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SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTROL IN URBAN KENYA: THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTROL SCALE IN NAIROBI, MOMBASA, AND KISUMU

by

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For Velma, my sister and S-P.

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Sociopolitical Control in Urban Kenya:

The Sociopolitical Control Scale in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu

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Abstract

There is popular belief among Kenyans that their government inappropriately distributes resources unequally between different regions in Kenya. A modified version of Zimmerman and Zahniser's (1991) *Sociopolitical Control Scale* (SPCS) tested for differences in perceived *sociopolitical control* (SPC) between residents of Kenya's three biggest cities, Nairobi (n = 49), Mombasa (n = 50), and Kisumu (n = 51). Hypotheses were based on expected levels of *leadership competence* (LC) and *policy control* (PC), two sub-scales that combine to create SPC. Contrary to the hypothesis, results indicated no significant differences in levels of SPC among the cities. Results could indicate a shared urban culture throughout these cities, or could be due to methodological issues. Suggestions for creating a Kenya-specific SPCS are outlined.

Sociopolitical Control in Urban Kenya: The Sociopolitical Control Scale in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu

In psychological literature, empowerment is commonly defined as a process by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their own lives and an understanding of their environment (Peterson, Lowe, Hughey, Reid, Zimmerman et al., 2006; Rollero, Tartaglia, de Piccoli, & Ceccarini, 2009; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). While empowerment may be explored at many different levels, *psychological empowerment* (PE) is the expression of empowerment at the individual level (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988) and is critically important to the functioning of any society, but especially democratic ones (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001). Across the world, nations striving to build or maintain democracies rely on the participation of their citizens in the democratic process, and thus also depend on their PE, which affects the ways in which, and the extent to which their citizens involve themselves in national politics. Outlined by Zimmerman (1990, 1995), PE can be organized into a network of three interrelated components: *intrapersonal, interactional*, and *behavioral*.

In a political context, the intrapersonal component involves notions of competence, efficacy, and mastery; the interactional component includes critical awareness and understanding of sociopolitical environment, and the behavioral component refers to actions intended to directly affect outcomes (Peterson et al., 2006). Though conceptually simple, this interconnected network becomes quite complex when applied to nations still working to achieve a stable democratic government. Here, citizens must constantly modify their interactions with their environment to match dynamic social and governmental norms and expectations. This, in turn, makes it difficult for them to

effectively influence the governmental policy that affects them, and for government to effectively influence the behavior of its citizens (Devas & Grant, 2003). This is currently a topic of major concern in Kenya, whose government is currently taking steps to decentralize power to citizens who know what they want, but who may or may not necessarily be ready to take on such responsibility. In order to understand Kenya's current cultural and political context, it is important to first review the country's past.

Issues in Kenya- Past and Present

Before Kenya's independence in 1963, British colonists actively worked to divide groups along ethnic and geographic lines. In an effort to create a strong agricultural sector and maintain power, British rulers transformed what had previously been relatively fluid and contextual identities into static and tribal identities that were self-sufficient, closed, and linguistically and ethnically homogenous (Ogot, 1995). British colonists further separated these tribes by geography and function and banned any attempts at inter-ethnic cooperation which, in turn, fed into notions of tribal identity and forced the Kenyan population to develop locally restricted ethnic associations and trade (Devas & Grant, 2003). Thus, as Kenya became independent, each Kenyan's identity was tied to a tribe, a particular geographic area, and whatever level of wealth was afforded by the natural resources of that land.

Post-independence Kenya can be characterized as a game of tug-of-war of ethnicity, land, and wealth. As Kenya transitioned to becoming an independent state in the early 1960's, the government was run centrally under the Kikuyu tribe to whom the British had left power, fertile land, and profitable business, while the other 41 tribes suffered the consequences of corrupt distribution of resources (Weber, 2010). When Moi,

the next president took office in 1978, new policy still encouraged discrimination along ethnic lines and provided resources primarily to the people and geographic areas associated with his tribe, the Kalenjin (Weber, 2010). Resources related to infrastructure, education, and health among other things, were perpetually tied to the tribes and therefore individuals with the most wealth and political clout, and the areas in which they live. Though efforts had already been made to begin to decentralize the government to include more local governance, it was primarily after ethnic tensions exploded in Kenya's 2007 post-election violence that these efforts received priority. According to a joint report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission and Social and Public Accountability Network, the violence is largely due to "inequality in the allocation of benefits from the available national resources, compounded by corruption and impunity, which aggravated inequality and imbalances." (*Harmonization*, 2010). Thus began an era of transition for Kenya, as it began to undergo various reforms, including implementing a new constitution in 2010, centered around improving equitable distribution of resources and basic human rights, regardless of provincial affiliation.

A central issue in this era of transition is citizen engagement in local decision-making (*Harmonization*, 2010; Mitullah, 2010), which is dependent on (a) the availability of political contexts in which average Kenyans can give their opinions on relevant issues and (b) the citizen's decision to take part in such forums. Reports by credible sources show that the decentralized funds set up by the government do, indeed, have avenues available for citizen participation, and that local staff for those funds are open to more citizen engagement (*Harmonization*, 2010), though the reports also state a need for more public participation. Indeed, Kenyans surveyed across the country are discontented with

the way local government has been run, and with the amount of say that ordinary Kenyans have in the decisions made on the local level (Mitullah, 2010).

These findings are elaborated on in a study performed by Afrobarometer (*Round 4,* 2008). Based on a nationally representative random sample of 1200 Kenyans of voting age, this survey included data regarding citizens' attitudes on democracy, markets, and civil society in Kenya. This study indicated that Kenyans saw many problems in their local government, but feel extremely limited in the actions they can take to solve those problems. Despite such pessimistic views, 59 percent of respondents felt that they would be "somewhat" or "very likely" to get a member of local council to listen to concerns about important local matters if they got together with others to do so, and 59 percent indicated that voters should be responsible for making sure the councilors did their jobs. Notwithstanding, 64 percent of respondents had not attempted to make contact with a local councilor in the past year.

Among other noteworthy findings were those related to trust and corruption among local councilors and national political figures with over half of respondents consistently reporting trust levels of "not at all" or "just a little" for various local and national political positions. Prompts about corruption of local and national officers and electoral officials drew positive responses (indicating corruption) from over 40 percent of respondents. Nationally, Kenyans seem to be aware of some opportunities to participate in local government, though their responses indicate incredibly pessimistic views of their ability to actually make their voices heard. However, the ways in which this varies between regions of the country and local administrations have not yet been addressed.

I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with Kenyans of voting age in Kenya's three most populous cities, Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa, which also serve as the country's administrative centers (*Harmonization*, 2010; Obudho, 1986). In those interviews corruption and lack of trust were consistently brought up by participants when discussing political matters. Further discussion revealed that these were themes that permeate everyday life, from relations with neighbors to clubs at the university, and that highlight lines of ethnicity and socioeconomic status. However, while corruption in these forms could not be avoided, political corruption largely could, and served as a deterrent from participation in government altogether. All informants independently attributed violence (this includes everyday crime and political violence) and lack of social services (including services related to health, education, employment, infrastructure, and poverty reduction) to corruption in the government. Moreover, seven participants said outright that because of risks associated with political affiliation, and lack of benefits offered by the government in general, they actively avoided any direct relationship with the government (local vs. national was not specified).

All participants reported general distaste for dealings with the government, though the degree to which this was indicated varied by region. Of the seven participants noted above, for example, five were residents of Nairobi, where political violence is highest among the three cities. Nairobi residents also mentioned that despite the risks, because of the still highly centralized government, all influential politicians had a residence in Nairobi, and spent a great deal of time there. When asked about the average Kenyan's ability to influence politics, all residents of Nairobi interviewed mentioned the importance of ethnicity, and corresponding benefits in governmental money and political

power among the powerful few. All residents of Nairobi also mentioned the wide gaps between the power of the few rich and many poor in everyday life. Among residents of Kisumu, on the other hand, violence was not mentioned, and the socioeconomic gap was only mentioned once, and in reference to a comparison between Nairobi's wealth relative to Kisumu. Lack of basic health facilities and infrastructure was of concern for three of the five interviewees. They indicated that this should be the role of the government, but that in most cases, local residents made do based on their own means. Universally, lack of government support was replaced by other groups and support structures, though type and degree of importance in individuals' everyday lives varied with region; religious organizations and self-help groups were highly important in Kisumu, whereas informal business held much sway in Mombasa and Nairobi. Still, all participants interviewed indicated that if effective, more support from the government would be helpful.

Sociopolitical Control (SPC)

The information provided from public attitude surveys and the above interviews indicates that Kenyans as a whole are unwilling to participate in political decision-making because they feel their voices will not be heard, but that the form and extent to which this is the case is variable. In the context of psychology, attitudes about the individual's influence in politics can be described in terms of *sociopolitical control* (SPC). A critical element of the intrapersonal component of PE (Peterson, et al., 2006), SPC represents individuals' beliefs about their capabilities in social and political systems (Paulhus, 1983; Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). It concerns their self-perceptions of their ability to organize a group of people (Smith & Propst, 2001) and influence policy decisions in a community (Itzhaky & York, 2003). In the literature on empowerment,

SPC is positively correlated with political participation (Christens, Speer, & Peterson, 2011; Itzhaky & York, 2000; Itzhaky & York, 2003; Peterson et al., 2006; Rollero, Tartaglia, de Piccoli & Ceccarini, 2009).

Much of the literature on SPC uses the Sociopolitical Control Scale (SPCS) developed by Zimmerman & Zahniser (Peterson et al., 2006). Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991) clarified connections and relationships between various concepts and measures related to PE and SPC. The original SPCS drew on items from 10 relevant instruments including political efficacy, perceived competence, locus of control, and sense of mastery, and ultimately contained 17 items that were conceptually relevant to SPC and PE (Peterson et al., 2006). The factor analysis that Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991) performed yielded two subscales: *Leadership Competence* (LC) which reflects the extent to which people feel that they are leaders, and *Policy Control* (PC) which refers to the individual's perception of the impact that his or her action has on political processes (Tartaglia, de Piccoli, & Ceccarini, 2009). Though the two subscales of SPC had high internal validity in original studies, the participants in the original studies testing the SPCS were all white, middle class American citizens (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). Indeed, Zimmerman (1995) emphasizes that the SPCS is not necessarily a globally valid measure, and that there is much need for further research on the SPCS in other contexts.

A few studies have since explored the SPCS in countries other than the United States, and have found differences between LP and PC regarding factors including decision-making (Itzhaky & York, 2000), action, and sense of community (Tartaglia, de Piccoli, & Ceccarini, 2009). In a study where participants were working-class residents of Israel, Itzhaky and York (2003) determined that LC shows more initiative and skills as a

personal resource without necessarily alluding to the individual's belief in his or her ability to influence policy. PC, on the other hand, was correlated with a strong network of friends and acquaintances, and mastery of politics. In general, they surmise, LC is indicative of more internal factors while PC is more external. When these ideas are applied to Kenya's current political context, it makes sense that similar findings may be anticipated. In a culture where citizens feel that political control rests in the hands of pre-determined affiliations such as ethnicity, it follows that patterns regarding ethnicity will also affect levels of perceived PC, just as social network was correlated with PC in the above study. Because Kenyans feel that those with low levels of PC often have their most basic needs neglected by the government, they have no choice but to fend for themselves, a process in which skills would be valued, and which would then be reflected in high levels of perceived LC.

SPC in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu

As the Kenyan national government looks for more citizen participation among its local authorities, it is important to understand the ways in which citizens' SPC varies between locales; the present study compares factors related to SPC in Kenya's three biggest cities: Nairobi, Momabsa, and Kisumu. As Kenya's capital, Nairobi is the center of governmental dealings, many businesses, and is a place where Kenya's richest and most powerful spend their time regardless of their ethnicity, resulting in a concentration of good infrastructure and social services (*Harmonization*, 2010). However, as interviewees emphasize, Nairobi is also home to many impoverished Kenyans with limited access to the benefits of sharing a city with such wealth.

As the hub of all national political offices, it would make sense that levels of PC in Nairobi would be quite high; however, because Kenyans feel that political power is reserved for the few elite of a certain socioeconomic and ethnic status, levels of perceived PC are hypothesized to be mid-range. Levels of perceived LC, on the other hand, are hypothesized to be high because of the nature of the work of both the elite and the poor residents. Because politics and many successful business are centered in Nairobi, citizens involved in such activities are likely to be responsible for managing others, which would lead to high perceived LC. In contrast, Nairobi's poor are forced to provide themselves with basic necessities such as informal employment, which would also foster high levels of perceived LC. With levels of PC anticipated to be moderate and LC to be high, Nairobi's overall SPC is hypothesized to be high.

Historically, Mombasa has been an economically important city in Kenya, as its port and more recently tourism, have been a major source of national income and employment (Ogot, 1995). However, while Nairobi is a hub for business *and* politics, Mombasa holds much less political clout than the capital. While Mombasa has regional offices for many governmental departments, multiple residents of Mombasa indicated that in order to achieve most government-related tasks, travel to the Nairobi offices was almost always required. Given these perceptions and the lack political sway of Mombasa's primary ethnic group, the Swahili, it is hypothesized that PC will be low. Interviews with residents of Mombasa indicated perceptions of a moderately sized middle class associated with Mombasa's tourist industry, minimizing the likelihood for the same kind of coping behavior necessary for Nairobi's poor. Combined with moderate levels of

infrastructure and social services, LC is hypothesized to be low. Low levels of both PC and LC are hypothesized to together yield low levels of SPC.

Historically Kenya's third largest city, Kisumu, has been associated with the Luo ethnic group and geographic location near Lake Victoria, which have been only moderately influential to the rest of Kenya (Ogot, 1995). This historical context has left the city without many of the resources afforded to Nairobi and Mombasa which, residents of Kisumu say, leaves them far from both the benefits and the drawbacks of the political spotlight. While they face less ethnic conflict than the other two cities, they also lack governmental resources devoted to cities more important to those in power. As such, PC among residents of Kisumu is hypothesized to be low. On the other hand, participants interviewed mentioned the importance of politically independent religious and self-help groups, which they said filled the holes left by the government. As such, levels of LC are hypothesized to be high, mirroring patterns hypothesized for those neglected by the government in Nairobi. Together, PC and LC in Kisumu are hypothesized to achieve a moderate level of SPC. Overall, SPC in Nairobi is hypothesized to be significantly higher than SPC Mombasa, while levels of SPC in Kisumu are hypothesized to fall between Nairobi and Mombasa.

Method

Participants

The present study is based on data collected from a sample of 150 participants that were residents of Nairobi (n = 49), Mombasa (n = 50), or Kisumu (n = 51). In total, participants identified with 15 different ethnicities. 22.7% identified as Luo (n = 34), 16% identified as Kikuyu (n = 24), 12.7% identified as Swahili (n = 19), and 10.7% identified

as Akamba (n = 16). All participants had some religious affiliation, most commonly Christianity (69.3%) and Islam (20%). Participants most commonly spoke Kiswahili at home (n = 80), as compared to those who most commonly spoke Mother-tongue (n = 32) or English (n = 37) at home. Age of participants ranged from 20-51 (M = 30.0, sd = 8.14).

Level of education of the participants ranged from not having completed primary school to having completed post-graduate school, with 52% of participants having completed college/university (n = 78). 42.7% of participants reported having consistent employment (n = 64), and average income was 11278.23 Kenya Shillings (KSH) per week (sd = 18039.42) (at the time of data collection, 1 USD was roughly equivelant to 86 KSH).

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling in centrally located public spaces such as parks, public transportation stops, and leisure areas. Participants were recruited primarily during midday and early evening during the week, and throughout the day on weekends in order to include participants regardless of working hours. All participants provided informed consent, and no compensation was given for participation.

Materials

Participants responded to a survey that included questions regarding culturally appropriate sociodemographic data, perceived sociopolitical control (SPC), and behavioral and interactional data relevant to sociopolitical empowerment. A translator was available to read and explain all materials in the national language of Kiswahili and in English. Basic demographic questions included, but were not limited to, age, ethnicity, gender, education level and income. In addition, there were demographic questions that

related to ethnic views of power including number of wives or co-wives, language spoken most at home, and views on male circumcision and adulthood. All sociodemographic questions were approved by a local professor at the University of Nairobi.

A modified version of Zimmerman and Zahniser's (1991) 17-item Sociopolitical Control Scale (SPCS) was used to evaluate levels of SPC. Peterson et al. (2006) found that method bias from the negatively worded items in the SPCS had a significant effect on the factor structure of the scale, and revised the SPCS to avoid the bias, creating the SPCS-R. The current study utilized a modified version of the SPCS-R based on results from a pilot test that was conducted with 10 Kenyans and suggestions from local professors. The modified SPCS-R had a Chronbach's Alpha of .675 and included six items from a subscale that measured LC (Chronbach's Alpha of .581) and eight items from a subscale that measured PC (Chronbach's Alpha of .645). All items were rated on a 1-4 Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (4). LC and PC scores were created by averaging the responses given to each subscale, respectively. SPC was created by averaging all SPC items. The LC subscale included items such as *I am often a leader in groups*, and *I like trying new things that are challenging to me.* The PC subscale included items such as *People like me are generally well qualified to participate in political activity in our country*, and *Most public officials would listen to me*. Modifications of the SPCS-R included changes in wording (*government* to *authority*), deletion of confusing items, and references to local current evens (for example, *With the new constitution there are plenty of ways for people like me to have a say in what the government does*).

The survey also included multiple items related to behavioral and interpersonal empowerment in the context of SPC. Behavioral items included questions such as *How often do you go to group meetings outside of work (i.e. church, prayer group, chama, sports, NGO meetings, etc)?*. Interpersonal items related to the extent to which participants were aware of, and understood current events and political issues. Examples of interpersonal questions include *How often do you read the newspaper?* And *How often do you understand the articles you read?*. See Appendix for all survey materials.

Design

This study was designed to test a one-way ANOVA, in which the dependent variable was SPC and the independent variable was city of residency (Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu). It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between SPC levels of Nairobi and Mombasa, with no significant difference between Kisumu and either city.

Procedure

Participants were surveyed by the researcher and research assistant at the centrally located public spaces where they were recruited. The researcher worked closely with a local research assistant who had been trained about research procedures. The researcher and research assistant approached individuals resting at recruitment sites and asked in Kiswahili if they would like to take part in a college survey. Individuals that expressed interest in participation were then asked if they were more comfortable participating in English or Kiswahili, and were then read a copy of the informed consent. The researcher and research assistant clarified questions about participation and consent, and assured individuals that participation was voluntary before asking them to sign or fingerprint a

copy of the informed consent. All communication took place in the participant's preferred language. The survey prompts were read to participants and responses were filled out by the researcher and research assistant to include individuals regardless of level of literacy. The survey took between five and ten minutes per person to complete. Clarification about questions was provided to individuals who did not understand any items. All questions regarding the researcher, research assistant, or content of the survey were answered after the survey was complete.

Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on participants' perceived sociopolitical control. Contrary to the hypothesis, the analysis was non-significant, $F(2, 146) = .221$, $p = .802$. Comparisons indicated that levels of perceived sociopolitical control did not vary significantly between cities. Means and standard deviations for each city are shown in *Table 1*. For purposes of comparison, values of responses were recoded to a 5-point scale with an ommited middle category. A one-sample t-test showed no significant difference between SPC in Kenya ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .589$) and SPC values from samples in previous literature (Ohmer, 2007; Peterson et al., 2006), $t(148) = -4.82$, $p = .000$, suggesting that the Kenyan levels could be characterized as moderate in comparison to previously reported results. In this light, the hypotheses that levels in Nairobi would be high and, in Mombasa, low, can be rejected.

	LC		PC		SPC	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Nairobi ($N = 49$)	3.0816	.48291	2.6006	.57586	5.6822	.83763
Mombasa ($N = 49$)	3.0082	.50984	2.5860	.53073	5.5942	.86791
Kisumu ($N = 51$)	3.0196	.50001	2.5602	.49639	5.5798	.78176

Table 1- Leadership competency, Policy control and Sociopolitical control in Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa

Discussion

Over recent years, Kenya has been taking steps toward decentralizing its government, a process that would provide opportunity for Kenyan citizens and local authorities from geographic regions across the country to more substantially influence the distribution of resources provided by the central government headquartered in Nairobi (*Harmonization*, 2010). This action works to re-organize a system built on colonial principles that bound ethnicity with specific land and other forms of wealth; even after the country's independence, these principles are believed to heavily influence Kenyan politics. Due to popular opinion that national politics are still largely determined by favoritism and corruption in the central government, it was incorrectly hypothesized that residents of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu would have differing levels of SPC. Though levels of SPC were expected to be high in Nairobi and low in Mombasa, levels across all three cities appeared to be moderate when compared to values of SPC found in previous psychological studies. Though this could be an indication of methodological issues, if valid these unexpected results have important implications for Kenyan policy and their efforts to increase citizen engagement in local and national government.

Explanation and Implications of Results

The results of the present study indicate that residents of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu share similarly moderate views about how they perceive their political control, their leadership competence and therefore, their overall sociopolitical control. That is to say, whichever factors contribute to these three scores among residents of Kenya's biggest cities do not depend primarily on any unique characteristics of the three different cities. At the most basic level this indicates that if issues of unequal resource distribution

are a problem, they are not perceived to be as overwhelming a concern as was expected. If this is a result of Kenya's decentralization efforts, similar levels of SPC reflect the government's goals to make governmental processes more accessible to Kenyans both in and out of Nairobi. The purpose of decentralizing a government is to adequately address the needs of intended beneficiaries (in this case, residents of urban Kenya), regardless of regional issues or concerns (*Harmonization*, 2010). For example, a report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission and Social and Public Accountability Network (*Harmonization*, 2010) discusses the concern that sector hearings (a part of the budget-making process designed to include citizen participation) are only centrally located in Nairobi. This example effectively highlights the limits that geography can have on citizen participation; in this case, participation in sector hearings is only available to those who have the time, resources, and capacity to get themselves to one central location. If similar SPC levels across localities reflect comparable awareness of, and attitudes toward such programs to promote public political participation, this would indicate that residents in all three cities experience similar opportunities from the government.

One contributor to the similarity in SPC scores might be a shared culture between residents of urban cities in Kenya. Bratton and Kimenyi (2008) describe the culture of many urban residents in Kenya as individuals who were born in one region and have since migrated to an urban center, often for reasons related to education or employment. They stipulate that the attributes shared among Kenya's biggest cities lead to a common mindset that impacts the priorities and attitudes of the many "non-natal" residents that make up much of the urban population. This shared culture may well explain the similar levels of LC. With comparable education and employment patterns, it makes sense that

individuals would share perceptions about their abilities to lead others, react to challenges, and other measured attitudes that make up LC. This is in keeping with results of the present study. There were no significant differences between level of education in different cities, and there were positive correlations between level of education completed and LC, $r(147) = .267$, $p = .001$, and level of education and SPC, $r(147) = .210$, $p = .010$ but no significant difference between level of education in different cities. The correlation between SPC and education level is slightly weaker because the SPCS also includes the PC subscale, which showed no correlation with education level. While previous literature based in the United States has shown level of education as positively correlated with PC (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991), one possible explanation for the results here are that whatever policy control is gained with more education, is equally matched with a more thorough understanding of the complex processes that stand between an individual citizen and the Kenyan political system.

Criticisms of the Present Study

It is possible that hypotheses were wrong, and that levels of SPC of residents in Kenya's three biggest cities are remarkably similar. However, it is also feasible that this is not the case, and that the findings in the present study are a reflection of methodological issues within the study itself. One such issue is participant bias could have resulted from the perceived identity of the researcher. At the end of each interview and pilot test that was conducted, participants were asked if they truly believed that the researcher was a student collecting information for a paper, as had been indicated at the beginning of each session. Of fifteen interviewees and ten pilot study participants, nineteen people assumed that the researcher was working for the government, and was in

fact not a student, as she had introduced herself. If these perceptions were prevalent among survey participants, they could have influenced the participants to answer more neutrally than they otherwise would have, for fear of repercussions that might be caused by providing more extreme responses.

Another possible methodological issue is that the survey did not provide enough possibility for variance in responses. When presented with Likert-type questions on a 1-5 scale, 70% of pilot test participants selected *neutral* as their response to seven or more of thirteen SPC items. In an effort to eliminate this phenomenon, the researcher omitted the *neutral* option, creating a four-point forced choice Likert-type scale. Perhaps if the participants were not limited to one of four choices but instead six, they would have felt more comfortable selecting less neutral options. Though differences in the nature of their responses may have been minimal, this could have provided more opportunity for variance in responses between cities.

Assuming the validity of the scale and methods used in this study, the results could still have been skewed by issues within the sample itself. Not only were the sample sizes relatively small, but there could also be a sampling bias that impacts results. Though steps were taken to ensure that samples were as systematic as possible, the dates, times, and locations of data collection could have affected the sample that agreed to participate in each location. For example, a chi square test indicated that slightly more participants in Mombasa spoke English than were expected. This finding could be indicative of a sample that is involved in the government, as not much English is spoken in Mombasa outside of governmental affairs. Consequently, results that might otherwise reflect hypothesized low levels of SPC instead indicate moderate levels of SPC.

Suggestions for Future Research

The methodological issues already discussed are certainly important to the study at hand, though there are more general, overarching issues that stem from the fact that the SPCS is an American scale that was being tested in Kenya. Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991) state explicitly that there is great need to study this scale in other cultures and contexts. Despite the fact that present study was conducted in the most Western, cosmopolitan parts of the country, it is still probable that power dynamics differ greatly between the context in which the SPCS was developed and the context in which it was applied here. The scale has been studied in Italy and Israel (Itzhaky & York, 2003; Rollero et al., 2009) since first being published, but has not yet been applied to a third-world context, nor to any context with prevalent African culture. Creating a Kenyan SPCS (SPCS-K) would pave the way for using creating new versions of SPCS in this new realm of contexts and cultures.

Zimmerman and Zahniser's SPCS draws on constructs such as political and self-efficacy, perceived competence, locus of control, and sense of mastery (Peterson et al., 2006). Even constructs in the SPCS thought to be universal must be re-evaluated in an applied political context; for example, Luszczynska, Scholz & Schwarzer (2005) determined that self-efficacy was a consistent construct across cultures, though his study focused on isolated, individual tasks. When applied to a setting in which collective identity impacts those tasks, this construct may be less universally applicable. Yip (2004) highlights the many intricacies of empowerment and power relations that can vary between cultures, and suggests that accurate measurements of conceptions related to

power and empowerment involve contextual history, norms, politics, values, and activities.

In line with Yip's (2004) findings, interviews indicated that constructs applied in the SPCS-K would need to be modified based on issues relevant to current Kenyan culture in order to accurately measure participants' perceptions. The most prevalent themes brought up in interviews were *identity,* and *transparency and corruption*. The issue of identity has the potential to strongly impact constructs of LC, especially as applied to ethnicity. Where the current SPCS contains one item that says *I am often a leader in groups*, it might include two items to the effect of *I am often a leader in within my ethnic group* and *I am often a leader among different ethnic groups*.

While issues of collective identity could impact LC constructs, perceived prevalence of transparency and corruption could confuse PC constructs such as political efficacy and locus of control on the current SPCS. For example, items like *A person like me can really understand what's going on with government and politics* might be understood in terms of ideal political processes, or might be taken as a reference to assumed "under-the-table" dealings that are in fact undermining ideal political processes. This, too should be specified so that the participant can accurately respond to the prompt.

Another aspect of the SPCS that may be changed in the SPCS-K is the underlying assumption that political participation is perceived positively by the participant. In interviews by the researcher and in Afrobarometer surveys (*Round 4,* 2010), participants indicate that political participation is not only viewed negatively, but in keeping with the recent post-election violence, it can be harmful to Kenyan's livelihoods. Therefore, items such as *I want to have as much say in running local authority as possible* might not

measure the participant's desire to control his own circumstances, because it also implies the possible (or perhaps probable) negative consequences of being involved in government. One way to rectify this might be to reverse items so that they are worded negatively instead of positively in order to measure perceptions of this possibility, and to add another item that would specify circumstances such as "*ideally…"*.

As government programs (*Harmonization*, 2010) and theorists (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002) attempt to foster more political participation among Kenyan citizens, they might first want to establish ways to reconcile this contradictory view that citizens want to have their voices heard without it being potentially harmful to their health. To this end, instead of attempting to adapt the SPCS to a Kenyan context, an avenue for future research might be to re-create a Kenyan version of the SPCS. This could then be used in collaboration with efforts to decentralize the government in such a way that more citizens become involved in political processes, do so through values and practices they respect.

Conclusion

The present study sought to determine differences between Kenya's three most populous cities in how residents feel about their own leadership competence and political control. The results may speak to a shared culture among residents of Kenya's three biggest cities that is consistent with previous literature. But, there also exist major methodological concerns involving the investigator, the scale used, and the participants from whom the data came. Given that political participation is regarded as being an integral part of Kenya's decentralization process, it is imperative that it be thoroughly understood. Because the current SPCS may not be an adequate tool to address this need,

an equivalent Kenyan version (based on the country's culture and background) would be a helpful tool in understanding perceptions of self and government, and how they may intersect to create more beneficial political participation among Kenyan citizens.

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Appendix
Survey Questions

Part I - General Survey

City of Residence: Nairobi Kisumu Mombasa Other

Tribal Identity: (please circle all that apply) Luo Kikuyu Akamba Kalinjine Maasai Swahili Luhya Gusii Other (which one?) _____

Religion: Christianity Islam Hinduism Other (which one?) _____

What language do you speak most in the house? Kiswahili English Mother-tongue

What is your age? _____

Do you consider yourself an adult? Yes No

How many family members do you live with? _____

How many of them are your own husband/wife/children/brothers/sisters? _____

What gender are you? Male Female

Do boys need to be circumcised in order to be men? Yes No

Are you married? Yes No

How many wives or Co-wives do you have? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

How many children do you have? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

How many sons do you have? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

How many daughters do you have? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
Primary school
Secondary school
College/University
Higher than college/university
I never completed primary school

Do you have a permanent job? Yes No

If you do not have a permanent job, what do you do for your living? _____

If you have a permanent job, what is type of job is it? _____

How much money do you make? _____KSH per day/week/month

Part II

How often do you read the newspaper? Every day Once a week Once a month Never

Do you feel like you understand the articles you read? Always Sometimes Mostly Never

How much time do you spend at work every day? All day Half the day Less than half the day

How often do you go to group meetings outside of work (i.e. church, prayer group, chama, sports, NGO meetings, etc) Every day Once a week Once a month Never

For the following statements, please circle the number that best fits your attitude:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am often a leader in groups	1	2	3	4
I would prefer to be a leader rather than a follower	1	2	3	4
I can usually organize people to get things done	1	2	3	4
Other people usually follow my ideas	1	2	3	4
I like to work on solving a problem myself rather than wait and see if someone else will deal with it	1	2	3	4
I like trying new things that are challenging to me	1	2	3	4
I want to have as much say in running local authority as possible	1	2	3	4
A person like me can really understand what's going on with government and politics	1	2	3	4
I feel like I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues which confront my society	1	2	3	4
People like me are generally well qualified to participate in political activity in our country	1	2	3	4
People like me are generally well qualified to participate in political activity and decision-making in our city	1	2	3	4
It makes a difference who I vote for because whoever gets elected will represent my interests	1	2	3	4
With the new constitution, there are plenty of ways for people like me to have a say in what our government does	1	2	3	4
Most public officials would listen to me	1	2	3	4

Maswali

Sehemu ya kwanza

Unaishi wapi: Nairobi Kisumu
Mombasa Zingine

Kabila: Luo Swahili
(Eka alama kwa kabila yako) Kikuyu Luhya
Akamba Gusii
Kalinjine
Maasai Zingine (gani?) _____

Dini: Mkristo Mhindi
Muisilamu Zingine (gani?) _____

Unaongea lugha gani sana nyumbani? Kiswahili
Kingereza
Lugha ya mama

Una miaka mingapi? _____

Wewe ni mkubwa? Ndyo Hapana

Mko wangapi kwa familia yenu? _____

Wangapi ni familia wako wa karibu? _____

Wewe ni: Mvulana Msichana

Mvulana anabidi kutairiwa ili awe mwanaume? Ndyo Hapana

Umeoa au umeolewa? Ndyo Hapana

Una wake wangapi au Una mke mwenzako?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Una watoto wangapi?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Una watoto wavulana wangapi?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Una watoto wasichana wangapi?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+

Umesoma mpaca kiwango gani cha shule?
Shule ya msingi
Shule ya upili
College/chuo Kikuu
Juu ya chuo kikuu
Sikumaliza shule ya msingi

Unafanya kazi? Ndyo Hapana

Kama huna kazi unafanya nini? _____

Kama una kazi, unafanya kazi gani? _____

Unatengeneza pesa ngapi? _____KSH kwa siku/wiki/mwezi

Sehemu ya pili

Unasoma gazeti? Mara ngapi?	Kila siku Sisomi	Mara moja katika wiki Mara moja katika mwezi
Unaelewa na maswali unayo soma? Kwa muda gani?	Kila wakati Saa zingine	Mara kwa mara Sielewi
Unachuckua masaa mangapi ukiwa kazini?	Mchana kutwa kidogo kuliko	nusu siku nusu siku
Unaenda mara ngapi kwa mkutano ukitoka kazini (kama kanisani, maombi, chama, michezo…)	Kila siku Siendi	Mara moja katika wiki Mara moja katikia mwezi

Katika haya maswali, chora laini kulingana na tabia yako:

	Kataa Sana	Kataa	Kubali	Kubali Sana
Mimi hua kiongozi wa viyama	1	2	3	4
Ningependa kuwa kiongozi kuliko kuwa mfuwasi	1	2	3	4
Ninaweza kuongoza watu kufanya kazi vizuri	1	2	3	4
Watu wingine hufuata maagizo yangu	1	2	3	4
Ninapenda kufanya kazi na kurekebisha shida yangu peke kuliko kungoja mtu mwengine airekebishe	1	2	3	4
Napenda kujaribu vitu vipia vienye ni ngumu kwangu	1	2	3	4
Napenda kuwa na usaidizi mwingi kwa serekali kwa mji sana	1	2	3	4
Mtu kama mimi anazielewa sana vitu vinavyofanyika kwa serekali	1	2	3	4
Naona kuwa naelewa sana umuhimu wa ukabila za watu wangu	1	2	3	4
Watu kama mimi wanaweza kujiunga na vitu vya serekali kata nchi yangu	1	2	3	4
Watu kama mimi wanaweza kujiunga na vitu vya serekali na maoni katika miji yetu	1	2	3	4
Intengemea mtu ambaye nina mchagua kwa sababu yeye atanitumikia	1	2	3	4
Kwa katiba mpya, kuna nafasi nyngi ya watu kuweza kuzungumza juu ya serekali inavyofanya	1	2	3	4
Watu wa serekali wanaweza kunisikiliza	1	2	3	4