



Working Paper No. 124

**UNDERSTANDING CITIZENS
ATTITUDES TO DEMOCRACY IN
UGANDA**

by Robert Mattes, Francis Kibirige and Robert Sentamu

**A comparative series of national public
attitude surveys on democracy, markets
and civil society in Africa**



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AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

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UGANDA**

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October 2010

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Understanding Citizens Attitudes to Democracy in Uganda

Abstract

After nearly 30 years of autocratic rule and civil war, Uganda returned to elective national government in 1996. But while elections resumed, political parties were allowed to exist but legally prevented from directly fielding candidates for those elections (Kasfir 1998). President Yoweri Museveni's majority fell from 76 percent in 1996 to 69 percent in 2001. In 2005, the ruling party held a referendum in which the electorate overwhelmingly endorsed its proposal to return to formal multi-party politics. In the subsequent 2006 election, Museveni's vote share fell yet again to 59 percent, even though the main opposition candidate was jailed throughout much of the campaign period. Yet critics have complained that recent constitutional changes have reversed the transition towards fuller multi-party democracy by removing term limits on the President and reducing the authority of parliament and other watchdog organizations (Mwenda 2007).

Where Uganda's process of democratization goes from here depends not only on the wishes of the country's leaders and ruling party, but also to some degree on how ordinary Ugandans view these changes and whether or not they are satisfied with the present level of democracy, as well as whether they are willing to demand the protection and expansion of democracy. This paper seeks to shed some light on these issues. The goal is to provide a more nuanced understanding of trends in how Ugandans view of their country's process of political liberalization and democratization as well as the sources of those attitudes.

Understanding Citizens Attitudes to Democracy in Uganda

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Data

This paper draws upon public opinion data collected by Afrobarometer in both Uganda and across sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade. The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of national surveys of public attitudes on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa. It is a joint enterprise of the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP, Benin). Since 1999, Afrobarometer has accumulated interviews with over 105,000 Africans, conducting four rounds of surveys in 12 of those 20 countries. Respondents are selected using a random, stratified, multistage, national probability sample representing adult citizens aged 18 years or older. Each country sample yields a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. The pooled, cross-country sample is equally weighted to standardize national samples at 1200 respondents apiece. The Uganda surveys have used larger sample sizes and thus have smaller margins of error of ± 2 percentage points. Surveys have been conducted in May to June 2000 (N=2,271), August to September 2002 (N=2,400), April to May 2005 (N=2,400) and July to September 2008 (N=2,400).

The Supply of Democracy in Uganda

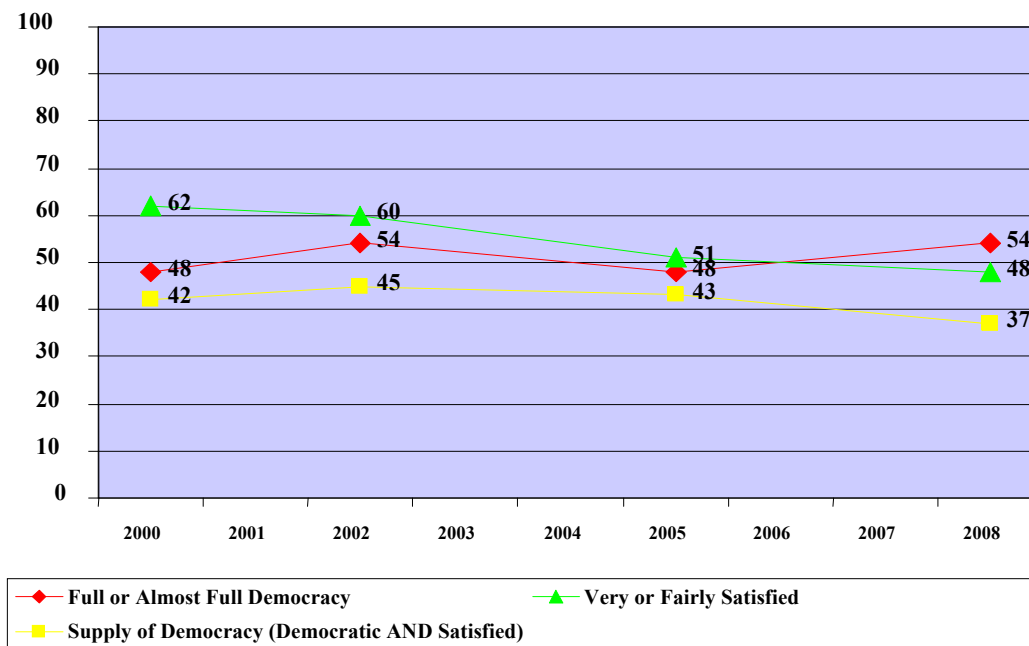
We begin by focusing on what ordinary people think about the present state of democracy in Uganda. At its broadest, Afrobarometer assesses citizens' general estimate of the extent of democracy by asking respondents: "how much of a democracy is (this country) today?" Response categories for this item range on a four-point scale from "a full democracy," though "a democracy with minor problems" and "a democracy with major problems," to "not a democracy." As of 2008, just over one half of all Ugandans (54 percent) felt that the country was "a democracy with minor problems" or "a full democracy." This places Uganda right in the middle of the Afrobarometer 20 country distribution with Malawi.

In order to develop a more robust measure of popular evaluations of the degree to which the current political regime in Uganda supplies people with democracy, the Afrobarometer asks the widely used item on satisfaction with democracy.¹ While just over half of Ugandans say the country is a democracy, just under half (48 percent) were "fairly" or "very satisfied" with the way democracy was working in 2008 (Figure 1).

¹ "Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (your country): very satisfied; fairly satisfied; not very satisfied; not satisfied at all?"

This puts Uganda right in the middle of the Afrobarometer distribution with a group of countries including Liberia, Mali, South Africa and Cape Verde.

Figure 1: Supply and Satisfaction With Democracy in Uganda Over Time



While Ugandans’ assessments of the state of democracy have remained fairly “flat” since 2000, varying within a range of just six percentage points from lows of 48 percent (in 2000 and 2005) to a high of 54 percent (in 2002 and again in 2008), satisfaction with the way democracy actually works has declined steadily from the 62 percent recorded in 2000. And overall, the perceived supply of democracy has declined slightly, but consistently since 2002 from 45 to 37 percent. Thus, regardless of what the ruling NRM might claim to have achieved in the progression toward multi-party politics, ordinary Ugandans retain a healthy degree of scepticism about the actual progress of democracy, at least in the past decade. In sum, they see democracy moving backward, not forward

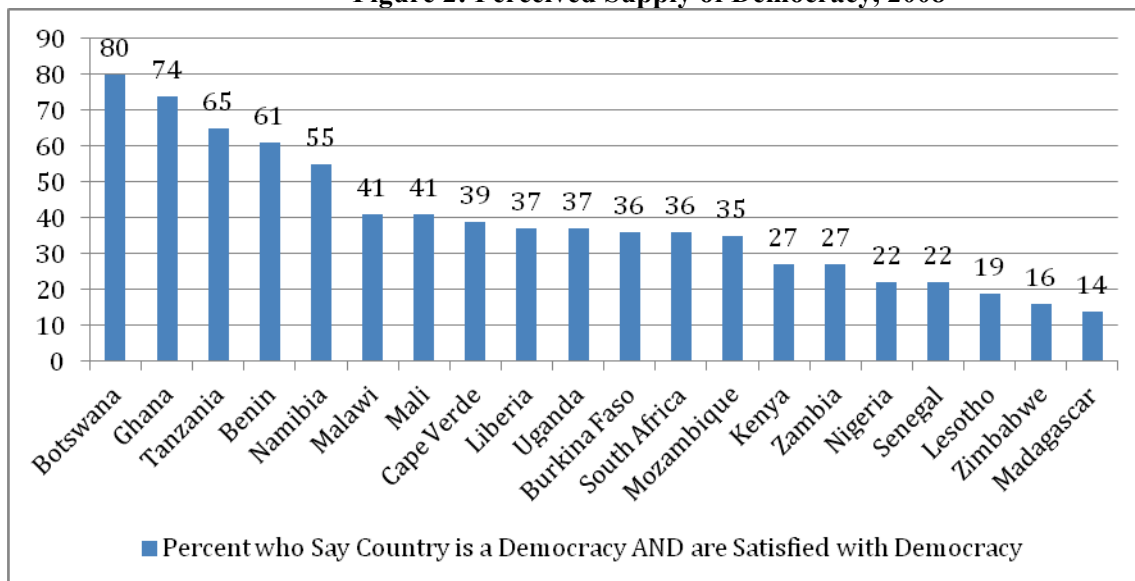
The sceptical view among Ugandans on of the state of democracy in their country can also be seen in a range of other questions about various sub-dimensions of the performance of the democratic regime. At the broadest level, Ugandans are very satisfied with the current state of political freedoms, at least in the abstract. As of 2008, almost nine-in-ten (86 percent) say that they are “somewhat” or “completely free” “to join any political organization you want,” and three quarters (77 percent) say that people are similarly free to “say what you think.” Looking more closely, however, we see that just 44 percent say “completely” free. In fact, while most people feel that while they have the legal right to speak their mind, free speech in Uganda carries real risks. In response to a separate question, just 39 percent feel that they “rarely” or “never” have to “be careful of what they say about politics.”

Similarly, while 86 percent of Ugandan citizens feel that people are free to “choose who to vote for without feeling pressured,” only 60 percent say “completely free.” Meanwhile, a significant proportion of the population worries about the consequences of their vote. Just two thirds (65 percent) are confident that it is “not very” or “not at all likely” that “powerful people” can find out how they voted. Only one half (48 percent) have no fear of “becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence” “during election campaigns,” and just 39 percent say that “competition between political parties” rarely or never “lead to

violent conflict.” Thus, just one-half (50 percent) of respondents felt that the 2006 election in Uganda was “completely free and fair” or “free and fair, but with minor problems.” This was a sharp reduction from the 67 percent who felt the same way about the 2001 election (in the 2005 survey), and the 79 percent who judged the 1996 election (in the 2000 survey) as free and fair. As national election results have become more competitive, the quality of the contestation has become more suspect, at least in the eyes of the voters. Perhaps because of these doubts, just 44 percent of Ugandans say that elections “serve to ensure that the MPs reflect the views of the voters” and 47 percent say that elections “enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want.” And the leaders selected by those elections are seen even more negatively: just 22 say that MPs “often” or “always” “try their best to listen” to what ordinary people have to say,” (though the figure is twice as high (43 percent) for local councillors). Consequently, just 30 percent say it is “somewhat” or “very easy” for an “ordinary person to have his voice heard between elections.”

We are able to combine responses to these two items into a larger construct that we call the perceived *Supply of Democracy*. It measures the extent to which individual Africans are *both* satisfied with democracy *and* perceive it to be extensive in their country. While adding the satisfaction measure into the construct of supply brings down the absolute levels of supply (compared to extent), we would argue that this provides a more realistic assessment. When we do this, we find that the perceived supply of democracy in 2008 was very high in only Botswana (80 percent) and Ghana (74 percent) and moderately high only in Tanzania and Benin. The 37 percent of Ugandans who felt supplied with democracy again put the country in the middle of the Afrobarometer distribution with Cape Verde, Liberia, Burkina Faso and Mozambique (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Perceived Supply of Democracy, 2008



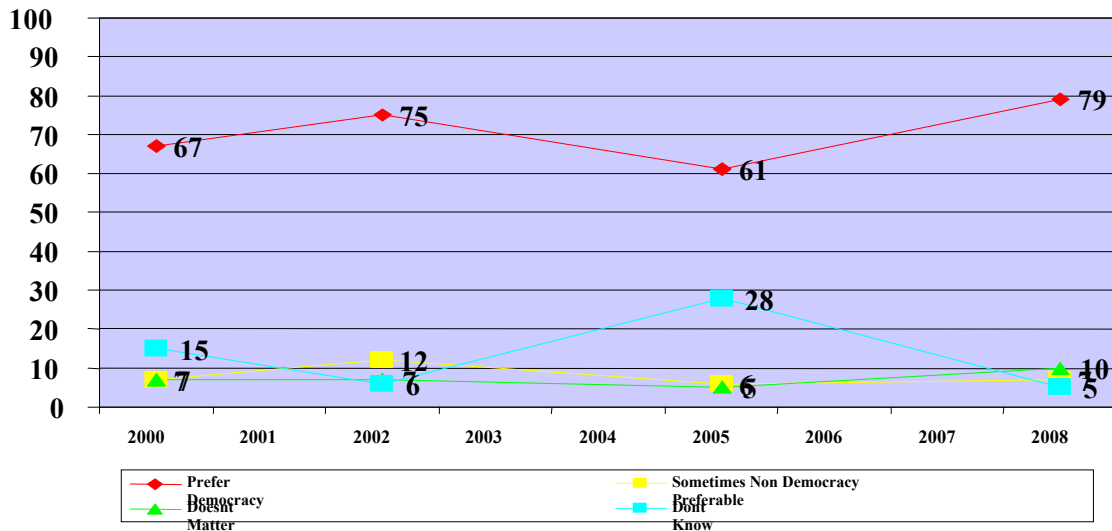
Demand for Democracy

Thus, only about one half of the Ugandan electorate exhibit generally positive attitudes about the overall state of democracy in the country. On balance, the median Ugandan sees the quality of democracy moving backward. Yet these results tell only half the story and beg the question as to whether Ugandans actually *want* to live in a democracy?

To examine this question, we turn to the Afrobarometer aggregate construct we call popular *Demand for Democracy*. This measure combines the responses of those who say they support democracy as the best system of government, and those who explicitly reject three authoritarian alternatives: military rule, one-party rule, and strongman presidential rule. While there are legitimate worries over what ordinary citizens understand by the “D-Word,” it is impossible to assess popular attitudes toward this political regime without actually using the word. Thus, we begin with a widely used question that asks respondents: “Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? A. Democracy is preferable to any other form of

government. B. In certain situations, a non democratic government can be preferable. Or C. To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have." As of 2008, almost eight in ten Ugandans (79 percent) told interviewers that "Democracy is preferable to any other form of government". Just 6 percent said a non democratic government could be preferable in certain situations (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ugandans' Support for Democracy Over Time



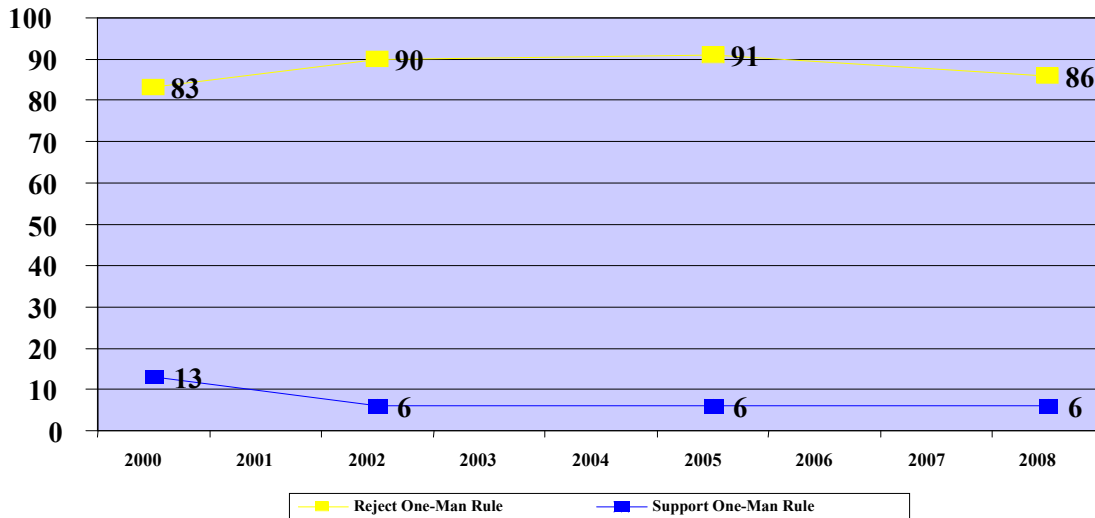
In some instances, people might possess an attachment to the word “democracy” without a meaningful idea of what the concept entails. Thus, to assess popular attitudes to democracy without using the “D-Word,” we also ask respondents whether they would support or oppose changing from the present system of competitive elections to a range of authoritarian alternatives, all of which African respondents would have some experience.

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?

- Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
- The army comes in to govern the country.
- Election and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

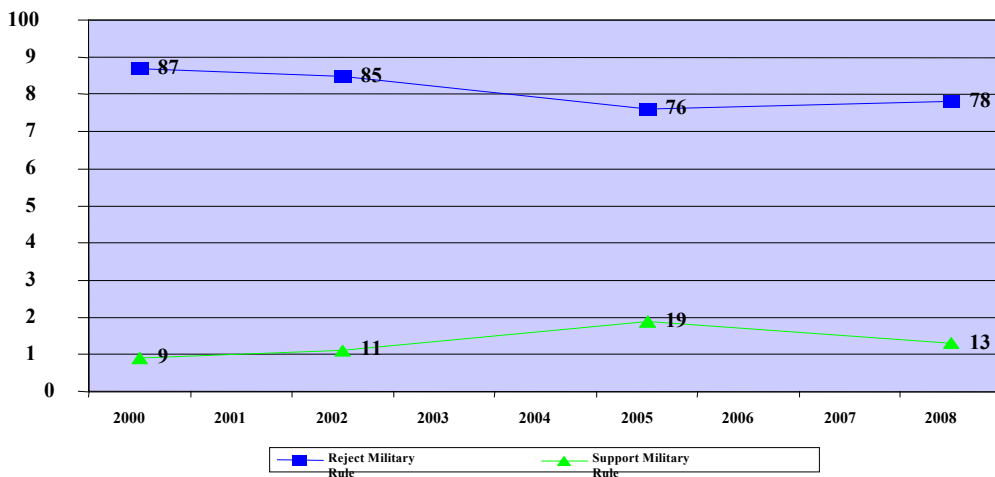
As of 2008, more than eight-in-ten (86 percent) Ugandans reject the idea of presidential dictatorship. The 2008 Uganda result represents a very slight decline from previous results. Perhaps the more important finding is that between eight and nine out of ten Ugandans have consistently rejected this alternative form of regime since 2000 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ugandans' Rejection of One-Man Rule over Time



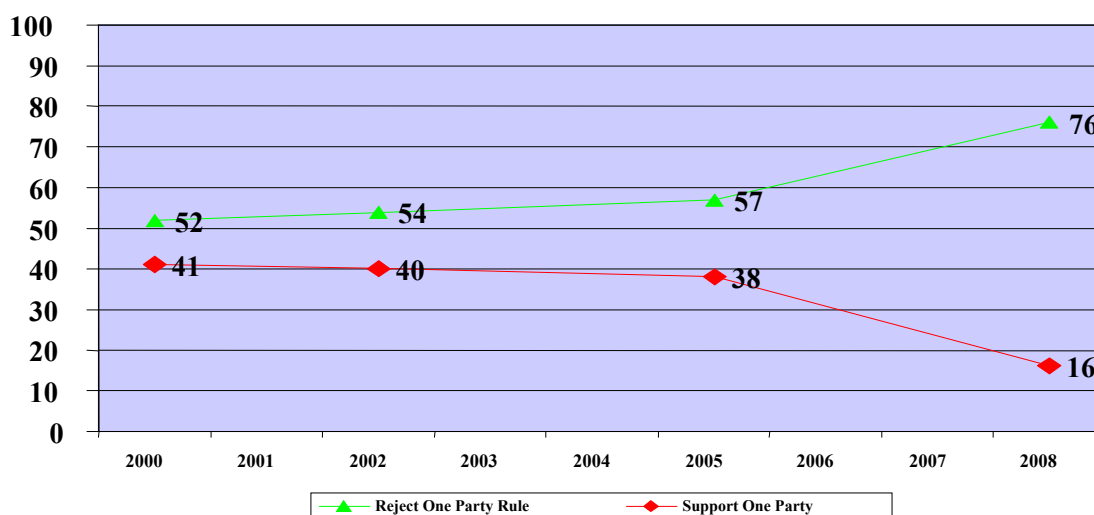
While a high proportion of Ugandans have consistently rejected one man rule, a somewhat reduced majority reject the idea of military rule (78 percent). The rejection of military rule in Uganda lags behind countries like Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Botswana, and is statistically equivalent to Zimbabwe, Cape Verde, Ghana and Lesotho, right about the middle of the Afrobarometer distribution. However, this also represents a significant decline of almost 10 percentage points since 2000. One in ten Ugandans explicitly supports this idea, a position that was supported by as many as 19 percent in 2005 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Ugandans' Rejection of Military Rule Over Time



Three quarters of Uganda (75 percent) also reject the idea of one-party rule. This places Uganda slightly above the middle range of the 20 Afrobarometer countries. In contrast to the downward trends in rejection of military rule, present levels of rejection of one-party rule represent a very sharp increase over previous surveys (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Ugandan’s Rejection of One-Party Rule Over Times

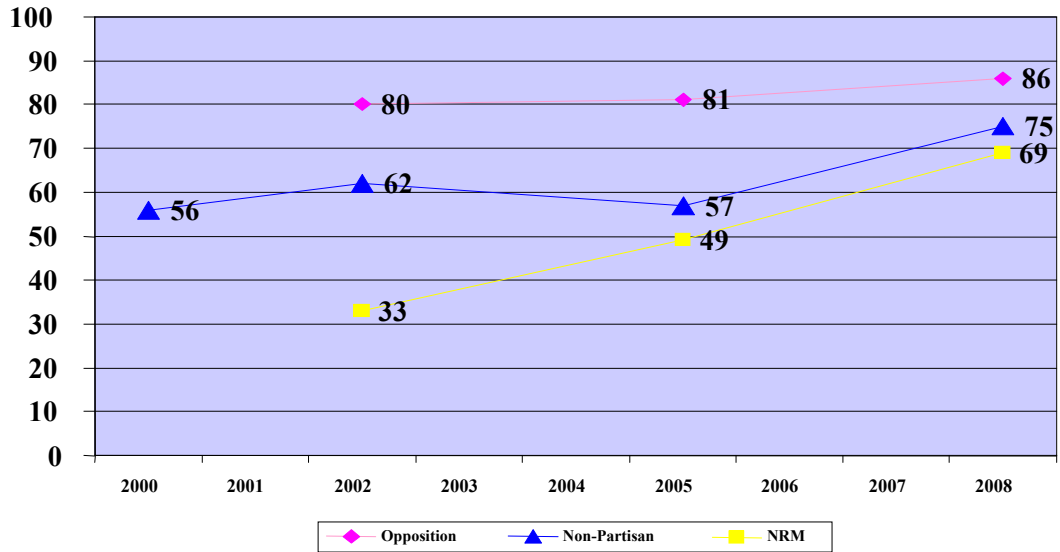


The most obvious explanation for such a drastic increase in the rejection of one party rule is the referendum that was held in 2005 to reintroduce multi-party politics in Uganda. This raises the issue of whether many Ugandans might have preferred multi party elections previously, but felt uncomfortable saying so, or whether they changed their opinion after the referendum. While we delay any detailed analysis of the sources of these attitudes until later, this change is so drastic that we pause to focus on the role of partisan identification to shed light on whether opinion change was broad-based, or concentrated amongst certain groups of voters. Figure 7 shows clearly that rejection of one party rule was, unsurprisingly, always very high amongst those who felt close to an opposition political party, it has also been high amongst those who feel close to no party, or non-partisans, though there was also a sharp increase amongst this group.

However, it is amongst NRM supporters that we see the most drastic increases, and we see them both between 2002 and 2005, as well as after the 2005 referendum.² Thus, it seems that non-partisans either changed their minds, or simply felt freer to reveal their opposition to this type of regime since the referendum. Supporters of the NRM, however, appear to have been changing their minds even before the referendum. A far more detailed examination of internal Movement politics would be required to examine whether opinion change amongst its rank and file pushed it to hold the referendum, or whether the Movement was already busy promoting and conditioning its followers to this option well in advance.

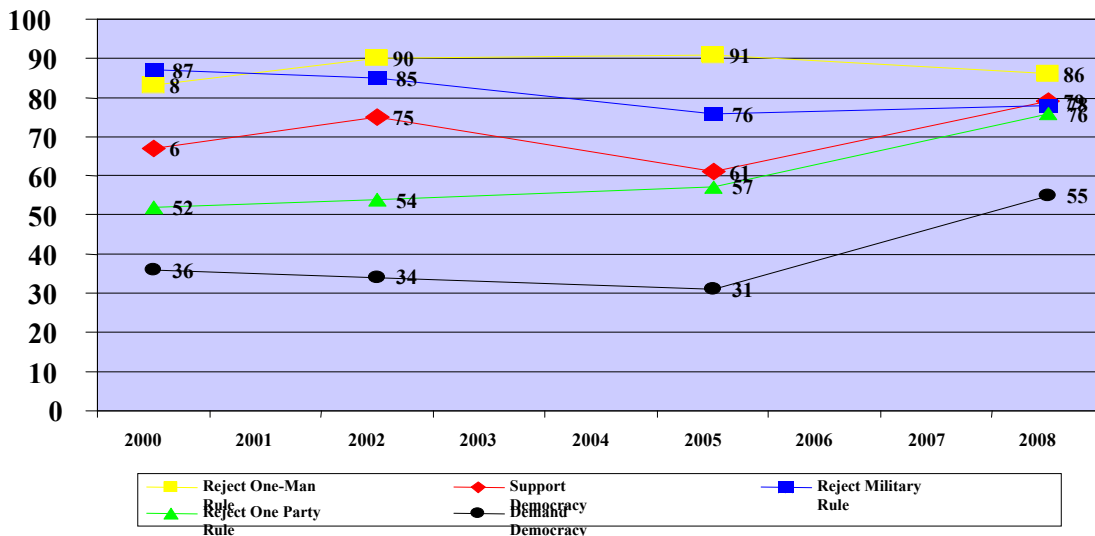
² In 2000, the questionnaire only asked people whether they felt close to any political party, but did not ask the follow-up question of which party.

Figure 7: Reject One Party Rule (by Partisan Identification)



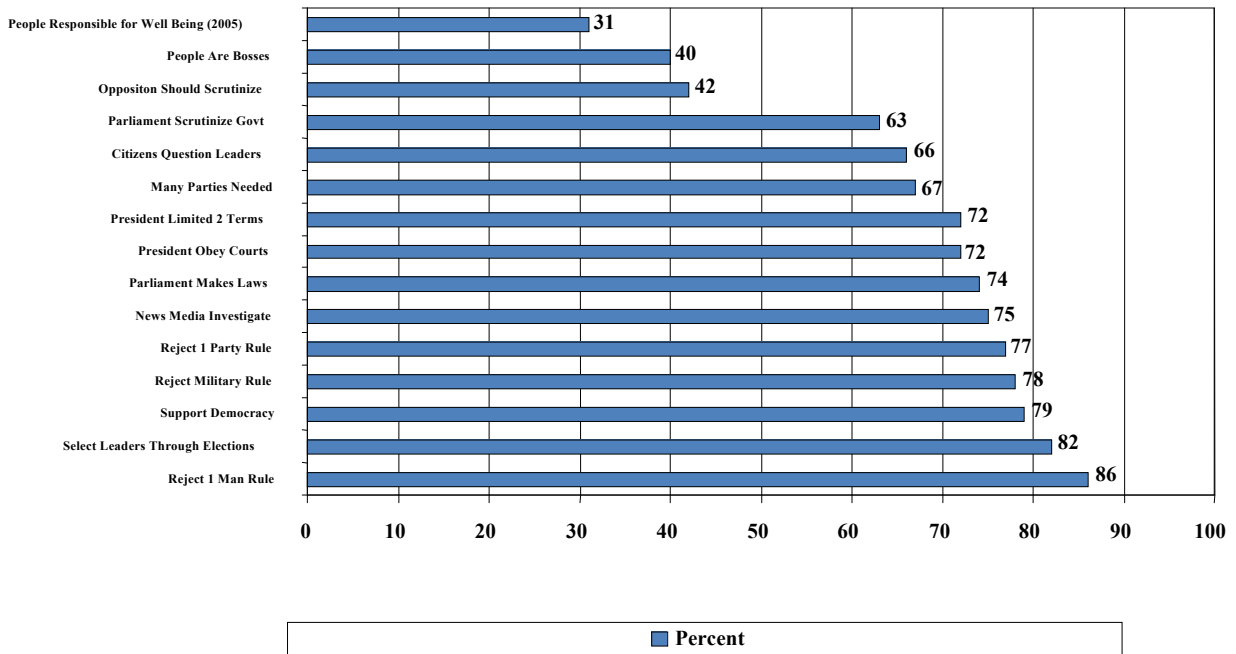
As discussed above, the tougher test of deep popular commitment to democracy is whether citizens both support democracy *and* reject all three authoritarian alternatives. As of 2008, just over one half of Ugandans (55 percent) gave the “democratic” response to all four questions. Largely because of the surge in popular rejection of one party rule, demand for democracy has also jumped sharply from the 30 to 35 percent range of 2000 to 2005 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Ugandan’s Demand for Democracy Over Time



The Afrobarometer also asks a series of questions about various aspects of the democratic process, the responses to which help provide us with a fuller understanding of the extent to which democracy has taken root amongst the Ugandan electorate (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Democratic Attitudes in Uganda



In terms of the key institutions of democracy, Ugandans strongly endorse the idea of *elections* as the source of political authority. Eight in ten Ugandans (82 percent) agree that leaders should be chosen “through regular, open and honest elections,”³. There is also strong, though far from consensual agreement with the idea of *separation of powers and limitations on presidential power*. Three-quarters (74 percent) agree that the elected members of parliament “should make the laws for this country, even if the President does not agree.”⁴ The same proportion (72 percent) say that the “President must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong,”⁵ and also that “the Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.”⁶

There is also fairly widespread support for aspects of both vertical and horizontal accountability. Three quarters (75 percent) believe “the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the government.”⁷ Yet while there is widespread support for elections, many Ugandans

³ 16 percent say that “Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt some other methods for choosing this country’s leaders.”

⁴ 13 percent agree that “Since the President represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what Parliament thinks.”

⁵ 20 percent say “Since the President was elected to lead the country, e should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong.”

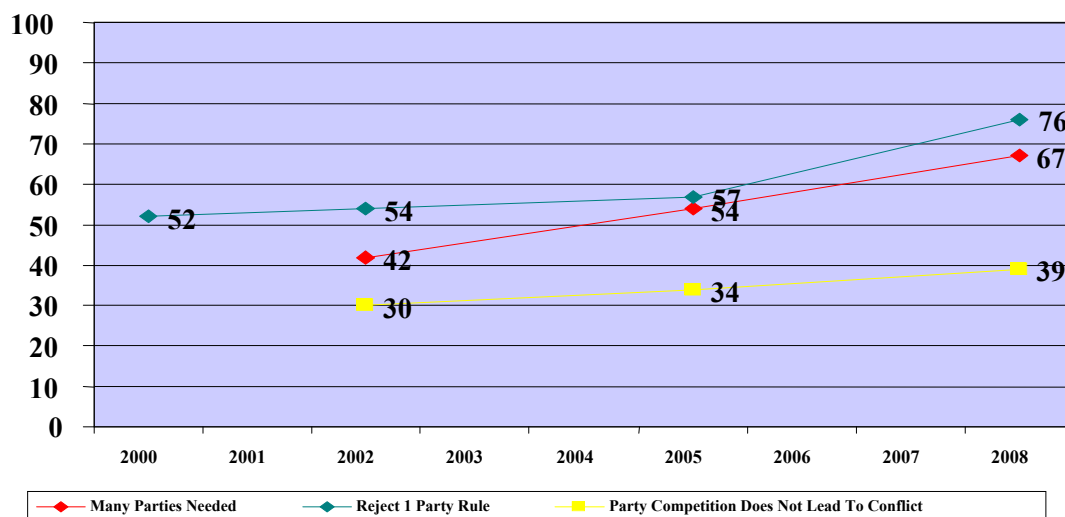
⁶ 11 percent feel “There should be no constitutional limit on how long the President can serve.”

⁷ 20 percent say “Too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country.”

are still not convinced that they should be organized along partisan lines. Just two-thirds (67 percent) agree that “many political parties are needed”⁸ Two thirds (66 percent) also agree that “Citizens should be more active in questioning the actions of leaders”⁹ The same suspicion of opposition politics also affects views of horizontal accountability. While six in ten (63 percent) say that Parliament “should ensure that the President explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends the taxpayers’ money,”¹⁰ just 42 percent say that “Opposition parties should regularly examine and criticize government policies and actions.”¹¹ Yet it is often opposition parties who provide the prime impetus for legislatures to actually hold executive accountable.

Perhaps the weakest area of democratic attitudes comes in the area of individual citizenship. While two thirds think that citizens should question their leaders, just 40 percent agree with the statement that “Government is like an employee; the people should be the bosses who control the government.” In contrast, a clear majority (55 percent) believe that “People are like children; the government should take care of them like a parent.” And in another indicator of citizen agency last asked in the 2005 survey, less than one-third (31 percent) agreed that “people should look after themselves and be responsible for their own success in life,” while fully 67 percent said “The government should bear the main responsibility for the well-being of people.” Taken together with the questions about demand for a democratic regime reported earlier, it is clear that popular support for the idea of plurality and opposition and citizen agency is far lower than support for the idea of elections and limitations on presidential power. At the same time, a review of responses to all of these questions over time shows clearly that the only real movement (greater than 10 percentage points) can be seen in public thinking about opposition parties. As we saw earlier, rejection of one party rule has increased by 24 percentage points since 2000, and the belief that multi-party are necessary to provide meaningful electoral choice has grown by 25 points (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Key Changes in Democratic Attitudes Over Time



⁸ 29 percent agree that “Political parties create division and confusion: it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Uganda.”

⁹ 31 percent agree that “In our country, citizen should show more respect for authority.”

¹⁰ 32 percent say “The President should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions.”

¹¹ 52 percent agree that “Opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating with government and helping it develop the country.”

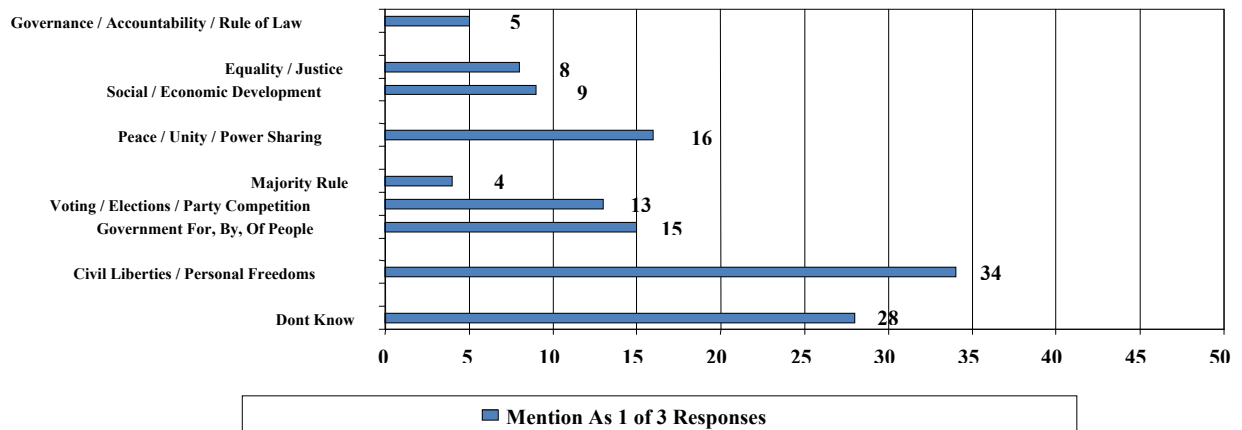
In sum, support for a democratic form of government is now relatively high in Uganda, mainly due to recent sharp increases in endorsement of multi party contestation. Support for key constituent institutions such as elections is very high, and support for various other accountability mechanisms is also relatively strong. But while Ugandans have no problem with the idea of questioning authority, they have yet to grasp the idea of popular sovereignty and still see government in a paternalist light.

How Do Ugandans Understand Democracy?

We have now seen that Ugandans remain ambivalent about the extent of democracy provided by their political regime, but that fairly large majorities prefer democracy to alternative forms of government, and that a solid majority may now be called “committed democrats.” Yet sceptics might argue that under-educated people, many living in rural areas with often limited access to electronic or print media, are insufficiently knowledgeable or experienced about democracy to offer meaningful assessments or preferences. From a different perspective, others would argue that Africans have a unique understanding of democracy that departs in significant ways from the western, procedural based understandings of democracy implied in these questions.

To address these points, we first turn to an item included in both the 2000 and 2005 surveys that asked respondents, “What, if anything does democracy mean to you?” In 2000, 70 percent of Ugandans were able to provide at least one spontaneous meaning, advancing very slightly to 72 percent in 2005 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Ugandans’ Understanding of “Democracy,” 2005



Consistent with other Afrobarometer surveys (Bratton & Mattes, 2001 and 2009), Ugandans who can provide their own meaning of democracy understand it in largely universal terms. In 2005, one third (34 percent) provided an answer that referred to some area of “civil liberty” or “personal freedom” as one of three possible responses. The next most common responses were those referring to some element of “government by the people” (15 percent) or “voting,” “elections” and “party competition” (13 percent). Reflecting Uganda’s recent history, 16 percent gave a response dealing with some element of “peace,” “unity” or “power-sharing.” However, in contrast to arguments that Africans possess a distinct, substantive view of democracy, just 9 percent associated democracy with “social development” or “economic development.” (Figure 11)

Despite quite significant investment in adult civic education, overall levels of basic “democratic literacy” have not moved in any significant way over the past decade: 28 percent were unable to offer their own meaning in 2005, compared to 30 percent in 2000. At the same time, among those who have some idea of democracy, the proportion who can offer two meanings increased three-fold, and the number who provided three meanings advanced by a factor of fifteen between 2000 and 2005. However, we have a good deal of confidence that the key demand and supply constructs discussed above are not “polluted” by respondents who are unable to provide a definition. In the 2005 survey, just 3 percent of those who said they were “fully supplied” could not provide a meaning and just 1 percent of those who “demand” democracy were unable to offer a meaning.

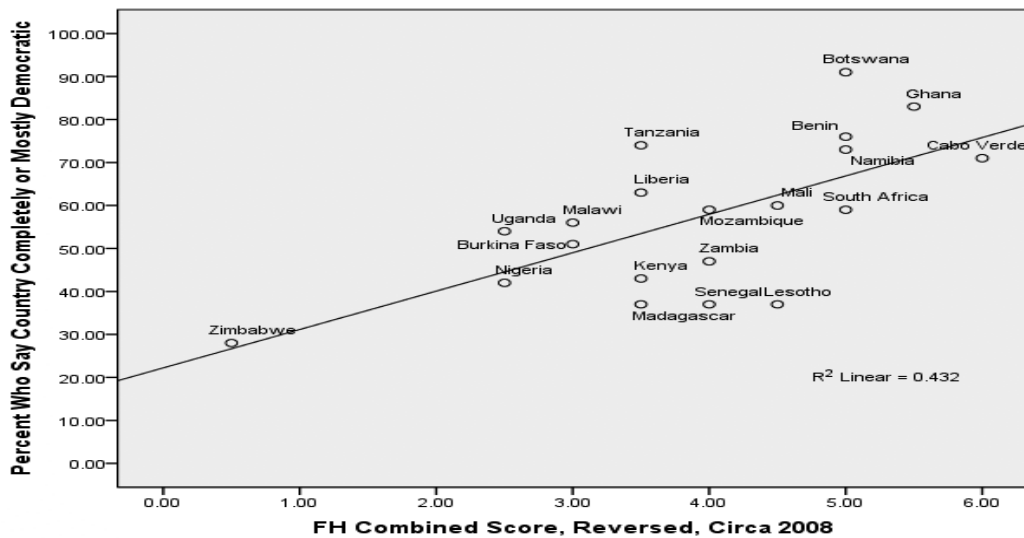
The Afrobarometer conducted a further test for shared meanings of democracy in 2008 with a series of vignettes in which respondents were asked to compare hypothetical African regimes.

- A. Abigail 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 Abigail’s country?
- B. Bernard 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 Bernard’s country?
- C. Cecilia lives in a country with regular elections. It has one big political party and many small ones. People 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 Cecilia’s country?

Eight in ten Ugandans (82 percent) recognized Country A to be a full democracy, or one with minor problems. However, just 46 percent said the same thing about Country B. And just 13 percent called Country C a democracy. Comparing this to the 54 percent who thought Uganda was a democracy in 2008, we can safely conclude that most Ugandans saw Country B as the vignette that came closest to resembling the actual state of affairs in Uganda, that is, a country with fairly broad levels of political freedom, but limited by one party domination. As we shall see below, ordinary citizens’ characterization of Uganda is broadly similar to that of independent international democracy experts.

A third way we check the veracity of people’s attitudes about democracy is to compare their assessments of the extent of democracy with the assessment of independent, international “experts. Figure 12 compares popular assessments of the extent of democracy with the well-known Status of Freedom score published annually by Freedom House. Both indicators are measured in 2008.

Figure 12: Public Perceptions and Freedom House Ratings Compared

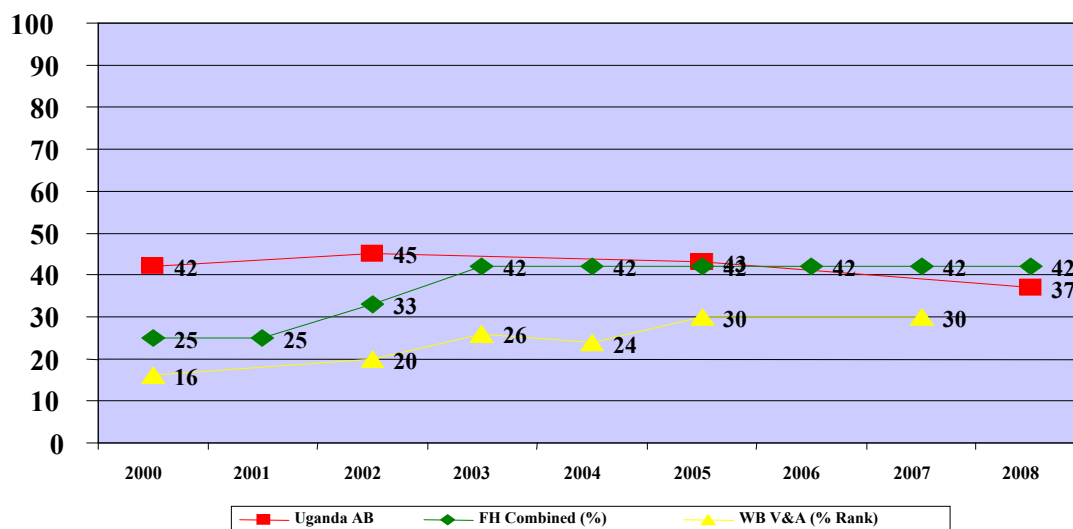


The scatter-plot shows that the international “experts” and African citizens converge on assessments of the level of democracy for countries like Kenya, Mozambique, Mali and Benin. To be sure, the experts think that South Africa is more democratic than do its citizens, and Tanzanians think they have more democracy than professionals would grant. Ugandans are just slightly more optimistic than what we could expect based on international opinion. But, all told, the fit of the country cases to the shared regression line is good.

In a final take on the same question, we compare Ugandans evolving assessments of the extent of democracy with those of Freedom House, as well as the measure of “Voice and Accountability” provided by the World Bank Institute over a common ten year period, 1998 to 2008.¹² All three scores rate the depth of Ugandan democracy below the midpoint of the respective scales. While the Afrobarometer and Freedom House measures both display the same lack of movement over time, the World Bank measure shows a slight increase over time, though starting from a low base (Figure 13).

¹² In order to place the measures on the same metric, we have taken the Freedom House score, reversed it, place it on a scale of 0 to 6 with 6 indicating the highest level of democracy, and then setting 6 equal to 100 percent and 0 to 0 percent. The international percentile score provided by the World Bank measure was used on the same 0 to 100 score.

Figure 13: Comparing Ugandans' and Expert Ratings Over Time

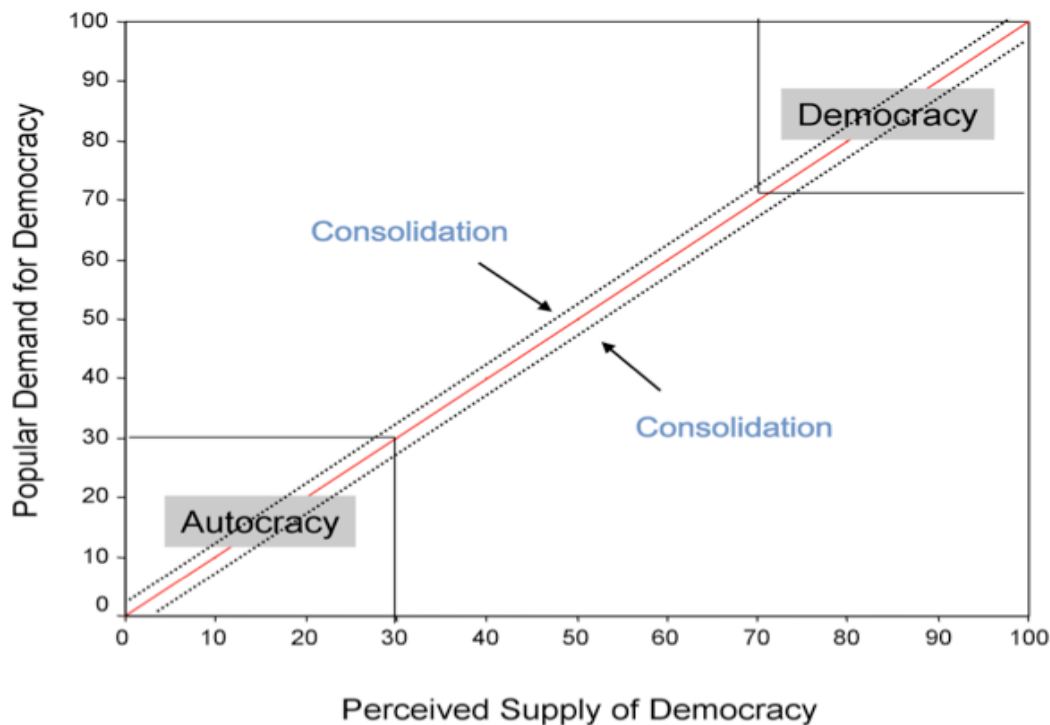


Public Opinion, Democratization and Regime Consolidation in Uganda

Now that we have greater confidence in the attitudes measured by Afrobarometer in Uganda, we turn to an Afrobarometer schematic that we believe provides important information about three different factors: the actual state of progress of democratization in a country and across the continent; the extent to which any regime – not only a democratic one – has consolidated; and the state of public opinion in a given country.

Following the analysis in Mattes and Bratton (2009), we take the indicators of supply and demand that we have already described and chart the percentage of citizens in each country who perceive that democracy is being supplied, and the percentage who actually want, or demand democracy. The diagonal line indicates where these percentages equal one another and thus would represent a kind of equilibrium between how much democracy is being supplied by elites, and how much democracy is being required by the people (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Consolidation of Political Regimes



Assumptions:

1. Intercept line represents consolidated regime (equilibrium of demand and supply)
2. Dotted lines represent margin of sampling error around survey point estimates
3. Equilibrium at 70 percent or higher represents consolidated democracy
4. Equilibrium at 30 percent or lower represents consolidated autocracy
5. Points off intercept line represent unconsolidated regimes

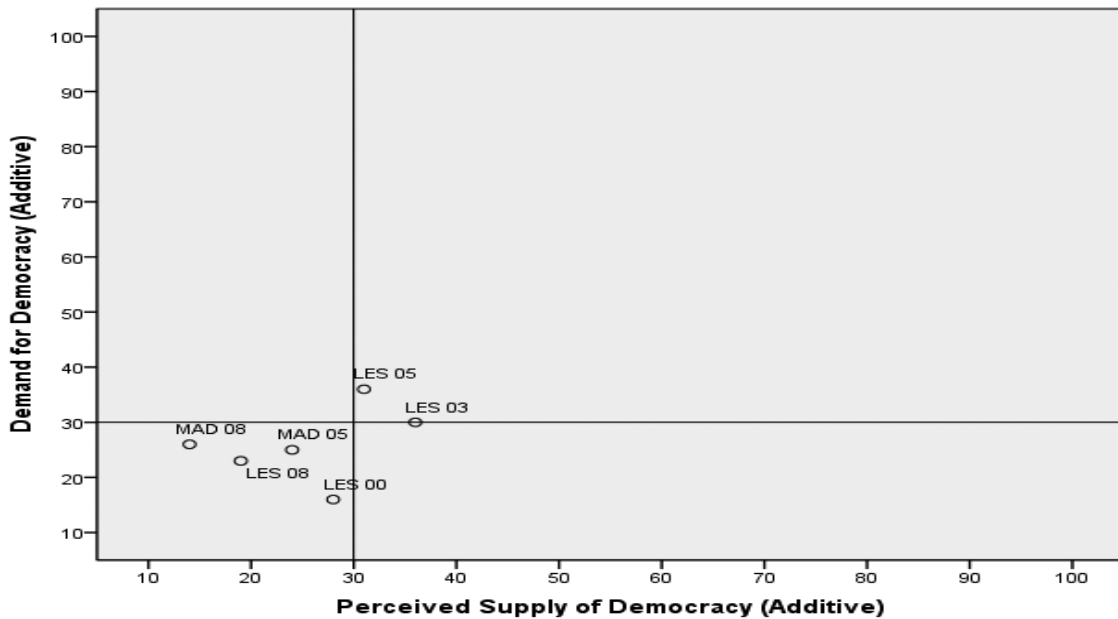
We would expect to find that the most democratic states would be located near the northeast corner of the diagram. We would label the ones which *remain there over a span of several survey years* as consolidated democracies. While we have no established benchmark, we would assume that a consolidated democracy would minimally require that 70 percent or more of the adult population wants this type of regime, and that at least 70 percent think they are getting it (Diamond 1999: 68). When these circumstances occur, we would expect that the probability that democracy will break down is low. We would expect to find autocracies at the opposite end of the spectrum (in the southwest segment). In these regimes, the populace neither demands democracy nor perceives its supply by the state elite (scoring 30 percent or lower in each case). Because strong initiatives for democratization do not emanate from above or below, the regime is caught in a low-level equilibrium trap.

A greater complexity of situations is found, however, between those extremes. We would expect that the countries that are found in between the democracy and autocracy segments would be governed by various types of *hybrid regimes* such as electoral democracies, semi-democracies or electoral autocracies, where citizens perceive neither full democracy nor autocracy but something in between. The first type would be hybrid regimes where demand is in equilibrium with supply. The danger here is that the system may consolidate at an intermediate level lending permanence to an imperfectly democratic regime. The second type would be countries which are found in the southeast portion of the diagram, that is, where people perceived more democracy than they desire. In these types of systems, uncritical citizens may “delegate” a wide range of discretion to their leaders to provide whatever type of governance they deem necessary. Elites may thus have more room to gradually close down democratic spaces and limit political competition with little reaction from its citizenry. The third type would be countries found in the northwest part of the schema,

where demand for democracy outstrips its perceived supply. On the positive side, there may be a sufficient amount of dissatisfied democrats in these countries to ensure that recalcitrant elites do not backtrack on existing democratic practices, and also to push them to provide greater degrees of democracy. On the negative side, such regimes may be prone to greater degrees of instability and even political violence if elites do not accede to public expectations.

We enter the results from all 66 national Afrobarometer surveys conducted since 2000 to find out where countries fall, and whether they fall into any stable and coherent patterns over time within the five regions we discussed above (democracies, autocracies, and the three different types of hybrid regimes). We find that public attitudes in most countries have remained in the same “zone” since 2000, and that relatively few countries have exhibited major change from one zone to another. We find no countries in the “northeast zone,” indicating that nowhere do Africans both insist on democracy at high levels that are matched by its perceived provision. We next look to the opposite end of the diagonal, in the southwest bloc where we might have expected to find only hardened and consolidated autocracies. In fact, the citizens of Madagascar (and perhaps surprisingly, given their ratings by Freedom House) Lesotho, place their political systems in this zone as they neither perceive even a modest level of democracy, nor do they exhibit even modest levels of demand (4 of the 6 results from these two countries fall southwest of the “30-30” supply-demand lines (Figure 15).

Figure15: Autocracies (Lesotho, Madagascar)



Six countries fall broadly in the zone of the equilibrium hybrid regimes where demand equals supply, but at levels higher than autocracy but lower than democracy. At the lower end of the diagonal area, we find Benin, Malawi, Mali and Senegal while at the upper end we tend to see Ghana and Botswana. One could infer from their spatial location that their regimes are consolidating as hybrids that fall short of full democracy. However, there we can also see that Ghana and Botswana have moved considerably during the past decade in the direction of a consolidated democracy (Figure 16). Five countries fall into what might be called a “delegative” zone (Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania) where popular satisfaction with the supply of democracy far outstrips public demand (Figure). And a final set of six

countries consistently display significantly higher levels of demand than supply. This comprises Cape Verde, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia (Figure 18).

Figure 16: Equilibrium Hybrid Regimes (Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal)

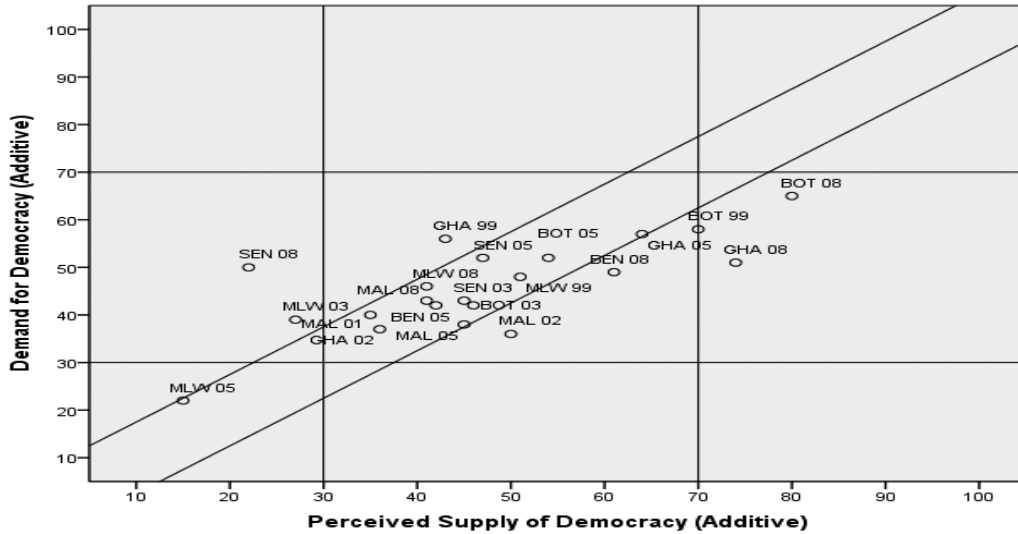
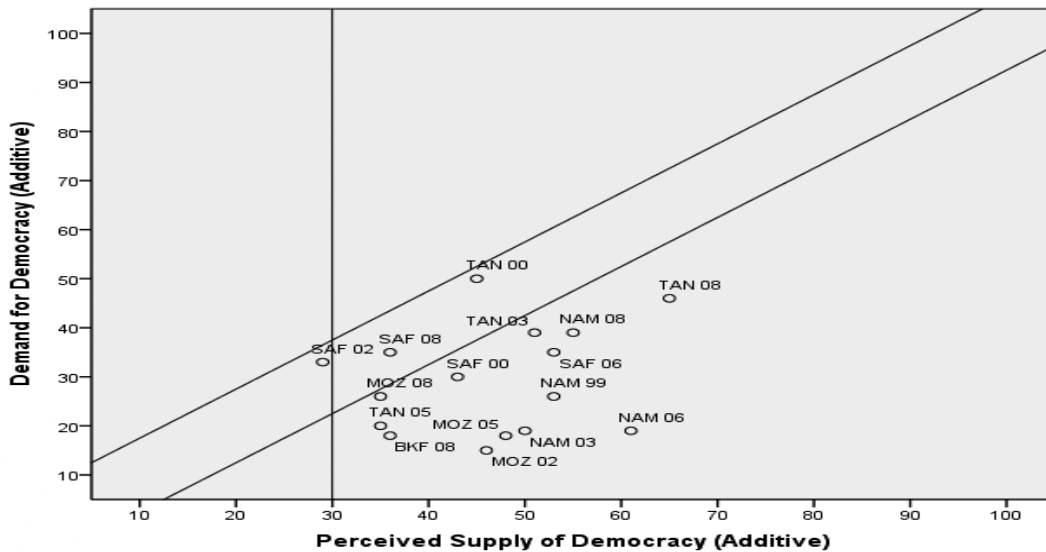


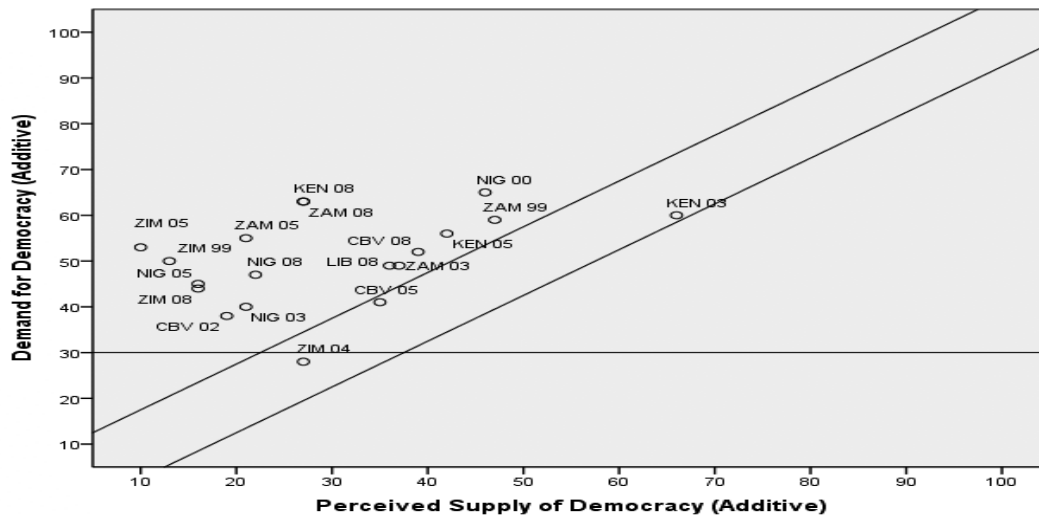
Figure 17: Supply-Led Hybrid Regimes (Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania)



A small subset of countries have undergone significant change *within* one of these attitudinal “zones.” Three countries have moved “backwards.” In Kenya, demand for democracy has risen slightly, but the perceived supply dropped over 40 percentage points, more than in any other country we have examined. As a consequence, a promising new democratic regime in 2003 had unraveled (or “deconsolidated”?) by 2008. Over the same period, Senegal followed a similar trajectory to Kenya. But its citizens have always displayed

lower levels of democratic attitudes. While perhaps more consolidated, the Senegalese regime is a lower quality semi-democracy than even Kenya today. The quality of political regime in Nigeria also declined between 2000 and 2008. But this country experienced setbacks on *both* the demand *and* supply sides. Indeed, the drop-off in popular demand for democracy (18 percentage points) is larger than seen in any other country.

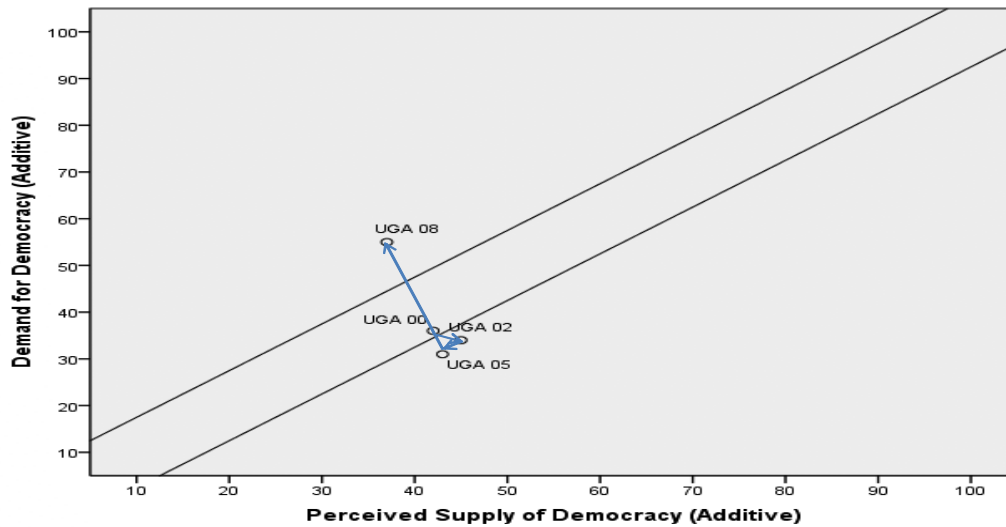
Figure 18: Demand-Led Hybrid Regimes (Cape Verde, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe)



Three other countries have shown considerable “progress.” In Ghana, demand for democracy has held fairly steady (between 51 and 56 percent) between 1999 and 2008. But the general public has substantially revised its opinion of the supply of democracy which they see as rising dramatically (by 30 percentage points over 10 years), perhaps due to a series of well-conducted elections and two peaceful alternations of ruling party. According to our data, Botswana gradually deepened its democracy over the past 10 years. Both demand and supply rose marginally. But, since there is no evidence of a high-level convergence of these two attitudes (and because demand continues to lag behind supply) we conclude that consolidation remains elusive. And even though it begins from an unexpectedly modest start-point, Cape Verde is the only country in the Afrobarometer where demand and supply are both growing substantially (up 13 and 19 points respectively).

We have not yet mentioned Uganda. This is because it displays a unique pattern of political development. It is the only country in the Afrobarometer data set that has moved clearly *across* three zones (Figure 19):

Figure 19: Uganda



In 2000, Uganda found itself in the area of relative hybrid equilibrium. But in 2003 and 2005 it started to resemble the supply led, largely one-party dominant states of Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania. However, once public opinion swung decisively in favour of multi party competition even as supply slipped somewhat, Uganda moved across the diagonal in 2008 to the area of a demand led regime. As we suggested above, this might portend an optimistic view for the future of democracy as political leaders would ideally have to increase the democratic quality of the political system in order to “catch up” with public opinion. At the same time, the presence of a strong popular constituency for democracy might also portend political instability if recalcitrant elites attempt to dig in their heels, stalling or even reversing democratic development.

Drivers of Demand and Supply

Finally, we turn to an assessment of the demographic, behavioural and attitudinal factors that shape why Ugandans want democracy, and why they think they are receiving it. Before moving to a multivariate model which tests the simultaneous effects of these factors, we conduct a preliminary analysis of the demographic of demand and supply. Even if demographic factors ultimately do not turn out to be what drives these attitudes, such a review may be useful if only to help “target” interventions at specific groups or areas, even if the message or the medium may need to be fine tuned.

In terms of popular demand for democracy, the most important demographic indicators appear to be partisan identification, education and gender, as follows:

- Since 2002, *partisanship* has made as much as a 34 percentage point difference in demand for democracy (in 2002) with opposition supporters consistently more demanding than non-partisans, or NRM supporters. The partisan gap closed, however, to just 15 points in 2008, reflecting the discussion above regarding the sharp increases in rejection of one party rule amongst NRM supporters (and to lesser extent non partisan voters) following the 2005 referendum.
- *Education* also appears to play a major role. Collapsing respondent into two groups (those with a minimum of secondary education or higher versus those with only a primary education or less) produces differences of anywhere from 24 points (in 2002) to 13 points in 2008 (possibly also reflecting the narrowing in partisan differences).

- Perhaps reflecting the education divide, *place of residence* and *gender* also matters. Urban dwellers have been 10 to 12 points higher in demand than rural and men have displayed levels of demands 10 to 13 points higher than women.

Regional differences have been less consistent. Respondents living in the Central and East regions have shown higher levels of demand than those from the North and West in the 2000 and again in the 2008 surveys. There were few discernible differences, however, in 2002 and 2005. There are no *religious* differences in 2002 and 2005 (the data is not available from the 2000 survey), but demand increased between 2005 and 2008 amongst Muslim and Protestant respondents more than it did amongst Catholics, opening up a 9 point gap. Perhaps surprisingly, *age* has very little apparent impact. There is little evidence of a new democratic generation amongst those who have received their education since the reintroduction of competitive elections. We detect, however, a slight reversal between 2000 and 2008 where the youngest (who were least supportive in 2000) have now become the most supportive, though the differences are relatively small.

We then move to a multivariate analysis in which we investigate the simultaneous impact of these demographic factors (e.g. are there still gender or rural-urban differences amongst people of the same educational background?). We test the impact of age, place of residence (urban is code as “1”, with rural coded as “0”, or the reference category), gender (male with female as the reference category), partisanship (Opposition supporters and non-partisans each compared with NRM identifiers) and region (Central, East and North, each compared to the West which had the lowest level of support for democracy).

We also wondered about the role of Uganda’s noted associational life and community structure. Thus we test for a block of variables that measure the number of *community groups* to which a person belongs, their level of *participation in community affairs*, and other forms of political participation such as *voting*, *contacting political leaders*, and *protest*. Beyond that, previous research on African public opinion has demonstrated that support for democracy hinges heavily on levels of *cognitive sophistication*, including formal education, but also the extent to which people take an active interest in politics, use news media, and speak to family and friends about politics (Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi 2005). Finally, some scholars have also argued that support for democracy will be based on more instrumental calculations of whether the regime is delivering a range of *economic*, as well as *political goods*.

When all these indices are entered into the same explanatory model, we find that the only demographic factors that ultimately contributes to greater levels of demand for democracy in the 2008 data are gender (men, rather than women), region (residing in the Central region), and partisanship (non partisans and opposition rather than NRM supporters) (Table 1). While performance evaluations matter, standard expectations about instrumental logic (i.e. people will support a regime so long as it delivers the goods) are stood on their head in Uganda. The extent to which satisfaction with the delivery of a basket of political (B or Beta, the standardized regression coefficient = -.124) and economic goods (B=-.060) are *negatively*, rather than positively correlated with demand for democracy (we try and unpack this finding below). It is also important to note that the political factors are twice as important as economic (seen by comparing the standardized regression coefficients, or Bs). However, the single strongest contribution to demand is made by cognitive sophistication (Beta=.201). In other words, it is those Ugandans who have higher levels of education, make greater use of news media, and take an active interest in politics who form the main constituency for democracy.

Table 1: Explaining Ugandans' Demand for Democracy, 2008

	1	2	3	4
	b	b	b	b
	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)
Constant	2.93	2.81	2.47	2.99
Male	.175*** (.113)	.145*** (.094)	.092** (.059)	.081** (.052)
Age	NS	-.014* (-.045)	NS	NS
Urban	.131** (.059)	.135** (.061)	NS	NS
Catholic	NS	NS	NS	NS
Eastern Region	.162*** (.091)	.139*** (.078)	.134* (.075)	NS
Central Region	.264*** (.153)	.272*** (.157)	.251*** (.145)	.178*** (.101)
Northern Region	NS	NS	.108* (.058)	NS
Non Partisan	.083* (.051)	.116*** (.072)	.144*** (.089)	.080* (.049)
Identity W/ Opposition	.282*** (.159)	.286*** (.161)	.252*** (.142)	.142*** (.080)
Participation and Affiliation		.164*** (.112)	NS.	NS
Voted		NS)	NS	NS
Cognitive Awareness			.264*** (.206)	.276*** (.215)
Delivery of Political Goods				-.152*** (-.124)
Delivery of Economic Goods				-.077* (-.060)
N	2420	2420	2420	2279
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	.065	.077	.105	.125

While we know that the level of demand for democracy has changed over time, we re-run this same model for each survey to see if the “drivers” of demand have changed in any appreciable way over the same time span (Table 2). It reveals that only cognitive sophistication, partisanship, region and gender have had consistent impacts in the four surveys since 2000.¹³ The precise impact of “region” however, has varied from survey to survey. Recall that the statistical impact of residing in the East, Central or North should be read in contrast to the excluded category: West. Thus, in each survey, respondents living in one or two of these regions have always substantially higher levels of support than those in the West. Perceptions of political performance have also exercised a consistently strong, and negative impact, but only dating from the 2002 survey. To use the analogy developed by Logan and her colleagues (Logan et al 2003), it is the political “insiders” (i.e., those who support the ruling party, and who reside in the West) who are, and have been, the *least* committed to the democratic regime.

¹³ In 2000, the survey asked respondents whether or not they identified with any political party – which allows us to create a measure of partisanship or non partisanship, but did not ask respondents to declare which party.

Table 2: Explaining Ugandans' Demand for Democracy, Over Time

	2000	2002	2005	2008
	b	b	b	b
	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)
Constant	2.26	2.40	2.48	2.99
Male	.141*** (.083)	.215*** (.123)	.198*** (.113)	.081** (.052)
Age	.018* (.053)	NS	.014* (.040)	NS
Urban	NS	NS	NS	NS
Catholic	NS	NS	NS	NS
Eastern Region	.138** (.070)	.106** (.052)	.105* (.052)	NS
Central Region	.424*** (.224)	NS	NS	.178*** (.101)
Northern Region	NS	.112* (.054)	.111* (.053)	NS
Non Partisan	.164*** (.087)	.101** (.056)	.097** (.054)	.080* (.049)
Identify W/ Opposition	--	.140* (.054)	.139* (.054)	.142*** (.080)
Participation and Affiliation	.110*** (.116)	.169*** (.094)	.381*** (.212)	NS
Vote	NS	--	-.114** (-.160)	NS
Cognitive Awareness	.220*** (.160)	.471*** (.298)	.438*** (.277)	.276*** (.215)
Delivery of Political Goods	NS	-.245*** (-.155)	-.236*** (-.149)	-.152*** (-.124)
Delivery of Economic Goods	-.126*** (-.099)	NS	-.067* (-.045)	-.077* (-.060)
N	2200	2393	2393	2279
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	.141	.201	.212	.125

We used as broad aggregate indicators as possible in the model reflected in Tables 1 and 2. We now turn to “unpack” the broad indices of cognitive sophistication, economic performance and political performance, and participation and affiliation by entering into the model their individual constituent indicators and keeping the rest of the overall model exactly the same (using the 2008 survey results) (Tables 3, 4 and 5 report only the coefficients for these variables, not the entire model). A focus on the constituent cognitive sophistication predictors demonstrates that *formal education* and watching *television news* and listening to *radio news* (but not, surprisingly, reading newspapers) have the greatest positive impact on demand (Table 3).

Shifting focus to the performance evaluations, we find that positive assessments of the *government's macro-economic performance* (e.g. growth, prices, unemployment), *government transparency* (e.g. freedom from corruption) and the *perceived fairness of elections and the freedom from political fear during elections* have the strongest impact on Demand, though all these assessments actually *reduce* demand for democracy (Table 4). Thus, far from going along with democracy simply because it suits their interests, it is those Ugandans who are *least* satisfied with economic reform, and those who have the *lowest* levels of political security and confidence in the probity of the state who display the greatest expressed desire for democracy. In other words, Ugandan democrats see democracy as way to protect themselves against the effects of bad governance. Finally, we see in Table 5 that all the various parts of the participation and affiliation construct (except protest) have an impact on demand for democracy. That is, those Ugandans who belong to community groups, who vote, and take part in local level politics (attending meetings and getting together

with neighbours to solve problems) have higher levels of demand. Perhaps surprisingly, those people who regularly contact elected and party officials are less likely to demand democracy.

Table 3: Unpacking Cognitive Sophistication and Demand for Democracy, 2008

	b (Beta)
Constant (For Overall Model)	2.87
Formal Education	.108*** (.120)
Cognitive Engagement	NS
Read Newspapers	NS
Listen to Radio News	.087*** (.096)
Watch TV News	.096*** (.133)
N	2420
Adjusted R ² (For Overall Model)	.136

Table 4: Unpacking Performance Evaluations and Demand for Democracy, 2008

	b (Beta)
Constant (For Overall Model)	2.92
Political Freedom	NS
Presidential Approval and Trust	NS
Government Handling of Crime and Corruption	NS
Institutional Trust	NS
Quality of Elections: Representation and Accountability	NS
Quality of Elections: Freedom From Fear	-.045* (-.048)
Government Transparency	-.052** (-.058)
Lived Poverty	NS
Satisfaction With Economic Conditions	NS
Satisfaction With Government Macro-Economic Performance	-.150*** (-.157)
Satisfaction With Government Micro-Economic Performance	NS
N	2420
Adjusted R ² (For Overall Model)	.137

Table 5: Unpacking Participation and Affiliation and Demand for Democracy, 2008

	b (Beta)
Constant (For Overall Model)	
Associational Affiliation	.056** (.058)
Voted	(.040*** (.072)
Community Participation	.051** (.064)
Protest	NS
Contacting Leaders	-.090 (-.076)
N	2419
Adjusted R ² (For Overall Model)	.132

Finally, we attempt to model the perceived supply of democracy. The largest demographic differences in perceived supply occur with respect to *region* and *partisanship*. Religion, age, gender, education and urban/rural distinctions appear to make no consistent difference.

- At least since 2002, respondents from the West have displayed the most optimistic assessments of democracy, and those from the North the most pessimistic.
- NRM supporters have been far more satisfied with the state of democracy than non partisans or Opposition supporters.

We then use the same model we tested against demand for democracy to explain the perceived supply of democracy (Table 6). We find that the most important demographic predictors which remain after controlling for other simultaneous influences are partisanship (Opposition identifiers are far less satisfied), and region (Central and Northern residents are less satisfied). with more minor negative impacts of being non-partisan, living in the Central region, and being male. People who live in the East are more optimistic than other Ugandans. Cognitive sophistication appears to make people more critical about the performance of democracy, though the impact is slight. The strongest impact by far are exercised by performance evaluations. And, as with demand for democracy, political evaluations matter far more than economic ones. But in contrast to demand, positive assessments of governance lead to *more* optimistic assessments of democracy overall. To return to the “outsider-insider” analogy, we see a reversal of the situation for supply that we saw with demand: that is, political “outsiders” (i.e. non partisans and opposition supporters, residents of the North and Central, and those who are dissatisfied with government performance) are more critical of the performance of the over-arching democratic regime as well.

Examining this model over time, we find that performance evaluations and partisanship have exercised consistently strong effects. At the same time, we detect a steadily growing impact of political evaluations (which can be seen by comparing the b’s, or un-standardized regression coefficients of each variable across time) (Table 7).

Table 6: Explaining Ugandans' Perceived Supply of Democracy, 2008

	1	2	3	4
	b	b	b	b
	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)
Constant	2.80	2.74	2.79	-0.51
Male	-.124** (-.054)	-.136** (-.059)	-.127*** (-.055)	NS
Age	NS	NS	NS	NS
Urban	NS	NS	NS	NS
Catholic	NS	NS	NS	NS
Eastern Region	NS	-.126* (-.047)	-.125* (-.047)	.NS
Central Region	-.468*** (-.183)	-.465*** (-.181)	-.461*** (-.180)	-.138* (-.054)
Northern Region	-.268*** (-104)	-.294*** (-106)	-.305*** (-110)	-.145* (-.053)
Non Partisan	-.5485*** (-.228)	-.535*** (-.223)	-.540*** (-.225)	-.239*** (-.099)
Identity W/ Opposition	-.904*** (-.344)	-.903*** (-.344)	-.897*** (-.341)	-.384*** (-.146)
Participation and Affiliation		NS	NS	NS
Vote		NS	.NS	NS
Cognitive Awareness			NS	-.084* (-.044)
Deliver of Political Goods				.784*** (.431)
Delivery of Economic Goods				.227*** (.119)
N	2420	2420	2420	2420
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	.156	.158	.158	.355

Table 7: Explaining Ugandans' Perceived Supply of Democracy, Over Time

	2000	2002	2005	2008
	b	b	b	b
	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)	(Beta)
Constant	0.00	-0.554	0.95	-0.51
Male	NS	NS	NS	NS
Age	NS	NS	-.022* (-.055)	NS
Urban	NS	NS	-.241*** (-.077)	NS
Catholic	NS	NS	NS	NS
Eastern Region	.136* (.055)	NS	-.203*** (-.085)	NS
Central Region	NS	NS	NS	-.138* (-.054)
Northern Region	-.389*** (-.141)	NS	-.241*** (-.098)	-.145* (-.053)
Non Partisan	NS	-.327*** (-.152)	-.237*** (-.112)	-.239*** (-.099)
Identify W/ Opposition	--	-.605*** (-.188)	-.549*** (-.180)	-.384*** (-.146)
Participation and Affiliation	.100** (.084)	.231*** (.094)	NS	NS
Vote	-.065* (-.073)	--	NS	NS
Cognitive Awareness	.124*** (.072)	-.236*** (-.126)	NS	-.084* (-.044)
Delivery of Political Goods	.512*** (.309)	.563*** (.315)	.580*** (.310)	.784*** (.431)
Delivery of Economic Goods	.307*** (.192)	.460*** (.241)	.174*** (.100)	.227*** (.119)
N	2172	2365	2393	2420
Adjusted R ²	.275	.367	.276	.355

Lastly, we “unpack” the larger aggregate constructs of political and economic performance evaluations in search of greater guidance for democracy assistance programming (Table 8). Strong impacts are exercised by positive evaluations of the President and trust in government institutions. This, taken together with the impacts of partisan identification described above, reveals that people evaluate the supply of democracy through partisan-coloured lenses. However, they do not only pay attention to whether their party is in or out of power, they also look to the actual quality of democratic institutions. Holding constant for partisanship and views of the President, those Ugandans who perceive a healthy supply of political freedom and who believe their elections are fair and free from fear and intimidation, are also far more likely to believe that democracy is being actually being delivered.

Table 8: Unpacking Performance Evaluations and Supply of Democracy, 2008

	b (Beta)
Constant (For Overall Model)	0.32
Political Freedom	.201 (.148)
Presidential Approval and Trust	.134*** (.139)
Government Handling of Crime and Corruption	NS
Institutional Trust	.138*** (.119)
Quality of Elections: Responsiveness and Accountability	NS
Quality of Elections: Freedom From Fear	.187*** (.137)
Government Transparency	.107*** (.080)
Lived Poverty	NS
Government Micro Economic Performance	.086** (.065)
Satisfaction With Economic Conditions	.091** (.064)
Government Macro Economic Performance	.096** (.068)
N	2393
Adjusted R ² (For Overall Model)	.372

Programming Implications?

What implications for democracy assistance in Uganda can be derived from these various findings? This is a complex question if only because of the recent evolution of the profile of attitudes toward democracy in Uganda. Uganda's initial position on the Demand-Supply property space to the south of the 45 degree diagonal would ordinarily imply a focus on "demand-side" interventions such as civic education and advocacy training. However, its recent position to the north of this diagonal would suggest a focus on "supply-side" interventions strengthening government institutions to help them protect human rights and the rule of law, deliver quality elections, and provide accountability and representation. However, it would be premature to conclude that Uganda's recent moves on this space are irreversible. Demand for democracy has only increased substantially in recent years because initiatives taken by the ruling party have convinced their supporters, at least for now, that multi-party competition is acceptable. And while Uganda now has one of the highest levels of demand in Africa, it is still relatively quite modest. Thus, "demand side" work needs to continue.

Over the long haul, one clear strategy to increase the size of the constituency for democracy would be to expand formal educational opportunities through-out the school system. Not only will this have benefits in and of itself, but should also produce a democratic dividend. The payoff, however, would clearly lie several years down the road.

In the medium term, our results suggest that greater attention to the content of the curriculum could pay dividends. One of the reasons that democracy consolidated in post-authoritarian countries like Germany, Austria, Italy, Japan and Spain was a concerted effort through the school system to reform the curricula and turn out a new generation of democratic citizens. Yet it is important to note that the results indicated that while the extent of formal education increases demand in Uganda, age had no real impact. In other words, there is nothing in the present school curriculum that makes recent school leavers more likely to support democracy than older folk. While considerable resources have been spent on adult civic education,

democracy education that is embedded into the everyday school curriculum, or if necessary as “stand-alone workshops” might take longer to bear fruit, but produce a far greater yield a few years down road.

A second medium term area of potential payoff could be in expanding access to television, especially independent networks or stations. While we found that getting news from television increases demand, just 20 percent of all Ugandans say they watch television news every day or a few times a week. And the urban-rural gap is enormous with 67 percent of urban respondents frequently using television compared to just 12 percent of rural.

In the near term, our results suggest a number of possible areas of intervention. Our finding that newspaper readership makes no contribution to democratic demand is extremely atypical of research elsewhere in Africa and around the world. While papers reach a relatively small audience in Uganda (just 20 percent read them frequently, but 56 percent in urban areas), support for print journalism could begin with a thorough examination of how Uganda’s newspapers actually cover politics. This might help to explain Uganda’s anomalous results, but then go on to address shortfalls through training and support for journalists.

While civic education should clearly continue, what do our results say about its content? First, programs should – if nothing else – simply increase citizens’ basic factual knowledge of who their elected leaders are and how democratic government works. While we did not test these variables here because they were not available in the most recent Uganda survey, previous Afrobarometer research clearly shows that such knowledge helps people use the information they acquire from the news media and conversations with friends and neighbours in more constructive ways. Second, previous research also shows that people will come to value democracy to the extent that they understand it as a set of institutions and processes designed to represent citizens and hold leaders accountable, rather than as a way to achieve larger substantive ends like creating unity or transforming the economy. Indeed, this is reflected in our findings that Ugandans who are least satisfied with the current state of governance are the most demanding of democracy. Obviously, the goal of civic education would not be to make more people dissatisfied and insecure; rather it should be to sensitize those who are currently content with the state of governance – and who presumably support the party in power – to the possibility that they may one day find themselves on the losing side of the political game, and that democracy offers the best guarantee that they will be allowed to continue to play the game and hold the other side to account.

Third, civic education needs to help alleviate concerns about the role of pluralism and partisan competition. One way to do this might be to emphasize the role of criticism and a loyal opposition in a democracy, possibly contrasting this with the actions of previous party leaders which in the past led to violence and civil war. Needless to say, any interventions with parties in general, and opposition parties in particular, which helps them do a better job in providing real alternatives in a peaceful manner will promote the same objective. Lastly, while Ugandans clearly seem to understand the need to limit political power, civic education needs to promote the idea of the ordinary citizen as an agent with the duty to control government, rather than simply a subject or client.

Given that few donors would have the resources for a program substantial enough to achieve significant attitude change amongst the overall electorate, adult education programs need to be closely targeted to areas of greatest need. Based on our results, an ideal target group might be to work with women’s groups and/or other organizations that might be part of the larger structure of the ruling party, and based in rural areas, particularly those in the Western region of the country.

Yet Uganda’s recent position on the demand-supply matrix suggests that its political institutions are now falling behind public opinion, suggesting new emphases on the “supply side” of democracy. Clearly, the task is not one of convincing Ugandans that they ought to be more satisfied than they presently are, if only because they reach the same general conclusions as international experts. Rather, the task it is to get the country’s institutions to deliver more public goods. And because we found that popular assessments of the current state of democracy have very little to do with economic satisfaction, there is--at least for now--no

need for governments or donors to attempt to do “hard things” such as transforming the economy, reducing poverty, or rapidly accelerating the delivery of services in order to save democracy. Rather, popular assessments of democracy will be bolstered to the extent that government can do relatively “simple things” like increasing the quality of the electoral process, enabling people to participate without fear, and reducing levels of corruption.

The particular role of electoral quality is reflected not only in the Uganda findings, but in previous cross national Afrobarometer research as well as a longitudinal analysis conducted by Greenberg (2008) who found that popular evaluations of freeness and fairness are highly correlated with expert international judgments, and that a flawed election between any pair of Afrobarometer surveys systematically reduces the perceived supply of democracy (as well as increase its demand) in the latter survey. Given Ugandan’s mixed evaluations of the 2006 elections, the fact that another election is looming in 2011, and that the degree of electoral competition has been steadily increasing, helping Uganda deliver an election campaign free from intimidation and fear, and an election result which is accepted by all political parties might be the most immediate and cost effective way to sustain and increase popular assessments of democracy.

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