

What the People of Africa Think about International Organisations

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Abstract

International organisations have long sought to promote peace and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Much research has focused on their policies and activities, but little is known about how people living in Africa view them. How aware are people in Africa of international organisations, and how helpful do they believe them to be? This article analyses public perceptions using data from Afrobarometer Round 4 surveys conducted in 20 countries. Awareness of international organisations is widespread, especially in countries that have experienced peacekeeping missions and among individuals who have completed primary school. Evaluations are favourable on balance, more so for the United Nations and other “global” organisations than for the African Union and its sub-regional bodies. Though most Africans see development aid as helpful, large and highly visible aid inflows are associated with concerns about the influence that donors and NGOs wield over recipient governments.

Keywords: international organisations; regional organisations; sub-Saharan Africa; Afrobarometer; peacekeeping; development aid

Introduction

International organisations have long pervaded political and economic life in sub-Saharan Africa, probably more so than in any other major developing region. The commitment of the United Nations (UN) to national self-determination has created a global environment crucial to achieving political independence. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank subsequently assumed prominent roles in financing economic development previously carried out by the colonial powers. African leaders, conscious of the continent’s fragmentation and vulnerability, formed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 to promote regional cooperation and integration. Today sub-Saharan Africa receives more development aid relative to



Politeia

<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/Politeia>

Volume 38 | Number 2 | 2019 | #6563 | 23 pages

<https://doi.org/10.25159/0256-8845/6563>

ISSN 2663-6689 (Online) | ISSN 0256-8845 (Print)

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income than does any other major region, and since the end of the Cold War it has been the site of more UN peacekeeping operations. Within the region, African governments launched the African Union (AU) as successor to the OAU in 2002, seeking to rejuvenate the organisation and its network of affiliated sub-regional bodies. Add international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to the field, their abbreviations also imprinted on buildings and vehicle fleets, and the quest for peace and development in Africa has aptly been called an “invasion of the acronyms” (Nugent 2012, 330).

Ordinary people living in Africa are the ostensible beneficiaries of the activities of these international organisations, but many observers have questioned whether they really do benefit. For example, diverse critics of conditional “adjustment” lending by the IMF and the World Bank, which requires cash-strapped African governments to commit to external prescribed policies in return for financial assistance, have argued that such lending does little to improve economic well-being (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999; Van de Walle 2001). Development aid more generally has been criticised for making governments more accountable to donors than to their own people (Moss, Pettersson, and Van de Walle 2006; Whitfield 2009; cf. Findley et al. 2017). Meanwhile, peacekeeping missions have been justified by increasingly expansive norms of international humanitarian intervention (Sarkin 2010). Though African regional organisations have cooperated in many missions, the prominence of external actors has evoked complaints of a “postcolonial imperialism” that tramples on the right of African people to govern themselves (Wai 2014). Others have raised fundamental questions about the desirability of an international system that legitimates states in Africa often unable to govern their territory effectively (Herbst 2014; Jackson and Rosberg 1982).

Conspicuously absent from the many deep controversies about the impact of international organisations in Africa are the views of the ostensible beneficiaries themselves. How aware are ordinary people in Africa of these organisations and their activities? To the extent that they are aware, do they see international organisations as helping their countries? Do they distinguish between global organisations like the UN, regional organisations like the AU, sub-regional organisations, and other non-governmental organisations and donors? How much do their views of international organisations differ from country to country? On these important questions we have continued to suffer from what John Lonsdale once called the problem of “too much theory chasing too little empirical data” (Lonsdale 1981, 140). Knowing more about the views of ordinary people will not in itself resolve the many controversies about the impact of international organisations in Africa. But knowing more is valuable in itself, and as many African countries consolidate democratic systems of governance, public perceptions are likely to carry greater weight in governments’ decisions about how to engage with international organisations.

In this article I use survey data to clarify what people in Africa think about international organisations. I draw primarily on data from a valuable and largely overlooked battery of questions from the Afrobarometer Round 4 surveys, conducted in 20 sub-Saharan

African countries in 2008 and 2009. Most of these questions have not been repeated since, meaning that the data I analyse offer the best currently available baseline for further research on public attitudes. I use the data to construct measures that jointly capture public awareness and evaluations of international organisations. I also examine bivariate associations between these country-level measures and economic output, aid dependence, and educational attainment. My approach is exploratory, seeking to highlight cross-national patterns. I present the analysis mainly through a series of graphs, with numerical measures, in the Appendix.

Surveying African Perceptions

Afrobarometer Round 4 surveys targeted nationally representative samples of 1,200 to 2,400 adults living in 20 African countries in 2008 and 2009 (Afrobarometer 2010). Interviews were conducted face to face in the respondent's preferred language. Multistage, stratified random sampling ensured that the mix of respondents in a country approximated the national population from which it was drawn. As a rule of thumb, the sampling error margins for percentage frequencies within each country were about two or three per cent.¹

Although the sampling of individuals within countries was random, coverage of African countries in Afrobarometer Round 4 was not. Political violence and repression made it difficult and even dangerous to run a survey in some African countries. Incentives may also have existed to select more populous countries. Figure 1 confirms that the surveyed countries tended to have larger populations and to be more politically stable than other countries in the region. Population is on the horizontal axis, and the Worldwide Governance Indicator for “political stability” (World Bank 2015) is on the vertical axis. (Country-level data are for 2008, roughly contemporaneous with the survey data.) Labels are all-capitals for surveyed countries and regular-case for other sub-Saharan African countries.² Most Afrobarometer countries lie in the upper-right quadrant, meaning that they exceed the regional medians for both population and political stability. Exceptions include Nigeria with a low political stability score (unrest in the Niger Delta, Islamic militancy in the North, and fallout from flawed 2007 presidential election), and Cape Verde with a population of less than half a million. Liberia is the only Afrobarometer country in the lower-left quadrant, meaning that it falls below the

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- 1 The sampling “error margin” depends not only on sample size but also on sample design, which for the Afrobarometer surveys incorporates stratification, clustering, and weights. The rule of thumb of plus or minus two or three per cent is a reasonable approximation of 95 per cent confidence intervals. The standard errors for specific estimates reported in tables 2, 3, and 4 in the Appendix are design-adjusted, using the techniques described in Lumley (2010) and implemented in Lumley (2017).
 - 2 The underlying numerical data, sources, and three-letter International Organization for Standardization (ISO) codes for the Afrobarometer countries are in Table 1 of the Appendix. To ensure legibility in all scatterplots in the article, locations of some labels have been adjusted slightly using an algorithm that prevents overplotting of text (Fellows 2014). Tables in the Appendix report the underlying numerical data.

regional medians for both population and political stability. Afrobarometer Round 4 surveys included diverse countries, but they tended to over-represent those that were more populous and more politically stable.

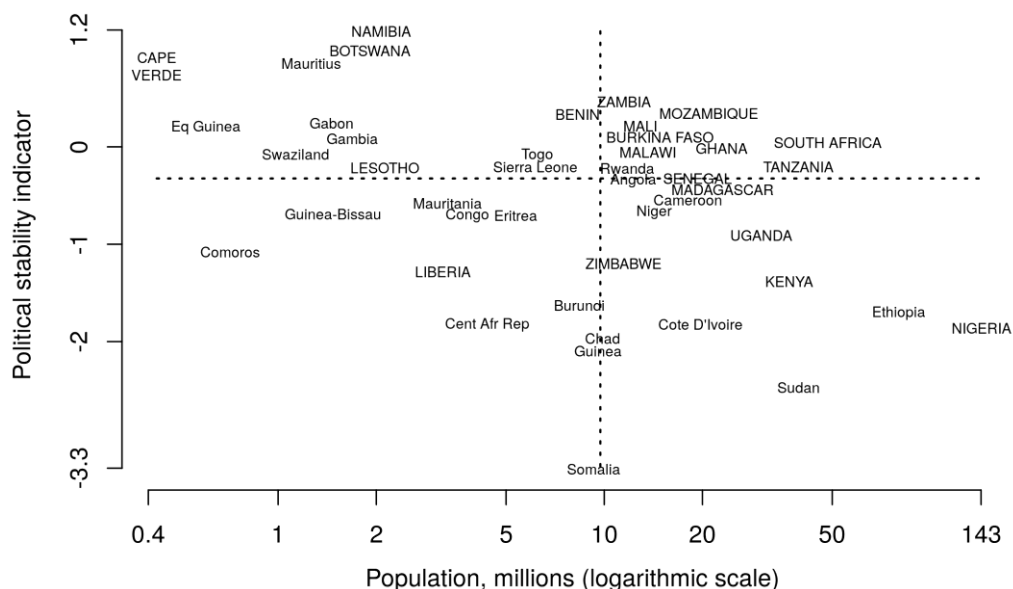


Figure 1: Size and stability of Afrobarometer Round 4 countries compared with other sub-Saharan African countries

A battery of questions in the Round 4 questionnaire probed people’s awareness and evaluations of international organisations. Each question began, “In your opinion, how much do each of the following do to help your country, or haven’t you heard enough to say?” The questionnaire then specified an organisation or a set of organisations, including “the United Nations,” “other international donors and NGOs (apart from the United Nations),” “the African Union,” and a relevant African sub-regional organisation for each country (the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS in English, CEDEAO in French) or the East African Community (EAC)). Respondents chose from five possible answers: “do nothing, no help,” “help a little bit,” “help somewhat,” “help a lot,” and “don’t know.” The first four options provide a scale of progressively more favourable evaluations; the fifth can be taken as an (imperfect) indicator of lack of awareness.

Respondents’ answers reflected their subjective perceptions of the organisations, if imperfectly. Imagine for example that a respondent believed the IMF and the World Bank had harmed his or her country’s economy. Since the IMF and the World Bank are not mentioned specifically in the questions, should this person blame “the UN” or blame “other international donors ... (apart from the UN)”? Even for a specialist in international relations, the dilemma would not be trivial. According to the UN itself, the

IMF and the World Bank lie in an institutional grey area: “specialized agencies” within the “UN system” that “are autonomous organisations” but whose work is coordinated through UN structures (UN, Public Information Office 2017). A further complication is that the respondent’s available answers are framed as degrees of “helpfulness” starting from “no help,” without offering an explicit “harmful” option. Whatever answers actual respondents gave, they are general impressions about potentially complex issues, guided in part by the design of the questionnaire. These caveats aside, comparing responses aggregated within large, representative samples for each country can reveal distinct cross-national patterns in perceptions of international organisations.

Public Evaluations and Awareness of International Organisations

I characterise the distribution of perceptions of international organisations in a country in two primary dimensions. The first is public *awareness* of an organisation, measured as the proportion of people who could rate the organisation’s impact—that is, the proportion who did not answer “don’t know.” The second is the public *evaluation* of an organisation, measured as an average zero-to-one rating among those who did not answer “don’t know”.³ (To adjust for “endpoint aversion” on the ordinal scale, I assign numerical codes based on the logistic function that modestly accentuates “extreme” responses: “no help” coded as 0.00, “little help” as 0.35, “some help” as 0.65, and “a lot of help” as 1.00.)

Within each country the diversity of respondents’ views about an international organisation can be represented as a single point inside an equilateral triangle. Each corner of the triangle (lower-left, lower-right, and top) represents a perfectly unanimous set of responses. If everyone in a country were to say that an organisation gives “no help,” the most negative distribution of evaluations possible, the country would be located precisely in the lower-left corner of the triangle. If everyone in a country were to say that an organisation “helps a lot,” the most positive distribution of evaluations possible, the country would be located precisely in the lower-right corner of the triangle. And if everyone in a country were to say “don’t know,” the distribution showing the least awareness possible, the country would be located precisely in the top corner of the triangle. Such unanimity rarely occurs in the real world; any large national survey will yield mixed responses. Any particular “ternary” (three-component) mix corresponds with a unique point within the triangle, its precise location determined by the “pull” of each of the three corners.

Applying these principles, Figure 2 shows public awareness and evaluations of organisations by country (by three-letter code). The two triangular panels on the left summarise perceptions of global organisations whereas the two panels on the right

3 For a similar approach to measuring public awareness and evaluations of international organisations using Afrobarometer Round 2 data, see Afrobarometer (2003).

summarise perceptions of regional and sub-regional organisations. The vertical spread of countries within each triangle reflects differences in awareness, and the horizontal spread reflects differences in evaluation. Across all four organisations, only about a third of those surveyed gave “don’t know” answers, but variation in public awareness was considerable. Awareness of the UN was very high in Namibia (NAM) and Liberia (LBR), which are near the bottom of the triangle in the top-left of the figure. But it was very low in Malawi (MWI), which is near the top of the same triangle. Evaluations of all four organisations fall in the right (more favourable) half of the triangles for nearly all countries. More people in these countries thought that international organisations help “a lot” or “some” than that they help “not at all” or “a little.” Evaluations were more positive for the global organisations than for the regional and sub-regional ones, but again large differences existed from country to country.

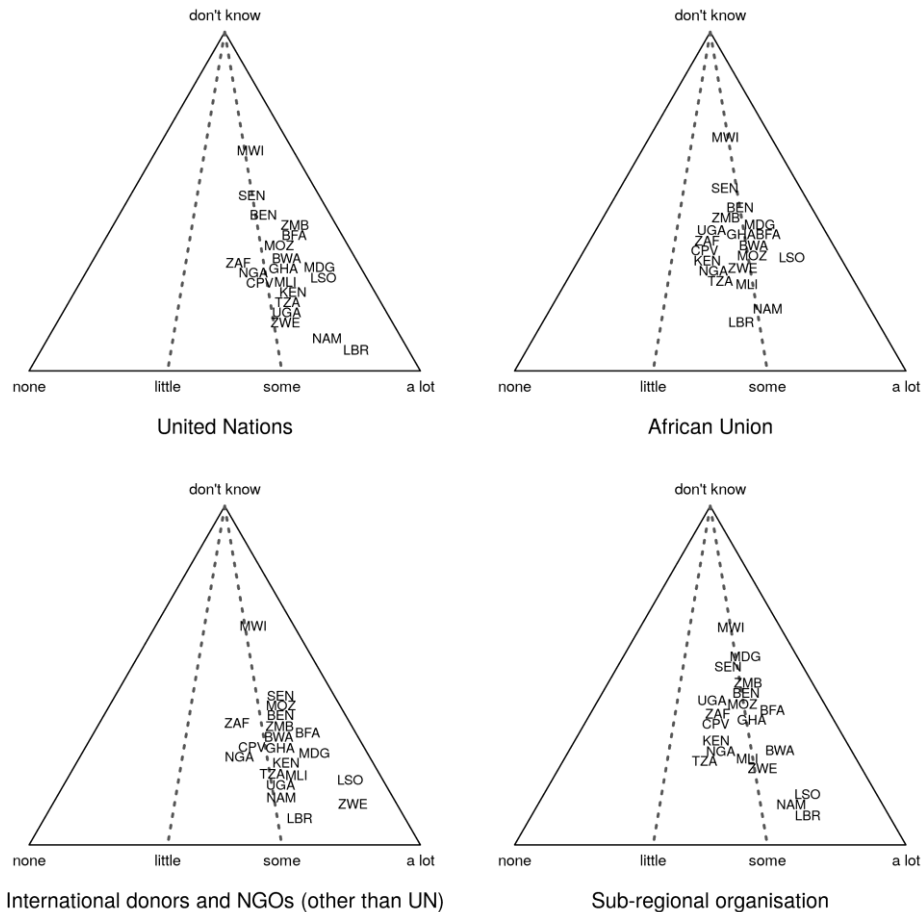


Figure 2: Public views about how much international organisations “help your country”

The four triangles in Figure 2 summarise my principal descriptive indicators of the evaluations and awareness of international organisations. They are based on more than 100,000 data points—that is, more than 25,000 Afrobarometer respondents each answering four questions. (I report the numerical values of the indicators, along with the three-letter country codes, in Table 1 in the Appendix.) The rest of the article seeks to illuminate correlates (and possible causes) of these patterns, using cross-national data mainly drawn from other sources, frequently referring to the patterns in Figure 2.

Country size

Residents of larger African countries tended to regard international organisations as less helpful than did residents of smaller countries. This pattern holds if country size is measured by population, but it is even more pronounced if size is measured by economic output. South Africa (ZAF) and Nigeria (NGA) have by far the largest gross domestic products (GDPs) in sub-Saharan Africa. The two panels on the left of Figure 2 show that South Africans and Nigerians rated the helpfulness of global organisations lower than did residents of any other Afrobarometer countries. Although South Africa and Nigeria are leading powers within the African Union and their respective sub-regional blocs, their people also expressed lukewarm views of these organisations. Residents of the leading powers of the EAC, Kenya (KEN), Tanzania (TZA) and Uganda (UGA),⁴ were similarly unimpressed by regional and sub-regional organisations, as shown in the bottom-right panel of Figure 2.

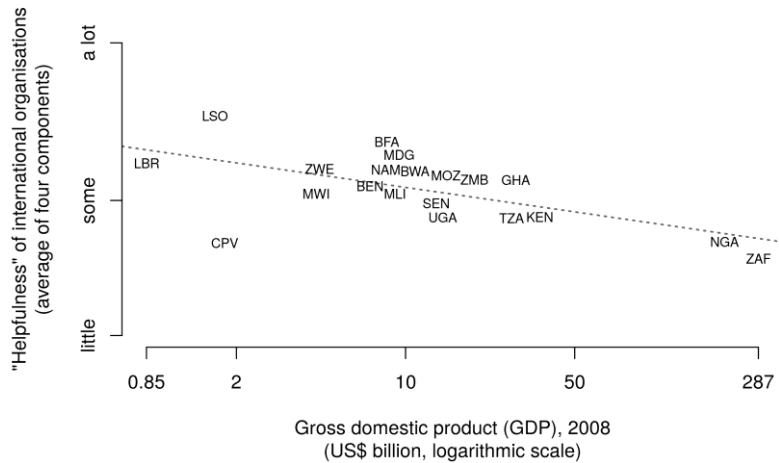


Figure 3: Economic output and public perceptions of international organisations

4 The three countries were the founding members of the EAC, revived in 2001. In 2008, among Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, respective shares of GDP were 46 per cent, 32 per cent and 22 per cent, and respective shares of population were 34 per cent, 38 per cent, and 28 per cent. The EAC has expanded to include Rwanda and Burundi (not included in Afrobarometer Round 4).

That country size and evaluations of international organisations are negatively associated shows up clearly in Figure 3. The measure of perceived helpfulness on the vertical axis is a simple average of the four “helpfulness” scores underlying Figure 2 (excluding “don’t know” answers). The measure of country size on the horizontal axis is total GDP (scaled logarithmically). Nigeria and South Africa are in the lower-right, given their large economies and low levels of perceived helpfulness. Most other countries are in a downward-sloping “cloud” near the middle of the graph. Cape Verde, a small island country whose people are unusually unenthusiastic about African and global organisations, is the main outlier.⁵ The dotted regression line tracks the tendency for those living in countries with larger economies to see international organisations as less helpful.

Peacekeeping and Development Aid

Two crucial ways international organisations assist African countries are through peacekeeping operations and development aid. Sub-Saharan Africa has attracted more international peacekeeping operations and receives far more official development assistance (ODA) as a share of national income than does any other major region (International Peace Institute 2017; World Bank 2017). Large-scale external intervention and assistance have become established features of the political economy of Africa. It is worth exploring how they relate to perceptions of international organisations.

Awareness and favourable perceptions of the UN predominated in two countries (Liberia and Namibia) where the UN has deployed high-profile peacekeeping operations. The UN Mission in Liberia had been in place for nearly five years when the Afrobarometer survey was conducted in late 2008, having taken the reins from a prior ECOWAS peacekeeping operation in 2003. The UN Mission in Liberia consisted of about 10,000 military and civilian personnel, promoting postwar peace-building and reconstruction. Goodwill toward the UN extended to ECOWAS, as shown in the bottom-right panel of Figure 2. In Namibia, the Afrobarometer survey came nearly two decades after the high point of UN involvement. The UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), made up of about 8,000 personnel, ran the country’s 1990 founding elections. The elections were a culmination of many decades of UN General Assembly opposition to South African rule in Namibia. Vigorous UN presence at critical political junctures in Liberia and Namibia translated into widespread public awareness and sympathy for the organisation.

5 With close ties to its former colonial power, Portugal, Cape Verde has “special partner” status within the European Union. Its ECOWAS membership has been a source of controversy, as some have seen it as contributing to the country’s status as a staging point for illegal immigration and drug trade between West Africa and Europe (see “Cape Verde Wants Special Status at ECOWAS” (2007) and “Cape Verde-EU Partnership Reached” (2010)).

The impact of development aid on public perceptions is more ambivalent than the impact of peacekeeping operations. Figure 4 has evaluations of “international donors and NGOs” on the vertical axis and a measure of aid dependence (ODA as a proportion of gross national income (GNI)) on the horizontal axis.⁶ The dotted regression line slopes upward, meaning that people in countries that receive more aid are more likely to see international donors as helpful. Yet the line does not fit the pattern very well. For countries on the left half of the graph, countries that receive ODA of less than 10 per cent of GNI, the actual slope of the association between aid and perceived helpfulness is steeper than the regression line. For countries on the right half, the association is much flatter, perhaps even negative. Aid seems to generate positive public sentiment toward donors up to a point (about one-tenth of GNI), above which the effect of additional aid is at best ambivalent. For example, people in Mozambique (MOZ) and Malawi, countries that have received ODA of about 20 per cent of GNI, do not regard donors any more positively than people in countries that receive half as much aid do.

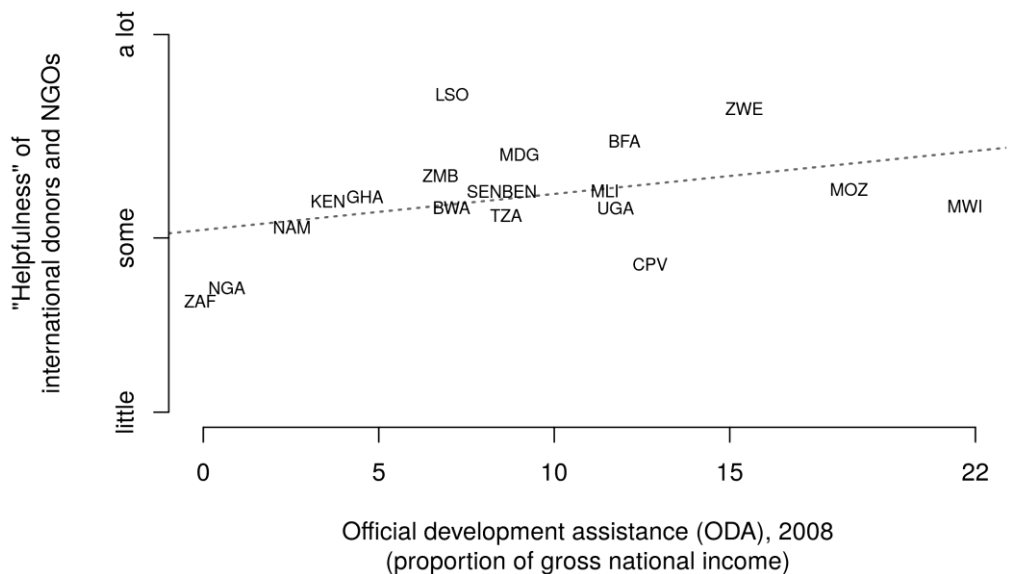


Figure 4: Development aid receipts and perceptions of international donors and NGOs

Declining “returns” to aid seem to reflect public concerns that large aid inflows give international donors too much clout over recipient governments. The survey included a question about whether “international donors and NGOs ... have too little, too much, or

6 Liberia is an extreme outlier on “aid dependence” in 2008, receiving ODA equal to about 150 per cent of GNI, whereas the perceived helpfulness of donors (other than the UN) in Liberia is very similar to a country like Kenya. Liberia is excluded from Figure 4 to clarify the association between aid and perceptions in the other 19 Afrobarometer countries.

about the right amount of influence over your government,” with responses on a five-point scale from “far too little” to “far too much,” centred on “about the right amount.” Figure 5 shows the relationship between public perceptions of the *influence on government* of international donors and NGOs on the one hand, and public evaluations of their *helpfulness to the country* on the other. The dotted regression line confirms a strong, positive association: where people see international donors and NGOs as being more helpful to their country, they also see them as exerting more influence on government. In nearly half the countries, respondents perceive a trade-off between the “helpfulness” of development aid and the danger of ceding excessive influence to external actors.⁷

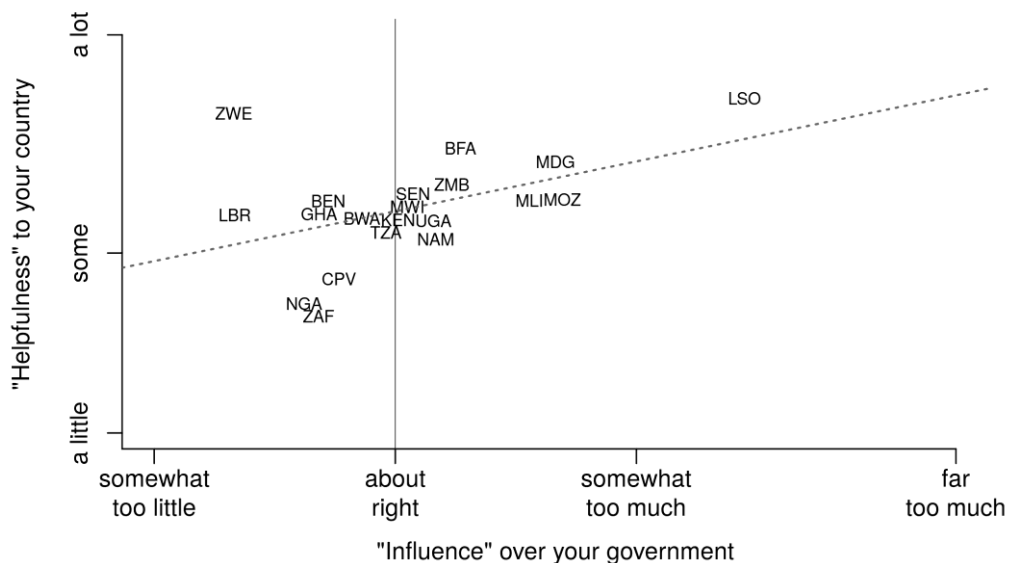


Figure 5: Public perceptions of international donors and NGOs

A few examples illustrate the relationship between aid and public perceptions of donors. Mozambicans and Malawians, residents of the two largest aid recipients as shown in Figure 4, saw “too much” international donor and NGO influence. This seems to account for their tepid evaluations of the helpfulness of aid to their countries. Lesotho does not receive as much aid, but survey responses show that international donors and NGOs are very visible. Public perceptions exemplify the double-edged sword of development aid in Africa: the people of Lesotho see donors as helpful but also as

7 For more on tensions between aid and accountable governance, see Moss, Pettersson, and Van de Walle (2006).

exerting much too much influence over their government. Zimbabwe (ZWE) is a notable outlier in the upper left of Figure 5, reflecting the political crisis that prevailed in the country in 2008. Fiercely contested elections marred by widespread violence culminated in a tense “unity” government incorporating Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Morgan Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Donors provided ODA equal to nearly 15 per cent of GNI in 2008, but Zimbabweans remained deeply disappointed by the so-called “unity” government’s performance. Surveyed in early 2009, they evaluated international donors and NGOs favourably but complained of *too little* external influence on their government.

Public Awareness of International Organisations

Public awareness is reflected in citizens’ ability to form opinions about individual international organisations and in their ability to distinguish among different organisations. Differentiation is a more demanding standard of awareness, since it presupposes the ability to form distinct opinions about individual organisations or sets of organisations. In practice, simple awareness is highly correlated with differentiation: countries where more people express opinions about international organisations also tend to be countries where more people differentiate among organisations. Whatever the standard, the underlying evidence is indirect, as the survey data contain no yardstick of “informedness” against which respondents’ answers can be judged.⁸ Yet clear patterns emerge from the data, and it is worth exploring why.

Roughly one-third of Afrobarometer respondents said they “don’t know” how helpful the major international organisations in Figure 2 are to their countries. Global organisations elicited more opinions than regional and sub-regional organisations did. Greatest awareness was of international donors and NGOs, with 71 per cent of respondents expressing opinions. The UN was a close second with 69 per cent. By comparison, 66 per cent expressed opinions about sub-regional organisations, and 63 per cent expressed opinions about the AU. The average of the four indicators of awareness is 67 per cent. A tougher measure of awareness is whether a respondent differentiates between organisations, for example by saying that the UN helps “a lot” and that the AU helps “some,” or by saying that the AU helps “a little” while admitting that he or she does not know how helpful sub-regional organisations are. Among Afrobarometer respondents, 40 per cent differentiated in this way. So, while about two-thirds of respondents met the original “did not answer ‘don’t know’” criterion of awareness, only about two-fifths distinguished among organisations in their assessments.

8 For a detailed discussion of the challenge of measuring “political knowledge,” see Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996, 62–104).

Despite differences in the toughness of the two measures, they correlate closely with each other (cross-national correlation coefficient of 0.80). Country rankings based on either measure are therefore similar (see Table 2 in the Appendix). Differentiation was greatest in Liberia (65%), followed by Namibia (64%)—countries in which the UN attracted unusually widespread awareness and unusually favourable evaluations. Liberians and Namibians also viewed other international organisations favourably, but the UN stood out. Third highest on differentiation was crisis-hit Zimbabwe, reflecting widely favourable views toward international donors and NGOs, contrasted with widely sceptical views of the AU. Rounding out the top six were Kenya (56%), Tanzania (53%), and Uganda (52%). Respondents in these countries differentiated mainly by rating global organisations as more helpful than regional ones—including the EAC, of which their governments are leading members.

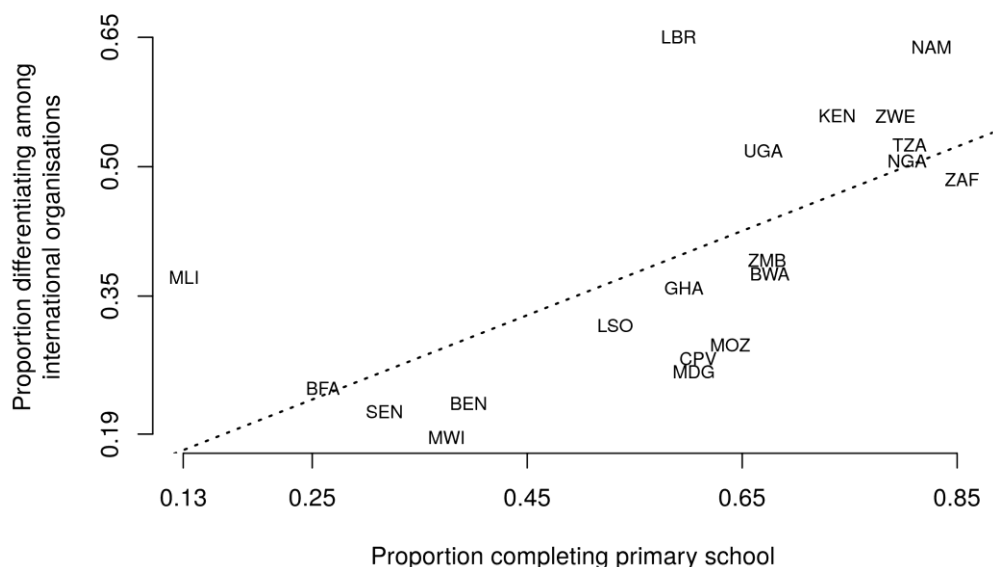


Figure 6: Formal schooling and differentiation among international organisations

A strong individual-level predictor of awareness of international organisations is formal schooling, especially completion of primary school. Among all Afrobarometer respondents, those who completed primary school were 29 per cent more likely to say that they “don’t know” about any particular international organisation, and they were 26 per cent less likely to differentiate among organisations. These differences reflect the specific value of literacy and basic education and other social advantages correlated with formal schooling. Figure 6 shows that national primary-school completion rates are closely associated with national public awareness of international organisations. Education is far from the only factor. Liberians were much more aware of international organisations than the people of island countries like Madagascar and Cape Verde are, for example, despite similar records of primary education. And Malawians’ awareness

of international organisations is exceptionally low, even after accounting for the fact that it has the lowest level of primary education and least urbanised population of Afrobarometer countries. Their lack of awareness is likely due in part to the country's regional isolation during the long reign of founding president Hastings Kamuzu Banda.⁹

Conclusion

International organisations are ubiquitous in Africa. By analysing Afrobarometer Round 4 survey data collected in 2008 and 2009, this article has established baseline estimates of what ordinary people in Africa think of them. Enthusiasm is far from unanimous, but popular views of global, regional and sub-regional organisations are generally favourable, with little sign of widespread resentment. Roughly two-thirds of those surveyed expressed opinions about the helpfulness of major international organisations in their countries, and the proportion is significantly higher for those with at least primary-school education. Afrobarometer countries tend to be larger and more politically stable than the region as a whole, but the survey responses of more than 27,000 respondents spread over 20 countries carry much information about what Africans think about international organisations.

Awareness of as well as support for international organisations is greatest in countries where international organisations have intervened to address domestic political crises. The Liberian survey, conducted at a time when roughly 10,000 UN peacekeeping personnel were on the ground in the country and when aid for post-conflict reconstruction far exceeded the country's GDP, is instructive. Liberians were acutely aware and supportive of the UN, as they were of ECOWAS and other donors. Zimbabwe differed in that international donors and NGOs and not the UN were the lead international actors addressing a tense political crisis. Namibia differed in that peak UN involvement came nearly 20 years before the survey. Yet all three cases show that ordinary Africans appreciate international involvement most where it addresses a fundamental crisis in the functioning or legitimacy of domestic state authority.

Popular enthusiasm for international involvement to address domestic political crises does not extend unambiguously to international aid under more "mundane" conditions. The African public generally regards international donors and NGOs as helpful, and people in countries that receive more aid tend to see them as more helpful. Yet the relationship between aid and perceived helpfulness is far from automatic, and residents of non-crisis countries receiving large aid flows often complain that external donors are exerting too much influence over their governments. This pattern reinforces the view

9 Malawi's geographical vulnerability led Banda to maintain diplomatic relations with apartheid South Africa, which severely isolated the country regionally. The University of Malawi did not offer courses in political science while Banda was president, reportedly because Banda claimed personally to know everything Malawians needed to know about politics (personal communication, Blessings Chinsinga, lecturer in politics at the University of Malawi, 2011).

that aid externalises government accountability, making governments more accountable to international benefactors than they are to their own people. Lesotho illustrates the trade-off starkly. At first glance, Basotho appreciation of international donors and NGOs seems to be “off the charts,” but positive ratings on “helpfulness” mask deep concerns about external influence over their government.

Prospects for greater engagement between African governments and international organisations may be complicated by public scepticism in Africa’s most powerful countries. Theories of international cooperation emphasise the benefits that accrue to leading states, but they also emphasise the need for leading states to exhibit enlightened self-interest, promoting cooperation by making financial contributions and accepting international rules that impinge upon their sovereignty.¹⁰ Such visible sacrifices make it difficult for governments to mobilise domestic constituencies. Difficulties of this kind are evident in South Africa and Nigeria, where many respondents doubt the helpfulness of international organisations. A similar pattern emerges in East Africa, where Kenyans, Tanzanians and Ugandans do not see the EAC as particularly helpful.

That Africa’s international relations are characterised by organisation density rivalling more economically advanced regions is just beginning to be recognised by scholars in the field of international organisation. Although the depth of ordinary people’s knowledge of these developments remains less than clear, this article has revealed broad public awareness of international organisations, especially among adults with at least a primary education. Research that directly probes how well the people of Africa are informed about global and regional organisations, and research extending beyond the Afrobarometer Round 4 countries, can further clarify popular perceptions of international organisations in Africa. The only Round 4 question analysed in this article repeated in Round 6 (conducted in 2016) was the one about the helpfulness of the AU. My preliminary analysis of this single item shows that while public awareness has increased gradually in most countries, evaluations of the AU have been fluid over the decade since the Round 4 data were collected. In light of this fluidity, which may extend to popular perceptions of other organisations, collecting updated data would be a worthwhile contribution to the understanding of Africa’s international relations.

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10 For a theoretical overview, see Mattli (1999); for an application to Africa, see Moshoeshe (2012).

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Appendix

Table 1: Characteristics of countries in Afrobarometer Round 4, 2008

Country	Code	Political stability(index)	Population (millions)	GDP(US\$billion)	Aid (ODA/GNI)	Primary school (proportion)
Benin	BEN	0.33	9.0	7.1	0.09	0.40
Botswana	BWA	0.98	2.0	10.9	0.07	0.68
Burkina Faso	BFA	0.10	14.7	8.4	0.12	0.26
Cape Verde	CPV	0.83	0.5	1.8	0.13	0.61
Ghana	GHA	-0.01	23.1	28.5	0.05	0.60
Kenya	KEN	-1.38	38.2	35.9	0.04	0.74
Lesotho	LSO	-0.22	2.0	1.6	0.07	0.53
Liberia	LBR	-1.28	3.7	0.9	1.81	0.59
Madagascar	MDG	-0.49	19.9	9.4	0.09	0.60
Malawi	MWI	-0.06	13.9	4.3	0.22	0.37
Mali	MLI	0.18	14.2	8.7	0.11	0.13
Mozambique	MOZ	0.34	23.0	11.5	0.18	0.62
Namibia	NAM	1.19	2.1	8.5	0.03	0.83
Nigeria	NGA	-1.86	151.1	208.1	0.01	0.80
Senegal	SEN	-0.15	12.2	13.4	0.08	0.32
South Africa	ZAF	0.04	49.3	286.8	<0.005	0.85
Tanzania	TZA	-0.21	42.8	27.4	0.09	0.81
Uganda	UGA	-0.91	31.0	14.2	0.12	0.67
Zambia	ZMB	0.46	13.1	17.9	0.07	0.67
Zimbabwe	ZWE	-1.20	13.5	4.4	0.15	0.79

Notes: “Political stability (and absence of violence)” is from World Bank 2015; “population,” “GDP,” and “aid” are from World Bank 2017; “primary school completion” is the sample frequency, calculated directly from Afrobarometer Round 4.

Table 2: Awareness of international organisations, 2008–2009

Country	UN		Donor/NGO		AU		Sub-region	
BEN	0.54	(0.02)	0.62	(0.02)	0.52	(0.02)	0.55	(0.02)
BWA	0.67	(0.02)	0.68	(0.02)	0.63	(0.02)	0.72	(0.02)
BFA	0.60	(0.02)	0.67	(0.02)	0.60	(0.02)	0.60	(0.02)
CPV	0.74	(0.02)	0.71	(0.02)	0.64	(0.02)	0.64	(0.02)
GHA	0.67	(0.02)	0.68	(0.02)	0.61	(0.02)	0.63	(0.02)
KEN	0.77	(0.02)	0.76	(0.01)	0.65	(0.02)	0.69	(0.02)
LSO	0.73	(0.01)	0.81	(0.01)	0.66	(0.01)	0.85	(0.01)
LBR	0.94	(0.01)	0.92	(0.01)	0.86	(0.01)	0.91	(0.01)
MDG	0.71	(0.02)	0.74	(0.02)	0.61	(0.03)	0.44	(0.03)
MWI	0.35	(0.02)	0.35	(0.02)	0.31	(0.02)	0.36	(0.02)
MLI	0.76	(0.01)	0.79	(0.01)	0.74	(0.01)	0.74	(0.01)
MOZ	0.61	(0.02)	0.60	(0.02)	0.61	(0.02)	0.59	(0.02)
NAM	0.90	(0.01)	0.86	(0.01)	0.82	(0.01)	0.88	(0.01)
NGA	0.74	(0.01)	0.71	(0.01)	0.70	(0.01)	0.73	(0.01)
SEN	0.48	(0.02)	0.57	(0.02)	0.46	(0.02)	0.45	(0.02)
ZAF	0.69	(0.01)	0.64	(0.02)	0.65	(0.01)	0.65	(0.01)
TZA	0.79	(0.01)	0.79	(0.02)	0.70	(0.02)	0.69	(0.02)
UGA	0.79	(0.01)	0.79	(0.01)	0.63	(0.02)	0.67	(0.02)
ZMB	0.64	(0.02)	0.64	(0.02)	0.50	(0.02)	0.54	(0.02)
ZWE	0.75	(0.01)	0.88	(0.01)	0.66	(0.01)	0.77	(0.01)

Notes: UN = United Nations; NGO = Non-governmental organisation; AU = African Union; BEN = Benin; BWA = Botswana; BFA = Burkina Faso; CPV = Cape Verde; GHA = Ghana; KEN = Kenya; LSO = Lesotho; LBR = Liberia; MDG = Madagascar; MWI = Malawi; MLI = Mali; MOZ = Mozambique; NAM = Namibia; NGA = Nigeria; SEN = Senegal; ZAF = South Africa; TZA = Tanzania; UGA = Uganda; ZMB = Zambia; ZWE = Zimbabwe.

Calculated from Afrobarometer Round 4 data. Indicators are scaled from zero to one. Standard errors are in parentheses, design-adjusted to account for sample stratification, clustering, and weights.

Table 3: Perceived helpfulness of international organisations, 2008–2009

Code	UN		Donor/NGO		AU		Sub-region	
BEN	0.68	(0.04)	0.73	(0.03)	0.65	(0.04)	0.67	(0.04)
BWA	0.74	(0.05)	0.70	(0.04)	0.68	(0.05)	0.75	(0.04)
BFA	0.79	(0.03)	0.82	(0.03)	0.75	(0.03)	0.76	(0.03)
CPV	0.62	(0.04)	0.60	(0.04)	0.48	(0.05)	0.52	(0.05)
GHA	0.74	(0.04)	0.72	(0.04)	0.65	(0.04)	0.67	(0.04)
KEN	0.73	(0.04)	0.71	(0.04)	0.50	(0.05)	0.52	(0.05)
LSO	0.85	(0.03)	0.90	(0.02)	0.81	(0.03)	0.79	(0.04)
LBR	0.86	(0.03)	0.71	(0.04)	0.59	(0.04)	0.77	(0.04)
MDG	0.80	(0.04)	0.79	(0.04)	0.71	(0.05)	0.70	(0.06)
MWI	0.69	(0.05)	0.70	(0.04)	0.62	(0.05)	0.65	(0.05)
MLI	0.69	(0.03)	0.73	(0.04)	0.63	(0.04)	0.63	(0.04)
MOZ	0.74	(0.06)	0.73	(0.05)	0.69	(0.06)	0.70	(0.06)
NAM	0.79	(0.02)	0.67	(0.03)	0.68	(0.03)	0.73	(0.03)
NGA	0.59	(0.04)	0.56	(0.03)	0.52	(0.04)	0.56	(0.03)
SEN	0.64	(0.05)	0.73	(0.04)	0.58	(0.04)	0.62	(0.04)
ZAF	0.55	(0.04)	0.55	(0.04)	0.47	(0.05)	0.52	(0.04)
TZA	0.71	(0.04)	0.69	(0.04)	0.57	(0.04)	0.48	(0.04)
UGA	0.72	(0.01)	0.70	(0.03)	0.52	(0.04)	0.51	(0.04)
ZMB	0.78	(0.03)	0.76	(0.04)	0.59	(0.06)	0.66	(0.05)
ZWE	0.72	(0.04)	0.87	(0.03)	0.60	(0.04)	0.68	(0.03)

Notes: UN = United Nations; NGO = Non-governmental organisation; AU = African Union; BEN = Benin; BWA = Botswana; BFA = Burkina Faso; CPV = Cape Verde; GHA = Ghana; KEN = Kenya; LSO = Lesotho; LBR = Liberia; MDG = Madagascar; MWI = Malawi; MLI = Mali; MOZ = Mozambique; NAM = Namibia; NGA = Nigeria; SEN = Senegal; ZAF = South Africa; TZA = Tanzania; UGA = Uganda; ZMB = Zambia; ZWE = Zimbabwe.

Calculated from Afrobarometer Round 4 data. Indicators are scaled from zero to one. Standard errors are in parentheses, design-adjusted to account for sample stratification, clustering, and weights.

Table 4: Differentiation among organisations and perceived donor/NGO influence, 2008–2009

Country	Differentiation among organisations		Donor/NGO influence on government	
Benin	0.23	(0.01)	0.44	(0.01)
Botswana	0.38	(0.02)	0.47	(0.01)
Burkina Faso	0.24	(0.01)	0.56	(0.01)
Cape Verde	0.28	(0.01)	0.45	(0.01)
Ghana	0.36	(0.02)	0.45	(0.01)
Kenya	0.56	(0.02)	0.49	(0.01)
Lesotho	0.32	(0.01)	0.81	(0.01)
Liberia	0.65	(0.02)	0.36	(0.01)
Madagascar	0.27	(0.02)	0.64	(0.01)
Malawi	0.19	(0.01)	0.50	(0.01)
Mali	0.37	(0.01)	0.62	(0.01)
Mozambique	0.29	(0.02)	0.65	(0.02)
Namibia	0.64	(0.01)	0.54	(0.01)
Nigeria	0.51	(0.01)	0.42	(0.01)
Senegal	0.22	(0.01)	0.50	(0.01)
South Africa	0.49	(0.02)	0.44	(0.01)
Tanzania	0.53	(0.02)	0.49	(0.01)
Uganda	0.52	(0.01)	0.54	(0.01)
Zambia	0.39	(0.02)	0.55	(0.01)
Zimbabwe	0.56	(0.01)	0.36	(0.01)

Notes: Calculated from Afrobarometer Round 4 data. For “donor/NGO influence” on government, 0.0 is “far too little,” 1.0 is “far too much,” and 0.5 is “about right.” Standard errors are in parentheses, design-adjusted to account for sample stratification, clustering, and weights.