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Working Paper No. 105

**RATIONALITY, COSMOPOLITANISM, AND
ADJUSTMENT FATIGUE: PUBLIC
ATTITUDES TO ECONOMIC REFORM IN
ZAMBIA**

by Michael Bratton and Peter Lolojih

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April 2009

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Rationality, Cosmopolitanism, and Adjustment Fatigue: Public Attitudes to Economic Reform in Zambia

Abstract

In a context of growing popular fatigue with market-oriented policies, public opinion toward economic reform in Zambia is a mixed bag. As a whole, Zambians neither embrace nor refuse the orthodox package of reforms introduced by the Chiluba government (1991-2001) and sustained under the Mwanawasa presidency (2001-2008). Instead, they distinguish among specific policy measures, accepting price reforms and rejecting institutional change. With only minor modifications, these popular policy preferences are consistent over the past decade. Among social groups, rural dwellers are more likely to be satisfied with economic reform policies than urbanites. Perhaps the most original demographic finding concerns the influence of “cosmopolitanism” – an individual’s openness to globalization, for example through information and communication technology – as an explanatory factor driving support for market-oriented policies. Otherwise, in arriving at their opinions about economic reform, Zambians are just as likely to resort to political loyalty – based on partisan attachment to the ruling party – as on economic rationality.

Introduction

Technocrats usually take the lead in formulating and managing policies for economic development. In aid-dependent African countries, the relevant inner circle of policy actors includes not only senior officials in national central banks and ministries of finance, but also advisors drawn from international financial institutions and development assistance agencies. In this elite-centered process, few opportunities arise for the citizens of African countries to express their views in economic policy debates. Indeed, when it comes to economic reforms, the opinions of the man in the street and woman in the fields are rarely sought and seldom considered.

This paper seeks to cast light on the neglected realm of public attitudes to economic reform. With a focus on Zambia, it asks four basic research questions. First, what do ordinary citizens think about the package of market-oriented reforms that shaped the economic policy agenda after the country's transition to multiparty democracy in 1991? Second, how has public opinion evolved over time on key policy questions regarding limits to state intervention and the introduction of market mechanisms? Third, who among Zambians supports or opposes the reforms associated with economic stabilization and structural adjustment? And, finally, what factors – not only demographic, but also economic or political – explain popular demand for economic reform, if any, and mass perceptions of whether benefits are being supplied?

To anticipate results, we find that public opinion toward economic reform in Zambia is a mixed bag. As a whole, Zambians neither embrace nor refuse the orthodox package of reforms introduced by the Chiluba government (1991-2001) and sustained under the Mwanawasa presidency (2001-2008). Instead, they distinguish among specific policy measures, accepting some and rejecting others. And, with only minor modifications, popular policy preferences are largely consistent over time. Among social groups, rural dwellers are more likely to be satisfied with economic reform policies than urbanites, for reasons that we explore below. Perhaps the most original demographic finding concerns the influence of “cosmopolitanism” – an individual's openness to globalization, for example through information and communication technology – as an explanatory factor driving support for market-oriented policies. Otherwise, such support is barely formed in Zambia and is difficult to explain.

Our principal inquiry, however, is animated by an interest in different types of rationality. Do Zambians mainly use economic or political reasoning to arrive at attitudes to reform? We demonstrate that individual citizens use both sorts of criteria in making up their minds about whether a structural adjustment program is appropriate and effective in Zambia. But which criterion matters more? On the demand side (do citizens *want* economic reform?), political factors – like satisfaction with democracy and approval of the president's job performance – are relatively more important. And, although economic considerations are preeminent on the supply side (do citizens think the government is *delivering* the benefits of reform?) a complete explanation also requires reference to political factors – including an individual's partisan identification with political incumbents. The paper ends with a discussion of the implications of our results for the political management of economic reform programs.

Economic versus Political Rationality

In order to frame an investigation about policy choice and performance, it is useful to draw a basic distinction between two forms of rationality. On one hand, economic rationality is the approach of technocrats, who apply standard cost-benefit tests to determine which one of several policy options provides maximum output for least expense. On the other hand, political rationality derives from the worldview of politicians, who assess policy alternatives in terms of expected impacts on political support and longevity in office (Medard 2002; Geddes 2003; van den Berg and Meadwell 2004). Although both forms of rationality are based on instrumental reasoning, the former is driven by detached fiscal calculation and the latter by a passionate urge to retain political power.

With reference to the policy choices of African governing elites, political calculations have repeatedly trumped economic rationality. Reflecting on the first several decades of independence, researchers from the Africa Economic Research Consortium (AERC) identify a “syndrome” of anti-growth policies – including a closed economy, price distortions, and market regulation – which they describe as “control regimes.” (Ndulu and Collier et al. 2007). Robert Bates argues that:

Control regimes effectively...lowered the continent’s rate of economic growth. That these policies nonetheless remained in place reflects the political advantages they conferred: resources that authoritarian elites could employ to ameliorate political tensions, to recruit political clients, and to build political machines, and thereby remain in power” (2008, 74).

In this light, policies aimed at structurally adjusting African economies in the 1980s and 1990s represented a heroic effort to impose principles of economic rationality on a thoroughly politicized policy environment. That these programs met their goals with only scattered and sporadic success is testament to the strength of patronage – a key element in the logic of political rationality. Because, on its own, a strategy of “getting the prices right” rarely worked in isolation, international development agencies turned attention to democratic reforms and good governance, an approach to economic development that can be thought of as “getting the politics right.” In conjunction with domestic protest against corruption, repression and mismanagement, international pressures over the past two decades helped to open up politics in Africa and, in a good number of countries (including Zambia), to prompt a transition to multiparty electoral democracy. A puzzle remains, however: if there is an “elective affinity” between authoritarian political institutions and control policies (Bates 2008, 73), then does democratization create conditions for the adoption of economically rational, market-oriented policies?

Recent analyses of elite orientations to policy reform in Africa warn about the persistence of politically motivated “neo-patrimonial” practices (van de Walle 2001, Cammack 2007). The implication is that political considerations remain paramount among policy actors even in liberalized political environments (but see von Soest 2006, van Donge 2009). Medard characterizes the result as “a politically rational particularistic mode of redistribution through patronage, allowing for a middle-term reproduction of the regime” (2002, 386). With specific reference to Zambia, Szeftel speaks of politics as taking a “clientelist form in which patronage constitutes an important mechanism through which political supporters often obtain access to state resources in return for helping patrons obtain access to public office itself” (1982, 5).

This paper approaches competing forms of rationality from the bottom up rather than the top down. It asks how citizens in Zambia’s electoral democratic regime regard the policy agenda of economic reform. We assume that ordinary people are instrumental and pragmatic in arriving at preferences, favoring policies that actually work to their benefit. From this perspective, it is economically rational for citizens to lend support to policies that lead to macroeconomic growth and improved living standards, while rejecting policies that fail to achieve these goals. As for political motivations, it is also rational for clients to cultivate close ties to individuals and organizations that wield power, notably the incumbent president and the ruling party. By demonstrating political loyalty, thus helping patrons retain office, clients signal that they are worthy beneficiaries of the official patronage machine.

But how can these different forms of reasoning be captured and measured for purposes of research?

On one hand, citizens refer to existential economic experiences in judging the suitability and impact of government policies. For example, they may consider their own satisfaction (or not) with living conditions – present, past or future – in deciding whether they prefer a market- or state-based approach to economic

management. Or, instead of adopting an egocentric perspective, they may base emerging policy preferences on their own judgments about the current, retrospective and prospective performance of the national economy writ large. If the literature on economic voting in non-African countries is any guide, popular policy preferences will be shaped – “socio-tropically” and “retrospectively” – by the condition of the national economy in the immediate past (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000). The logic of any such economic referendum is that, based on recent experience, citizens will support the candidate or policy that delivers the most tangible material benefits.

On the other hand, citizens also use daily political life as a source of cues for appraising economic reform. They know, for example, whether the government implementing any given reform policy has been legitimately elected, extending cooperation to the authorities or withholding it accordingly. In this regard, approval of economic policy reform may depend on an individual’s diffuse feeling about an ideal political regime, expressed as “support for democracy” (Klingemann 1999, Schedler and Sarsfield 2007). Or citizens may use a more specific assessment of how well the democratic procedures of a particular elected regime in their country are actually working – an attitude commonly referred to in the literature as “satisfaction with democracy” (Anderson and Guillory 1997, Diamond 1999). Even more specifically, acceptance of an economic policy package may hinge on whether the individual citizen has voted, intends to vote, or otherwise identifies with the incumbent party in power. Partisans are likely to give their preferred party the benefit of the doubt on policy matters, whereas opponents are prone to be unduly critical. Finally, given that political “big men” continue to loom large even in elected governments in Africa, citizens may base their acceptance of a prevailing policy regime on whether they feel close personal or patronage ties. Especially if voters share an ethnic or other social identity with the president, it is rational for them to support his policies because they stand to benefit from his largesse.

Data

To test these propositions, data are drawn from the Afrobarometer, a comparative series of national public opinion surveys on democracy, markets and civil society conducted by a network of independent researchers.¹ Over the previous ten years, the Afrobarometer has conducted four surveys in Zambia, dated 1999, 2003, 2005 and 2008. Fieldwork for the most recent survey occurred from October 13 to 28, 2008, that is, the period immediately before the special presidential election occasioned by the death of Zambia’s third president, Levy Mwanawasa.² In addition, observations on selected items are available from surveys under a democracy promotion project conducted by a donor agency in 1993 and 1996.³ With these sources, it becomes feasible to describe Zambian attitudes to economic reform, track the evolution of these opinions, distinguish reform supporters from reform opponents, and test competing explanations about the formation of economic attitudes.

Economic Policy and Performance

After 1991, the government of Zambia undertook far-reaching economic policy reforms aimed at liberalizing the national economy. Key policy measures included the deregulation of foreign exchange controls, removal of consumer and producer subsidies, reductions in import tariffs, and, most importantly, the privatization of state owned enterprises, notably in the strategic copper sector. Under pressure from donors to rein in government spending, successive governments adopted a cash budget (Chiluba) or an activity-based accounting system (Mwanawasa) and developed an explicit poverty reduction strategy (International Monetary Fund 2002, 2006, Seshamani 2002). By prosecuting his predecessor for theft of public resources, Mwanawasa sought to publicize his government’s expressed commitment to rooting out corruption. In a vote of confidence in Mwanawasa’s calls for good governance and poverty reduction, international financial agencies relieved over 90 percent of Zambia’s previously crippling external debt.

These policy developments, along with a quadrupling of the international price of copper between 2003 and

2006, helped to stabilize and build the country's economy. As Table 1 indicates, Zambia has maintained an average annual GDP growth rate above 5 percent in the current decade, peaking at 6.2 percent in 2006 and 2007 (Central Statistical Office, 2009). The mining sector's share of economic output also grew, albeit marginally, from 6.2 percent in 2000 to 8.3 percent in 2008. During this expansion, Zambia also enjoyed a falling rate of inflation from 30.1 percent in 2000 to 8.2 percent in 2006 (see Table 2). A recent spike in inflation (to over 16 percent by December 2008) can be attributed mainly to rising import costs exacerbated by the depreciation of the local currency and an upward spike in crude oil prices.

Table 1: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Zambia, 2000-2008 (at constant 1994 prices)

Year	Total GDP (K billion)	GDP per capita (K)	GDP growth rate (annual percent)
2000	2,499	255,213	3.6
2001	2,621	259,806	4.9
2002	2,708	260,138	3.3
2003	2,847	264,930	5.1
2004	3,000	270,528	5.4
2005	3,160	276,215	5.3
2006	3,357	284,507	6.2
2007	3,564	293,054	6.2
2008	3,770	300,966	5.8

Source: Lusaka: Central Statistical Office, *The Monthly*, vol. 70, January 2009

While the period from 2000 to 2008 was a largely positive time for the Zambian economy, fundamental challenges remain. Even though the incidence of absolute poverty is said to have dropped nationally in the urban Copperbelt, it rose or held steady in Central, Northwestern and Western Provinces (Central Statistical Office, 2006a). Moreover the estimated proportion of unemployed persons increased steadily, with jobless rates highest among young people in urban areas. Since only 17 percent of employed adults report holding a job in the formal sector, most Zambians continue to rely on self-employment or unpaid family labor in roughly equal proportions (Central Statistical Office, 2006b). Of greatest concern, cuts in social expenditure led to declining living standards: compared to other countries around the world, Zambia slid on the Human Development Index from the 81st percentile in 1990 to the 91st percentile in 2008 (United Nations, 2009). The International Monetary Fund recently issued the grim reminder that “poverty is still widespread in Zambia with 68 percent of the population falling below the poverty line” (2006, 3).

The Preferences of Zambian Citizens

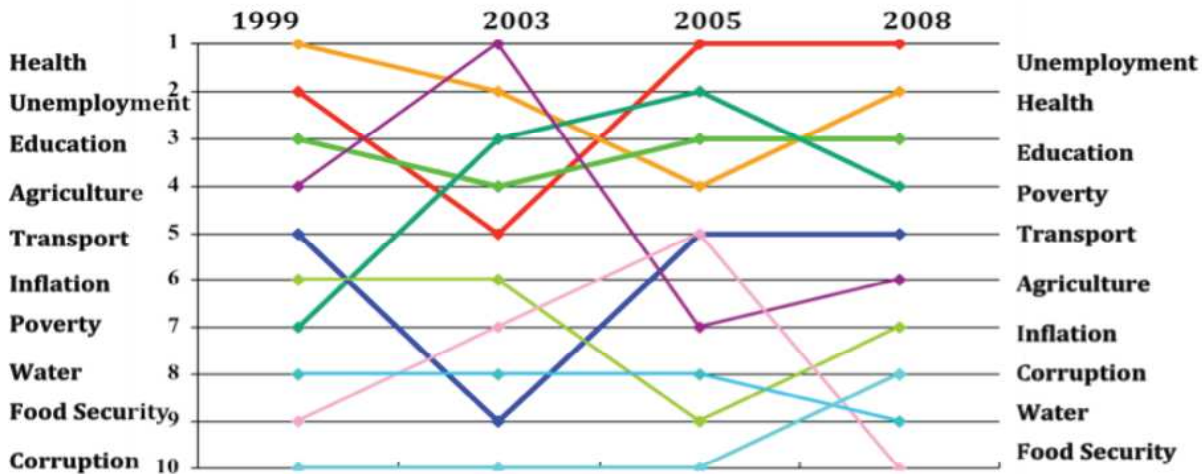
How well do popular policy priorities match the Zambian government's economic policy? A suitable starting point to this inquiry is an open-ended question that asked Afrobarometer survey respondents to spontaneously identify “the *most important problems* facing this country that the government should address.” Up to three responses were recorded in the respondents' own words. Summary trends are presented in Figure 1.

Three priorities consistently top the popular policy agenda: unemployment, health care and education. Health care was uppermost in Zambians' minds in 1999; it accounted for 17 percent of all responses and was mentioned by 38 percent of all respondents. In both 1999 and 2008 education ranked in third place. Over time, however, unemployment surpassed both health care and education; by 2008 it accounted for 16 percent of all responses and was mentioned by 48 percent of all respondents.

Other notable trends include the elevation of concerns about poverty alleviation up the popular agenda (from

rank seven to rank four) even after the Zambian government published its first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2002. Anxiety about inflation tended to fall by mid-decade, only to rise again by 2008, a trend that mirrors the actual path of inflation as officially reported by the Central Statistical Office (see Table 2). And, in a somewhat surprising result given the escalation of maize meal prices in 2008 (Jayne et al. 2008), popular unease about food security first rose steadily between 1999 and 2005, but then dropped off sharply in the most recent survey. Notwithstanding this last result, the overall tendency is for Zambians to grant increasing priority over time to economic worries about poverty and unemployment.

**Figure 1: Most Important National Problems:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



The scale on the Y axis is a rank order (from 1 = highest rank to 10 = lowest rank)

The rise of unemployment as the nation’s leading policy problem can be traced to the closure of copper mines, the retrenchment of workers in industries exposed to foreign competition, and the weakening of the Zambian currency. These trends, including a recent reversal in copper prices, have intensified as the world economy entered a drastic slowdown during 2008. High petroleum prices in early 2008 also contributed to inflated costs of production, prompting some companies to reduce staffing levels as a measure to control costs. When Zambians indicate the rising salience of unemployment, they appear to be referring to formal employment and to be discounting gains in full- and part-time job availability in the expanding informal sector.

As for education, Zambians are concerned about limited access to public schools, colleges and universities, as well as with high costs. The recent government policy to allow all Grade 9 pupils who obtain a full certificate to proceed to Grade 10, has been received with mixed feelings. Although the policy provides opportunity for more pupils to complete secondary school, the capacity of the education system in terms of teaching staff, infrastructure, and learning materials cannot guarantee high standards in education. The Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP), 2006-2010 is targeting three educational priorities: recruitment of teachers; procurement of materials; and the construction of classrooms and teachers’ houses. It is estimated, for example, that the government will need to recruit 5,000 additional teachers per year to reduce an unfavorable pupil-teacher ratio (FNDP, 2006).

Table 2: Inflation Trends, Zambia, 2000-2008

Year	Year on Year Inflation Rate (percent)
2000	30.1
2001	18.7
2002	26.7
2003	17.2
2004	17.5
2005	15.9
2006	8.2
2007	8.9
2008	16.6

Source: Lusaka: Central Statistical Office, *The Monthly*, vol. 70, January 2009

Although achievements have been recorded in malaria control⁴, citizen anxiety with respect to health services is well founded. Total expenditure on health fell from US\$24 million in 1997 to an average of US\$18 million for 2001 to 2005, a situation that has had a negative impact on the provision of good quality health care. Because of low wages and benefits in the civil service and a poor working environment in the health sector, there has been a massive exodus of medical workers, especially nurses, seeking work in other countries. A recent assessment reported that current health workforce levels are only 50 percent of the required levels (FNDP, 2006).

Within this socioeconomic context, how do Zambians evaluate the various economic policies introduced by successive governments since the country's return to multiparty elections in 1991? We trace public opinion with respect to key components in the stabilization and structural adjustment package. With regard to price reforms, the Afrobarometer surveys ask whether Zambians are willing to pay market prices for consumer goods and fees for education. With regard to institutional reforms, our questions concern the restructuring of the civil service and the privatization of public corporations. All these topics have arisen in policy debates in Zambia in the period 1991 to 2008. And each appears on the popular agenda of the country's "most important problems" in the guise of widespread and persistent concerns about the quality of education, the costs of inflation, and the shortage of employment.

Support for Price Reforms

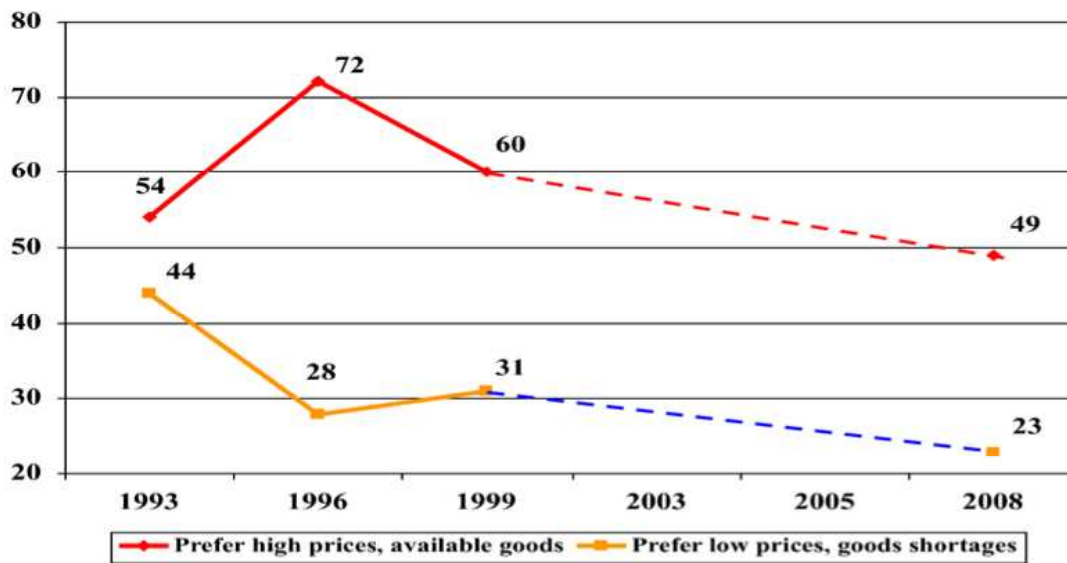
The establishment of market prices for *consumer goods* – notably maize meal, Zambia's staple food – was a top priority item for Chiluba government as soon as it took office. During the late 1980s, former President Kaunda had made several attempts to remove subsidies on maize meal, which were then the single largest item in the government's growing budget deficit. But the president always backed down in the face of urban protests. Confronted after 1990 with an organized political challenge from the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), the government of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) abandoned any pretence of adherence to donor-sponsored economic reforms. As the election of 1991 approached, Kaunda fixed maize meal prices, effectively allowing subsidies to balloon to US\$1.5 million per day. As soon as MMD convincingly won the elections with more than three quarters of the vote, Chiluba was forced to address this unsupportable drain on the public budget. On December 27, 1991 he announced that subsidies on maize meal would be cut in half, a measure soon followed with the complete removal of all such subventions.

How did the Zambian population react? In this instance, subsidy cuts were not followed by food riots, perhaps because citizens acknowledged that a freely elected government had won a mandate for reform. But the acquiescence of the citizenry to a key reform measure also reflected a growing acceptance that "getting the prices right" had the beneficial side effect of ending the shortages of consumer goods that had plagued

the country under Kaunda. No longer would Zambians have to line up to buy bread or go without sugar and cooking oil because these commodities were unavailable. When first asked in 1993, a majority of Zambians – some 54 percent – agreed that, “it is better to have goods in the market even if the prices are high.” Significantly fewer respondents – just 44 percent – agreed at the time that, “it is better to have low prices even if there are shortages of goods” (See Figure 2).⁵

While popular sentiment about consumer prices fluctuates in Zambia, a pro-reform preference has prevailed consistently. As Figure 2 shows, almost three quarters of Zambians chose the “high prices/available goods” option in 1996, as did three fifths in 1999. The question about market prices was not asked in 2003 and 2005 surveys, but by October 2008 some 49 percent of Zambian adults continued to favor market pricing. While this proportion was no longer a majority, the gap between supporters and opponents of this policy more than doubled from 10 percentage points in 1993 to 26 percentage points in 2008.

**Figure 2: Popular Attitudes to Consumer Prices:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



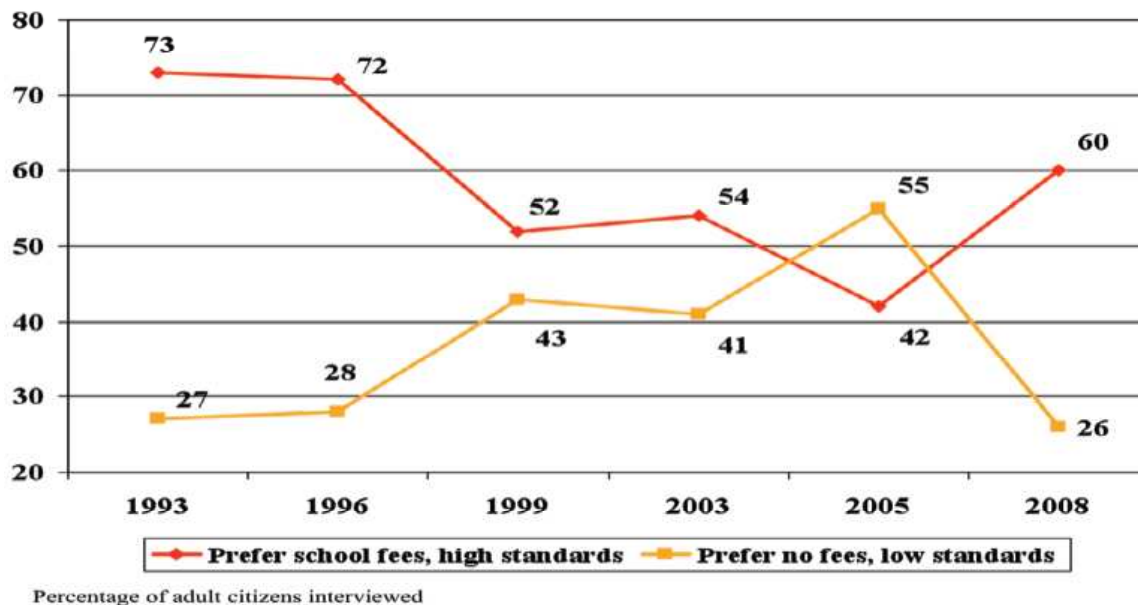
One interpretation of the observed trend is that, Zambian citizens accept free market pricing, but with increasing reluctance over time. By 2008, fully one quarter of the survey respondents (28 percent) said that they “didn’t know” what kind of policy regime they preferred, agreeing with neither market nor controlled prices for consumer goods. Because there is no correlation between age and support for market prices, we can discount the possibility that only older people – that is, who remember the shortages of the 1980s – are the main (but dwindling) supporters of market pricing. Another possibility is that, with the appearance of high-end supermarkets in Zambia’s urban areas, many people are becoming disillusioned with an economic policy regime that makes available plentiful luxury goods but at prices that many working folk simply cannot afford.

We turn now to another example of price reform, in this case for *educational services*. In return for standby agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and program loans from the World Bank, the Kaunda government slashed spending on social programs. Schools found themselves without textbooks and health clinics ran out of essential drugs. As maintenance was deferred, roads, buildings and equipment began

to show signs of wear and tear. In short, there was “a wholesale deterioration in the productivity of the government machine” (Gulhati 1989, 31). At the same time, government introduced cost recovery measures such as service fees at hospitals and clinics and expanded school fees at all levels of the education system. Yet, even as households faced increased costs for social services, a majority of Zambians expressed a willingness to shoulder some of the burden. In response to the 1993 survey, almost three quarters (73 percent) of respondents agreed that, “it is better to raise educational standards, even if we have to pay school fees.” Barely one quarter (27 percent) associated themselves with the view that, “It is better to have free schooling for our children, even if the quality of education is low” (see Figure 3).

By the late 1990s, however, international agencies revised donor strategy for educational development, now placing emphasis on mass access to basic schooling (World Bank 2001, World Bank 2008). As neighboring countries like Malawi (1994) and Uganda (1996) introduced universal primary education (UPE), the prospect of rescinding entry-level school fees began to enter policy debates in Zambia. Fulfilling a pledge made in the 2001 election campaign, the Mwanawasa administration adopted UPE as government policy for grades 1 to 7 of primary school in 2002.

**Figure 3: Popular Attitudes to School Fees:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



As a probable consequence of this policy shift, the pattern of public opinion on school fees abruptly changed: the majority of Zambians who had favored market pricing for high quality education through 2003 (54 percent) disappeared in favor of a new majority (55 percent) who favored free education in 2005. In a striking result from the most recent survey, however, this new preference did not last: by October 2008, Zambians again reversed themselves, with 60 percent once more supporting the pro-market position on school financing. One likely reason is that Zambians perceive declining educational quality under the UPE policy: a person’s preferences for free education are negatively correlated with his or her perceptions that the public education system suffers problems with poor teaching and overcrowded classrooms.⁶ Instead, Zambians are apparently willing to countenance the payment of school fees in return for better education. In practice, nominally “free” education is still associated with indirect costs – for example for school uniforms, books and supplies, private tuition, and PTA fees (Petrauskis and Nkunika 2006).⁷ In short, the efficacy of

the UPE policy in relieving parents of the financial burden of educating their children remains to be demonstrated.

Opposition to Institutional Reforms

If Zambians reluctantly evince pro-market attitudes toward price reforms, do they also support pro-market institutional reforms? In this case, they clearly do not. Take *civil service reform*. In its first budget, the Chiluba government made a commitment to drastically reduce the size of a public sector bloated by the profligate distribution of patronage jobs. This policy was prompted by the realization that government ministries were ineffective, undisciplined and hardly responsive to the needs of the public; personnel cutbacks were also consistent with conditions imposed by international lenders in return for promises of future debt relief. The idea was to rehabilitate run down state bureaucracies by reducing the size of the establishment and improving professionalism and efficiency. Even as some public employees would unavoidably lose their jobs, others would become better trained, paid and motivated.

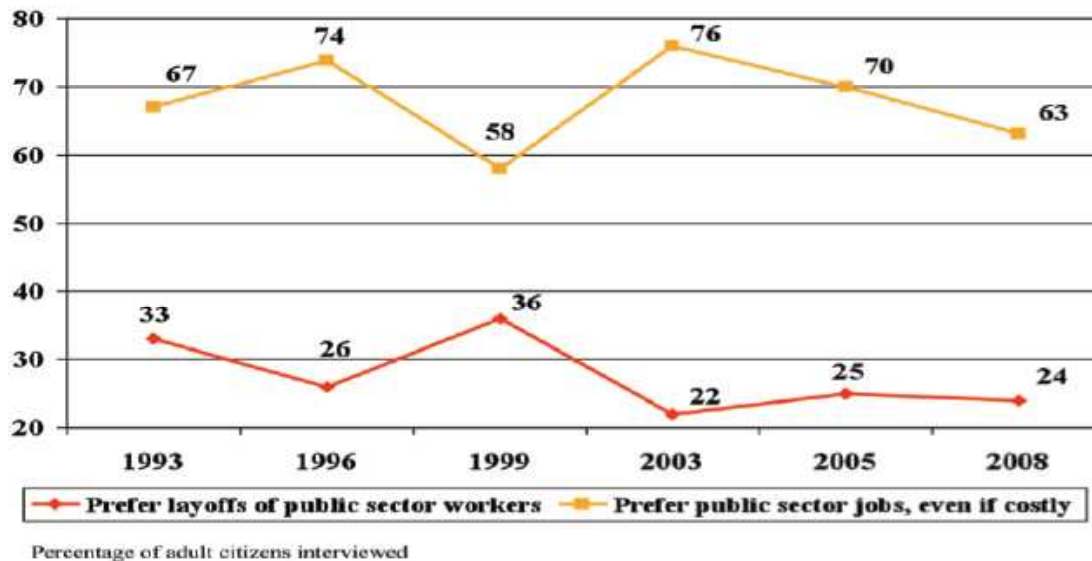
The government announced a Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) in 1993. By 2006 it had resulted in a number of achievements: a reduction in the size of the public service from 139,000 in 1997 to 104,000 in 2000 (before increasing again to 115,000 in 2004); the appointment to key technical and professional positions of competent and qualified staff; a rationalization of the salary structure; and the promulgation of new terms and conditions of service, a new disciplinary code, and new procedures for hiring and firing personnel (FNDP, 2006).

But the effort to retrench employment in the public service immediately ran into a headwind of public opposition. In 1993, two thirds of Zambians interviewed agreed that “all civil servants should keep their jobs even if paying their salaries is costly to the country”; only one third agreed that “the government cannot afford so many public employees and should lay some of them off” (See Figure 4). The reasons are not hard to find: with the government being the largest employer in the economy, and with unemployment perceived as the leading national problem, many ordinary people viewed with alarm the prospect of livelihood losses. Moreover, resistance was widespread: in 1996, individuals without a government employee in their household were no less likely to oppose the policy than individuals who were directly dependent on a regular government paycheck.

Over time, public opposition has dissolved only slightly. From a peak in 2003, when three quarters opposed civil service cutbacks, some three out of five Zambians still withheld support in 2008. And the gap on this issue between reform supporters and reform opponents widened slightly between 1993 (34 points) and 2008 (39 points).

In sum therefore, Zambians have long preferred the state to intervene actively in the economy in order to create jobs. A growing pro-state orientation comes through clearly when survey respondents are asked, “Who should take the main responsibility for providing jobs? Is it government, private business, individuals, or some combination of these providers?” In 1993, a clear majority of Zambians (57 percent) considered that the government had sole responsibility for creating jobs in their country, with a further 33 percent thinking that the government shared responsibility for job creation with private businesses and individuals. The overall proportion preferring some role for the state in job creation actually rose between 1993 and 2008 (from 90 to 95 percent). But, the proportion favoring the state *alone* began to fall (from 57 to 47 percent), with a growing proportion (from 33 to 48 percent) now recognizing job creation as a responsibility shared between the public and private sectors and with citizens themselves.

Figure 4: Popular Attitudes to Civil Service Reform:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008



In the light of popular concerns about civil service reform, it comes as no surprise that Zambians also resist the *privatization* of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), a policy that stirred up vigorous policy debate and a intermittent labor unrest. The thrust of Zambia’s privatization program, perhaps the most ambitious in sub-Saharan Africa, occurred between 1993 and 2003. More than 250 SOEs were sold to private (mostly foreign) investors, mainly in the agro-processing, manufacturing, and financial sectors (Zambia Privatization Agency, 1993, 1997 and 2001). Since copper exports are the strategic mainstay of the economy – accounting for 54 percent of export earnings in 2008 – the government was slow to cede control of the mining sector. After lengthy stop-start negotiations, the Anglo-American corporation eventually purchased the largest copper mining divisions including Nkana, Nchanga and Konkola in March 2000 (Craig 2001). But AAC pulled out of these investments in 2003 over concerns about profitability and was succeeded in 2004 by an Indian-based multinational conglomerate, Vedanta Resources. As shown in Table 3, the Government of Zambia now holds only small minority stakes in most of Zambia’s mining companies. It exercises remaining nominal control through an 86.7 percent share in the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines-Investments Holdings, a holding company (Fraser and Lungu 2008, ZCCM-IH 2009).

From the outset, and before the privatization program was fully launched, Zambians were already wary. In 1993, some six out ten concurred that, “the government should retain ownership of its factories, businesses and farms,” with only four in ten agreeing that, “it is better for the government to sell (these assets) to private companies and individuals” (See Figure 5). As the consequences of privatization became apparent – including an influx of foreign corporations and the closure of previously protected enterprises – popular dissatisfaction grew. Anti-privatization sentiment rose to a peak by 1996 (68 percent), as did the spread between pro-and anti-privatization views by 1999 (to a 37-point gap). While opinion has moderated slightly in the current decade, Zambians now oppose privatization almost as much as they shun civil service reform. Indeed, citizens who presently reject one category of institutional reform are also likely to reject the other.⁸

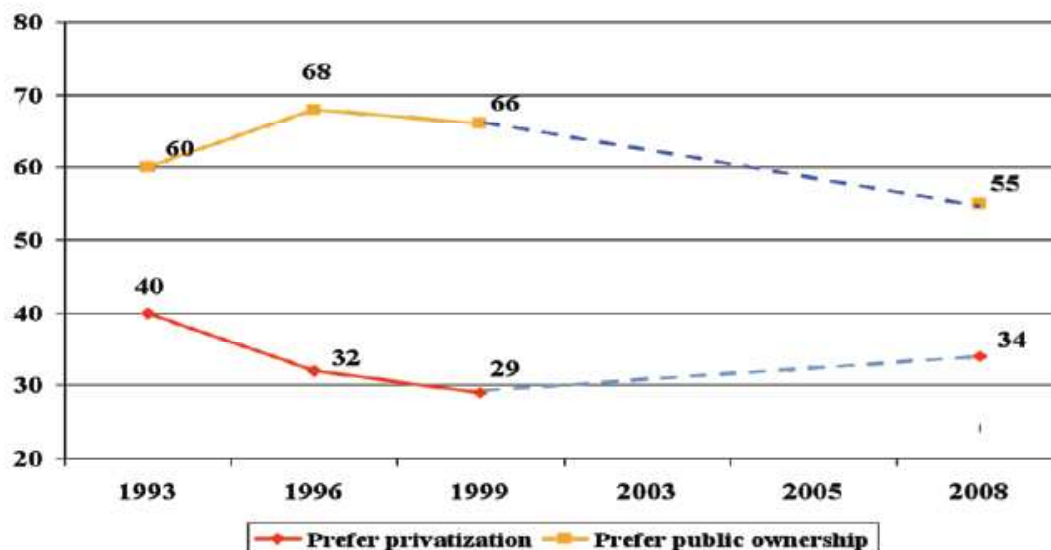
Table 3: Ownership in the Mining Sector, Zambia, 2008

Mining Company	Private Shareholder (share)	ZCCM-IH share
Mopani Copper Mines	Carlisa Investments Corporation (90%)	10%
Chambishi Metals	Enya Holdings (90%)	10%
Konkola Copper Mines	Vedanta Resources (79.4%)	20.6%
Luanshya Copper Mines	Enya Holdings (85%)	15%
NFC Africa Mining	China Non-Ferrous Metal Mining (85%)	15%
Lumwana Copper Project	Equinox Copper Ventures (95.5%)	4.5%
Kansanshi Mining	First Quantum Minerals (79.4%)	20.6%
Copper Energy Corporation	Zam-Energy (85%)	15%
Chibuluma Mines	Metorex Limited (85%)	15%

Source: ZCCM-IH Investments Profile, <http://www.zccm-ih.com.zm>.

To confirm the status of Zambian opinion toward privatization, the 2008 survey posed an alternative question: “As you may know, the government has reduced its role in the economy, for example by privatizing the mining companies. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way this policy works?” While 35 percent reported that they were satisfied (“very” or “fairly”) 62 percent reported that they were not (“not very” or “not at all”). Dissatisfaction with privatization correlates highly with an individual’s expression of opposition to the sale of government assets.⁹ And the 2008 result reflects the crystallization and deepening of anti-privatization sentiment as compared to 2002 (when 39 percent were satisfied, 51 percent were not, and 10 percent didn’t yet know).

**Figure 5: Popular Attitudes to Privatization:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



Percentage of adult citizens interviewed. Dashed line indicates missing data (no observations in 2003 and 2005)

As with the provision of public employment, however, there is trace evidence that Zambians are also recognizing that the state cannot shoulder all economic tasks. Asked who should bear the main responsibility for buying and selling copper, the same overwhelming majority of Zambians in 2008 (90 percent) as in 2002 (91 percent) cited *some* role for the state. But the proportion favoring the state *alone* fell dramatically over

this time period from a high of 76 percent to just 48 percent. In this respect, public opinion is begrudgingly granting a role in managing strategic commodities to the private sector, if not in place of the state, then at least in partnership with it.

Adjustment Fatigue

On balance, therefore, Zambians neither holistically accept nor completely reject an orthodox package of structural adjustment reforms. Instead, they prefer to pick and choose among component policies, supporting some but opposing others. In general, we have found evidence that Zambians are willing to accept price reforms that require the payment of prevailing market rates for consumer goods and education services. But we have also noted a strong streak of resistance to reforms that require the restructuring of economic institutions. By saying “no!” to job cuts in the civil service and to the sale of public corporations, people express persistent attachments to the state as the principal provider of employment.

Given this contradictory record, we wonder what overall conclusions Zambians draw about outcomes from a continuous period of economic reform. What balance of costs and benefits do they attribute to the implementation of a market-oriented policy package? In particular, do Zambians display signs of “adjustment fatigue”? In Latin America, according to Nelson,

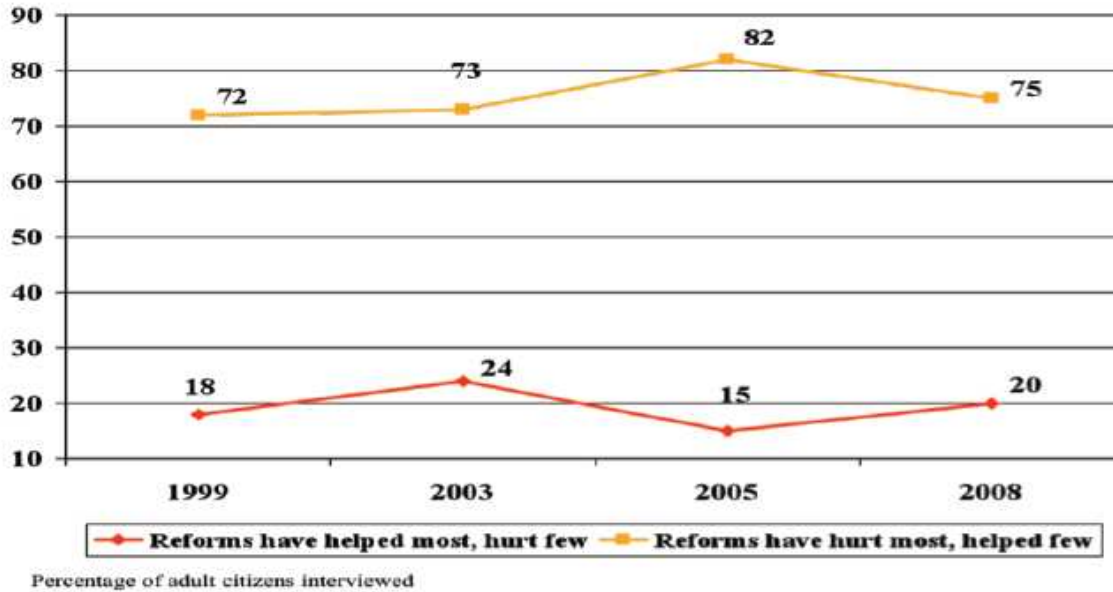
“the combination of prolonged austerity and economic liberalization...generated...sustained internal political conflict...(At minimum) continued economic stagnation or decay...destroyed popular confidence in the government’s ability to manage the economy, as well as confirmed initial skepticism of the effects of the policies urged by external agencies” (1989, 7)

Since Zambia has recently experienced growth rather than stagnation, and has encountered only mild civil unrest around economic policy issues since the 1980s,¹⁰ we do not expect to find citizens turning diametrically against a market economy in the mold of Argentinians and Venezuelans (Quispe-Agnoli 2004). But the success of populist politicians like Michael Sata, who dispense a message of international protectionism and wealth redistribution suggests that there is an audience in Zambia that is primed to try an alternative development strategy (Larmer and Fraser 2007, Cheeseman and Hinfelaar 2009).

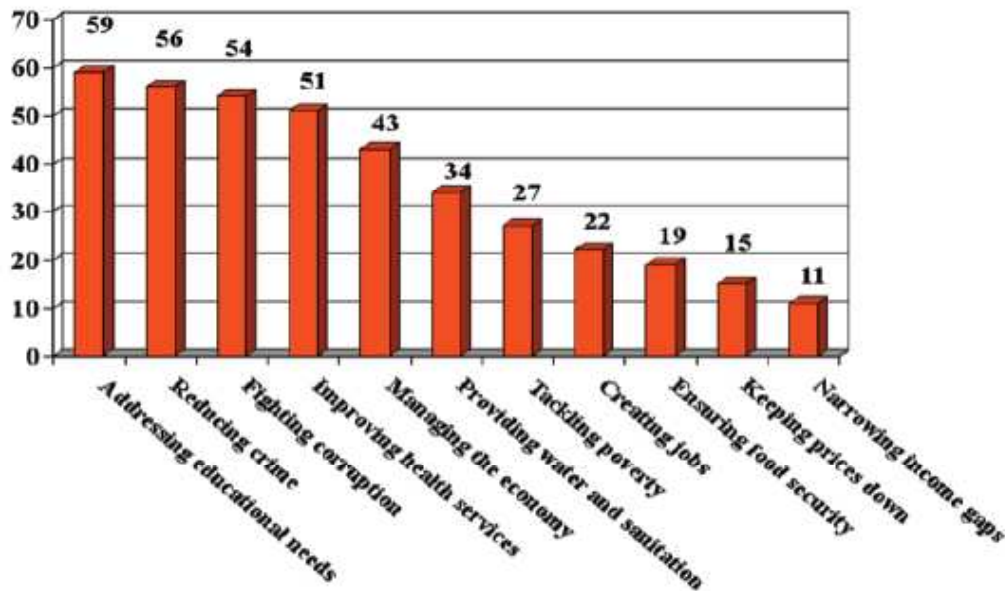
Figure 6 tracks public opinion on reform outcomes, revealing a remarkably clear and recurrent pattern. Over the course of the past decade, less than one quarter of Zambians have ever thought that, “the government’s reform policies have helped most people; only a few have suffered.” By contrast, about three quarters have consistently reported that, “the government’s economic policies have hurt most people and benefited only a few.” Writ large, this almost invariant trend can be read as a sustained overall vote of no confidence in the structural adjustment agenda.

Implied in this result is an assumption that economic reforms have negatively affected the distribution of wealth. Figure 7 further suggests that Zambians are concerned about social inequality as represented by a growing income gap between rich and poor. Asked in 2008 to evaluate government performance on a range of development tasks, Zambians draw sharp distinctions. A majority judges the government to be performing well at addressing educational needs, reducing crime, fighting corruption and improving health services. But under one half say the same about its performance at managing the economy, providing water and sanitation services, and tackling poverty. And less than one quarter approve government performance at creating jobs, ensuring food security, and controlling inflation. In important respects – especially creating jobs – these assessments reflect unsatisfied public demand for the solution of important national problems.

**Figure 6: Popular Attitudes to Reform Outcomes:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



**Figure 7: Popular Assessments of Government Performance,
Zambia 2008**

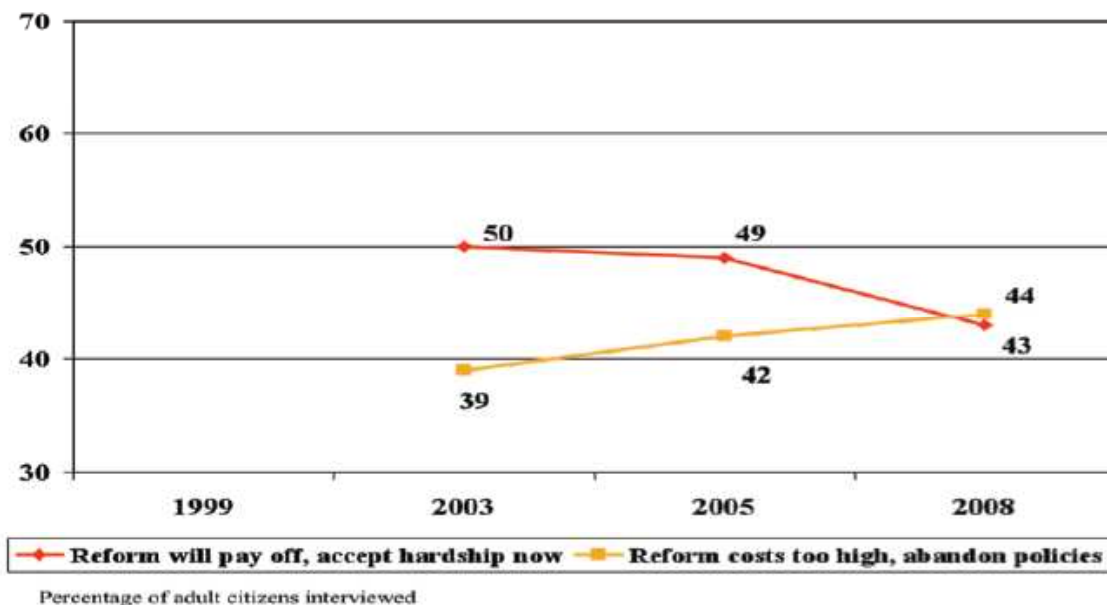


Notably, however, the government is given the lowest grade for “narrowing income gaps between the rich and the poor”; just 11 percent of Zambians think the elected authorities are performing well at this development task. In all three surveys where the question was asked (2003-2008), “narrowing income gaps” always ranked low; but, by 2005 and 2008, concerns about social inequality first joined and then displaced

“creating jobs” at the very bottom of popular performance rankings. In this light, we can understand why, over time, Zambians have attached growing importance to poverty as an important national problem (see Figure 1). Even if GDP per capita is on the rise and destitution has eased in some provinces, people apparently perceive poverty in relative as well as absolute terms and are disturbed by the unequal distribution of gains from recent economic growth.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to find a mass constituency in Zambia for a rigorous economic reform agenda. Remarkably, however, Zambians have shown a good deal of forbearance towards government’s economic policies. As Figure 8 indicates that, even though most survey respondents did not support the reform program, a slim majority (50 percent) were nonetheless willing to endure it, agreeing that, “in order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary for us to accept some hardships now.” In 2003, only a minority (39 percent) had had enough; they felt instead that, “the costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore abandon its current economic policies.” While the difference between patient and impatient citizens tightened slightly in 2005 (49 versus 42 percent), reform proponents could still claim that a plurality preferred to stick with the program. But in a substantively and statistically significant shift in 2008, slightly more Zambians (44 percent) now want the government to abandon its prevailing package of economic policies than are willing to grant more time for the government to deliver results (43 percent).¹¹ It would appear that, after almost 18 years of economic reform, most Zambians now feel the pangs of adjustment fatigue.

**Figure 8: Popular Attitudes to Economic Reform:
Trends in Public Opinion, Zambia, 1999-2008**



Towards Explanation

This paper now turns from a description of Zambian public opinion to an explanation of its origins. On the demand side, we want to know what explains the degree of popular *support* for economic reform policies. On the supply side, we are interested in accounting for the extent of popular *satisfaction* with government’s management of the economy. As discussed earlier, we hypothesize that, in making their minds up about the desirability and efficacy of economic reform, citizens will make both *economic* and *political* calculations. The remaining puzzle is which of these competing rationalities offers the better explanation.

To make popular demands operational for research purposes, we create an additive index of *support for economic reform*. It comprises the number of reform policies – consumer prices, school fees, civil service cutbacks and privatization – that individuals support.¹² The supply side indicator of *satisfaction with economic reform* is an average construct of the respondent’s opinion of how well or badly the current government is managing the economy and tackling poverty.¹³ As indicated in Figure 7, Zambians are split on the matter of overall economic management (43 percent positive) and dubious about the effectiveness of the government’s anti-poverty strategy (only 27 percent positive).¹⁴

To measure the extent to which citizens use a calculus of economic rationality, we select public opinions on four key *economic factors*: the country’s present economic condition, the individual’s present living condition, the country’s past economic condition (compared to 12 months ago), and the individual’s expected future living condition (estimated in 12 months time).¹⁵ The argument here is that citizens will reason from their own economic circumstances in calculating their stances toward reform. We expect that socio-tropic (i.e. country-level) conditions, both present and retrospective, will have more formative effects on reform attitudes than egotistic (i.e. personal) considerations. But we guess that future expectations about personal wellbeing may also have some effect.

We also select four *political factors* as indicators of political rationality. Support for democracy is a standard item used in barometer surveys worldwide to tap an individual’s ideal regime.¹⁶ Similarly, satisfaction with democracy is a familiar comparative item that asks, “overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (your country)?”¹⁷ We expect that, supportive and satisfied democrats are more likely to favor the policies implemented by a freely elected government. The third political factor is the performance of the president, which is a measure of popular perceptions of the chief political executive’s job performance over the previous year.¹⁸ Given the timing of the October 2008 survey in Zambia, respondents were asked to comment on the job performance of late President Levy Mwanawasa, who died in August 2008. As a final indicator of political rationality, we examine whether an individual stated an intention to vote for the candidate of the incumbent MMD party in the presidential election of October 30, 2008. The logic of the last two indicators is that citizens are expected to use considerations of personal and party loyalty, especially to the national patron-in-chief, in calculating whether economic policies are likely to serve their interests.

As with any multivariate analysis of survey data, controls are necessary for demographic factors. Relevant to economic reform in Zambia – substantively as well as statistically – are residential locale (urban or rural), gender, age and education. All these standard markers are included in the multivariate models that follow.

In addition, we have developed a novel indicator of the extent to which an individual has a global – as opposed to local – orientation toward the world. We call this orientation “cosmopolitanism.” It is measured by an index of five items: the first measures the number of languages an individual speaks; the remainder measure the frequency of an individual’s computer, Internet, and mobile phone use, as well as the frequency with which he or she receives money remittances from outside the country. Table 4 indicates that these five items together comprise an average *index of cosmopolitanism*: while computer use is most central to the index and multilingualism most peripheral, all nonetheless cohere into a reliable scale.¹⁹ We predict that cosmopolitan Zambians will be more open than their parochial compatriots to a market reform agenda. And, while education and cosmopolitanism are highly correlated,²⁰ they should not be conflated. Instead, we expect that even Zambians with low levels of education may be able to learn about economic reform through new forms of interaction with a globalized social environment.

Table 4: Components of Cosmopolitanism, Zambia 2008 (Pearson's R correlation matrix)

	INDEX OF COSMOPOLITANISM†	Computer	Internet	Mobile Phone	Remittances
Computer	.822***				
Internet	.807***	.892***			
Mobile Phone	.693***	.403***	.361***		
Remittances	.442***	.169***	.190***	.101**	
Languages	.439***	.105**	.100***	.252***	.085**

† A one-factor principal components solution produces a reliable 5-item index (Cronbach's alpha = .662)

*** p < .001, ** p < .01

Explaining Support for Reform

What, then, explains *support for economic reform* – limited as it is – among Zambians? Table 5 displays results of an ordinary least squares regression analysis. Explanatory factors that attain statistical significance, of which there are only three, are highlighted in bold font.

The first notable result is that, on the demand side, economic factors apparently matter little. In deciding whether they want policy reforms, Zambians seemingly make scant reference to economic conditions. The perceived condition of the national economy actually has a negative effect on support for economic reform, which is the opposite of what we expected. It seems that the better the economy is seen to be doing, the less Zambians demand reform. And this perverse result is barely statistically significant. Moreover, as inferred earlier, future expectations about personal living conditions have a more positive effect on demand for reform than any other economic factor. But this predictor falls short of statistical significance.

By contrast, a political factor is in play. If Zambians are satisfied with democracy, they are significantly more likely to want economic reforms. We interpret this result to mean that policies arrived through democratic methods are able to attract support by virtue of their procedural legitimacy. In other words, a democratically elected government is able to sell reform measures more effectively to its constituents than a government that is not so elected. This result generalizes the observation made earlier about the relative ease with which the Chiluba government withdrew maize meal subsidies without provoking the violent unrest that had always accompanied Kaunda's efforts to implement this reform. Nor did the later removal of subsidies on fertilizer and fuel provoke political unrest, though perhaps for other reasons. The constituency of fertilizer-using peasant farmers is scattered countrywide and is not well organized; and the owners of taxis, minibuses and factories can easily pass on the burden of higher fuel prices to customers. But our analysis suggests political reasoning based on felt satisfaction with democracy also plays a role.

Strikingly, a demographic factor provides the best explanation of whom among Zambians demands reform. It seems that support for market oriented policies is mainly an attribute of cosmopolitans. By far the most influential factor in the equation, cosmopolitanism has a stronger and more significant influence than either economic or political rationality. And it is distinct from education, a statistically insignificant predictor in this model. How might this influence work? We speculate that Zambians who use information and communications technology – for example, the 56 percent who say they use a mobile phone every day (see table 6) – have access to economic knowledge that helps build support for reforms. In other African countries, farmers who use mobile phones are able to gather and compare crop prices across a range of markets before deciding when and where to sell (Aker 2007, Molony 2008, Hahn and Kibora 2008). Similarly, people who maintain contacts outside their home village or neighborhood – for example through travel, remittances or exchanges with people who speak other languages – are more likely to be exposed to hegemonic debates about the “magic” of the market.

All of these results must be tempered, however, by a recognition that support for economic reform in Zambia is barely formed and difficult to explain. Even an exhaustive model with four economic, four political, and five demographic predictors accounts for a mere 3 percent of the variation in popular support for economic reform. We can only conclude that public opinion on this matter remains inchoate: political rationality and cosmopolitanism aside, there are few patterns that point to the formation of strong demands either for or against reform. Instead, Zambians of all walks of life remain undecided about the suitability of market reforms to their country's development needs.

Table 5: Support for Economic Reform, Explanatory Factors, Zambia, 2008
(Ordinary least squares regression)

	B	S.E.	Beta	Sig.
Constant	1.100	.388		.005**
ECONOMIC FACTORS				
Country's present economic condition	-.080	.040	-.077	.046*
Your present living condition	.043	.042	.040	.314
Country's economic condition 12 months ago	.029	.044	.022	.510
Your living conditions in 12 months time	.084	.043	.067	.051
POLITICAL FACTORS				
Support for democracy	.037	.065	.019	.564
Satisfaction with democracy	.117	.042	.093	.005**
Performance of the president	-.047	.050	-.031	.343
Intend to vote for incumbent party	-.043	.092	.015	.640
DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS				
Gender (female)	-.034	.074	-.015	.647
Locale (rural)	.046	.083	.020	.581
Age	-.004	.004	-.034	.297
Education	-.058	.031	-.077	.061
Cosmopolitanism	.266	.062	.183	.000***
Adjusted R square = .033				
Standard error of the estimate = 1.112				

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Table 6: Use of Information Technology, Zambia 2008 (Percentage of adult Zambians)

	Computer	Internet	Mobile Phone
Never	61	67	13
Less than once a month	10	9	3
A few times a month	12	12	8
A few times a week	9	8	20
Every day	7	4	56

Explaining Satisfaction with Reform

Whether or not they explicitly called for it, Zambians received a strong dose of market reform between 1991 and 2008. This is not to say that the Chiluba and Mwanawasa administrations fulfilled all the policy conditions required by aid donors or fully moved the country from a planned to an open economy. Because

the Zambian government encountered obstacles and engineered reversals during the implementation of the economic adjustment program, caution is warranted in discussing popular evaluations of the supply of reform. For example, a Fertilizer Support Programme (FSP), launched during the 2002-3 agricultural season, reintroduced subsidies and required smallholder farmers to form marketing cooperatives. In the run-up to the 2006 election, the MMD government broke the public budget to disburse funds through the Food Reserve Agency to buy up a bumper maize crop. And subsidies for fuel were reintroduced in 2008 to offset the escalating international price of crude oil. Thus, in commenting on their government's performance in liberalizing the economy, Zambians are undoubtedly judging the product of a partial and incomplete reform process.

With this caveat in mind, we now seek to explain *satisfaction with economic reform* using the same method, format and structure of explanatory factors as before. Regression results are shown in Table 7.

The supply-side model is more powerful since it explains one quarter of the variance in popular satisfaction with the government's management of the reform program. Moreover, as predicted, both economic and political rationality play formative roles in shaping this aspect of public opinion. And, whereas cosmopolitanism heightens satisfaction, rural residential location is even more influential. We discuss each explanatory strand in turn.

First, economic factors. As predicted, an individual's socio-tropic assessments of the health of the macro-economy strongly and significantly shape his or her satisfaction with reform. The better the country's perceived economic condition, the more likely is a Zambian to say that the government is doing a good job at managing the national economy and alleviating poverty. This rational calculus rests primarily on the country's current economic status, though evaluations of past economic conditions and expectations of future personal living standards play modest reinforcing roles. But the strongest (and only significant) effect is a direct line of economic reasoning from country-level economic conditions to satisfaction with reform. In this light, the dramatic contraction of the world economy in 2009, which occurred after fieldwork for the Afrobarometer Round 4 survey was complete, is likely to spill over into Zambia in the form of future dissatisfaction with economic reform.

Second, Table 7 indicates that political rationality matters too. Three of four political factors have strong, positive and statistically significant connections to popular approval of reform outcomes. Zambians who are satisfied with democracy, or who approve of the president's performance, or who vote for MMD are all likely to approve of the government's track record at economic management. It is insufficient for citizens to simply prefer democracy in the abstract as an ideal regime; in Zambia, there are too many professed democrats who say they support democracy but who disapprove of the consequences of the reform program, such as deepening inequality. Instead, to endorse reform outcomes, citizens must also express approval of the actual performance of the democratic regime, the incumbent party, and the top political leader. Indeed, they use approval of these actors and institutions as heuristic shortcuts in arriving at favorable evaluations of economic reform.

But which matters more: economic or political rationality? Not shown in Table 7 is the amount of variance explained by each bloc of factors. When regressed alone on satisfaction with economic reform, the four economic variables explain over 16 percent of variance; the four political variables exactly 12 percent; and the five demographic controls under 4 percent. This sub-analysis suggests that economic rationality is probably more important than political rationality in a citizen's calculation about the costs and benefits of reform. But it also confirms that a supply-side explanation is deficient without reference to *both* economic *and* political reasoning. And it hammers home the necessity of studying reform processes within an interdisciplinary political economy framework that makes room for, and grants credence to, both types of

rationality.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Economic Reform Explanatory Factors, Zambia, 2008

(Ordinary least squares regression)

	B	S.E.	Beta	Sig.
Constant	.084	.231		.715
ECONOMIC FACTORS				
Country's present economic condition	.206	.024	.294	.000***
Your present living condition	.013	.026	.017	.624
Country's economic condition 12 months ago	.041	.026	.047	.118
Your living conditions in 12 months time	.030	.026	.035	.247
POLITICAL FACTORS				
Support for democracy	.022	.039	.017	.567
Satisfaction with democracy	.096	.025	.111	.000***
Performance of the president	.119	.030	.111	.000***
Intend to vote for incumbent party	.355	.055	.190	.000***
DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS				
Gender (female)	-.002	.044	-.001	.962
Locale (rural)	.182	.050	.115	.000***
Age	.001	.002	.009	.770
Education	.028	.019	.053	.140
Cosmopolitanism	.093	.037	.095	.012*
Adjusted R square = .252				
Standard error of the estimate = .660				

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Third and finally, we consider demographic controls. As indicated, we again find that cosmopolitans are champions of reform, being more willing than parochials to approve reform outcomes. One possible mechanism is that the liberalization of exchange control regulations has eased the flow of foreign currency remittances from Zambians working abroad, thus inducing a gratified response from recipients. Another possible connection concerns the liberalization of the mobile phone market, which has not only enabled Zambians to communicate more easily, but also helped to build a constituency for market reforms. In Zambia, where there are 73 languages (7 of which are considered to be the main ones), the ability to speak more than one language provides an opportunity for accessing perceptions on reform initiatives across language barriers. Once again, we confirm that cosmopolitanism substitutes for education, since education is not significant in Table 7. The spread of mobile phones is apparently having a democratizing effect in which individuals with less education are able to use new technologies to learn about economic reform and formulate their own opinions about its outcomes. But the use of computers and the Internet probably presupposes a certain level of formal education that has yet to become widespread in Zambia.

We cannot close without noting the strong effect of residential locale on economic satisfaction. Other things being equal, rural dwellers are 18 percent more likely than urban dwellers to express satisfaction with the reform program. We can speculate about this highly significant result. Perhaps rural dwellers have benefited from market reforms, for example as farmers encounter better rural-urban terms of trade or improvements in the delivery of agricultural services. During the 2005-6 farming season, a 65 percent increase was recorded

in output of maize, with the benefits of increased sales accruing to farmers, including smallholders. Moreover, there have been greater increases in informal employment in the agricultural sector as compared to the non-agricultural sector.

Alternatively, perhaps rural dwellers know little about the national economic reform program and simply go along with whatever policies the government proposes. Certainly there is evidence that, like other long-standing ruling parties in Africa, MMD has fallen back on a rural base of support. By targeting subsidies under the Fertilizer Support Program at small farmers in rural cooperatives, much as UNIP did before, the ruling party resorted to tried and true patronage techniques. Moreover, in the run-up to the 2008 presidential election, Rupiah Banda, then Acting President and MMD candidate for the presidency, announced a reduction of 75 percent on the price of fertilizers. The Afrobarometer's 2008 pre-election survey indicated that MMD would do well in rural Northwestern, Western and Eastern provinces and fare badly in the urban Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces, predictions later borne out in the official election results (Electoral Commission of Zambia, 2008).

Conclusions

We have reviewed popular attitudes to economic policy reform in Zambia from 1993 to 2008, a period marked by political and economic liberalization and by hints of economic recovery and improved public management. Yet, despite such positive objective changes, adult Zambians have yet to subjectively embrace an orthodox agenda of economic policy reform.

Most clearly, we observe fixed public opposition to institutional reforms that aim at reducing the role of the state in the economy. In 2008 as in 1993, three out of five Zambians opposed the privatization and civil service reform. These opinions were accompanied by a rise in mass concern about unemployment as the nation's "most important problem." At the same time, however, we detect a growing public recognition that the state cannot create jobs on its own and that private individuals and firms make important contributions too.

This study also reveals that initial public tolerance of price reforms is wearing thin. To be sure, a majority of Zambians, after briefly flirting with support for universal free schooling, once again express willingness to pay for higher educational standards. But, whereas a majority also once accepted market pricing for consumer goods, only a minority takes this stance today. Indeed, we characterize the major trend in economic opinion toward in Zambia as one of growing adjustment fatigue. Most Zambians are convinced that the government's economic policies have hurt more people than they have helped and have contributed to widening income inequalities. For the first time, a slim plurality of Zambians is now ready to abandon the reform program.

In explaining the sources of these economic opinions, we isolate three distinctive factors in ascending order of importance. First, rural dwellers, who may have benefited from recent reversals of market policies in agriculture, say they are more satisfied with policy performance than their counterparts who live in urban areas. Second, offsetting this demographic tilt, we find that Zambians who have shrugged off local ties in favor of a cosmopolitan worldview – typified by their use of mobile phones and the Internet – are also inclined to support a market-led economy.

Thirdly and most importantly, we find that the development of popular economic opinion depends on political, as well as economic, calculations. Obviously, the public's views on the performance of the economy shape popular evaluations of the official policy regime. But, if Zambians also feel politically close to the president and ruling party – which we interpret in terms of access to patronage – then they are more likely to accept policy reform and think that reforms are working well.

What are the policy implications of this cluster of attitudes? How can reformers within Zambia build a political constituency that will sustain a market economy in the long run? Given that popular attitudes to economic reform are highly instrumental, there is no substitute for economic performance. From a public opinion perspective, the acid test for any policy measure is whether it generates well-paid formal sector jobs in urban areas, a requirement that is unlikely to be met without infusions of private investment capital. To the extent that new jobs require the use of information technology, their creation will, in turn, encourage the emergence of cosmopolitan reform coalitions that will build a base of support for a market economy.

At the same time, greater policy attention is required to poverty alleviation and income distribution. Governments can lift up the poor and effectively regulate the excesses of private markets, however, only if the state apparatus is first reformed. Thus, despite popular resistance, the Zambian government should persist with efforts to streamline and professionalize the civil service. Developmental outcomes will only be obtained when Zambians can put more faith in the universal application of a rule of law than in the particularistic rewards of a patronage system. If state institutions were competent and trustworthy, a blanket policy of privatization would be unnecessary and could be replaced with various kinds of public-private partnership. The global financial crisis of 2009 has already put an end to the “Washington consensus” in favor of this sort of emergency experimentation. Under these circumstances, there is now opportunity for international donors and lenders to recommend policies that converge with the expressed preferences of Zambian citizens

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Endnotes

¹ Afrobarometer surveys are conducted in up to 20 African countries on a regular cycle. Because the instrument asks a standard set of questions, countries can be systematically compared and trends in public attitudes can be tracked over time. Coordination for Afrobarometer activities is provided by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP-Benin) and IDASA (South Africa). Data is collected by national partners in each African country. In Zambia, fieldwork was led by the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zambia in conjunction with Steadman Inc., a market research firm based in Nairobi, Kenya. Support services are provided by Michigan State University and the University of Cape Town.

²² The Afrobarometer Round 4 survey in Zambia was based on a national probability sample of adult Zambians (18 years or older) distributed proportionally across all nine of the country's provinces. Based on Central Statistical Office population projections for 2008, a multi-stage, stratified area cluster sampling approach was used. Interviews were conducted with 1,200 respondents; but 99 cases were discarded due to low quality of interviews, yielding a final sample of 1101 persons (and a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level). The respondents were balanced in terms of gender and had a median age of 29 years. Most of the respondents (63 percent) were rural residents whilst the remainder (37 percent) were urban-based. According to respondents' preferences, the interviews were conducted in English (the official language) or in a local language (Chinyanja, Chibemba, Chitonga, Silozi or Kikaonde).

³ The study was conducted on behalf of the Zambia Democratic Governance Project of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The methodology included both focus groups and exploratory surveys. Some questionnaire items now included in Afrobarometer surveys were first tested in surveys in Zambia in 1993 and 1996. Results from this research are reported include Michael Bratton and Beatrice Liatto-Katundu, "A Focus Group Assessment of Political Attitudes in Zambia," *African Affairs*, 93, October 1994, 535-563 and Michael Bratton, "Political Participation in a New Democracy: Institutional Considerations from Zambia," *Comparative Political Studies*, 32, 5, August 1999, 549-588. See also the *Political Reform Series* at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/archives.html>.

⁴ The malaria incidence rate per 1,000 fell from 400 in 2000 to just above 200 in 2004. Deaths caused by malaria dropped from 9,367 in 2001 to 4,765 in 2004. This progress is mainly attributed to the shift in treatment policy from chloroquine to artemisinin-based therapy (Coartem) and improvements in the laboratory services (UNDP 2007).

⁵ As with all policy preferences discussed in this section, the questions were posed in a balanced, "forced choice" format using mutually contradictory statements, which we find a more reliable metric than a univalent Likert scale. The interviewer read both statements to the respondent and asked, "which statement is closest to your view." Responses were recorded on a five-point scale, allowing for "agree" or "agree very strongly" with either statement and a middle category for "agree with neither" and "don't know." We calculate descriptive statistics by aggregating the "agree" and "agree strongly" responses to the pro-reform, market-oriented option.

⁶ Pearson's $r = -.142^{***}$ and $-.087^{***}$ respectively. Since the 2008 survey did not ask about particular aspects of service delivery, we used 2005 data for these estimates.

⁷ Pearson's $r = -.153^{***}$

⁸ Pearson's $r = .115^{***}$

⁹ Pearson's $r = .330^{***}$

¹⁰ The main exception is sporadic work stoppages on selected mining compounds and in educational and health institutions, including the country's biggest referral hospital (the University Teaching Hospital). These disputes have usually been resolved through negotiation.

¹¹ Due to the margin of sampling error inherent in probability surveys, patient and impatient respondents are statistically indistinguishable in 2008.

¹² The index of *support for economic reform* ranges across a 5-point scale from 0 to 4 policies.

¹³ Managing the economy and tackling poverty are correlated at Pearson's $r = .627^{***}$

¹⁴ The construct of *satisfaction with economic reform* also employs a 5-point scale from “very badly” through “fairly badly,” “don’t know,” and “fairly well” to “very well.”

¹⁵ All economic factors are also measured on 5-point scales: the first two factors from “very bad” to “very good”; the second two factors from “much worse” to “much better.”

¹⁶ The question asks: “Which of these statements is closest to your own opinion? 1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. 2. In some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferable. 3. For someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have.” Those choosing statement 1 are held to support democracy.

¹⁷ On a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all satisfied” through “not very satisfied,” “don’t know,” and “fairly satisfied” to “very satisfied.”

¹⁸ On a 5-point scale from “strongly disapprove” to “strongly approve.”

¹⁹ Cronbach's alpha = .662

²⁰ Pearson's $r = .610^{***}$

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