



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-WIDER**

World Institute for Development  
Economics Research

# Foreign Aid and Democracy in Africa:

## *Framework, Concepts, and Mechanisms*

Danielle Resnick

Accra, 8 June 2012

# Global Research Team

---

- **Mamoudou Gazibo** (*University of Montreal*)
- **E. Gyimah-Boadi** (*Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana*)
- **Carrie Manning and Monica Malbrough** (*Georgia State University*)
- **Lise Rakner** (*University of Bergen, Norway*)
- **Danielle Resnick** (*UNU-WIDER, Finland*)
- **Aili Tripp** (*University of Wisconsin*)
- **Nicolas van de Walle** (*Cornell University*)
- **Joseph Wright and Simone Dietrich** (*Penn State University and Princeton University*)

# Why Aid and Democracy?

---

- **Normative motivations**

Prevention from participation in one's political community constitutes major human deprivation

- **Instrumental reasons**

Large body of scholarship indicates democracies more concerned about development outcomes of citizens

- **Policy relevance**

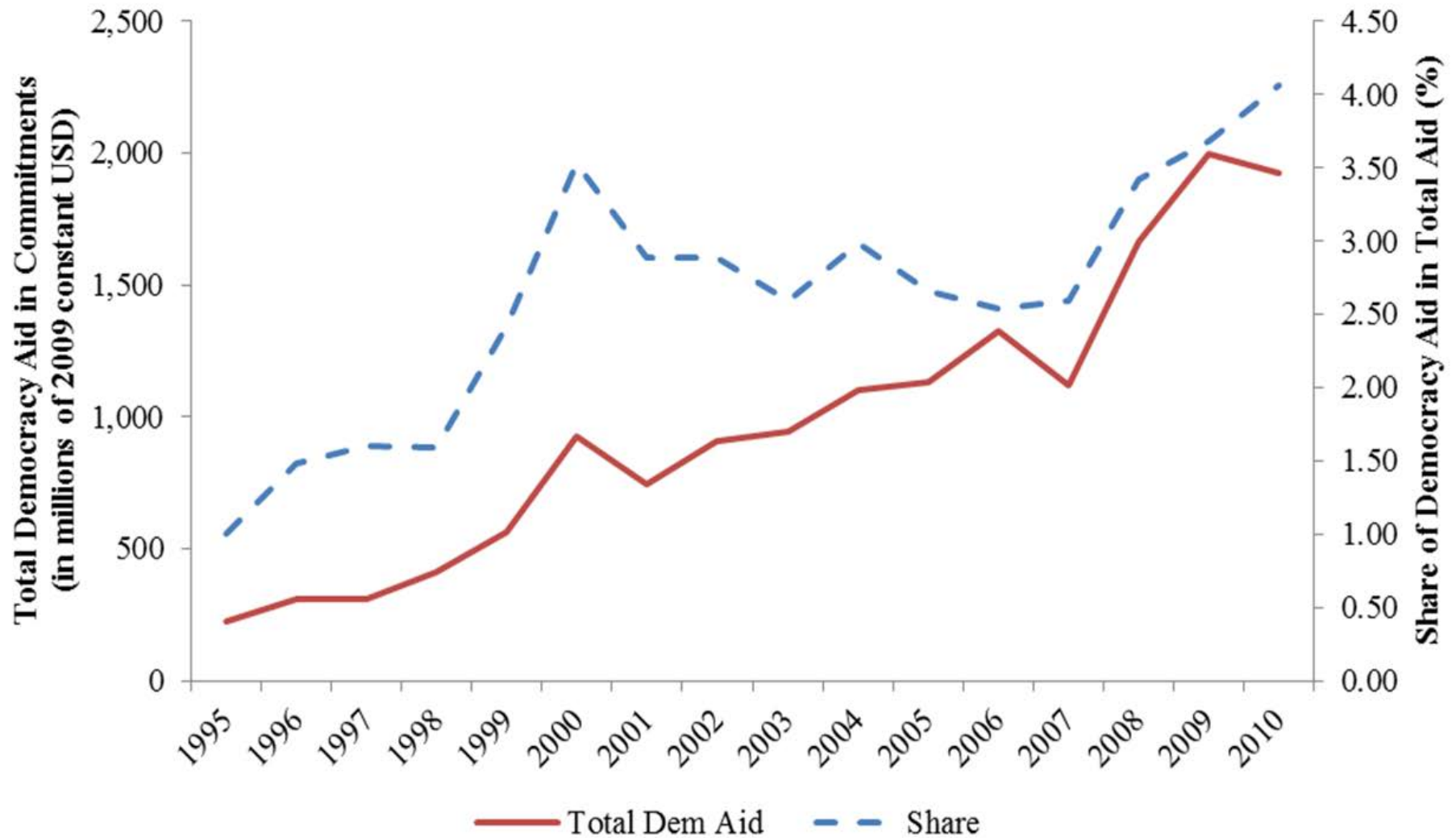
2011 Busan High Level Forum: 'Promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance are an integral part of our development efforts'

# Why Aid and Democracy?

---

- **Existing cross-country studies offer mixed and contradictory findings**
  - Rely on disparate time periods and country samples
- **Single case studies can be idiosyncratic and selectively chosen**
- **Existing research aggregates all foreign aid together**
  - Problematic since development aid and democracy assistance communities have different views on the importance of democracy and the means to achieve it

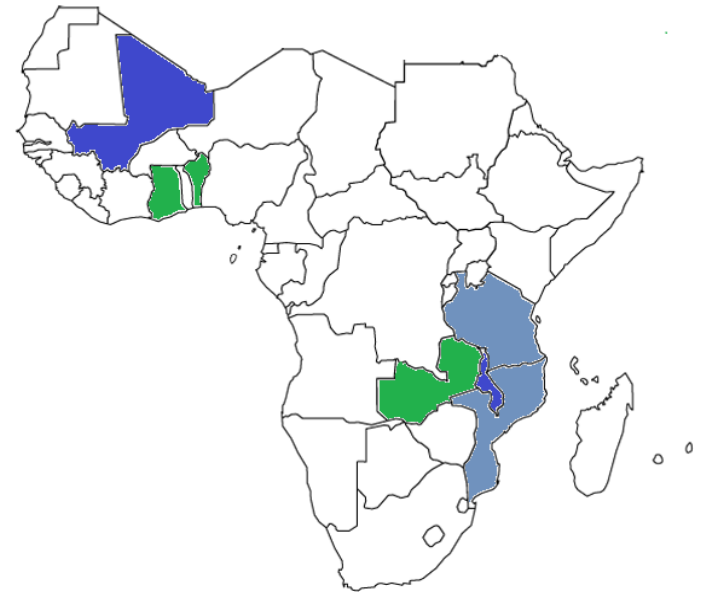
# Democracy Aid to Africa



# 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

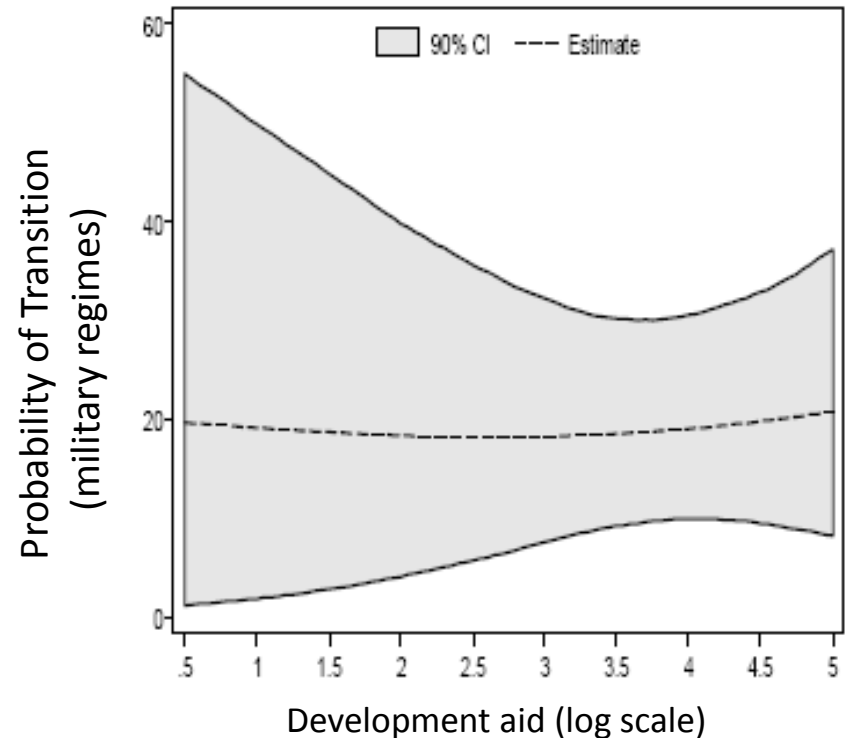
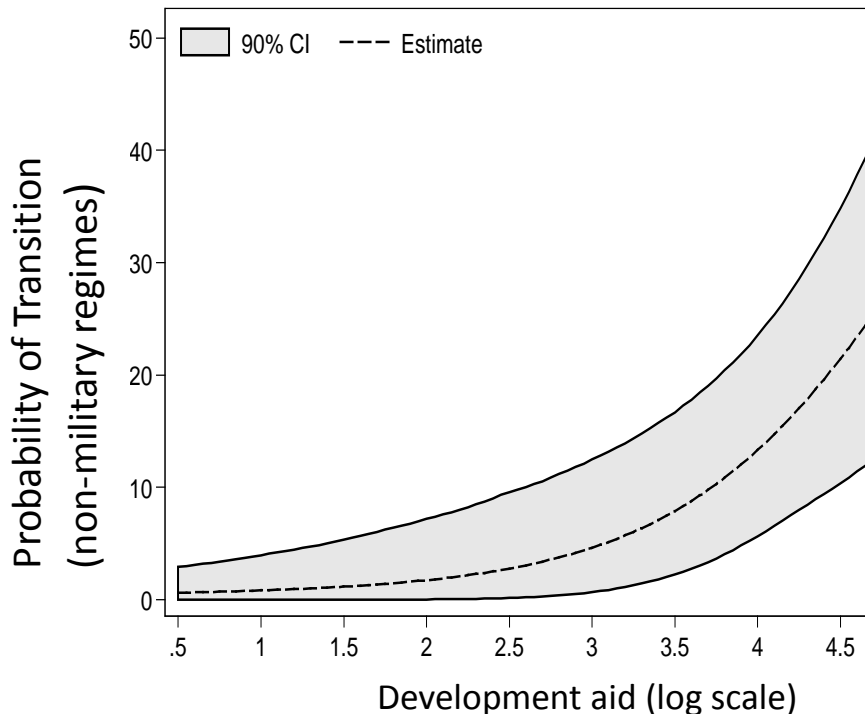
---

- Continuous concept with both negative and positive “poles”

 Spectrum of democratic consolidation		
<i>Avoiding breakdown</i>	<i>Avoiding erosion</i>	<i>Deepening democracy</i>
Preventing return to one-party regime or a cessation of leader selection via elections	Preventing deterioration in civil liberties and human rights, disrespect for key institutions and laws, averting elections that are not ‘free and fair’	Strengthening vertical accountability, reinforcing institutions that provide horizontal accountability, and creating competitive party systems

# Transitions

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





# 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, particularly in countries with higher levels of party institutionalization
  - Risk of term-limit violations drops from 40% to less than 5% at high levels of democracy aid
  - Example: Oasis Forum in Zambia

# Breakdown and Erosion

---

- **Development aid could be used as a means of preventing breakdown by addressing structural inequalities (e.g. Mali)**
- **However, it is more frequently used as an *ex-post* tool to reverse elites' decisions**
  - Examples: G19 donor strike in Mozambique;  
3<sup>rd</sup> term bid in Malawi
  - Corruption and electoral violations are priorities while violations of civil liberties are addressed much more erratically
  - Issue of coordination is key for effectiveness

# Vertical Accountability: Elections

---

- **Democracy aid significantly effective at promoting free and fair elections**

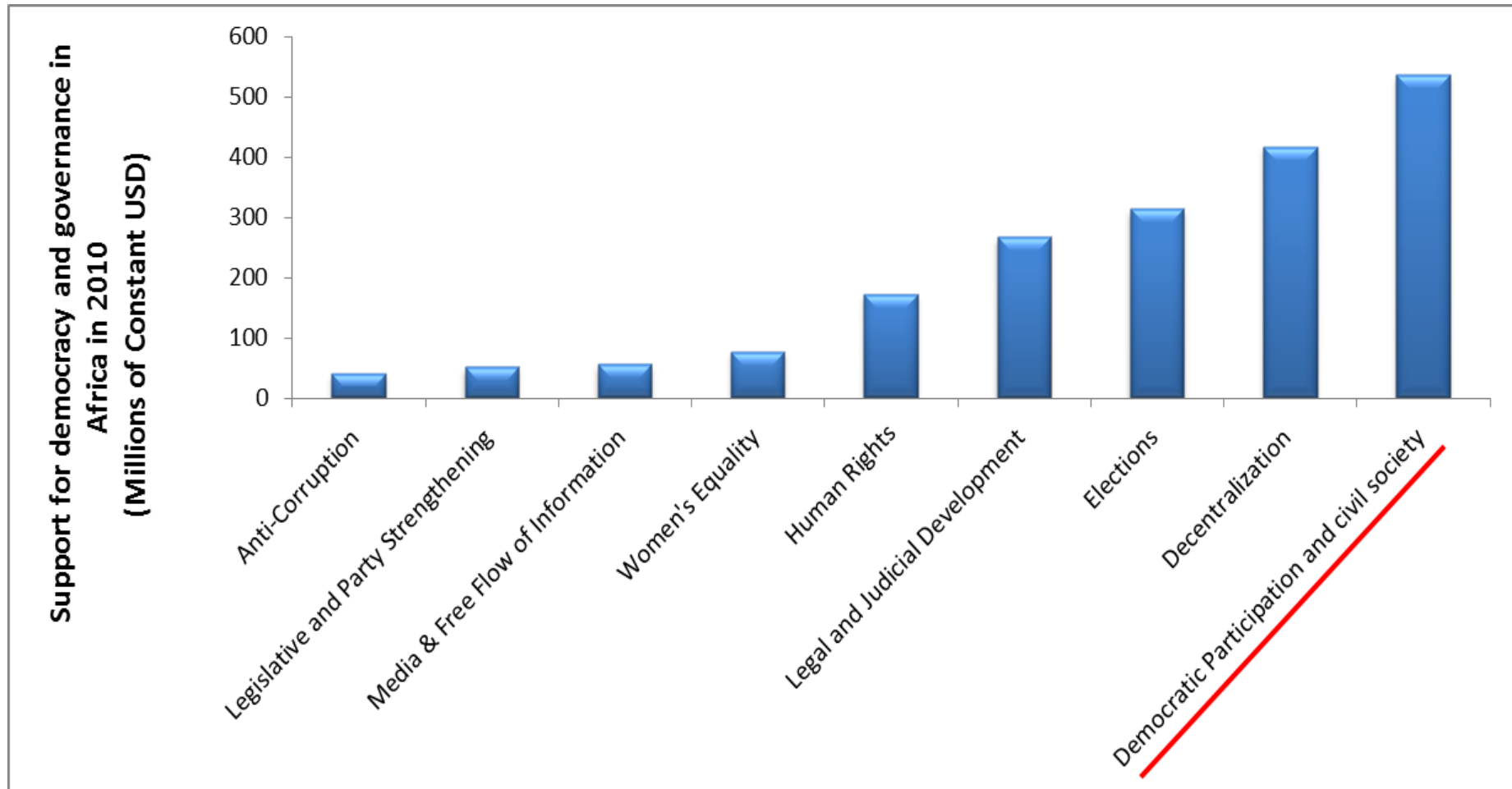


- Electoral support essential for civic and voter education, monitoring elections, ballot papers, electronic voter lists, and preventing election postponements

- **Key concerns:**

- Elections still seen as an event rather than a process
- Some aspects of elections deemed too costly
- Lack of EC autonomy, esp. in dominant party regimes

# Vertical Accountability: Civil Society



Source: OECD-CRS Creditor Database

# **Vertical Accountability: Civil Society**

---

- **Democracy aid emphasizes capacity and fundraising rather than the legislative environment**
- **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**

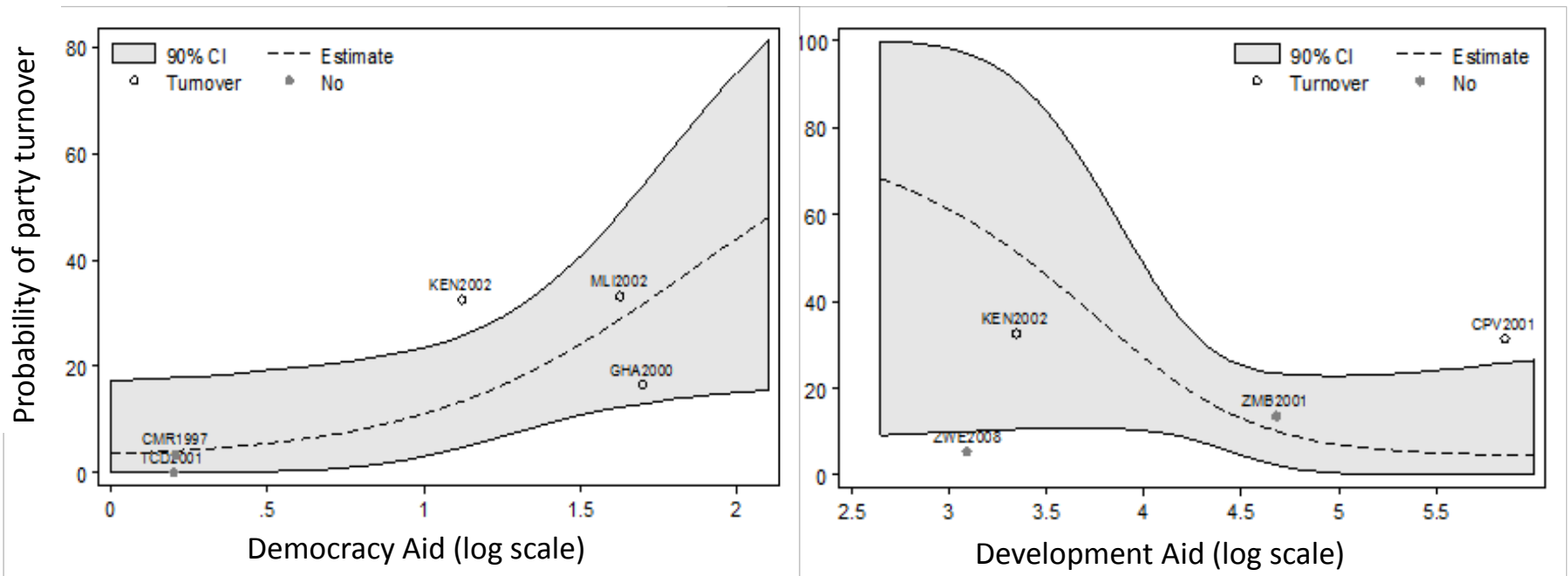
# Horizontal Accountability

---

- **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



# 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