AFRICA'S LATENT ASSETS

Soeren J. Henn
James A. Robinson

ABSTRACT

Despite the past centuries' economic setbacks and challenges, are there reasons for optimism about Africa's economic prospects? We provide a conceptual framework and empirical evidence that show how the nature of African society has led to three sets of unrecognized "latent assets." First, success in African society is talent driven and Africa has experienced high levels of perceived and actual social mobility. A society where talented individuals rise to the top and optimism prevails is an excellent basis for entrepreneurship and innovation. Second, Africans, like westerners who built the world's most successful effective states, are highly skeptical of authority and attuned to the abuse of power. We argue that these attitudes can be a critical basis for building better institutions. Third, Africa is "cosmopolitan." Africans are the most multilingual people in the world, have high levels of religious tolerance, and are welcoming to strangers. The experience of navigating cultural and linguistic diversity sets Africans up for success in a globalized world.

Soeren J. Henn
Innovations for Poverty Action &
Harris School of Public Policy
University of Chicago
1307 E 60th St.
Chicago, IL 60637
soeren.henn@gmail.com

James A. Robinson
University of Chicago
Harris School of Public Policy
and Department of Political Science
1307 East 60th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
and NBER
jamesrobinson@uchicago.edu

1 Introduction

Supposedly, it is (Sub-Saharan) Africa's "Turn" (Miguel, 2009), it is "Emerging" (Radelet, 2010), "Rising" (Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2018), and full of "Lions on the Move" (McKinsey, 2010). But are there real grounds for such optimism and if so what are they? Development economists have been wrong on Africa before. In 1961 Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, one of the founders of development economics, made some projections based on his understanding of the "economic fundamentals." He argued that "prospects of good ... rates of growth seem to appear for Tanganyika, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana" (p. 111) indeed, higher than in Singapore, South Korea or Taiwan.

Since Rosenstein-Rodan wrote, Africa has had a tough time economically and socially.[1] In fact, Africa hasn't just had a bad 60 years, one could say it has had a bad 400 years. Since the ramping up of the Transatlantic slave trade in the 17th century, Africa has experienced sustained economic stagnation and many adverse changes in society. This was connected to slavery (Inikori, 1983, Nunn, 2008, Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011, Teso, 2019), colonialism (Mamdani, 1996, Young, 1997, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001, Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016, Lowes and Montero, 2019), post-colonial realities of autocracy (Bates, 1981), the Cold War (Dube, Kaplan and Naidu, 2011, Schmidt, 2013, Cheeseman, 2015) and possibly foreign aid (Nunn and Qian, 2014).[2]

But prior to 1978 China had a very bad 200 years. By the second half of the 18th century the Qing state was collapsing fiscally and wracked by corruption. The granary system of social insurance withered away, the Grand Canal silted up, and China was convulsed by civil wars like the Taiping Rebellion which claimed perhaps 20 million lives. The Imperial state disintegrated, there was rampant warlordism, a communist revolution, the Great Leap Forward, and then the Cultural Revolution. But despite all these calamities, it turned out that China has large latent advantages, or assets, on which economic prosperity could be built, even though apparently necessary institutions were missing in many dimensions. A central asset was a social norm that, as Confucius put it, one should "promote those who are worthy and talented" (2003, p. 138). The norm of meritocracy, turned out to be a powerful plinth on which to build an inclusive market economy. It probably reaches back even further than Confucius

Ning Yue was a man from the outskirts of Zhongmou; he was bitter at the labor of

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[1]Africa of course is not a country but a very heterogeneous continent with many cultures and traditions. In fact, this diversity, and its many benefits, is one of our key arguments. We present data which presents the picture of Africa "on average" but we also try to explore as much of this heterogeneity as possible.

[2]We cannot do justice here to large scholarly literature on all these topics.

tilling and sowing and said to his friend: "How can I escape this bitterness?" His friend replied: "The best is to learn. After learning for thirty years, you will fulfill [your goals]." Ning Yue said: "I pledge to make it within fifteen years. When others are to rest, I shall not dare to rest; when others are asleep, I shall not dare to sleep." He learned for fifteen years and became the teacher of Lord Wei of Zhou. (quoted in Pines 2013, pp. 177-178)

The story of Ning Yue, reproduced in a text written during the Warring States period just before the rise of the first Chinese dynasty in 221 BC, depicts a society characterized by remarkable social mobility and meritocracy. Ning Yue was a nobody, but he could aspire to be a teacher of Lord Wei. The norm was so deeply rooted that China and the surrounding areas it influenced (particularly Vietnam and Korea) became the only part of the world which had a pre-modern elite chosen by an examination system.[3]

In this essay we pose the question: if China could have a bad 200 years but still maintain, or even develop, latent assets, could the same thing be true about Africa? None of these mattered for economic prosperity in China until some basic issues of governance were solved, as they were by Deng Xiaoping and successive Chinese political elites. Such governance challenges certainly exist in Africa. But could Africa possess, have sustained, or created such latent assets?

We argue that the answer to this question is yes and it is here that genuine optimism about African prosperity begins. To give a sense of where one might expect such assets, in the next section we provide a simple framework for thinking about African society based mostly on our reading of the relevant anthropological, historical and sociological literatures. African society was, and is, organized around networks. These networks are used to access economic resources and create political power and they can be invested in. Their focus is on people and personal relationships and they imply a great deal of social mobility because links to more capable or talented people are more valuable. They bridge other social structures, even ethnicity, and were forged in historic periods of migration and movement which bred very flexible attitudes towards strangers (people, whoever they were, were always valued). The basis of political power in personalized networks combined with what Vansina (1990) describes as an intense desire to "safeguard the internal autonomy of each community" (p. 119) to keep the scale of African polities small. They were based on networks and wary of the abuse of authority. This framework implies the presence of three sets of latent assets in African society.

The first asset is that, like China, the majority of African societies are built on achieved,

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[3]There were of course other pre-modern meritocratically organized states, for example in Ancient Egypt.

not ascribed status. Unlike in India with its religiously enforced caste system, or Latin America with its ingrained "castas" and inequalities, in Africa anyone can get ahead just like Ning Yue did. Like the type of meritocracy that has deep roots in China, the achievement basis of African society is also deep seated, if rarely institutionalized via an examination system. In historic Africa, even slaves who had the capacities got to the top. We illustrate this fact with several sources of information. First, survey data on perceived and expected social mobility shows Africa to be the most socially mobile part of the world. Africans are also the most optimistic about future mobility. Perceptions are important because they determine people's actions and effort and also their policy preferences (Alesina, Stantcheva and Teso, 2018). Nevertheless, we also show with data on observed educational mobility that Africa is more socially mobile than Latin America or South Asia and some countries in Africa are as mobile as Western Europe. What would be the basis for such optimism? Despite the cliché that Africa is a continent of corruption where connections and social networks are critical to people's opportunities, in fact Africans are more likely to say that the way to get ahead economically is via hard work. Their opinions about this are similar to those of people in the United States. These beliefs manifest themselves in the types of attitudes they transmit to their children.

Though there is a great deal of corruption in Africa, so is there in China, yet in the Chinese case the incentives and opportunities created by the norm of meritocracy seem more powerful quantitatively. Why not in Africa?

The second latent asset we call "skepticism of authority." Unlike many societies in East Asia, Africa is much more like Western liberal democracies in its anticipation that political power will be abused. African oral history and political theory is full of the anticipation of miss-rule, often in the form of a "drunken king" (de Heusch, 1982), and it generally lacks the notion of a "redeemer" (Krauze, 2011) or charismatic personal rule so central to the emergence of populism in Latin America and elsewhere. This skepticism has of course not stopped power being abused in post-colonial Africa, but we argue that, just as in the United States at the time of the Constitution, this skepticism can provide the basis for building inclusive and effective political institutions. We illuminate this by presenting data on attitudes in Africa towards one-man rule and we show how these are related to the history of political development in Africa.

The final asset we identify is "cosmopolitanism."[4] Because of the heterogeneous and small scale nature of African society, Africans endlessly have to deal with differences: different languages, different cultures, different histories. This history is reflected in African languages where

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[4]We borrow this word inspired by Appiah (2007), but we use it in a positive sense, not as a normative ideal as he proposes.

the word for "stranger" is typically the same word as for "guest." We argue that this makes Africans the most able culturally to cope with a modern globalized world; people who can deal with difference and adapt will succeed. Though much social science attempts to portray this diversity as a burden, which may be true in some specific contexts, we argue that it is in fact an asset. One way we illustrate this asset is by showing that Africa is the most multi-lingual continent in the world. Though it may not be specifically advantageous to speak Lingala or Kikongo in New York, London or Paris, we argue that the ability and willingness of Africans to master so many languages is indicative of the great suppleness of cosmopolitan African society and in line with a recent literature in social psychology, it helps Africans to take and appreciate the perspectives of others (see Kinzler, 2020, for an overview).

Thus far these assets are latent and we do not under-estimate the challenges to building better institutions in Africa in the difficult context that colonial powers bequeathed (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). Moreover, the analogy to China is made complicated by the fact that unlike Africa, China has a long history of consolidated state authority with a common system of writing and something approximating a common culture. These features almost certainly helped Deng Xiaoping move the country onto a path of reform. Yet, these features also helped implement the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. It is not obvious that the type of challenges that Deng overcame are larger than those that face African leaders. Moreover, many doubt that the hegemony of authoritarianism is consistent with sustaining the prosperity that China has generated in the past 40 years. Here Africa may have systematic advantages over China.

2 A Simple Framework

There is a great deal of agreement amongst scholars of Africa about some basic elements of African society which are relevant to our arguments. African society is built around personalized networks and was mostly organized in small scale polities.

African society is built around flexible networks

African society was, and is, highly personalized and organized around networks. These included genetically related kin, but also fictive kin. In many contexts wealth was measured in "people" (Miers and Kopytoff, 1977, coined the expression "wealth in people" to describe this) as much as in material form—a person was rich if they had a lot of social connections (Bledsoe, 1980, and Guyer, 1993, are seminal studies). This priority is manifested in proverbs. For example, a

Yoruba one states

> A gift of money is not equal in value to a [gift of a] person (Owomoyela, 2005, p. 292).[5]

The networked nature of African society is not a historical curiosity but rather provides a framework for understanding its contemporary nature. Smith (2004, p. 227) notes in his ethnography that "The enduring salience of these "wealth in people" proverbs in contemporary Nigeria reflects the continued importance of "having people" in a different kind of political economy" and that "very striking in the interviews and observations of peoples' daily lives was the continued importance of "having people" as the means through which individuals, families, and communities gain access to social resources in an economic context based on patron-client ties" (p. 233).[6]

These networks were related to and interwoven with two sets of institutions which are also important to our discussion. One was social structures such as lineages, clans, age sets and age grades, and various types of association and societies. The second was the continuum of different types of status which ran from free at one end to slave at the other.

Early work by anthropologists attempted to clarify the relationship between these networks and social structures. For example, Gulliver observes that even in segmentary lineage societies, where it might appear that one's position in a particular descent group determined all one's relationships "The network is still there ... but it is simpler, and it has been possible to ignore its persisting non-group features" (1971, p. 347).

A key aspect is that while networks might start with kinship, they are much broader and more flexible than that. Gulliver (1971) notes in his study of the Ndendeuli of Tanzania that "even with declared non-kin, interaction was oriented in terms of kinship ... That the "objective" facts of genealogical connection could be ignored, blurred, or even altered did not diminish the real value of the kinship idiom" since it "provided an language ... by which to standardize expectations and to provide guide-lines of a kind everyone could follow" (p. 351). An implication of these observations is that networks were not determined by actual kinship and "in actuality men joined [networks] for a variety of reasons, only one of which, if at all, was the straight kinship tie" (p. 225). Gulliver recorded how some people were much better at creating these networks

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[5]The concept also appears centrally in Yoruba Ifa Divination Verses. Number 131-1 tells the story of Ajaolele who "had become an important person" because he had "become someone with a following" (Bascom, 1969, pp. 369-371).

[6]This model of African society is at the root of concepts such as "patrimonialism" and "prebendalism" heavily used by political scientists to describe post-colonial African states, for example Turner and Young (1985) and Bratton and van de Walle (1997).

than others. One was a man called Kabaya who "began to gain a reputation for influence and leadership, and then be acknowledged as a "big man"" (p. 103). Kabaya's particular skill was "his ability to smooth out disputes arising from conflicts in the timetabling of agricultural work-parties" (p. 103). The endogenous and "fictive" elements of networks are common features of the literature (Berry, 1993, for an overview). For example Glazier (1985), studying the Mbeere in Kenya, noted how "genealogically unconnected [clan] segments developed into kin-based corporations whose major *raison d'etre* is the control of land" (p. 181, 183) and to establish rights to land descent is not sufficient, or even necessary, but "contributions of money and labor are essential" (p. 183). In Mbeere society Glazier even showed that the rate at which people "advanced through the age grades depended in their investment in seniority" (1985, p. 90).[7]

So social structures shape networks and the types of links that form, but do not determine them in a rigid way. The same seems to be true of the other important set of issues surrounding status (see Smith, 1966, and Southall, 1970, for overviews). Here too, a key feature seems to be the fluidity with which one could change one's social position. For example, historically, slavery in Africa was radically different from chattel slavery in the Americas. Slaves were quickly absorbed into kinship systems and became part of one's "people." Tuden and Plotnicov discuss how amongst the Ila "slaves were introduced ... as types of kinsmen" and "The bondage period itself was temporary and the inferior position transitory" (1970, p. 13) and they go on to conclude "the Ila represent the general conditions of slavery in Africa" (p. 13). As Klein put it "The acquisition of slaves ... was one way either big men or descent groups increased their numbers and thus, their power" (2009, p. 172). Therefore slaves fitted into the "wealth in people" model. Within this there was a great deal of flexibility and in many contexts, if they had ability, they could get to the top (Jones, 1963, for some famous examples in southern Nigeria like Jaja who became King of Opobo). Lovejoy (2000, p. 187) notes in this context "Rank was acquired, and slavery was not a serious obstacle to improving one's status." Tuden and Plotnikov discuss the "rapid mobility within traditional African slavery" (p. 23).[8]

Outside the institution of slavery there certainly were more rigid systems of caste stratification that appeared in parts of Africa, notably the Sahel (Tamari, 1991, Conrad and Frank, 1995) and the Great Lakes region, particularly Rwanda (Maquet, 1961) and surrounding polities like Ankole with similar institutions (Doornbos, 1978). Ethiopian "feudalism" also diverged

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[7]See also the essays in Mitchell (1969).

[8]Smith (1959) documented that slaves were found at all socio-economic levels in Hausa society and could hold important offices in the state and thus wield power over free people.

from the general pattern (Crummey, 1980). But quantitatively these do not seem to be large relative to other parts of the world. The Rwandan distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was only institutionalized in the 19th century (Vansina, 2004) and the social innovations here seem to be rather anomalous (right down to the hereditary nature of the military). Tuden and Plotnicov (1970) conclude their overview of systems of stratification in Africa societies by making a similar observation "In most, mobility is both great and rapid, but there are also distinct exceptions, such as ... Rwanda" (p. 7). Fallers (1973) emphasized the achievement basis of society in Buganda, an interesting case since it was one of the most centralized states of the pre-colonial period.

The thrust of this literature therefore is that while social structure and status may influence ones' options, they interact with networks which are flexible and endogenous to peoples efforts— hence the emphasis on "big men." Networks may "tax" people and redistribute,[9] but they also provide opportunities and people invest in them (Berry, 1989, Parkin, 1972). In our view this model of fluid and responsive networks is the theoretical basis to expect African society to be achievement based today.

These mechanisms applied to women as well as men. Women were deeply involved in economic activities, particularly agriculture (Boserup, 2007, Chapter 1) and this spread into trade. In West Africa, for example, market trade was dominated by women (Boserup, 2007, Chapter 5, Achebe, 2020, Chapter 3).[10] Women were valuable members of networks and were just as capable as building them as men.

The achieved nature of status in Africa was likely accentuated by the history of migration and the occupation of the territory. As Kopytoff (1987) put it, in many ways Africa is a "frontier society." The nature of the frontier society is evident in the dominance in oral histories of the role of outsiders in the founding of polities, for example Shambaa (Feierman, 1974) and Ufipa (Willis, 1981) in Tanzania, or Mamprusi, Dagomba and Gonja in Ghana (Rattray, 1932) and in all the states of that formed in the Congolese Savanna (see Vansina, 1966, on the Luba and Lunda).

These frontier movements, like the Bantu or the Mande expansions, created considerable opportunities for the formation of new networks and upward mobility. There seem to have been three ways in which the frontier aspect strengthened the networked basis of society. First, to settle new areas one needed people. Thus wealth in people became very important, otherwise

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[9]This topic is the focus of a large literature, e.g., Jakiela and Ozier (2016).

[10]Clark's work (1994, 2010) on market women in Ghana is particular testament to their abilities to take advantage of opportunities and the potential for social mobility.

it is hard to convince people to move. Second, most areas were already settled by someone. Domination and occupation was not a sustainable mode of expansion, but instead far more consensual forms of incorporation took place. Third, and related to the second, new rulers usually incorporated the successful aspects of previous societies to gain skills and legitimacy. [11].

The more consensual nature of these expansions is illustrated by the evidence that, because people were wealth, outsiders, or "strangers" were welcomed. Miers and Kopytoff (1977, p. 14) argue

> African societies were receptive to all opportunities for bringing outsiders into their midst as dependents and retainers. This readiness and willingness to absorb people is a fact.[12]

These attitudes are again heavily represented in proverbs. A Yoruba one states: "The visitor's host is the visitor's father" (Owomoyela, 2005, p. 339). Colson (1970, p. 41) notes based on Zambian materials that "Innumerable Tongan proverbs play upon the desirability of being visited by strangers and the good treatment that should be extended to the stranger/guest". Southall described a process in Uganda with the emergence of the Alur state, also the construction of outsiders, which is likely representative of the Bantu expansion more generally: "Although in each initial settlement situation the proliferating segments of the chiefly lineages were a layer of higher rank as it were over the populations among whom they settled, this situation was not perpetuated in caste terms, but by limited intermarriage and acculturation moved towards a more homogeneous society in which there were no absolute discontinuities of rank" (Southall, 1956, p. 54).[13] Southall documents how the Alur were invited to form a state by a number of stateless societies. This was a very different process from the settlement of Indian by Aryan groups who incorporated indigenous peoples at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. In Fourshey, Gonzales and Saidi's (2018) account, the African pattern went along with the emergence of norms of hospitality and reciprocity.

This merging of peoples is clear from well documented ethnographic work. Schapera (1952, p. 65) for instance noted that in the Ngwato reserve of Botswana, a mere 20% of people were Ngwato. The rest were strangers who had been integrated into the polity (see Wilson (1979)

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[11]Examples include the existing hunter-gatherers in the rain forest, or local ritualists who might be incorporated into the new kingdom (for example on Idwji island in Lake Kivu (see Newbury, 1992)).

[12]Wilson (1979) states "Strangers were welcome; they added to the dignity and power of a chief" (p. 55) while Colson observes "No matter how different the system is from which the foreigner stems, he can be absorbed" (1970, p. 43).

[13]See Fourshey, Gonzales and Saidi (2018) on the broad applicability of this model, see also the essays in Shack and Skinner (1979).

for other similar examples). In the Tswana case political institutions facilitated this integration while in other cases strangers started new clans. Often they were merged into the kinship system even when "no kinship is known to exist" (Colson, 1970, p. 42). In the Tonga case Colson studied this was done by the "placing of a person within the clan system" (p. 42).

It might seem surprising that a network based society would have survived the spread of markets, commercialization and "modernization", but the evidence is overwhelming that it has and that networks have flexibly re-formed and spread to cope with change and new challenges. Berry (1993) concludes "Over the course of the twentieth century, the growth of markets in right to land, labor and capital goods did not diminish the importance of social relationships for farmers' access to productive resources" which have "remained clearly linked to membership in descent groups, communities and patron-client networks" (p. 159) and to "multiply their options in a rapidly changing world, Africans have created new networks as well as multiplied their membership in existing ones" (p. 165).

Historical African polities were small scale

The networked nature of African society is connected to perhaps the salient political fact of historical African polities: they were small scale.[14] Southall (1970) notes that "before they were cut short by the nineteenth century onslaught of the Western imperial powers, the indigenous societies and autonomous polities of Africa had to be counted in the thousands" (p. 231). This political fact, often gets lost in the contemporary discussion of "ethnic groups." The Yoruba or Mende, for example, might be a linguistic or cultural group, but they were never unified politically and in the pre-colonial period were organized into independent states. This fragmentation is even more evident amongst less centralized societies like the Igbo or Kikuyu. Talbot (1926) for example, divided Igboland into thirty "sub-tribes" and twice that number of clans (pp. 39-41) but one might more appropriately take a "village group" as the fundamental polity of which there were about 200 (Forde and Jones, 1950).

A quantitative sense of the extent to which Africans were living historically in small scale societies can be gained by combining the classification of political institutions according to "levels of jurisdictional hierarchy" in Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1967) with estimates of historical population sizes. Murdock coded a variable which ran from 1, meaning "No levels (no political authority beyond community)", 2 ("petty chiefdoms"), 3 ("larger chiefdoms"), to 4 "Three levels (e.g., states)" and finally 5 "Four levels (e.g., large states)". Using the estimates of population in Africa in 1880 from the HYDE (Historical Database of the Global Environment)

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[14]Gluckman (1966) relates this fact to many different aspects of African society.

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project we can calculate the proportion of Africans that lived in states in 1880. We present these findings in Table 1. If one takes as states ethnic groups in the Murdock dataset that are coded as having 4 or 5 levels of jurisdictional hierarchy then only 30% of Africans were living in polities which had a state in 1880. If one takes the more restrictive definition of large state, then the proportion is only 4.4%. Either way, a large majority of Africans were not living in states in the pre-colonial period.

There are many mechanisms that can account for this small scale,[15] but one is likely the networked nature of society. Political power based on personal connections, similar to the big man notions we have mentioned, based on accumulating followers and "wealth in people," is intrinsically difficult to scale up. Moreover, it cannot be managed at a large scale and inhibits the concentration and institutionalization of power. As a Mende proverb from Sierra Leone puts it

when a big tree falls, the birds in it scatter (quoted in Little, 1954, p. 113)

Personalized power is intrinsically hard to pass on and when someone who possesses it dies (the "big tree falls") their people dissipate and cannot be passed on ("the birds ... scatter").

This is not the only reason for small political scale. Perhaps the most influential argument is that of Vansina (1990) who suggests that

Africans grappled in an original way with the question of how to maintain local autonomy paramount, even while enlarging the scale of society (p. 101).

In his theory of Central African political development people created institutions in order to "safeguard the internal autonomy of each community" (p. 119) and though familiar pressures such as population growth, or the need to provide public goods, did lead to the "birth of some chiefdoms, even kingdoms" it mostly "led to the birth of new forms of association to safeguard the autonomy of the basic community in a time of expansion" (p. 119). In Vansina's account, the type of lineages of a people like the Tiv, which we discuss shortly, or the societies of the Igbo, both arose as "a defensive reflex for the autonomy of small groups against the growing centralization and at the same time a mechanism to defend the advantageous positions gained ... within such a structure" (p. 154). In other words, because Africans were concerned that state institutions would be abused at the expense of local communities they devised political

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[15]Political scientists like Herbst (2000) have focused on structural features of Africa, such as low population density and the lack of inter-state warfare, but there is little empirical evidence supporting these claims, e.g., Osafo-Kwaako and Robinson (2013). Goody (1971) instead emphasized how state formation was inhibited by the presence of the tse-tse fly which made it impossible to use cavalry in much of Africa—Alsan (2015) for evidence.

institutions that would stop this. The desire to "safeguard ... autonomy" is everywhere evident in the ethnographic literature. Gulliver, while he observed the presence of Big Men also noted that "they were not so ambitious that they sought to acquire authority" since that would "defeat his own ends" given that "His neighbours would have reacted strongly against the suspicion of authoritarianism, or pretension to it" (1971, pp. 244-245).

One of the best documented accounts of this desire to "safeguard ... autonomy" is Bohannan's studies of the Tiv of Nigeria. Bohannan tried to identify the politics which had kept them "stateless" prior to the colonial period. He showed empirically, through studying a cult called Nyambua, that this was because

> Men who had acquired too much power ... were whittled down by means of witchcraft accusations ... Nyambua was one of a regular series of movements to which Tiv political action, with its distrust of power, gives rise to so that the greater political institutions - the one based on the lineage system and a principle of egalitarianism - can be preserved (1958, p. 11)

In Bohannan's argument, larger political scale could not emerge in Tiv society because the type of hierarchy it would have involved was not trusted. It was anticipated that authority would be abused and the best solution for this was to avoid putting anyone into positions of authority, as with the Ndendeuli. The form that this whittling down took was to accuse people of committing witchcraft and being a man of "tsav," which signified both legitimate charisma, but also illicitly acquired power. As Bohannan put it "The most powerful men, no matter how much they are respected or liked, are never fully trusted. They are men of tsav - and who knows?" (Bohannan, 1958, p. 3)

Another well studied case in Nigeria is Igboland. In their seminal studies Meek (1937), Green (1947) and Afigbo (1981) pointed out how political power was distributed in many institutions in Igbo society in such a way as to maintain the autonomy of the constituent groups and stop more centralized political institutions emerging. Villages themselves tended to be divided into two halves (Meek (1937, p. 88-89) calls them "kindreds" and that word is commonly used today in Igboland) which were in "balanced opposition" to each other. In the part of Igboland studied by Margaret Green (see also Jones, 1949), the Abaja village group, they were called Ama and Owerri

> The working village affairs was considerably bound up with the system of checks and balances and of institutionalized rivalry introduced by this dualism (Green, 1947, p.

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Like that of the Tiv, the desire to preserve their autonomy is widely noticed about Igbo society.[16] James Africanus Horton, whose father was an Igbo, noted about the Igbo in 1868 that

> They would not, as a rule, allow anyone to act the superior over them; nor sway their conscience by coercion, to the performance of any act, whether good or bad, when they have not the inclination to do so ... in fact everyone likes to be his own master (2011, p. 182).

The Igbo case is particularly interesting because it foregrounds the role of women in preserving autonomy. As Achebe (2020) puts it "Authority was divided between men and women in a dual-sex political system in which each sex managed and controlled its own affairs. The Igbo had two arms of government, male and female" (p. 96). The power of women disciplined male authorities (van Allen, 1972) and was also central in opposing colonial rule, leading to the Aba Women's War of 1929 which forced the British to dismantle the hated and ineffective Warrant chief system (Achebe, 2005). In fact that study of Green (1947) (and Leith-Ross, 1939) was motivated by a desire on the part of British colonial authorities to understand the unexpected power of Igbo women.

The role of women is central to understanding the nature of African polities. This is obviously so when they assumed political office, as in Mendeland (Day, 2012) in Sierra Leone, amongst the Mamprusi of Ghana (Brown, 1975) or the Lovedu of South Africa (Krige and Krige, 1947). But it is more subtly and broadly true when they assumed complementary political offices, what Achebe calls a system of "joint sovereignty" (p. 71). Emblematic examples of this are the Queen Mothers of Swaziland or Asante (Aidoo, 1982, Stoeltje, 1997) or the Mammy Queens of Temneland in Sierra Leone (see Achebe, 2020, Chapter 2 for many other examples).

Vansina did not advance an explanation for why Africans were so concerned to "safeguard ... autonomy" but the literature on African studies suggests several ideas. One, due to Horton (1993), is that the nature of African religious beliefs were very synergetic with small scale society. Horton points out that

> In many ... traditional African belief systems, ideas about the spirits and actions based on such ideas are far more richly developed than ideas about the supreme being and actions based on them. In these cases, the idea of God seems more the

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[16]Henderson (1972) is a famous study.

pointer to a potential theory than the core of a seriously operative one. This perhaps is because social life in the communities involved is so parochial that their members seldom have to place events in the wider context that the idea of the supreme being purports to deal with (p. 211).

Horton's argument is that religious beliefs kept society local and small scale, or as he puts it "parochial."

Our discussion of the Tiv and Igbo does not exhaust the types of institutions that were used to sustain autonomy. Elsewhere in Africa the same types of forces were dealt with using very different types of social organizations and institutions than they were in Southern Nigeria. In East Africa, for example, small scale political society is guaranteed through the organization of society around age sets and age grades. In a society like the Maasai, for instance, power was allocated according to age. Power was held by the most senior elders, but they inevitably passed away and were replaced by a new age set.

Age Class systems are unique, for not only do they regulate the attainment of individual maturity and autonomy, but they regulate the distribution and rotation of all forms of power (Bernardi, 1985, p. 9).

Bernardi says of the Maasai that "their age class system shows how the distributive nature of the system is assured against possible individual attempts at personal power" (p. 57). Elsewhere he notes that these systems made sure that "no clan and no class, or no party, [can] stay in the limelight too long" (p. 107) and that "it is likely that the succession of classes to power served as a check impeding the formation of a centralized state" (p. 107). Thus the Maasai achieved what the Tiv and Igbo did, but using very different mechanisms.

The personalized nature of power was not only difficult to scale up, but when it was, it tended to create unstable states. State failure is not novel to post-colonial Africa, there was rather a lot of it in pre-colonial Africa (Jones (1983) for a brilliant case study in 19th century Sierra Leone). Gluckman (1965) pointed out that very few pre-colonial states in Africa had clear and institutionalized lines of succession. Usually large numbers of people were eligible to succeed to high office and he pointed out that this led to constant civil wars. The fundamental reason, in his account, for this absence of institutionalization was that it provided a mechanism to stop fission and tie valuable people to the state—it created an expectation that any sub-group could aspire to hold power at the center.

This account of African political development and philosophy illustrates the depth of the

skepticism towards authority in the continent, indeed it is central to its political history.[17] It is also intimately related to the networked nature of African society.

Effects of colonialism on African society

Whatever the nature of social, economic, and political institutions in the late nineteenth century, colonialism and the independence period clearly had large effects. However, as we outlined above, research suggests that some key aspects of African society, like it's networked nature, have been highly persistent. In terms of achieved status colonialism clearly unleashed many mechanisms. On the one hand, the African frontier was decisively closed. Models of indirect rule and colonial governance may have distorted traditional mechanisms of accountability and solidified elites (Mamdani, 1996). In settler colonies Africans were expropriated en masse, losing their land and being forced into wage labor on European farms or in mines. Even before the permanent arrival of Europeans, the Atlantic slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth century intensified and transformed slavery and institutions (Lovejoy, 2000). On the other hand, in non-settler colonies, greater market integration allowed for considerable upward mobility in the production of export crops, for example in Nigeria (Berry, 1975, Hogendorn, 1978), the Côte d'Ivoire (Bassett, 2001), and Ghana (Hill, 1963, Austin, 2008). The spread of markets, particularly the emergence of a labor market, also created new options for young men who could escape gerontocratic authority (Peel, 1983, Berry, 1985). In addition, to the extent that slavery retarded mobility, it was abolished. New types of status appeared, though these often had pejorative connotations, like "verandah boy" in Ghana, or *évolué* in the Congo, these were clear instances of social mobility, even if only for a few (these and many other mechanisms are discussed in Southall, 1961, Cohen and Middleton, 1970, see also Berry, 1989).[18]

These mechanisms impacted both men and women, though often in different ways. Colonial regimes changed laws, for example with respect to marriage or property rights that negatively influenced women (see Berger, 2016 Chapter 1, and Robertson, 1984, Allman and Tashjian, 2000, for detailed studies). But similarly in places like West Africa women were very well positioned to take advantage of economic opportunities, for example in cocoa and export agriculture.

Relevant here is the empirical literature which studied the emerging post-colonial elite as well as the pre-colonial one. The thrust of this work tends to support the studies of Fallers which

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[17]Even apparently heroic state-builders like King Shyaam of the Kuba are morally ambiguous. Shyaam created the Kuba state by cheating in a contest where contenders for power had to throw iron axes into Lake Iyool with the winner being the person whose axe floated. Shyaam made a fake axe out of wood to ensure victory (Vansina, 1978, pp. 48-49).

[18]See Meier zu Selhausen, van Leeuwen and Weisdorf (2018) for evidence that the net effect was positive in Uganda.

emphasized the extent of social mobility into this elite (see for instance, Smythe and Smythe, 1960, Clignet and Foster, 1964, Lloyd, 1966, and Vincent, 1968). Nugent (1996) makes a direct connection between pre-colonial notions of wealth and social mobility and the post-colonial political elite, making use of the big man metaphor (see also Barber, 1991).

Ultimately it is an empirical question what the net effect of all these mechanisms has been on African society and to what extent the types of mechanisms we identified which facilitated social mobility, for example, remain operational today. Tuden and Plotnikov's early synthesis noted about the post-colonial elite that, "the picture appears to show ancestral backgrounds that are highly heterogeneous" and that "The development of a modern elite ... in Africa has taken place under conditions ... of rapid upward mobility" (1970, pp. 21, 23-24). [19]

We now move to examine the data. The main purpose of this section was to present a simple model of African society which we believe is consistent with our three latent assets: an achievement based society; skepticism of authority; and cosmopolitanness.

3   A Continent of Achieved Status

Our first latent asset is immediate in the above framework. The fluidity and endogeneity of networks and attitudes of achieved status, even amongst those of lower "status," implicit in the idea of big men (and big women) suggest a high degree of social mobility on average, though clearly there will be considerable heterogeneity between countries and regions. Vansina's (1990) model of the historical evolution of society in Central Africa begins with communities led by "big men" who "achieved rather than inherited their status" (p. 73). He characterizes what he calls the "ancestral social tradition" as having an "emphasis on leadership by achievement" (p. 55). Though much has changed since the period for which Vansina developed this model, our analysis above suggested that many of the mechanisms he and other scholars identified may still be relevant. Has this ancestral tradition survived the eras of colonialism and the economic decline of the post-independence period?

The achievement basis of African society today is easy to illustrate empirically. Panel A of Figure 1 uses data from the Afrobarometer which collects information on social mobility. People are asked to place their parents on an 0-10 income scale and then place themselves on the same scale. In the figure we use the size of the sphere to capture a larger number of datapoints - the larger the sphere, the more people report that particular pair of values. In a society with little social mobility, one would expect the observations to be clustered onto the 45 degree line. For

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example, in the analogous question for Latin America in the Latinobarometro shown in Panel B, 52.3% of respondents view their economic score as the same as their parents. One sees that the largest spheres, the preponderance of the data, are on the 45 degree line. In Africa, this figure is only 20.5% - the data is not at all concentrated on the 45 degree line suggesting a very high degree of social mobility. Most African's do not report that their economic outcomes is similar to that of their parents.

How does this compare to other parts of the world? Africa is certainly more socially mobile than Latin America, but what about Asia, or the United States? Remarkably, comparing the Afrobarometer to comparable data, Africans report more mobility than anywhere else in the world. In Asia 47.96% of respondents view their economic score as the same as their parents (Panel C). In the U.S. 40% of respondents view their economic score as the same as their parents (the number is 38% in Europe).[20]

But this is perceptions of mobility which possibly is too subjective. Perhaps people systematically miss-perceive or miss-represent their social mobility and this problem could be exacerbated in Africa where levels of education tend to be lower than elsewhere in the world. Empirical evidence on realized intergenerational mobility in Africa is mixed. The most comprehensive study comparing income and educational mobility across the world finds average mobility lowest in Africa though with some signs of recent improvement (World Bank, 2018). However, intergenerational mobility in Africa varies starkly by country (Beegle et al., 2016). Recent work by Alesina et al. calculate intergenerational mobility in 27 African countries using census data (2021). They find high levels of variation in mobility between and within countries, with some African countries (e.g., South Africa and Botswana) exhibiting levels of educational mobility as high as developed countries. Additionally, social mobility varies by ethnicity and religion (Alesina et al., 2020). These recent studies add much needed breadth to the literature on mobility in developing countries, which was previously limited to select cases due to data availability (for a review see Iversen et al., 2019). Previous studies have found high levels of mobility in some African settings such as Senegal (Lambert and van de Walle, 2014), Ghana and Uganda (Bossuroy and Cogneau, 2013), and Ethiopia (Hertz et al., 2007) and low levels of mobility in other contexts such as Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and in Madagascar (Bossuroy and Cogneau, 2013).

To investigate this Figure 2 shows data on actual social mobility in education using data from the World Bank's intergenerational mobility database. For each country with available data, the World Bank calculated the average correlation between the educational outcomes

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[20]These numbers come from the ISSP's Social Inequality Survey from 2009.

of parents and their children.[21] A correlation of 1 would imply complete immobility while a correlation of 0 would be complete mobility (parental education has no predictive power for the subject's education). Here we plot the distribution of these country-level values of educational persistence by region. According to this measure, as Panel A shows, Africa is less socially mobile than high income countries, or East Asia, or Europe and Central Asia. One sees this in the figure because the mass of the distribution for Africa is to the right of the other distributions - concentrated more towards higher correlations. Yet Panel B shows that observed mobility in Africa is higher than South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America. Interestingly, a number of African countries, such as Botswana, Kenya, Mauritania and Cape Verde, have rates of educational mobility as high as high income countries.

If African societies are achievement based, then contrary to all the stereotypes, the way to get ahead is not via connections, but hard work. In fact, this is what the data suggests people believe. The World Value Survey (henceforth WVS) asks respondents to choose between "In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life" and "Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections." We plot the distribution of answers by continent (1=hard work brings a better life; 10=it's more luck and connections) in Figure 3. The values in between 1 and 10 are meant to allow the respondents to report intermediate values. Fully 35% of Africans report a value of 1, the most definitive emphasis on the importance of hard work. In Europe, less than 20% of people give this answer while even in the United States and Asia it is lower than Africa.

None of these findings would be surprising from the perspective of the ethnographic or sociological literature we discussed in the previous section. Lloyd (1974) sums up his investigation of Yoruba social mobility by stating that "he sees his own attainment of an enhanced status lying in his own efforts" (p. 219). Though this literature also suggests a great deal of variation, even within Nigeria (e.g., Le Vine, 1966) our data suggests that on average the situation is one of high rates of mobility.

How can this evidence be reconciled with the overwhelming evidence and logic that in a networked based society connections are important? Our answer is that both things can be true because networks are endogenous and if you work hard you can create more advantageous networks.

Though there is certainly evidence for the persistence of identities and the social consequences

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[21]The database offers different options to calculate this correlation. We use the *average* education of the parents (instead of the max or only the father's or mother's) and the educational outcome of *all* their children (instead of just the sons' or daughters' outcome).

of slavery in particular contexts (e.g., Bellagamba, Greene and Klein eds., 2012) the data we present shows that slavery in Africa does not seem to have had the negative legacy for social mobility as it seems to have had in the United States or elsewhere in the Americas. Tuden and Plotnikov perhaps identify the reason when they state "Although slavery in Africa was widespread, it was an ephemeral and transitory status. Is has had no major influence on the systems of stratification that have since emerged" (p. 15). They argue that this was because slavery in Africa "lacked a strong ideology of status inferiority" and "the abolition of slavery ... was accompanied by only minor shifts in the structuring of society" (p. 15).

The distinctiveness of patterns of social mobility in Africa becomes even more striking when we look at the data in the Afrobarometer about people's expectations about the incomes of their children. We plot this data in Figure 4 Panel A. On the horizontal axis we plot the parents own reported income, the same as we used in Panel A of Figure 1 while on the vertical axis we plot the respondents' reported expectation of their children's income on the same scale. In Panel A the mass of the data are above the 45 degree line showing that a vast majority (in fact 81%) of Africans anticipate that their children will have higher incomes than they will. Panel B shows that this is not true in Latin America while Panel C shows that while Asians are more optimistic, they are far less so than Africans.

It is worth emphasizing here something we mentioned in the introduction. Though this survey evidence is about perceptions and expectations the literature finds that these actually influence behavior and policy preferences.

How will the children of Africans enjoy such economic mobility? Via hard work is part of the answer again. The World Value Survey also asks people about what values they would like their children to have from a list of: Independence; Hard work; Feeling of responsibility; Imagination; Tolerance and respect for other people; Thrift, saving money and things; Determination, perseverance; Religious faith; Unselfishness; Obedience; Self-expression. People can mark any five of these they think are important. Figure 5 plots the cross-regional data on the proportion of people who mark "hard work." Africa leads the world in the proportion of people who mark hard work as a value that they think is important in their children.

The evidence is overwhelming that Africans experience high rates of social mobility and, perhaps even more interesting, anticipate very high rates of social mobility. This may come as a surprise for many given the long periods of economic stagnation in post-independence Africa and the perception that most growth has been narrowly concentrated and driven by commodity exports. What it shows is that despite the many economic challenges the average

African undoubtedly faces they are extremely creative and entrepreneurial at finding niches and opportunities in whatever context they find themselves, even if in the rural or informal sectors, or via migration to urban areas or different countries. The fact that this mobility is evident everywhere is shown by our break-down of the mobility data from the Afrobarometer between urban and rural which we present as Figure A1. One sees the same patterns as Figure 1 and Figure 4 in both urban and rural areas. While perhaps these beliefs about children are hard to square with observed mobility, the fact that Africans are so optimistic about their children's future is actually an important fact because it undoubtedly influences behavior.

Even more important, A2 shows that, in line with our theoretical expectations, our findings so far apply to women as well as men. Reported social mobility and expected future mobility amongst women in the Afrobarometer is very similar to that of men.[22]

4   Skepticism of Authority

Our second latent asset we capture with the notion of "skepticism of authority." Any society faces severe principal agent problems in building political institutions. Hierarchy must be constructed and controlled and often, for example with respect to taxation, the quid is long separated from the pro quo. We argue that there are interesting cultural differences in the expectations that people bring to this relationship. The western tradition, at least since the time of Locke has been deeply skeptical of the use of authority. After arguing that government was desirable relative to the state of nature which lacked third party dispute resolution, Locke immediately, and skeptically, noted

> remember that absolute monarchs are but men; and if government is to be the remedy of those evils, which necessarily follow from men's being judges in their own cases, and the state of nature is not to be endured; I desire to know what kind of government that is, and how much better it is than the state of nature. (Locke 2003, p. 105)

This skepticism was a defining feature of the process that led to the creation and implementation of the U.S. Constitution. In Federalist 51 Madison wrote

> If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing

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[22]Though we do not report figures, it is also true that women have very similar attitudes towards hard work and the inter-regional pattern of realized educational mobility is similar, though African women are actually more mobile then men when compared to Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia. Women also have similar opinions to men about the importance of various qualities for their children.

a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. (Madison, Hamilton and Jay, 1987, p. 94).

The Federalists like Madison were skeptical about the incentives of those in control of a central state, and the anti-Federalists, who forced the Bill of Rights to be adopted, were skeptical that the solutions the Federalists had developed were sufficient to stop the abuse of power.[23]

This attitude of skepticism is very different from attitudes towards authority common in Chinese or eastern political theory. Here rule is regarded as far more virtuous and subject to perfection. Confucius put it in the following way: "Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about governing ... Confucius responded, "In your governing ... One who rules through the power of Virtue is analogous to the Pole Star: it simply remains in its place and receives the homage of the myriad lesser stars" (Confucius, 2003, p. 8). The literature on the political economy of western countries sees this skepticism as a distinct advantage in creating a political equilibrium where the state works in the interest of society. Our point here is that the African attitudes to authority are much closer to western attitudes than eastern ones.

We can illustrate this skepticism, so evident in the ethnographic literature we discussed above, using cross-national survey data. Figure 6 plots data from both the Afrobarometer, Panel A and the Asiabarometer, Panel B, on peoples' attitudes towards one-man rule. Respondents are asked whether they would approve or disapprove if "Elections and Parliament/National Assembly are abolished so that the President/Prime Minister can decide everything." Almost 60% of Africans strongly disapprove of such one-man rule. In Asia this is just over 30%, about half. These numbers are systematically reflected in related questions in the WVS which can be seen in the Appendix Figure A3.

The Afrobarometer allows us to delve more deeply into this issue and relate it to some of the arguments we made above about the nature of African society and political development. The ethnographic evidence from Nigeria discussed previously suggests that people like the Tiv or Igbo, who prior to colonialism lived in societies without a centralized state, ought to be even more skeptical about one-man rule than say the Hausa or Fulani who did live in states. Figure 7 therefore breaks down the responses to the same question amongst these four Nigerian ethnic groups where we also add the Ibibio, another previously stateless society, and the Yoruba an intermediate case who lived in city states but with quite elaborate mechanisms of accountability compared to the Fulani or Hausa. The data confirm the ethnography: amongst Nigerians the

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[23]There is a vast literature on this topic but Holton (2008) is a representative recent historical account which is consistent with our emphasis. See also the synthesis in Acemoglu and Robinson (2019).

Tiv and Igbo are far more likely to respond that they strongly disagree with one-man rule. Both Hausa and Fulani people are about 20 percentage points less likely to choose this answer. The Yoruba and Ibibio are intermediate but are generally significantly more likely to disapprove of such rule compared to the Hausa or Fulani. In the Appendix Figure A4 we show a very similar pattern of answers to the question about whether presidents should not be term limited. Ibibio, Igbo, and Tiv are far more likely to think that this is a bad idea.

Figure 8 extends this argument to the continent. We again take the variable in Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas which codes an ethnic groups' political institutions according to "levels of jurisdictional hierarchy" we used earlier. Groups like the Ibibio, Igbo, and Tiv score 2, while the Hausa and Fulani score 4. Splitting the sample into ethnic groups that score 1-3 and those that score 4-5 ("states") and merging the data with answers to the Afrobarometer by ethnicity we see that those peoples from societies without states are distinctly more strongly disproving of one-man rule.

So far we have stressed that this skepticism of one-man rule is far more similar to western political thought than eastern traditions. But if this is the case why is it that Africa has suffered so much from single-party and one-man rule since independence? We would argue that this is not because Africans are happy with this situation, but because they have not been able to stop it. As we delve into more in the next section, the type of mechanisms we have identified here resulted in the preponderance of African polities remaining small historically. From a continental perspective, the experience of the Ibibio, Igbo, and Tiv is more representative than that of the Fulani and Hausa. This created an enormous problem at independence of aggregating all of the diverse and often contradictory institutions into a post-colonial social contract. The result, often aided by departing colonial powers, was a vacuum at the center which allowed for the rise of dictators and autocrats.

Yet the type of polities we have been discussing do create some optimism about the potential for building such contracts in the future. Schapera (1938) noted of the Tswana, "single persons or families may similarly change their tribal affiliation ... membership of a tribe is defined not so much by birth as of allegiance to the Chief" (p. 5). African polities were defined politically, not ethnically, and the flexible mechanisms that were and are available for incorporating people can be the basis for more effective social contracts.

Despite the connection to Locke and Madison, one could argue that the skeptical attitude of Africans to authority now makes it difficult to build more effective states. Africans are rightly nervous about what they might do. We do not underestimate the difficulty of this problem

but Figure 9 present some evidence which shows that this skepticism also has a participatory aspect which does bode well for institution building. We again use data from the Afrobarometer (pooled rounds IV to VII) at the ethnicity level in Nigeria. Here one sees that Ibibio, Igbo and Tiv people are more likely to say that they attended community meetings. The political cultures of these societies were not only skeptical of authority, but they went along with very dense and broad political participation, likely an asset in building inclusive and effective state institutions.

5 Cosmopolitanness

Skepticism of authority is one of the reasons African society has historically been organized in small scale polities. This small scale organization has led to an impressive degree of "cosmopolitanness" in African societies. These societies featured different institutions, different social structures and customs, and different languages. Africans continually moved, migrated, and traded, frequently coming into contact with each other. They had to learn to negotiate higher levels of difference and diversity than anyone else in the world. Though Medieval Europe might have had hundreds on polities, they had a lingua franca in Latin and religion in common. Africans have neither, though some languages like Swahili, Lingala, and various types of Creoles (Krios) emerged to facilitate trade and commerce.

As a result, Africans have had to learn to navigate these differences. This has led to a high degree in flexibility and tolerance. We start by looking at language. It quickly becomes apparent that Africa is the most multi-lingual part of the world. Panel A of Figure 10 shows the percentage of Afrobarometer respondents who speak 1, 2, 3, and 4 or more languages. Panel B shows the results for the Eurobarometer. The percentage of the population in Europe who speak only one language is just less than 50%. In Africa this fraction is around 25%. For comparison, according to the American Community Survey in the United States over 75% of the population speak only one language (English).

Many arguments have been advanced in favor of the benefits of multilingualism. Our argument is not that it is directly useful to speak Chiluba or Lingala. Rather, the fact that multilingualism is the way of life in Africa is indicative of a much broader openness and cultural nimbleness. Many mechanisms link multilingualism to better outcomes, for example cognitive development (see Diamond, 2010, and Antoniou, 2019). More relevant for us is a great deal of recent evidence in social psychology that suggests that multi-lingual people and societies have many advantages over mono-lingual people and societies (see Kinzler, 2020, for an overview of this literature). For example, evidence suggests that people are more rational and less emotional

in a second language. This facilitates more rational private behavior (Keysar, Hayakawa and An, 2012) and assessments of collective situations (Costa, Foucart, Hayakawa, Aparici, Apesteguia, Heafner and Keysar, 2014). More fundamentally, as Kinzler argues, language is the most important way that humans use to sort themselves into in-groups and out-groups. Her research has persistently found language to be more important than race (e.g., Kinzler and Dautel, 2011) and she argues that "Raising children in an environment that values multilingualism can expand their horizons ... and may create a world in which mutual understanding allows people to unite across borders ... Even just being exposed to a second language can make us better problem solvers and better at social understanding" and maybe even be "part of the key to stopping bias—linguistic or otherwise—in its tracks" (Kinzler, 2020, p. 152,161). Indeed, a study by Fan, Liberman, Keysar and Kinzler (2015) illustrates that bi-lingual children are better able to see things from another child's perspective. It is important to emphasize these findings are not about specific languages, they are about multilingualism in general.

Many Western societies, especially in the era of nation states, have an obsession with monolingualism which perhaps dates all the way back to the Bible's Book of Genesis. There it relates that after surviving the flood, mankind still all speaks the same language. But they build the Tower of Babel to reach to heaven and God punishes them for their pride and decides to "confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth." Multilingualism arises as a punishment from God. It is interesting to contrast this account with that of the Bassari people of Togo and Ghana who have a myth similar to the Tower of Babel (see Campbell, 1988, p. 14). Their creator God Unumbotte "made a human being. Its name was Man. Unumbotte next made an antelope, named Antelope. Unumbotte made a snake, named Snake." Then God leaves some seeds and a tree grows that bears red fruit. Snake encourages man (and woman who has now appeared) to eat the fruit. Unumbotte returns and asks why they did this without his permission. They all say they are hungry, so

> Unumbotte then gave sorghum to Man, also yams and millet. And the people gathered in eating groups that would always eat from the same bowl, never the bowls of the other groups. It was from this that differences in language arose.[24]

Witzel (2012) comments on this passage that "It is remarkable that, differently from the Bible, this myth does not speak of primordial guilt, or of an expulsion from paradise, or of a

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[24]This myth was original transcribed by Leo Frobenius and published in 1924. He asserted that he visited the Bassari prior to any missionaries. Even earlier Frazer (1919) noted the independent existence of Tower of Babel type myths.

punishment of the snake. It merely assigns roles to the living beings" (p. 365). Multi-lingualism appears, but not as a consequence of divine retribution.

Africans are also used to dealing with high levels of religious diversity. Not only did different African societies have their own religious beliefs. Muslim raiding and trading from the North and East resulted in the spread of Islam and colonial missionaries competed for influence and introduced a variety of Christian faiths. The notoriety of groups like Boko Haram has led to the perception of Africa as being a hotbed of religious intolerance. Yet, we argue that this case, and others like them, for example in Somalia, are the exception. In fact, diversity in religious beliefs has led to high degrees of religious tolerance across the continent. Respondents in the Afrobarometer are asked "whether they would like having people from a different religion as their neighbors, dislike it, or not care." Figure 11 shows the percentage of Afrobarometer respondents who would somewhat or strongly dislike having a neighbor of a different religion. Across Africa on average 11% object and only in 4 countries is the number higher than 20%.

Openness and tolerance are not new features of African societies, but likely date back at least to the Bantu and other frontier expansions as we noted in Section 2. Migrant people were generally absorbed into existing populations peacefully, who in turn largely welcomed the newcomers. A remnant of this openness can be found in African languages. Many African languages have the same word for stranger/foreigner and guest (Fourshey, Gonzales, and Saidi, 2018). We have collected the names for stranger/foreigner and guest in the 32 most widely spoken African languages and 91 non-African languages using GoogleTranslate and dictionaries. 20 out of 31 (65%) African languages have the same words for stranger/foreigner and guest, while only 1 non-African language, Hawaiian, out of 91 has the same feature. The full tables can be found in the appendix (Tables A3-A5). [25]

There is one more way to think about the cosmopolitanness of Africans. This is via kinship terminology. In his famous 19th century research, Henry Morgan, one of the founders of anthropology, proposed a classification of the way different peoples classified their kin. For example, the standard European-American system is what is known as a descriptive kinship system and has an elaborate array of terminology for describing different kin: mother, father, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, niece, nephew, cousin etc. In contrast many African societies have what Morgan called a Hawaiian kinship system which is not descriptive, but classificatory. Here there are just four terms: mother, farther, sister, brother. A person who would be an uncle in the United

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[25]These observations only scratch the surface of the important differences African languages can make. For example Bantu languages have neither gendered nouns nor gendered pronouns (no distinction between his and hers) thus providing less of a basis for gender distinctions and discrimination, see Jakiela and Ozier (2019).

States, would be called father. Similarly, nephews and nieces would be brothers and sisters. The flexibility of this system enormously facilitates the type of fictive kinship which we discussed in the context of Gulliver's (1971) study because just as brother and sister can be extended to cousins, they can be extended to non-genetically related people. Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas provides systematic information on these kinship systems. Using historical data on population roughly around the time that the information in the Atlas pertains to (say 1900) we can estimate the proportion of Africans who used different types of kinship terminology. Table 2 shows the percentage of historical populations in Africa and the rest of the world. Interestingly, while for the rest of the world sample, 40% of people used descriptive kinship systems, only 8% of Africans do so. Rather over 20% of Africans use the Hawaiian system, relative to only 6% of people in the rest of the world. We believe the importance of Hawaiian kinship terminology in Africa is yet another asset in relating to strangers in a globalized world.

Cosmopolitanness is deeply rooted in the history of Africa and the development of African societies, kinship systems and languages. In contrast to the evolution of Europe, with its nationalistic antagonisms, wars of religion and fixation with monolingualism, Africans have found a far more consensual and fluid way of relating to each other. We argue that in the intensely globalized world that we now find ourselves in, and which is unlikely to recede, this gives Africans a significant advantage. They are the most instinctively globalized people.

6 Statistical Significance

So far our presentation of the data attempting to establish the presence of Africa's latent assets has been intuitive. We now present some slightly more formal hypotheses tests in order to justify the use of the word "significant" which we have avoided thus far. In Table A1 we conduct some simple t-tests of difference in the means of our main variables of interest between Africa and the various other parts of the world we have discussed in the text.

Africans perceive significantly more social mobility than Asians or Latin Americans and they anticipate significantly more social mobility for their children than either. They are significantly more likely to believe that hard work is more important for getting ahead than luck and connections. Politically they are also significantly more opposed to one-man rule than Asians. They are significantly more likely to speak more than one language than Europeans (and indeed, more likely than in any other part of the world), and it is significantly more likely that the word guest will be the same as the word for stranger in an African language compared to the languages of any other part of the world.

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Table A2 conducts a similar exercise using first the distinction between Tiv and Igbo versus Hausa and Fulani, and then the breakdown across Africa between people who formally lived in societies with 0-2 levels of jurisdictional hierarchy as opposed to those who lived in societies with 3-4 levels. The pattern in both rows of the table is that Africans who today are associated with formerly stateless societies are significantly more likely to strongly disapprove of one-man rule.

7   Conclusion

In this paper we have proposed a new way of thinking about African prosperity by focusing on its latent assets. We have argued that as of yet, these assets have not born fruit because, as in China, in order for this to happen, some basic institutional problems have to be solved. We do not underestimate the task of building better institutions in Africa. But it is also not clear to us that these problems are more insurmountable than the problems facing Chinese political elites in the 1970s and 1980s. Though we have pointed out some of the problems of making analogies to the Chinese experience, particularly the differences in the incidence of centralized state authority, we conclude by pointing out that in fact the analogies between Africa and China may be even closer than we have argued so far.

To see this, note that a large literature has emphasized the drawbacks of the networked nature of African society. While our emphasis has been on the endogeneity of networks and the flexible way they allow for social mobility, others have emphasized instead how the resulting 'patrimonialism' undermines the state, or the redistributive effects in networks undermines effort incentives. Though there is certainly evidence for both phenomena, the question is the net effect. In a famous passage Confucius recorded

> The Duke of She said to Confucius, "Among my people there is one we call 'Upright Gong.' When his father stole a sheep, he reported him to the authorities."
>
> Confucius replied, "Among my people, those who we consider 'upright' are different from this: fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. 'Uprightness' is to be found in this. (Confucius, 2003, p. 147)

Here Confucius is arguing that one's first loyalty is to one's family not to abstract laws. This is very similar to traditional African notions of the law, captured, for example, in the research by Bohannan (1957). This notion of morality, even stretches in Chinese to the organization of the state. A passage of one of Confucius' most famous followers Mengzi talks about how Lord

Shun was treated badly by his younger brother Xiang and yet he gave him the province of Youbi to govern. Mengzi explains the logic of this in the following way

> Benevolent people do not store up anger against their younger brothers. They simply love and treat them like kin. Treating them as kin, they desire them to have rank. Loving them, they desire them to have wealth. He gave him Youbi to administer to give him wealth and rank. If he himself was the Son of Heaven, and his younger brother was a common fellow, could this be called loving and treating him as kin? (Mengzi, 2008, p. 120).

In effect Mengzi justifies Lord Shun engaging in patronage—one desires ones kin to have rank and wealth. Here we see yet another African norm deeply embedded in the Chinese intellectual canon. Such patronage and favoring of kin is a common practice in China today and part of what is known as Guanxi—usually translated as "connections" (Gold, Guthrie and Wank eds., 2002). How China has combined Guanxi with meritocracy in their economic reversal since the 1970s appears to have a lot of lessons for Africa.

Tables

Table 1: African Population in 1880 by Judicial Centralization

Number of levels beyond local community	Number of Groups	Population 1880	Percentage of population
Missing Data	50	8,599,348	10.05%
None	114	9,075,557	10.60%
One	173	20,489,696	23.94%
Two	101	22,109,596	25.84%
Three	45	21,521,027	25.15%
Four	4	3,784,628	4.42%
All	**487**	**85,579,852**	**100%**

Notes: This table shows the African population in 1880 by historical centralization. Data on historical centralization comes from the Murdock Ethnographic Atlas which codes up the levels of jurisdictional hierarchy beyond the community level. We overlay the boundaries of these communities with 1880 population density data from HYDE to calculate the 1880 population of each ethnic group.

Table 2: Historical Population by Kinship System

Panel A: Africa

Kinship term for cousins	Number of Groups	Historical Population	Percentage of population
Missing data	187	68,731,017	32.01%
Crow	16	4,250,292	1.98%
Descriptive	21	17,548,571	8.17%
Eskimo	4	1,150,646	0.54%
Hawaiian	70	43,971,986	20.48%
Iroquois	82	44,748,023	20.84%
Omaha	30	33,908,676	15.79%
Sudanese	2	200,922	0.09%
Mixed	2	233,996	0.11%
All	**414**	**214,744,129**	**100.00%**

Panel B: Rest of the World

Kinship term for cousins	Number of Groups	Historical Population	Percentage of population
Missing Data	146	64,044,763	33.27%
Crow	42	314,339	0.16%
Descriptive	53	77,709,233	40.37%
Eskimo	97	7,854,092	4.08%
Hawaiian	268	11,926,783	6.20%
Iroquois	175	28,436,813	14.77%
Omaha	48	329,877	0.17%
Sudanese	12	1,881,941	0.98%
Mixed	10	0	0.00%
All	**851**	**192,497,841**	100.00%

Notes: This table shows the historical population of ethnic groups around the world by kinship system. Data on kinship system comes from the Murdock Ethnographic Atlas which codes up what system of kinship an ethnic group uses to describe cousins. Fenske (2013) has matched this data with population density at the time for when the Ethnographic Atlas data was documented. From this we calculate the population for each ethnic group. Panel A shows the Ethnographic Atlas sample for all African groups, and Panel B shows the rest of the world.

Figures

Figure 1: *Perceived Mobility by Region*

Panel A: Africa

Panel B: Latin America

Panel C: Asia
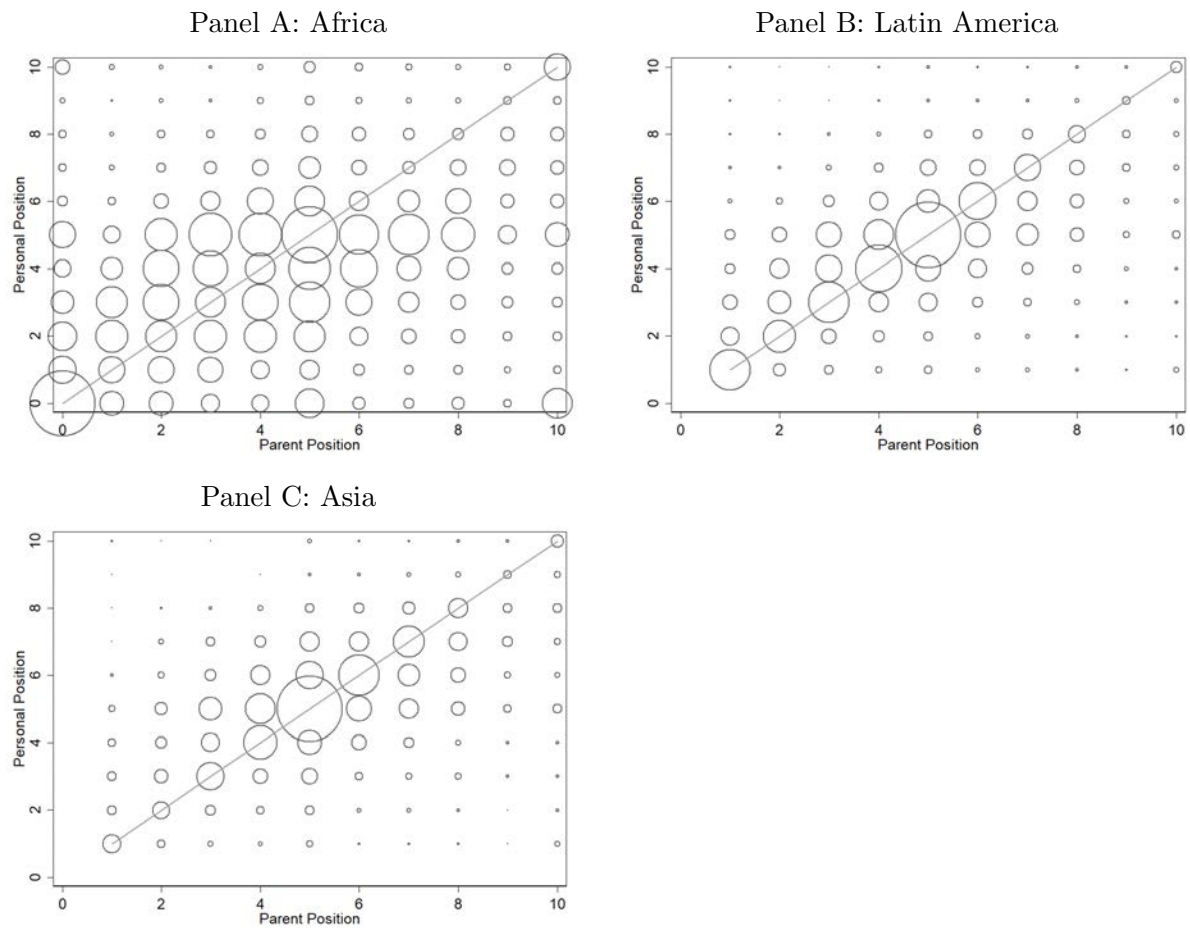
Notes: This figure shows the perceived mobility of respondents by region. Respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (y-axis) as well as their parents' economic position (x-axis). The data for Sub-Saharan Africa come from Round 2 of the Afrobarometer (Panel A), data for Latin America come from Latinobarometer 2000-13 (Panel B), and data for Asia come from the Asian Barometer Wave 4 (Panel C). A list of the countries included in each survey can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 2: *Educational Mobility*

Panel A: Regions More Mobile Than Africa
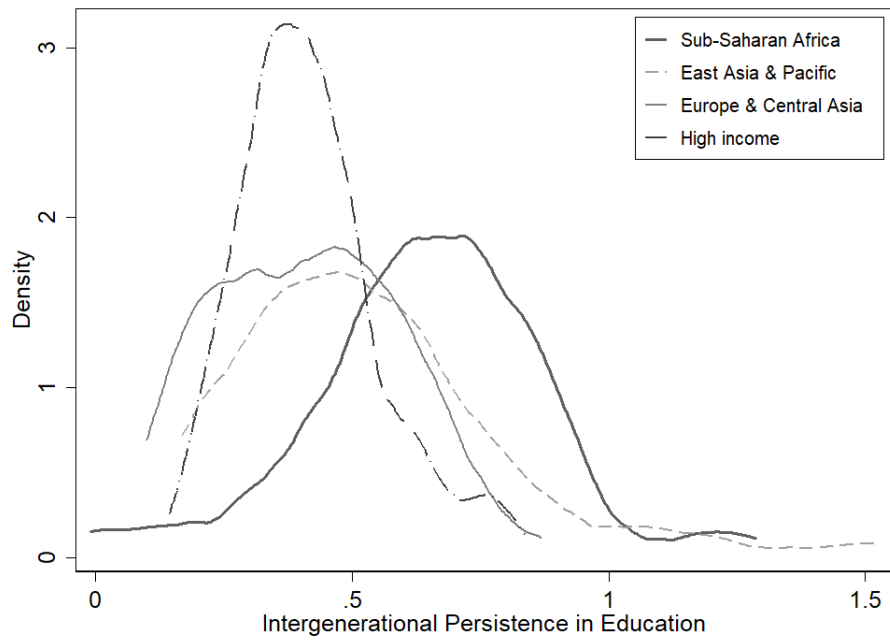
Panel B: Regions Less Mobile Than Africa
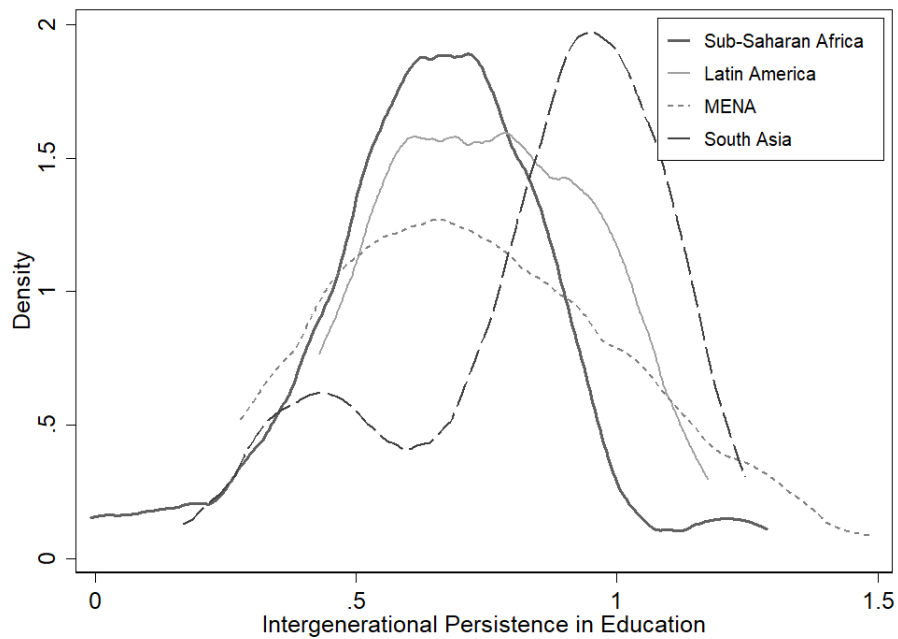
Notes: This figure shows the distribution of intergenerational persistence in education across countries according to the World Bank Intergenerational Mobility Database 2018. Panel A plots regions with a lower level of intergenerational persistence in education and Panel B plots regions with higher persistence. A list of countries included in the data can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 3: *Importance of Hard Work vs. Luck & Connections by Region*

1 = hard work brings a better life; 10 = hard work doesn't matter, it's about luck and connections

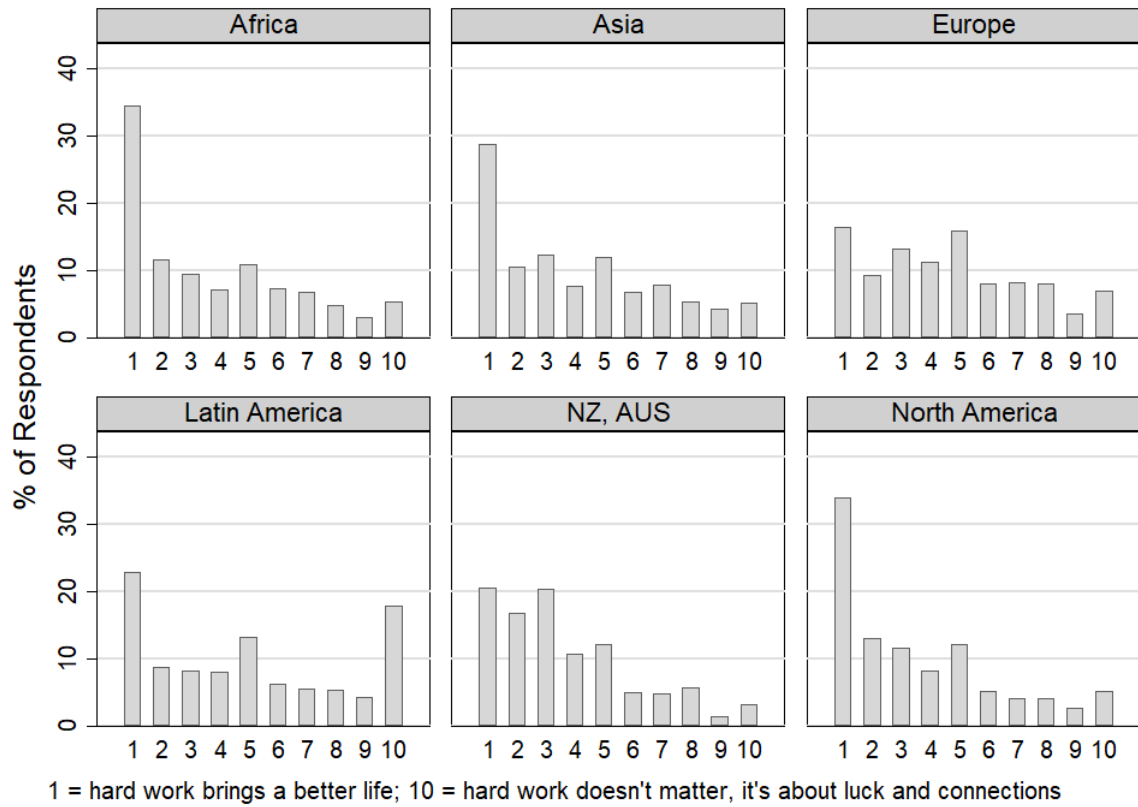*Notes*: This figure shows the perceived importance of hard work vs. luck and connections across regions. The data come from Round 6 of the World Value Survey. Respondents are asked on a 1 to 10 scale, whether they believe "in the long run, hard work usually brings a better life" (1) or "hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections" (10). A list of the countries included can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 4: *Future Mobility by Region*

Panel A: Africa

Panel B: Latin America

Panel C: Asia
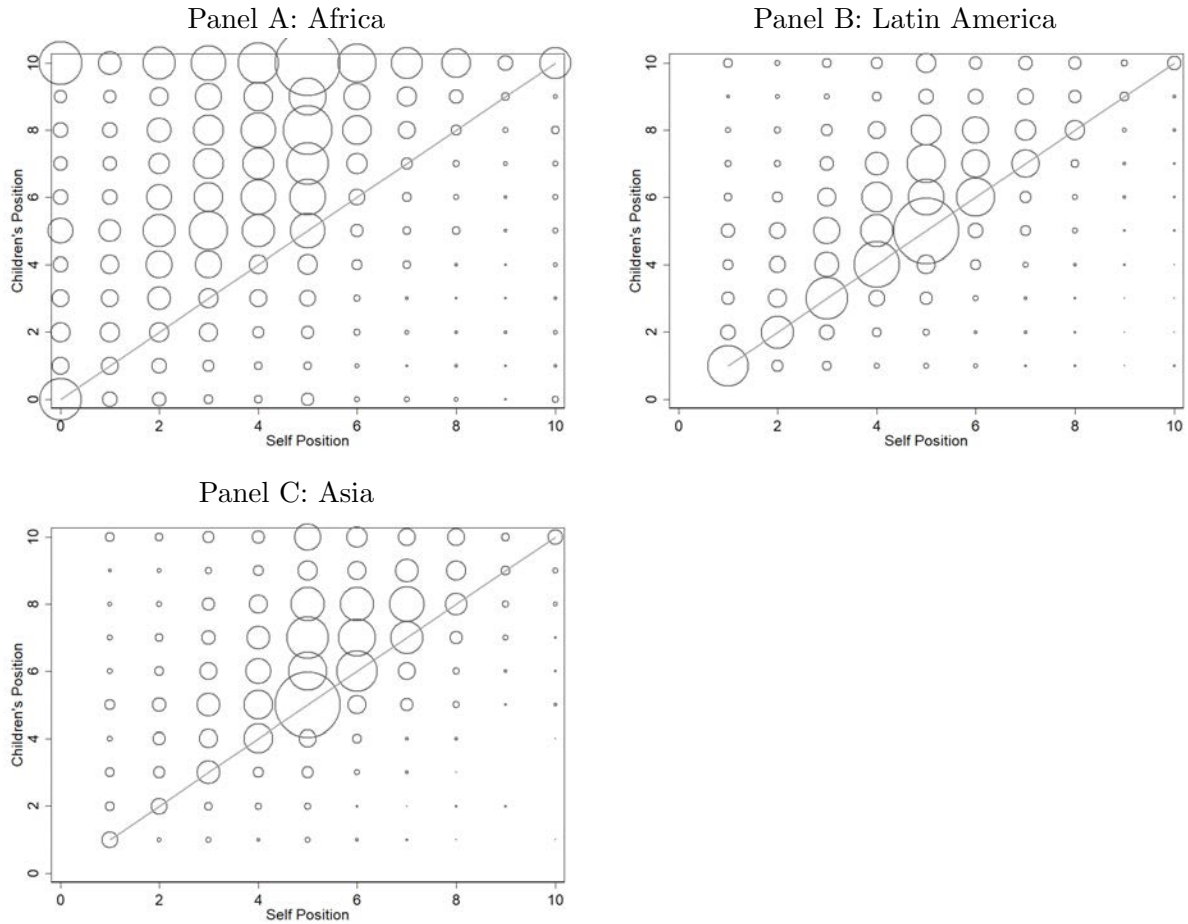
Notes: This figure shows the perceived future mobility of respondents by region. Respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (x-axis) as well as their expectation for their children's economic position in the future (y-axis). The data for Sub-Saharan Africa come from Round 2 of the Afrobarometer (Panel A), data for Latin America come from Latinobarometer 2000-13 (Panel B), and data for Asia come from the Asian Barometer Wave 4 (Panel C). A list of the countries included in each survey can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 5: *Important Qualities for Children: Hard Work*
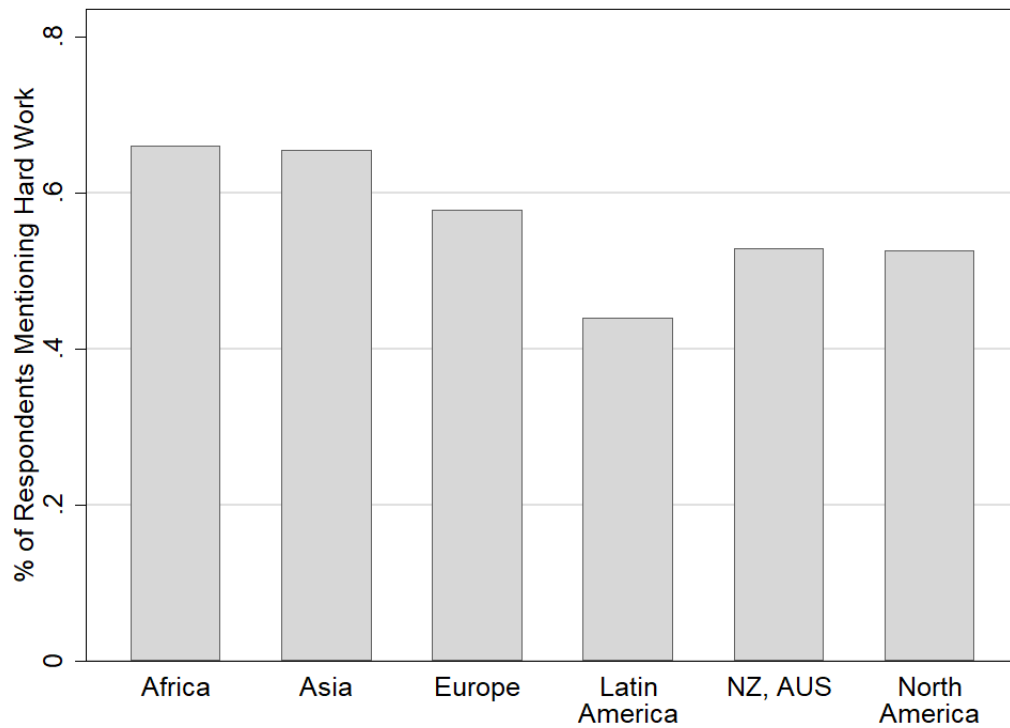
Notes: This figure shows the percentage of respondents to the World Value Survey across regions who think hard work is an important quality for children to learn. The data come from Round 6 of the World Value Survey. Respondents are asked two identify up to 5 qualities which they believe are especially important to teach children. A list of the countries included can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 6: *Skepticism of Authority: Feelings Towards One-man Rule*

Panel A: Africa   Panel B: Asia
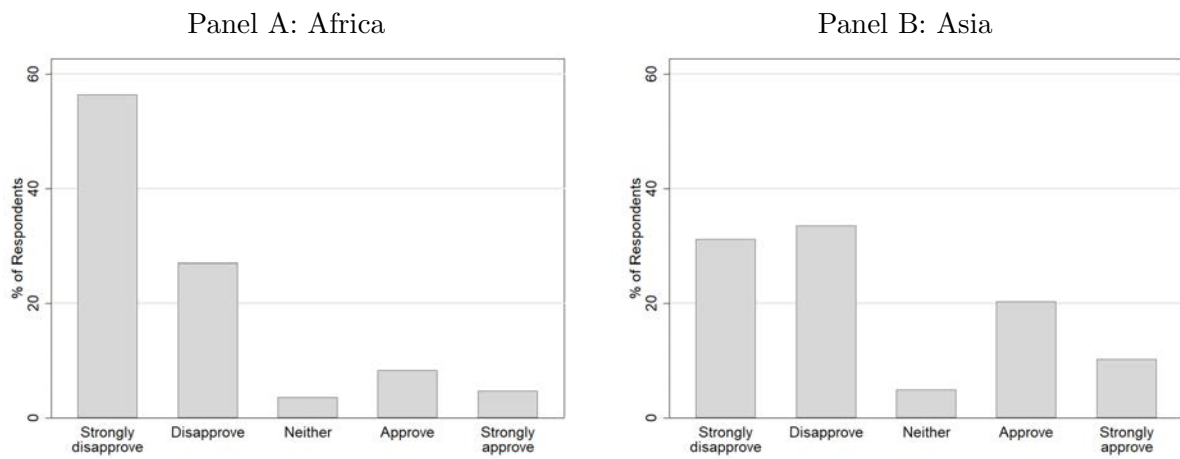
Notes: This figure shows the attitudes towards one-man rule in Africa and Asia. Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved with the statement "Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything." Data on Africa come from Round 7 of the Afrbarometer (Panel A). Data on Asia come from Wave 4 of the Asian Barometer (Panel B). A list of the countries included can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 7: *Skepticism of Authority: Feelings Toward One-man in Nigeria by Ethnic Group*
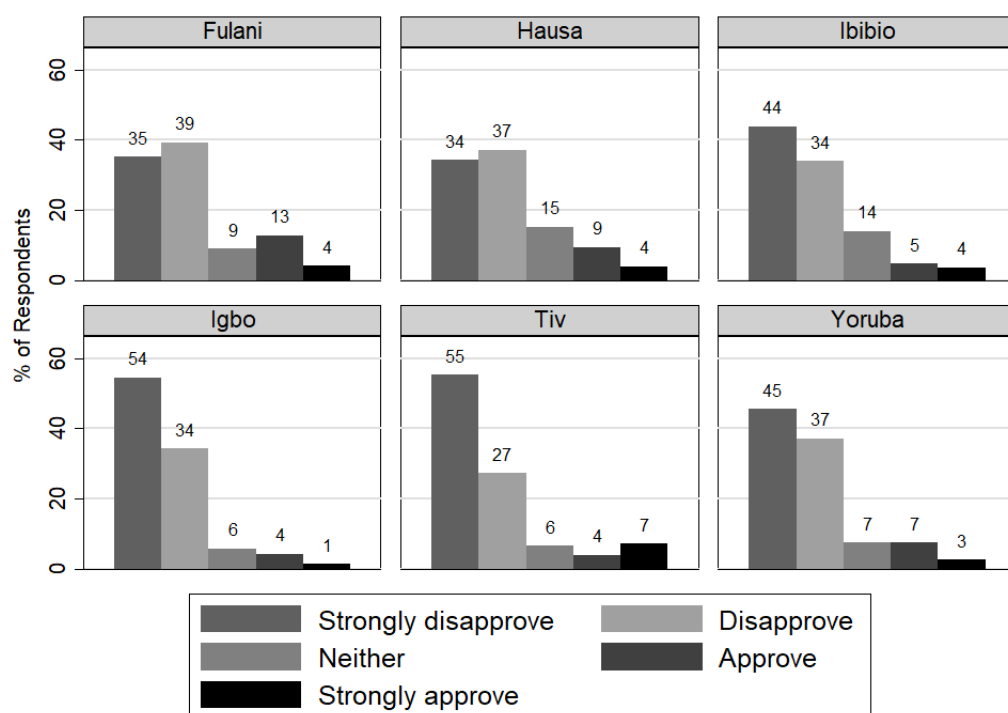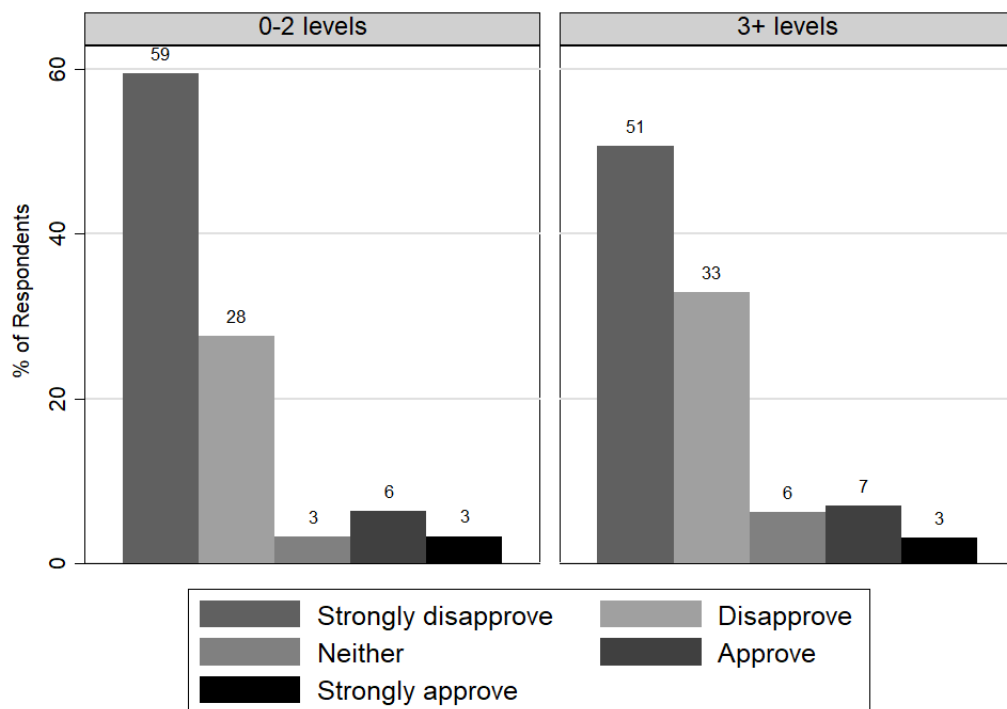

Notes: This figure shows the attitudes towards one-man rule in Nigeria by ethnic group. Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved with the statement "Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything." Data come from Rounds 4 to 7 of the Afrobarometer and include 5,821 respondents.

Figure 8: *Skepticism of Authority: Feelings Towards One-man Rule in Africa by Historical Centralization*

Notes: This figure shows the attitudes towards one-man rule in Africa by historical centralization. Respondents were matched to the Murdock Ethnographic Atlas. Results are shown separately for ethnicities with no or little state structures (Panel A) and those with 3 or more levels of jurisdictional hierarchy beyond the village level (Panel B). Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved with the statement "Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything." Data come from Rounds 4 to 7 of the Afrobarometer and include 42,009 respondents.

Figure 9: *Skepticism of Authority: Community Participation in Nigeria by Ethnic Group*
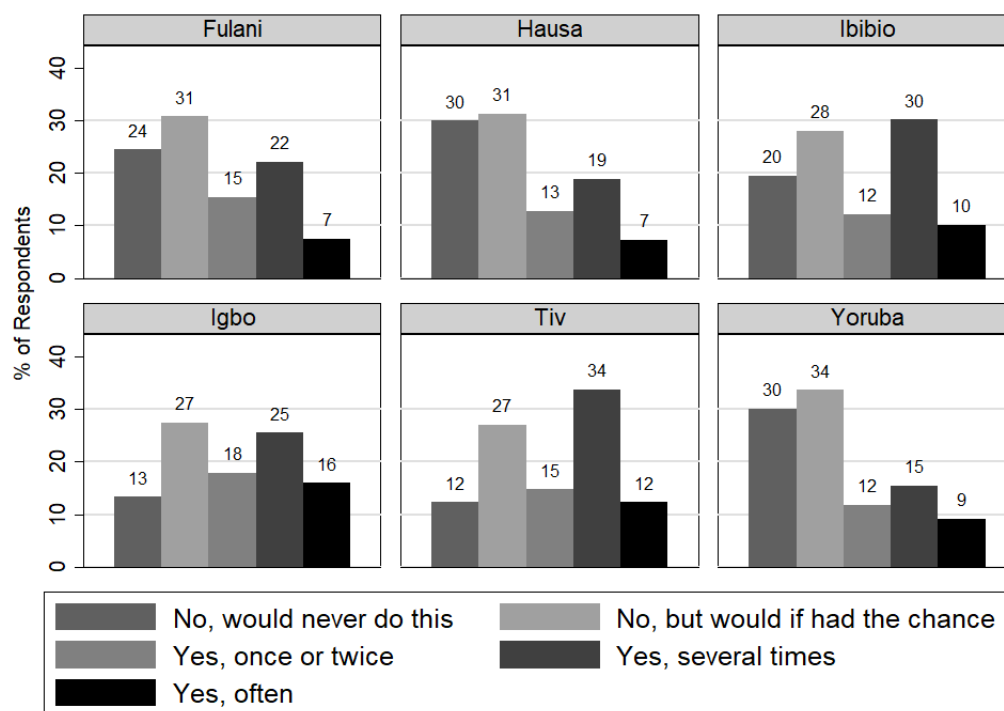
Notes: This figure shows community participation in Nigeria by ethnic group. Respondents were asked if they "attended a community meeting." Data come from Rounds 4 to 7 of the Afrobarometer and include 6,073 respondents.

Figure 10: *Cosmopolitanism: Numbers of Languages Spoken*

Panel A: Africa   Panel B: Europe
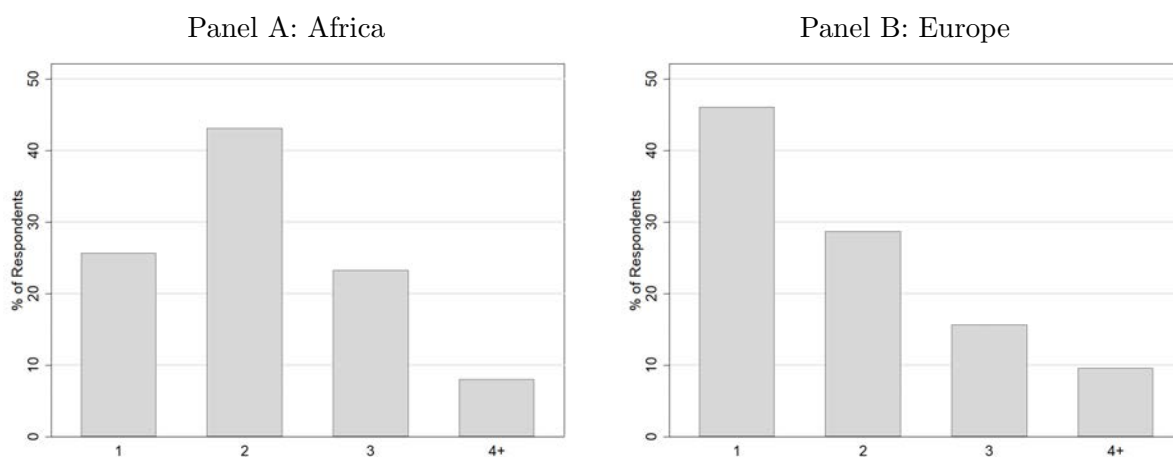
Notes: This figure shows the numbers of languages spoken by respondents in Africa and Europe. Data for Africa come from Round 4 of the Afrobarometer (Panel A). Data on Europe come from the Special Eurobarometer 386 (Panel B). A list of countries included in the data can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure 11: *Cosmopolitanism: Religious Tolerance in Africa*
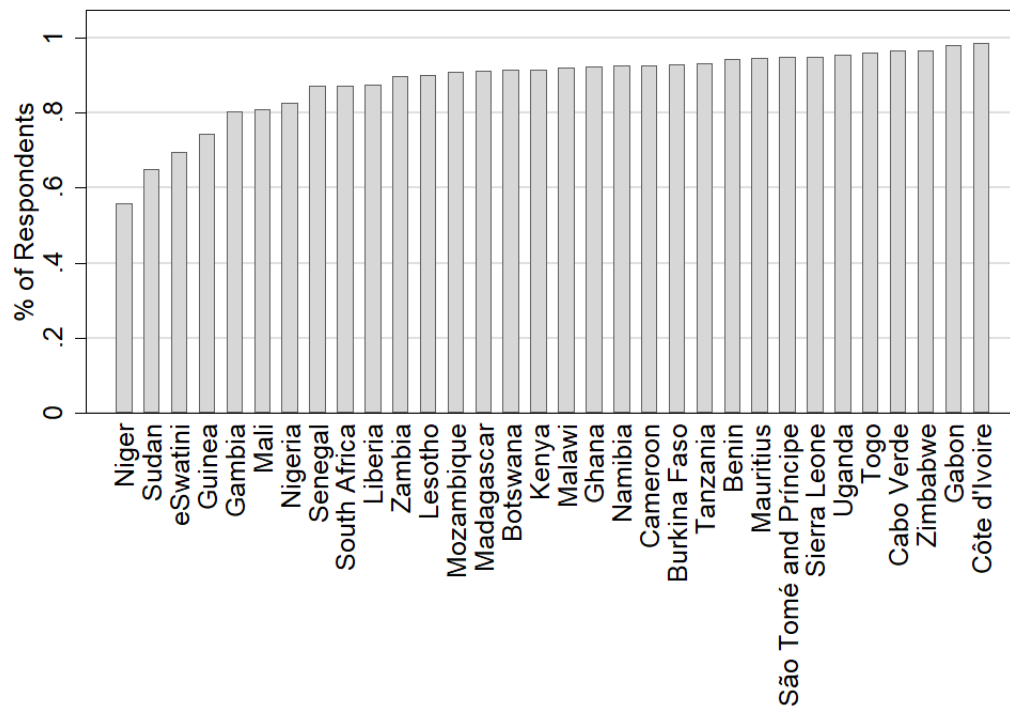
Notes: This figure shows religious tolerance by country in Africa. Data come from Round 7 of the Afrobarometer. The figure shows the percentage of respondents who would not object to having a neighbor of a different religion.

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A   Countries Included in the Surveys Used

Afrobarometer Round 2 (Figure 1, 4, A1): Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

Afrobarometer Round 4 (Figure 10): Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Afrobarometer Round 7 (Figure 6, 8, 11): Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cap Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Asian Barometer Wave 4 (Figure 1, 4, 6): Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Special Eurobarometer 386 (Figure 10): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

Latinobarometer 2000-2013 (Figure 1, 4): Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

World Bank Intergenerational Mobility Database 2015 (Figure 2): Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Rep, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana,

Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, South Korea, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, West Bank and Gaza, Yemen, Zambia

World Value Survey Round 6 (Figure 3, 5): Algeria, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Australia, Armenia, Brazil, Belarus, Chile, China, Taiwan, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Palestine, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Jordan, South Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Yemen

B

Figure A1: *Perceived Mobility in African*

Panel A: Rural Past Mobility

Panel B: Urban Past Mobility

Panel C: Rural Future Mobility

Panel D: Urban Future Mobility
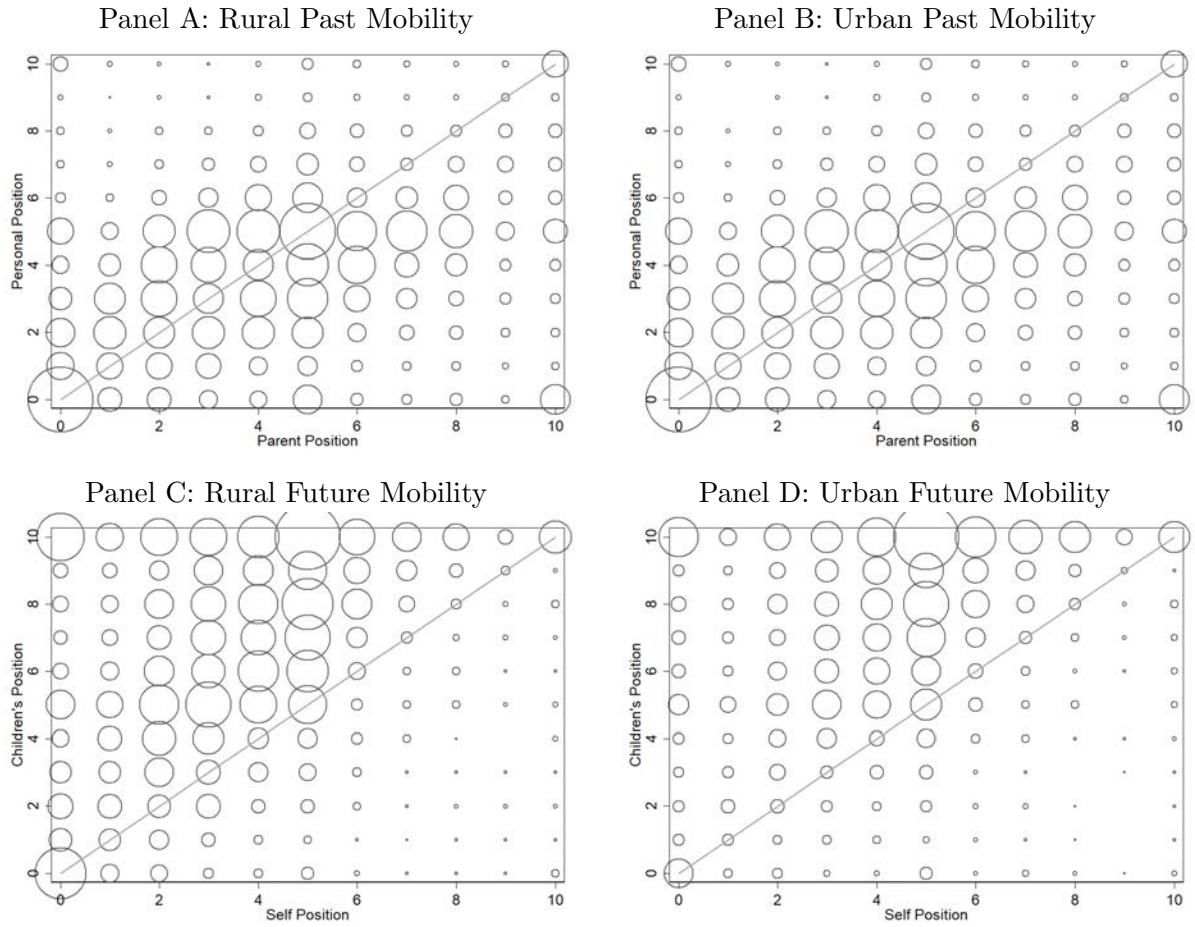
Notes: This figure shows perceived past and future mobility of urban and rural respondents in Africa. For perceived mobility in Panels A and B, respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (y-axis) as well as their parents' economic position (x-axis). For perceived future mobility in Panels C and D, respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (x-axis) as well as their expectation for their children's economic position in the future (y-axis). The data come from Round 2 of the Afrobarometer. A list of the countries included in each survey can be found in Section A.

Figure A2: *Perceived Mobility by Gender*

Panel A: Women Perceived Mobility

Panel B: Women Future Mobility

Panel C: Men Perceived Mobility

Panel B: Men Future Mobility
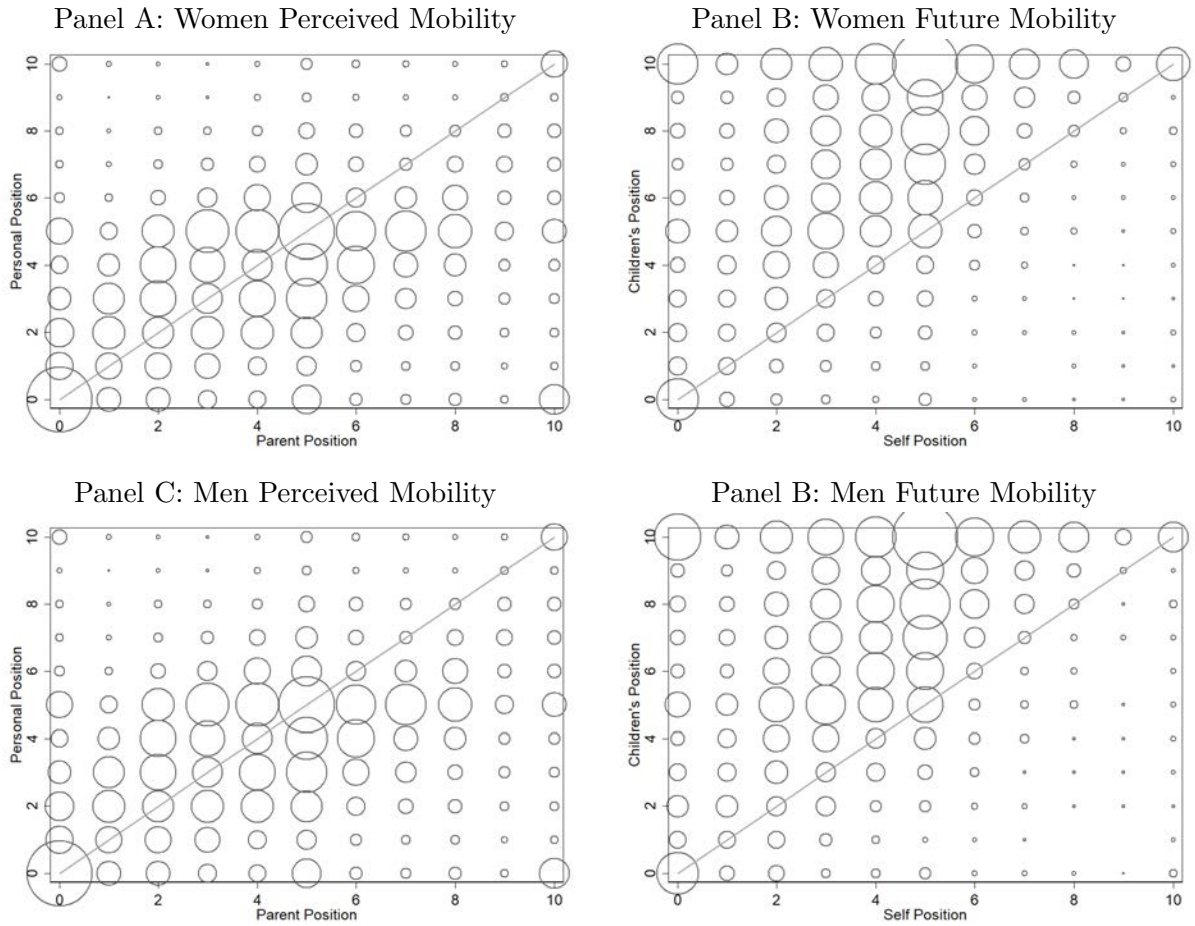
Notes: This figure shows the perceived mobility of African respondents by gender. The first row shows the responses of women and the second row the responses of men. In Panels A and C respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (y-axis) as well as their parents' economic position (x-axis). In Panels B and D respondents are asked to rate their own economic position from 0 to 10 (x-axis) as well as their expectation for their children's economic position in the future (y-axis). The data come from Round 2 of the Afrobarometer. A list of the countries included in each survey can be found in Section A.

Figure A3: *Skepticism of Authority: Support for Authoritarianism Across the World*
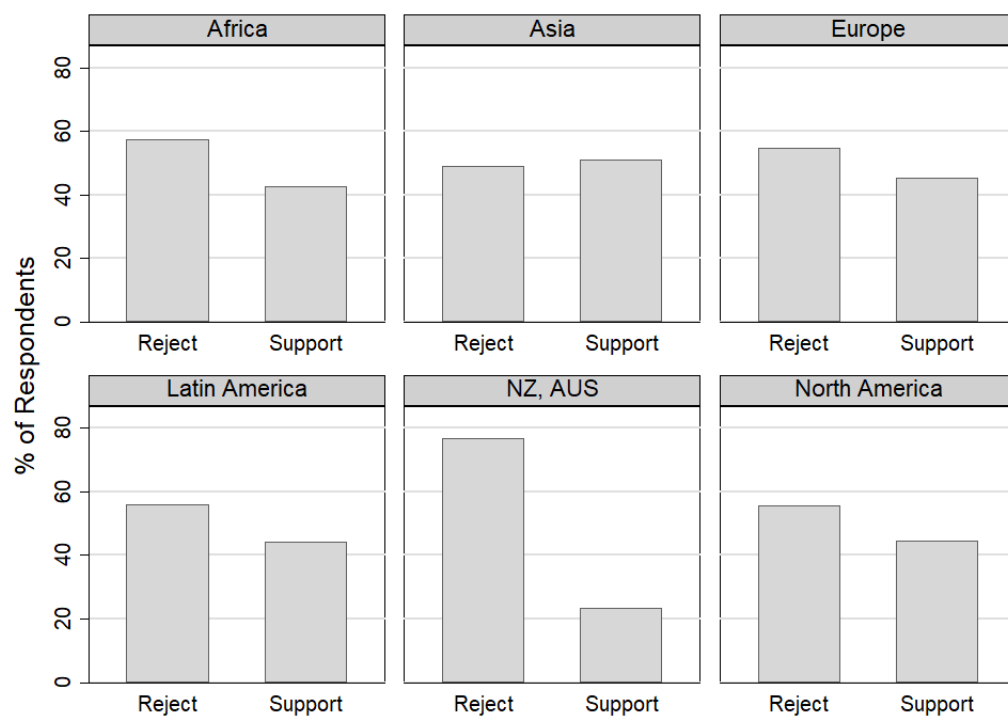
Notes: This figure shows the percentage of respondents to the World Value Survey across regions who are in support of authoritarian government. Respondents are asked whether they rejected or supported the statement "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections." The data come from Round 6 of the World Value Survey. A list of the countries included can be found in Appendix Section A.

Figure A4: *Skepticism of Authority: Feelings Towards Abolishing Term-limits in Nigeria by Ethnic Group*
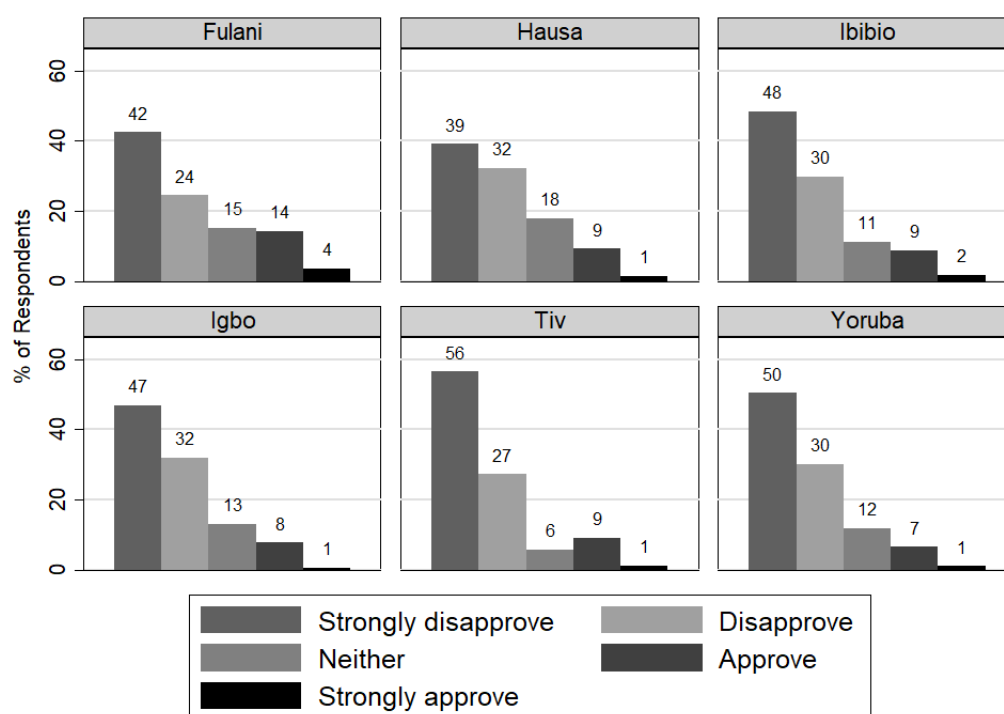
Notes: This figure shows the attitudes towards abolishing term-limits in Nigeria by ethnic group. Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved with the statement "There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve." Data come from Rounds 4 to 7 of the Afrobarometer and include 5,821 respondents.

C

Table A1: Overview of Evidence

	Africa			Other				Data Source
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	T-stat	
Perceived past mobility (own score higher than parents)	21,970	0.34	0.48	13,933	0.27	0.45	14.23	Afrobarometer R2; Asian Barometer Wave 4
Perceived future mobility (children's score higher than own)	21,970	0.82	0.38	13,933	0.62	0.49	42.11	Afrobarometer R2; Asian Barometer Wave 4
Perceived past mobility (own score higher than parents)	21,970	0.34	0.48	134,679	0.25	0.43	27.22	Afrobarometer R2; Latinobarometro 2000-2013
Perceived future mobility (children's score higher than own)	21,970	0.83	0.38	120,232	0.48	0.50	117.96	Afrobarometer R2; Latinobarometro 2000-2013
Hard work vs luck/connections (1="hard work"; 10="luck & connections")	16,733	3.75	2.82	70,574	4.30	2.89	-22.66	World Value Survey R6
Feeling towards one-man rule (1="strongly disapprove"; 5="strongly approve")	42,626	1.78	1.14	12,459	2.45	1.37	-49.78	Afrobarometer R7; East Asian Barometer Wave 4
More than 1 language spoken	27,708	0.67	0.47	26,751	0.36	0.21	99.23	Afrobarometer R4; Special Eurobarometer 386
Guest=Stranger	32	0.59	0.50	91	0.01	0.10	6.56	Own coding

Notes: This table shows the result of two-sided t-tests comparing the sample mean of our outcomes of interest in Africa and the rest of the world.

Table A2: Skepticism of Authority Today in formerly Stateless Societies vs Ones with a State

| | Stateless | | | With State | | | | |
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	T-stat	Data Source
Tiv & Igbo vs Fulani & Hausa	1,516	1.65	0.91	2,285	2.12	1.11	-14.10	Afrobarometer R4-7
0-2 levels vs 3+ levels	28,913	1.67	1.03	11,274	1.79	1.04	-10.79	Afrobarometer R4-7 Murdock Ethnographic Atlas

Notes: This table shows the result of two-sided t-tests comparing the sample mean of our skepticism of authority outcomes across stateless societies and ones with states across Nigeria and Africa. Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved with the statement "Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything." Values range from 1, "strongly disapprove," to 5, "strongly approve." Data come from Rounds 4 to 7 of the Afrobarometer.

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Table A3: Guest, Stranger, and Foreigner in Different African Languages

Language	Word for "Guest"	Word for "Stranger"	Word for "Foreigner"	Overlap
Amharic	inigida	inigida	yeba'idi āgeri sewi	Yes
Berber	inebgi	ajentad	awerdani	No
Fulani	beero; kodo		beero	Yes
Gikuyu	mugeni		ageni	Yes
Hausa	bakon	bakon	bakon	Yes
Igbo	onye obia	onye obia	onye obia	Yes
Kikongo	nzenza	nzenza		Yes
Kinyarwanda	umushyitsi	umunyamahanga	umunyamahanga	No
Kirundi	umushitsi	umunyamahanga	umunyankiko	No
Lingala	mopaya	mopaya, mobútu	mopaya, mobútu	Yes
Luganda	omugenyi	omugenyi	omugenyi, omunnagwanga	Yes
Luo	wendo, welo	wendo, welo	jadak, jamwa	Yes
Malagasy	vahiny	vahiny	vahiny	Yes
Mossi/More	saan		saan	Yes
Ndebele	isivakatjhi	umyeni	iphandle	No
Nyanja (Chewa)	mlendo	mlendo	mlendo	Yes
Oromo	keessummaa	keessummaa, alaagaa	alaagaa, orma	Yes
Shona	muenzi	mweni, mueni, mutorwa	mutorwa	No
Somali	marti	ajnabiyad, shisheeye	ajnabiyad	No
Sesotho	moeti	osele	motho osele	No
Sudanese	tamu	muhrim	urang asing	No
Swahili	mgeni	mgeni	mgeni	Yes
Tigrinya	gasha	wexa'ètena; gasha; 'èngda	ba'ëdi; wexa'ètena	Yes
Tshiluba	mwenyi		mwenyi	Yes
Tsonga	Muendzi	munhu		No
Twi	ohohoo	ohohoo	ohohoo	Yes
Umbundu	ukombe, omokiwa	osombekua	onundapala, ongoya	No
Venda	mueni, vhaeni	mutsinda, vhatsinda		No
Wolof	gan	gan	laakakat, waaliyaan	Yes
Xhosa	undwendwe	umntu wasemzini	owasemzini	No
Yoruba	àlejò	àlejò	àlejò	Yes
Zulu	isivakashi	isihambi	idebe	No

Table A4: Guest, Stranger, and Foreigner in Different Non-African Languages

Language	Word for "Guest"	Word for "Stranger"	Word for "Foreigner"	Overlap
Arabic	zayir	shakhs ghurayb	'ajnabi	No
Albanian	mysafir	i huaj	i huaj	No
Armenian	hyur	antsanot'	otarerkrats'i	No
Azerbaijani	Qonaq	qerib	xarici	No
Basque	gonbidatua	arrotza	atzerritarra	No
Belarusian	hosć	nieznajomy	iinšaziemiec	No
Bengali	Atithi	Aparicita	Bidēśi	No
Bosnian	gost	stranac	stranac	No
Bulgarian	gost	nepoznat	chuzhdenets	No
Burmese	ny sai	luuhcaim	ninenganhkyarrsarr	No
Catalan	convidat	desconegut	estranger	No
Cebuano	bisita	langyaw	langyaw	No
Chinese	Kèrén	Mòshēng rén	Wàiguó rén	No
Corsican	invitatu	stranieru	stranieru	No
Croatian	gost	stranac	stranac	No
Czeck	host	cizinec	cizinec	No
Danish	gæst	fremmed	udlænding	No
Dutch	gast	vreemdeling	buitenlander	No
Estonian	külaline	võõras	välismaalane	No
Filipino	bisita	estranghero	dayuhan	No
Finnish	vieras	muukalainen	ulkomaalainen	No
French	client	étranger	étranger	No
Frisian	gast	frjemd	bûtenlanner	No
Galician	gast	estraño	estranxeiro	No
Georgian	st'umari	utskho adamiani	utskhoeli	No
German	Gast	Fremder	Ausländer	No
Greek	episképtis	xénos	xénos	No
Gujarati	Mahēmāna	Ajānī vyakti	Vidēśī	No
Hatian Crejole	Guest	etranje	etranje	No
Hawaiian	malihini	malihini	haole	**Yes**
Hebrew	oréakh	zár	zár	No
Hindi	atithi	ajanabee	paradeshee	No
Hmong	qhua	neeg txawv	neeg qhua	No
Hungarian	vendég	idegen	külföldi	No
Icelandic	gestur	ókunnugur	útlendingur	No
Indonesian	tamu	orang asing	orang asing	No
Irish	aoi	strainséir	eachtrannach	No
Italian	ospite	sconosciuto	straniero	No
Japanese	Gesuto	Sutorenjā	Gaikoku hito	No
Javanese	tamu	wong liyo	wong asing	No
Kannada	Atithi	Aparicita	Vidēśi	No
Kazakh	qonaq	beytanıs	şeteldik	No
Khmer	phnhiev	chn chamlek	chonobartes	No
Korean	sonnim	nachseon salam	oegug-in	No

Table A5: Guest, Stranger, and Foreigner in Different Non-African Languages

Language	Word for "Guest"	Word for "Stranger"	Word for "Foreigner"	Overlap
Kurdish (Kurmanji)	mêvan	xerîb	bîyanî	No
Kyrgyz	konok	çooçun	çet eldik	No
Lao	aekhk	khon aepk na	khontangpathed	No
Latvian	viesis	svešinieks	ārzemnieks	No
Lithuanian	svečias	svetimas	užsienietis	No
Luxermbourgish	Gaascht	friem	Auslänner	No
Macedonian	gostin	stranec	stranec	No
Malay	tetamu	orang asing	orang asing	No
Malayalam	atithi	aparicitan	vidēśi	No
Maltese	mistieden	barrani	barrani	No
Maori	manuhiri	tangata tauhou	tangata iwi ke	No
Marathi	Atithī	Anōlakhī	Paradēśī	No
Mongolian	zochin	ül tanikh khün	gadaad	No
Myanmar (Burmese)	ny sai	luuhcaim	ninenganhkyarrsarr	No
Nepali	Pāhunā	Aparicita	Vidēśī	No
Norwegian	gjest	fremmed	utlending	No
Odia	Atithi	Aparichita	Bideshi	No
Pashto	melma	ajnabi	baharanáy	No
Persian	mehmân	ğaribe	xâreji	No
Polish	Gość	nieznajomy	cudzoziemiec	No
Portuguese	hóspede	desconhecido	estrangeiro	No
Punjabi	Mahimāna	Ajanabī	Vidēśī	No
Romanian	oaspete	străin	străin	No
Russian	gost'	neznakomets	inostranets	No
Samoan	malo	tagata ese	tagata mai fafo	No
Scots Gaelic	aoigh	coigreach	cèin	No
Serbian	gost	stranac	stranac	No
Sindhi	mehmân	ajnabi	pardeśī	No
Sinhala	amuttangē	āgantukaya	vidēśikayā	No
Slovak	hosť	cudzinec	cudzinec	No
Slovenian	gost	neznanec	tujec	No
Spanish	invitado	desconocido	extranjero	No
Swedish	gäst	främling	utlänning	No
Tajik	mehmon	begona	xoriçī	No
Tamil	Viruntinar	Anniyan	Velināttavar	No
Tatar	qunaq	cit kese	cit il kesese	No
Telugu	Atithi	Aparicitudu	Vidēśīyudu	No
Thai	Khaek	Khn paelk hna	Chaw tang chati	No
Turkish	misafir	yabancı	yabancı	No
Turkmen	myhman	nätanyş	daşary ýurtly	No
Ukrainian	hist'	neznayomets'	inozemets'	No
Urdu	mehmān	ajnabī	ghayr mulki	No
Uyghur	dost	natonush	yabanchi	No
Uzbek	mehmon	begona	chet ellik	No
Vietnamese	khách moi	nguoi la	nguoi nuoc ngoài	No
Welsh	gwestai	dieithryn	estron	No
Yiddish	gast	fremder	fremderd	No