

# Citizens' Support of Democracy in Africa: A Comparative Perspective of Africans' Attitudes

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**Abstract:** This paper is an exploratory study of Africans' support for democracy as a system of government. Using two rounds of Afrobarometer surveys, the article compares Africans' views on democracy from three African countries; Botswana, Nigeria, and Swaziland. The paper also seeks to find out if Africans' demand for democracy is related to attitudes of fear of political intimidation and satisfaction with democracy. In so doing, the paper seeks to divert from instrumental or economic measures of support but to explore political factors that determine regime support. The paper departs from a basic premise that individual freedoms are fundamental to the functioning of democracy and as such there is a need for people to exercise their democratic rights in a free and politically conducive environment. The study finds that support for democracy in Africa's mature democracy remains high across the two survey rounds while Africa's former military regime show an increase in support for democracy. There is less than majority support for democracy in Africa's absolute monarchy. Satisfaction with democracy influences Africans' support for democracy while fear of political intimidation only influences Africans in Swaziland to demand democracy. Based on these findings, the article argues that to a certain degree, Africans support democracy because they value it as a system of governance. This study is significant because democratic experiments on the continent have largely been a result of external forces and pressures of neoliberal agenda, donor assistance and globalization. It is also important given the fact that African countries have so far fallen under different regimes that are not necessarily democratic. It is therefore essential to compare the level of support for democracy across the three regime types in order to assess what Africans think of democracy as a system of governance.

**Keywords:** Political support, Africa, Regimes, Democracy, Attitudes

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## 1. Introduction

When former colonial powers left, most African countries dealt away with institutional and political practices left behind. With the exception of Botswana and a few others, most countries abolished multiparty politics and opted for a one party state while Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea to mention a few at the time of independence fell under military rule. Quite significantly, these political regimes failed to inspire development for their countries and instead dragged the fortunes of their countries down through greed, and corruption more especially countries that were endowed with resources. In some instances, elections were held but in rather unbearable environment characterized by violence and unlevelled competition. This paper is an exploratory and comparative study of Africans' support for democracy in three countries; Botswana, Nigeria and Swaziland that are supposed to represent states that are categorized as Africa's 'mature' democracy, formerly military regime and absolute monarchy respectively. Based on Afrobarometer

surveys (2012 and 2014), qualitative research methodology is used to analyze variances in support for democracy across the regimes. Logistic regression models are used to determine if Africans' support for democracy is related to attitudes of fear of political intimidation and satisfaction with democracy. In so doing, the paper seeks to divert from instrumental or economic measures of support but to explore political factors that determine regime support.

The main aim of the study is twofold, first to compare what Africans' think of democracy as a system of governance, that is whether it is preferable to other systems or not, and secondly, if Africans support democracy, is it more to do with fear of political intimidation or their satisfaction with democracy. The findings suggest that there is an overwhelming support for democracy in Africa's 'mature' democracy, while support for democracy in former military regime is increasing but citizens in absolute monarchy show an uncertainty towards democracy. Satisfaction with democracy influences Africans' support for democracy while

fear of political intimidation only influences Africans in Swaziland to demand democracy.

## **2. Literature Review**

It is widely acknowledged that democracy, which as usually portrayed as a western idea and concept, is an ideal and an aspiration that most countries in the world would like to work towards. The 2014 and 2015 Afrobarometer survey results appear to concur because the results show that the majority of people surveyed in 36 African countries indicated that they preferred democracy to any other kind of government (Nicolson, 2016). On the other hand, most of the literature on Africa and democracy deals with issues regarding conflict wars, dictatorship, economic failures, corruption, famine, diseases, natural disasters and so on. Perhaps less known across the globe is the fact that there are many perceptions of what democracy means and the fact that there are many historical non-western perceptions and practices of democracy in many pre-colonial systems/societies around the world including Africa (Ake, 1991; Bradley, 2011). There is also ample evidence that in the 1960s the successful anti-colonial movements throughout Africa premised on fundamental democratic principles that people should rule themselves by governments which they put in power through the ballot box (Gyekye, 1992; Oladipo, 2001; Wired, 1996).

Africa's experience with democracy can be classified in three phases. The first, the precolonial phase lasted until the beginning of colonization (1884-1885) (Bradley, 2011). African societies are reported to have exercised forms of horizontal-type of democracies in which traditional rulers played a key role. This period that marked the beginning of Africa's official marginalization, which still continues today, in international political and economic affairs was followed by the colonial era. For most African states colonialism lasted until the 1960s except for a few countries like Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia that got their independence in 1975 and 1990 respectively while Zimbabwe was liberated in 1980 and South Africa's apartheid system was brought to end in 1994. The rich literature shows that under colonial domination and apartheid rule, Africans were denied most basic democratic rights that the settlers enjoyed hence the struggles for emancipation and democracy (Ihonvbere, 1997; Oladipo, 2001; Lewis 1992; Joseph, 1997; Ihonvbere 1997). This period does not therefore count as a period of

democracy for Africans instead it marked beginning of the struggle for independence, self-determination and democracy (Shivji, 2003). Equally important is Shivji's (2003) observation that neither formal independence nor the victory of armed liberation wars marked the end of democratic struggles because they are also a fight for good governance that is why they still continue today despite the various reforms that have been made across Africa. It is in this context that the fall of the eastern European dictators also led to the fall of most African authoritarian regimes.

The third wave of democratisation in Africa, which continues today, is said to have begun after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 which marked the Soviet Union's debacle and its Eastern European allies. This review of literature focuses on this last phase which, just like the second, constitutes Africa under African rule. The difference between the second and the third wave of democratization, which are both very well documented, is that the former was overshadowed by dictatorial rule which often ended with military rule mainly in west Africa and the proxy wars that contributed to economic, political and social destabilization of the continent (Barka & Ncube, 2012; Makara 2013). Most of the post-colonial leaders, nationalists and elites were being corrupt, abandoned democratic principles, introduced one party states, marginalized the majority of the people and enriched themselves (Fanon, 1963; Chole & Jibrin, 1995).

The one party state which was basically an instrument of oppression of the majority was justified on several grounds ranging from rejecting multiparty politics as a western concept that was divisive to Africans because it allegedly fuelled racism, ethnicity and religious conflicts, to multiparty politics being a waste of resources that could be channeled towards development of African states that were victims of underdevelopment as a result of colonialism (Herbst, 2001). In short, one party state system was justified as vehicle for democracy and economic development. The reality is that all the foregoing factors contributed to the third wave of democratization in Africa that led to the end of most dictatorships on the continent. The internal struggles for democracy coupled with the external pressures such as the fall of the Berlin wall, donor countries and international institutions' instance that democratization was a precondition for financial assistance, all contributed to the implementation of

democratic reforms on the continent (Joseph, 1997; Maathai, 2010, Ihonvbere (2007:3); Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997).

The initial results of these reforms have produced overwhelming support for democracy in Africa but twenty-seven years later there are mixed results that show that democratic reforms in some countries have stagnated and while others have declined and a few states have even experienced coups such as in Nigeria (1993) Mali (2012) Guinea-Bissau (2008) Niger, (February, 2010). Other regimes fell as a result of citizen pressure (Barka & Ncube, 2012; Makara, 2013). These include Egyptian regime and the NATO assisted overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. Many of these countries like a few others are still facing instability partly because the leaders continue to cling to power, manipulate elections and ignore institutions of accountability. Some analysts contend that some of the post-Cold War democratic experiments in Africa have been derailed by western and Chinese attempts to "militarise" the continent which could lead to "neo-colonialism" or "new imperialism" (Piombo, 2015; Franke, Giglio & Janiszewski, 2007). In other cases, it has been argued that the U.S. military presence on the continent has led to regime change, failed states, political instability and constant warfare (Swanson, 2015). Turse (2016) has observed that the armed groups have multiplied at more or less rate the same pace as the U.S. military expansion in Africa.

On the overall, evidence shows that most Africans appear to prefer democracy as a system of government. The studies such the one about Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa confirm this (Doorenspleet, 2012; Bradley 2011; Mattes & Bratton 2007). Botswana and Mauritius probably represent the very few countries that were spared from foregoing harsh realities and were later praised as the most stable states and good examples of democracy in Africa. Unlike most African states that experienced political instability that included military coups, social unrest and high levels of poverty, the two countries were not only stable but achieved high levels of development. However, in the post-Cold War period both countries have also been criticized for losing some of the democratic qualities leading to charges that they have become electoral democracies dominated by ruling parties that are not really accountable to the people (Kasenny, 2011). However, without taking the shine away from the

credible achievements these two countries have accomplished, in the post-Cold War period both states have also received more criticism for losing some of the democratic qualities (Good & Taylor 2003; Taylor 2003; Groop 2017; Kasenny 2011; Srebrnik, 2002; Bunwaree & Kasenny 2010; Frankel 2010).

Critiques of Botswana's democracy contend that while the country's economic story of "rags to riches" is undisputed, the distribution of the wealth from diamond sales has largely benefited the elites and democratic practice has been on the decline in recent years (Good and Taylor, 2008; Poteete, 2012). Others contend that Botswana, which for a long time was seen as Africa's 'democratic hope' is the same as South Africa was perceived until recently, that the country is basically dominated by one party, and that democratic institutions that are supposed to ensure checks and balances are weak, making transparency and accountability difficult resulting in the blurring of lines of demarcation between the state and the ruling party (Taylor, 2006; Osei-Hwedie, 2006; Good, 2008; Poteete, 2012; Groop, 2017; Mogalakwea & Nyamnjoh, 2017). In spite of the foregoing, Botswana's positive perception of democracy still remains one of the highest in Africa (Bratton, 2002; Doorenspleet, 2012).

In the case of Nigeria, one of the current case studies, extensive literature shows that the country got independence from Britain in 1960 and four years later the country experienced its first coup that was followed by many others in 1970, 1993, 1998 as the struggle for democracy intensified ( Joseph, 1987; Lewis, 2000; Ohachenu, 1995). Olusegun Obasanjo, the man who reintroduced democratic reforms in 1999 as a democratically elected leader first ruled Nigeria between 1976 and 1979, when he took over power through a coup (Oladeinde, 2017). Under military rule, mismanagement of the country led to charges that Nigeria was the poorest 'oil rich' country that was ruled for almost 30 years by coups and a series of ruthless bloody kleptocratic leaders (Agbaje, Diamond & Ebere, 2004; Ibrahim, 1986; Ohachenu, 1995). Military rule contributed to profound poverty, serious ethnic and religious strife and lingering corruption which usurped people's basic democratic rights. Obasanjo was the only military leader who returned power voluntarily to civilian rule and began seriously addressing the perceived corruption. Today, despite the various economic and political challenges, including terrorism, the majority

of Nigerians believe democracy is the best form of government (Bratton 2002; Doorenspleet, 2012).

Swaziland gained independence in 1968 and has been ruled by a constitutional monarchy and since 1973 to date when the then King, Sobhuza II, father to current King Mswati III, suspended the independence constitution and imposed a state of emergency that still remains in force today (Dlamini, 2013; Masuku & Limb, 2016). The decree conferred absolute power to the monarchy and banned all political parties. Since then the struggle for democracy in Swaziland has been growing from strength to strength and the absolute monarchy is seen as the root of all problems in Swaziland and an island of autocratic rule in Southern Africa where countries largely practice various kinds of democracy (Kenworthy, 2011; Daniel & Vilane, 1986; Bischoff, 1988). The government in Swaziland has integrated traditional authorities whose structures have been set-up to primarily service and protect the monarchy. Consequently, Swaziland is the only country among the three cases studies where absolute monarchy is in existence and people's democratic rights have been usurped by the state (Bischoff, 1988; PUDEMO, 2014; Daniel & Vilane, 1986). It is therefore hardly surprising that of the three case studies selected for this study Swaziland has the lowest rating of democracy and perceptions in the case of Afrobarometer studies.

In spite of the fore going, there have been very few studies on political attitudes in Africa although in recent years there has been an increasing scholarly interest on the subject (Logan & Mattes, 2010; Bratton & Robert, 2001; Diamond & Morlino, 2005). In terms of popular support for a regime, in their study, Bratton & Mattes (2001) compare support for democracy in electoral democracies of South Africa, Ghana and Zambia. Consistently, in all three countries, support for democracy was strongest among citizens who felt that elected governments were generally doing a good job (Bratton & Mattes, 2001). Africans' approval of government performance was closely connected to party identification, with supporters of the ruling party in each country being much more approving. But they caution that if popular support for democracy is linked to government achievements other than intrinsic valuations of democracy as an ideal, then Africans risk having 'democracies at risk'. In this vein, democracy is valued not so much for what it is but for what it can do (Bratton & Mattes, 2001:452).

Fernandez and Kuenzi (2009) compared support for democracy in Latin America and Africa and concluded that support is high in Africa (72%) compared to Latin America (59%) because transitions to democracy in Latin America took place in the 1980s, while those in Africa took place in the 1990s. For them, Latin Americans have had more time than Africans to become disappointed with democracy. But the low support of democracy in Latin America is influenced by perceptions of crime and safety. In other studies, support for democracy was conditional on whether a regime follows the rule of law; there are free and fair elections; and the economy maintains a high standard of living (Mishler & Rose, 2002).

Bratton (2002) found that Africans support democracy in 12 countries he studied, although he found shallow support. And this is because Africans still expressed a sentiment on support for non-democratic regimes. This ambivalence led Bratton to conclude that democratization on the continent is still far from complete. Besides the cited works, there are still very few comparative studies on attitudes towards democracy on Africa, particularly across regime comparative studies. Also, there is scant literature that explains support for democracy in terms of political goods such as perceptions of freedoms, satisfaction with democracy and civic engagement.

### **3. Insights from Theory**

From Lincoln's view of democracy as a government of the people, by the people, for the people, the term democracy has since been interpreted quite differently. But even then, it is widely accepted that democracy should entail rules that facilitate the selection of leaders by people, in contrast to forms of governments that disregard people in choosing leadership such as absolute monarchies. Accordingly, democracy is a system of rules and procedures by which leaders, groups, and parties compete for power, and in which free and equal people elect representatives to make binding decisions (Mattes and Bratton, 2007).

Political support for a democratic regime is fundamental to its continual stability, sustenance and survival. Legitimacy of a regime rests on the public's support and this ensures the smooth running of government. As Easton (1975) rightly concludes, a defining feature of democratic regimes is that they

depend for their survival and effective functioning on the public's willing acquiescence and support. All regimes require a measure of public support; transitional regimes arguably require even more than stable democracies, given the greater stress and competition they face from potential alternative regimes (Mishler and Rose, 2001:14). More importantly, a democratic regime becomes consolidated when, among other conditions, people see it as legitimate and accord it some measure of support. Democracies become consolidated only when, all significant elites and an overwhelming proportion of citizens see democracy as "the only game in town" (Linz & Stepan, 1996a,15). For Karl (1990), a consolidated democracy is one in which institutional arrangements and procedures develop into permanent, consistent, and autonomous institutions governed by justifiable rules.

Public attitudes toward democracy shape the prospects for regime consolidation through the process of political legitimation (Mattes & Bratton, 2007:2). It is the people who ultimately judge their political process, procedures and institutions and their perceptions are important to legitimate a regime. In political theory, there are various approaches that explain political support and its measurement. More specifically, idealist measures of support measure support in terms of citizens' adherence to the principles or ideals of democracy (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Idealist measures are based on some ideal "destination" of where citizens are supposed to be. It is a rather abstract measurement that is premised upon what people think in terms of the values of democracy. But the efficacy of idealist measures of political support is problematic and it is argued that they do not sufficiently capture support for democracy in new democracies (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Citizens in new democracies do not have sufficient knowledge about democracy and its ideals.

Conversely, for citizens of established democracies, the fundamental structure and democratic character of the regime are well known and widely accepted and while they may not appreciate how the legislative process works, they do have a basic understanding of institutions and support democracy. For them, they prefer democracy to any other alternative and in fact as Mishler and Rose (2001:3) put it, "it is inconceivable that the existing regime could be replaced by any other." On the other hand, realist measures of support are based on citizens' acceptance or rejection of the regime

of the day, whether democratic or not. "A realist approach to regime support is less concerned with the extent to which citizens subscribe to democracy in the abstract and more concerned with the extent to which citizens embrace or reject their current regime, whether democratic or undemocratic, established or incomplete" (Mishler & Rose, 2001:14). Norris argues it's better to ask them about regimes with which they have actual experience, and focus on which regimes people are willing to support or reject. The basic assumption here is that regardless of how well designed its political institutions and processes, a sustainable democracy requires people who are willing to support, defend and sustain democratic practices (Mattes *et al.*, 2000)

The efficacy of a realist approach is that it can be relied on not only to assess popular support for stable democratic regimes but to also compare levels of support for undemocratic regimes and regimes attempting the transition to democracy. Related to the realist approach, Mattes and Bratton (2007) propose a demand and supply measurement of support and consolidation of democracy. They argue that democratic consolidation both requires a "high" level of demand, but also where most people think they are receiving democracy - over time. In this vein, survey questions should not ask respondents whether they love democracy or not but instead, they should offer respondents realistic choices between democracy and its alternative (Mattes & Bratton, 2007). To this end, demand for democracy in opinion surveys is measured by asking citizens the question,

*"Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? (A) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government; (B) In certain situations, a nondemocratic government can be preferable; or (C) To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have".*

#### 4. Data and Methods

This paper uses the Afrobarometer public attitudes surveys conducted between 2008 and 2014 to analyze Africans' views towards democracy across the three regimes. The interviews were conducted with sample sizes of 1200 adult citizens in Botswana, Swaziland, whereas in Nigeria interviews were conducted with a sample of 2400 adult citizens because of the geographical size of the countries.

**Table 1: African influences for demand of democracy**

Variable Construction		
Variables	Values	Construction notes
<b>Dependent variable</b>		
Support for democracy	0, 1	0, not preferable, 1, preferable
<b>Independent variables</b>		
Satisfaction with democracy	0, 1, 2, 3	0, not democracy, 1, not satisfied 2, satisfied, 3, don't know
Fear of political intimidation	0, 1, 2	0, No fear, 1, Fearful, 2, don't know

Source: Authors

Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2014. Afrobarometer conducts face-to face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level (Afrobarometer.org)

Using round 5 and 6 of the data, descriptive statistical analysis is conducted to compare the level of demand for democracy across the three regimes based on the following questions:

*i) "Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? (A) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government; (B) In certain situations, a nondemocratic government can be preferable; or (C) To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have".*

The next step is to run logistic regression models to determine what influences Africans' demand for democracy using round 6 of the survey. Logistic regression is appropriate statistical technique for variables that are categorical. Logistic regression analysis examines the influence of various factors on a dichotomous outcome by estimating the probability of the event's occurrence (Reddy *et al.*, 2015).

## 5. Support for Democracy in Africa

Figure 1 & 2 on the next page show that Africans in established democracy overwhelmingly demand democracy throughout the periods studied. There is

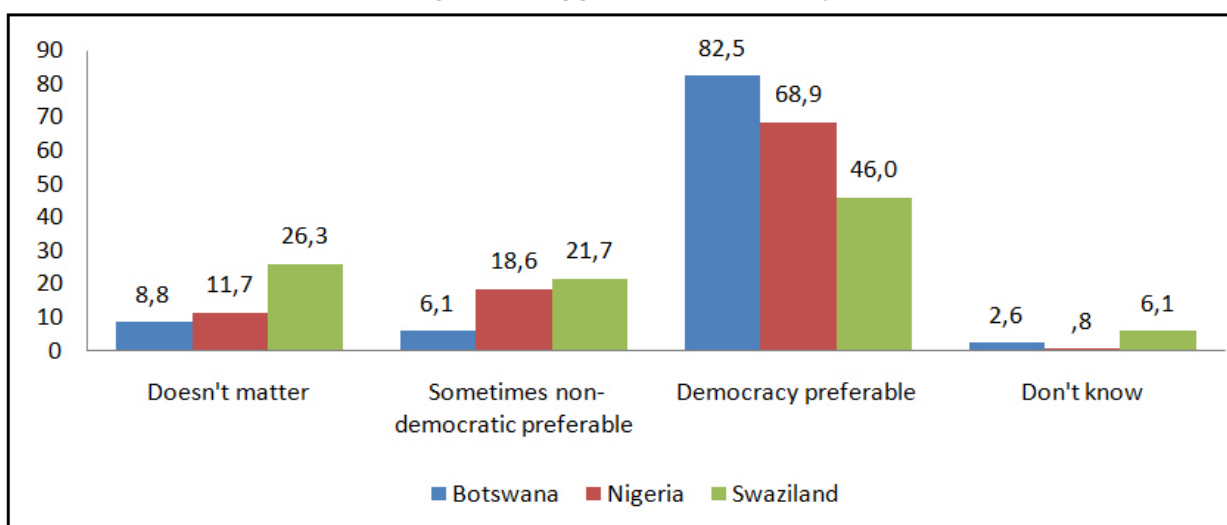
majority (82.5%) support for democracy in round 5 which slightly increased to 82.9% in round 6. Almost 7/10 Africans in former military regime support democracy, though there is a slight drop in round 6. There is less than majority demand for democracy in Africans in absolute monarchy. Only 46% of Africans in absolute monarchy demand democracy, and there is a slight decline in demand for democracy in round 6.

## 6. Results of Logistic Regression and Discussion

The models for the three countries combined (Table 2) are statistically significant and our explanatory variables seem to predict the likelihood for Africans to support democracy. Generally, Africans who are satisfied with democracy are more likely to support democracy than those who think that their country is not a democracy. In round 5, the likelihood is increased by 2.58 times and this increased to 3.5 times in round 6 of the survey. The likelihood of those not satisfied with democracy to support it increased from 1.9 in round 5 to 2.4 in round 6. Africans seemed to demand democracy more in round 6 particularly in Africa's established democracy (Figure 1 & 2). But Africans are not fearful to demand democracy as in both rounds fear does not seem to increase the likelihood to support democracy.

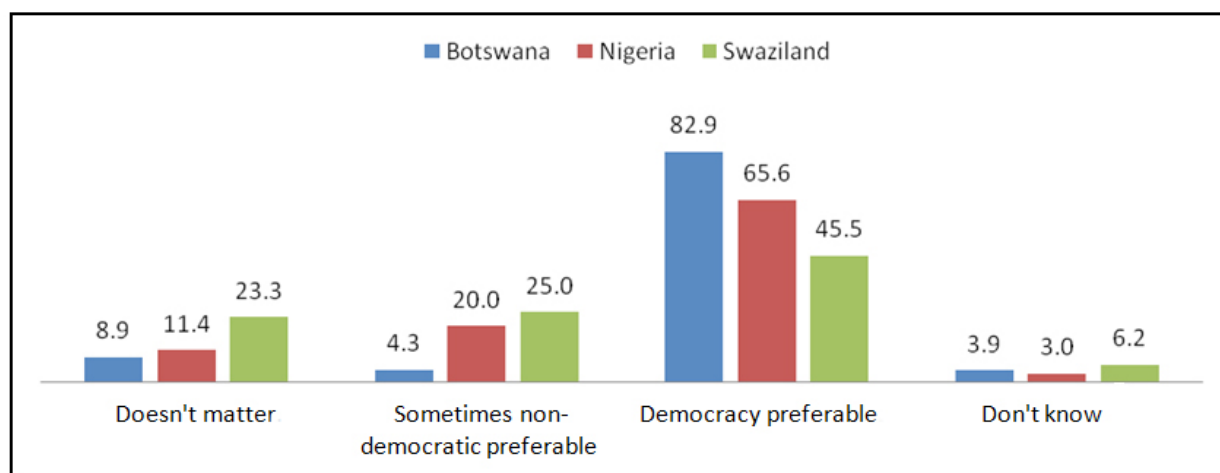
Now, looking at the individual models for the three regimes, Africans in a mature democracy who are satisfied with democracy are 7.6 times more likely to support democracy than those who say a country is not a democracy. Having had the experience of democracy for 50 years, it does not come as a surprise that Batswana who are satisfied with democracy would demand democracy more

Figure 1: Support for Democracy



Source: Authors

Figure 2: Support for Democracy Round 6



Source: Authors

compared to those who say the country is not a democracy. On the other hand, the results show that those who are not satisfied with democracy are 4.5 times more likely to demand democracy than those who say the country is not a democracy. It is expected that those who are dissatisfied with democracy will express demand for more of democracy particularly in the wake of the recent spate of events that threaten democracy in Botswana. For instance, the onslaught on media freedoms which has escalated to arrests of journalists, and the assault on the independence of the judiciary by the presidency have of late been cited as incidences that indicate regression of democracy. But besides these, Botswana who are dissatisfied with democracy may well be disillusioned with abuse of state media, weak oversight of parliament over

the executive and lack of culture of consultation that has come to characterize Botswana especially under the Khama regime.

Africans in Nigeria who are not satisfied with democracy are 3.5 times more likely to demand democracy than those who say the country is not a democracy. This expression for support for democracy by those who are not content with democracy does not occur in a vacuum as some elements of democratic retrogression have been noted in the Buhari administration not long after a landmark historic shift of power in 2015. The Buhari administration's disdain and disrespect for court decisions also threatens the core fundamental precepts of democratic practice. The arrest of seven judges (among) who include two justices of the apex court,

**Table 2: Combined Model for the Three Countries**

		Round 5				Round 6			
Variables		B	P-value	OR	95% CI for OR	B	P-value	OR	95% CI for OR
Satisfaction with democracy	Country not democracy	ref				ref			
	Not satisfied	0.67 (0.151)	<0.001	1.968	(1.464,2.645)	0.878 (0.133)	< 0.001	2.407	(1.855,3.124)
	Satisfied	0.948 (0.153)	<0.001	2.58	(1.912,3.482)	1.256 (0.136)	< 0.001	3.512	(2.692,4.582)
	Don't know	-1.264 (0.254)	<0.001	0.282	(0.172,0.464)	-1.694 (0.217)	< 0.001	0.184	(0.12,0.281)
Fear of political intimidation	No fear	ref							
	Fear	-0.347 (0.064)	<0.001	0.707	(0.624,0.801)	-0.222 (0.067)	< 0.001	0.801	(0.702,0.914)
	Don't know	-0.164 (0.264)	0.535	0.849	(0.506,1.425)	-0.652 (0.279)	0.02	0.521	(0.301,0.901)
	Constant	0.167 (0.147)	0.258	1.181		-0.074 (0.129)	0.564	0.928	

Source: Authors

**Table 3: Models for the Three Countries**

VARIABLES	Model for Botswana				Model for Nigeria				Model for Swaziland			
	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
SATIS DEMOCRACY			0.000				0.000				0.000	
NOT SATISFIED (1)	1.495	0.699	0.032	4.459	1.259	0.36	0.000	3.522	0.494	0.166	0.003	1.638
SATISFIED (2)	2.030	0.693	0.003	7.611	1.586	0.366	0.000	4.886	-0.032	0.176	0.856	0.969
DONT KNOW (3)	-0.891	0.755	0.238	0.41	-0.244	0.494	0.621	0.783	-2.718	0.353	0.000	0.066
FEAR			0.000				0.341				0.639	
FEAR (1)	-0.797	0.173	0.000	0.451	-0.007	0.117	0.95	0.993	0.121	0.128	0.344	1.129
DONT KNOW (2)	-1.339	0.573	0.019	0.262	-0.54	0.376	0.152	0.583	0.062	0.622	0.920	1.064
Constant	0.212	0.69	0.759	1.236	-0.644	0.372	0.083	0.525	-0.16	0.146	0.273	0.852

Source: Authors

the Supreme Court, is one of the significant issues in the Buhari administration's relationship with the judiciary (Obiyan as cited in Akinola, 2017).

On the other hand, finding of this study show that Nigerians who are satisfied with democracy are 4.9 times more likely to support democracy than those who say the country is not a democracy. It does not come as a surprise because Nigerians have had to contend with repressive military rule in the post-independence era and the country has also battled

with a myriad of challenges since introduction of multiparty politics in early 1990s. These challenges include rampant corruption, the threat of terrorism posed by Boko Haram extremists and political instability particularly surrounding the alternation of the presidential position between the Islamic dominated north and Christian dominated south. Democracy seems to be preferable at least to the extent that people can participate in the political process and most of their rights are entrenched compared to when the country was under military regime.



According to the data gathered by this study, citizens who are not satisfied with democracy in Africa's absolute monarchy are 1.6 times more likely to demand democracy than those who think that the country is not a democracy. Surprisingly, the likelihood to support democracy in Swaziland by those who are discontent with lack of democracy is rather low or unexpected. Even those who are satisfied with democracy are less likely to demand as the log odds of supporting democracy are decreased by 0.969. It would appear that the level of discontent with lack of democracy in Swaziland have not reached a point that Swazis could desperately and overwhelmingly demand democracy. Alternatively, the fear of political intimidation perhaps even explains why there is low demand for democracy in the monarchy. Those who are fearful are 1.1 times more likely to support democracy. This is expected though, given the lack of political space in Swaziland. The country conducts elections on a non-partisan basis and persistent calls for democratic reforms by civil society have fallen on deaf ears as political parties remain outlawed in the kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

But it may well be that Swazis are conservative and, as they express less than majority support for democracy (See Figure 1 and 2). But compared with Africans in an established democracy and former military regime, fear of political intimidation seems to increase the likelihood to demand democracy in the monarchy.

## 7. Conclusion

This article has explored Africans' support for democracy across three regimes. The article has shown that Africans in mature democracy are overwhelmingly persistent in their resolve for support for democracy in the period under review. Botswana are more likely to express support for democracy if they are satisfied with democracy. The data also reveal that Botswana are more likely to demand democracy if they are not satisfied with democracy. In terms of support for democracy in former military regime, Nigerians are more likely to demand democracy if they are not satisfied with democracy, but are even more likely to support it when they are

content. Fear of political intimidation does not in any way increase the likelihood for Botswana and Nigerians' to support for democracy. Conversely, Swazis show ambivalence towards support for democracy as in both periods under review, there is less than majority support for democracy. But fear of political intimidation makes Africans in the monarchy to demand democracy. In sum, support for democracy in Africa is not just instrumental, that is, based on government performance, but this article has shown that to certain degree, Africans hold intrinsic views about democracy based on political freedoms and whether they are content with democracy or not.

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<sup>1</sup>All political parties in Swaziland have, hitherto, had a de facto rather than a de jure existence. Article 25 (1) of the Constitution stipulates that every person has the right to freedom of association and assembly but Article 79 iterates that political representation is on an individual basis.

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