Slowly growing or stunted? Examining Uganda’s gains in demand for democracy

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 7 survey

HATCHILE CONSULT LTD
Social Research and Integrated Business Consultancy
At a glance

- **Declining demand and supply for democracy:** Despite increasing demand for democracy early in the new millennium, recent trends suggest declining demand and supply of democracy in Uganda, and on the continent.

- **Poor quality of elections negatively impacting democracy:** Ugandans who view their elections as of poor quality, or see poor delivery of political or economic goods, tend to demand democracy more.

- **Weakening democratic attitudes:** Uganda’s attitudes toward democracy appear either fading or fluctuating with the national election cycle, with committed democrats occasionally rescinding.
What is Afrobarometer?

• A pan-African, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.


• **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

• A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In Uganda, Afrobarometer Round 7 survey was conducted by Hatchile Consult Ltd.
Where Afrobarometer works
Methodology

• Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  - All respondents are randomly selected.
  - Sample is distributed across 5 regions (Kampala, Central, West, North, and East) and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
  - Every adult citizen has an equal chance of being selected.

• Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

• Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.

• Sample size in Uganda of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.

• Fieldwork for Round 7 in Uganda was conducted between 26 December 2016 and 8 January 2017.
Survey coverage
### Survey demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>50</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>75</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>35-44</td>
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<td>45-54</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>55-64</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
Democracy: demand and supply
Key findings

- Demand for democracy across Africa increased from 36% in 2002 to 44% in 2015, but recent data suggest a slowing-down since 2008, with 24 of 36 surveyed countries registering negative or zero change in demand.

- Supply of democracy in Africa declined from 39% in 2002 to 35% in 2015, with 23 of 36 surveyed countries registering negative or zero change in perceived supply.

- Uganda is among 7 countries whose supply of democracy has remained largely unchanged – registering a 3-percentage-point increase between 2012 and 2015.

- Demand for democracy in Uganda appears to fluctuate around election years.
Democracy: Measuring demand

- **Support for democracy:**
  - Which of these three 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 government we have.

- **Rejection of authoritarian alternatives:**
  - There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?
    1. Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
    2. The army comes in to govern the country.
    3. Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

**Demand = Proportion who support democracy AND reject all 3 authoritarian alternatives**
Democracy: Measuring supply

**Extent of democracy:**
- In your opinion, how much of a democracy is [your country] today? (% who say “a full democracy” or “a democracy, but with minor problems”)

**Satisfaction with democracy:**
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [your country]? (% who say “fairly” or “very” satisfied)

Supply = Proportion who say their country is “a full democracy” or “a democracy, but with minor problems” AND are “fairly” or “very” satisfied with the way their democracy is working
Graph shows two indices measuring demand and supply of democracy:

- Demand for democracy shows those who both prefer democracy over any other system and who consistently reject one-man, military, and one-party rule.
- Supply of democracy shows those who both say their country is “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems” and are fairly/very satisfied with how democracy is working in their country.
Graph shows change in the proportion of % demand and supply of democracy between 2012 and 2015
Demand and supply of democracy | Uganda | 2000-2017

Graph shows two indices measuring demand and supply of democracy:
- Demand for democracy shows those that prefer democracy and consistently reject one-man, military or one-party rule.
- Supply of democracy shows those that feel country is a full democracy, a democracy with minor problems and are fairly/very satisfied with democracy in their country.
Support for democracy | Uganda | 2000-2017

Graph shows preference for and satisfaction with democracy:
- **Prefer democracy** shows proportion of Ugandans who prefer democracy to any other form of government.
- **Satisfaction with democracy** shows the proportion of Ugandans who feel fairly or very satisfied with the way democracy works in Uganda.
Democracy satisfaction gap and election-year cycle | percentage points | Uganda | 2000-2017

Graph shows the growing gap, in percentage points, between the proportion of Ugandans who prefer democracy and the proportion who are fairly/fully satisfied with the way democracy is working. Uganda’s last 4 election years plotted to illustrate the fluctuating nature of the growing gap with the election year.
Meaning of democracy
Key findings

- Understanding of democracy appears to grow with time, as the proportion of citizens who could provide up to three definitions for democracy rose from 1% in 2000 to 25% in 2015.

- Committed democrats are able to offer more responses on the meaning of democracy than those who are not as committed to democracy.

- By 2015, most Ugandans understood democracy to mean civil liberties/personal freedoms (36%) or peace/unity (19%). However, about one-third could not offer a substantive definition of democracy.

Respondents were asked: What, if anything, does democracy mean to you?
“Committed democrats” are respondents who both prefer democracy over any other system and consistently reject one-man, military, and one-party rule.
Respondents were asked: What, if anything, does democracy mean to you? “Committed democrats” are respondents who both prefer democracy over any other system and consistently reject one-man, military, and one-party rule.
Respondents were asked: What, if anything, does democracy mean to you? The labeled percentages are those for 2015.
Democratic regimes | committed democrats vs. others | Uganda | 2008

Respondents were asked to assess the extent of democracy in 3 hypothetical regimes, as well as in Uganda. Chart shows % who said “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems.”

- **Country A:** Alfred lives in a country with many political parties and free elections. Everyone is free to speak their minds about politics and to vote for the party of their choice. Elections sometimes lead to a change of ruling party. In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Alfred’s country?
- **Country B:** Betty lives in a country with regular elections. It has one large political party and many small ones. People are free to express their opinions and to vote as they please. But so far, elections have not led to a change of ruling party. In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Betty’s country?
- **Country C:** Charles lives in a country with regular elections. It has one big political party and many small ones. People are afraid to express political opinions or to vote for the opposition. The opposition is so weak that it seems that it can never win an election. In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Charles’ country?
Committed democrats by demographics
Key findings

■ Men, more educated citizens, and urbanites are more likely to be committed democrats than women, less educated citizens, and rural residents.

■ Since 2005 (the year multipartyism returned to Uganda), youth have closed the gap with adults in the proportion of committed democrats.

■ The proportion of Ugandans who are committed democrats has grown substantially across all education levels since 2000 – from 31% to 53% among those with primary education or less, from 40% to 68% among those with secondary education, and from 52% to 79% among those with post-secondary qualifications.

■ Despite the overall increase in committed democrats between 2000 and 2017 as seen across education, gender and residence location, this growth is nonlinear, but cyclic around election years.
“Committed democrats” are respondents who both prefer democracy over any other system and consistently reject one-man, military, and one-party rule.
“Committed democrats” are respondents who both prefer democracy over any other system and consistently reject one-man, military, and one-party rule.
Trends in Uganda’s democratic attitudes
Key findings

- The proportion of Ugandans who are committed democrats grew by 25 percentage points between 2000 and 2017, from 34% to 59%, although the trend fluctuated strongly over the period.

- Committed democrats consistently outperform the national average in support for elections, accountability, free media, parliamentary oversight, and multipartyism but lag behind on limited presidential tenure.

- The general trend in democratic attitudes in Uganda appears to fluctuate, with an overall decline except for support for multiple political parties.
Committed democrats | Uganda | 2000-2017

*Graph shows % who both prefer democracy over any other system AND reject military, one-man, and one-party rule.*
Committed democrats | Uganda | 2000-2017

Graph shows % who both prefer democracy over any other system AND reject military, one-man, and one-party rule.
Selected democratic values | Uganda | 2017

- Obey govt always vs. only if you voted for it: 92%
- We should choose leaders through elections vs. other methods: 83%
- President obey laws and courts vs. free to act: 81%
- Many political parties needed vs. parties divisive: 75%
- Two-term limit for president vs. no term limits: 74%
- President monitored by Parliament vs. free to act on own: 67%
- Govt accountable to citizens vs. govt gets things done but no citizen influence: 65%
- Newspapers free to publish vs. govt control: 59%
- Citizens free to join any organisation vs. govt can ban organisations: 55%

Graph shows proportion of Ugandan citizens who “agree” or “agree strongly” with selected democratic values and attitudes. See next slide for full question text.
Graph shows a cross-tabulation of preference for democracy (prefer vs. don’t prefer) and score on democratic values scale averaging responses on nine measures of democratic values (see previous slide). “Low” is a score below midpoint of the scale, and “high” is a score above midpoint of the scale.
Views on selected measures of quality of elections | Uganda | 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose country’s leaders through elections vs. other methods</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt performs fairly/very well at preventing violence during election campaigns</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last national election was completely free/fair or free/fair with minor problems</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended campaign rally for last election</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear “a little bit” or “not at all” falling victim to violence during elections</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition never prevented from running in elections</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never or rarely have to be careful about which political organizations they join</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust National Electoral Commission a lot or somewhat</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/Rarely have to be careful about how they vote</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/Rarely have to be careful about what they say about politics</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked for candidate in last election</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions used to estimate citizen views on quality of election index (1)

- Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
  - Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.
  - Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.

- On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election held in 2016. Was it completely free and fair, free and fair but with minor problems, free and fair but with major problems, or not free and fair?

- Thinking about the last national election in 2016, did you (a) attend a campaign rally? (b) work for a candidate or party? (Yes/No)

- Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
  - Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.
  - Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country’s leaders.
Questions used to estimate citizen views on quality of election index (2)

- During election campaigns in this country, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence? (Not at all, A little bit, Somewhat, A lot)
- In your opinion, during this country’s elections, how often are opposition candidates prevented from running for office? (Never, Sometimes, Often, Always)
- In your opinion, how often, in this country, do people have to be careful (a) of what they say about politics? (b) of what political organizations they join? (c) about how they vote in an election (Always, Often, Rarely, Never)
- How much do you trust the Uganda Independent Electoral Commission, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say? (Not at all, Just a little, Somewhat, A lot)
- How well or badly would you say the current government is handling preventing political violence during election campaigns, or haven’t you heard enough to say? (Very badly, Fairly badly, Fairly well, Very well).
Shift in views on quality of election | Uganda | 2015-2017

Graph shows a cross-tabulation of preference for democracy (prefer vs. don’t prefer) and score on quality of elections scale averaging responses on 10 measures of perceived election quality (see previous slide). “Low” is a score below midpoint of the scale, and “high” is a score above midpoint of the scale.
Understanding demand for democracy, elections, and democratic values
Graph shows the growing gap, in percentage points, between the proportion of Ugandans who prefer democracy and the proportion who are fairly/fully satisfied with the way democracy is working. Uganda’s last four election years plotted to illustrate the fluctuating nature of the growing gap with the election year.
Average changes in democratic values | Uganda | 2000-2017

Graph shows Uganda's score on the democratic values scale between 2000 and 2017. The democratic values scale sums up responses that “agree” or “agree strongly” on nine selected measures of democratic attitudes. High scores show good democratic values valuation while low scores denote the opposite.
Graphic shows a side-by-side comparison of the fluctuating trajectories of Uganda’s democracy satisfaction gap (the difference between support for and satisfaction with democracy) with election years, on the left, and of its democratic value scale scores on the right.
Graph shows Uganda’s score on selected measures of quality of elections from 2000 to 2017. The quality of elections scale sums up responses on eleven elected selected measures of perceived quality of elections. Low scores show poor perception of quality of elections, while high scores denote the opposite.
Graph shows a side-by-side comparison of trajectories of Uganda’s democracy satisfaction gap (the difference between support for and satisfaction with democracy), on the left, and the perceived quality of elections on the right. Uganda’s last 4 election years are plotted to illustrate the fluctuating nature of the growing gap with each election year.
Relative strength of predictors for democracy demand gap | Uganda | 2000 - 2017

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score on democratic values index</td>
<td>0.192**</td>
<td>0.245**</td>
<td>0.279**</td>
<td>0.318**</td>
<td>0.305**</td>
<td>0.286**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive ability index</td>
<td>0.140**</td>
<td>0.088**</td>
<td>0.099**</td>
<td>0.141**</td>
<td>0.086**</td>
<td>0.163**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on delivery of political goods index</td>
<td>(0.136)**</td>
<td>(0.197)**</td>
<td>(0.124)**</td>
<td>(0.135)**</td>
<td>(0.131)**</td>
<td>(0.161)**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on delivery of economic goods Index</td>
<td>(0.254)**</td>
<td>(0.192)**</td>
<td>(0.109)**</td>
<td>(0.045)*</td>
<td>(0.135)**</td>
<td>(0.132)**</td>
<td>(0.158)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on quality of elections index</td>
<td>(0.132)**</td>
<td>(0.181)**</td>
<td>(0.195)**</td>
<td>(0.087)**</td>
<td>(0.102)**</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residing in Northern vs. West</td>
<td>0.103**</td>
<td>0.073**</td>
<td>0.078**</td>
<td>0.092**</td>
<td>(0.084)**</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residing in Kampala vs. West</td>
<td>0.085**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residing in Central vs. West</td>
<td>0.099**</td>
<td>0.149**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residing in Eastern vs. West</td>
<td>0.079**</td>
<td>0.122**</td>
<td>0.047*</td>
<td>0.092**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent gender</td>
<td>0.107*</td>
<td>0.107**</td>
<td>0.059**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban or rural residence</td>
<td>0.054*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (below 30 vs. 30+)</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count of most important problems</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R-Square

| 2000  | 0.089 |
| 2002  | 0.222 |
| 2005  | 0.259 |
| 2008  | 0.259 |
| 2012  | 0.257 |
| 2015  | 0.195 |
| 2017  | 0.300 |

Blank fields = not statistically significant  * significant at p<0.05  ** significant at p<0.001

Table shows regression models of demand for democracy gap for each survey year, showing the relative contribution of each predictor to demand for democracy in Uganda. Only significant coefficients are shown. Negative coefficients are marked in parentheses.
Determinants of demand for democracy
| Uganda | 2000-2017

- Since 2000, demand for democracy has shown a positive correlation with democratic values, cognitive ability, and residing in the Northern region (compared to residing in Western Uganda).

- Citizens who express stronger democratic values also tend to demand more democracy, as do citizens who are more cognitively able.

- Citizens who perceive poor delivery of political or economic goods or who view Ugandan elections as of poor quality have also consistently demanded more democracy since the year 2000.

- Results indicate that these factors have remained significant throughout the seven models estimated in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2017.
Conclusions
Are Uganda’s gains in demand for democracy dwindling?

- Demand for democracy appears to be slowing across the continent, but in Uganda demand for democracy appears cyclical around elections, with a surge preceding the election and a decline after the election.

- Data suggest that the slump in demand for democracy after the 2016 elections is characterized by decline in democratic values and perceived quality of elections.

- Men, more educated citizens, and urbanites are more likely to be committed democrats than women, less educated citizens, and rural residents. Youth have closed the gap with adults in the proportion of committed democrats.
Thank you

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