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# The supply and demand model of civic education: evidence from a field experiment in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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## ABSTRACT

Can democratic orientations and political participation in fragile democracies be fostered through civic education? Early evaluation work reported generally positive effects, though recent work has been more skeptical, with some studies reporting negative impacts of civic education on political engagement through highlighting the poor performance of incumbents and ongoing political processes. In this article, we report the results of a field experiment using an encouragement design to assess the *Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education* (VOICE) programme conducted in 2010-2011 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We adapt Bratton and Mattes' (2007) "supply and demand" model of democratic support to the case of civic education, and derive hypotheses regarding expected impacts of VOICE on a series of democratic orientations and political participation. The results show that the VOICE programme had *negative* effects on support for the decentralization process and on individuals' satisfaction with democracy in the DRC, and *positive* effects on non-electoral participation as well as on democratic orientations such as knowledge, efficacy, and political tolerance. We suggest that this pattern of effects has positive normative implications, and that civic education programmes continue to have the potential to deepen democratic engagement and values, even in fragile or backsliding democratic settings.

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**KEYWORDS** Civic education; field experiment; democratization; political attitudes; political participation

## Introduction

Can democratic orientations and political participation in fragile democracies be fostered through civic education? The importance of supportive democratic orientations for the consolidation and resilience of democratic regimes has long been noted by political scientists, with compelling cross-national evidence recently demonstrated by Claasen.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, international donors such as USAID, UNDP and the World Bank have devoted considerable resources over the past several decades to civic education programmes designed to promote democratic political culture and mobilize political participation.

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Early evaluation work, in diverse settings in Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, reported generally positive effects of exposure to donor-sponsored adult civic education on political participation, and in some cases, impact on important orientations such as efficacy and political tolerance as well.<sup>2</sup> Recent work, however, has been more sceptical. Some studies report either null effects<sup>3</sup> or unintended *negative* impacts, with new information potentially exacerbating pre-existing resource-based disparities in participation<sup>4</sup> or depressing participation and political support by highlighting the poor performance of incumbents and ongoing political processes.<sup>5</sup>

In this article, we join this controversy by reporting the results of a field experiment from a 2011-2012 evaluation of a donor-sponsored civic education programme conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country ranked consistently in the lower tier of African democracies. The *Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education* (VOICE) programme consisted of community workshops using a series of images (“Boite à Images”) to stimulate discussion and awareness about an ongoing decentralization reform, and more generally about democracy and the role of the citizen in the democratic processes. We employed an “encouragement design” in eight villages where the VOICE workshops took place by randomly inviting a subset of individuals interviewed in baseline surveys to attend the events, and gauging the impact of encouragement, and of actual attendance at the workshop via an instrumental variable strategy, on changes in a series of democratic attitudes and behaviours over time.

The results show support for both sides of the civic education debate. We find substantial *negative* effects of the VOICE programme on support for the decentralization process as well as on individuals’ satisfaction with democracy in the DRC: as individuals became aware of ideal democratic processes and the stalled implementation associated with the institutional reform, the less satisfied they were with the process and with current system performance more generally. At the same time, we find significant positive effects of the programme on non-electoral political participation, as well as on other important democratic orientations such as political efficacy, political tolerance, support for individual rights, and support for decentralization as a normative policy ideal. We explain this pattern by adapting Bratton and Mattes’ “supply and demand” model of democratic support to the case of civic education.<sup>6</sup> We argue that in poorly functioning regimes the effects of civic education on *demand* for democratic governance are likely to diverge substantially from perceptions of current democratic *supply*. We suggest that this pattern of effects has positive normative implications, and that properly implemented civic education programmes continue to have the potential to deepen democratic engagement, values and, ultimately, political accountability, even in fragile or backsliding democratic settings.<sup>7</sup>

## Literature review and the “Supply and Demand” model of civic education

Civic education programmes, designed to promote political knowledge, engagement, and democratic norms and values among ordinary citizens, have been an important component of democracy promotion among international donors in the post-Cold War period.<sup>8</sup> These programmes are usually conducted via partnerships between donors and civil society organizations, and encompass a variety of interventions designed, for example, to encourage voter participation, increase the ability of citizens

to hold incumbent politicians accountable, promote the non-violent resolution of political disputes, and educate individuals about supportive democratic values such as political and social tolerance.<sup>9</sup>

The first assessments of whether civic education had attitudinal or behavioural impacts on the individuals who took part in the programmes' activities were conducted in the mid-to-late 1990s by Bratton *et al.* in Zambia,<sup>10</sup> and Finkel in the Dominican Republic, Poland, and South Africa.<sup>11</sup> Over the subsequent decade, USAID sponsored two larger-scale assessments in Kenya, the National Civic Education Programme (NCEP I) from 2001-2002, a nation-wide programme conducted during the run-up to the 2002 "democratic breakthrough" national elections,<sup>12</sup> and the similar Kenya NCEP II ("Uraia") programme conducted in the run-up to the disputed 2007 election that triggered massive ethnic violence in its wake.<sup>13</sup> Other work during this decade was undertaken in connection with programmes related to constitution-building and literacy in Uganda and Senegal.<sup>14</sup>

While these studies produced a range of findings, the overall pattern of results was optimistic regarding the potential of civic education to produce positive democratic outcomes. In the USAID-sponsored programmes evaluated by Finkel,<sup>15</sup> there were relatively strong effects on local-level participation, political knowledge and efficacy, and weaker, though detectable effects on democratic values, social trust, political tolerance, and support for democratic regimes.<sup>16</sup> The positive effects on participation were echoed in Kuenzi,<sup>17</sup> and virtually all of the studies found substantial effects on knowledge and often other indicators of civic competence and psychological engagement.<sup>18</sup> Even in the backsliding context of Kenya in 2007, civic education seemed able to promote resilience and support for democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Over the past decade, however, the number of evaluations of civic education interventions has increased markedly, with the evidence being much more mixed in terms of their effectiveness. Some studies have assessed the impact of civic education information campaigns on voting based on incumbent performance as opposed to ethnic or clientelistic grounds. Some report positive effects,<sup>20</sup> though others show null findings. Information provided to individuals about corrupt incumbents in settings ranging from India<sup>21</sup> to Benin<sup>22</sup> to Sao Tome and Principe seemed unable to spur public goods-oriented voting behaviour.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps even more troubling are studies pointing to null or *negative* effects of civic information campaigns on social and political participation. To be sure, some positive effects of targeted mobilization and election-security programmes have been reported.<sup>24</sup> But many evaluations have produced the opposite. Chong *et al.*, for example, find that as voters exposed to corruption-oriented accountability information appeared to withdraw more generally from the electoral process, while Vincente similarly found that exposure to an anti-vote buying campaign decreased turnout<sup>25</sup>. Gottlieb shows that a civic education programme on democratic rights in Mali decreased turnout especially among women, thus exacerbating pre-existing gender disparities in political participation, while John and Sjoberg's evaluation of a Kenyan accountability programme produced lower intentions to turnout and contact representatives among individuals aligned with opposition parties.<sup>26</sup>

Further, civic education programmes outside of the electoral arena have also reported null or negative effects on participation. Lieberman *et al* find no effects of an information campaign designed to increase collective action related to the school system in Kenya.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Sexton reports that participation in workshops related

to democratic accountability and decentralization in Peru led to significant decreases among treated individuals in subsequent participatory budgeting activities, along with significant increases in support for civil unrest as a means for sanctioning poorly performing local governments.<sup>28</sup>

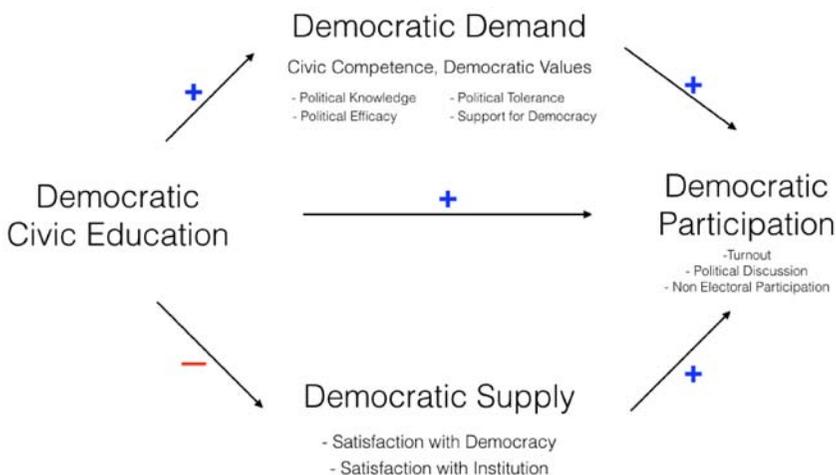
How can the divergent findings from these studies be explained? Certainly, early observational studies had limitations in terms of the causal identification of civic education treatments. But the recent advent of experimental methods in the field has nevertheless not produced scholarly consensus. Similarly, while recent work has been conducted more frequently in post-conflict settings as well as in electoral autocracies, conflicting findings have been reported in countries that are similar in terms of democratic development. We argue that at least a partial reconciliation of the findings of these literatures stems from the fact that civic education can have vastly different effects on what Bratton and Mattes term perceptions of the “supply” and “demand” for democracy in a particular context.<sup>29</sup> According to this model, democratic regimes are sustained through widespread public *demand* for democracy as a preferred form of government, along with the public’s perception that the system is providing an adequate *supply* of democracy as well, i.e. institutions which enact laws, protect individual freedoms, and deliver public services effectively. We contend that civic education conducted in fragile, poorly functioning democratic contexts may increase individuals’ demand for democracy while simultaneously decreasing their perceptions of democratic supply. That is, while civic education is designed to further positive support for democracy, democratic norms and values, or the “demand” for democratic governance, it may also have the effect of generating more acute perceptions of the regime’s deficiencies in supplying effective, transparent, and impartial governance. Differential effects are to be expected then, depending on whether a particular study is assessing the impact of civic education on variables related to each of these dimensions of democratic political orientations.

Why should civic education interventions lead to these differing impacts? First, as individuals become generally more informed and politically aware as a result of civic education, they should naturally become more attuned to the objective deficiencies of the performance of the political system in poorly functioning regimes. And because cognitive awareness is also consistently related to support for democracy and political engagement,<sup>30</sup> we should therefore expect to observe differential effects of civic education on orientations related to democratic “demand” and “supply”. Relatedly, as civic education induces positive changes in demand for democracy, this is likely to raise the standard or “reference point” that individuals use to gauge incumbent and regime performance<sup>31</sup>. This itself will then lead to greater discrepancies between perceived democratic ideals (“demand”) and ongoing democratic practices (“supply”), especially in contexts with poor quality governance and weak democratic institutions.<sup>32</sup> Finally, these differential impacts are also plausibly related to the kinds of “good governance” civil society organizations which typically implement civic education programmes in emerging democracies; these groups “... are often antagonistic toward governments that are perceived to be insufficiently democratic, insufficiently responsive to ordinary individuals, and hostile to democratic reforms”.<sup>33</sup> Generating positive effects among individuals in support for democracy and democratic ideals, coupled with heightened awareness of the shortcomings of the regime in delivering democratic change, is precisely what these organizations attempt to accomplish through the delivery of civic education to average citizens.

We show the Supply and Demand model of the effects of democratic civic education in Figure 1. All of the dependent variables figure prominently in the decades-old rich literature on the relationship of public opinion and the stability of democratic regimes,<sup>34</sup> and all have been analysed as possible outcomes of civic education in previous evaluations as well.<sup>35</sup> The figure shows that exposure to civic education should have positive effects on two sets of indicators of “Democratic Demand”: a set of *Civic Competence* variables, which includes knowledge, political efficacy, interest and civic skills; and a set of indicators for *Support for Democratic Values*, encompassing support for democracy as a political system and the rejection of non-democratic alternatives, as well as democratic values such as political tolerance, support for the non-violent resolution of conflict, and support for the exercise of democratic liberties.

At the same time, we predict a variable effect of civic education on indicators of Democratic Supply such as institutional trust and satisfaction with democracy, depending on the performance of the regime in delivering values political outcomes. In corruption-laden, clientelistic and ethnically fractured electoral autocracies and fledgling democratic regimes – such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where this study takes place – we predict a *negative* effect of civic education on indicators of democratic supply.

The figure also depicts multiple alternative paths from exposure to civic education to participation, depending on the respective effects of democratic demand and supply on different forms of political action. It is likely that higher levels of perceived democratic supply should feed positively onto participation, especially on voting and other institutionalized forms of behaviour. This would suggest, then, a *negative* indirect effect of civic education exposure on participation via more negative overall perceptions of democratic supply. On the other hand, increases in democratic demand should also have positive effects on political engagement, which implies a *positive* indirect effect from civic education via more enhanced levels of political efficacy, knowledge, and support for democratic values.



**Figure 1.** The Supply and Demand Model of democratic civic education.

Finally, civic education may also have direct effects on participation, over and above the indirect processes discussed thus far. In some cases, political mobilization is the ostensible purpose of the programme,<sup>36</sup> while in others it may be an ancillary part of the training that individuals receive from programmes providing other kinds of political information.

This model of the differential impacts of civic education on perceptions of democratic supply and democratic finds echoes in early evaluation work, for example, in Moehler's characterization of participation in Ugandan constitution-building workshops producing "distrustful democrats", that is, individuals with lower levels of institutional trust along with higher levels of political knowledge.<sup>37</sup> Finkel *et al.* similarly reported that civic education's effect on institutional trust was negative in late 1990s post-authoritarian Dominican Republic, where economic and political performance was extremely poor.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, they found positive effects of civic education on many of the indicators of democratic demand – political knowledge, efficacy, and awareness of individual rights, support for democratic values, and perceptions of civic competence.

These differential effects also resonate well with findings from more recent literature. Civic education programmes providing corruption and other performance-related information on incumbents highlight inadequacies in the supply of democracy, with concomitant withdrawal in many instances from engagement with the political process.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, programmes designed to promote knowledge and awareness about democratic norms and values invariably bring into focus the discrepancies between democratic ideals and the realities of current institutions and practices. As a result, these programmes produce positive effects on the former and negative effects on the latter, to the extent that the objective performance of the regime or political incumbents is poor.<sup>40</sup>

In sum, we derive the following hypotheses from the Supply and Demand Model of Democratic Civic Education, as they pertain to contexts with poor economic and political performance:

H1: Exposure to civic education will lead to negative impacts on indicators of Democratic Supply, such as trust in institutions and satisfaction with the contemporary democratic system.

H2: Exposure to civic education will lead to positive impacts on indicators of Democratic Demand related to both civic competence and support for democratic values.

H3: Exposure to civic education will lead to negative indirect effects on participation via its negative effects on perceptions of Democratic Supply (H3a), and positive indirect effects via its positive effects on Democratic Demand (H3b).

We assess each of these hypotheses in the context of the *VOICE* civic education programme on democracy and political decentralization implemented in the DRC between 2010-2011.

## **Decentralization, democratization and the *VOICE* civic education programme in the DRC**

### ***The country context***

Despite the introduction of the country's first multiparty elections in 2006, democratization in the DRC has been very slow to take hold. The country's score on the widely-

used V-DEM Electoral Democracy indicator increased from .20 on a 0–1 scale before the 2006 election – reflecting a “closed” autocratic regime – to values in the .35–.40 range (.36 in 2001 at the time of our data collection) and a classification of “electoral autocracy” from 2007 onward. The country has been wracked by war, ethnic conflict and civil unrest nearly continuously since the onset of democratization, and its elections have been characterized by high levels of campaign-related violence, voter intimidation, vote-rigging and other kinds of electoral fraud.<sup>41</sup>

As part of the opening to democracy in 2006, the government of the DRC committed to a constitutionally mandated process of decentralization. This entailed the passage of a law on *Entites Territoriale Decentralise (ETD)*, creating 26 provinces from the existing 11 and more than 6000 subprovincial electoral constituencies from the existing 189, giving provinces more control over locally generated revenue, and establishing a fund for local development projects. The motivations behind decentralization, commonly advanced among international donors, were to bring greater accountability to existing governmental institutions, to reduce levels of economic and political inequality across different geographic regions, to enhance the inclusion of broader strata of Congolese civil society, and to provide greater input from communities into decisions related to economic development in their localities.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, the decentralization process in the DRC advanced haphazardly, until ongoing political crises and tensions between various factions within the government effectively stalled formal implementation. At the time of our study, *de facto* changes regarding the creation of subnational administrative units and the establishment of local development funds had yet to take place.<sup>43</sup> There had been no further provincial elections since 2007, nor local elections that had been mandated in the *ETD*. In short, the decentralization process had been limited to formal designations of future territorial reforms, but, through mismanagement and political strife, did not extend to actual local development or political reforms, nor to changes in the revenue streams between the central, provincial and local levels of government.<sup>44</sup>

### **The civic education treatment**

In this context, the international NGO International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) designed and implemented the Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education programme (*VOICE*) with the goal of improving the capacity of the Congolese people to participate effectively in the political process and the ongoing decentralization reforms. The *VOICE* programme consisted of a range of activities aimed at enabling ordinary citizens to better understand and engage the decentralization process and the political system more generally, motivating individuals to participate, and providing local community organizations with the capacity to implement civic and voter education campaigns. The central tool was the *Boîtes à Images* community workshop, in which facilitators used a series of “picture boxes” to illustrate aspects of decentralization and broader issues of political, economic, and democratic development to audiences of approximately 100 persons in villages throughout the country.

IFES specifically designed the use of images as a civic education delivery mechanism in order to convey messages in the DRC context, where World Bank figures indicates that adult literacy reaches only 65%. These information sessions lasted roughly two hours and were conducted throughout 2010–2011 in four target provinces: Bandundu, Kantanga, Maniema, and South Kivu. Due to budget constraints, our study is limited

to the *Boîtes à Images* sessions conducted during the summer of 2011 in Bandundu province.

The specific 13 *Boîtes à Images* were organized into more general “modules”, corresponding to the different aspects of the civic education emphasized by the *VOICE* programmes. Two modules dominated the *Boîtes à Images* sessions under consideration here:

*Module 1. Let’s understand our new institutions:* This module introduced concepts of decentralization in the DRC and the importance of participation in local elections and government; it explained decentralized institutions and decentralization law, the responsibilities of urban and municipal counsellors, and the responsibilities of sector and *chefferie* counsellors. Module 1’s theme of understanding decentralization policy is illustrated in [Figure 2a](#), which is Image #2 in the *Boîtes* sequence, “Decentralization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”. The figure shows the map of the 11 current provinces and a large arrow pointing to the envisioned 26 provinces (including Kinshasa) that would exist post-decentralization.

*Module 2. Let’s be a part of the new Congo:* This module focused on the roles of the actors in the decentralization and political process (i.e. the election commission, politicians, political parties and opposition, judges, civil society), and explained the rationale for, and the benefits of democracy and active participation in civic life. Module 2’s theme of political participation and civic engagement is exemplified in [Figure 1b](#), which is Image #11, “The Role of the Citizen”. This image depicts ordinary individuals engaging in various acts of political participation, including attending a community meeting, submitting a petition to an elected official, and participating in a peaceful demonstration.

The *Boîtes* sessions were designed to be highly participatory forums where active learning took place, as all of the images were accompanied by questions posed by facilitators to the audience in order to stimulate discussion and learning (e.g. “ask participants to share their experiences in participating in peaceful protests”, “ask participants if they know how much revenue their entity mobilizes and what efforts have been made to develop their communities”). The discussion guide for facilitators of the *Boîtes* sessions can be found in Appendix A3.

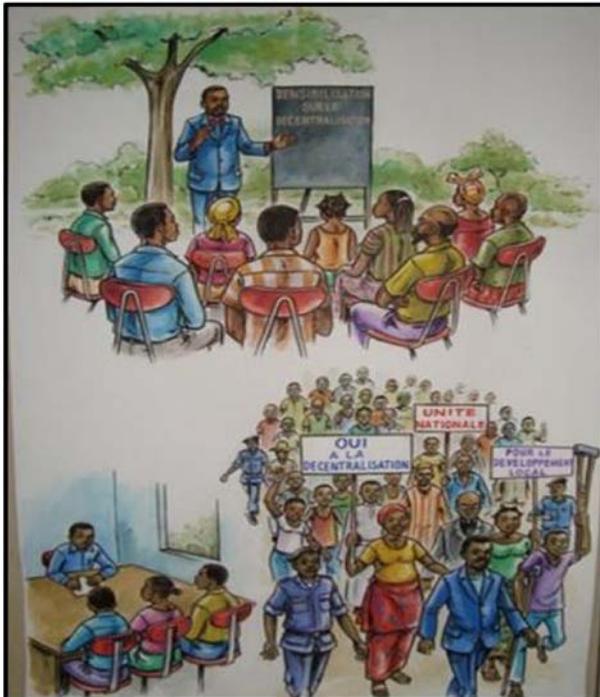
## Study design

We aim to identify the effects of exposure to the *VOICE* programme on individuals’ attitudes towards democratic supply and demand as well as on political participation. We implement surveys before and after the *Boîtes* sessions to estimate the changes in individuals’ attitudes between the pre- and post-treatment. The study was designed to produce a random sample of 140 individuals residing in each of eight villages where a *Boîtes à Images* event was to take place, for a total of 1120 respondents. We randomly selected eight different *groupements* in the Bandundu province of the DRC where we had knowledge that *Boîtes* events were to occur. One village was selected at random from each *groupement* as a research site, though logistical and travel difficulties made village substitutions necessary in four instances (See Table A1 in the appendix for selected villages).

Given that attendance at the *VOICE* workshops was voluntary, we could not randomly assign individuals to attend or to not attend the event. To overcome problems of self-selection bias, we implement an *encouragement design*.<sup>45</sup> We randomly selected



(a) Decentralization in the DRC



(b) The Role of the Citizen

**Figure 2.** Examples of the VOICE programme's "Boîtes à Images".

100 of the 140 respondents in each research site and invited them at the end of the baseline interview to attend the upcoming *Boîtes à Images* event.<sup>46</sup> Because it is randomly assigned, the encouragement to attend a *Boîtes à Images* session is unrelated to all factors that are correlated with both exposure to the treatment (the *Boîtes* sessions) and our outcomes of interest. Provided that encouragement significantly increased the likelihood of attending the event – which in our case it did (see footnote 53) – it can be used as an instrument for exposure to the *Boîtes à Images* event and thus identifies the causal effect of exposure on outcomes of interest.

Random assignment worked satisfactorily in the field, producing treatment and control groups that were virtually identical aside from their being encouraged to attend the upcoming *Boîtes* information session. Nevertheless, we include pre-treatment levels of all dependent variables and other demographics in all our models to improve the precision of our estimates. Table 1 summarizes our research design.

### Survey instrument and field work

We included in the survey instrument indicators related to democratic supply and demand, as well as for various modes of political participation. For perceived democratic supply, we asked the often-utilized question on the individual's satisfaction with democracy in the DRC, as well as a question on general support for the current decentralization process. For the civic competence component of democratic demand, we asked questions related to both general political knowledge and knowledge about decentralization, and political efficacy. For the democratic values component of demand, we included questions on political tolerance, support for the exercise of democratic rights, and support for decentralization as a normative policy ideal. For participation, we included questions relating to diverse forms of political participation, including a measure of intention to vote in possible future local elections, discussion of politics with others, and an index of non-institutionalized forms of participation consisting of community problem solving, protest, and registering a complaint about an injustice of violation of the individual's rights. We also include standard demographic and political variables, including gender, education, age, and media exposure. A list of all the variables used, the exact question wording, and response categories can be found in the Appendix (A2), and descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in Table A2 in the same section.

The survey also included questions related to the individuals' attendance at the *Boîtes* events. In the post-workshop survey, all respondents were asked whether they had attended the workshops that had recently taken place in their communities. This introduces the potential for social desirability in reporting attendance to the events. To reduce measurement error in self-reported attendance, we introduced a specific recall measure to assess the validity of self-reports.<sup>47</sup> Participation of

**Table 1.** Summary of research design.

|   | Respondents per Site | Total Respondents |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| Research Sites (8 villages)                 | 140                  | 1120              |
| Encouraged to Attend the VOICE: Treatment   | 100                  | 800               |
| Not Encouraged to Attend the VOICE: Control | 40                   | 320               |
| Pre-treatment (Baseline) Survey             | 140                  | 1120              |
| Post - treatment Survey                     | 140                  | 1120              |

individuals who claimed to have attended a particular *Boîtes* event in our survey was verified by asking a specific question about the method of delivery of the *Boîtes à Images* session (i.e. a presentation and discussion about images). This resulted in an attendance rate of 77% among those in the treatment sample compared with the self-reported 87% attendance rate.

Baseline interviews were conducted between 8 June 2011 (Bulungu *Territorie*) and 23 July 2011 (Kusango Lunda *Territorie*). In each *territoire*, the baseline survey was conducted within the week prior to the *Boîtes à Images* session taking place in each village. Interviewers followed standard random route household interviewing procedures. Detailed information about the respondent and how s/he could be recontacted in a future follow-up survey was collected. Following the *Boîtes* session, interviewers attempted to reinterview all respondents from the baseline wave. This proved highly successful, as BERCI achieved a remarkable 98% reinterview rate. Post-*Boîtes* interviews were conducted between 8 July 2011 and 4 September 2011; this period represented a time of between one and 26 days after the *Boîtes* session. The overall time between pre- and post-event interviews ranged from three to 39 days.

### Estimation strategy

Our research design allows us to identify the effect of the random encouragement to attend the *Boîtes* sessions on all dependent variables (“Intent to Treat (ITT)”), as well as the effects of attending the workshops instrumented, as noted above, by the random encouragement (IV). The ITT provides an estimate of the effects of encouragement itself to attend the *Boîtes* sessions on the change in individuals’ attitudes:

$$\Delta DV_{v,i} = \beta_{0_{v,i}} + \beta_1 \text{Encouragement}_{v,i} + \beta_2 DV_{v,i,pre} + Z_{v,i}\tau + \varphi_v + \varepsilon_{v,i}$$

where  $v$  indexes village, and  $i$  indexes each respondent.  $\beta_0$  represents the average change in each dependent variable for non-encouraged individuals,  $\beta_1$  represents the additional changes in the dependent variable for individuals who were encouraged to attend the session. The equation also includes village fixed effects ( $\varphi_v$ ) as well as the pre-treatment value of the dependent variable ( $DV_{v,i,pre}$ ) in order to increase the precision of the estimates.<sup>48</sup> Lastly, the model includes other demographics such as gender, age, and level of education ( $Z_{v,i}\tau$ ) to address potential imbalance in our sample.

As discussed above, even though encouragement is randomly assigned, attendance at the *Boîtes* sessions is voluntary. Thus, ITT will generate a potentially biased estimate of the effects of attending the *Boîtes* sessions. To overcome this, we identify the causal effects of attendance at the *Boîtes* sessions using instrumental variables estimation. We use the random assignment of “encouragement” as an instrument that exogenously increases the attendance at the *Boîtes* sessions. The estimation equation is written as below

$$\text{Attendance}_{v,i} = \beta_{0_{v,i}} + \beta_1 \text{Encouragement}_{v,i} + Z_{v,i}\tau + \varphi_v + \varepsilon_{v,i} \text{ (First Stage)}$$

$$\Delta DV_{v,i} = \beta_{0_{v,i}} + \beta_1 \widehat{\text{Attendance}}_{v,i} + \beta_2 DV_{v,i,pre} + Z_{v,i}\tau + \varphi_v + \varepsilon_{v,i} \text{ (Second Stage)}$$

where  $v$  indexes villages, and  $i$  indexes individuals. The process identifies the Complier Average Causal Effect (CACE), that is, the effect of attendance on change in each of the dependent variables among individuals who attended the *Boîtes* session as the result of the randomized encouragement ( $\beta_1$  in the Second Stage).

Lastly, in order to investigate the direct and indirect effects of civic education on political participation through perceived democratic supply and demand respectively (H3), we employ the widely-utilized approach to causal mediation analysis suggested by Imai et al.<sup>49</sup> The procedure decomposes the total effect from a treatment to an outcome into the “average causal mediation effect” (ACME) – that is, the portion resulting from the indirect effect of the treatment on the outcome through a specified mediator, and the remaining “average direct effect” (ADE), which represents both the direct causal effect of the treatment on the outcome as well as any effects from potentially unmeasured or unspecified mediators.

## Results

We show the results from the estimation of equations (1) and (2) for *Democratic Supply* in Table 2. As can be seen, for both overall satisfaction with democracy and support for the ongoing decentralization process, the estimates for *VOICE* exposure are negative and statistically significant. The ITT effects show that individuals who were randomly encouraged to attend the workshops decreased on both outcomes, relative to those who were not encouraged to attend in the baseline survey, controlling for prior levels of each outcome and for standard demographic variables such as gender, age, education, and media exposure.

The IV estimates of the complier average causal effect (columns 2 and 4), are substantially larger than the corresponding ITT effects.<sup>50</sup> In standardized terms, the IV estimate of *Boîtes* attendance on satisfaction with democracy is nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a standard deviation, while the corresponding IV effect on support for the current decentralization process is over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a standard deviation. This is strong evidence in support of H1: the *Boîtes* civic education workshops heightened individuals’ *dissatisfaction* with the current supply of democratic outcomes, both in terms of the specific decentralization reform as well the overall democratization process in DRC.

**Table 2.** Effects of voice exposure on perceived democratic supply.

|                         | Dependent Variable:         |                    |                                      |                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                         | Satisfaction with Democracy |                    | Support for Decentralization Process |                   |
|                         | ITT                         | IV                 | ITT                                  | IV                |
| Encouraged              | −0.088*<br>(0.046)          |                    | −0.167***<br>(0.050)                 |                   |
| Attended                |                             | −0.397*<br>(0.214) |                                      | −0.803<br>(0.272) |
| Male                    | −0.022<br>(0.044)           | −0.012<br>(0.045)  | 0.064<br>(0.047)                     | 0.082<br>(0.053)  |
| Age                     | 0.003***<br>(0.002)         | 0.004**<br>(0.002) | −0.001<br>(0.002)                    | 0.001<br>(0.002)  |
| Education               | 0.020<br>(0.016)            | 0.020<br>(0.016)   | 0.007<br>(0.017)                     | 0.003<br>(0.019)  |
| Media                   | 0.007<br>(0.038)            | 0.0004<br>(0.038)  | 0.065*<br>(0.039)                    | 0.047<br>(0.044)  |
| Lagged DV               | X                           | X                  | X                                    | X                 |
| Village FE              | X                           | X                  | X                                    | X                 |
| Observations            | 1,047                       | 1,047              | 1,025                                | 1,025             |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.413                       | 0.383              | 0.514                                | 0.380             |
| First Stage F           |                             | 70.270***          |                                      | 59.320***         |

p<0.1\*; p<0.05\*\*; p<0.01\*\*\*

**Table 3.** Effects of voice exposure on democratic demand: civic competence.

|                         | Dependent variable: |                     |                            |                     |                     |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                         | General Knowledge   |                     | Decentralization Knowledge |                     | Political Efficacy  |                     |
|                         | ITT                 | IV                  | ITT                        | IV                  | ITT                 | IV                  |
| Encouraged              | 0.082<br>(0.058)    |                     | 0.479***<br>(0.086)        |                     | 0.338***<br>(0.064) |                     |
| Attended                |                     | 0.363<br>(0.256)    |                            | 2.209***<br>(0.404) |                     | 1.604***<br>(0.338) |
| Male                    | 0.024<br>(0.055)    | 0.017<br>(0.055)    | 0.242***<br>(0.082)        | 0.208**<br>(0.084)  | 0.326***<br>(0.061) | 0.285***<br>(0.068) |
| Age                     | 0.003*<br>(0.002)   | 0.002<br>(0.002)    | 0.011***<br>(0.003)        | 0.006*<br>(0.003)   | 0.0001<br>(0.002)   | —0.004<br>(0.003)   |
| Education               | 0.062***<br>(0.020) | 0.064***<br>(0.020) | 0.040<br>(0.029)           | 0.043<br>(0.030)    | —0.034<br>(0.021)   | —0.031<br>(0.024)   |
| Media                   | 0.029<br>(0.047)    | 0.040<br>(0.047)    | 0.082<br>(0.070)           | 0.035<br>(0.071)    | —0.061<br>(0.053)   | —0.022<br>(0.059)   |
| Lagged DV               | X                   | X                   | X                          | X                   | X                   | X                   |
| Village FE              | X                   | X                   | X                          | X                   | X                   | X                   |
| Observations            | 1,003               | 1,003               | 1,092                      | 1,092               | 1,052               | 1,052               |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.345               | 0.344               | 0.498                      | 0.476               | 0.476               | 0.353               |
| First Stage F           |                     | 71.647***           |                            | 70.532***           |                     | 63.990***           |

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

The effects of encouragement and *Boîtes* attendance on outcomes related to *Democratic Demand*, on the other hand, are almost uniformly *positive*, both in terms of the Civic Competence dimension (Table 3) and on Democratic Values (Table 4). The effects on Civic Competence variables, in particular on specific knowledge of decentralization and on political efficacy were both highly significant and of very large substantive magnitude (with standard deviation changes of 1.66 and 1.42, respectively).

**Table 4.** Effects of VOICE exposure on democratic demand: values and norms.

|                         | Dependent variable:    |                     |                     |                      |                    |                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                         | Decentralization Ideal |                     | Tolerance           |                      | Right to Criticize |                    |
|                         | ITT                    | IV                  | ITT                 | IV                   | ITT                | IV                 |
| Encouraged              | 0.155**<br>(0.064)     |                     | 0.134**<br>(0.064)  |                      | 0.104**<br>(0.046) |                    |
| Attended                |                        | 0.772***<br>(0.332) |                     | 0.636**<br>(0.315)   |                    | 0.475**<br>(0.217) |
| Male                    | 0.202***<br>(0.061)    | 0.185***<br>(0.063) | 0.084<br>(0.061)    | 0.076<br>(0.063)     | 0.078*<br>(0.043)  | 0.059<br>(0.045)   |
| Age                     | 0.001<br>(0.002)       | —0.001<br>(0.002)   | —0.005**<br>(0.002) | —0.007***<br>(0.002) | 0.0003<br>(0.002)  | —0.001<br>(0.002)  |
| Education               | 0.002<br>(0.021)       | 0.001<br>(0.022)    | —0.052**<br>(0.022) | —0.053**<br>(0.022)  | —0.029*<br>(0.015) | —0.027*<br>(0.016) |
| Media                   | 0.061<br>(0.052)       | 0.076<br>(0.053)    | 0.036<br>(0.052)    | 0.023<br>(0.053)     | 0.008<br>(0.037)   | 0.0004<br>(0.039)  |
| Lagged DV               | X                      | X                   | X                   | X                    | X                  | X                  |
| Village FE              | X                      | X                   | X                   | X                    | X                  | X                  |
| Observations            | 1,048                  | 1,048               | 1,070               | 1,070                | 1,027              | 1,027              |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.527                  | 0.495               | 0.516               | 0.485                | 0.464              | 0.420              |
| First Stage F           |                        | 57.412***           |                     | 64.640***            |                    | 67.012***          |

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

A similar pattern can be seen for the second *Demand* dimension of support for democratic values and norms, though the size of the effects is of somewhat smaller magnitude. Individuals who attended the *Boîtes* workshops (based on the exogenous push of the random encouragement) were substantially more likely to support the normative ideal of decentralization than the control group (standard deviation change of .72), and were more likely to endorse core democratic values such as extending political rights even to those espousing non-democratic principles (standard deviation change of .64) and supporting the rights of individuals to criticize the government (standard deviation change of .68). This is strong evidence in support of H2.

We present the effects of *VOICE* exposure on three measures of political participation in Table 5: discussing politics with others, expressing intention to vote in possible upcoming local elections, and engaging in non-electoral behaviours such as community action, protest, and the redress of personal injustices or grievances. The results show an interesting pattern, with the effects of civic education exposure on discussion and non-electoral participation being significant and positive, while its impact on turnout intention is insignificant and slightly negative in sign. The instrumental variable estimates for discussion and non-electoral behaviour are moderate in substantive magnitude, with the effect for discussion being nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a standard deviation, and for non-electoral behaviour approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a standard deviation as well. The figure for non-electoral behaviour is notable in that the post-test took place no longer than one month after the *Boîtes* event, and thus there were not likely to be an abundance of opportunities for engaging in these actions in that limited a time frame.

The reasons for the null effect of exposure on turnout intention are not altogether clear. It may have been that, given the delays in scheduled local elections that had occurred in the recent past, individuals discounted the possibility of elections actually taking place. The negative effect is also consistent, however, with recent work

**Table 5.** Effects of *VOICE* exposure on democratic demand: values and norms.

|                         | Dependent variable: |                     |                            |                     |                     |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                         | General Knowledge   |                     | Decentralization Knowledge |                     | Political Efficacy  |                     |
|                         | ITT                 | IV                  | ITT                        | IV                  | ITT                 | IV                  |
| Encouraged              | 0.082<br>(0.058)    |                     | 0.479***<br>(0.086)        |                     | 0.338***<br>(0.064) |                     |
| Attended                |                     | 0.363<br>(0.256)    |                            | 2.209***<br>(0.404) |                     | 1.604***<br>(0.338) |
| Male                    | 0.024<br>(0.055)    | 0.017<br>(0.055)    | 0.242***<br>(0.082)        | 0.208**<br>(0.084)  | 0.326***<br>(0.061) | 0.285***<br>(0.068) |
| Age                     | 0.003*<br>(0.002)   | 0.002<br>(0.002)    | 0.011***<br>(0.003)        | 0.006*<br>(0.003)   | 0.0001<br>(0.002)   | -0.004<br>(0.003)   |
| Education               | 0.062***<br>(0.020) | 0.064***<br>(0.020) | 0.040<br>(0.029)           | 0.043<br>(0.030)    | -0.034<br>(0.021)   | -0.031<br>(0.024)   |
| Media                   | 0.029<br>(0.047)    | 0.040<br>(0.047)    | -0.082<br>(0.070)          | -0.035<br>(0.071)   | -0.061<br>(0.053)   | -0.022<br>(0.059)   |
| Lagged DV               | X                   | X                   | X                          | X                   | X                   | X                   |
| Village FE              | X                   | X                   | X                          | X                   | X                   | X                   |
| Observations            | 1,003               | 1,003               | 1,092                      | 1,092               | 1,052               | 1,052               |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.345               | 0.344               | 0.498                      | 0.476               | 0.476               | 0.353               |
| First Stage F           |                     | 71.647***           |                            | 70.532***           |                     | 63.990***           |

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

demonstrating a “deliberate disengagement” hypothesis, whereby new information about flawed political processes leads to voter withdrawal from behaviours such as turnout that would legitimate the political regime.<sup>51</sup> We explore the differential effects on turnout and the other forms of participation more thoroughly in the mediation analyses that follow in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6 shows the mediated effects of *VOICE* civic education on participation via its effect on perceptions of Democratic Supply, using overall satisfaction with democracy as the mediator so as to minimize the complexity of the model. As can be seen, the effect of democratic satisfaction on all three forms of participation is positive and statistically significant, such that individuals who are more satisfied are more likely to express intention to turn out to vote and engage in other forms of passive (discussion) and active participation. In combination with the negative effect of *VOICE* exposure on democratic satisfaction (see Table 2), this produces a *negative* indirect effect on participation in all forms. This can be seen from the statistically significant Average Causal Mediation Effect (ACME) of approximately  $-.01$  on each form of behaviour. This suggests that one effect of civic education is to depress participation by heightening individual’s dissatisfaction with contemporaneous political processes and regime outputs. This pattern is consistent with H3a from the Supply and Demand model of Figure 1. It should be noted, however, that these indirect effects are modest in magnitude, explaining less than 15% of the total civic education effects in each of the three dependent variables.

We find partial support for H3b from the results in Table 7, which shows the indirect effects of *VOICE* exposure via Democratic Demand. Again, we select one indicator of Demand, political efficacy, for ease of presentation. Here the effects of efficacy on political discussion and non-electoral participation are positive and significant. Coupled with the positive effects of *VOICE* on efficacy as shown in Table 3, this process produces an overall positive and significant ACME for these two outcomes.

**Table 6.** Effects of *VOICE* exposure on political participation.

|                         | Dependent variable:  |                     |                             |                     |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                         | Political Discussion |                     | Non-Electoral Participation |                     | Electoral Participation |                    |
|                         | ITT                  | IV                  | ITT                         | IV                  | ITT                     | IV                 |
| Encouraged              | 0.115**<br>(0.051)   |                     | 0.074***<br>(0.027)         |                     | -0.059<br>(0.055)       |                    |
| Attended                |                      | 0.541**<br>(0.248)  |                             | 0.341**<br>(0.134)  |                         | -0.328<br>(0.308)  |
| Male                    | 0.267***<br>(0.049)  | 0.262***<br>(0.050) | 0.079***<br>(0.025)         | 0.073***<br>(0.028) | 0.065<br>(0.051)        | 0.073<br>(0.053)   |
| Age                     | 0.005***<br>(0.002)  | 0.004**<br>(0.002)  | 0.003***<br>(0.001)         | 0.002**<br>(0.001)  | 0.001<br>(0.002)        | 0.002<br>(0.002)   |
| Education               | 0.024<br>(0.017)     | 0.025<br>(0.018)    | -0.0003<br>(0.009)          | -0.0002<br>(0.010)  | 0.044**<br>(0.018)      | 0.044**<br>(0.019) |
| Media                   | 0.080*<br>(0.042)    | 0.092**<br>(0.043)  | 0.068***<br>(0.022)         | 0.075***<br>(0.023) | -0.089**<br>(0.044)     | -0.100<br>(0.045)  |
| Lagged DV               | X                    | X                   | X                           | X                   | X                       | X                  |
| Village FE              | X                    | X                   | X                           | X                   | X                       | X                  |
| Observations            | 1,092                | 1,092               | 1,092                       | 1,092               | 911                     | 911                |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.410                | 0.377               | 0.445                       | 0.352               | 0.482                   | 0.461              |
| First Stage F           |                      | 67.623***           |                             | 69.460***           |                         | 41.239***          |

Note:  $p < 0.1^*$ ;  $p < 0.05^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.01^{***}$

**Table 7.** Effects of CE on participation: mediated through (perceived) democratic supply.

| 2nd Stage                           | Dependent variable:                |                                    |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                     | Political Discussion               | Non-Electoral Participation        | Electoral Participation           |
| Satisfied with Democracy Encouraged | 0.090**<br>(0.035)                 | 0.081***<br>(0.018)                | 0.121***<br>(0.036)               |
| Male                                | 0.120**<br>(0.052)                 | 0.084***<br>(0.027)                | -0.053<br>(0.055)                 |
| Age                                 | 0.245***<br>(0.050)                | 0.084***<br>(0.025)                | 0.061<br>(0.051)                  |
| Education                           | 0.005**<br>(0.002)                 | 0.002**<br>(0.001)                 | 0.002<br>(0.002)                  |
| Media                               | 0.027<br>(0.018)                   | 0.002<br>(0.009)                   | 0.047**<br>(0.019)                |
| Village FE Lagged DV                | 0.088**<br>(0.043)                 | 0.065***<br>(0.022)                | -0.090**<br>(0.044)               |
| ACME                                | -0.0088**<br>[-0.02082 - -0.00003] | -0.0077**<br>[-0.01670 - -0.00003] | -0.0127**<br>[-0.0306 - -0.00001] |
| ADE                                 | 0.1188**<br>[0.01665 - 0.2189]     | 0.0807***<br>[0.02775 - 0.1341]    | -0.0512<br>[-0.1716 - 0.0550]     |
| TE                                  | 0.1100**<br>[0.00750 - 0.2120]     | 0.07307***<br>[0.02041 - 0.1259]   | -0.0639<br>[-0.1802 - 0.0426]     |
| Prop.Mediated                       | -0.0725                            | -0.10120                           | 0.1413                            |
| Sensitivity Score                   | 0.1                                | 0.2                                | 0.2                               |
| Observations                        | 1,066                              | 1,066                              | 909                               |

95% confidence intervals in square brackets estimated, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets estimated based on nonparametric bootstrap with 1000 resamples. Both mediation and outcome equations are estimated with OLS.  $p < 0.1^*$ ;  $p < 0.05^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.01^{***}$

The mediated effect is also relatively large, explaining between 20 and 35% of the total effect of *VOICE* on the outcomes. In the case of intention to vote, however, the effect of efficacy is unexpectedly insignificant, rendering the indirect effect negligible and insignificant as well. [Table 8](#).

Taken together, these analyses show that there were offsetting indirect effects linking *VOICE* exposure to subsequent political behaviour. The programme stimulated participation by generating more politically competent and aware individuals, but depressed participation by generating individuals who were more dissatisfied with current democratic supply. The processes resulted with, on balance, positive indirect effects in the case of political discussion and non-electoral or unconventional behaviours, and on balance negative indirect effects in the case of intention to vote. In all three cases, however, the direct effect of *VOICE* – positive for discussion and non-electoral actions, negative for turnout intentions – outweighed the indirect effects by a substantial amount. These direct effects may represent the effects of civic education exposure through as yet unobserved mediators. But we interpret at least some of these direct effects as the result of the direct mobilization messages contained in the *VOICE* programme as well. As can be seen in the *Boîte à Image* depicted in [Figure 2b](#), the programme encouraged individuals to engage explicitly in the redress of grievances (illustration at the lower left of the figure) and to participate in collective action or protest on issues of importance (lower right).

**Table 8.** Effects of CE on participation: mediated through democratic demand (efficacy).

| 2nd Stage         | Dependent variable:            |                                |                               |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                   | Political Discussion           | Non-Electoral Participation    | Electoral Participation       |
| Efficacy          | 0.114***<br>(0.025)            | 0.046***<br>(0.013)            | 0.017<br>(0.026)              |
| Encouraged        | 0.055<br>(0.052)               | 0.062**<br>(0.027)             | -0.045<br>(0.056)             |
| Male              | 0.224***<br>(0.050)            | 0.066**<br>(0.026)             | 0.046<br>(0.052)              |
| Age               | 0.005***<br>(0.002)            | 0.003***<br>(0.001)            | 0.002<br>(0.002)              |
| Education         | 0.027<br>(0.017)               | -0.001<br>(0.009)              | 0.044**<br>(0.019)            |
| Media             | 0.104**<br>(0.043)             | 0.065***<br>(0.022)            | -0.087*<br>(0.045)            |
| Village FE        | X                              | X                              | X                             |
| Lagged DV         | X                              | X                              | X                             |
| ACME              | 0.0363***<br>[0.0207 - 0.0602] | 0.0152***<br>[0.0059 - 0.0262] | 0.0047<br>[-0.0091 - 0.0211]  |
| ADE               | 0.0566<br>[-0.0492 - 0.1476]   | 0.0611**<br>[0.0093 - 0.1147]  | -0.0421<br>[-0.1510 - 0.0700] |
| TE                | 0.0928*<br>[0.0096 - 0.1866]   | 0.0762***<br>[0.0266 - 0.1300] | -0.0373<br>[-0.1495 - 0.0743] |
| Prop.Mediated     | 0.3473                         | 0.1975                         | -0.0351                       |
| Sensitivity Score | 0.1                            | 0.2                            | 0.2                           |
| Observations      | 1,071                          | 1,071                          | 906                           |

95% confidence intervals in square brackets estimated, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets estimated based on nonparametric bootstrap with 1000 resamples. Both mediation and outcome equations are estimated with OLS.  $p < 0.1^*$ ;  $p < 0.05^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.01^{***}$

## Conclusion

We proposed a general Supply and Demand model of the effects of civic education in emerging democracies by adapting Bratton and Mattes' model of democratic support. We suggest that new information imparted in civic education programmes may successfully instil political knowledge, self-competence and support for democratic values and norms ("Demand"), while at the same time highlighting and deepening dissatisfaction with poorly functioning political institutions and regimes ("Supply"). We tested hypotheses derived from the model with the *VOICE* programme undertaken in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2011-2012, which attempted to further citizen knowledge, support and engagement with the country's decentralization reforms and the democratization process.

Using an "encouragement design", we found consistent support for the model's hypotheses. Estimates of both ITT and IV models showed that the workshops led to increases on virtually all indicators of Democratic Demand – knowledge of decentralization, political efficacy, tolerance and support for the exercise of democratic rights – while leading to negative effects on indicators of Democratic Supply – satisfaction with democracy in the DRC and support for the ongoing decentralization process. These processes then differentially fed into subsequent political engagement. Civic education exposure had positive indirect effects on political discussion and non-electoral participation via increases in democratic demand, and these effects were partially offset by negative indirect effects on participation via decreases in perceived democratic supply. Finally, we found strong direct effects of *VOICE* workshop exposure on

reported non-electoral participation and informal political discussion, though no corresponding increase was shown on intentions to vote in upcoming local elections.

The findings have important normative implications for the role of civic education in furthering democratic political culture. That civic education provides information to individuals about poorly functioning institutions is laudable, as there may be a limited amount of objective information available elsewhere on political performance in fragile democracies and electoral autocracies. The fact that this heightened awareness of deficiencies in institutional performance was accompanied by increases in supportive democratic values, norms and behaviours also provides a positive normative view on what civic education can accomplish. Gibson *et al.* asserted that “a democratic citizen is one who believes in individual liberty and who is politically tolerant, who holds a certain amount of distrust of political authority ... [and] who is obedient but nonetheless willing to assert rights against the state”.<sup>52</sup> This is precisely what the VOICE programme appears to have accomplished in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Though democratic development depends on many factors, it is nevertheless plausible to assert that this increase in “distrusting democrats”<sup>53</sup> is likely to provide at least some incentive for elites in poorly performing contexts to increase the future supply of democracy to a citizenry that is more committed to democratic norms as well as more politically engaged.

The results also have more practical implications for the future design and implementation of civic education information campaigns in emerging and in backsliding democracies. Although negative effects of civic education on perceptions of democratic supply may be laudable in poorly-functioning democracies, it is also the case that no democracies are perfect, and civic education programmes need to be cognizant of modulating to some degree the discrepancy between democracy in theory and in practice. Programmes could also exploit the positive effects we reported on political discussion, by providing supplementary materials and explicit instructions to participants on how best to transmit the civic education messages to others in their social networks. And the relatively strong individual-level effects observed here indicate that the VOICE programme could serve as an example for future large-scale information campaigns, given its use of the kinds of active and participatory methodologies that previous work has identified as “best practices” for civic education.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, much more needs to be done in future research. The present study has limitations, for example, in our reliance on measuring participation using self-reported as opposed to objective indicators, in our focus on relatively short-term effects of civic education exposure, and our inability to incorporate variation in implementation quality into the evaluation. More generally, though our supply and demand model has attempted to integrate previous work into a general theoretical framework, there are still important avenues left to explore. For example, we need to know much more about possible heterogenous effects of civic education for individuals with differing levels of political and social resources.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, future work should directly test the mechanisms which may lead to the differential impacts of civic education on democratic supply and demand. We suggested increased cognitive awareness and changes in the expectations or reference points with which individuals compare democratic ideals to ongoing democratic practices; others, for example, increases in voluntary association memberships or informal mobilization from family or friends, may also need to be considered in modelling the linkages between civic education, democratic orientations, and political engagement. Finally, it is likely that the

micro-level impacts of civic education programmes depend on macro-level and contextual factors, such as the country's level of democracy or recent trajectory, few of which have been considered in previous work. In better-functioning democracies, the combination of demand and supply effects may differ considerably from the pattern found here in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As more research is done in different settings on all of these issues, a more comprehensive understanding may be achieved on how civic education and related information campaigns affect individuals in emerging democracies.

## Notes

1. Classen, "Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?"
2. Finkel, "Can Democracy be Taught?"; "The Impact of Adult Civic Education Programmes in Developing Democracies".
3. Lieberman *et al.*, "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship?"
4. Gottlieb, "Why Might Information Exacerbate the Gender Gap in Civic Participation?"
5. Chong *et al.*, "Does Corruption Information Inspire the Right or Quash the Hope?"; Sexton, "The Long Road to Accountable Democracy."
6. Bratton and Mattes, "Learning About Democracy in Africa."
7. Mvukiyehe and Samii, "Promoting Democracy in Fragile States."
8. Azpuru *et al.*, "Trends in Democracy Assistance"; Moehler, "Democracy, Governance, and Randomized Development Assistance."
9. Many programmes have been conducted among primary and secondary students in the formal school systems of developing democracies; we focus in this article on non-formal civic education programmes aimed at adults.
10. Bratton *et al.*, "The Effects of Civic Education on Political Culture."
11. Finkel *et al.*, "Civic Education, Civil Society, and Political Mistrust in a Developing Democracy"; "Can Democracy Be Taught?"
12. Finkel and Smith, "Civic Education, Political Discussion."
13. Finkel, Horowitz, and Rojo-Mendoza, "Civic Education and Democratic Backsliding."
14. Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*; Kuenzi, "Nonformal Education, Political Participation."
15. Finkel, "Can Democracy Be Taught?"
16. Finkel and Smith, "Civic Education, Political Discussion."
17. Kuenzi, "Nonformal Education, Political Participation."
18. Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.
19. Finkel, Horowitz, and Rojo-Mendoza, "Civic Education and Democratic Backsliding."
20. Gottlieb, "Greater Expectations: A Field Experiment."
21. Banerjee *et al.*, "Can Voters Be Primed to Choose Better Legislators?"
22. Keefer and Khemani, "Do Informed Citizens Receive More ... or Pay More?"
23. Vincente, "Is Vote Buying Effective?"
24. Gine and Mansuri, "Together We Will"; Collier and Vincente, "Votes and Violence"; Mvukiyehe and Samii, "Promoting Democracy in Fragile States."
25. Chong *et al.*, "Does Corruption Information Inspire?"; Vincente, "Is Vote Buying Effective?"
26. Gottlieb, "Why Might Information Exacerbate?"; John and Sjoberg, "Partisan responses to democracy promotion."
27. Lieberman *et al.*, "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship?"
28. Sexton, "The Long Road to Accountable Democracy."
29. Bratton and Mattes, "Learning About Democracy in Africa."
30. Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*; Milner, *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens*.
31. Gottlieb, "Greater Expectations: A Field Experiment."
32. Sexton, "The Long Road to Accountable Democracy: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Peru."
33. Finkel *et al.*, "Civic Education, Civil Society, and Political Mistrust in a Developing Democracy: The Case of the Dominican Republic," 1867-1868.

34. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes*; Claasen, “Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?”; Gibson *et al.*, “Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union”; Verba *et al.*, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism*.
35. That these outcomes can be affected in the first place by short-term factors such as civic education is no longer controversial, though the relative impact of short-term interventions versus long-term factors such as generational replacement or top-down actions from parties and political elites remains undetermined. See, e.g. Neundorf, “Democracy in Transition: A Micro Perspective on System Change in Post-socialist Societies.”
36. Gine and Mansuri, “Together We Will: Experimental Evidence.”
37. Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.
38. Finkel *et al.*, “Civic Education, Civil Society, and Political Mistrust.”
39. Chong *et al.*, “Does Corruption Information Inspire?”
40. Sexton, “The Long Road to Accountable Democracy.”
41. Reyntjens, “Briefing: Democratic Republic of Congo.”
42. Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway?*; Dizolele, “The Mirage of Democracy in the DRC.”
43. Englebert *et al.*, “Misguided and Misdiagnosed: The Failure of Decentralization Reforms in the DRC.”
44. *Ibid.*
45. See Appendix (A1) for the exact encouragement script.
46. Random assignment to receive the encouragement was blocked at the village level.
47. Sovey and Green “Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers’ Guide.”
48. Our dependent variable in all our models ( $\Delta DV_{v,i}$ ) is the change in individuals’ attitudes over the two waves ( $DV_{v,i,post} - DV_{v,i,pre}$ ). This applies to the behavioral questions such as political discussion and non-institutional participation as well, so in those models the dependent variable represents the change in the individual’s reported engagement in the various acts between the two waves of interviews.
49. Imai *et al.*, “Unpacking the Black Box of Causality”; Imai *et al.*, “Causal Mediation Analysis Using R.”
50. The first-stage estimates in all of the IV models reported in this section produce F statistics ranging from 41 to 71, well above the generally accepted threshold of 10 for rejecting instruments as “weak”.
51. Croke *et al.*, “Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes”; also Chong *et al.*, “Does Corruption Information Inspire?”
52. Gibson *et al.*, “Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” 332.
53. Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.
54. Blair, “Jump-Starting Democracy: Adult Civic”; Milner and Lewis. “It’s What Happens on the Front Lines.”
55. Gottlieb, “Why Might Information Exacerbate the Gender”; Johns and Sjoberg, “Partisan Responses to Democracy Promotion.”

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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