Narrowing the Legitimacy Gap: Turnovers as a Cause of Democratic Consolidation

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Democratic consolidation depends on common perceptions of institutional legitimacy among citizens aligned with governing and opposition parties. Elections always result in winners and losers, but if they also create subservient insiders and aggrieved outsiders, the future of the democratic system will be uncertain. This article theorizes about why certain electoral qualities (elections that produce turnovers, are peaceful, accepted by opposition parties, and free and fair) should reduce winner-loser gaps in perceived institutional legitimacy. The hypotheses are tested using a hierarchical two-step statistical procedure to analyze three rounds of Afrobarometer microlevel data combined with national-level data on African elections between 1989 and 2006. The analyses indicate that electoral turnovers (and only turnovers) have a significant moderating effect on the citizenry. Following alternations of power, winners and losers converge in their attitudes about their institutions, thus furthering the consolidation of democracy.

Over the past few decades there have been major political changes throughout the world, most notably the proliferation of multiparty elections in former authoritarian states. According to Freedom House (2009), 119 nations are now "electoral" democracies, meaning that they live up to a minimum definition of "polyarchic" (Dahl 1971) democracy. In response to the electoral revolution, many academics turned their attention to the causes and consequences of (sometimes flawed) electoral contests in Africa and elsewhere.[1] Scholars now agree that the introduction of multiparty elections does not guarantee democratic consolidation, but the relationship between elections and democratic trajectories is not yet clear.

Regardless of whether democratic consolidation is conceived of as "institutionalized uncertainty" (Przeworski 1986, 57–61) or as "making democracy the only game in town" (Linz 1990), it requires a self-enforcing equilibrium where elites on opposing sides comply with the democratic rules because the alternatives (such as revolt or manipulation of electoral procedures) are deemed less beneficial (Przeworski 1986, 2005). Ruling and opposition elites face greater incentives to play by the rules of the democratic game when citizens maintain moderate perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Boosting support for democratic institutions among citizens on the losing side is beneficial so that they do not disengage from formal political structures or support destabilizing interventions by opposition elites. However, it is equally important that citizens on the winning side do not become so euphoric about their electoral fortunes that they forfeit their critical capacities, ignore the performance of their government, and give their leaders carte blanche to tamper with democratic rules. Subservient insiders are just as dangerous for democratic development as aggrieved outsiders. Thus, democratic consolidation is facilitated by bringing "winners,"

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[1]Without any pretence of being representative, a list of this new kind of research on democracy in Africa published in the past few years includes: power sharing and democratic stability (Gazibo 2006, Lemarchand 2007; Lindberg 2005), women's representation (Bauer and Britton 2006; Lindberg 2004; Yoon and Bunwaree 2005); influence of corruption and clientelism on democratic procedures (Blake and Martin 2006) role of elections in peace making (Lyons 2005); Roeder and Rothchild 2005), party systems and democratic stability (Ishiyama and Quinn 2006; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005; Lindberg 2007), voter attitudes and behavior (Afrobarometer's working papers and journal articles following them; Lindberg and Morrison 2006, 2008; Moehler 2006); and effects of ethnicity on democracy (e.g., Paden 2005; Posner 2005).

"independents," and "losers"[2] of the electoral game towards a shared appreciation of the legitimacy of their government institutions.

What causes gaps between winners and losers in emerging democracies to narrow so that citizens aligned with competing parties move closer to each other in how they evaluate the legitimacy of state institutions? This article develops a theoretical argument about why various qualities and outcomes of elections (elections that produce turnovers, are peaceful, accepted by opposition parties, and free and fair) should reduce winner-loser gaps in perceived institutional legitimacy. The hypotheses are tested using a hierarchical two-step statistical procedure to analyze three rounds of Afrobarometer (AB) microlevel data combined with a national-level data set on elections held between 1989 and 2006 in Sub-Saharan Africa (hereafter referred to as Africa).[3]

The results show that in nearly every African country for which there is data, winners and losers on average have highly polarized perceptions of the legitimacy of their political institutions. Winners tend to view their constitutions, courts, police, and so on as *much* more trustworthy, accountable, worthy of consent, representative, and satisfactory (in short, legitimate) while losers tend to seriously question institutional probity. The African status quo is dangerous for democracy; such sanguine winners are unlikely to sanction favored leaders who chip away at democracy, while disenchanted losers may be more likely to support electorally defeated elites who decide to pursue power by undemocratic means. More importantly, this article suggests a single plausible antidote: electoral turnovers have a significant moderating effect on the citizens as winners and losers converge in their attitudes about the legitimacy of their state institutions thus creating incentives for elites on both sides to comply with the rules of the democratic game. These results give new meaning to Huntington's

"two-turnover-test." Not only are turnovers indicators that elites have accepted democracy, as Huntington (1991) argued, but power alternations also appear to generate shared levels of legitimacy between winners and losers in the general population, thus furthering democratic consolidation.

The remainder of this paper first discusses briefly the literature on elections and democracy and the focus on winner-loser gaps in perceived institutional legitimacy. The second section presents the theoretical arguments about how the four electoral qualities are expected to influence popular legitimacy, and the third section describes the data and measurement. The fourth section explains the multilevel model, presents the empirical results, and describes empirical tests of alternative explanations. It concludes by summarizing the findings and discussing implications of this research.

Elections, Democracy, and Legitimacy

Initial research on the third wave typically treated elections only as *indicators* of democratization. For example, O'Donnell and Schmitter's (1986) posited "founding" elections as the hallmark of a completed transition. Ensuing empirical work used aspects like number of elections, voter turnout, competitiveness, and turnovers as measures of either the degree of democratization (e.g., Barkan 2000; Linz and Stephan 1996; van de Walle 2002), the level or quality of democracy (e.g., Altman and Linán 2002; Foweraker and Landman 2002), or the consolidation of democracy (e.g., Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Diamond 1999; Günther, Diamandouros, and Puhle 1995).[4]

More recently, several global as well as regional studies have come to the conclusion that elections do play an important causal role in furthering democratization and consolidation (e.g., Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Hadenius and Torell 2007; Howard and Roessler 2006; Lindberg 2006; Schedler 2002). However, this literature has not successfully disentangled the causal mechanisms involved.[5] The present inquiry seeks to

[2]Winners are understood here as citizens who feel close to the political party whose representative(s) form the government after a particular election. Independents are citizens who do not feel close to any party and losers feel close to a political party whose representative(s) are not in the ruling coalition. Other conceptualizations could include individuals who actually vote for the parties in an out of government, those who did or did not benefit from policies enacted, or just the official members of ruling and opposition parties. Lack of data, however, precludes any testing of alternative definitions. Coding of winning and losing parties is based on who obtained power following the elections regardless of whether they "won" fairly or not. Data on who would have won absent fraud is usually not reliable.

[3]Specifically, the model evaluates the interactive effects of electoral qualities and being a winner, independent, or loser on perceived institutional legitimacy.

[4]Some soon noted that elections alone do not a democracy make (Karl 1986) and that an exclusive focus on elections risks precluding attention to other important issues of democratization (e.g., Carothers 2002).

[5]In a recent volume (Lindberg 2009) dedicated to evaluating the role of elections in democratization, several suggestions about causal mechanisms are made by authors such as Valerie Bunce, Sharon Wolchick, Andreas Schedler, Nicolas van de Walle, Lise Rakner, Pippa Norris, and Staffan I. Lindberg. However, no systematic tests of those hypotheses about mechanisms are conducted.

advance knowledge precisely in this regard. Do certain electoral characteristics serve as missing causal links by which the repetition of elections contribute to legitimating political institutions and thus further democratic consolidation?

The exercise of political power is generally viewed to be legitimate when it is in accordance with existing rules justified by shared beliefs and when citizens consent to the arrangement (e.g., Baird 2001; Beetham 1991, 16; Gibson and Caldeira 1995). This study therefore uses survey data on popular perceptions of state institutions to gauge their legitimacy.

Why Focus on Winner-Loser Gaps in Institutional Legitimacy?

In theory, elections are thought to enhance legitimacy by providing citizens with fair procedures to select leaders and hold officials accountable (e.g., Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). In practice, however, elections typically have uneven effects and winners tend to be happier than losers with political outcomes (leaders, policies, and institutions). Winner-loser gaps have been identified across a wide range of citizen attitudes and opinions.[6] One should not be surprised or concerned that winners and losers feel differently about the leaders and policies for which they did or did not vote. However, theory indicates that large gaps in perceived legitimacy of the *system* are troubling particularly for developing democracies and recent studies of emerging democracies in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia[7] suggest that gaps are particularly large in these political systems (Anderson et al. 2005, 108–09; Moehler 2009). Therefore, this article focuses on gaps in perceived institutional legitimacy.

There are at least three reasons why winner-loser legitimacy gaps (as opposed to average levels of perceived legitimacy) should be the analytical focus for a study of consolidation in emerging democracies.

First, one should be concerned about the attitudes of losers because, all else equal, they have greater incentives to act against the current system (Anderson et al. 2005). Losers with low levels of institutional legitimacy or support for the democratic system are less likely to oppose a threat of revolt and may even actively participate in attempts to overthrow the regime (cf. Przeworski 1991, 2005).[8] Institutional legitimacy among losers is thus beneficial for regime stability and longevity in fragile polities because it represents "a reservoir of favorable attitudes or goodwill that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effects of which they see as damaging to their interests" (Easton 1965, 124–25).

Second, this more common concern regarding losers should be supplemented with an equally important attention to winners because inflated perceptions of legitimacy among citizens aligned with ruling elites can enable the gradual erosion of democratic institutions by insiders (Bunce 2002; O'Donnell 1992). Naïve, loyal, or complacent citizens who overestimate the quality of their political institutions are unlikely to monitor leaders, protest undemocratic behavior by incumbents, and advocate for greater democratic reforms. Such theoretical arguments regarding the importance of a critical citizenry (e.g., Bowler and Karp 2004; Citrin 1974; Cook, Hardin, and Levi 2005; Dalton 2004; Hardin 2002; Levi and Stoker 2000; Moehler 2008; Norris 1999) are reinforced by recent empirical analyses showing that African levels of institutional trust are similar to OECD levels, despite Africa's poor-performing institutions (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005, 229).[9] Additionally, Moehler (2009) finds that winners in Africa are less willing to defend press freedoms, judicial independence, and parliamentary elections if it means going against a government to which they feel attached, and Bratton et al. (2005, 235) note that institutional trust

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[6]The size of the gap varies considerably across attitude dimensions and regions. For recent examples, see: Anderson and Lotempio (2002); Anderson and Tverdova (2003); Anderson et al. (2005); Banducci and Karp (2003); Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2005); Cho and Bratton (2005); Craig et al. (2006); Klingemann and Fuchs (1995); Nadeau et al. (2000); and Norris (1999). Most empirical studies documenting winner-loser gaps examine advanced industrial democracies.

[7]The authors of *Losers' Consent* compare Eastern to Central Europe and also examine Mexico (Anderson et al. 2005). Bratton and his colleagues examine this topic in Africa (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Cho and Bratton 2005). The analysis in *Critical Citizens* includes Mexico, India, and Chile (Norris 1999, 230–32).

[8]Certainly other factors, such as economic interests, also affect whether citizens will support or resist rebellion by elites (Przeworski 2005). However, ceteris paribus, attitudes about the legitimacy of democratic institutions can also be influential. The argument that citizen attitudes have a causal effect on elite decisions to obey or reject democratic rules is somewhat at odds with Pzeworski's assertion that equilibrium culture is a result rather than a cause of elite calculations (2005, 269). However the argument is consistent with postulates that citizens' "distaste for physical insecurity" (257) or "preference for democracy, independent of income" (265) affect rebellion thresholds.

[9]Institutional trust in Africa is also higher than in most other hybrid or new democracies. For example, the various barometer surveys indicate that the mean level of trust in the courts was 49% in Africa, 36% in Latin America, and 25% in New Europe, though it was 56% in East Asia.

is associated with support for the single party state in Africa. Thus, unconditional allegiance can be dangerous for democratic development. Citizens aligned with the ruling party are especially vital for incentivizing leaders in power to preserve the democratic equilibrium because they have closer connections with incumbents and often constitute a plurality of the electorate.

Third, polarization of attitudes between insiders and outsiders makes tolerance, compromise, and cooperation more difficult to achieve across political lines (Sani and Sartori 1983). In polarized polities, reform attempts from one group are likely to be summarily rejected by citizens aligned with alternative parties. Political differences are more likely to end in stalemates or violent clashes when the attitudes of the mass citizenry are drastically divided along party lines, especially when political splits frequently coincide with ethno-linguistic divisions as in Africa (e.g., Green 2006; Posner 2005). Thus, relative differences (gaps) in citizen attitudes matter more than absolute levels for democratic stability and progress.

In sum, legitimacy means that state institutions are accepted in principle and valued regardless of outcomes in terms of who is currently in power and who is not. When the citizenry is divided into two camps (one that unconditionally supports existing institutions regardless of democratic performance and a second that unconditionally denounces them), elites have no incentive to comply with the rules of the game, and the democratic equilibrium is at risk. For the democratic equilibrium to be self-enforcing, citizens on winning and losing sides must successively come closer together in their assessment of the political system rather than drifting further apart. Therefore, the attitude of the losers relative to the winners (rather than average support) is fundamental to the legitimacy of state institutions and hence, for democratic consolidation.

Hypotheses: Electoral Qualities and Legitimacy

The new literature discussed above have established that elections play a causal role in democratization and consolidation but so far not established systematic causal mechanisms. Do specific electoral qualities help narrow winner-loser gaps in perceived legitimacy and if so, which? This study focuses on four qualities of elections that are particularly likely to affect popular perceptions of legitimacy in emerging democracies: turnover of power; peaceful process;

opposition parties accept outcome; and free and fair election.

Turnover of Power

Huntington suggested that democracy was evidently accepted by elites as legitimate after two alternations in power, hence the "two-turnover-test" as an indicator signaling consolidation of democracy. Elections can be truly competitive without turnovers; in some democracies a single party rules over many electoral cycles (e.g., Britain, Sweden, Japan, and Italy). Yet, it is only when a peaceful turnover occurs that we have unambiguous evidence that it would be accepted (if grudgingly) by losing incumbents and that the democratic institutions can deal with political change (Bunce 2002, 313). In established democracies, most of today's losers were already yesterday's winners and vice versa; even new voters understand that current advantages and disadvantages are temporary and limited in scope. In emerging democracies, democratic attitudes are unlikely to result from childhood socialization under authoritarian regimes (e.g., Jennings and Niemi 1981) so losing gracefully and winning benevolently require personal experience of being on the other side (Anderson et al. 2005).[10] Importantly, turnovers are expected to affect popular legitimacy among losers and winners in opposite ways. New winners/old losers get an extra boost in confidence yet are likely to still be influenced by a legacy of skepticism from their recent experience as outsiders. Old winners/new losers are likely to lose some of the unwarranted approval but can still be expected to carry with them some of their old views of institutional legitimacy despite the electoral loss. Thus, turnovers should bring winners and losers closer together in their assessment of the legitimacy of their state institutions. In contrast, it is hypothesized that elections without turnovers make repeated losers perceive government as inherently unaccountable and unfair, while repeated winners come to take advantages for granted. Thus, incumbent success at the ballot box, especially if repeated, will create a marked winner-loser gap in perceptions of legitimacy.

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[10]Anderson et al. (2005) found that winner-loser gaps are relatively large in countries with predominant party systems (such as Japan and Mexico) and that citizens who loose repeatedly were more dissatisfied than were citizens who lost only once. To date the most comprehensive inquiry into systematic effects of turnovers on public opinion in Africa found that alternations in power affected every measure of support for democracy positively (Bratton 2004) but that study did not inquire into the winner-loser relationship, or institutional legitimacy, the subjects of this inquiry.

Peaceful Process

The systematic use of violence constitutes a denial of democratic values and rights. It is plausible that electoral violence should have a greater negative impact on the attitudes of losers than winners. Losers are more likely to suffer abuse during campaigns and elections especially if the winning party was an incumbent party, and more likely to bear the brunt of state violence in the postelection period. In addition, citizens who get their favored candidates as leaders (winners) are arguably less likely than losers to be concerned with whether violence affected the outcome of the election. Thus, the hypothesis is that violence leads to a widening winner-loser gap whereas peaceful elections will be more appreciated by losers than winners and thus be associated with a narrowing of the gap.

Opposition Acceptance

Opposition acceptance of electoral results is uncertain in new electoral regimes. Losing parties sometimes challenge the results in order to gain political advantage from the international community or to undermine the political rule of their rivals domestically. However, opposition parties at other times accept defeat even in the face of less than free and fair contests especially if an election is accepted as a substantial improvement over the past and there is a perceived prospect of future advancements. In a context of general uncertainty and low information about electoral quality, citizens look to their favored political leaders for cues. Hence, when losing parties refuse to accept electoral outcomes, their supporters will be more negatively affected than supporters of the winning party and one should therefore expect to see a widening of the winner-loser gap. Acceptance of the electoral processes by leaders of losing parties should, conversely, have a positive impact on losers' perceptions of legitimacy and will narrow the gap between winners and losers.

Free and Fair Election

Existing research suggests that when individuals believe decision-making procedures are fair, they tend to be more accepting of the outcomes of the process even when outcomes are deemed suboptimal (Anderson et al. 2005; Lind and Tyler 1988; Tyler 1989; Tyler, Casper, and Fisher 1989). Furthermore, various political institutions (such as electoral commissions, police, and courts) are usually involved in electoral processes; thus perceptions of deficient elections are likely to spill over into decreasing legitimacy for political

institutions *writ large*. The more actual fraud is present, the more likely one finds perceptions of fraud among citizens; yet, perceptions of the extent and importance of fraud tend to be unevenly distributed among winners and losers in Africa due to imperfect information about actual electoral quality.[11] It is plausible to expect that citizens who voted for the winning candidate will tend to believe that most irregularities were inadvertent, results reflect the will of the people, and the system is legitimate. In contrast, losers are more likely to presume that flaws were both purposeful and consequential for electoral outcomes. Thus, it is hypothesized that unfree and unfair elections will be associated with wider winner-loser gaps, while free and fair elections should decrease winner-loser gaps in legitimacy.

While turnover of power, peaceful process, opposition parties' acceptance of the outcome, and free and fair contest are certainly related, they are empirically and analytically distinct characteristics.[12] There are, for example, several instances in Africa where genuinely unfair elections have nevertheless effectuated an opposition win: the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ivory Coast on 22 October and 10 December 2000; the executive elections of Madagascar on 16 December 2001; and the parliamentary elections in Malawi on 15 June 1999. There are also examples where violent contests or opposition rejection of outcomes coincided with power transitions: the 1999 elections in Nigeria; Ghana's 2000 election; and Senegal's election in 2001. This study investigates the independent effect of each factor and therefore assesses their respective causal effect in a multiple regression analysis. Furthermore, this is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all electoral qualities that might affect legitimacy gaps, but rather those factors that we felt were both most theoretically important and subject to valid and reliable measurement.

Data, Cases, and Measurement

To test the above hypotheses one would ideally track the attitudes of the same individuals over time as they experience different types of elections. Since this is not

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[11]Opinion pollsters, journalists, and election observers in Africa face numerous constraints, which prevent them from providing accurate and independent information to citizens.

[12]Turnover is only weakly correlated with peacefulness (0.12), opposition elite acceptance of the contest and outcomes (0.26), and the free and fairness of election (0.06). See the online Appendix C for the full variance-covariance matrix.

possible, the present study compares different individuals from different countries and years that recently experienced a range of election types. Although imperfect, such a comparison nonetheless yields insights into what would happen to citizens in a country that embarks on improvements in electoral quality. This article focuses on Africa in an effort to hold a number of region-specific factors relatively constant.

The individual-level analysis uses Afrobarometer (AB) survey data from Rounds 1, 2, and 3 administered from 1999 to 2006, in which nationally representative samples are drawn through a multistage, stratified, clustered sampling procedure. The use of a standardized questionnaire facilitates cross-national comparisons. Complete data is available from 11, 15, and 18 countries from Rounds 1, 2, and 3 respectively, making a total of 44 surveys (country/rounds).[13] In the two-step hierarchical model described below, these results are coupled with data on the national-level elections using an updated version of Lindberg's (2006) data set covering all elections from 1989 to February 2007.[14] Based on the assumption that citizens are likely to be most influenced by the latest election, the effects are estimated using data from the most recent presidential or parliamentary election held before the AB survey. The time lag between elections (which form the basis for the key independent variables) and the subsequent surveys (which generate the key dependent variables) allows for greater confidence in making plausible inferences regarding the direction of causal effects. A series of robustness checks are also carried out to further corroborate the findings and to probe the direction of causal influence.

The sample is restricted by the selection of countries included in the AB surveys, which are not entirely representative of the continent as a whole. The 18 countries included in the AB surveys are significantly more democratic than the African average cautioning against too generous generalizations.[15] Nonetheless analyzing dynamics in the emerging democracies on the continent arguably provides a plausible map of what may happen in the other nations if they develop more democratic systems.

Measures of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, perceived legitimacy of political institutions, is a multidimensional concept that is preferably analyzed in its various aspects, so a range of five indicators are examined.[16] All five indicators are based on individual-level responses to the AB surveys, and the exact question wording and coding of the variables can be found online in Appendix A. *Institutional Trust* is an index variable that sums trust in four political institutions: the electoral commission, courts of law, the army, and the police.[17] *Accountability* gauges whether citizens feel political institutions offer possibilities to hold leaders accountable. *Consent to Government Authority* asks if the government has the right to make people abide by its decisions. *Support for Constitution* measures the degree to which citizens feel that the constitution represents the people's values and beliefs. Finally, *Satisfaction with System* measures how satisfied citizens are with the way democracy actually works.[18]

Measures of the Independent Variables

The key independent variables at the national level are those theorized earlier: turnover of power, peaceful process, opposition acceptance of outcome, and free

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[13]Twelve surveys were conducted in Round 1, but several of the questions used for both independent and dependent variables were not asked in Uganda's first-round survey; all observations for Uganda round 1 are excluded from the analysis. The total number of survey respondents in the 44 surveys is 68,958. In most instances, respondents who did not answer all the questions used in the analyses were excluded from the analysis. Many individuals were unable to answer the question about whether the constitution represents the values and interests of the people, hence the considerably lower N in the analysis predicting constitutional support. Each first-step analysis (for each of the five measures of legitimacy) contains between 48,948 and 55,892 individual-level responses. An overview of which elections and AB survey rounds were used for each country is found online in Appendix B.

[14]The full data set provides data on 16 electoral aspects, including outcomes, boycotts, freedom and fairness, acceptance of results, and turnovers from 284 elections in Africa. It is available at www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sil/.

[15]The average Freedom House rating on the political rights' scale from 7 to 1 for AB countries has improved from 3.50 to 2.89 between round 1 and round 3, while the average of all other African states has worsen from 4.83 to 5.03 in the same period. The freest of those surveyed by AB include Botswana (democratic since independence in 1966) and South Africa. At the other end of the spectrum are Uganda (with civil war and restrictions on party activity during the survey period) and Zimbabwe (where citizens are afforded only minimal political and civil rights).

[16]The five indicators measure different dimensions of legitimacy rather than a single concept (Cronbach's alpha=0.22), so we refrain from combining them into a single index. Despite the low internal consistency (which we do not attempt to explain here), the results of the analyses are strikingly similar across the five measures of legitimacy.

[17]An index variable that excluded trust in the electoral commission was also used to ensure that this institution alone was not responsible for the findings. The results were largely the same for the key variables.

[18]Although this question asks specifically about democracy there are good reasons to believe that responses characterize the existing system regardless of its level of democracy.

and fair. The key independent variable at the individual-level of analysis is winner-loser status, which takes on three different values for winners, nonpartisans, and losers. Citizens who said they feel close to the parties that make up the government (winners) are coded as two. Citizens who claim they are not close to any party (nonpartisans) are coded as one. Citizens who report feeling close to opposition parties in the legislature or parties that did not win seats at all (losers) are coded as zero.[19] The analysis also includes individual-level controls for gender, age, education, urban residence, poverty, media exposure, political participation, and political interest. Appendix A, which is available online, contains specific question wording and coding information for all the variables mentioned.[20]

Testing Hypotheses on Winner-Loser Gaps and the Effects of Electoral Qualities

In order to answer questions about how the conduct and aftermath of elections influence the size of winner-loser gaps in perceived legitimacy, the microlevel survey data must be paired with macrolevel data on electoral institutions and elite behavior. Scholars have employed several different strategies for analyzing cross-national public opinion data together with higher-level data.[21]

The results in this paper are derived from a two-step hierarchical estimation strategy that models the individual-level processes for each survey (country/round) separately and allows the intercepts and coefficients for each survey to differ arbitrarily. Two-step strategies are well suited for analyses of cross-national surveys where there are large numbers of microlevel observations (individuals per survey) and small numbers of unique macrolevel contexts (countries or elections). There are likely to be sizeable differences in the processes generating the data in each country/survey and limited cross-survey information; the two-step process estimates the relationship between individual-level variables in each survey independently.[22] However, the key findings presented here remain the same regardless of whether a one-step or a two-step procedure is used.[23]

Briefly, the two-step procedure is as follows. In the first step, the measure of perceived institutional legitimacy is regressed on the individual level variables for 44 different ordinary least squares regressions (one for each survey). The 44 intercepts and 44 coefficients for winner from the first step then become the dependent variables in the second step; the independent variables in the second step come from the data on the most recent election preceding each of the 44 surveys. Because of space limitations, only one part of the full analysis of legitimacy for political institutions is discussed in detail: the model predicting institutional trust. However, the same principle model was used for the analysis of the four other indicators of the dependent variable (accountability, consent to government authority, support for constitution, and satisfaction with system) with essentially the same results. Footnotes detail where the results for the other measures of legitimacy diverge from those for institutional trust, and the full results are available online in Appendix D.

First Step of Model

The first step of the model establishes the base-line effects for each survey of being a winner on institutional trust, controlling for gender, age, education, urban residence, poverty, media exposure, political

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[19]The coding of winning and losing parties was done on basis of official elections results, but the admission of affiliation is self-reported. Bratton et al. discuss the validity of the measure: "Of course, some respondents may rewrite their personal histories by reporting voting records deemed politically correct. Despite the possibility that we were sometimes intentionally misled, we still expect that being a self-proclaimed 'winner' increases one's loyalty to incumbent leaders and reduces one's willingness to criticize their performance" (2005, 259). Note that the measure used here is a measure of affiliation, not a measure of how citizens voted in the last election. The Afrobarometer surveys did not consistently include questions about past vote.

[20]The appendices are available online at http://journalofpolitics.org/.

[21]Perhaps the most common strategy is to conduct separate analyses on each survey and then compare statistics (such as means, proportions) or casually compare multiple regression analyses across surveys. Another popular strategy involves pooling (or stacking) the surveys and analyzing them as a single data set, either with or without country indicators and weighting factors. Pooling strategies can lead to problematic standard errors if single observations at the macrolevel are assigned to thousands of individuals and statistically treated as if they are independent observations. Recently, more scholars have employed multilevel hierarchical linear models; the approach adopted here. For a more detailed comparison of strategies for analyzing cross-national public opinion data see Jusko and Shively (2005, 327–38). See also Gelman and Hill (2007) for information on multilevel models.

[22]One-step multilevel models employ cross-sample information to estimate an integrated model and are thus most appropriate for situations with numerous related macro samples, each with a small number of micro units.

[23]For further discussion of one- and two-step multilevel modeling strategies see Beck (2005); Bowers and Drake (2005); Franzese (2005); Gelman (2005); and Kedar and Shively (2005). For excellent examples of two-step models using survey data, see Duch and Stevenson (2005) and Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005).

participation, and political interest. The first equation thus is

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\, winner_{ij} + \beta_{2j}\, gender_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{3j}\, education_{ij} + \beta_{4j}\, urban_{ij} + \beta_{5j}\, poverty_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{6j}\, media_{ij} + \beta_{7j}\, participation_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{8j}\, interest_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \qquad (1)$$

where Y_{ij} is institutional trust for an individual i in survey j, and the parameters β_{0j}, β_{1j}, $\beta_{2j}\ldots\beta_{8j}$ are estimated separately for each survey, using an OLS estimator.[24] β_{0j} and β_{1j} are the main quantities of interest: β_{0j} is the intercept value for each survey j; β_{1j} is the effect of winner-loser status on institutional trust for each survey j. β_{1j} estimates indicate the size of the winner effects (which can also be interpreted as the size of the winner-loser gaps in legitimacy) for each country/round for which data is available. Hereafter, β_{1j} estimates are referred to by the variable name *Legitimacy Gap*.

Before moving on to the second step, the individual-level results were examined to ensure that the model fits the process generating the data as well as to gauge the effect of winner-loser status on institutional trust. Figure 1 plots the OLS estimates for the legitimacy gap (β_{1j}) for each survey. The vertical lines show the 95% confidence intervals for estimated legitimacy gaps.

Figure 1 reveals several interesting features. First, the estimated legitimacy gap is significantly positive in most countries across three survey rounds even after controlling for other individual-level variables; the 95% confidence intervals typically lie above the zero axis.[25] In 80% of the cases, winner-loser status significantly predicts institutional trust. Similar analysis for the other measures of legitimacy indicate that winners are also significantly more likely than losers to think that their institutions are accountable, deserving of consent, appropriate, and satisfying. Second, Figure 1 shows considerable variation in the size of the

legitimacy gap from country to country and between survey rounds within a country.[26] What accounts for this variation in the legitimacy gap across countries and across time? Do the qualities elections help explain the subsequent sizes of legitimacy gaps?

Figure 1 also provides a first cut at answering this question. Results from surveys following full turnovers are depicted with squares and results following partial turnovers of power are depicted with triangles. The rest, where incumbents stayed in power, are depicted with solid circles. There appears to be a negative relationship between turnovers of power and the gap in institutional trust between winners and losers. The legitimacy gap tends to be smaller in surveys that were conducted following partial turnovers (triangles) or full turnovers (squares), than when the incumbent retained power (circles). Figure 1 is illustrative of such a relationship, but to obtain quantifiable estimates of the interactive effect of the national-level variables on the relationship between being a winner and institutional trust, the second step of the analysis is needed.

Second Step of Model

In the second step the estimated intercepts and the coefficients measuring the legitimacy gap are each regressed on the four election-level variables to estimate the direct effect and interactive effects of electoral institutions on perceived legitimacy. The estimated dependent variables are weighted according to their precision from the first step so as to make the most efficient use of available information (Lewis and Linzer 2005).[27] To adjust for intracountry correlation, the second-step equations were calculated using a variance estimator clustered by country.[28] This analysis was conducted for each of the five indicators of institutional legitimacy (institutional trust, accountability, consent to government authority, support for constitution, and satisfaction). The discussion below describes in detail the model for the measure of institutional trust and results for the other measures are available online in Appendix D.

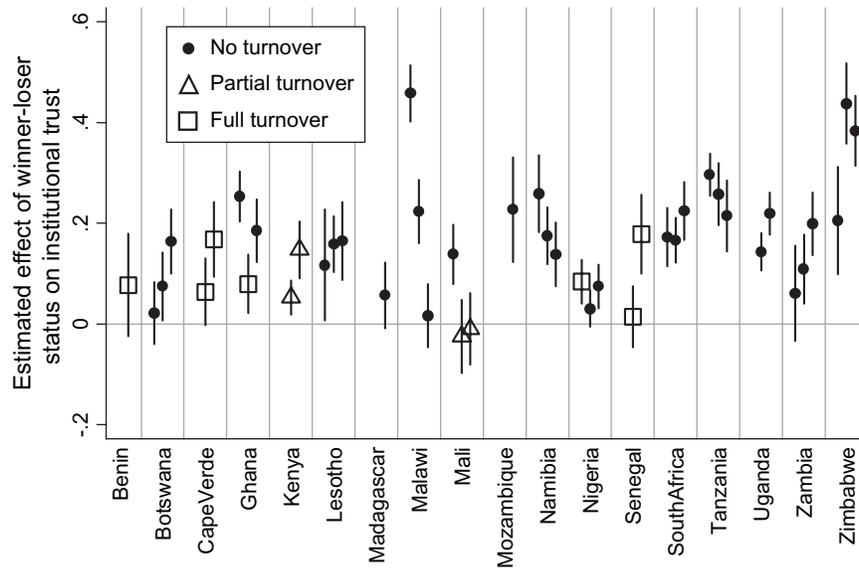[24]HC3 heteroskedastic consistent standard errors (Efron standard errors) are used.

[25]With controls, the legitimacy gap is statistically significant for 35 of 44 surveys (80% of the cases) and the legitimacy gap is positive but not statistically significant in another seven surveys. It is negative but not significant in the remaining two cases (Mali rounds 2 and 3 where turnout was extremely low). When not controlling for alternative factors, winners are more trusting than losers in every survey except Mali (round 2 and 3), and the difference between winners and losers is statistically significant in 37 of the 44 surveys. The results in the second step are robust to the exclusion of possible outliers, in particular Mali (rounds 2 and 3), but also Malawi (round 1), and Zimbabwe (rounds 2 and 3).

[26]The legitimacy gap is extremely high for the first round survey in Malawi and the second and third round surveys in Zimbabwe. In contrast, there appears to be only a minimal effect in the first round survey in Botswana, the third round survey in Malawi, the second and third round surveys in Mali, and the second round survey in Senegal.

[27]Results from unweighted regression analyses are comparable.

[28]The 44 observations come from only 18 countries, and one can not assume that observations from the same country at different times are independent of each other.

Legitimacy Gaps and Turnovers

Notes: The Legitimacy Gaps (β_{1j}) are estimated by OLS with HC3 heteroskedastic consistent standard errors and controlling for gender, education, urban residence, poverty, media exposure, political participation, and interest. Vertical lines denote 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal axis reports surveys in rounds 1, 2, and 3 (where data exists) for each country. Solid circles denote elections where incumbents remained in power. Hollow triangles denote partial turnovers of power (change in leader or party coalition, but not both). Hollow squares denote full turnovers of power. The baseline is a 33-year-old woman living in a rural area with a primary education and median levels of poverty, media exposure, participation, and interest in politics
Sources: Afrobarometer (afrobarometer.org) and Lindberg (2006a).

To obtain the direct effect of electoral traits on institutional trust, we estimate the equation

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\, turnover_j + \gamma_{02}\, peaceful_j + \gamma_{03}\, opposition_j + \gamma_{04}\, free_j + u_{0j} \qquad (2)$$

where β_{0j} is the estimated intercepts from equation (1) for each survey j. The parameter γ_{01} is the direct effect of turnovers of power on institutional trust, γ_{02} is the direct effect of peaceful elections on institutional trust, γ_{03} is the direct effect of opposition acceptance of outcomes on institutional trust, and γ_{04} is the direct effect of an election that has been judged free and fair on institutional trust.[29]

The second step also consists of an additional equation in order to obtain the interactive effects of winner-loser status and the election-level variables. In the equation

[29]The direct effect is the same as the total effect of each electoral trait on perceived legitimacy *only* for the losers (winner = 0). For winners (winner = 2) or independents (winner = 1), the total effect must take into account both the direct effect and the indirect (interactive) effect.

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}\, turnover_j + \gamma_{12}\, peaceful_j + \gamma_{13}\, opposition_j + \gamma_{14}\, free_j + u_{1j} \qquad (3)$$

β_{1j} are the estimated coefficients on winner-loser status from equation (1) for each survey j (i.e., the legitimacy gap). The parameter γ_{10} is the intercept (or the effect of winner-loser status on institutional trust when the election-level variables are zero), γ_{11} is the effect of a turnover on the legitimacy gap, γ_{12} is the effect of nonviolent elections on the legitimacy gap, γ_{13} is the effect of opposition acceptance of the election outcome on the legitimacy gap, and γ_{04} is the effect of an election that has been judged free and fair on the legitimacy gap.

Turnovers and Winner-Loser Convergence

Table 1 reports the estimated parameters and standard errors resulting from the second-step equations (2) and (3), respectively. Model B shows that in the equation predicting the legitimacy gap (β_{1j}), the estimated coefficient on turnover (γ_{11}) is negative and statistically

TABLE 1   Second-Step Estimates of Electoral Influences On Institutional Trust

		Model A β_{oj} Main Effect		Model B β_{1j} Legitimacy Gap Effect
Turnover of Power	γ_{01}	.038	γ_{11}	−.048
		(.113)		(.017)
		.738		.014
Peaceful Process	γ_{02}	.100	γ_{12}	.018
		(.168)		(.038)
		.560		.640
Opposition Acceptance	γ_{03}	.111	γ_{13}	−.027
		(.109)		(.043)
		.323		.541
Free and Fair	γ_{04}	.039	γ_{14}	−.009
		(.144)		(.079)
		.788		.909
Constant	γ_{00}	1.18	γ_{10}	.199
		(.195)		(107)
		.000		.079
R^2		.159		.173
Prob > F		.234		.032
N		44		44

Notes: Entries are unstandardized coefficients, followed by standard errors in parentheses, and p-values in italics below. The standard errors are adjusted for intra-country correlation. The dependent variable in Model A is the weighted predicted intercept from the first-step individual-level regression models. The dependent variable in Model B is the weighted predicted regression coefficient for winner from the first-step individual-level regression models. The first-step within-survey regression models regress institutional trust against winner, gender, education, urban residence, poverty, media exposure, political participation, and interest for each of the 44 surveys (countries/rounds), thus generating the 44 intercepts and 44 winner coefficients, which are weighted by their precision (Lewis and Linzer 2005) and used as the dependent variables here. The baseline is a 33 year old woman living in a rural area with a primary education and median levels of poverty, media exposure, participation, and interest in politics.
Sources: Afrobarometer Rounds 1, 2 and 3 (afrobarometer.org) and Lindberg (2006a).

significant with more than 95% confidence. Substantively, this means that being a winner is a less powerful determinant of institutional trust following a turnover than when an incumbent won the last election. In contrast, peaceful process, opposition acceptance of the outcome, and free and fair election do not seem to significantly affect the legitimacy gap.

The estimated results thus provide support for the hypothesis that a turnover of power has a significant moderating effect on the legitimacy gap between winners and losers for 18 African countries. The visuals

in Figure 1 reported above do not mislead. In fact, it seems that they paint a rather accurate picture of what happens with popular perceptions of legitimacy for political institutions after elections with or without turnovers respectively. Losers consistently ascribe institutions with less legitimacy than winners, but after turnovers, when winners become losers and the other way around, the gap between the two groups of citizens narrows significantly to the effect of reducing polarization. In short, turnovers of power narrow the winner-loser gap in perceived institutional trust. These findings are quite robust; turnovers of power significantly moderate winner-loser gaps for all five measures of legitimacy of state institutions. For all the equations predicting the legitimacy gap (β_{1j}) the estimated coefficients on turnover (γ_{11}) are negative and statistically significant with 95% confidence.[30]

Surprisingly, peaceful election, opposition acceptance of outcome, and free and fair contest have no statistically significant estimated effect on winner-loser gaps in trust, accountability, consent to authority, constitutional support, or system satisfaction. Regardless of how legitimacy is measured, turnover is the *only* factor that has a significant influence on the winner-loser gaps.[31] We can offer only post-hoc conjectures for these null findings. First, if we had data for the full sample of African countries, instead of a truncated sample of more democratic countries surveyed by Afrobarometer, it is possible that the effect had proven significant. Yet the sample is also truncated for turnovers and the variance of the opposition acceptance variable (.61) is greater than the variance of the turnover variable (.56). Second, it is possible that the narrowing effect only occurs for a small portion of the population (for example the highly educated), which the average effect does not reveal. Third, it is possible that many citizens have insufficient access to accurate and reliable information and lack the capacity to judge source credibility. Citizens may simply not be able to correctly discern

[30]In both bivariate and multiple second-step regression models for all five measures of legitimacy, turnovers significantly reduced the gap between winners and losers. There is not a single exception to this general result.

[31]For all of the five legitimacy measures, there are no exceptions to the general finding that turnovers are the *only* significant mechanism for reducing legitimacy gaps in either multiple or bivariate models. Furthermore the robustness checks also indicate no significant effect of peaceful election, opposition acceptance, and free and fair contest. The null findings are not due to multicollinearity, the specification of the model, nor the estimation strategy. See the results online in Appendix F.

the level of violence, opposition response, and expert assessments of fairness from the dominant state media or from the cacophony of voices on FM radio (Moehler and Singh 2006). In contrast, virtually every individual will know who holds power following an election. Finally, it is possible that the null finding accurately captures the fact that citizens care about electoral outcomes and not about electoral processes. Additional research is needed to understand why peaceful, opposition approved, and free and fair contests do not significantly reduce legitimacy gaps,

To help interpret the estimated substantive effect of turnovers on institutional trust, equations (1), (2), and (3) are combined into a single equation. Starting with equation (1) from above and inserting (2) and (3) and simplifying yields:

$$
\begin{aligned}
Y_{ij} = {}& \boldsymbol{\gamma_{00}} + \boldsymbol{\gamma_{01}} \, \boldsymbol{turnover_j} + \gamma_{02} \, peaceful_j \\
& + \gamma_{03} \, opposition_j + \gamma_{04} \, free_j + \boldsymbol{\gamma_{10}} \, \boldsymbol{winner_{ij}} \\
& + \boldsymbol{\gamma_{11}} \, \boldsymbol{turnover_j^*} \, \boldsymbol{winner_{ij}} + \gamma_{12} \, peaceful_j^* \, winner_{ij} \\
& + \gamma_{13} \, opposition_j^* \, winner_{ij} + \gamma_{14} \, free_j^* \, winner_{ij} \\
& + \beta_{2j} \, gender_{ij} + \beta_{3j} \, education_{ij} + \beta_{4j} \, urban_{ij} \\
& + \beta_{5j} \, poverty_{ij} + \beta_{6j} \, media_{ij} + \beta_{7j} \, participation_{ij} \\
& + \beta_{8j} \, interest_{ij} + (u_{0j} + u_{1j} winner_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}). \quad (4)
\end{aligned}
$$

The substantive interpretation of the interaction effect is made less complicated because the intercepts for the control variables in the first step were calculated so that the baseline is a 33-year-old woman living in a rural area with primary school education and median levels of poverty, media exposure, participation, and interest in politics.[32] Suppose that our baseline individual lived a polity with the most violent election (peaceful = 0), where the opposition rejected the outcome (opposition = 0), and the election was not free and fair (free = 0).[33] Following an election in such a polity where the incumbent retained power (turnover$_j$ = 0), the predicted difference in institu-

tional trust between our baseline individual aligned with the ruling party (winner$_{ij}$=2), and our baseline individual aligned with the losing power (winner$_{ij}$=0) is:

$$
\begin{aligned}
& [\gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(0) + \gamma_{10}(2) + \gamma_{11}(0^\star 2)] \\
& - [\gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(0) + \gamma_{10}(0) + \gamma_{11}(0^* 0)] \\
& = \gamma_{10}(2) \\
& = 0.398. \quad (5)
\end{aligned}
$$

However, following a similar election where there was a full alternation of power (turnover$_j$=2), the predicted difference between our baseline individual aligned with the ruling party (winner$_{ij}$=2), and our baseline individual aligned with the losing power (winner$_{ij}$=0) is

$$
\begin{aligned}
& [\gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(2) + \gamma_{10}(2) + \gamma_{11}(2^\star 2)] \\
& - [\gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(2) + \gamma_{10}(0) + \gamma_{11}(2^* 0)] \\
& = \gamma_{10}(2) + \gamma_{11}(2^\star 2) \\
& = 0.206. \quad (6)
\end{aligned}
$$

In short, the estimated difference in trust between winners and losers in this case is nearly double when incumbents stay in power (0.398) than when there is a turnover (0.206).

The predicted values shown in Figure 2 help to illustrate the substantive effect of turnovers for all five measures of legitimacy.[34] The vertical axes are the predicted levels of perceived legitimacy, and the horizontal axes indicate turnovers. The predicted values for our baseline individuals aligned with the winning party are marked with circles, independents are marked with squares, and those who feel close to opposition parties are marked with triangles. Everything else being equal, turnover elections make individuals affiliated with political groups competing for political power move closer to each other in their appreciation of political institutions' legitimacy. The opposite is also true; when countries hold elections in which one political party or group of parties consistently win, winners and losers diverge in their attitudes about their institutions.

While the discussion has detailed the analysis of the measure of institutional trust, the basic results hold across all five legitimacy measures. Winners are

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[32]In other words, the variables were rescaled so that they are zero for each of these traits. For example, 33 years old is coded 0, 32 is coded −1, and 34 is coded 1 and so on. This ensures that the intercepts examined in the second step represent a plausible and typical individual. Because the first-step intercepts in each survey vary according to the centering of the individual-level variables the second-step results for the regression on the intercepts are not invariant to rescaling (Huber, Kernell, and Leoni 2005, 379).

[33]These extreme examples are used to simplify the math. Figure 2 presents the predicted values for individuals living in a more realistic electoral environment.

[34]The predicted effects in Figure 2 are calculated for the median values of peaceful (1), opposition (1), and free (2).

FIGURE 2 Predicted Institutional Legitimacy by Levels of Turnover and Winner-Loser Status
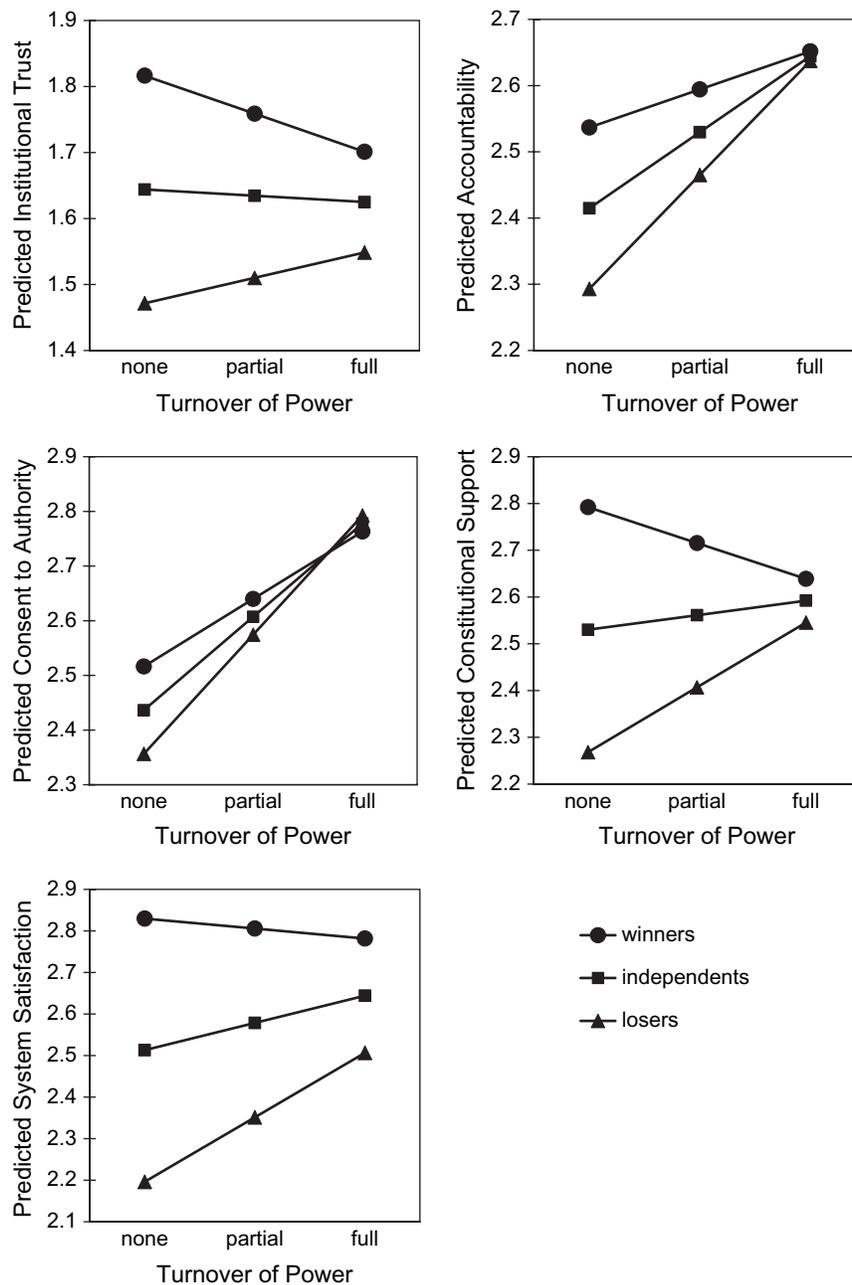
Notes: Predicted values are calculated for a 33-year-old woman living in a rural area with a primary education and median levels of poverty, media exposure, participation, and interest in politics, following an election with median values of peaceful (1), opposition (1), and free (2).

Sources: Afrobarometer Rounds 1, 2, and 3 (afrobarometer.org) and Lindberg (2006a).

significantly more supportive of all their government institutions than losers; power alternations significantly reduce the size of this winner-loser legitimacy gap; while we find no significant moderating effect of the other electoral qualities (peaceful process, opposition acceptance, and free and fair election).

Making Moderation Play

While the reelection of an incumbent in emerging democracies tends to polarize the citizenry, an alternation of power brings citizens aligned with winning and losing parties closer together in an appreciation of state institutions. Turnovers seem to generate a

FIGURE 3 Following Turnovers Winners Become Losers and Losers Become Winners
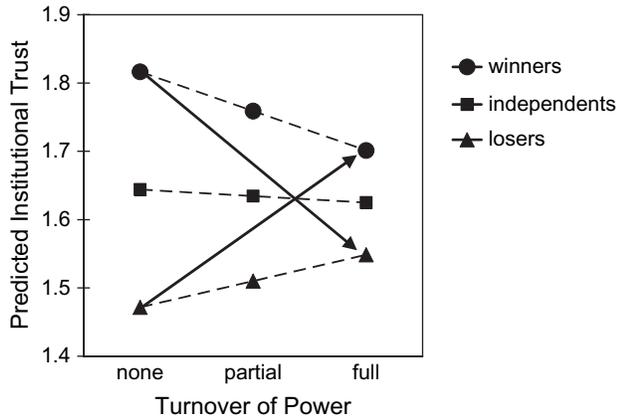
Notes: Predicted values are calculated for a 33-year-old woman living in a rural area with a primary education and median levels of poverty, media exposure, participation, and interest in politics, following an election with median values of peaceful (1), opposition (1), and free (2).
Sources: Afrobarometer Rounds 1, 2, and 3 (afrobarometer.org) and Lindberg (2006a).

significant reduction in opportunistic evaluations of state institutions in terms of sweet (and sour) grapes. When there is a turnover, groups of citizens swap places between winners and losers as indicated in Figure 3.[35]

Used-to-be losers become more positive in their evaluations of the legitimacy of political institutions but they do not quite reach the same inflated level of appreciation of political institutions as the former winners. The new winners are thus less likely than the old winners to ignore or accept undemocratic and illicit government behavior that would pose a threat to democratic consolidation. Former winners become losers and ascribe less trust and confidence than before to the same institutions, yet, do not descend so far down the scale of legitimacy as to reach the former losers' levels of distress. Post-alternation losers still see institutions as relatively legitimate.[36] Importantly,

losing elites now have greater incentives to comply with the rules and procedures since their supporters generally favor existing political institutions. Moderation of perceptions between winning and losing citizens thus facilitates the self-enforcing equilibrium necessary for consolidation of democracy.

Direction of Causation and Alternative Explanations

The time lag between previous elections (generating the independent variables) and the surveys (generating the dependent variables) allows for relative confidence in interpreting direction of causation. Nonetheless, one might still be concerned about reverse causation. Instead of electoral turnovers leading to a narrowing of the legitimacy gap, one might think that winner-loser harmony causes turnovers. However, closer investigation reveals that our causal argument is more consistent with the existing evidence than an argument about reverse causation.[37]

First, Figure 1 provides longitudinal evidence for the two cases, Ghana and Mali, with survey data prior to full or partial turnovers. If turnovers lead to a narrowing of the gaps between winners and losers as posited (rather than the other way around), then the gaps from the surveys prior to the turnovers should be greater than the gaps in surveys held after the alternation of power. Figure 1 shows that the estimated legitimacy gaps measured prior to the elections (round 1) were far higher than estimated coefficients after the turnovers (rounds 2 and 3). The argument that the causal arrow leads from turnovers to narrowing of the gap is more consistent with the evidence from the sequencing of elections and survey results overtime in Ghana and Mali.

Second, if turnovers affect the winner-loser legitimacy gap (rather than the reverse), then one would expect the relationship between the gap and the elections held prior to the survey to be significant and the relationship between the gap and the elections held after the survey to be weak or insignificant. Data exists for only 31 elections held after AB surveys, and the evidence is consistent with the argument put forth in this article. For those 31 elections, the correlation between the legitimacy (institutional trust) gap and the previous election outcome is −0.39 (significance = 0.03), while the correlation with the

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[35]A large majority of citizens/voters tend to have stable party preferences. For example, Lindberg and Morrison's voting behavior studies (2005, 2008) measure a large number of individuals' vote choice in more than one election and find that about 80% of Ghanaian voters have stable preferences.

[36]This moderation effect of turnovers, also tally well with Anderson et al.'s (2005, 52–56) findings from Europe. In the short term, alternations are typically followed by a boost in legitimacy among the new winners while the new losers keep some of their previous appreciation.

[37]Results for additional analyses described in this section titled ''Direction of Causation and Alternative Explanations,'' the next section titled ''Robustness Checks,'' and the Conclusion can be found online in Appendices E and F.

subsequent election outcome is –0.12 (significance = 0.50).[38] Turnovers are significantly related to the legitimacy gap in subsequent surveys, but the gap is not significantly related to the outcome of subsequent elections. In addition, the estimated legitimacy gap never significantly predicts outcomes in subsequent elections.[39]

Third, the original models were estimated again including a variable for turnover in the elections after each survey. Turnovers in previous elections still significantly moderate the legitimacy gaps for all measures of legitimacy, even when controlling for the outcome of the elections after the survey. The key findings do not seem to be the result of reverse causation.

Even if reverse causation is not a problem, one might be concerned about omitted variable bias. To guard against spurious conclusions, the analysis was repeated 10 times, each analysis including one of the following control measures: (1) level of civil and political rights; (2) number of elections since transition; (3) type of electoral system; (4) presidential versus parliamentary poll; (5) voter turnout; (6) percentage of votes collected by the winning candidate; (7) percentage of votes collected by the second candidate; (8) number of months between the election and the survey; (9) whether the past authoritarian leader (s) participated in the election; and (10) whether the real opposition participated.[40] Turnovers significantly predicted the legitimacy gap when each control measure was included separately, indicating that these alternative characteristics are not responsible for our results.[41]

The search for possible omitted variables can be endless. Fortunately, the analysis of reverse causation described previously provides additional comfort that the results are not due to alternative causal influences. If the estimated effects were from some other characteristic of the polity, then the relationship between attitudes and subsequent elections should be just as strong as with previous elections. Furthermore, the results would not persist with the inclusion of the measure of subsequent election outcomes. It seems that excluded variable biases of this nature are not influential culprits.[42]

Robustness Checks

The results are robust to the following series of checks. First, a general correction for heteroskedasticity[43] was used in the second step instead of clustering by country. Second, possible outlier elections/surveys were excluded.[44] The findings are not the product of individual countries but rather they reflect general trends. Third, unweighted rather than weighted dependent variables were included in the second step.[45] Fourth, the model was estimated with a (single-step) random-effects generalized least squares (GLS) regression estimation strategy grouped by survey and clustered by country. Although a two-step procedure is preferable given the dimensions and properties of the data, it is comforting to know that the findings are not an artifact of the chosen estimation strategy. Fifth,

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[38]This pattern holds for four of the five measures of legitimacy. The only major exception was with the measure of accountability where attitudes are similarly related to previous and subsequent elections; the correlation between the accountability gap and the previous election outcome is –0.41 (significance = 0.03), while the correlation with the subsequent election outcome is –0.42 (significance = 0.02).

[39]When the variable for turnovers in the subsequent elections is regressed on the estimated measure of the legitimacy gap, it is not significant across all five measures of legitimacy. See Appendix F online for results.

[40]Due to the limited degrees of freedom afforded by 44 cases, each control measure was included individually (i.e., each second-step equation included only one control measure). Information on coding and sources for the control variables are available at www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sil/.

[41]The coefficients on turnover maintained significance except with the inclusion of electoral turnout; the coefficient on turnover creeps above the bounds of conventional significance ($p = .16$); and the coefficient on turnout is positive and significant. High turnout is associated with a wider gap in perceived legitimacy between winners and losers. The correlation between turnout and turnovers is -0.35.

[42]Any influential omitted variable would have to be something that is related to citizen attitudes and the elections before the survey, but not elections after the survey. This eliminates traits that are relatively stable over time.

[43]Analysis of both first and second-step equations employ HC3 (Efron) standard errors, a heteroskedastic consistent covariance matrix correction that tends to produce more accurate results when the heteroskedasticity is potentially large and of an unknown form, and when the number of observations is small. HC3 produces confidence intervals that are typically more conservative than Huber-White standard errors (Lewis and Linzer 2005, 346).

[44]Graphs of the estimated intercepts and graphs of the estimated coefficients on winner were examined to identify possible outliers. The results remain the same when the identified surveys were excluded from the analysis.

[45]Monte Carlo experiments indicate that with estimated dependent variables regression models, OLS estimators (with Huber-White or HC3 heteroskedastic consistent standard errors) are generally reliable, though often inefficient compared to FLGS estimators (Lewis and Linzer 2005). The OLS estimated second-step equations were run employing country clusters. As an additional check they were rerun using an HC3 correction for heteroskedasticity.

we used a bivariate specification in the second step. Sixth, all independents were dropped from the analysis. The results remained substantially unchanged throughout and are not a spurious result of multicollinearity or the coding of the winner-loser variable.

In an alternative model specification, the winner-loser status variable was replaced with two dummy variables, one for winners and one for losers. The alternative model evaluates the influence of turnover, peacefulness, opposition party acceptance, and free and fairness on: (1) the intercept (where the baseline individual is now an independent), (2) the coefficient on the winner dummy variable, and (3) the coefficient on the loser dummy variable from the first-step equations. The equations are:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} \, winner \, dummy_{ij} + \beta_{2j} \, loser \, dummy_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{4j} \, gender_{ij} + \beta_{5j} \, education_{ij} + \beta_{6j} \, urban_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{7j} \, poverty_{ij} + \beta_{8j} \, media_{ij} + \beta_{9j} \, participation_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{10j} \, interest_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}. \qquad (7)$$

$$\beta_{0j} + \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \, turnover_j + \gamma_{02} \, peaceful_j$$
$$+ \gamma_{03} \, opposition_j + \gamma_{04} \, free_j + u_{0j}; \qquad (8)$$

$$\beta_{1j} + \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} \, turnover_j + \gamma_{12} \, peaceful_j$$
$$+ \gamma_{13} \, opposition_j + \gamma_{14} \, free_j + u_{1j}; \qquad (9)$$

$$\beta_{2j} + \gamma_{20} + \gamma_{21} \, turnover_j + \gamma_{22} \, peaceful_j$$
$$+ \gamma_{23} \, opposition_j + \gamma_{24} \, free_j + u_{2j}; \qquad (10)$$

The results, provided online in Appendix E, are still entirely consistent with the argument that turnovers (and only turnovers[46]) significantly moderate the euphoric views of winners and increase the negative views of losers, thus narrowing the legitimacy gap.[47] The first-step equations show that winners are significantly more likely, and losers significantly less likely, to view their institutions as legitimate as compared to independents.[48] The second-step results reveal that the sign of the coefficients are as expected in every single case for all five measures of legitimacy. The five coefficients on turnover predicting the winner dummy effect (γ_{11}) were negative, indicating that turnovers moderated the strong positive relationship between being a winner and perceived legitimacy. The five coefficients on turnover predicting the loser dummy effect (γ_{21}) were positive, indicating that turnovers helped losers to perceive their institutions as more positively than they would otherwise. Furthermore, 7 of these 10 coefficients were statistically significant.[49] This alternative specification of the model lends additional support for the argument about the mechanisms by which turnovers lead to smaller gaps in perceived legitimacy: turnovers change the attitudes of winners *and* losers in opposite directions.[50] These results also indicate that, for the most part, turnovers have no significant effect on the attitudes of independents.[51] In sum, the key findings presented here are quite robust.

Conclusions

For the first time in history, a majority of the world's countries are at least minimally democratic. Yet, most elections today take place in unstable hybrid regimes that combine elements of democratic and authoritarian rule. A self-enforcing democratic equilibrium characterizing a consolidated democracy only emerges when it is too costly for leaders outside government to resort to undemocratic means (such as revolt) to

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[46]None of the 30 coefficients on peaceful process, opposition acceptance and free and fair (γ_{12}, γ_{13}, γ_{14}, γ_{22}, γ_{23}, and γ_{24} across the five measures of legitimacy) were statistically significant, with the one exception of the coefficient on opposition acceptance predicting the relationship between the winner dummy and consent to authority, which was negative and significant with 90% confidence. These alternative electoral qualities do not seem to affect the attitudes of winners or losers.

[47]Please contact the authors to obtain the results of tests for reverse causation, alternative explanations, and robustness checks employing the model described in equations 7–9.

[48]Of the 10 coefficients (β_{1j} and β_{2j} across the five measures of legitimacy), only the coefficient on the loser dummy predicting institutional trust was not significant, though still negative as expected.

[49]Of the 10 coefficients on turnover in the second step (γ_{11} and γ_{21} across the five measures of legitimacy), three coefficients are in the expected direction but not significant; specifically, those predicting the relationship between: (1) winner dummy and institutional trust; (2) winner dummy and accountability; and (3) loser dummy and accountability.

[50]With respect to the model using winner and loser dummy variables, the results from a one-step hierarchical model are quite similar to the two-step estimation strategy.

[51]Turnovers have no significant effect on the attitudes of independents for four of the five measures of legitimacy. The coefficient on turnover predicting the intercept (γ_{01}) was significant only for the model predicting consent to authority.

obtain power and when it is too costly for leaders inside government to resort to undemocratic means (such as tampering with the rules) to maintain power (Przeworski 1991, 2005). Democracies typically die at the hands of elites. However, mass attitudes affect the incentives elites face and thus the strategies that elites are likely to choose. Revolt is more costly to opposition elites when their followers view current institutions as legitimate. Tampering with democratic rules is more costly for ruling elites when their supporters maintain a healthy degree of skepticism and monitor government performance. Thus, narrowing the gap in perceived legitimacy between supporters of winning and losing parties helps to establish a self-enforcing equilibrium by providing incentives for elites on both sides to play by the democratic rules of the game. Conversely, strongly divergent citizen views of political legitimacy are especially dangerous in transitional polities where political systems are unstable and democracy is not yet consolidated.

A burgeoning literature has presented a series of empirical findings suggesting that repetition of elections have democratizing and consolidating effects, yet, systematic evidence on the exact causal mechanism has been lacking. This article presents a theory of four plausible causal mechanisms for the role elections might play in consolidation. The results suggest that only one mechanism is significant: alternations in power via the ballot box. Shared understandings of state legitimacy are a central feature of democratic consolidation and electoral turnovers can help achieve common views among citizens aligned with opposing parties.

The analyses here of national- and microlevel data demonstrate a systematic and wide gap in perceived legitimacy of political institutions between winners and losers across 44 surveys in 18 African countries. Citizens who feel close to ruling parties are more likely to trust in their institutions, think that government can be held accountable, consent to government authority, support their constitution, and be satisfied with their existing (more or less democratic) political system than citizens who are aligned with the losing side. Yet, these extreme winner-loser gaps in legitimacy are significantly reduced by alternations in power as both sides move towards a shared common middle ground.

Other electoral qualities do not seem to affect the gaps between winners and losers in Africa. Winners and losers appear to remain polarized in their attitudes about the legitimacy of their institutions regardless of whether elections are peaceful or violent, accepted or rejected by opposition elites, and free or forged. Turnovers alone exhibit the estimated harmonizing effect in

our analyses. This suggests that democracy promotion activists with an eye to consolidation should be more attentive to improving opposition capacity, thus making alternations more possible. Intensive monitoring during the heady electoral period may help make elections more peaceful, accepted by opposition elites, and free and fair, but improving these qualities of elections alone seems not to reduce polarization of the citizenry. Some level of electoral quality may be necessary for turnovers to happen, but improving the quality of elections will not guarantee opposition success, nor should we expect it to bring winners and losers together to a shared and productive view of their government institutions.

How long do the moderating effects of a turnover last and what are the effects of repeated turnovers? One can only speculate about the specific effects of repeated turnovers since none of the AB countries have experienced two turnovers during the surveyed period. One can perhaps say something (even if only tentatively) about the durability of attitudinal changes. The effects of turnovers on legitimacy gaps seem to diminish with time, suggesting that repeated turnovers are needed for consolidating new democracies much along the lines of Huntington's (1991) emphasis on two turnovers after the founding election. The model above was estimated again including a measure of turnovers in the second most recent election before each survey. What had been large and consistent effects for turnovers in the most recent elections were insignificant for all measures of the second most recent elections.[52] Furthermore, the addition of an interaction term between turnover and the number of months between the election and the survey suggest that the attitudinal changes from a turnover erode over time.[53] Finally, in the sample there are four countries in which one particular election that resulted in a partial or complete turnover was followed by two rounds of surveys distanced by approximately two years without another intervening election: Cape Verde, Kenya, Mali, and Senegal. In three out of four cases (Cape Verde and Senegal in 2001, and the elections in Kenya in 2002), the later round surveys carried out in 2005 (between 31 and 49 months after the elections) showed a wider legitimacy gap than the earlier round surveys carried out 7 to 17 months after the turnover election. This pattern is also reinforced by the only

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[52]The results for the second most recent elections control for the characteristics of the most recent elections.

[53]The coefficient on the parent variable for turnover is negative and significant while the coefficient on the interaction term is significant and positive. The coefficient on the parent variable for number of months is not significant.

case (Ghana) with an incumbent-won-election followed by round 1 of the surveys, turnover-election followed by round 2, incumbent-won-election followed by round 3. The legitimacy gap in this case displays a U-shaped curve from high to low to high again (though not as high as before the turnover) exactly as predicted by the reasoning above. Although the available evidence is not conclusive, it is suggestive of a gradual erosion of the moderation effect of turnovers.

In sum, alternations in power bring citizens of emerging democracies closer together in shared perceptions of the legitimacy of political institutions thus increasing the costs of repression and decreasing the cost of toleration to use Dahl's (1971) famous phrase, but repeated alternations seem to be needed to sustain moderation. Theories of democratization and consolidation have long emphasized the importance of alternations in power, but until recently, the small number of cases as well as the lack of data on popular attitudes in transitional regimes have prevented more rigorous testing. Controlling for both individual-level characteristics as well as national level electoral qualities, there is substantial and consistent empirical support for the claim that turnovers do in fact play a causal role in furthering democratic consolidation. When Lipset (1959) theorized the importance of legitimacy for democratic endurance, he emphasized the role of political competition. Fifty years later we can confirm that competition plays this significant role not only in the *de jure* sense of the term, but also through the *de facto* rotation of the people in power.

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