

Neither Consolidating Nor Fully Democratic: The Evolution of African Political Regimes, 1999-2008

Although public attitudes toward democracy are on the rise, few of Africa's diverse political regimes are consolidated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The central questions addressed in this bulletin concern the fate of democracy, especially as seen by Africans themselves. Do they say they *want* democracy, a preference that we call the popular demand for democracy? And do they think they are *getting* it, that is, do they perceive that their leaders are providing a supply of democracy? Moreover, if there is evidence of democratic development in Africa, to what extent are democratic regimes established, stable, or *consolidated*? We examine whether or not various countries are approaching a stable equilibrium between demand and supply – that is, whether they are consolidating – and if so, whether they are doing so as democracies at high levels of both demand and supply, as autocracies at low levels of both, or as hybrid regimes at intermediate levels.

Afrobarometer Round 4 conducted public attitude surveys in 19 countries during 2008. We also report some results from a 2005 survey in Zimbabwe (since a new survey was not possible during 2008). The key findings are summarized below, and described in full in the text that follows.

Demand for Democracy

Our indicator of *demand for democracy* combines both 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. We find that:

- Overall, across 19 countries in 2008, support for democracy stands at 70 percent, but there is wide variability, from 39 percent in Madagascar, to 85 percent in Botswana.
- On average, 75 percent reject military rule, 73 percent reject a one-party system, and 79 percent reject strongman rule.
- However, only 57 percent of respondents reject *all three* alternatives to democracy, and fewer than half (45 percent) fully demand democracy by *both* rejecting the three alternatives and explicitly supporting democracy.
- Across the 11 countries that we can track over at least four surveys since 1999, there is a consistent pattern in demand for democracy and its component parts. Demand for democracy started at 44 percent in the first set of surveys, then dropped to 36 and 37 percent in the next two series. It has gained 10 points since 2005, up to a high of 47 percent for these 11 countries in 2008, but it still remains a minority position.

Supply of Democracy

Our indicator of the perceived *supply of democracy* combines those who say that they think their country *is* a democracy (i.e., those who say their country is either fully democratic, or a democracy with only minor problems), with those who say they are either “fairly” or “very satisfied” with “the way democracy works” in their country. We find that:

- Across 19 countries in 2008, an average of 59 percent of all Africans interviewed believed that they lived in a full or almost full democracy, ranging from 91 percent of Botswana to a mere 14 percent of Zimbabweans (in 2005).
- Satisfaction with democracy is lower, averaging 49 percent across 19 countries.
- The perceived supply of democracy, i.e., those who *both* believe that their country is a democracy, and are fairly satisfied with it, averages 41 percent across 19 countries.
- Across the 11 countries that we can track since 1999, satisfaction with democracy has declined by 5 percentage points, from 61 percent circa 1999 to 56 percent in 2008, while the perceived extent of democracy has risen by a similar margin, from 58 to 63 percent.
- The combined measure of supply of democracy follows a similar path to demand. It started at a high of 46 percent in Round 1, fell to 39 and 40 percent in 2002 and 2005, respectively, and has now climbed again back to the starting level of 46 percent in 2008.

Regime Consolidation

A regime is “consolidated” when there is *sustained* balance between demand and supply. High-level equilibrium – both at 70 percent or more – indicates a consolidated democracy. Low-level equilibrium – both below 30 percent – suggests a consolidated autocracy. Between these two are hybrid regimes that exhibit some features of democracy but which are not fully democratic.

Regimes that are not in equilibrium are *unconsolidated*. Either demand for democracy outstrips the perceived supply, in which case citizens are likely to pressure their governments for continuing economic reforms, or instead supply runs ahead of popular demand, leaving elites room to manipulate the rules of the democratic game. Because of the imbalance between supply and demand, unconsolidated regimes are prone to instability.

Africa’s political regimes are extremely *diverse* in terms of where they fall on the demand-supply spectrum:

- There are *no consolidated democracies* in our sample, although Botswana comes closest, with popular demand at 65 percent, and perceived supply at 80 percent.
- In contrast, Lesotho appears to be settling in as a *consolidated autocracy*, with demand at just 23 percent in 2008, and a mere 18 percent perceiving substantial supply.
- Most political regimes in Africa are *unconsolidated hybrid systems*.
 - In countries like Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, citizens demand more democracy than elites are willing to supply. Zimbabwe in 2005 has the largest gap between demand (53 percent) and supply (10 percent).
 - In countries like Namibia and Tanzania, governments supply more democracy than citizens really want. In Burkina Faso, supply of democracy (36 percent) exceeds demand (18 percent) by a factor of two to one.
- The demand-supply trajectories of various countries over time show that:
 - Declining regimes include Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and Senegal.
 - Advancing regimes include Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, and Uganda

In sum, there is both good and bad news. The good news is that democratic attitudes are generally on the rise among the African populations we have surveyed. If sustained, this up-tick is a promising portent for further democratization. But the bad news is that fewer than half of all Africans interviewed demand democracy and perceive its supply when these indicators are measured rigorously. As such, the project of democracy building still has a long way to go.

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Introduction

Almost 20 years have passed since the Berlin Wall came down, an event that was followed in sub-Saharan Africa by pressures for political liberalization and by transitions to multiparty rule. In addition, more than 10 years have elapsed since the Afrobarometer embarked on a pioneering effort (starting in Ghana in July 1999) to conduct surveys of public opinion about these changes. As democratic experiments have spread across the sub-continent, the Afrobarometer Network – an international consortium of researchers¹ – has since accumulated interviews with over 105,000 Africans in four rounds of surveys in up to 20 countries.²

The time is ripe, therefore, to assess the current state of political development in these countries and to track changes in public attitudes that have occurred over the past decade (1999-2008). The central question concerns the fate of democracy, especially as seen by Africans themselves.³ Do they say they *want* democracy, a preference that we call the popular demand for democracy? And do they think they are *getting* it, that is, do they perceive that their leaders are providing a supply of democracy? Moreover, if there is evidence of democratic development in Africa, to what extent are democratic regimes established, stable, or *consolidated*?

Of course, it would be a mistake to see African politics exclusively through the lens of democracy. After all, most African countries have had limited experience with a form of political regime more commonly associated with the mature democracies of the West. For this reason, we wish to keep an open mind about whether political regimes in Africa are best characterized as democracies or whether they fall short. After all, regimes may survive in various forms, including as autocracies or as hybrid regimes that are neither fully authoritarian nor fully democratic.

With reference to particular countries, this briefing arrives at three conclusions:

- (a) that Africa is characterized by a *diversity of political regimes*;
- (b) that most political regimes in Africa are *unconsolidated hybrid systems*; and,
- (c) that some political regimes are *consolidating*, but not always as democracies.

The presentation unfolds in three parts. Using Afrobarometer Round 4 surveys conducted in 2008,⁴ we first measure *demand for democracy* across countries and over time. Second, we

¹ The Afrobarometer is a joint enterprise of the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP, Benin). Fieldwork, data entry, preliminary analysis, and the dissemination of survey results are conducted by National Partner organizations in each African country. Michigan State University and the University of Cape Town provide technical and advisory support services.

² Fieldwork for Round 4 Afrobarometer surveys was conducted in 19 African countries between March and December 2008. Due to state-sponsored violence, a Round 4 survey could not be conducted in Zimbabwe during 2008; instead this bulletin refers to results from the Round 3 survey in Zimbabwe of October 2005. Also note that all findings from Zambia should still be considered provisional; final results will be released in mid-2009.

³ In general, Afrobarometer surveys can only be conducted in the continent's most open societies. Hence the results do not represent the continent – or all Africans – as a whole.

follow the same steps for Africans' perceptions of the *supply of democracy*. In the third and final section we present an *equilibrium model of regime consolidation*, which locates 20 countries in Africa in relation both to regime type and to degree of consolidation.

The Meaning of “Democracy”

Before attempting to measure popular attitudes to democracy, we must ensure that respondents to Afrobarometer surveys have a similar object in mind. We offer evidence to suggest that Africans regard democracy in reasonably standard fashion. When asked in 1999 and 2005, “what, if anything does democracy mean to you?” three quarters could offer a definition. Respondents in almost all countries ranked personal liberty in first place, with a consistent average of 41 percent mentioning liberty in both surveys. The next most common substantive meaning was “government by the people,” being mentioned by 16 and 10 percent respectively in 1999 and 2005. And the rank order of meanings was virtually identical across all countries.⁵

To further test for shared meanings in 2008, we asked respondents to compare two hypothetical African regimes. Is Country A (with free speech, multiparty competition, and electoral turnover of leaders) more or less democratic than Country C (with restricted speech, a dominant party and regular reelection of incumbents)? Some 71 percent of respondents ranked Country A as more democratic and only 3 percent as less democratic than Country C.⁶ To be sure, popular understandings of democracy are not yet universal. But these results suggest that Africans share enough of an emergent consensus to allow valid and reliable comparisons of mass attitudes to political regimes.

Popular Demand for Democracy

Do Africans say they *want* democracy? To start, the Afrobarometer asks a standard question, the wording of which is given at the bottom of Figure 1. Respondents who say that, “democracy is preferable to any other kind of government” are deemed to support democracy.

In 2008, an average of 70 percent of Africans interviewed in 19 countries expressed support for democracy.⁷ But there was considerable cross-national variation around this mean value, ranging from 85 percent support in Botswana to 39 percent support in Madagascar. This cross-national distribution of opinion accords with each population's political experience: Botswana apparently derive their regime preferences from more than 40 years of stable multiparty rule, whereas Malagasy convey concern over a recent history of irregular elections, mass protests, and non-constitutional power grabs.

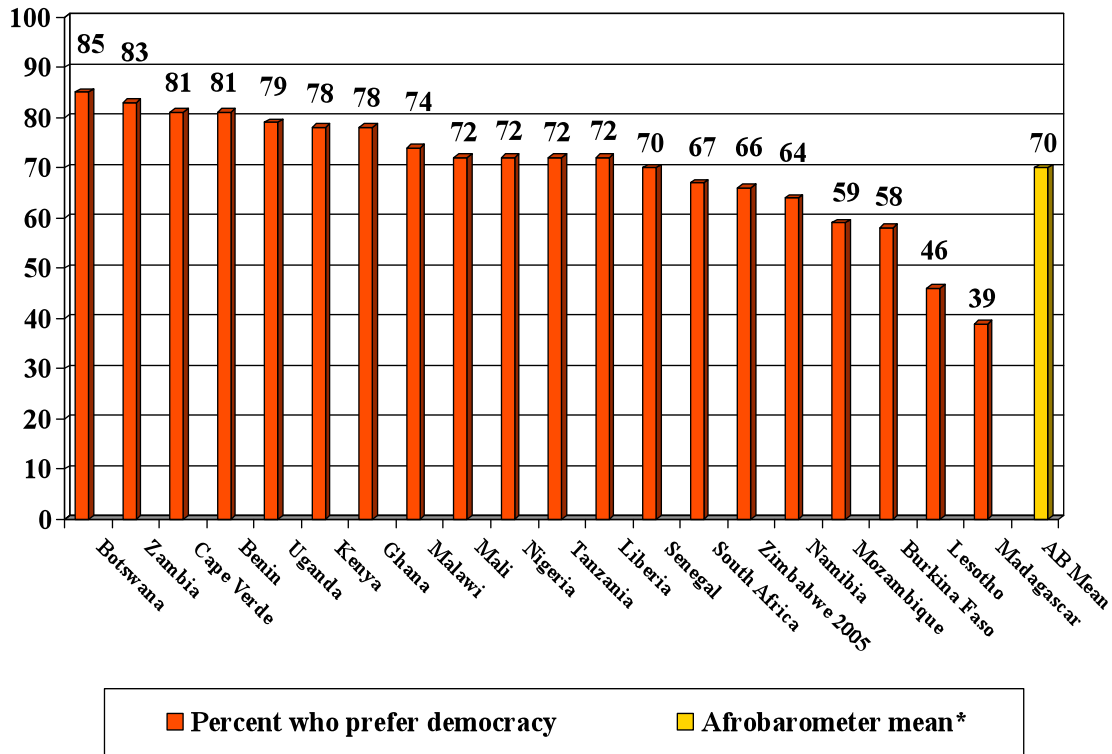
⁴ All Afrobarometer interviews – totaling 26,414 in Round 4 – are conducted face-to-face by trained fieldworkers in the language of the respondent's choice. Respondents are selected using a random, stratified, multistage, national probability sample representing adult citizens aged 18 years or older. 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 $n = 1200$.

⁵ Note, however, that the second most common response was “don't know,” suggesting that Africans still have much to learn about this unfamiliar form of government.

⁶ Eleven percent said “equally democratic” and 14 percent said “don't know.” Country B was a middle category, not reported here.

⁷ All mean scores for 2008 exclude Zimbabwe. But 2005 point estimates for Zimbabwe are given to enable cross-national comparisons.

Figure 1: Support for Democracy, 19 Countries, 2008



*mean excludes Zimbabwe

“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 form of government we have”

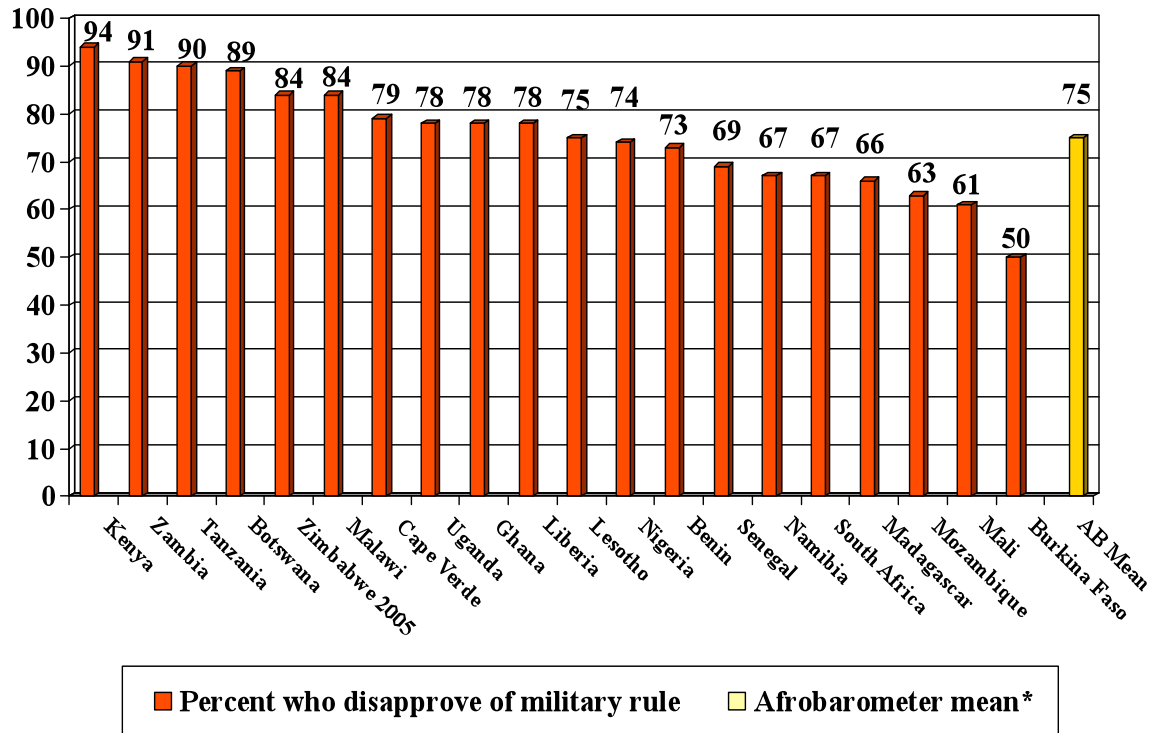
A critic might complain that public opinions are unreliable because citizens lack knowledge about democracy or easily acquiesce to a socially approved symbol. After all, it is as easy to express a favorable opinion about motherhood as it is to claim support for democracy. But the substance of democratic preferences are affirmed by the fact that fewer than 7 percent of Afrobarometer respondents in 2005 said they support democracy without being able to offer a definition of its meaning.⁸

Moreover, we probe whether professed democrats are willing to countenance alternative authoritarian regimes. Figure 2 compares the proportions across Afrobarometer countries who express disapproval of military rule. Consistent with survey results from previous years, a higher mean proportion states opposition to this form of authoritarian governance (75 percent) than professes pro-democratic sentiments (70 percent), suggesting that Africans remain clearer about the kind of government they *don't* want than the kind they affirmatively desire. Reflecting strong commitments to civilian rule, Kenyans display the most vigorous rejection of an army takeover (94 percent). Burkina Faso, however, whose current leader first rose to power by means of a military coup, are much more ambivalent (50 percent).

⁸ Of those who could not offer a definition (the 28 percent who said they “don't know” any meaning of democracy in 2005), more than half (52 percent) also said they “don't know” whether they support democracy and a further fifth (20 percent) say that the type of regime “doesn't matter” to them.

Large majorities of national populations also roundly reject two other authoritarian regimes common to Africa: one-party rule and personal rule by a strongman (rejected by 73 and 79 percent, respectively; not shown). Note, however, that a majority of Mozambicans barely rejects one-party rule (51 percent), suggesting either popular wistfulness for a pre-democratic past or a genuine, if mistaken, belief that one-party arrangements are democratic.

Figure 2: Rejection of Military Rule, 19 Countries, 2008

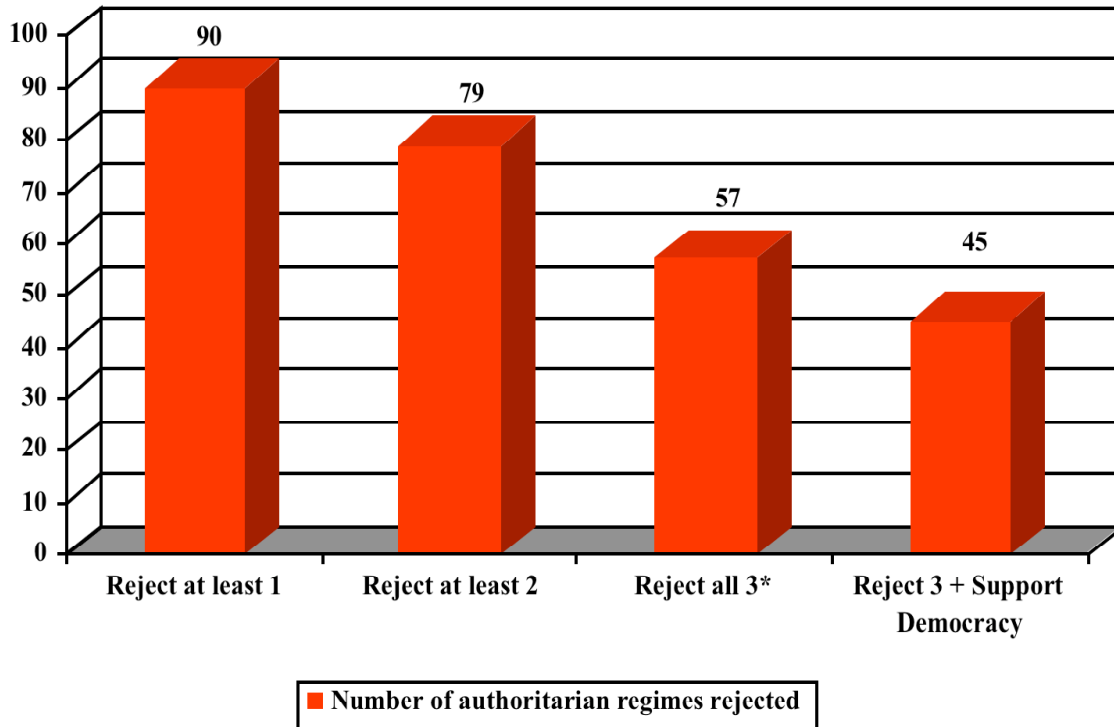


*mean excludes Zimbabwe

“There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternative: The army comes in to govern the country?”

The tougher test of deep popular commitment to democracy, however, is whether citizens *both* support democracy *and* reject all three authoritarian alternatives. We measure this composite attitude with an index of *demand for democracy*. Figure 3 indicates that, in 2008, almost all Africans interviewed rejected at least one form of autocracy (90 percent). But far fewer rejected two or three such alternatives. And fewer than half of all respondents (45 percent) expressed a robust demand for democracy that was unqualified by any kind of authoritarian nostalgia.

Figure 3: Demand for Democracy, 19 countries, 2008



* *Military rule + one-party rule + personal dictatorship*

What has happened to demand for democracy over time? Figure 4 shows trend data for the 11 countries for which we have four survey observations between 1999 and 2008.⁹ On average, popular support for democracy was initially quite high in the aftermath of the regime transitions that occurred in the 1990s (68 percent), though this support had begun to dissipate slightly by 2005 (61 percent). In the last three years, however, we discern a sharp upsurge in the mean level of expressed support for democracy (to 72 percent). The reasons for the changing direction of opinion remain unclear. Perhaps economic recovery spurred by a commodity price boom has encouraged growing confidence in the political regime. However, support for democracy in 2008 is only weakly correlated with perceptions of improvements in macroeconomic conditions over the previous 12 months. More likely, citizens perceive that political reforms are taking root; after three or four rounds of competitive elections, including several cases of turnover of ruling parties, they are gaining confidence in the institutionalization of their right to choose leaders.¹⁰

A similar pattern is evident with respect to anti-authoritarian sentiments. After initial post-transition highs (56 percent) there was some decline in 2002 and 2005, perhaps due to increasing nostalgia for the sense of stability sometimes provided by authoritarian regimes. But in 2008, more Africans report that they reject all three forms of authoritarian regime, which suggests that one-party, military and one-man rule are becoming less appealing over time. This trend is consistent with the diminished frequency of military coups in Africa over the past 20 years and

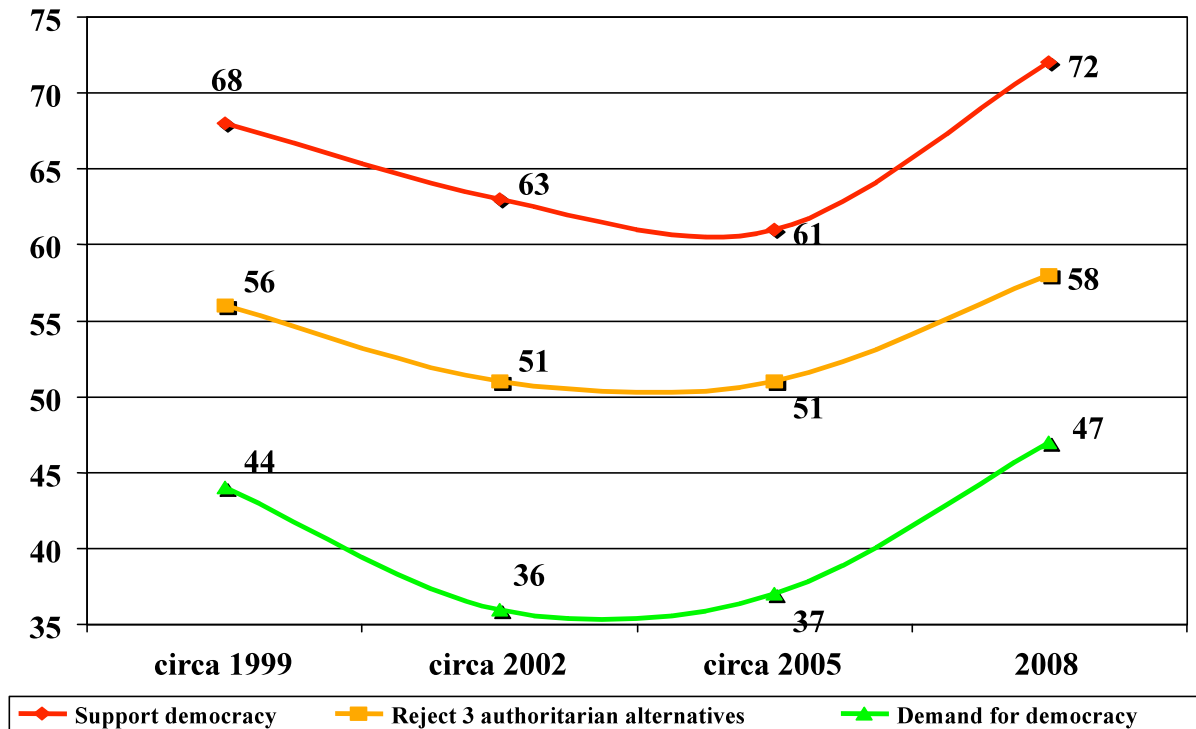
⁹ Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

¹⁰ Citizen preferences for elections as a means of choosing leaders and their judgments about the availability of civil and political rights are strongly and significantly related to demand for democracy.

the growing unwillingness of the international community, including even the African Union, to recognize such illegal transfers of power.

As expected, demand for democracy echoes the arcs of its component attitudes, dropping somewhat from 44 percent in 1999 down to lows of 36 to 37 percent between 2002 and 2005, before rebounding up to 47 percent in 2008. But, before we prematurely celebrate the consolidation of democracy in Africa, we must note that, on average, robust demand for democracy remains a minority sentiment in the countries we have studied.

Figure 4: Demand for Democracy, Average Trends, 11 Countries, 2000-2008



Countries included are Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The Perceived Supply of Democracy

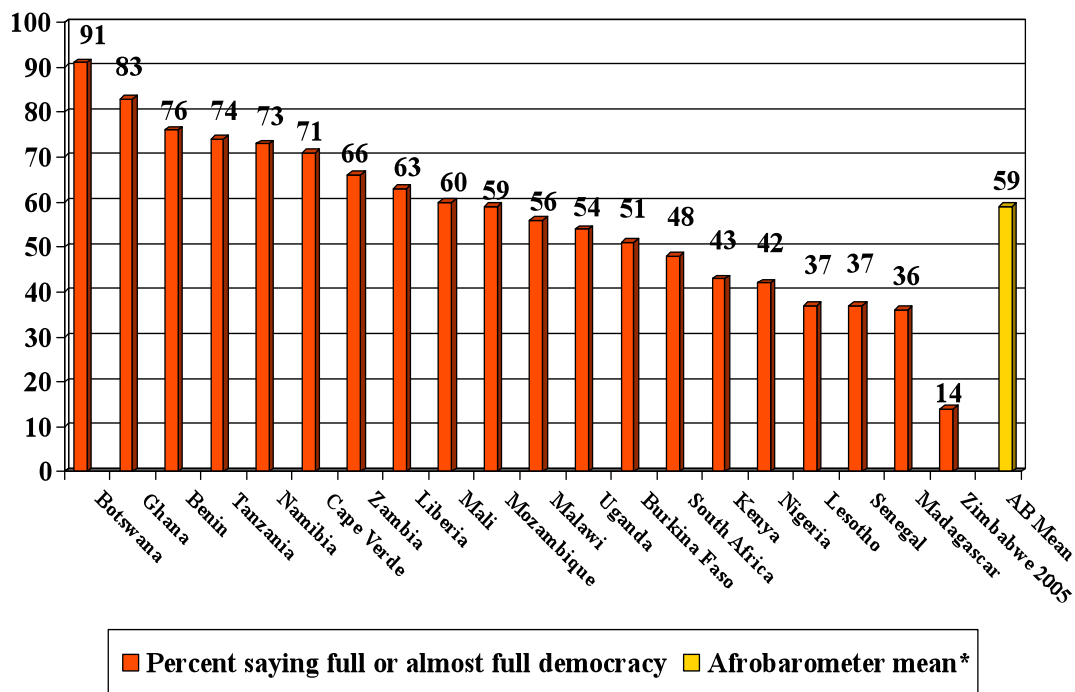
On the supply side, do ordinary people think that they are *getting* democracy? One way to generate an answer is to ask, “how much of a democracy is (this country) today?” Response categories for this item range on a four-point scale from “a full democracy,” though “a democracy with minor problems” and “a democracy with major problems,” to “not a democracy.”

Skeptics might again argue that non-literate people in the developing world are insufficiently knowledgeable or experienced about democracy to offer meaningful responses. But, in 2005, fewer than 10 percent of respondents who had an opinion on the extent of democracy were unable to define the term. And, while this uninformed group was slightly more prone to innocently perceive “a full democracy,” their views on the extent of democracy otherwise resembled the opinions of those who better understood the nature of the regime.

By 2008, an average of 59 percent of all Africans interviewed considered that they lived in a full or almost full democracy. The range of responses in Figure 5 is wider for the perceived extent of democracy than for any other item of opinion considered here. While the citizens of Botswana again lead the pack (at 91 percent, with Ghanaians close behind at 83 percent), Zimbabweans trail far below (at a dismal 14 percent in 2005). With regard to the perceived extent of democracy, countries can be roughly divided into three equal-sized groups:

- (a) in six countries (from Botswana to Cape Verde), at least seven out of ten citizens think they have extensive democracy;
- (b) in seven other countries (from Zambia to Burkina Faso) citizens see moderate levels of democratic development; and
- (c) and in a last group of seven countries (from South Africa to Zimbabwe), fewer than half think they live in a full or almost full democracy.

Figure 5: Perceived Extent of Democracy, 19 African Countries, 2008



*mean excludes Zimbabwe

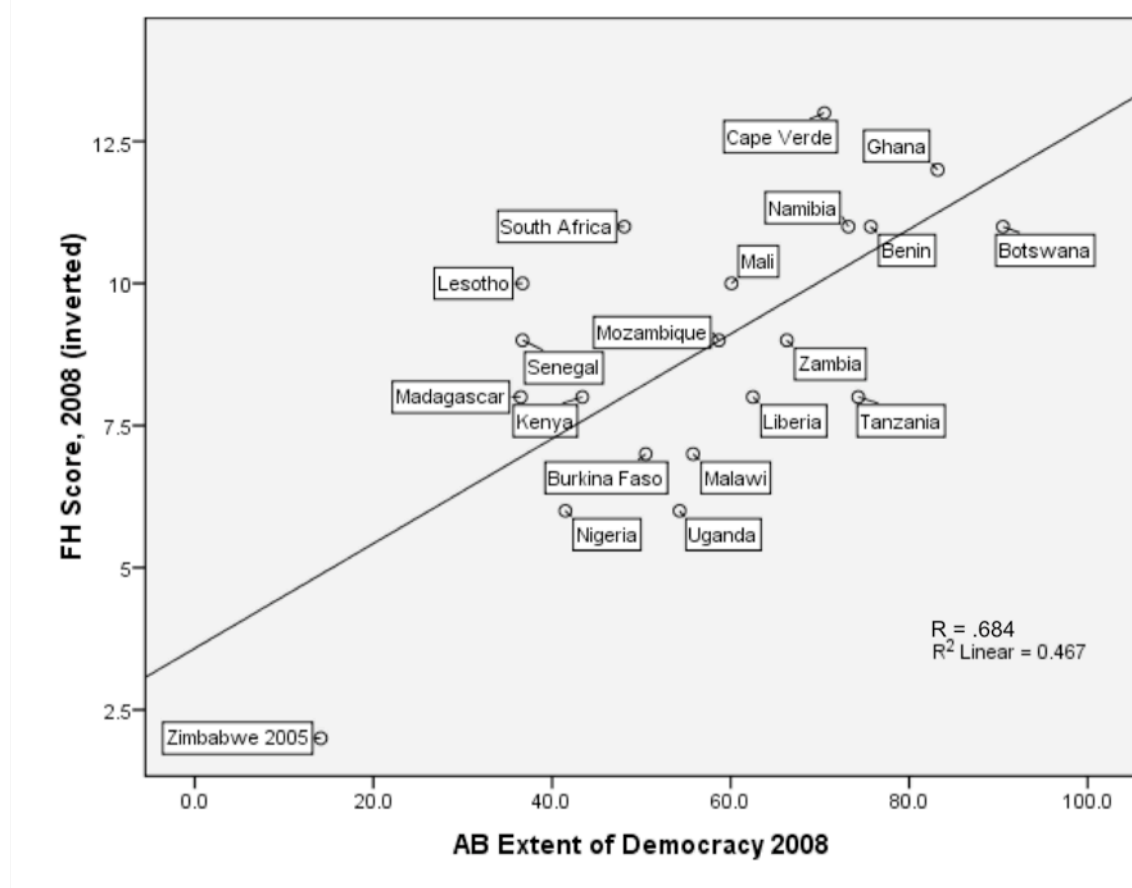
“In your opinion, how much of a democracy is (your country) today?”

It is within this last group that we discern democracies at risk, for example in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

To check whether our measurements of popular perceptions of the extent of democracy are robust, we offer two tests. First, to be externally valid, African public opinion should be consistent with judgments about the level of democracy made independently by international experts. Figure 6 compares the Afrobarometer’s extent of democracy with the well-known status of freedom score published annually by Freedom House. Both indicators are measured in 2008. The scatter-plot shows that experts and 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 its citizens do; and Tanzanians think they have more

democracy than professionals would grant. But, all told, the fit of the country cases to the shared regression line is good.

Figure 6: Afrobarometer and Freedom House Indicators Compared, 2008

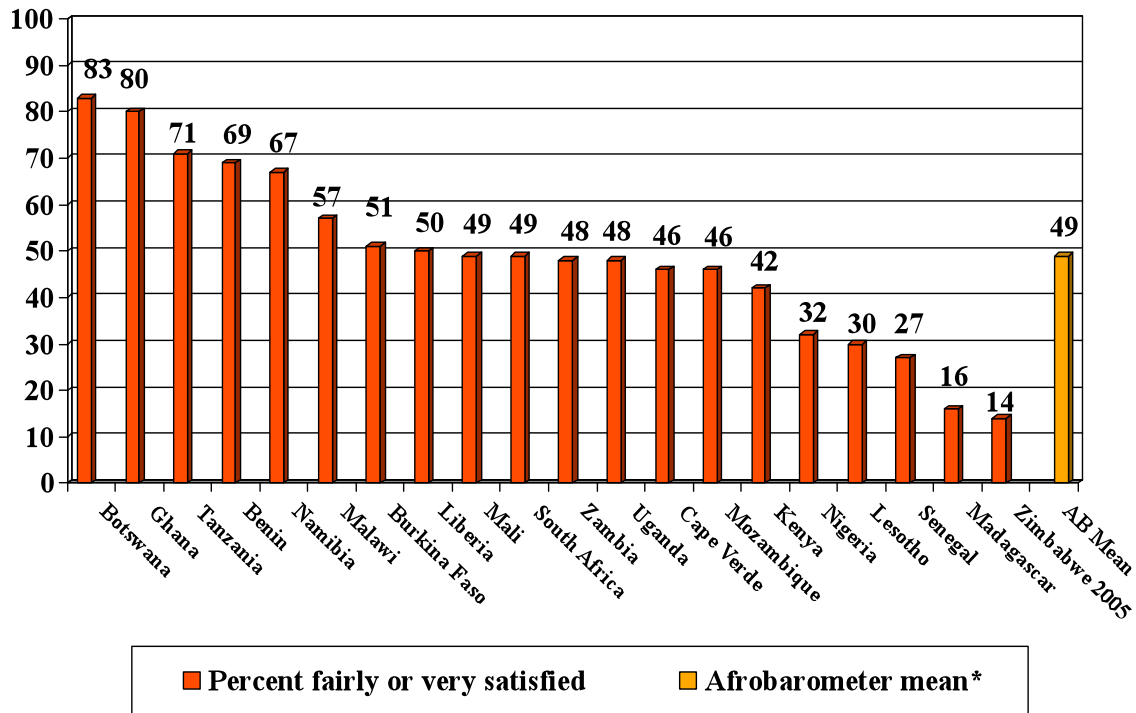


Second, as a test of internal validity, we would expect that popular perceptions of the extent of democracy would be closely correlated with expressed satisfaction with “the way democracy works.” Figure 7 shows that, on average, fewer than half (49 percent) of all Africans interviewed were satisfied (either “fairly” or “very”) with democracy in 2008. But the cross-country distribution for satisfaction closely resembles that for the extent of democracy; for example, democracy is again at risk in exactly the same group of countries.¹¹ The main differences on satisfaction are that Cape Verde and Mozambique move down in the country rankings and Malawi and South Africa move up.¹² Moreover, satisfaction with democracy is closely associated with the perceived extent of democracy, not only at the country level, but also at the individual level. As Figure 8 shows, fully 81 percent of those who are satisfied with democracy also perceive extensive democracy.

¹¹ 11 of the 19 countries have an identical rank on each distribution.

¹² Because the mean score for satisfaction with democracy (49 percent) is lower than the mean score for the perceived extent of democracy (59 percent), Malawi and South Africa have similar absolute scores on both indicators.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with Democracy, 19 Countries, 2008



*mean excludes Zimbabwe

“Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (your country)?”

Figure 8: Cross-tabulation of Extent of Democracy by Satisfaction with Democracy, 2008
(weighted n = 22,800 AB R4 respondents)

	Not satisfied with democracy	Satisfied with democracy
Don't see extensive democracy	63%	19%
Perceive extensive democracy	37%	81%

Measures of association: Ordinal: Gamma = .763

Interval: Pearson's r = .451

Because of the coincidence of these measures, we combine satisfaction and perceived extent into an additive construct of the *supply of democracy*. It measures which individual Africans are *both* satisfied with democracy *and* perceive it to be extensive in their country. For the 19 countries included in Round 4, 41 percent believe they are being supplied with democracy. The evolution of this indicator in 11 countries, along with its component attitudes, is shown in Figure 9.

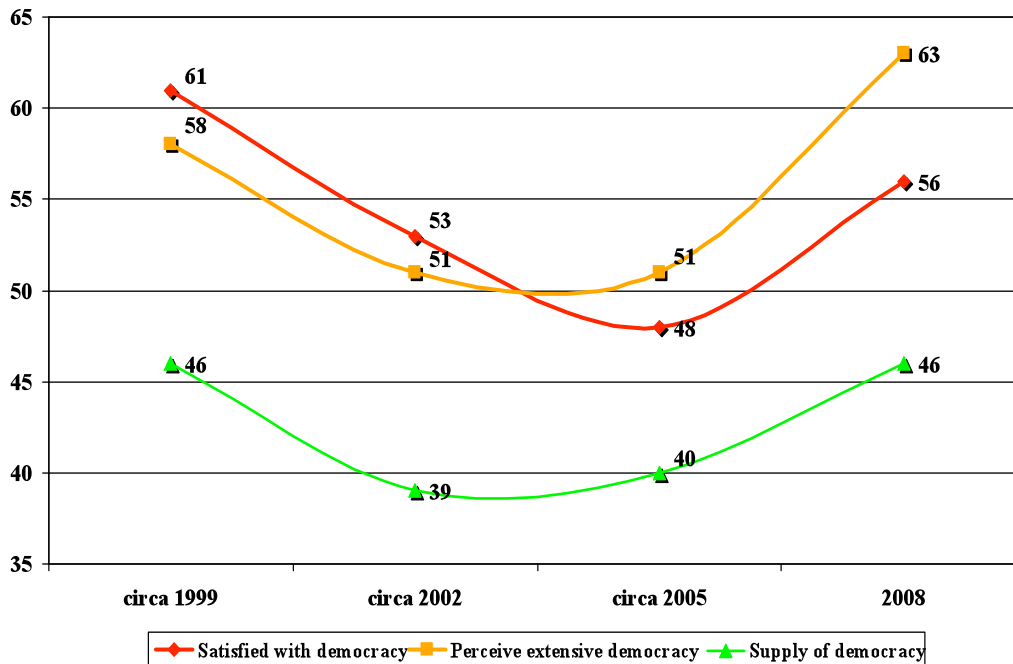
Several noteworthy trends emerge:

- (a) On average, satisfaction with democracy is lower in 2008 than 10 years earlier (by 5 percentage points);

- (b) By contrast, the perceived extent of democracy has risen somewhat between 1999 and 2008 (also by 5 percentage points); and
- (c) All indicators, including the perceived supply of democracy, were on an upward path over the three-year period from 2005 to 2008.

It would appear, therefore, that the Africans we interviewed think that they have more democracy today than earlier in the decade. Most importantly, we note that the perceived extent of democracy has risen even as satisfaction has dropped. This unexpected result suggests an adjustment of mass expectations. People are recognizing a measure of democratic progress even as they realistically conclude that actual democratic practice is falling short of their dreams.¹³

Figure 9: Supply of Democracy, Average Trends, 11 Countries, 2000-2008



Countries covered are Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

A Model of Regime Consolidation

But how many African regimes are democracies (at least in the eyes of their citizens)? And which regimes in Africa are consolidating?

In Figure 10 we suggest a schema for addressing both the nature and the stability of various political regimes. It builds upon the political indicators of supply and demand that we have already described. The logic of the model is that, in consolidated regimes, demand and supply are in equilibrium (or balance), a condition represented by the diagonal intercept that dissects the space in Figure 10. As Rose and colleagues argue:

¹³ To confirm, we note that the proportion of *dissatisfied democrats* (i.e., those who demand democracy but are dissatisfied with its performance) has risen from 34 percent to 41 percent. The latter figure would be even higher if Zimbabwe were included in the 11-country sample for which we have trend data.

What happens to a new democracy is the outcome of a continuing process of interaction between what elites supply and what the populace demands... Uninterrupted progress towards the *completion* of a new democracy will occur if popular demands for reforms to improve the regime are met by political elites. This positive equilibrium is often described as a stable or established democracy.¹⁴

We extend this argument about the consolidation of new democracies to claim that a sustained balance between mass demands and institutional supply is required for the consolidation of *any* type of regime. Whereas a high-level political equilibrium connotes the consolidation of democracy, a low-level equilibrium signals the consolidation of autocracy.

For *democracies*, how high must a political equilibrium be? Let us assume that the consolidation of democracy minimally requires that 70 percent or more of the adult population wants this type of political regime and a similar proportion thinks they are getting it, and that this condition has persisted over a sustained period of time.¹⁵ When these circumstances occur, the probability that democracy will break down is low. In Figure 10, democracies are found in the northeast bloc and are consolidated to the extent they approach the equilibrium line within this space.

At the opposite end of the spectrum (in the southwest segment) lie *autocracies*. 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. The closer that actual regimes approach the equilibrium line, and do so over successive surveys, the more that autocracy is consolidated.

Regimes that lie elsewhere in the property space are *hybrid regimes*; that is, regardless of their formal characteristics, their citizens perceive neither democracy nor autocracy but something in between. Hybrid regimes may consolidate at intermediate levels, lending permanence to forms like electoral democracy, electoral autocracy, or other semi-formed systems.¹⁶ Indeed, the greatest risk to the consolidation of new democracies in Africa is that the architecture of the regime hardens prematurely, that is, before democratic institutions or beliefs have had a chance to take root.

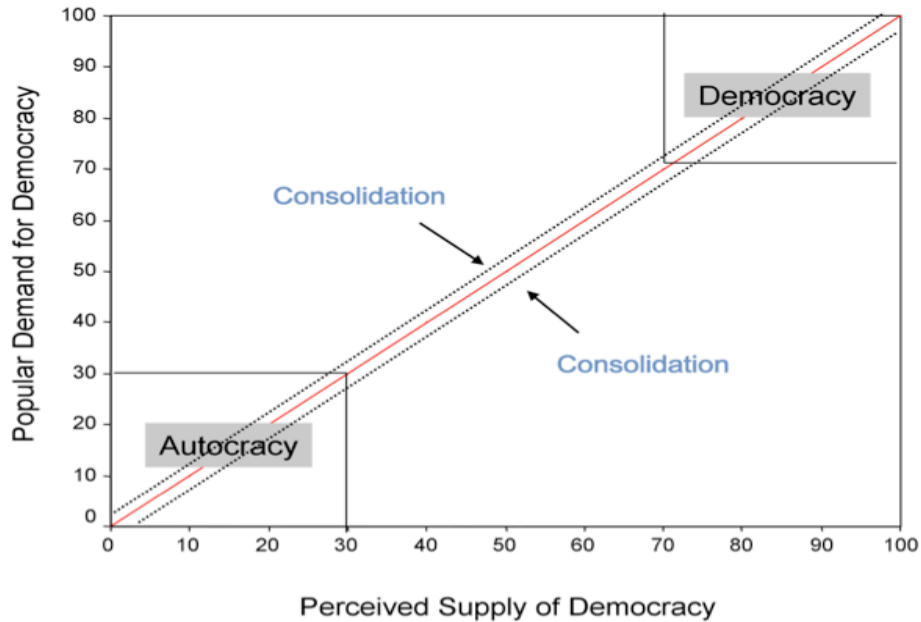
Regimes that fall far from the equilibrium line can be considered *unconsolidated*. Where demand exceeds supply, citizens are likely to pressure their governments for ongoing democratic reforms. Where supply exceeds demand, we should suspect that elites have room to manipulate the rules of the democratic game. Moreover, because of the imbalance between political demand and supply, hybrid regimes are prone to instability.

¹⁴ Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 14, emphasis added.

¹⁵ See Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 68.

¹⁶ An electoral democracy holds competitive elections, but respect for civil liberties is incomplete. An electoral autocracy holds sham elections that the opposition can almost never win.

Figure 10: 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

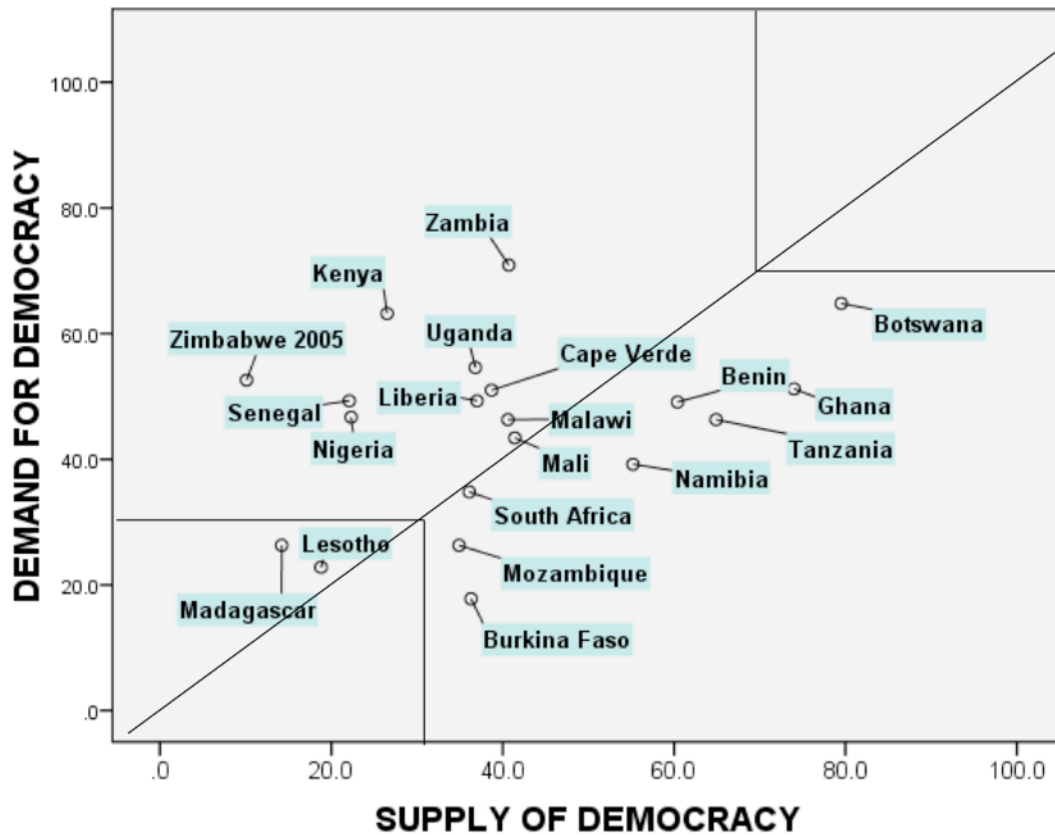
Regime Consolidation in Africa

We now enter Afrobarometer data for 2008 into the regime consolidation model. Figure 11 reveals several interesting results.

First, by our standards, there are *no consolidated democracies* among Afrobarometer countries. Botswana comes closest, where 65 percent of adults demand democracy and 80 percent think that democracy is institutionalized. To the extent that supply exceeds demand, however, Botswana's democracy is not yet consolidated. Second, and by contrast, Lesotho is apparently caught in a low-level trap; in 2008, it could even be classified as a *consolidated autocracy* by our standards. Only 23 percent of Basotho demand democracy and 18 percent perceive a supply. Despite a façade of parliamentary institutions, the country's political culture seemingly still manifests monarchical and military legacies inherited from the past.

Third, almost all other countries possess *hybrid political regimes*. Democratic demand and the perceived supply of democracy reach intermediate levels in South Africa, Mali, Malawi and Benin. The coordinates for these cases fall close to the equilibrium line. We infer from their spatial location that their regimes are consolidating as hybrids that fall short of full democracy. Moreover, with supply and demand in balance, there is no political force propelling major political changes in these countries in the foreseeable future.

Figure 11: The Consolidation of Political Regimes, 19 African Countries, 2008



Fourth, *most hybrid regimes are unconsolidated*, but in distinctive ways.

On one hand, citizens demand more democracy than elites are willing to supply in places like Kenya and Zambia. Indeed, demand in Zimbabwe in 2005 is above average (56 percent) while experiencing the lowest supply (10 percent) of any Afrobarometer country, which suggests that Zimbabwe could register quick democratic progress if ever a new government is installed as a result of a free and fair election. Because demand is twice as high as supply in Nigeria and Senegal, one can also predict continued popular pressures from below for further democratic reforms in these countries.

On the other hand, political regimes like those in Tanzania and Namibia are unconsolidated for other reasons. Citizens in these places report that their governments provide more democracy than they really want. In Burkina Faso, the supply of democracy (36 percent) exceeds demand (18 percent) by a factor of two to one. With this profile of opinion, the general public in this group of countries is predisposed to easily acquiesce to strong leaders who control dominant political parties or originate from the armed forces. Unless these autocratic elites reform themselves, any change in these countries is likely to move away from, rather than toward, consolidated democracy.

Overall, Figure 11 displays considerable face validity; in other words, the placement of many of the observed countries tends to reinforce more casual observations about their democratic prospects (or lack thereof).

Diverse Trajectories

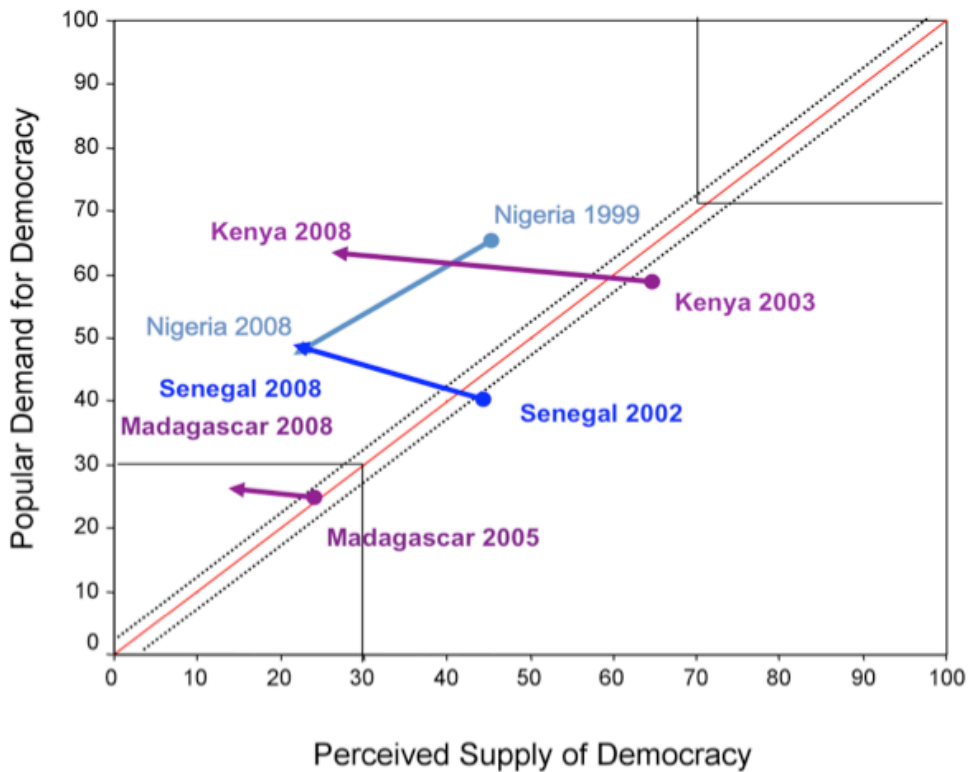
A major result of this analysis is that *African political regimes are diverse* along at least two dimensions. With regard to the nature of the regime, some are nearly democratic, a few seem autocratic (at least in the eyes of their citizenry), while most fall into an intermediate hybrid category. A common African regime type is electoral democracy, meaning democratic in institutional form (e.g. elections), but lacking some essential attribute of rights or accountability. With regard to the likelihood of change, some regimes – including some hybrids – have attained a stable equilibrium, but more are unconsolidated.

With Afrobarometer data it is possible to track the political evolution of particular African countries over recent years. Selecting the countries that have undergone the most change, we distinguish “declining” from “advancing” regimes according to their movement away from or toward consolidated democracy. In the interests of brevity, we simply report trends and leave the informed reader to identify causal events and interpret trends. Again, the main theme is the *diversity of regime trajectories*.

Figure 12 illustrates four declining regimes:

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) The quality of political regime in *Nigeria* also declined between 1999 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.
- (d) The quality of democracy was never high in *Madagascar*. In 2005 it teetered on the brink of consolidated autocracy. By 2008, prior even to the civilian coup of March 2009, citizens reported still further declines in the supply of democracy.

Figure 12: Declining Regimes in Africa, Selected Cases



By contrast, Figure 13 selects four advancing regimes:

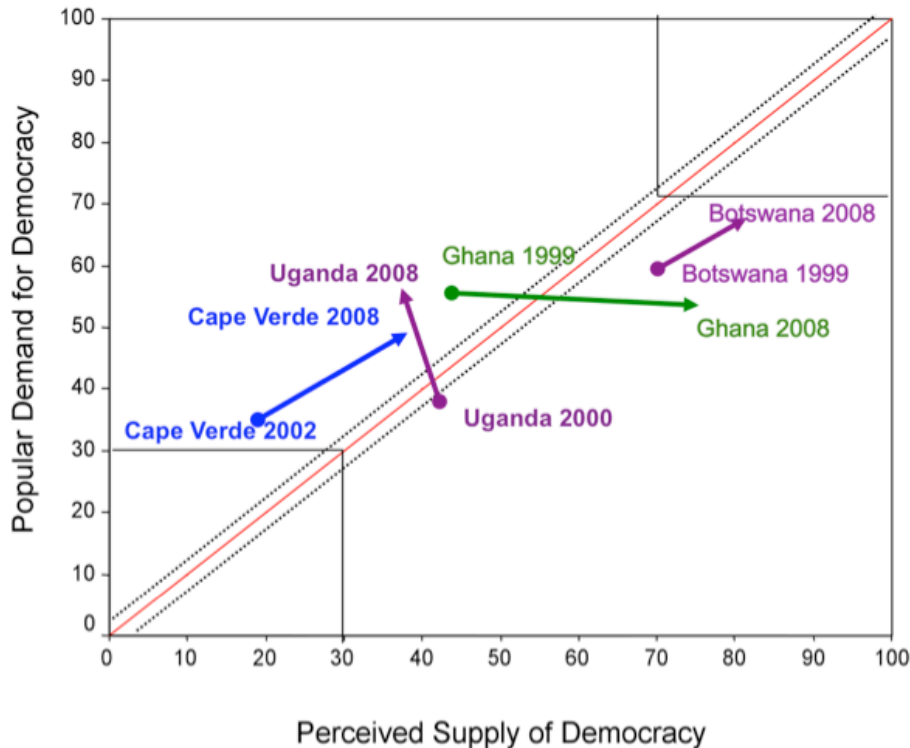
(a) In *Ghana*, demand for democracy has held pretty steady (between 56 and 51 percent) between 1999 and 2008. But the general public has substantially revised its opinion of the supply of democracy, which they see as rising dramatically (by 30 percentage points over 10 years), perhaps due to a series of well-conducted elections and two peaceful alternations of ruling party.

(b) *Uganda* displays an opposite pattern of political development. While the perceived supply of democracy has slipped somewhat, popular demand for democracy has risen substantially (by 19 percentage points) during a period when the country transitioned from no-party to multi-party rule.

(c) 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.

(d) 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). Moreover, these public attitudes are converging on the equilibrium line, which we take as evidence of a regime consolidation process.

Figure 13: Advancing Regimes in Africa, Selected Cases



Conclusion

At the risk of obscuring the diversity of regime trajectories, we end with general observations. Figure 14 traces the overall trends in popular demand for democracy and the perceived supply of democracy from 1999 to 2008. The referent is a “typical” Afrobarometer polity (as if there were such an abstract entity).

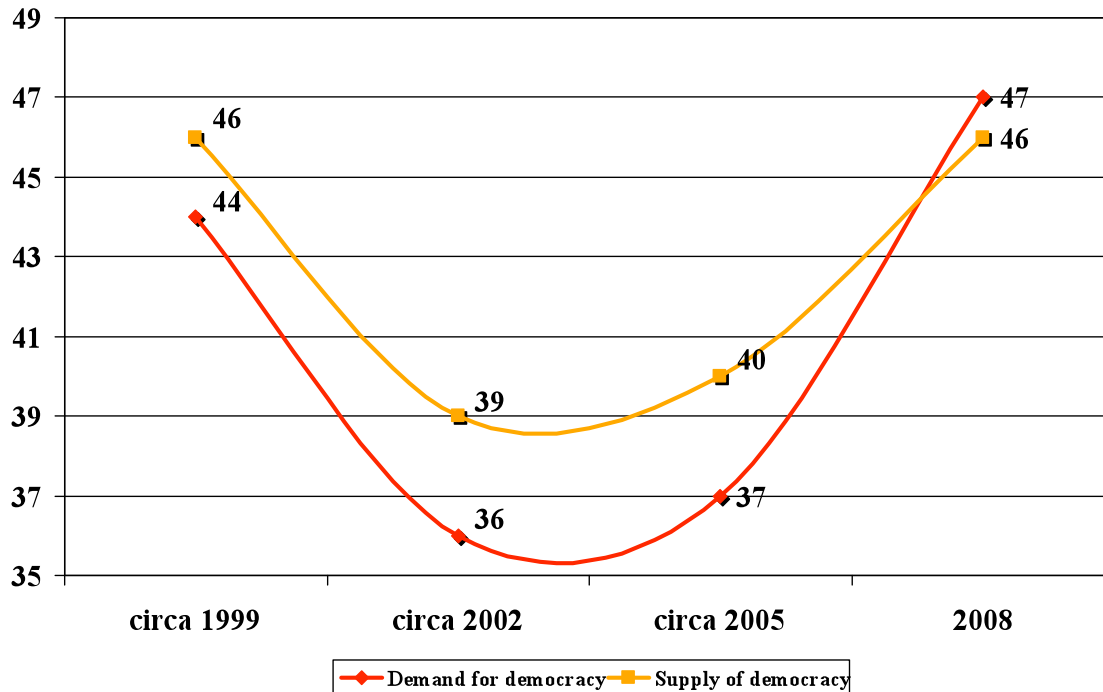
At the outset, in 1999, the Africans we interviewed perceived that, on average, the provision of democracy by new multiparty regimes ran slightly ahead of the level of popular demand (48 percent supply versus 44 percent demand). At this time, people were unsure about the virtues and vices of a democratic dispensation and therefore hedged their bets. They offered tentative support to democracy but at the same time retained residual loyalties to older authoritarian alternatives.

Between 2002 and 2005, as we have seen, both demand and supply fell by roughly similar margins. The challenges and uncertainties of democracy may have been taking a toll, while the experience of living under democratic regimes that rarely performed up to expectations led to increasingly skeptical judgments about how much freely elected governments were likely to achieve.

By 2008, however, we see substantial increases in both demand and supply. Political rights were becoming institutionalized, and Africans were beginning to appreciate the virtues of democracy (especially civil liberties and electoral participation) and continued to put authoritarian attachments behind them. Moreover, demand and supply have now come into closer alignment, at least in terms of gross averages across more than 25,000 respondents in 19 countries. Demand

now in fact slightly surpasses supply (47 percent demand democracy, 46 percent perceive a supply), although the difference is not statistically significant. But it would be a mistake to interpret this result as trace evidence in pooled data of an underlying consolidation of Africa's existing array of regimes. There is too much political diversity across African countries – not only of regime type, but also degree of institutional stability – to allow any such conclusion.

Figure 14: Democratic Demand and Supply, Average Trends, 11 Countries, 2000-2008



Countries covered are Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

To end, we note both good and bad news. The good news is that democratic attitudes are generally on the rise among the African populations we have surveyed. If sustained, this up-tick – measured prior to the onset of the global financial crisis in late 2008 – is a promising portent for further democratization. But the bad news is that fewer than half of all Africans interviewed demand democracy and perceive its supply when these indicators are measured rigorously. As such, the project of democracy building still has a long way to go.

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