Foreign Policy Congruence in Africa:
Evidence on Free Movement and Free Trade

Florian G. Kern*

University of Essex

fkern@essex.ac.uk

Martin C. Steinwand

University of Essex

martin.steinwand@essex.ac.uk

Samira Diebire

University of Essex

s.diebire@essex.ac.uk

May 1, 2024

Abstract

How does foreign policy of African governments reflect the preferences of their constituents? Scholars have studied public opinion in Africa, and how constituents assess government performance. Yet, social scientists neglect how and why foreign policy by African governments reflects public opinion, despite much anecdotal evidence of citizens expressing opinion on African foreign policy. In this paper we investigate the congruence of governmental foreign policy positions and public opinion on issues of free movement and free trade across 34 African countries. We explore two drivers of foreign policy congruence: first democratic versus autocratic government; and second, external rents accruing from natural resources, aid, and remittances. Our descriptive evidence suggests that, on free trade, African publics tend to be more trade-sceptic than the liberalized policy positions of their governments, meaning low foreign policy congruence. On free movement, low foreign policy congruence stems from African constituents preferring more liberalization than what governments provide. Surprisingly, multivariate analysis indicates that democracies show lower foreign policy congruence than autocracies on issues of free trade. We argue that this may be because democracies systemically oversupply market liberalization. We cannot find an effect of external rents on foreign policy congruence.

KEYWORDS:
foreign policy, congruence, Africa, public opinion, free trade, free movement, African Union

Word count: 10,903 words (excluding appendix)

1   Introduction

Does foreign policy of African governments reflect the preferences of their constituents? What determines congruence of foreign policy and public attitudes across African countries? Scholars have studied public opinion in Africa (Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Lieberman and McClendon, 2013; Mattes and Bratton, 2007) and how congruence between constituency preferences and representatives' policy or ideology plays out (Belchior, Sanches and José, 2018; Clayton et al., 2019; Lupu and Warner, 2022; Resnick, 2012; Van Eerd, 2011). Yet, social scientists largely neglect how and why *foreign policy* by African governments reflects constituent views (Quinn, 2010, 6). This is surprising, given much anecdotal evidence of citizens expressing opinions pertinent to "Africa's international relations" (Death, 2015; Whitaker and Clark, 2018).

Examples include xenophobic riots in South Africa (Chutel, 2019), and violent anti-South Africa reactions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Zambia (Capron and O'Brien, 2019); protests against France in Senegal (Chutel, 2021); demonstrations by traders against COVID-19 related border closures between Chad and Cameroon (Kindzeka, 2020); strikes by truck drivers at the Kenya-Uganda border because of harassment by Ugandan security forces (Ochunge and Sali, 2020); and trade unions organising rallies against exploitative work practices for African migrant workers in Arab Gulf states (Adewumi, 2019). These events suggest citizens try to influence their government's foreign policy. And yet, there is so far little systematic, comparative evidence on how foreign policy in Africa reflects constituent preferences.

Addressing this important gap, we investigate whether and how foreign policy by African governments mirrors public preferences on foreign policy issues. We define foreign policy as government actions on issues with cross-border (i.e., international) ramifications, addressing interests and relations with other states or international bodies, and involving other countries and governments' spheres of interest. We conceptualise *foreign policy congruence* as the proximity between a government's foreign policy position and the expressed preferences of its constituents on the same issue. To our knowledge, this is the first study applying the long es-

tablished concept of policy congruence to foreign policy in Africa (for an overview see Shim and Farag, 2024).

We study the congruence of governmental foreign policy positions with public opinion on issues of free movement and free trade across 34 countries in Africa. We consider two theoretical drivers of foreign policy congruence. First, in democracies, we expect higher foreign policy congruence than in autocracies, given normative arguments about democracies' greater ability to aggregate collective preferences. Second, unearned income and external rents (Ahmed, 2012, 2019; Ross, 2001), e.g., from natural resources, aid, or remittances, may drive a wedge between constituents and governments, making the latter more independent from public preferences, leading to lower foreign policy congruence. To preview our findings, our descriptive evidence suggests that, on free trade, African publics tend to be more trade-sceptic than the liberalized policy positions of their governments, meaning low foreign policy congruence. On free movement, low foreign policy congruence stems from African constituents preferring more liberalisation than what governments provide. Interestingly, and counter to our expectations, our multivariate analysis indicates that democracies tend to have lower foreign policy congruence than autocracies on issues of trade: we show that democracies on average are more liberal on international market integration than their constituents prefer. This speaks to previous arguments that policy congruence is not unique to democracies (Belchior, Sanches and José, 2018, 202). We cannot find an effect of unearned income on foreign policy congruence.

The focus on trade and free movement is timely, as the African Union (AU) has adopted the "Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area" (AfCFTA), signed in March 2018, and the "Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment" (AfFM), signed in January 2018. The 55 AU member states vary on whether they signed and ratified the AfCFTA and AfFM, and more generally on how liberalized their foreign policies are in terms of free movement and free trade. And, as Whitaker (2023) has recently shown, cross-border dynamics affect public opinion on free movement in Africa.

2 Foreign policy, public attitudes, and policy congruence in Africa

Political scientists typically understand foreign policy as a "two-level game" in which "central decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously" (Putnam, 1988, 460; see also Milner, 1997, 3). Yet, for African countries, domestic imperatives regarding foreign policy running from the people's preferences to the executive have rarely been systematically and comparatively studied. Existing analyses see foreign policy in Africa as a function of either negotiations among African government elites, or between African governments and great powers or international donors (overviews can be found in Khadiagala and Lyons, 2001*a*; Quinn, 2010; Wright, 1999; Whitaker and Clark, 2018). A notable exception is Ojione's analysis of Nigerian public opinion regarding the government's asylum offer to former Liberian President Charles Taylor. In his assessment, this foreign policy decision showed that the "government adopted ... a mode of moral judgment that was antagonistic to that of the people whom it is ideally supposed to stand for" (Ojione, 2008, 71).

Historically, scholarship has focused on the executive as the fulcrum of foreign policy decisions (Zartman, 1966), as post-independence states in Africa saw the influence of competing centers of authority to the executive, such as judiciaries, legislatures, and the state bureaucracy, quickly limited and dominated by governments after independence (Khadiagala and Lyons, 2001*b*). The move towards multi-party politics after the end of the Cold War led observers to predict a more salient role of democratic processes for foreign policy formulation, across a wide variety of African countries (Khadiagala and Lyons, 2001*b*). Whitaker and Clark (2018) cover the historical and contemporary facets of African foreign policy exhaustively. Social scientists have analyzed African foreign policy with a focus on regional integration and the African Union (Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008; Kefale, 2019; Makinda and Okumu, 2007; Murithi, 2005; Tieku, 2004; Warner and Shaw, 2018), security cooperation (Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008; Baimu and Sturman, 2003; Touray, 2005), foreign aid (Milner and Tingley, 2013; Milner, Findley and Nielson, 2016), climate policy (Held, Roger and Nag, 2014), trade relations (Car-

mody and Owusu, 2007; Cheru and Obi, 2011; Kirkpatrick and Watanabe, 2005), monetary cooperation (Cooper, 2007; Tapsoba et al., 2019), conflict and peace-making (Kagwanja, 2006; Maundi et al., 2006), elite identity and foreign policy (Clark, 2024), as well as foreign policy of African governments with influential non-African state actors, e.g. China, USA, India, or the EU (Barton and Men, 2013; Alden, 2000; Mampilly, 2018; Jura et al., 2024). However, the role that constituent demands play in shaping African foreign policies, and how government foreign policy reflects public opinion, remain largely ignored.

This neglect may have three reasons. First, foreign policy of governments in Africa has often been understood as dependent on external parties (e.g., international organizations such as the UN, IMF, World Bank; powerful states such as the USA, China, Russia, India; donors, such as the Gates Foundation) pressuring domestic African governments to adopt certain positions because of financial dependency or other power asymmetries. Second, African governments' foreign policy is assumed to emerge solely in the interaction between strong executives, for instance at the African Union or regional supranational organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), or the East African Community (EAC). Third, if domestic constraints are considered, they are often narrowly defined, as specific elites and clientelistic networks such as the "selectorate" or the military limiting governmental foreign policy, jointly with external parties. While surely explaining part of how foreign policy emerges, all three understandings of African foreign policy neglect the possibility that policymakers take into account preferences of the *people* in the realm of foreign policy. They stem from a conception of African governments as inherently undemocratic – led by Big Men and corrupt elites entering office without legitimate electoral mandates and ignoring public opinion – or without the capacity or agency to pursue foreign policy in the interest of their constituents. At a minimum, they assume an electorate not sufficiently important for their opinions to be reflected in their country's foreign policy.

We argue that this conception of African foreign policy is outdated or at least incomplete: first, this limited view of African governments' foreign policy neglects the rise in "people

power" in Africa (Marks, Chenoweth and Okeke, 2019). Citizens increasingly express their preferences – through mobilization, demonstrations, elections, lobbying, activism, civil unrest, or rioting – on government policy in general, and foreign policy specifically. Even if governments have considerable independence, some of these public preferences may in fact be mirrored or incorporated in governments' foreign policies. Second, understanding foreign policy without taking public preferences into account ignores the great variance in democratic institutions across countries, with democracies such as Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius or Namibia, and hybrid anocratic or autocratic regimes such as in Eswatini, Central African Republic, Tanzania or Uganda. As it stands, from a theoretical and empirical perspective, we have very limited understanding and lack basic evidence as to what extent African governments' foreign policies mirror constituent preferences. We do not know whether and which governments ignore or incorporate public views on foreign policy.

The goal of this paper is to initiate the theoretical debate and identify the empirical basis for understanding how public preferences and government foreign policies in Africa are linked. For this purpose, we leverage and build on insights from the literature on congruence – a long-established concept used in political science (Eckstein, 1961; Golder and Stramski, 2010; Golder and Lloyd, 2014; Miller and Stokes, 1963) and applied to measure the match and correlation between elites or representatives and constituency preferences over ideology, issues, or policy (for extensive overviews see Powell, 2004; Shim and Farag, 2024; Lupu, Selios and Warner, 2017). Shim and Farag review the geographic coverage of this literature, and mention no studies focusing on Africa (2024, 3). However, a few exceptional studies exist applying the concept of congruence empirically with reference to African politics. Lupu and Warner (2022) include African countries in their global analysis of whether affluent constituents are better represented. Belchior, Sanches and José (2018) use congruence to describe how MPs' and voters' preferences over policy align in Angola. Resnick (2012) shows how populist strategies by opposition parties in Zambia lead to greater policy congruence with poor urban constituents. Finally, Clayton et al. (2019) analyze, among other things, to what extent male and female MPs across Africa pursue policies more congruent with preferences of male or female voters. Our

paper contributes to this nascent stream of literature, by offering the first analysis of foreign policy congruence using cross-national evidence on Africa.

As we argue in the theory section below, in the realm of foreign policy in Africa the most democratic governments should be expected to show greater foreign policy congruence with citizen preferences. However, as previously argued by scholars working on policy congruence in non-democracies (Belchior, Sanches and José, 2018; Shalaby and Aydogan, 2020), even autocratic governments may formulate foreign policy with an eye towards the preferences of the population. However, these often just reflect a subgroup of the population defined by clientelistic representation (e.g., an ethnic group, the urban population, border communities, etc.).

3   Theory and hypotheses

Our analysis centers on the congruence between the attitudes of domestic constituents and their government's foreign policy position on free movement and free trade. We study foreign policy congruence at the national level. Similar to Clayton et al. (2019, 79), we argue that understanding congruence at the national level is important, since foreign policies (a) apply in the aggregate to the overall population; and (b) these policies have cross-border ramifications.

If constituent attitudes on foreign policy matter, then governmental foreign policy positions should reflect those of the populace, especially for constituency groups for which free movement and trade are salient issues. We conceptualize this by using the concept of foreign policy congruence. Taking free trade as an example, congruence is 'close' if, on a scale running from full protectionism to complete free trade, a government's position is close or identical to that of their constituency, or parts of their constituency. This in turn could mean that public opinion is reflected in the formulation of foreign policy. Of course, close congruence of foreign policy positions and public preferences does not necessarily mean that governments have generated their position strictly based on public opinion. Governments and populace could simply hold similar positions without an aim for greater representation. That said, understanding which factors are associated with foreign policy congruence is a first step to understand to what extent

public opinion drives foreign policy in Africa, or vice versa.

In the following, we present two channels and related explanations that may influence foreign policy congruence in Africa: first, whether governments are more democratic, and how this translates to closer foreign policy congruence; and second, whether governments and constituents rely on unearned income, and how this shapes to what extent governments make independent decisions from their constituency, leading to variance in congruence. We formulate and test two hypotheses.

Channel 1: Democracies versus autocracies

H1:   *The more democratic a government is, the greater the foreign policy congruence.*

Democratic governments should be more reflectiveof their constituents' preferences than more autocratic governments (see similar argument in Clayton et al., 2019, 20), including on issues of free movement and free trade. Much of the literature on congruence focuses on democratic countries (Shim and Farag, 2024). Democracies should be more effective in aggregating public preferences through elections and other accountability mechanisms, thereby translating the majority's (or median voter's) view into foreign policy positions. This does not mean that special interests do not play a role in determining foreign policy, but rather that democratic governments should empirically, all else equal, show greater congruence with constituent preferences. Moreover, compared to autocracies, full-fledged democracies not only hold free and fair elections, but have a more liberal policy outlook, favoring free trade and movement of people, especially if their constituents agree to those measures. Thus, we might expect the most democratic countries in Africa to have a more liberally-minded populace that favors free movement and trade and a government in favor of such liberalized policies.

Channel 2: Unearned income and external rents

H2:   *The higher the unearned income and external rents accruing to governments and constituents, the lower the foreign policy congruence.*

Countries in which governments have to rely less on taxing constituents for government rev-

enue, because of external rents and unearned income, could display lower policy congruence.[1] Three mechanisms may drive this relationship: First, governments which receive larger amounts of foreign aid income can rely less heavily on revenue from their constituents via taxation(Ahmed, 2012; Bräutigam and Knack, 2004; Mesquita and Smith, 2009). Second, governments which have significant revenue from natural resources can depend less on public preferences and providing public goods (Chaudhry, 1994; Ross, 2001). The result may be that governments from resource-rich nations show lower foreign policy congruence on free movement and trade. Third, countries in which income from remittances is high may experience lower foreign policy congruence: as constituent households receive external income flows from remittances, they may invest in private services instead of relying on public services provided by the government (especially where public services are poor to begin with). This effectively "substitutes" government spending on services, allowing governments to divest even further from responding to public preferences (Ahmed, 2012, 146, fn3). Generally, this argument on the independence of decision-making of African governments in foreign policy reflects previous debates on strong executives in Africa ("big men"). Reliance on rents and natural resource income makes them less responsive to their constituents.

Additional explanations of foreign policy congruence

While we focus our analysis on how democracy and unearned income shape foreign policy congruence, we also acknowledge that other factors may play a role in this relationship and need to be accounted for. For instance, the colonial past of countries may affect the foreign policy of African governments. Especially on issues of free trade and free movement, differences in "colonial styles" (Athow and Blanton, 2002) may shape government policy and constituent preferences today. For example, as Grier (1999) has argued, differing colonial economic models and approaches to international market integration of British colonies, private companies' involvement in running colonial endeavors, versus more state-focused approaches by French colonizers, in addition to post-colonial access to trade networks, have effects on African states

---

[1] According to (Ahmed, 2012, 146) "[u]nearned income refers to nontax government revenue. Unearned *foreign* income refers to income generated from outside a country's border that can change (either directly or indirectly) a government's revenue base" (original emphasis).

until today. However, the path dependence and implications of these colonial experiences for current foreign policy congruence are less theoretically intuitive. To acknowledge the role of the colonial past, we conduct a set of robustness checks for the empirical models discussed below that incorporate the identity of the former colonizer. All our findings remain substantively unchanged.[2]

4 Research Design: Data & Methodology

4.1 Data

To study the congruence between governments' foreign policies and public preferences, we require data on both implemented policy regarding free trade and free movement as well as expressed preferences of constituents. For policy data, we rely on the trade integration and freedom of movement components of the 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII), which was jointly developed by the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2020). Table 1 shows the variables used in computing the freedom of movement and trade integration components of ARII. The index was derived by normalizing each component to lie in the $[0, 1]$ interval and then aggregating components by taking a weighted average.[3] We only retain variables that capture government policies (such as tariff rates and signing of AfCFTA), and disregard variables that relate to policy outcomes (such as a country's share of intra-regional trade). Some variables are inversed so that higher values reflect more integration (tariffs on imports, number of countries requiring a visa).[4]

---

[2] Table A6 reproduces the analysis from table 2 including a dummy variable for former British colonies. The control does not reach statistical significance, and main results for polyarchy remain unchanged, but are estimated with less precision. Table A7 reproduces the results from table 3, splitting the sample into former British colonies and those of other countries. Again, main results are unchanged, though there is heterogeneity in effect sizes.

[3] Relative weights of the components are based on principal-component analysis. We retain the original weights where we make use only of sub-components of the ARII (i.e. for trade integration).

[4] We lack public opinion data on preferences over free movement and free trade for any other period than 2019-2021. As the Afrobarometer queries these issues only in Round 8, we only include the ARII 2019, and do not utilize the ARII 2016.

Table 1: 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) components

Variable	Source
Trade Integration	
Average tariff on imports	International Trade Centre
AfCFTA signature & ratification	African Union
Freedom of Movement	
AfFM signature & ratification	African Union
Number of countries whose citizens may obtain a visa on arrival	African Development Bank
Number of countries whose citizens require a visa to enter	African Development Bank

Data on public preferences and public opinion comes from round 8 of the Afrobarometer, covering 34 countries (see table A1 in the appendix for a full list, data collected 2019-21). Unfortunately, earlier rounds of the Afrobarometer contain only very limited questions pertaining to free movement and trade policy. Regarding the specific battery of questions we utilize, the item on trade is only included in round 8. The item on freedom of movement is included in round 6, not included in 7, and then again jointly included with the trade item in round 8. It is not included in later round 9. Consistent intertemporal information would allow us to study dynamic aspects of policy formulation, and would potentially provide more opportunities for causal identification. However, we are able to incorporate some backwards-looking aspects into the analysis to compensate for this, such as the length of tenure of the current government coalition. In addition, round 8 is particularly timely given that AfCFTA and AfFM were adopted in 2018, just prior to the data collection of round 8.

For both free trade and freedom of movement, each respondent encountered two statements (one in opposition and one in support of the respective policy item) and then chose from several responses. Those responses form a 4-item Likert scale ranging from strong opposition to strong support of the respective policy. The free movement item mentions trade and work as reasons for open borders and the protection of citizens as reasons against. The free trade item juxtaposes trade integration with local production and protection of local producers as strategies for economic development (for precise wording see table A2 in the appendix).

We rescale the response variables to lie on the $[0, 1]$ interval to correspond to the operationalized policy index (i.e., foreign policy positions). This allows for comparison of public

preferences and foreign policy positions. While both scales order preferences and policy positions consistently from most restrictive to most liberal, comparison involves the additional assumption that it is meaningful to compare levels across scales. At the end points of the scales this is not problematic, since these represent the observed extremes of the measured underlying concepts. Nonetheless, we cannot be certain that the mathematical midpoints of the scales precisely fall in the middle of the measured constructs.[5] However, we are not aware of any theoretical or empirical priors about the direction or nature of these deviations. We therefore argue that it is justified to treat this uncertainty as random measurement error.[6]

The multivariate analysis proceeds in two steps. First, we aggregate to the country level and perform regressions that relate public preferences to foreign policy positions, conditioning this relationship on the different channels that affect congruence, such as levels of democracy and measures of unearned income. However, this approach does not allow us to control for how these moderating channels interact, as with $n = 34$ country cases this is not statistically feasible. To remedy this, we also leverage the rich individual-level variation in the data (with over 46,000 respondents across 34 countries) and estimate multi-level models of congruence between government policies and individual opinions.

The key independent variables tap into the two channels that influence how greater foreign policy congruence emerges. To measure democracy, we rely on data and conceptual developments from the Vdem project (Coppedge et al., 2022). We use Vdem's electoral democracy index, which aims to capture the competitive nature of elections, including whether they are free and fair, and the ability of civil society organizations to organize political competition. The variable is called *polyarchy*. As alternative, we use the liberal democracy index. This puts additional emphasis on freedom of expression and the protection of minority rights. It is less process oriented, but does integrate some of the components of the polyarchy variable.

Regarding unearned income, we look at foreign aid, remittances, and natural resource income. Foreign aid is Official Development Aid (ODA). While only a part of ODA is directly

---

[5] This implies that there could be non-linearities in how the measure relates to the underlying concept.

[6] This means that the additional noise from measurement error will make it more difficult to identify statistical effects, but will not introduce bias into the results.

spent by the government, project aid has the potential to reduce political demands for govern-ment spending, freeing the government to spend on other things. This justifies using a broad measure of aid in terms of percentage of gross national income. For remittances, we rely on a similarly broad measure, capturing total flows as percentage of GDP. Finally, natural resources can directly provide government income where ownership is in state hands. But even if run privately, royalties from natural resource extraction provide government income without in-creasing the tax burden for citizens. To capture this overall effect, we use natural resource income as percentage of GDP. All three independent variables are taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI, The World Bank, 2023).

We control for a range of possible confounders, both on the country level and level of in-dividual respondent. The theoretical channels – democracy and the prevalence of unearned income – strongly correlate with a country's level of economic development (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997; Ross, 2003; Bettin, Presbitero and Spatafora, 2017). We therefore control for GDP per capita. After a change in government, it might take some time for new policies to be implemented. Likewise, longtime rulers might become increasingly insulated from constituent needs with the passage of time. The longevity of rulers in power in turn is correlated with both influence channels (Knutsen and Nygård, 2015). Accordingly, we control for the number of years a current ruler has been in power. Finally, in countries with large diasporas, govern-ments potentially pay more attention to foreign policy issues (Shain and Barth, 2003; Ho and McConnell, 2019). Since the causal pathway of this influence likely runs through constituent preferences, we control for the total stock of a country's population that has migrated abroad. On the individual respondent level, we control for key occupations in agriculture and trade, income, rural versus urban residence, as well as distance to international borders and water-ways. All of these factors differentially expose respondents to the consequences of government policies on free trade and movement and affect their ability to make their voices heard in the political process. In turn they likely vary with the presence of unearned income and a country's regime type. Summary measures for all variables included in the analysis can be found in table A3 in the Appendix.

4.2 Methodology

As a first step, we start with an aggregate analysis of governments' foreign policy positions, estimated via OLS. This first cut gets at the idea of foreign policy congruence by testing the extent to which foreign policy positions are correlated with public opinion:

$$\text{Government foreign policy}_i = \beta_{12} * \text{Public opinion}_i \times \text{Channel}_i +$$
$$\beta_1 * \text{Public opinion}_i + \beta_2 * \text{Channel}_i + \zeta + \gamma * \text{Controls}_i + \varepsilon_i,$$

$$(1)$$

where i denotes country i, the parameters of substantive interest are called β, ζ is a constant, γ are parameters for the controls, and ε is a well-behaved error term. *Government foreign policy* is the raw foreign policy position (ranging from 0 to 1) for country i. 'Typical' public opinion in country i is computed as average of the individual response variable. To test our hypotheses about the conditions of foreign policy congruence, we interact the public opinion variable with the respective variable capturing the theoretical channels outlined above on democratic government and unearned income, e.g., via measures of democracy levels, aid, natural resource revenues, remittances etc. To avoid higher-order interactions and given the low statistical power with $n = 34$, we estimate separate models for each of the channels.

A significant positive interaction relationship between public opinion and the channel is evidence that the channel is associated with a stronger correlation between public opinion and the government's foreign policy position, indicating foreign policy congruence. To illustrate, consider the counter-factual scatter plots in Figure 1. Dots represent *hypothetical* countries, and relate mean public opinion, running from opposing to fully supporting liberalization, and foreign policy position, running from restrictive to liberalized. In the left panel, there is a poor fit in the hypothetical country sample. Government positions are not matching well with average public opinion – i.e. lower foreign policy congruence. Observations tend to fall away from the 45 degree line. In the right panel, foreign policy congruence is greater, with more observations falling closer to the 45 degree line – foreign policy positions match public opinion
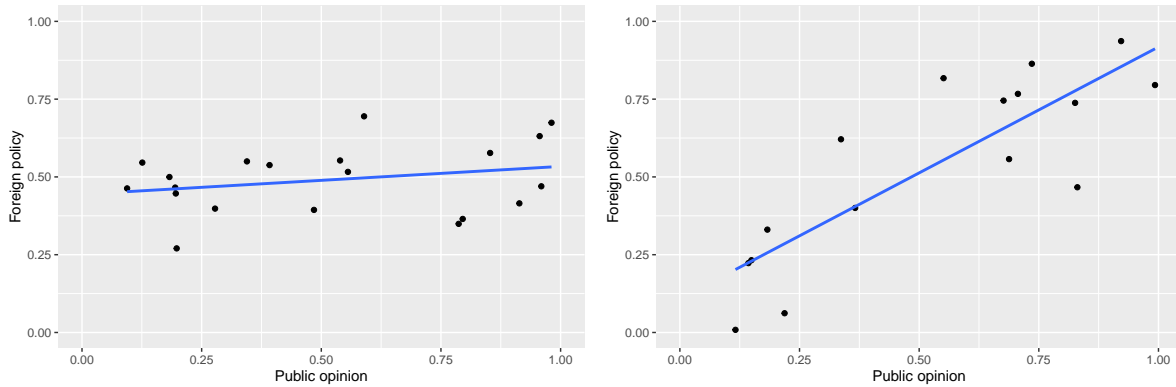
13

Figure 1: Examples of low and high fit between public opinion and policy

across countries fairly well. Recall that an interaction term changes the slope of a regression line. If we were to assume that the left-hand panel only features authoritarian countries, and the right-hand panel only democratic countries, when pooling the observations in both graphs, the interaction term between democracy and public support would move the regression line from the scenario on the left to the right-hand side, providing support for H1.

It is important to note that low congruence results either from undersupply of the policy (when public opinion is in favour of not liberalizing, but foreign policy is liberalized) or oversupply (public opinion is in favour of liberalizing, but foreign policy is restrictive). Thus, this exercise illustrates one important feature of our analysis: high foreign policy congruence, e.g., a close match between public opinion and government foreign policy, can be either very restrictive or very liberalized (or anything in-between), as long as policies mirror the preferences of constituents. Thus, foreign policy congruence can also provide information on the *direction* of congruence, i.e., where on the policy scale congruence occurs.

To further capture foreign policy congruence on free movement and free trade, we estimate multi-level models that incorporate characteristics of individual survey respondents:

$$\text{Absolute Foreign Policy Congruence}_{ij} = \boldsymbol{\beta} * \text{Channels}_i + \boldsymbol{\gamma} * \text{Controls}_i$$

$$\underbrace{\boldsymbol{\xi} * (\text{Individual Traits}_{ij} - \overline{\text{Individual Traits}_i})}_{\textbf{within effects ('fixed effects')}} +$$

$$\underbrace{\boldsymbol{\psi} * \overline{\text{Individual Traits}_i}}_{\textbf{between effects}} + \zeta + (u_i + \varepsilon_{ij}), \qquad (2)$$

where j indexes individual respondents and i countries. The coefficients of substantive interest are denoted as vector $\boldsymbol{\beta}$, featuring elements b_1 to b_4 for each of the four variables that capture the two influence channels. Country-level controls are captured by $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$ as before. In addition, the model controls for individual-level traits of respondents, decomposed into within-effects ($\boldsymbol{\xi}$) and between- effects ($\boldsymbol{\psi}$), following Bell and Jones (2015). The constant ζ and error terms at country and individual level (u_i respectively ε_{ij}) complete the model.

The dependent variable, *absolute foreign policy congruence* (AFPC), is defined for individual j in country i according to

$$\text{AFPC}_{ij} = 1 - Abs(\text{DFPC}_{ij}), \qquad (3)$$

with *DFPC*, directional foreign policy congruence, in turn given by

$$\text{DFPC}_{ij} = \text{ARII}_i - \text{Response}_j. \qquad (4)$$

Conceptually, absolute foreign policy congruence is a measure of proximity between public opinion and foreign policy that only considers how close the two are aligned. A value of 0 indicates the largest possible divergence, and 1 perfect congruence. We use this in the individual-level multivariate analysis. In contrast, directional foreign policy congruence is descriptively richer, as it preserves information about whether a government oversupplies or undersupplies a policy relative to a constituent's stated preference. It ranges from -1 (undersupply), where government policy is most restrictive and constituents prefer full liberalization, to 1 (oversup-

ply), where government policy is fully liberalized but constituents prefer restrictive policies. A value of 0 is a perfect congruence. We use this measure in the descriptive analysis below.

5 Analysis

5.1 Descriptives: public opinion and government positions

Given space constraints, figures A1 and A2 (Appendix) show the distribution of popular views on, respectively, free movement and free trade by the number of respondents for each of the 34 countries in our sample, ordered by average support on each issue. There is considerable variance in terms of popular views on free trade and free movement: in some countries popular views are skewed towards strong support of free movement and trade (Zimbabwe, Uganda) or strong opposition (Botswana). In other countries, populations are differing in their support, e.g., in Lesotho respondents favour free movement but oppose free trade.

Figure A3 (Appendix) shows the distribution of government foreign policy positions (i.e., based on the ARII) on free movement and free trade, with countries ordered from the most protectionist to liberalized policies. Overall, there is wide variation across countries, though on free trade the distribution is skewed towards more openness in government positions. Regarding free trade, there are three groups of country positions: Those with very open economies, with governments having signed and ratified AfCFTA and having very low or no tariffs on imports; those who have joined AfCFTA, but maintain somewhat higher tariff barriers; and restrictive outliers, such as Cameroon, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia. The trade openness of southern African countries contrasts with their relatively restrictive policies on freedom of movement.

5.2 Descriptive evidence on foreign policy congruence

Free trade

Regarding foreign policy congruence on free trade, figure 2 shows the DFPC between government policy and respondent preferences. The number of respondents associated with each policy position on free trade is plotted on the x-axis in each country panel (strongly opposed, somewhat opposed, somewhat in favor, strongly in favor), and the resulting distance – i.e. DFPC – to their government's policy position on free trade is given on the y-axis. The orange line marks the median respondent position. The light grey line marks the position of the government (graphically shown here as zero distance). Countries are ordered (from right to left, top to bottom), from the most positive DFPC (countries in which the government pursues a policy that is more liberalized than the median constituency preference, i.e. policy oversupply) to the most negative (countries in which the government has implemented a policy that is more protectionist than the median constituency preference).
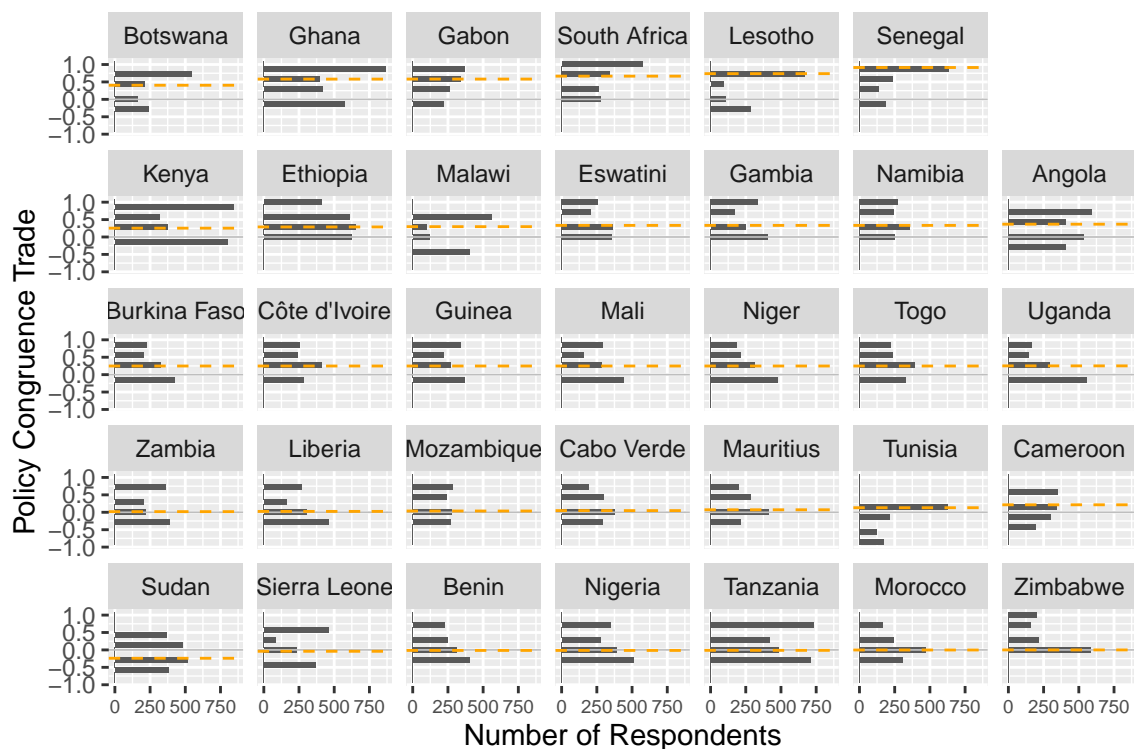

Figure 2: Trade, Directional Foreign Policy Congruence, Histograms

To illustrate, Senegal shows the greatest positive DFPC, indicating that the median constituent prefers much less liberalized policies than the government of Senegal pursues on free trade, leading to large foreign policy incongruence in Senegal. 53 percent of Senegalese respondents strongly agree that protection of local producers from foreign competition is necessary for development, with another 20 percent somewhat agreeing. Yet Senegal has signed and ratified the AfCFTA agreement and imposes an average tariff of 14.1 percent on imports, just below the mean of all 34 countries in the sample (14.8 percent, median at 13.4). At the other end of the spectrum, the DFPC is most negative in Sudan: the median constituency preference is more liberalized policies on trade than the government pursues, leading to foreign policy incongruence (see also figure A5 for a box plot).

Foreign policy congruence on trade varies widely across the continent. Yet, one pattern to note is that about two-thirds of all countries have trade policies that are more liberal than what public opinion supports (figure A5). This suggests that many African publics are generally more trade sceptical than the policy positions of their governments suggest. For a handful of countries, the oversupply of liberalized trade foreign policy is very pronounced. Similar patterns to Senegal can be observed in Lesotho, South Africa and Gabon, though in the latter two countries public opinion in opposition to free trade is not as concentrated. Some governments implement policies that align with only one side of a rather polarized public opinion spectrum, whereas others choose a more centrist position. For example, in Ghana and Kenya, government policies align with a large group of constituents who strongly support free trade, but leave a similarly large number of constituents who are strongly opposed with a poor policy match. Moreover, based on our measure of DFPC, quite a few countries show a relatively strong foreign policy congruence with the median constituent preference on trade (Mauritius, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Liberia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin and Sierra Leone). That said, these countries have fairly different distributions of public opinion on trade. Apart from Sudan, our measure does not suggest that there are other countries in the sample where the DFCP is positive (i.e., where constituents would prefer a more liberalized policy than their government pursues).

18

Free movement

Turning to free movement, the emerging picture of foreign policy congruence is quite different. Figure 3 illustrates that Mozambique shows the greatest positive DFPC, i.e., the median constituent prefers less liberalized policies than the government of Mozambique pursues on free movement, leading to foreign policy incongruence. The DFPC is most negative in Ethiopia: the median constituency preference is to have more liberalization than existing government policies allow, leading to foreign policy incongruence (see also figure A4 for a box plot). DPRF varies widely across the continent. Looking again at the examples of Ghana and Kenya, we can see that some populations are polarized on the issue of free movement. In both countries, government policy is more congruent with the opinion of the most supportive respondents of the population. A pattern to note here is that we observe more negative DFPC across countries than on trade: based on our measure of foreign policy congruence, median public opinion of African publics seems to frequently be more liberal than the restrictive policies implemented by the governments. Countries such as Senegal, Benin, Sudan and Gabon appear to show the closest foreign policy congruence relative to median public opinion on free movement.

Similar patterns exist in Sierra Leone and South Africa, but with more protectionist government positions. In both cases the largest (modal) group of respondents strongly opposes freedom of movement. Government policies are very restrictive and therefore representative of these groups. However, because of polarized public opinion, large numbers of respondents would prefer liberal freedom of movement policies, resulting of an undersupply of these policies in the aggregate. In countries such as Ethiopia or Cameroon, government policies are very restrictive, leaving the majority of people with a policy that is not representative of their more liberal views on freedom of movement. Finally, for a good number of countries, we observe an overall close congruence between aggregate opinion and foreign policy. These countries include Gabon, Cabo Verde, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Angola.
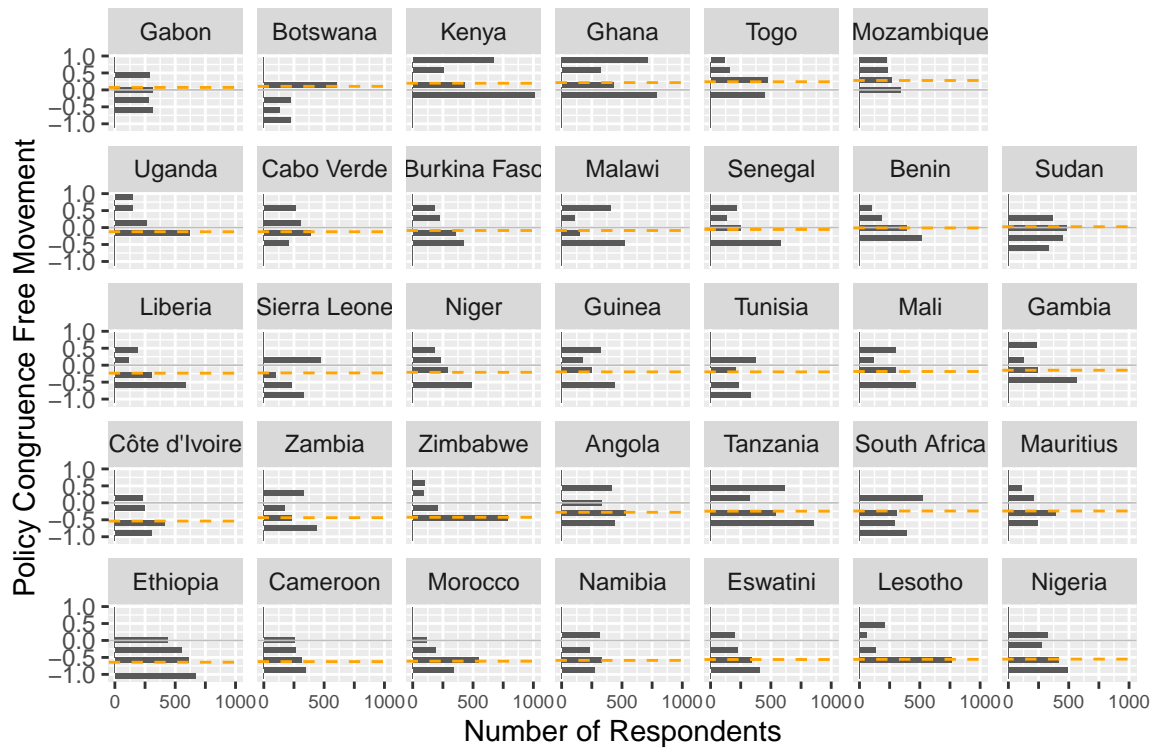
Figure 3: Freedom of Movement, Directional Foreign Policy Congruence, Histograms

5.3 Multivariate analysis – Absolute foreign policy congruence, democratic institutions and unearned income

Free trade

We begin the regression analysis of foreign policy congruence with free trade. Starting with country-level data, the interactive OLS model (equation 1) has government trade policy positions as dependent variable. We explore whether these policy positions correspond to mean constituent opinion, and how this relationship is moderated by democratic institutions and unearned income. We then leverage the considerably richer individual-level data to directly look at the relationship between the two channels and absolute foreign policy congruence.

Table 2 shows the results from the country-level OLS analysis.[7] Models 1 and 2 interact a country's mean public opinion with the two operationalizations of democracy. Models 3 to 5 do the same for external rents and unearned income. While the interaction terms themselves

---

[7] Breusch-Pagan and Wald tests indicate the presence of heteroskedasticity. Accordingly we report robust standard errors with small sample bias adjustment.

do not attain statistical significance, we cannot interpret the conditional relationships directly. Instead we need to look at the statistical significance of constituents' trade preferences across the entire range of the conditioning variable (Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006).

Table 2: OLS – Free trade policy: Public opinion and conditioning factors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Trade preference (mean)	1.674*	2.174**	0.849	1.294*	1.565*
	(0.826)	(0.897)	(0.747)	(0.716)	(0.804)
Liberal democracy score	0.871				
	(1.420)				
Trade preference × liberal democracy	−1.910				
	(2.666)				
Polyarchy democracy score		1.221			
		(1.230)			
Trade preference × polyarchy		−2.279			
		(2.217)			
Net ODA, % of GNI			−0.028		
			(0.051)		
Trade preference × ODA			0.022		
			(0.094)		
Remittances, % of GDP				0.030	
				(0.028)	
Trade preference × remittances				−0.062	
				(0.064)	
Natural resources, % of GDP					0.064
					(0.040)
Trade preference × natural resources					−0.144
					(0.085)
Stock of migrants sent abroad, log	−0.052	−0.053*	−0.062*	−0.045	−0.044
	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.032)
Years in power leader	−0.004	−0.003	−0.004	−0.003	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
GDP pc, 1,000s, 2017 const ppp	−0.0001	−0.002	−0.011	0.001	−0.004
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Constant	0.659	0.357	1.340***	0.729*	0.678
	(0.651)	(0.730)	(0.355)	(0.389)	(0.419)
Observations	34	34	34	34	34
R^2	0.232	0.246	0.286	0.236	0.294
Adjusted R^2	0.062	0.079	0.127	0.066	0.137
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Once we do that, we find a statistically significant relationship for polyarchy, i.e., the electoral democracy index. To explore this relationship, the marginal effects plot in figure 4 shows on the y-axis the amount of change in a government's position on free trade that is associated with one unit increase in public opinion, mapped over the range of the conditioning polyarchy variable. Concretely, we can see that the least democratic countries in the sample have a considerably higher correspondence between public opinion and policy outcome. For example, fixing polyarchy at 0.2, a one percentage point increase in the public opinion scale for free trade is associated with a trade policy that is more liberal by around 1.75 percentage points. For more democratic countries this relationship is weaker. Although this decline itself is not statistically significant (reflecting the lack of statistical significance of the interaction coefficient), for polyarchy scores greater than 0.55, public opinion ceases to have a statistically discernable effect on policy outcomes. We therefore have evidence of a systematic difference in policy congruence for autocracies and democracies that runs opposite to what we expected in hypothesis 1.
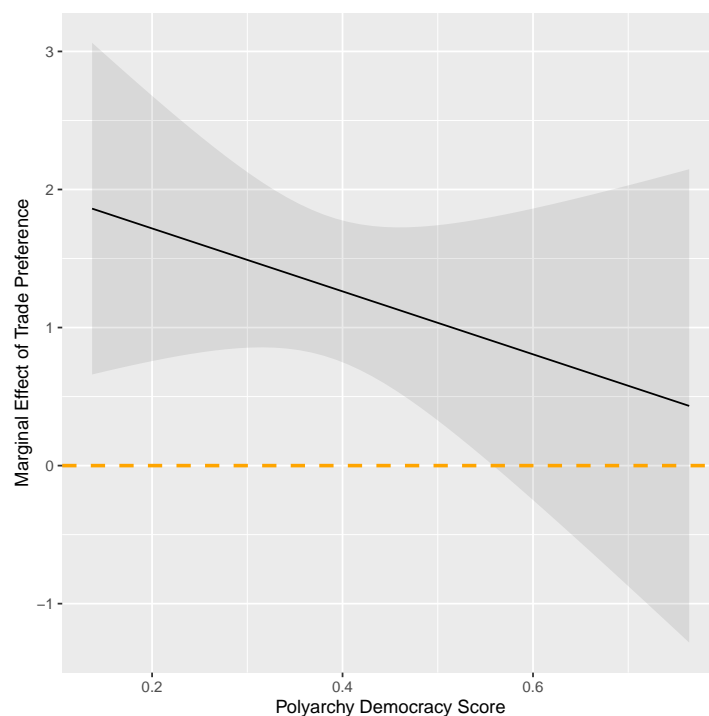

Figure 4: Conditional marginal effect of public opinion on trade openness policies.

To explore what is driving this unexpected pattern, we recreate the hypothetical example

from figure 1, but this time with actual values for free trade used in the regression analysis. Figure 5 plots observed levels of government free trade policies (y-axis) as a function of observed values of constituent preferences (x-axis). Each country's position is represented by a dot. The dots are colored according to polyarchy score, with black representing the least democratic and yellow the most democratic countries. To illustrate the effect of the interaction term, we draw two regression lines – corresponding to how the model summarizes the data for highly democratic and highly autocratic countries. The solid line shows fitted values (predictions) for a hypothetical highly democratic country, varying constituent preferences from low to high, while keeping all independent variables at their mean, except for setting the polyarchy score equal to that of the most democratic country in the sample. The dashed line is generated in a similar way, but setting polyarchy equal to the least democratic country.[8]
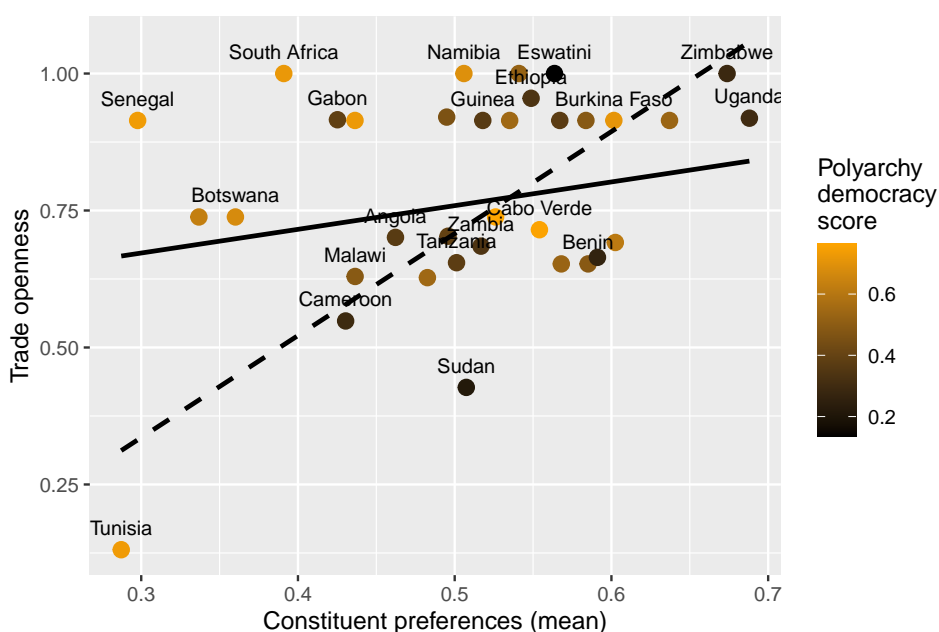
Figure 5: Fitted values from OLS regression of trade openness; least (most) democratic country in analysis: dashed line (solid line); other variables kept at their respective means.

The slope of the regression line predicting trade policies for very autocratic countries is much steeper than for very democratic countries. This signifies that non-democratic countries have greater foreign policy congruence between their constituents' preferences and policies on

---

[8] Corresponding to values of 0.137 (Eswatini) and 0.764 (Mauritius), respectively.

free trade. In fact, as we have seen in the discussion of marginal effects above, for democracies the slope of the regression line cannot be statistically distinguished from zero. The graph reveals interesting patterns. Among democracies, the lack of policy congruence is due to a considerable number of countries having very open trade policies that do not reflect their constituents' much more protectionist preferences. These cluster in the upper-left quadrant and include Senegal, South Africa, and Botswana. The only democracy that achieves high policy congruence with constituents who oppose free trade is Tunisia (in the lower left quadrant). In non-democracies, public opinion tends to be generally moderately to highly supportive of free trade, and government policies are more congruent with these preferences. Accordingly, non-democratic countries cluster in the center upper-right quadrant and the center of the graph. The most pronounced outliers are Gabon, which has a trade policy that is more liberal than public opinion, and Sudan, which is more protectionist.

In the next step, we draw on the entire dataset of individual survey responses. This will enable us to test whether the revealed patterns are robust to controlling for all influence channels simultaneously and to overcome any econometric issues associated with small-n regression. Table 3 reports results of the multilevel model (see equation 2). The dependent variable is now *absolute foreign policy congruence*, with higher values signifying a closer match between a respondent's preferences and their government's trade policy position. Model 1 reports results for all influence channel variables without any controls. For democracy, we now focus only on the polyarchy variable, which was significant in the OLS analysis. Model 2 includes country-level and individual-level controls, but omits estimates for them. The complete results can be found in table A4 in the appendix.

Starting with model 1, the polyarchy variable is associated with a decrease in foreign policy congruence, confirming the finding from the national-level analysis. While the estimated effect remains below standard levels of statistical significance ($p = 0.71$), it becomes strongly statistically significant once we include the full set of country- and individual-level controls (model 2). We can interpret the regression coefficient directly as marginal effect: for each percentage point increase in a country's polyarchy score (coded on the 0 to 1 interval), the congruence between

24

Table 3: Linear multi-level model – Absolute foreign policy congruence, trade: national channels

	(1)	(2)
Polyarchy democracy score	−0.165*	−0.298**
	(0.088)	(0.119)
Net ODA, % of GNI	0.004	0.009**
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Remittances, % of GDP	−0.002	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Natural resources, % of GDP	0.0003	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Country level controls	no	yes
Individual level controls	no	yes
Observations	46,170	46,170
Log Likelihood	−8,916.503	−8,856.032
Akaike Inf. Crit.	17,847.010	17,792.060
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	17,908.190	18,141.670
Number of countries	34	34
Standard deviation(Country)	0.084	0.069
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

a constituent's preference for open trade and their government's policy position on average decreases by 0.3 percentage points. To put this into perspective of the countries in the analysis, going from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean polyarchy score (mean is 0.49, standard deviation 0.17), reduces a constituent's trade policy congruence on average by 10 percentage points (-0.10 on the variable's 0 to 1 scale), a substantively large difference. Together with similar patterns from the country-level analysis and the fitted values from figure 5, this provides robust evidence that democratic governments in Africa have trade policies that are systematically more liberal compared to what their constituents want, while non-democratic governments achieve higher trade policy congruence.

Table 4: OLS – Free movement policy: Public opinion and conditioning factors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
FOM preference (mean)	1.500	1.570	1.141	1.777**	1.449*
	(1.269)	(1.551)	(0.796)	(0.737)	(0.788)
Liberal democracy score	0.885				
	(1.682)				
FOM preference × liberal democracy	−1.001				
	(2.948)				
Polyarchy democracy score		0.833			
		(1.720)			
FOM preference × polyarchy		−0.876			
		(2.866)			
Net ODA, % of GNI			0.015		
			(0.069)		
FOM preference × ODA			−0.011		
			(0.112)		
Remittances, % of GDP				0.106	
				(0.064)	
FOM preference × remittances				−0.162	
				(0.097)	
Natural resources, % of GDP					0.036
					(0.066)
FOM preference × natural resources					−0.052
					(0.123)
Stock of migrants sent abroad, log	0.003	0.001	0.013	−0.012	0.004
	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.045)	(0.044)
Years in power leader	−0.0005	−0.0001	−0.003	−0.004	−0.004
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
GDP pc, 1,000s, 2017 const ppp	−0.015	−0.014	−0.004	−0.009	−0.009
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Constant	−0.529	−0.602	−0.423	−0.392	−0.456
	(0.913)	(1.063)	(0.792)	(0.641)	(0.704)
Observations	34	34	34	34	34
R^2	0.270	0.268	0.256	0.315	0.279
Adjusted R^2	0.107	0.105	0.090	0.163	0.118

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Free movement

We now explore foreign policy congruence for freedom of movement. Table 4 reports results from the country-level regression.[9] Again, models 1 and 2 capture the moderating effect of

[9] Diagnostics did not detect heteroskedasticity, so we report non-adjusted standard errors.

democracy, and models 3 to 5 look at unearned income. As with trade, none of the interaction terms are directly statistically significant, and we have to evaluate marginal effects to identify statistically significant relationships. For remittances (model 4), there is congruence between public opinion on free movement and government policy. Figure 6 shows the two variables moving together in a statistically meaningful way, but only if remittances stay below 3 percent of GDP. This is a very narrow range, and the model does not simultaneously control for the effects of other influence channel variables. To assess robustness, we therefore turn to the individual-level analysis (equation 2). The results do not confirm any meaningful patterns for remittances (table A5 in the appendix). We therefore are unable to conclude that a) free movement policy is meaningfully congruent with public opinion; and b) any of the influence channels affect the congruence relationship in the theorized manner.
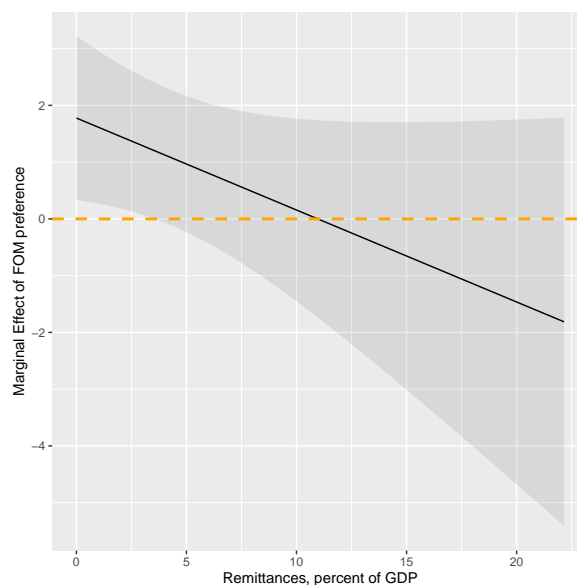

Figure 6: Conditional marginal effects of public opinion on government on freedom of movement policies

6 Discussion & Conclusion

Does foreign policy of African governments reflect the preferences of their constituents? What determines congruence of foreign policy and public attitudes across African countries? Social

scientists largely neglect how and why foreign policy by African governments matches constituent views (Quinn, 2010, 6), despite much anecdotal evidence of citizens expressing opinions pertinent to "Africa's international relations" (Death, 2015; Whitaker and Clark, 2018). The goal of this paper was to initiate the theoretical debate and identify the empirical basis for understanding how public preferences and government foreign policies in Africa are linked. For this purpose, we build on insights from the literature on congruence. To our knowledge, ours is the first study applying the concept of policy congruence to foreign policy in Africa (for an overview on congruence see Shim and Farag, 2024).

We study foreign policy congruence of governmental foreign policy positions with public opinion on issues of free movement and free trade across 34 countries Union Africa. We consider two theoretical drivers of foreign policy congruence: first, in democracies, we expect higher foreign policy congruence than in autocracies; second, where unearned income and external rents from natural resources, aid, or remittances are high, we expect low foreign policy congruence.

Our empirical contribution is both descriptive and explanatory. We find two interesting patterns in our descriptive analysis which contextualize the 2018 adoption of the AfCFTA and AfFM: on free trade, African publics tend to be more trade-sceptic than the liberalized policy positions of their governments, meaning low foreign policy congruence. On free movement, low foreign policy congruence stems from African constituents preferring more liberalization than what governments provide. While our analysis reveals variance across the continent in terms of foreign policy congruence at the country-level, it allows us to identify those countries with better foreign policy congruence, as well as those which are oversupplying or undersupplying liberalization. While the issues of free trade and free movement are related, our findings suggest that governments and constituents do not necessarily sort in a simple protectionism versus liberalization dichotomy. Constituents arguably perceive, experience, and comprehend the issues of free trade and free movement quite differently. These insights could mean that African publics do not perceive the same gains from free trade as their governments, or that the free trade policies adopted by their governments and the African Union are not delivered

28

to the satisfaction of the constituents. On the issue of free movement, it is possible that different countries exhibit different features in terms of being net senders or net hosts of foreign constituent movement, which will shape public opinion and governments positions alike.

Our multivariate analysis, counter to our expectations, indicates that democracies tend to have lower foreign policy congruence than autocracies on issues of trade: we show that democracies on average are more liberal on free trade than their constituents prefer. We cannot find an effect of unearned income on foreign policy congruence. While these findings are surprising, they also speak to previous arguments that policy congruence is not unique to democracies (Belchior, Sanches and José, 2018, 202). More autocratic states may require a certain level of foreign policy congruence to stabilize their rule. In addition, the insight that democracies over-supply free trade – i.e. governments pursue a more liberalized trade policy than constituents prefer – may be a consequence of democracies generally being more liberal not just with regard to political participation, but also regarding market liberalization and international market integration. Democracies may also simply be more prone to pursue free trade with economies outside of Africa. Since the constituents of these governments do not appreciate trade openness to the same extent as their governments, this points to a central tension in African foreign policy.

Our analysis provides the stepping stones for further research, with the potential for spawning a larger research agenda on foreign policy congruence in Africa: first, future analyses should broaden the issue space beyond free trade and free movement. This would, however, require further data on both government positions *and* specified survey data asking constituents' to express or assess foreign policy positions. Second, ideally, these data would be collected over time, to allow for clarification of the causal link between public preferences and policy: does public opinion drive foreign policy or vice versa? The data currently available did not allow for such an intertemporal perspective. Finally, scholars interested in foreign policy congruence could start to investigate the domestic underpinnings of the observed differences between countries. While government positions at the national level are a good starting point, additional insights could be gained from collecting survey data from MPs or foreign office staff on their

foreign policy positions and constituent influences on these positions. Moreover, disaggregating public opinion (e.g., by gender, profession, etc) promises an understanding of which groups and interests are better represented in African foreign policy, and why.

References

Adejumobi, Said and Adebayo O Olukoshi. 2008. *The African Union and new strategies for development in Africa.* Cambria Press.

Adewumi, Bode. 2019. "Labour holds awareness rally against abuses of African migrant workers." *Nigerian Tribune* (June 11, 2019). Available online.
URL: *https://tribuneonlineng.com/labour-holds-awareness-rally-against-abuses-of-african-migrant-workers/*

Ahmed, Faisal Z. 2012. "The Perils of Unearned Foreign Income: Aid, Remittances, and Government Survival." *American Political Science Review* 106(1):146–165.

Ahmed, Faisal Z. 2019. Foreign Rents and Rule. In *The Perils of International Capital.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 42–75.

Alden, Chris. 2000. "From Neglegt to 'Virtual Engagement': The United States and Its New Paradigm for Africa." *African Affairs* 99(396):355–371.

Athow, Brian and Robert G. Blanton. 2002. "Colonial Style and Colonial Legacies: Trade Patterns in British and French Africa." *Journal of Third World Studies* 19(2):219–241. Publisher: University Press of Florida.

Baimu, Evarist and Kathryn Sturman. 2003. "Amendment to the African Union's Right to intervene: A shift from human security to regime security?" *African Security Studies* 12(2):37–45.

Barton, Mr Benjamin and Professor Jing Men. 2013. *China and the European Union in Africa: Partners or Competitors?* Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Belchior, Ana Maria, Edalina Rodrigues Sanches and Gildo Matias José. 2018. "Policy Congruence in a Competitive Authoritarian Regime: Learning from the Angolan Case." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 53(2):201–216.

Bell, Andrew and Kelvyn Jones. 2015. "Explaining fixed effects: Random effects modeling of time-series cross-sectional and panel data." *Political Science Research and Methods* 3(1):133–153.

Bettin, Giulia, Andrea F. Presbitero and Nikola L. Spatafora. 2017. "Remittances and Vulnerability in Developing Countries." *The World Bank Economic Review* 31(1):1–23.

Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding interaction models: Improving empirical analyses." *Political Analysis* 14(1):63–82.

Bratton, Michael, Robert Mattes and E. Gyimah-Boadi. 2005. *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa.* Cambridge University Press.

Bräutigam, Deborah A. and Stephen Knack. 2004. "Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 52(2):255–285.

Capron, Alexandre and Peter O'Brien. 2019. "'We want one Africa' – protesters in Zambia, Nigeria, DRC react to xenophobia in S. Africa." *France 24* (September 5, 2019). Available online.
URL: *https://observers.france24.com/en/20190905-protesters-zambia-nigeria-drc*

Carmody, Padraig R and Francis Y Owusu. 2007. "Competing hegemons? Chinese versus American geo-economic strategies in Africa." *Political Geography* 26(5):504–524.

Chaudhry, Kiren Aziz. 1994. "Economic Liberalization and the Lineages of the Rentier State." *Comparative Politics* 27(1):1–25.

Cheru, Fantu and Cyril Obi. 2011. "Chinese and Indian engagement in Africa: Competitive or mutually reinforcing strategies?" *Journal of International Affairs* pp. 91–110.

Chutel, Lynsey. 2019. "What's driving anti-immigrant violence in South Africa? It's not just economic anxiety." *Washington post (Washington, D.C. : 1974)* (September 10, 2019). Available online.
URL: *https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/whats-driving-anti-immigrant-violence-in-south-africa-its-not-just-economic-anxiety/2019/09/10/ba4c1fb2-d0d9-11e9-a620-0a91656d7db6story.html*

Chutel, Lynsey. 2021. "Senegal's Political Crisis. A country seen as a bulwark of stability faces mass unrest." *Foreign Policy* (March 17, 2021). Available online.
URL: *https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/17/senegal-dakar-protests-political-crisis/*

Clark, John F. 2024. Political Identity and African Foreign Policies. In *Political Identity and African Foreign Policies*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Clayton, Amanda, Cecilia Josefsson, Robert Mattes and Shaheen Mozaffar. 2019. "In Whose Interest? Gender and Mass–Elite Priority Congruence in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 52(1):69–101.

Cooper, Scott. 2007. "Why doesn't regional monetary cooperation follow trade cooperation?" *Review of International Political Economy* 14(4):626–652.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Nazifa Alizada, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Adam Glynn, Sandra Grahn, Allen Hicken, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Katrin Kinzelbach, Joshua Krusell, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Juraj Medzihorsky, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Josefine Pernes, Oskar Rydén, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundström, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, Steven Wilson and Daniel Ziblatt. 2022. "VDem Country–Year dataset v12.".

Death, Carl. 2015. "Introduction: Africa's international relations." *African Affairs.* (Virtual issue on Africa's International Relations: Sovereignty, Extraversion, and China):1–6.
URL: *https://academic.oup.com/afraf/pages/internationalrelationsvirtualissue*

Eckstein, Harry. 1961. *A Theory of Stable Democracy*. Center of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University.

Golder, Matt and Gabriella Lloyd. 2014. "Re-evaluating the relationship between electoral rules and ideological congruence." *European Journal of Political Research* 53(1):200–212.

Golder, Matt and Jacek Stramski. 2010. "Ideological Congruence and Electoral Institutions." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1):90–106.

Grier, Robin M. 1999. "Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth." *Public Choice* 98(3/4):317–335.
URL: *https://www.jstor.org/stable/30024490*

Held, David, Charles Roger and Eva-Maria Nag. 2014. *Climate governance in the developing world*. Cambridge, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Ho, Elaine L. E. and Fiona McConnell. 2019. "Conceptualizing 'diaspora diplomacy': Territory and populations betwixt the domestic and foreign." *Progress in Human Geography* 43(2):235–255.

Jura, Jarosław, Dominik Kopiński, Andrzej Polus and Wojciech Tycholiz. 2024. "Examining shifts in the Angola–China relations in the post-Dos Santos era." *African Affairs* p. Online first.

Kagwanja, Peter. 2006. "Power and peace: South Africa and the refurbishing of Africa's multilateral capacity for peacemaking." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24(2):159–184. Publisher: Taylor & Francis.

Kefale, Asnake. 2019. Federalism and regional politics in africa. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*. Oxford University Press.

Khadiagala, Gilbert M and Terrence Lyons. 2001*a*. *African foreign policies: power and process*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Khadiagala, Gilbert M. and Terrence Lyons. 2001*b*. Foreign policy making in Africa: An introduction. In *African foreign policies: Power & process*, ed. Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons. London: Lynne Rienner pp. 1–13.

Kindzeka, Moki Ewin. 2020. "Traders, truckers protest cameroon-chad border closing over COVID." *Voice of America* (December 16, 2020). Available online.
URL: *https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/traders-truckers-protest-cameroon-chad-border-closing-over-covid*

Kirkpatrick, Colin and Matsuo Watanabe. 2005. "Regional trade in sub-saharan africa: An analysis of east african trade cooperation, 1970–2001." *The Manchester School* 73(2):141–164.

Knutsen, Carl Henrik and Håvard Mokleiv Nygård. 2015. "Institutional Characteristics and Regime Survival: Why Are Semi-Democracies Less Durable Than Autocracies and Democracies?" *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3):656–670.

Lieberman, Evan S. and Gwyneth H. McClendon. 2013. "The Ethnicity–Policy Preference Link in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(5):574–602.

Lupu, Noam, Lucía Selios and Zach Warner. 2017. "A New Measure of Congruence: The Earth Mover's Distance." *Political Analysis* 25(1):95–113.

Lupu, Noam and Zach Warner. 2022. "Affluence and Congruence: Unequal Representation around the World." *The Journal of Politics* 84(1):276–290.

Makinda, Samuel M and F Wafula Okumu. 2007. *The African Union: challenges of globalization, security, and governance*. Routledge.

Mampilly, Zachariah. 2018. "Shifts in global power and UN peacekeeping performance: India's rise and its impact on civilian protection in Africa." *African Affairs* 117(467):171–194.

Marks, Zoe, Erika Chenoweth and Jide Okeke. 2019. "People power is rising in africa." *Foreign Affairs*. Online publication.
URL: *https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2019-04-25/people-power-rising-africa*

Mattes, Robert and Michael Bratton. 2007. "Learning about Democracy in Africa: Awareness, Performance, and Experience." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1):192–217.

Maundi, Mohammed Omar, Kwaku Nuamah, I William Zartman and Gilbert M Khadiagala. 2006. *Getting in: Mediators' entry into the settlement of African conflicts*. US Institute of Peace Press.

Mesquita, Bruce Bueno de and Alastair Smith. 2009. "A Political Economy of Aid." *International Organization* 63(2):309–340.

Miller, Warren E. and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57(1):45–56.

Milner, Helen V. 1997. *Interests, institutions, and information: Domestic politics and international relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Milner, Helen V. and Dustin Tingley. 2013. "Public opinion and foreign aid: A review essay." *International Interactions* 39(3):389–401.

Milner, Helen V., Michael G. Findley and Daniel L. Nielson. 2016. "Citizen preferences and public goods: comparing preferences for foreign aid and government programs in Uganda." *The Review of International Organizations* 11:219–245.

Murithi, Timothy. 2005. *The african union: pan-Africanism, peacebuilding and development*. Routledge.

Ochunge, Nathan and Micah Sali. 2020. "Truckers defy Malaba border deal." *The Standard* (May 26, 2020). Available online.
URL: *https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/kenya/article/2001372738/truckers-defy-malaba-border-deal*

Ojione, Ojieh Chukwuemeka. 2008. "Public opinion and foreign policy: analysing Nigerian reactions to the asylum offered former President Charles Taylor of Liberia." *African Journal of International Affairs* 11(1).

Powell, G. Bingham. 2004. "Political Representation in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7(1):273–296.

Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49(2):155–183.

Putnam, Robert D. 1988. "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games." *International organization* 42(3):427–460.

Quinn, John James. 2010. "African foreign policies." *The International Studies Compendium Project. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell* pp. 24–46.

Resnick, Danielle. 2012. "Opposition Parties and the Urban Poor in African Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 45(11):1351–1378.

Ross, Michael. 2003. The Natural Resource Curse: How Wealth Can Make You Poor. Technical report World Bank.
URL: *https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02485.7*

Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3):325–361.

Shain, Yossi and Aharon Barth. 2003. "Diasporas and International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 57(3):449–479.

Shalaby, Marwa and Abdullah Aydogan. 2020. "Elite-Citizen Linkages and Issue Congruency under Competitive Authoritarianism." *Parliamentary Affairs* 73(1):66–88.

Shim, Jaemin and Mahmoud Farag. 2024. "Blind spots in the study of democratic representation: Masses and elites in old and new democracies." *International Political Science Review* p. 01925121231219045.

Tapsoba, Sampawende J-A, Daouda Sembene, Vigninou Gammadigbe and Ismaël Issifou. 2019. "Fiscal convergence in africa." *Journal of Economic Integration* 34(2):214–235.

The World Bank. 2023. "World development indicators.".

Tieku, Thomas Kwasi. 2004. "Explaining the clash and accommodation of interests of major actors in the creation of the African Union." *African Affairs* 103(411):249–267.

Touray, Omar A. 2005. "The common African defence and security policy." *African Affairs* 104(417):635–656.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. 2020. "Africa regional integration index (ARII): Methodoloigcal note.".

Van Eerd, Jonathan. 2011. "Elite-Mass Congruence in African Dominant Party Systems: The Cases of Botswana and Lesotho." *IPSA-ECPR Joint Conference, University of Sao Paolo, February 16-19 (2011).* .
URL: *http://www.ssrn.com/abstract=2411537*

Warner, Jason and Timothy M. Shaw, eds. 2018. *African foreign policies in international institutions*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Whitaker, Beth Elise. 2023. "Border proximity and attitudes toward free movement in Africa." *Afrobarometer Working Paper* 200:1–23.

Whitaker, Beth Elise and John F Clark. 2018. *Africas international relations: Balancing domestic and global interests*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Wright, Stephen, ed. 1999. *African foreign policies*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Zartman, I William. 1966. "Decision-making among African governments on inter-African affairs." *The Journal of Development Studies* 2(2):98–119.

Appendix

Tables

Table A1: Countries in Analysis

Country	Number of Respondents
Benin	1200
Botswana	1200
Burkina Faso	1200
Cabo Verde	1200
Cameroon	1200
Cote d'Ivoire	1200
Eswatini	1200
Ethiopia	2378
Gabon	1200
Gambia	1200
Ghana	2400
Guinea	1200
Kenya	2400
Lesotho	1200
Liberia	1200
Mali	1200
Mauritius	1200
Namibia	1200
Niger	1199
Nigeria	1599
Senegal	1200
Sierra Leone	1200
Sudan	1800
Tanzania	2398
Togo	1200
Tunisia	1200
Uganda	1200

Respondents from Afrobarometer Rd. 8

Table A2: Afrobarometer, Freedom of Movement &Trade Items

Question 61 (Freedom of Movement)
Now let's talk about how our country should relate to other countries in [respondent's region] and the world. Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose statement 1 or Statement 2.
Statement 1: People living in East Africa should be able to move freely across international borders in order to trade or work in other countries.
Statement 2: In order to protect their own citizens, governments should limit the cross-border movement of people and goods.
Value labels

1. Agree very strongly with 1,

2. Agree with 1,

3. Agree with 2,

4. Agree very strongly with 2.

Question 66 (Free trade)
Now let's talk about how our country should relate to other countries in [respondent's region] and the world. Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose statement 1 or Statement 2.
Statement 1: In order to develop, our country must rely on trade with the rest of the world, including by opening our borders to foreign imports.
Statement 2: In order to develop, our country must rely on local production and protect local producers from foreign competition.
Value labels

1. Agree very strongly with 1,

2. Agree with 1,

3. Agree with 2,

4. Agree very strongly with 2.

Table A3: Overview of variables

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Trade openness policy	34	0.786	0.192	0.131	1.000
Free movement policy	34	0.413	0.280	0.025	0.944
Polyarchy democracy score	34	0.493	0.176	0.137	0.764
Liberal democracy score	34	0.368	0.174	0.097	0.678
Net ODA, % of GNI	34	5.158	4.627	0.034	19.588
Remittances, % of GDP	34	4.212	4.936	0.005	22.156
Natural resources, % of GDP	34	6.746	5.898	0.002	26.138
Stock of migrants sent abroad, log	34	12.989	1.110	10.774	14.998
Years in power leader	34	7.176	10.140	0	36
GDP pc, 1,000s, 2017 const ppp	34	5.480	5.082	1.217	23.682
DFPC – free trade	44,806	0.284	0.425	−0.869	1.000
DFPC – free movement	45,861	−0.155	0.461	−0.975	0.944
AFPC – free trade	44,806	0.592	0.307	0.000	1.000
AFPC – free movement	45,861	0.595	0.269	0.025	0.988
Respondent in agriculture	45,861	0.240	0.427	0	1
Respondent in trading	45,861	0.111	0.314	0	1
Distance to border (inverse)	45,861	0.0004	0.005	0.00000	0.366
Urban respondent	45,861	0.453	0.498	0	1
Going without income	45,861	2.051	1.347	0	4

Table A4: Linear multi-level model – Absolute foreign policy congruence, free trade: national channels, complete results

	(1)	(2)
Polyarchy democracy score	−0.165*	−0.298**
	(0.088)	(0.119)
Net ODA, % of GNI	0.004	0.009**
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Remittances, % of GDP	−0.002	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Natural resources, % of GDP	0.0003	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Country-level controls (between variation)		
Migrants sent abroad (log)		0.025*
		(0.015)
Government spell in power (years)		0.0004
		(0.002)
GDP per capita		0.003
		(0.006)
Share of respondents in agriculture		0.039
		(0.155)
Share of respondents in trading		0.316
		(0.259)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse, average)		15.486
		(29.304)
Share of urban respondents		−0.014
		(0.110)
Respondent going without income (average frequency)		−0.083***
		(0.031)
Individual-level controls (within variation)		
Respondent in agriculture		0.010
		(0.006)
Respondent in trading		0.009*
		(0.005)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse)		−0.305
		(0.492)
Urban respondent		−0.011**
		(0.004)
Respondent going without income (frequency)		−0.001
		(0.002)
Constant	0.663***	0.471*
	(0.051)	(0.275)
Observations	46,170	46,170
Number of countries	34	34
Standard deviation(Country)	0.084	0.069
Log Likelihood	−8,916.503	−8,856.032
Akaike Inf. Crit.	17,847.010	17,792.060
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	17,908.190	18,141.670

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A5: Linear multi-level model – Absolute foreign policy match, free movement: national channels, complete results

	(1)	(2)
Polyarchy democracy score	0.126	0.076
	(0.079)	(0.100)
Net ODA, % of GNI	0.002	0.006*
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Remittances, % of GDP	−0.002	0.0005
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Natural resources, % of GDP	0.003	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Country-level controls (between variation)		
Migrants sent abroad (log)		0.002
		(0.013)
Government spell in power (years)		0.002
		(0.001)
GDP per capita		0.016***
		(0.005)
Share of respondents in agriculture		0.104
		(0.135)
Share of respondents in trading		0.278
		(0.210)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse, average)		−16.995
		(24.316)
Share of urban respondents		−0.030
		(0.095)
Respondent going without income (average frequency)		0.054**
		(0.026)
Individual-level controls (within variation)		
Respondent in agriculture		−0.005
		(0.004)
Respondent in trading		−0.004
		(0.005)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse)		−0.158
		(0.801)
Urban respondent		−0.007**
		(0.003)
Respondent going without income (frequency)		0.002
		(0.001)
Constant	0.511***	0.239
	(0.046)	(0.243)
Number of countries	34	34
Standard deviation(Country)	0.075	0.074
Observations	45,861	45,861
Log Likelihood	−2,776.192	−2,749.099
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,566.384	5,578.199
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	5,627.518	5,927.534

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A6: OLS – Trade openness policy, controling for former GB colony

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Trade preference (mean)	1.710	2.237*	0.864	1.294*	1.564*
	(1.080)	(1.155)	(0.770)	(0.728)	(0.826)
Liberal democracy score	0.913				
	(1.716)				
Trade preference × liberal democracy	−1.992				
	(3.243)				
Polyarchy democracy score		1.273			
		(1.444)			
Trade preference × polyarchy		−2.398			
		(2.706)			
Net ODA, % of GNI			−0.026		
			(0.056)		
Trade preference × ODA			0.019		
			(0.103)		
Remittances, % of GDP				0.030	
				(0.029)	
Trade preference × remittances				−0.062	
				(0.065)	
Natural resources, % of GDP					0.064
					(0.042)
Trade preference × natural resources					−0.144
					(0.087)
Fromer GB colony	−0.010	−0.014	−0.009	−0.001	−0.004
	(0.084)	(0.080)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.070)
Stock of migrants sent abroad, log	−0.053	−0.054*	−0.063*	−0.045	−0.044
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Years in power leader	−0.004	−0.003	−0.004	−0.003	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
GDP pc, 1,000s, 2017 const ppp	0.657	0.351	1.346***	0.730*	0.684
	(0.677)	(0.761)	(0.359)	(0.408)	(0.455)
Constant	−0.0001	−0.002	−0.011	0.001	−0.004
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Observations	34	34	34	34	34
R^2	0.233	0.248	0.286	0.236	0.294
Adjusted R^2	0.026	0.045	0.094	0.030	0.104

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A7: Split-sample, former UK colonies vs other colonial histories – free trade

	Former colonial power			
	GB	GB	Others	Others
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Polyarchy democracy score	−0.209*	−1.301***	−0.162	−0.144*
	(0.108)	(0.116)	(0.148)	(0.077)
Net ODA, % of GNI	0.001	0.025***	0.004	0.019***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Remittances, % of GDP	−0.002	0.030***	0.002	−0.018***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Natural resources, % of GDP	0.004	0.016***	−0.001	0.001
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Country-level controls (between variation)				
Migrants sent abroad (log)		0.041***		0.041**
		(0.007)		(0.017)
Government spell in power (years)		−0.009***		−0.001
		(0.001)		(0.002)
GDP per capita		0.064***		0.022***
		(0.008)		(0.008)
Share of respondents in agriculture		0.968***		0.150
		(0.110)		(0.221)
Share of respondents in trading		1.225***		1.897***
		(0.263)		(0.304)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse, average)		−335.668***		4.869
		(60.022)		(37.625)
Share of urban respondents		−0.050		0.00004
		(0.077)		(0.134)
Respondent going without income (average frequency)		−0.077**		−0.240***
		(0.030)		(0.032)
Individual-level controls (within variation)				
Respondent in agriculture		0.002		0.017**
		(0.010)		(0.008)
Respondent in trading		0.015**		0.005
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Distance of respondent to border (inverse)		0.716		−0.681
		(0.772)		(0.420)
Urban respondent		−0.005		−0.016***
		(0.007)		(0.005)
Respondent going without income (frequency)		0.002		−0.004*
		(0.003)		(0.002)
Constant	0.671***	−0.053	0.672***	0.257
	(0.073)	(0.184)	(0.077)	(0.348)
Number of countries	16	16	18	18
Standard deviation(Country)	0.074	0.03	0.087	0.051
Observations	23,271	23,271	22,899	22,899
Log Likelihood	−4,909.284	−4,859.474	−3,989.865	−3,934.232
Akaike Inf. Crit.	9,832.569	9,798.947	7,993.730	7,948.463
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	9,888.954	10,121.150	8,050.002	8,270.017

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figures

Figure A1: Public opinion on free movement by country (Afrobarometer Q61, Round 8) (2019-2022), ordered by mean support
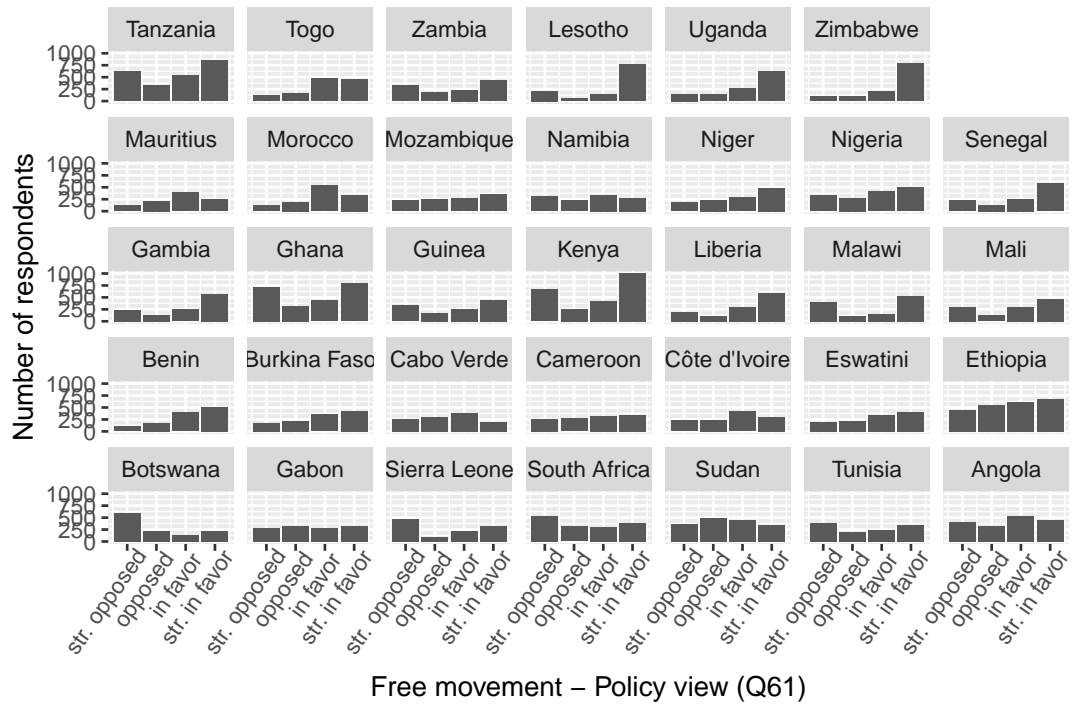

Free movement – Policy view (Q61)

Figure A2: Public opinion on free trade by country (Afrobarometer Q66, Round 8) (2019-2022), ordered by mean support
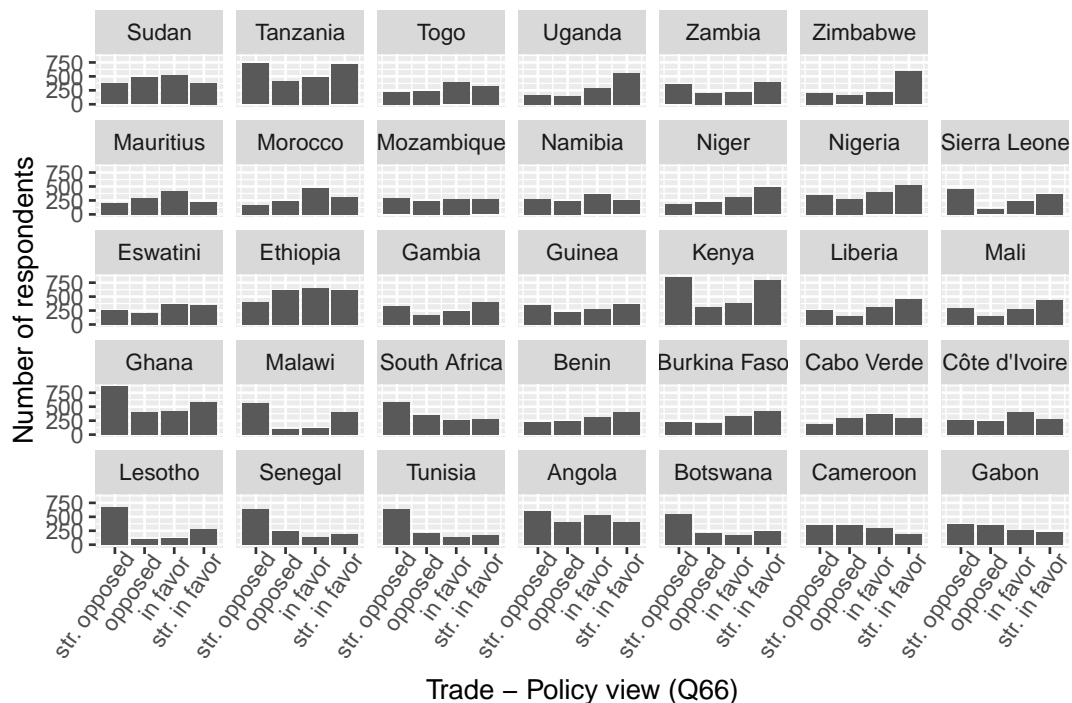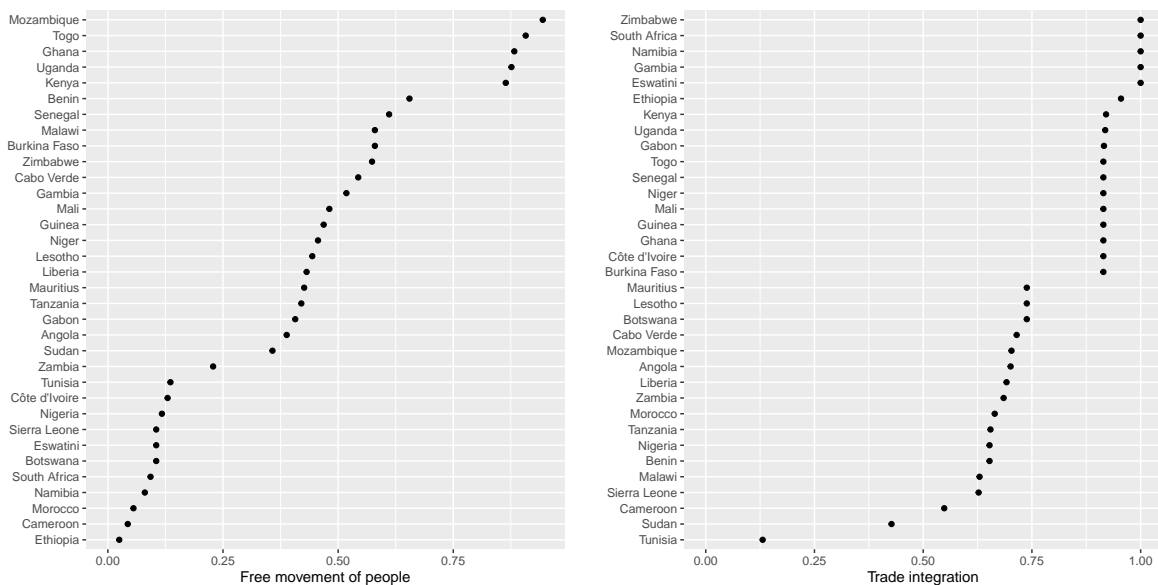

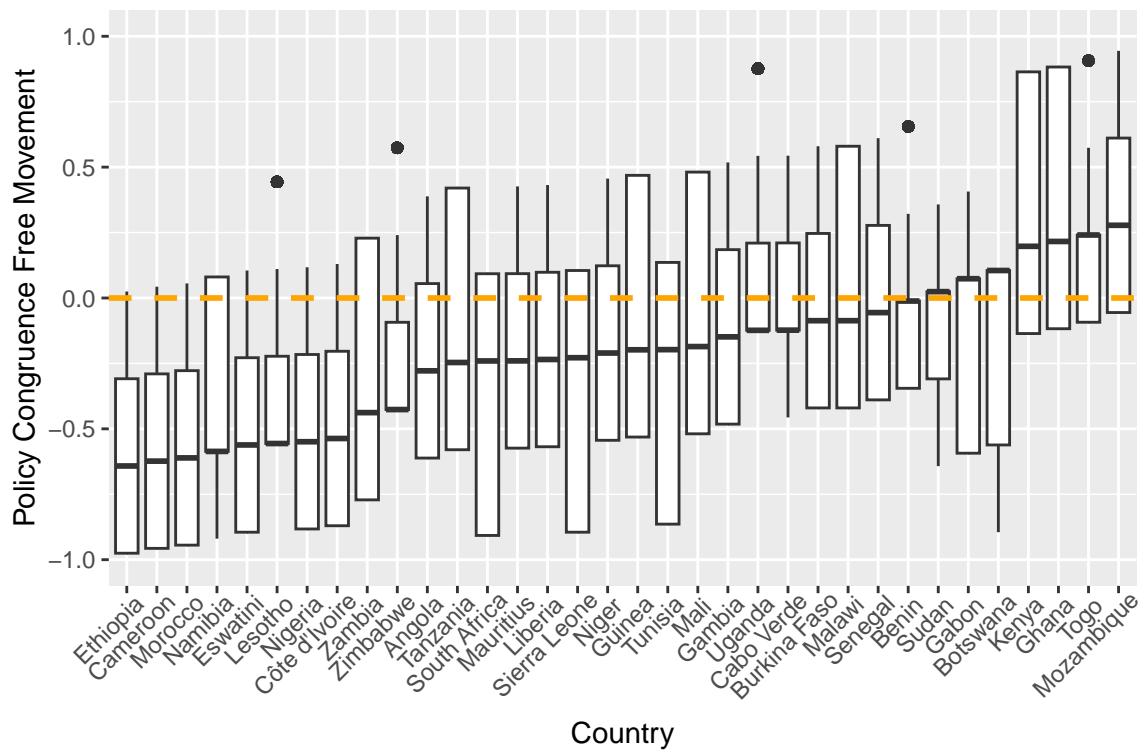Figure A3: Government positions on free movement & trade (ARII)
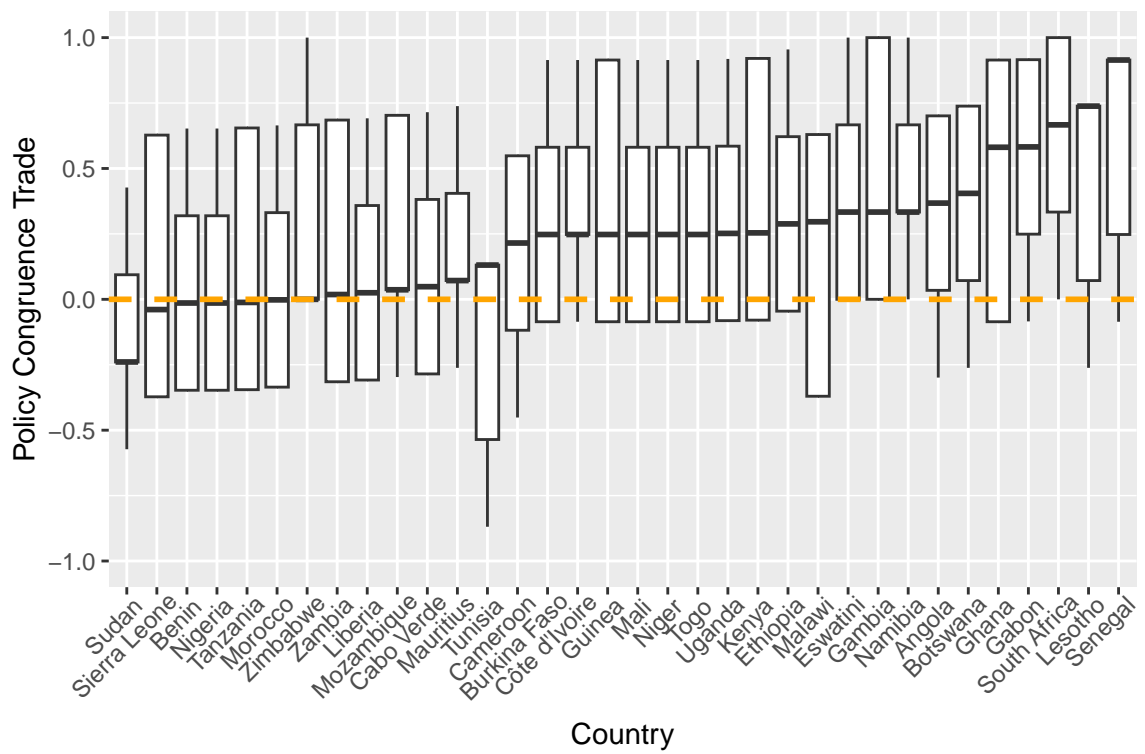
Figure A4: Freedom of Movement, Foreign Policy Congruence, Boxplots

Figure A5: Trade, Foreign Policy Congruence, Boxplots