Foreign Aid and Democratic Consolidation in Africa

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Our Approach

• Disaggregate foreign aid into democracy and development assistance

• Quantitative, cross-country analysis from 1991-2008 and case studies of seven electoral democracies

• Focus on both transitions to multiparty rule and consolidation of democracy
Democratic Consolidation

- Continuous concept with both negative and positive “poles”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spectrum of democratic consolidation</th>
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<td>Avoiding breakdown</td>
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<td>Preventing return to one-party regime or a cessation of leader selection via elections</td>
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Transitions

- Development aid has played a role in some democratic transitions
  - Mechanism: precipitating discontent through economic reforms or demanding political reforms

Source: Dietrich and Wright, 2012
Breakdown and Erosion

• Democracy aid appears to discourage elites from certain decisions in the first place
  – High levels of democracy aid associated with lower likelihood of multiparty breakdown
  – Risk of term-limit violations drops from 40% to less than 5% at high levels of democracy aid
  – Example: Oasis Forum in Zambia

• Development aid used as *ex-post* tool to reverse elites’ decisions
  – Example: G19 donor strike in Mozambique
  – Corruption and electoral violations are priorities while human rights violations addressed more erratically
  – Issue of coordination is key for effectiveness
Vertical Accountability: Elections

• Democracy aid significantly effective at promoting free and fair elections
  – Electoral support essential for civic and voter education, monitoring elections, ballot papers, electronic voter lists, and preventing election postponements

• Key concerns:
  – Elections still seen as an event rather than a process
  – Lack of EC autonomy in dominant party regimes
Vertical Accountability: Civil Society

Source: OECD-CRS Creditor Database
Vertical Accountability: Civil Society

• Greater consideration of CSO representivity
  – Development community uneasy with trade and labour unions

• Budget support viewed as reducing CSOs knowledge of, and input into, donor activities

• Democracy aid emphasizes capacity and fundraising rather than the legislative environment
• Democracy support essential for strengthening judiciaries, parliaments, audit offices, and anti-corruption bureaus
  – Notable successes:
    • Public Accounts Committee in Ghana; Anti-corruption commission and MP constituency offices in Zambia
• Consistent finding: General budget support further marginalizes the role of parliaments
Competitive Party Systems

• Party assistance receives least attention but extremely valuable for opposition parties

• Development aid tends to reinforce incumbent advantages, especially in dominant-party regimes

Source: Dietrich and Wright, 2012
Key Findings

• Democratic consolidation ultimately internal affair but external actors do play an important role

• Democracy and development aid have different levers of influence over the democratization process

• Democracy aid will remain pivotal given Africa’s changing development landscape

• Addressing how to reconcile trade-offs between the democracy and development communities remains a major policy priority