Cultural Censorship and Institutional Trust in Africa

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Abstract: What are the consequences of cultural censorship on trust? Previous literature on institutional and political trust informs this article which extends the work to consider the importance of artistic spaces for shaping political attitudes. These spaces may allow individuals to form trust relationships with each other. The importance of these cultural spaces is highlighted when, in both democracies and autocracies, we observed cultural censorship. While the rationale for censorship may differ across regime types, some of the effects look strikingly similar. Using survey data from the Afrobarometer and measures of censorship from Varieties of Democracy, this article suggests that trust in executive and legislative institutions among regime supporters is increased, when autocracies engage in cultural censorship. Additionally, this article argues that trust in the ruling party increases and trust in the opposition party decreases with more cultural censorship in both autocracies and democracies. Taken together this descriptive initial test of the theory, consistent with the theory presented, offers additional insights about how authoritarian regimes might use cultural censorship to maintain system support, but also suggest reasons why even democratic regimes can be motivated to engage in censorship for political gain.

Keywords: cultural censorship, institutional trust, Africa, repression

Introduction

"They just ask me to do a video with flowers and butterflies, but we are not living with butterflies. We are living with guns." In this quote, rapper Amkoullel described his decision to produce a music video featuring images of, and lyrics opposing, the Malian regime. His choice ultimately ended with his music video being banned by the state for its messaging.[1] This example of an artist producing media against the regime—and ultimately being censored by it—serves as an exemplar of the cultural censorship experienced in many countries in Africa. As the quote from Amkoullel highlights, government censorship is not limited to restrictions on free press nor silencing political opposition. Censorship can also extend to cultural and intellectual materials.

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Censorship occurs when the government limits or prohibits the production of ideas in the form of academia, art, or media. Often banned through legal means and enforced through methods ranging from fines to imprisonment, government censorship effectively thwarts the proliferation of ideas, in a process that can eventually lead to self-censorship, where individuals do not produce certain works or share certain ideas, anticipating that the government will censor them.[2] This article offers an expanded perspective on censorship, by highlighting the importance of cultural expression and cultural spaces, and then investigating the political consequences for trust when cultural censorship occurs.

Shifting focus from media to cultural censorship, both autocratic and democratic regimes censor. Democracies by their very definition may not engage in as much media censorship (a free press is often seen as a central measure of democracy), and democracies may use apolitical rationales when they engage in cultural censorship (emphasizing issues such as morality and community standards as justification), but democracies may engage in cultural censorship. Although the occurrence of censorship across regime types may be unexpected as it should strike most as antithetical to democratic norms, it seems rational if we understand that regimes of all types will act in their best interests.[3] Expanding beyond media censorship to consider cultural censorship thus expands our understanding of censorship beyond an 'authoritarian tactic' and offers an opportunity for a more robust understanding of the political causes and consequences of censorship. Furthermore, because we would not expect all individuals to be equally affected by cultural censorship, just as they are not equally concerned with other government actions such as electoral manipulation or corruption, this study considers censorship's effects on regime supporters and non-supporters separately.[4]

Because media censorship has been well studied and documented, particularly in research on authoritarian regime survival, these literatures provide a useful frame of reference for considering the consequences of cultural censorship. In building upon media censorship research, this article contributes to the field by examining how censorship leads to alternative outcomes in political trust. First, this research suggests that for elected institutions, cultural censorship boosts support among autocratic regime supporters—supporters in autocratic regimes trust institutions more as governments engage in more cultural censorship. Second, this initial test of theory using observational data indicates that censorship increases trust in the ruling party and distrust in the opposition in both autocracies and democracies, suggesting that democracies may have a political motivation to censor culture.

Censorship as a Strategic Tool

While regimes cannot survive if their only tactic is repression, it is a powerful tool.[5] Censorship is a strategic form of repression. Censorship has been empirically examined as a method of diminishing the influences of political opponents.[6] This line of inquiry has produced three main theories explaining why a given state may choose to censor media available to its citizens. Collective Action Theory holds that states censor media when such media encourages citizens to mobilize against the government.[7] State Critique Theory, by contrast, argues that the state will ban media that is critical of the regime.[8] Supporter Reward Theory is related to Third-Person Effect.[9] It contends that authoritarian regimes may use cultural censorship to appeal to supporters.[10]

The assumption underlying these theories is that censorship is a strategic tool that will help a regime to maintain power.[11] Operating with this assumption, research shows that in authoritarian regimes, censorship will occur to limit the publication and dissemination of ideas that are perceived to destabilize the regime.[12] This article engages with this research by expanding the study to focus on cultural censorship and suggests that if censorship is a strategic tool, then there should be effects—such as a shift in attitudes of citizens towards institutions—and cultural censorship might actually be implemented for political gain, even in democracies.

The Politics of Cultural Expression and Censorship

Art is a medium through which individuals can communicate their thoughts, opinions, and emotions with others. This renders artistic associations similar to civic associations in terms of their impact on political trust.[13] For example, with near-endless choice of instruments, rhythms, melodies, and lyrics, music is particularly expressive and allows for the inclusion of subcultural identifiers for emotional expression, and social play.[14] Civic associations such as those based on the arts can assist in the development of political trust. There is an observed relationship between high social capital and effective government which in turn, leads to feelings of trust.[15] There is also evidence to the inverse—lack of social capital can lead to a decline in trust in government.[16] Given the similarities to civic association, cultural expression is likely to also have an impact on political trust.

Amkoullel summarizes the importance of artistic spaces in his interview by stating that "Music really has a special place in Malian society. Our daily life has music everywhere. It's more power than law. It's a kind of social law, sometime more strong [sic] than the political or social law."[17] This is precisely the power that poses a threat to the regime and may provide the motivation to censor. At the time of the interview, Mali was engaged in a war and music was a part of it. Throughout Africa, censorship efforts aimed at suppressing culture have become law under the guise of upholding morality, religion, and cultural norms.[18] In the last decade, non-governmental organizations have reported a global increase in censorship. In newly democratizing regimes, censorship threats continue to grow at an alarming rate.[19] The repercussions of this type of censorship is an area of contribution for this article.

Censorship is generally measured through the repression of press or media within a country. News and social media are often censored as a method of diminishing the influences of political opponents.[20] Censoring citizens for this end is generally attributed to authoritarian regimes. However, scholars of repression also need to consider cultural censorship, which occurs across all regime types.[21] Media censorship is often about limiting the opposition's networks and communication opportunities, and while cultural censorship may ultimately have the same effect, it is performed with the justification of protecting society and its values. Nonetheless, when cultural censorship occurs, the spaces where individuals can network and express themselves are altered. Like media censorship, cultural censorship disrupts the flow of information and reduces opposition voices. However, unlike media censorship, cultural censorship also disrupts of individuals' and groups' communication and self-expression.[22]

Censorship carries significance for both the supporters and the opposition of the regime. However, we should expect the magnitude of the effect to be greater for those in the opposition, who are more likely to object to this censorship. This article extends Robert Dahl's work,

suggesting that when expression is limited we are less likely to be able to engage with discourse and refine or define our views.[23] However, this outcome may differ depending upon group membership. Supporters of both autocratic and democratic regimes are associated with the dominant culture as set by the ruling party, even if that culture is not representing the numerical majority. Therefore, when a regime censors culture, it will likely most affect the opposition because opposition subcultures will be limited while the dominant culture and values are promoted. Such a strategic use of censorship should produce different results than the collapses of other civic spaces. Without artistic spaces that engage in political and social discourse, individuals are unable to formulate as wide of a range of demands to go into the political system. Through both limiting the spaces to create discourse and critique institutional outcomes, the process of creating trust bonds is altered. Because of this alternation, it is necessary to look at the impact of censorship considering the theories on the origin of institutional trust.

Institutional theories of trust hold that trust is endogenous, meaning that political trust is a consequence of institutions performing well.[24] Institutions enable political involvement.[25] When citizens observe that their inputs into the political system—such as protests, voting, and other civic pressures—are received and responded to, trust in institutions grows.[26] Therefore, we may understand that people trust institutions more when they see aggregated demands go into the political system and come out as policy. The underlying assumption is that voters are able to have their preferences become demands in the system. Censorship, by definition, limits some of these demands. When censorship occurs, two things happen. First, individuals no longer have their demands entered into the system. Theories of the freedom of expression argue that it is imperative to democracies' formation and duration to allow individuals the opportunity to formulate preferences, signal those preferences, and have those preferences considered by the governing body.[27] Second, coordination is thwarted, possibly leading citizens to believe that more individuals approve of the regime.[28] Though perhaps counter-intuitive, when the diversity of preferences is limited through censorship, the endogenous theory of trust may remain viable. This is because the preferences have limited themselves to those the regime allowed. Instead of having multiple inputs and a robust dialogue, there is a dearth of evident opinions. A reduced number of expressed preferences from which to choose would allow a greater proportion of the input reaching the system turning into policy, presenting the appearance of responsive institutions and therefore generating trust. This phenomenon should occur across regime types, as the theoretical implication is that both autocracies and democracies will benefit. Thus, with cultural censorship, institutional trust will change in a way favorable to the regime.

> **Elected Institutional Trust Hypothesis**: Cultural censorship will increase trust in Political Institutions for supporters of the regime.

In the case of political identities, there are differences between regime supporters and non-supporters. While not necessarily the numerical majority in the population, supporters of the regime are likely to be a part of the dominant culture at the time because a member of their ideological group is in power. This political identity allows reenforcing cleavages to be shared, protected, and even preferred by political elites. It is unlikely that cultural censorship will be

targeted at this group because the ruling party came to power by the support of these individuals and thus would not have an incentive to censor the group.

In contrast, those who are not members of the winning party are likely to have other experiences. Not a part of the dominant group, members of the outgroup are more likely to experience discrimination.[29] Censorship may be thought of as a type of discrimination because it can be a symbolic threat to group identity. Symbolic threats challenge what a group stands for, namely the values and beliefs of the group.[30] Censorship may be understood as a symbolic threat because through not being able to express all aspects of an identity, the identity may not be able to fully form. Furthermore, censorship may erode aspects of formed identity through individuals not being able to communicate and refine that identity. However, the group may not be aware that this threat is occurring due to the sometimes clandestine nature of censorship.

Knowing that there are differences between the two groups, it is interesting to consider the effects of cultural censorship on group membership and its relationship to institutional structures. Cultural censorship may prevent the outgroup from being able to form a strong group identity. Group behavior is dependent on the strength of the identity.[31] When cultural censorship is occurring, it is less likely that the political opposition groups will be able to form a strong sense of political identity. In contrast, through allowing the politically dominant culture to persist, cultural censorship of some aspects of identity may help the dominant group's political identities to homogenize and solidify through group identity being regularly communicated by leadership.

For both supporters and non-supporters of the regime, cultural censorship may prevent groups from engaging in discourse and identity formation. However, with a lack of opposition discourse, the ruling party should appear to be performing well, and these perceptions may even extend beyond regime supporters to affect those who don't support the regimes. We should expect to see higher levels of trust in the ruling political party for the group in political power because they will have an awakened consciousness that aligns with political power and because opposition or counterculture will be censored to some extent. This should encourage feelings of trust towards the ruling political party that will be stronger for supporters, though non-supporters may also perceive the ruling party as acting effectively.

> **Partisan Institutional Trust Hypothesis:** Cultural censorship will increase trust in the ruling party and decrease trust in the opposition for both supporters and opponents of the regime.

Methods

To examine both hypotheses, this article employs a regional study of Africa. African states have endured varying levels of censorship over time. From colonizers attempting to stamp out indigenous cultures to post-colonial governments silencing singers of the opposition, censorship has been part of the region's story.[32] The countries of this region measure a high level of variation for both censorship and autocratic measures. Furthermore, there is high-quality survey data available. It is important to note that this data is observational and not experimental thus, endogeneity is a concern that future research needs to address. Using multiple waves of AfroBarometer results, the theory presented is explored with descriptive

data, suggesting that across regimes higher levels of cultural censorship result in higher levels of trust in the ruling party and institutions by supporters of the regime.

This article uses survey data from the second through fifth waves of the AfroBarometer for the dependent variables. The four dependent variables found in the models constructed here are presidential, parliamentary, ruling party, and oppositional trust. To measure these concepts, respondents were asked "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?" about the president, parliament, ruling party, and oppositional political party. Respondents could choose 0 meaning not at all, 1 meaning just a little, 2 meaning somewhat or 3 meaning a lot. Those who did not know, had not heard enough to say, refused to answer, or had a missing answer had their observation dropped.[33]

To capture the variation of censorship tactics employed by regimes, the main independent variable of cultural censorship comes from the database produced by Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). Recognizing that democracy requires robust measurements, V-Dem collects information from a plethora of country experts to create their latent variables. The cultural censorship variable, asks if there is academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression related to political issues. If cultural expression is fully respected by public authorities, the variable is coded as a 1. The ordinal scale progresses up to 4 if academic and cultural expression is not respected by public authorities.

In Africa, cultural censorship has been a tactic used by both colonizers and subsequent regimes to silence certain voices and bolster others.[34] Censorship of music that is critical of the ruling party or coordinating the opposition continues in modern governments. For example, in Niger after the July 2023 coup, music supporting the military flourished while those in opposition were silenced by the junta. In the state, there is a general atmosphere of self-censorship meaning that the full extent to which the state censors is unknown.[35] The desire for citizens to self-censor as a means of preservation is found across regimes. In Uganda, many artists censored the political messaging in their music to avoid censorship from the state. Censorship can range from fines and blacklisting artists to imprisonment and torture.[36] Though the extent to which cultural censorship occurs varies by regime, there is a precedent of regimes targeting music with themes contrary to its interests. The effects of this tactic are explored in the next section of this article by looking at the different experiences of supporters and non-supporters of the regime and highlighting examples in Niger, Nigeria, and Uganda.

The ruling party variable explores the implications of whether or not the respondent supported the regime. To create this variable, the party of the executive or parliamentary majority was recorded for each country and each wave at the time of survey (year determined by reported survey date from AfroBarometer). This was then compared to a question on the survey that asked individuals if they 'felt close' to any particular party. This information was then matched with the ruling party for that year. If the respondent indicated that they felt close to a party and that party was the ruling party, they were coded as a 1 or ruling party supporter. Those who indicated that they felt close to any other party or none at all were coded as a 0 and, therefore, not a supporter of the ruling party. This dichotomous variable is used in the interactions in the model.

The individual level control variables are provided by the AfroBarometer and include measures of age, economic status, education, and gender. The country level controls include

logged gdp, fractionalization, repression, and electoral democracy (see Appendix 1 & 2).[37] These country-level variables were measured annually and coded to correspond to the same year each survey was conducted for a given country. See Appendix 1 for the descriptive statistics on all variables used in the models.

This article employs an ordered logit model to provide a descriptive initial test of the theory. Country-level fixed effects are included to diminish the time-invariant differences across countries and fixed effects for survey waves are included to account for any time-specific factors.

Results

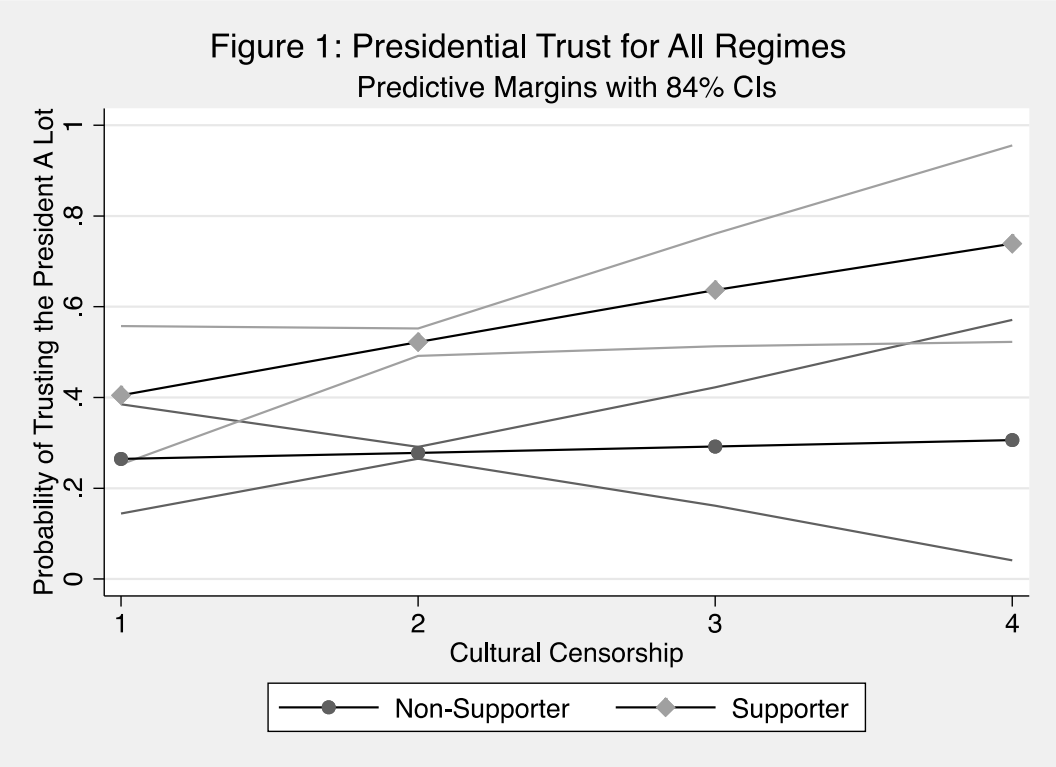

Figure 1. ***When the rate of Cultural Censorship is higher, the Probability of Trusting President A Lot increases for Ruling-Party Supporters and not for Non-Supporters. This effect is stronger in autocracies though it is still observable across regimes. To see the full regression results as well as the descriptive statistics, please see*** **Appendix 1 & 3.**

In Figure 1, we see interesting implications for the logic of regime censorship initiatives, as well as support for the Elected Institutions Hypothesis. In this figure, we see that when the rate of cultural censorship is higher, the probability of trusting the president a lot increases for ruling-party supporters, but not for non-supporters. This demonstrates that among supporters, censorship leads to an increase in the probability that an individual would trust the president a lot. Thus, this indicates an incentive for regimes to censor culture. However, in Figure 2, we observe that trust in parliament decreases only for non-supporters of the regime when cultural censorship is present.[38]

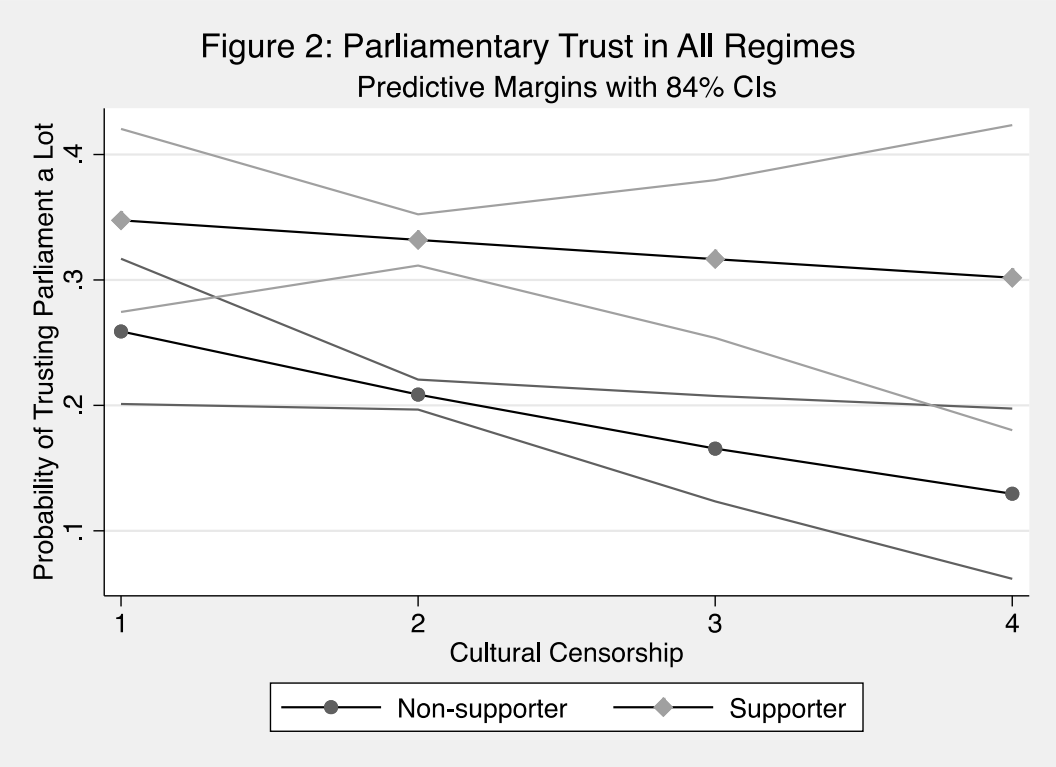

Figure 2. ***When the rate of Cultural Censorship is higher, the Probability of Trusting Parliament A Lot decreases for Non-Supporters. To see the full regression results as well as the descriptive statistics, please see*** **Appendix 1 & 3.**

This result suggests that there is a generalizable response from citizens to cultural censorship of benefit to the regime. To give context to this abstract idea, consider Uganda and the musician and politician Bobi Wine. For nearly a decade, Wine has been among the most popular recording artists in Uganda. Leveraging his popularity, in 2017 Wine ran and became a member of parliament. His bid for office continued when he ran for president of the National Unity Platform (NUP) in 2019 and again 2021. Both times, Wine lost to the incumbent. During both elections, the regime brutally censored the musician, his music, and fans through torture, suppression, and arrests, respectively. In such a political climate, many artists decided to no longer use their platform to critique the government.[39]

During the 2021 Ugandan election, musicians threatened by the sitting government engaged in self-censorship. Though musicians were supportive of Bobi Wine , fear of the ruling party prevented the musicians from writing songs or performing other acts of support. This contributed to failure of the opposition to secure the election because critiques of government were silenced and there was less ability for the opposition to coordinate.[40]

The case of Bobi Wine demonstrates that through censorship, governments can silence opposition in a way that boosts the trust of regime supporters for elected officials. For supporters of the regime in Uganda, censorship appeared as the president protecting them from individuals seeking to harm them. The arrest of individuals who allegedly stoned the

president's car is an example of the government framing suppression of the opposition in a manner meant to protect the supporters.[41] For non-supporters of the regime, the treatment differed.

To demonstrate an alternative outcome when music is not censored, we turn to Nigeria. In Nigeria, there is a long-established precedent of music as a tool to critic the political order. In the northern region of the country, the population is highly diverse in both religious and ethnic identity.[42] In the 2015 election, the opposition used music to promote a non-violent election turnout by emphasizing issues that were bigger than partisan fighting and ultimately won the election.[43] The use of music during the 2015 Nigerian election demonstrates that when not bound by censorship, the opposition can use music to successfully increase support and turnout.

In both Uganda and Nigeria, the executive elected to either censor or not censor the opposition critiquing the government through music. In the Ugandan example, censorship of the opposition took place and the incumbent remained in power. In the Nigerian example, censorship did not occur and the opposition won. While there are a variety of external factors that may have led to these results, these two examples demonstrate that without a space to critique the government, the opposition is unable to coordinate and the supporters continue to feel trust towards their elected officials.

Figure 3 shows support for the Ruling Party Trust Hypothesis. In the panel, we see that, regardless of regime type, there is a statistically significant increase in the probability of supporters trusting the ruling party a lot as censorship increases. Looking at the differences between non-supporters and supporters, we can see that for non-supporters there is no longer a significant decrease in trust towards the ruling party. We see that non-supporters no longer have this trend but may even have their trust towards the ruling party increase. From this, we may understand the logic for both autocracies and democracies to censor some aspect of culture because it increases trust in the ruling party among supporters.

Figure 4 offers a particularly interesting find. In this panel, we see that the probability of supporters of the current ruling party trusting the opposition a lot decreases when cultural censorship is present, but that it increases for non-supporters. The theoretical underpinning for such a finding may be due to a lack of space to engage in discourse. Following the logic of Dahl, citizens need a space to formulate preferences, signal those preferences, and have those preferences considered by the governing body. Under censorship, citizens are unable to communicate those preferences with others, which may result in lower levels of trust for the opposition.

The July 2023 coup in Niger provides context for this result. After the coup, the junta allowed music supporting the regime to be freely created. This music often depicts the leaders and the army in a positive manner, suggesting that the members are filled with "strength, wisdom, intelligence." In contrast, music critical of the regime is silenced. While there has been popular support for the coup, music videos circulating pro-military sentiments have further boosted support.[44]

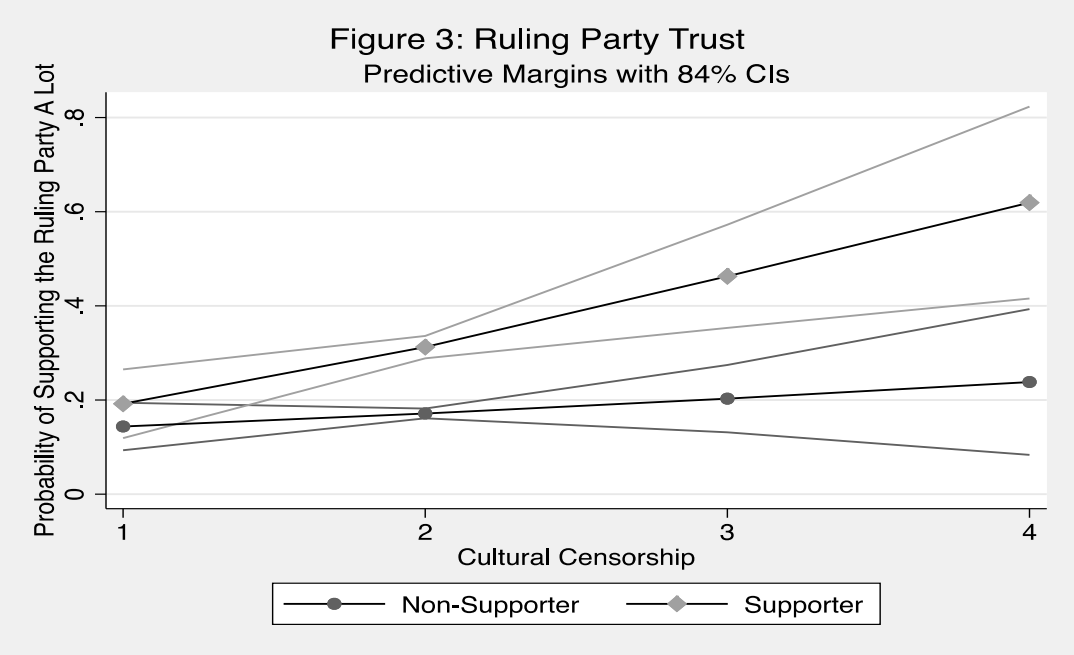

Figure 3. ***When the rate of Cultural Censorship is higher, the Probability of Trusting the Ruling Party A Lot increases across Regime Type, for Both Ruling-Party Supporters and for Non-Supporters. This effect is more apparent than in Media Censorship. To see the full regression results as well as the descriptive statistics, please see*** **Appendix 1 & 3.**

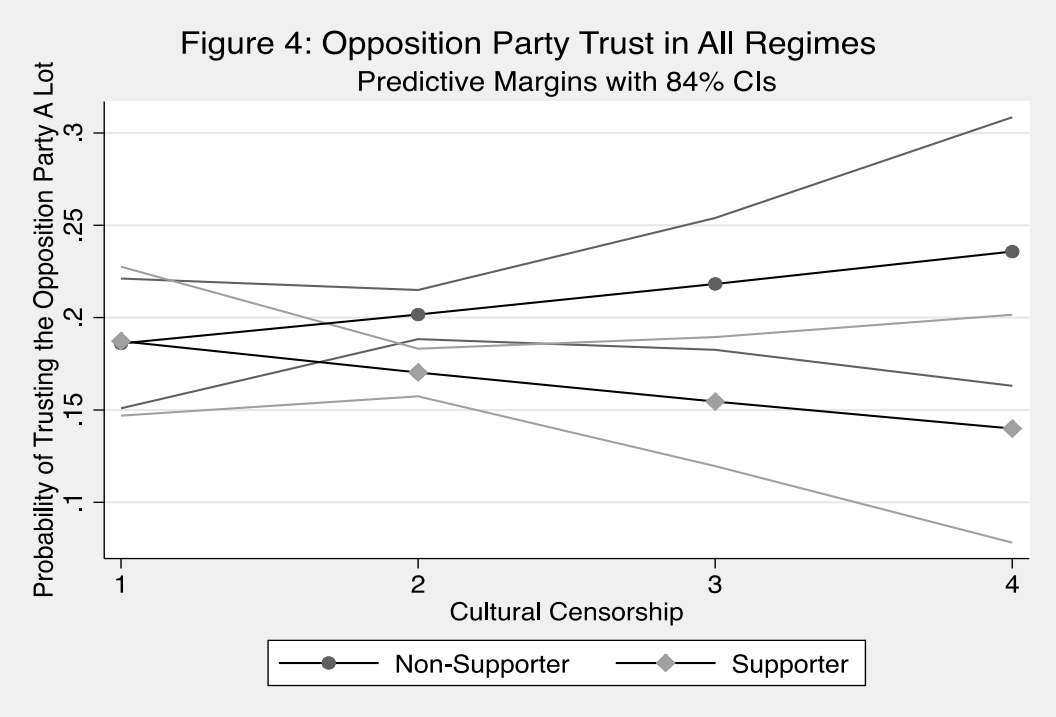

Figure 4: ***When the rate of Cultural Censorship is higher, the Probability of Trusting the Opposition Party A Lot decreases across Regime Type for Ruling-Party Supporters and increases for Non-Supporters. This effect is similar to that in Media Censorship. To see the full regression results as well as the descriptive statistics, please see*** **Appendix 1 & 3.**

Table 1 (see Appendix 3) presents the results of a series of Ologit regressions with models focusing on the effects of cultural censorship as the main independent variable. For the interaction between cultural censorship and ruling party, we see that the estimated coefficients are positive and statistically significant for trust president, trust parliament, and trust ruling party, indicating that increased cultural censorship is associated with increased trust in these institutions among supporters of the ruling party. In contrast, the interaction between cultural censorship and ruling party in the Model 4 is negative while still statistically significant, indicating that increased cultural censorship is associated with decreased trust in the opposition for supporters of the ruling party. In all models, we see that education is negative and statistically significant, indicating that an increase in educational attainment results in a decrease of trust felt toward the president, parliament, and ruling party. This result does not remain when looking at opposition trust.

There are some limitations of this analysis that require further discussion. First, this article uses the measure for cultural censorship as coded by V-Dem. This measure includes both cultural and academic censorship. While the theory of this article is focused upon cultural censorship, the addition of academic censorship should not affect the results. This is because both academic and cultural spaces are a place for individuals to critique the status quo to an assembled audience. Thus, we should be observing the same effects in both areas, but a stronger effect in artistic spaces that better serve subgroups and minorities. The second limitation is the possibility of preference falsification in the survey results.[45] In countries with higher levels of censorship, we may anticipate that citizens will indicate a higher level of trust than they actually feel. Future studies should consider indirect list experiments to overcome this issue.[46] The final limitation is in respect to the generalizability of results. This article looks at data from Africa to better understand why regimes may be motivated to censor their citizens. We should expect the general logic should apply to other regimes in other regions given that the results suggest that the benefits to the regime may outweigh the cost to censor. Africa is a unique region—it was chosen because the countries measure a high level of variation for both censorship and autocratic measures which allowed for a more comprehensive analysis. These patterns presented should have generalizability and future research may endeavor to test this. However, it is worth noting that the theory presented and explored in this article has been observed in opposition success during the 2015 Nigerian election, ruling party success the 2021 Ugandan election, and support for the junta following the July 2023 Nigerien coup.

Conclusion

This article set out to explore how cultural censorship impacts trust. Using multiple waves of the AfroBarometer, this article demonstrates that cultural censorship, as measured by V-Dem, impacts institutional trust. Thus, this article shows evidence consistent with the theory presented. Through studying the effects of cultural censorship on trust, this article contributes to the larger body of literature on censorship and regime survival tactics. From the current literature, we understand that regimes censor for many strategic reasons and media censorship is effective in achieving most goals. However, culture should be understood as a central piece of civil society which helps individuals to feel more connected. Because cultural censorship is found in both democracies and autocracies, it offers a unique opportunity to study the effects of

censorship on trust across regimes. Thus, the results produced in this article are interesting on multiple accounts.

Studying the effects of censorship on institutional trust, this article demonstrates that supporter trust of institutions increased through cultural censorship. Though non-supporters are less likely to show a change in support, this suggests that censoring culture is still a pathway forward for a regime to solidify its hold on power, even if it is not a path to gain additional support.

The last finding to note is the relationship observed between cultural censorship and partisan trust for all regimes. By demonstrating that both democracies and autocracies receive a boost in trust from their supporters, we understand that there is rationale for regimes to censor culture. In other words, democratic as well as autocratic regimes can benefit from censorship. This unexpected finding is interesting to consider because citizens should be more suspicious of paternalistic claims that democracies make when they engage in censorship.

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Notes

[1] Ford 2013.

[2] Crabtree et al. 2015.
[3] Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005.
[4] Beaulieu 2014; Chang and Kerr 2017.
[5] Desai et al. 2009.
[6] Dimitrov 2014; King et al. 2013; Lorentzen 2014; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956.
[7] King et al. 2013.
[8] Chwe 2013; Dimitrov 2014; Dimitrov 2015; Lorentzen 2014; Policzer 2009.
[9] Davison 1983 suggests that citizens want censorship of materials that are harmful to third-persons, but yet the citizen themselves is not affected. Regimes may act on this demand for censorship strategically. See Esberg 2020; Yang 2023; Zhang 2022.
[10] Esberg 2020; Yang 2023; Zhang 2022.
[11] Chen and Xu 2017; Zhang 2022.
[12] Brownlee 2007; Davenport 1995; Egorov et al. 2009; Lawson 2002; Levitsky and Way 2010; Olukotun 2002; Rawnsley and Rawnsley 1998.
[13] Goldstein 1989.
[14] Richman 2000; Rosenstone 1969; Merriam 1964.
[15] Putnam 2000.
[16] Keele 2007.
[17] Ford 2013.
[18] Music in Africa 2019.
[19] Coppedge et al. 2020; Conroy-Krutz 2020.
[20] Dimitrov 2014; King, Pan, and Roberts 2015; Lorentzen 2014.
[21] Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956.
[22] Grenier 2022.
[23] Dahl 1971.
[24] Mishler and Rose 2001.
[25] Norris 1999.
[26] Easton 1975.
[27] Dahl 1971; Linz and Stepan 1996.
[28] Chwe 2001.
[29] Tajfel 1981.
[30] Tajfel and Turner 1986.
[31] Huddy 2003.
[32] Drewett and Cloonan 2006.
[33] Institutional trust is seen as a rational citizen evaluation of institutional performance. Additionally, it is likely to be related to perceptions of corruption. Higher scores of trust may mean that people believe that the officials are honest. See Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi 2016 and Lavellée et al. 2008.
[34] Drewett and Cloonan 2006.

[35] Peltier and Kerr 2023.

[36] Broadway 2022; Grenier 2022.
[37] Drewett and Cloonan 2006; Gibney et al. 2024; Fearon 2023; World Bank 2020.
[38] Bolsen and Thornton 2014.
[39] Broadway 2022.
[40] Friesinger 2021.
[41] Kazibwe 2018.
[42] Kwasu 2018.
[43] Adebayo 2017.
[44] Peltier and Kerr 2023.
[45] Jiang and Yang 2016.
[46] Robinson and Tannenberg 2019.

Appendix 1

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Min	Max
Trust President	147,786	1.78	1.11	0	3
Trust Parliament	142,071	1.56	1.06	0	3
Trust Ruling Party	142,612	1.43	1.1	0	3
Trust Opposition Party	142,749	1.26	1.08	0	3
Interpersonal Trust	174,043	1.78	1.1	0	3
Cultural Censorship	180,533	2.9	0.7	0.51	3.77
Age	178,541	36.87	14.6	18	130
Economic Status	152,113	1.36	2.93	0	998
Education	180,048	3.26	2.15	0	98
Gender	180,533	1.5	0.5	1	2
Ruling Party Supporter	152,113	0.34	0.47	0	1
Repression	180,533	2.94	0.83	1	5
Logged GDP	180,533	9.81	1.54	5.85	13.20
Fractionalization	167,157	0.69	0.34	0.034	3.72
Wave Two	180,533	0.13	0.34	0	1
Wave Three	180,533	0.14	0.34	0	1
Wave Four	180,533	0.15	0.36	0	1
Wave Five	180,533	0.27	0.44	0	1
Electoral Democracy	180,533	0.53	0.49	0	1

Appendix 2

Electoral Democracy = 0	Electoral Democracy = 1
Algeria (2013-2015)	Benin (2005-2015)
Burkina Faso (2015)	Botswana (2003-2015)
Burundi (2012-2014)	Burkina Faso (2008-2015)
Cameroon (2013-2015)	Cape Verde (2005-2014)
Egypt (2013-2015)	Ivory Coast (2013-2014)
Gabon (2015)	Ghana (2003-2014)
Guinea (2013-2015)	Lesotho (2003-2014)
Kenya (2003-2014)	Liberia (2008-2015)
Madagascar (2008)	Madagascar (2005, 2013-2014)
Malawi (2003-2008)	Malawi (2012-2014)
Mali (2013)	Mali (2003-2008, 2014)
Morocco (2013-2015)	Mauritius (2012-2014)
Mozambique (2003-2005, 2012-2015)	Mozambique (2008)
Nigeria (2003-2015)	Namibia (2003-2014)
Sierra Leone (2012-2015)	Niger (2013-2015)
Sudan (2013-2015)	Sao Tome e Principe (2015)
Tanzania (2003-2005)	Senegal (2003-2014)
Togo (2012)	South Africa (2003-2015)
Uganda (2003-2015)	Tanzania (2008-2014)
Zambia (2005, 2014)	Togo (2014)
Zimbabwe (2003-2014)	Tunisia (2015)
	Zambia (2003, 2013)

Appendix 3

Ologit Model with Country Fixed Effects

	(1) Presidential Trust	(2) Parliamentary Trust	(3) Ruling Party Trust	(4) Opposition Party Trust
Cultural Censorship	0.0743	-0.303	0.216	0.112
	(0.483)	(0.226)	(0.313)	(0.164)
Ruling Party Supporter	2.497***	1.365***	2.229***	-0.956***
	(0.457)	(0.310)	(0.245)	(0.276)
Ruling Party Supporter x	0.449***	0.227**	0.467***	-0.241***
Cultural Censorship	(0.156)	(0.0993)	(0.0937)	(0.0908)
Age	0.00335	0.00139	0.00169	0.00111*
	(0.00291)	(0.00105)	(0.00125)	(0.000663)
Economic Status	-0.00506	-0.0188*	-0.00195	-0.00706
	(0.0101)	(0.00981)	(0.00261)	(0.00670)
Education	-0.0785***	-0.0655***	-0.0766***	-0.0124
	(0.0144)	(0.0110)	(0.0115)	(0.00892)
Gender	-0.0277	-0.0401*	-0.0201	-0.164***
	(0.0346)	(0.0223)	(0.0206)	(0.0275)
Electoral Democracy	0.291	0.458	0.462***	-0.111
	(0.341)	(0.280)	(0.139)	(0.187)
Repression	-0.267	-0.242**	-0.213***	-0.402***

	(0.179)	(0.0939)	(0.0763)	(0.140)
Logged GDP	-0.113	-0.107	-0.190**	-0.168**
	(0.135)	(0.126)	(0.0842)	(0.0669)
Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization	0.342**	-0.0621	0.0677	-0.0807*
	(0.149)	(0.0867)	(0.0756)	(0.0448)
Wave Two	-0.185	-0.279	-0.255	-1.037***
	(0.224)	(0.191)	(0.165)	(0.109)
Wave Three	0.490**	0.413**	-0.522***	1.070***
	(0.216)	(0.179)	(0.199)	(0.219)
Wave Five	0.372**	0.326***	0.174	-0.126*
	(0.167)	(0.0783)	(0.127)	(0.0759)
Benin	-0.476	-0.529	-0.120	-0.0256
	(0.838)	(0.506)	(0.460)	(0.388)
Botswana	-0.645	-0.640	-0.0779	-0.344
	(0.735)	(0.476)	(0.435)	(0.334)
Burkina Faso	-0.0671	0.0495	-0.275	0.117
	(0.761)	(0.458)	(0.461)	(0.351)
Burundi	1.271	1.675***	0.997**	-0.500
	(0.773)	(0.622)	(0.440)	(0.421)
Cape Verde	-1.421	-1.166*	-0.758	-0.407
	(0.904)	(0.678)	(0.527)	(0.411)
Ivory Coast	-0.455	-0.394	-0.426	0.195

	(0.704)	(0.414)	(0.370)	(0.338)
Egypt	-0.564	-0.610	-0.774**	0.302
	(0.611)	(0.371)	(0.301)	(0.315)
Gabon	-0.893	-0.819*	-0.812*	-0.625**
	(0.747)	(0.439)	(0.485)	(0.275)
Ghana	-0.552	-0.500	0.0924	0.939***
	(0.787)	(0.429)	(0.431)	(0.360)
Guinea	-0.411	0.689	0.0542	-0.00701
	(0.599)	(0.447)	(0.328)	(0.279)
Kenya	0.410	0.431	1.078***	0.710*
	(0.744)	(0.349)	(0.403)	(0.377)
Lesotho	-0.892	-0.701	-0.994**	-0.755**
	(0.822)	(0.641)	(0.448)	(0.362)
Liberia	-1.186	-1.212**	-0.638	-0.399
	(0.935)	(0.618)	(0.536)	(0.402)
Madagascar	-0.539	-0.451	-0.494	-0.799**
	(0.581)	(0.468)	(0.332)	(0.316)
Malawi	-0.952	0.149	-0.183	0.695**
	(0.671)	(0.513)	(0.332)	(0.319)
Mali	-0.0507	0.153	0.365	0.790**
	(0.835)	(0.469)	(0.472)	(0.363)
Mauritius	-0.501	-0.218	0.246	0.253

	(0.688)	(0.478)	(0.390)	(0.322)
Morocco	-0.859**	-0.703***	0.0528	-0.369*
	(0.423)	(0.242)	(0.237)	(0.194)
Namibia	-0.0244	-0.172	0.168	-0.124
	(0.764)	(0.487)	(0.434)	(0.342)
Niger	-0.261	-0.184	0.491	0.937***
	(0.834)	(0.377)	(0.472)	(0.361)
Nigeria	-0.957	-0.783*	0.611	0.155
	(0.790)	(0.405)	(0.470)	(0.357)
Senegal	0.0615	-0.280	0.356	0.871**
	(0.870)	(0.476)	(0.521)	(0.378)
Sierra Leone	0.0812	0.00157	0.240	0.202
	(0.511)	(0.324)	(0.285)	(0.273)
South Africa	-0.873	-0.214	0.346	0.804***
	(0.606)	(0.376)	(0.323)	(0.308)
Sudan	0.140	0.522	-0.388	0.210
	(0.897)	(0.529)	(0.579)	(0.522)
Tanzania	0.246	0.793**	0.441	1.149***
	(0.577)	(0.350)	(0.290)	(0.267)
Togo	-0.983	-1.228**	-0.740	-0.969***
	(0.829)	(0.569)	(0.538)	(0.348)
Tunisia	-1.213**	-1.278***	-0.827***	-0.466*

	(0.605)	(0.437)	(0.280)	(0.284)
Uganda	-0.0384	0.776**	0.509*	0.567
	(0.558)	(0.342)	(0.263)	(0.346)
Zambia	-0.478	-0.0663	0.335	-0.0227
	(0.596)	(0.386)	(0.324)	(0.306)
Zimbabwe	-0.575	0.645	-0.00359	-0.154
	(0.782)	(0.495)	(0.491)	(0.400)
Cut 1	-3.517	-2.238	-3.908***	-4.381***
	(2.151)	(1.772)	(1.283)	(0.809)
Cut 2	-2.224	-0.783	-2.635**	-3.055***
	(2.153)	(1.763)	(1.279)	(0.808)
Cut 3	-1.047	0.615	-1.349	-1.748**
	(2.154)	(1.772)	(1.282)	(0.810)
Observations	113,112	109,496	110,318	110,138

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Ologit Model For Two-Tailed Test.

Ordered Logit Model for Two-Tailed Test. To measure, *Presidential Trust, Parliamentary Trust, Ruling party Trust,* and *Oppositional Trust* respondents were asked "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?" about each the president, parliament, ruling party, and oppositional political party. Respondents could choose 0 meaning not at all, 1 meaning just a little, 2 meaning somewhat or 3 meaning a lot. For all

DVs, those who did not know, had not heard enough to say, refused to answer, or had a missing answer had their observation dropped.

Appendix 4

Ologit Model Without Country Fixed Effects Robust standard errors in parentheses

	(1) Presidential Trust	(2) Parliamentary Trust	(3) Ruling Party Trust	(4) Opposition Trust
Cultural Censorship	0.0495***	0.0332***	-0.0236**	-0.0461***
	(0.0104)	(0.0105)	(0.0105)	(0.0105)
Ruling Party Supporter	0.346***	0.199***	-0.0107	0.0595
	(0.0381)	(0.0367)	(0.0370)	(0.0368)
Ruling Party Supporter X Cultural Censorship	0.387***	0.257***	0.432***	-0.120***
	(0.0176)	(0.0168)	(0.0170)	(0.0169)
Age	0.00380***	0.00150***	0.00177***	0.00112***
	(0.000368)	(0.000267)	(0.000280)	(0.000250)
Economic Status	-0.00470	-0.0215***	-0.00106	-0.00586*
	(0.00387)	(0.00394)	(0.00165)	(0.00340)
Education	-0.0962***	-0.0864***	-0.0836***	-0.0424***
	(0.00291)	(0.00287)	(0.00281)	(0.00284)
Gender	-0.0281**	-0.0441***	-0.0181	-0.170***
	(0.0112)	(0.0111)	(0.0110)	(0.0111)
Electoral Democracy	0.140***	0.371***	0.243***	0.251***
	(0.0145)	(0.0146)	(0.0145)	(0.0145)
Repression	-0.0472***	0.0630***	0.0583***	-0.0346***
	(0.00894)	(0.00886)	(0.00889)	(0.00879)
Logged GDP	-0.165***	-0.181***	-0.126***	-0.0968***
	(0.00430)	(0.00431)	(0.00431)	(0.00429)
Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization	0.569***	0.213***	0.225***	0.197***
	(0.0165)	(0.0159)	(0.0157)	(0.0161)
Wave Two	-0.270***	-0.353***	-0.216***	-0.803***
	(0.0180)	(0.0179)	(0.0178)	(0.0183)
Wave Three	0.373***	0.248***	-0.581***	0.976***
	(0.0179)	(0.0177)	(0.0179)	(0.0178)
Wave Five	0.267***	0.166***	0.0486***	-0.197***
	(0.0151)	(0.0150)	(0.0150)	(0.0148)
Cut 1	-2.637***	-2.753***	-2.062***	-2.285***

	(0.0563)	(0.0553)	(0.0555)	(0.0549)
Cut 2	-1.404***	-1.360***	-0.827***	-1.006***
	(0.0559)	(0.0549)	(0.0552)	(0.0546)
Cut 3	-0.285***	-0.0196	0.428***	0.249***
	(0.0557)	(0.0547)	(0.0552)	(0.0546)
Observations	113,112	109,496	110,318	110,138

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Ologit Model For Two-Tailed Test.

Ordered Logit Model for Two-Tailed Test. To measure, *Presidential Trust, Parliamentary Trust, Ruling party Trust,* and *Oppositional Trust* respondents were asked "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?" about each the president, parliament, ruling party, and oppositional political party. Respondents could choose 0 meaning not at all, 1 meaning just a little, 2 meaning somewhat or 3 meaning a lot. For all DVs, those who did not know, had not heard enough to say, refused to answer, or had a missing answer had their observation dropped.