina Faso (-36)
  - 53% would accept military takeover if leaders abuse power
- Mixed signals on support for democratic norms
  - In favor of: accountability, rule of law, term limits, multiparty competition and media freedom
  - Support for elections declined 8 points (though majority still favor)

Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule | 39 African countries | 2021/2023

AFROBAROMETER



https://www.afrobarometer.org/feature/flagship-report/

Trends in support for democratic norms
| 30 African countries | 2011-2023

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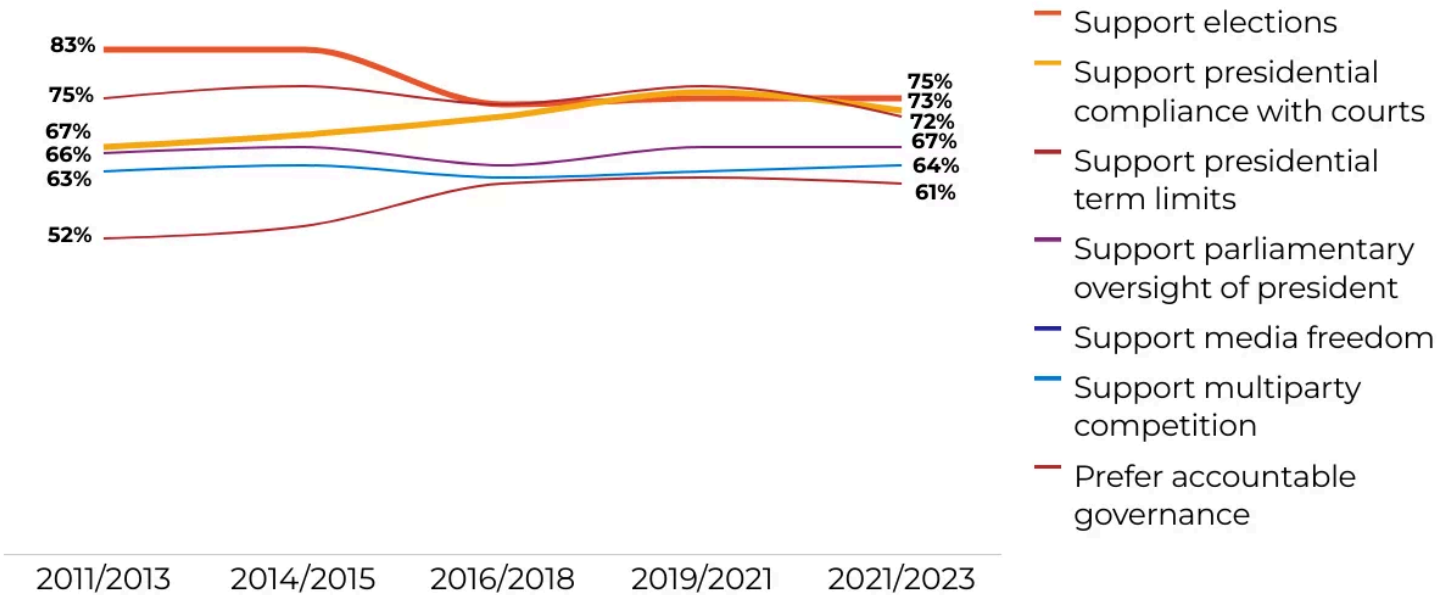

https://www.afrobarometer.org/feature/flagship-report/

Supply of democratic norms, institutions
| 30 African countries | 2011-2023

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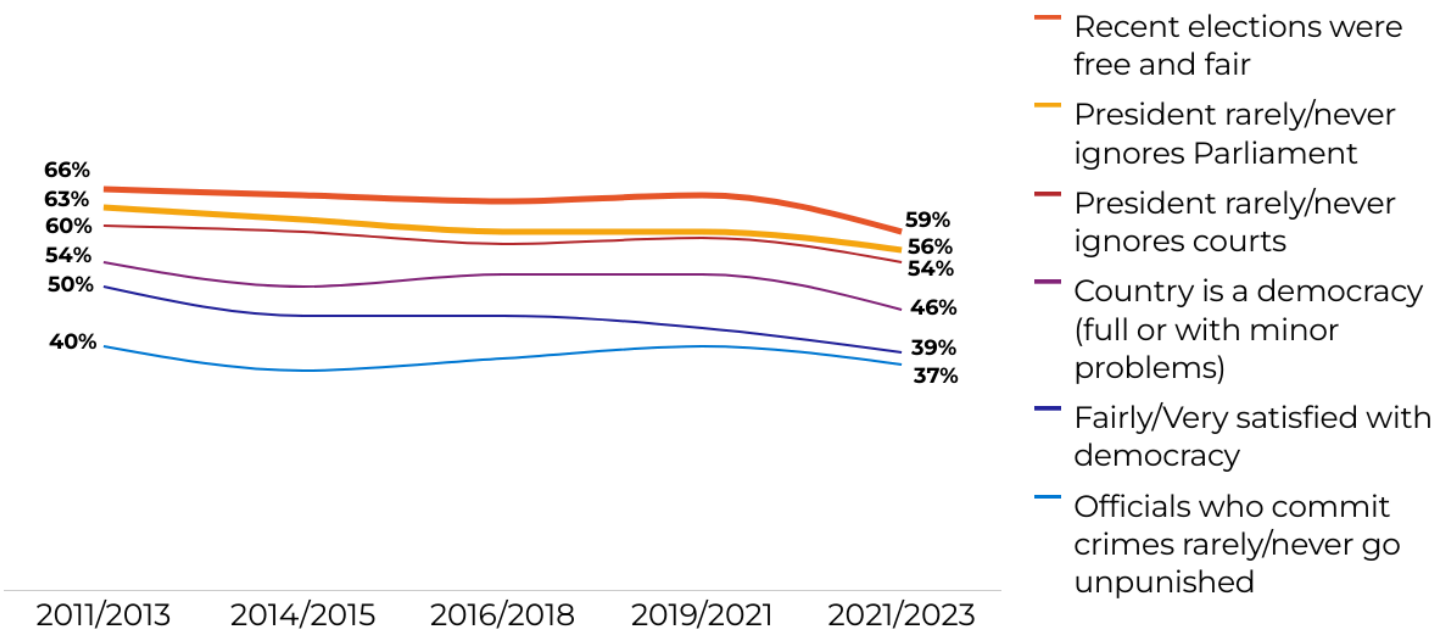

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Why democracies in Africa are “fragile”

- Worldwide democratic backsliding and the difficult "state" of global economy (inflation and cost of living crisis)
- Weakening of the post-1945 international settlement (and the rise of alternatives)
- African democracies are "young;" democractic institutions are "flimsy"

“Refresher” lecture

TBD.