

TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AUTHORITARIAN LEGACIES,
AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates citizens' support for democracy in southern Africa and the factors that explain variations in that support. Borrowing insights from the historical institutionalism literature, I argue that perceptions of the alternative institutional contexts will influence citizens' support for democracy. More specifically, I argue that support for traditional institutions and/or past authoritarian regimes will influence citizens' support for democracy.

To test this argument, I use a mixed research design, comprised of both a statistical analysis of cross-national survey data and a case-study of South Africa based interviews with members of the South African Parliament. The results indicate that support for alternative institutions do influence citizens' support for democracy, but that all institutions do not have the same effect. More specifically, I found that support for past authoritarian regimes had both a strong negative relationship with democratic support, while support for traditional institutions had a weaker, though still negative effect.