**Why Does Democracy Need Education?**

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Across countries, education and democracy are highly correlated. We motivate empirically and then model a causal mechanism explaining this correlation. In our model, schooling teaches people to interact with others and raises the benefits of civic participation, including voting and organizing. In the battle between democracy and dictatorship, democracy has a wide potential base of support but offers weak incentives to its defenders. Dictatorship provides stronger incentives to a narrower base. As education raises the benefits of civic participation, it raises the support for more democratic regimes relative to dictatorships. This increases the likelihood of democratic revolutions against dictatorships, and reduces that of successful anti-democratic coups.

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**Education as Liberation?**

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Scholars have long speculated about education's political impacts, variously arguing that it promotes modern or pro-democratic attitudes; that it instills acceptance of existing authority; and that it empowers the disadvantaged to challenge authority. To avoid endogeneity bias, if schooling requires some willingness to accept authority, we assess the political and social impacts of a randomized girls' merit scholarship incentive program in Kenya that raised test scores and secondary schooling. We find little evidence for modernization theory. Consistent with the empowerment view, young women in program schools were less likely to accept domestic violence. Moreover, the program increased objective political knowledge, and reduced acceptance of political authority. However, this rejection of the status quo did not translate into greater perceived political efficacy, community participation, or voting intentions. Instead, the perceived legitimacy of political violence increased. Reverse causality may help account for the view that education instills greater acceptance of authority.

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