

ARE DEMOCRATIC CITIZENS EMERGING IN AFRICA? EVIDENCE FROM THE AFROBAROMETER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been nearly two decades since many African countries embarked on democratic reforms, the focus of which has understandably been on the introduction and/or reintroduction of formal democratic institutions and processes such as constitutions and multiparty elections. But the argument is often made that it is not possible to have democracy without “democrats.” The purpose of this report is therefore to explore the extent to which Africans are orienting their attitudes and behaviour in the manner expected of citizens in a democratic society. We ask, in short, are “democrats” emerging to enable democracy to thrive in Africa?

We focus here on exploring three key aspects of democratic citizenship:

- Do Africans hold democratic attitudes and values?
- Do they demonstrate political knowledge and engagement?
- Do they exhibit democratic behaviours via civic participation?

We explore the answers to these questions using data from four rounds of Afrobarometer surveys. The most recent data on democratic citizenship comes from public attitude surveys conducted by the Afrobarometer in 19 countries during 2008. We then assess trends in these indicators in 11 countries from 1999-2008. The key findings are summarized below, and described in full in the text that follows.

Democratic Attitudes and Values

The Africans we surveyed reflect a mixture of negative and positive attitudinal and behavioural attributes of democratic citizenship.

- Democracy enjoys high levels of support amongst the Africans we interviewed, averaging 70 percent across 19 countries. Even higher numbers reject one-party rule (73 percent), military rule (75 percent) and strongman rule (79 percent respectively).
- A majority (62 percent) of Africans believe they should question the actions of their leaders, rather than simply respecting those in power.
- But other indicators are less encouraging. A solid majority (60 percent) sees their government more like a parent than an employee, and their own role as children rather than bosses.
- Most notably, less than half believe that it is voters themselves who are responsible for holding elected leaders accountable for doing their jobs.

Political Knowledge and Engagement

Results are also mixed with respect to political awareness and popular interest in politics.

- On the positive side, we find that sizeable majorities of Africans are both interested in politics (64 percent), and discuss politics with friends and family on a regular basis (68 percent).
- But interest in politics does not appear to translate into high levels of political knowledge. Just under half (46 percent) can name their own member of parliament, and only a quarter can identify their country’s finance minister.

Civic Participation

Civic participation is a key factor in the sustenance of the democratic process. But yet again, the indicators are mixed.

- Majorities report attending community meetings (65 percent) and joining with others to raise issues (55 percent), the latter being an especially good indicator of democratic citizenship. Not surprisingly, popular protest is much less common (13 percent).
- But only minorities report engaging in either religious (44 percent) or other community voluntary associations (24 percent).
- Contact with government officials is relatively low, with about one in three having contacted either a local government official (27 percent), an MP (13 percent) or some other government official (13 percent) in the last year.
- Contact with informal leaders is considerably more common. Half (50 percent) of respondents had contacted either a religious leader (40 percent), a traditional leader (24 percent), or some other influential person (18 percent).
- Finally, we find that paying taxes, potentially both a mechanism for encouraging citizenship, and an indicator of commitment to the democratic regime, is quite low, with fully three out of four respondents reporting that they have not paid income or property taxes or local government fees in the past year.

Are Africans Emerging as Democratic Citizens?

Given the long years of living under authoritarian governments, it is perhaps not unexpected that popular attitudes, beliefs and behaviour would register a democratic citizenship gap. We next turn to the question of trends in these indicators over time: is the gap narrowing, or widening? The overall trends are encouraging:

- Across 11 countries, the mean level of engagement in political discourse has increased by +11 percentage points, and respondents are also expressing greater interest in politics (+7 percentage points);
- Trends in political knowledge also show significant improvements: far more people know their MP (+21 points) and their country's finance minister (+11 points) in 2008 than in 1999.
- Civic participation in collective action such as community meetings and joining others to raise issues increased markedly, by 17 and 16 percentage points respectively.
- Contact with formal leaders has held relatively steady, while approaches to informal leaders have declined, but only marginally.
- The only declining trend we observe is in engagement with civil society organizations, but the decline here is quite substantial, with a drop of 17 points in participation in religious groups, and a 12 point decline for participation in other voluntary associations.

Conclusion

These indicators reveal something of a mixed picture. There are some encouraging indicators in all aspects of democratic citizenship, but there are also indicators in all areas that raise questions about the depth and extent of democraticness among Africans in the countries we surveyed. Based on this information, we conclude that the development of democratic citizenship among Africans is still relatively weak.

The good news, however, is that the trends on many indicators appear to be going in the right direction, with citizenship attributes increasing in many cases since 1999. The positive trends indicate that democratic citizens are beginning to emerge in Africa to complement the democratic structures and processes that are being established in the countries surveyed.

Are Democratic Citizens Emerging in Africa? Evidence from the Afrobarometer

Introduction

It has been nearly two decades since many African countries embarked on democratic reforms. The focus of the reforms has understandably been on the introduction and/or reintroduction of formal democratic institutions and processes such as constitutions and multiparty elections. These democratic reforms have significantly opened up opportunities for free expression and association. They have also helped to put in place minimum facilities for citizens to demand accountability and responsiveness from their leaders such as free media and competitive elections.¹

But the argument is often made that it is not possible to have democracy without “democrats.”² The purpose of this report is therefore to explore the extent to which Africans³ are orienting their attitudes and behaviour in the manner expected of citizens in a democratic society (nearly 20 years after formal democratic reforms). Do African democracies enjoy their compliment of democratic citizens? We ask, in short, are “democrats” emerging to enable democracy to thrive in Africa?

But what does a democrat look like? We will focus here on exploring three key aspects of democratic citizenship:

- Do Africans hold democratic attitudes and values?
- Do they demonstrate political knowledge and engagement?
- Do they exhibit democratic behaviours via civic participation?

We explore the answers to these questions using data from four rounds of Afrobarometer⁴ surveys. The most recent data on democratic citizenship comes from public attitude surveys conducted by the Afrobarometer in 19 countries during 2008. This data gives us a recent snapshot of the extent of democratic citizenship. But the Afrobarometer has now conducted more than 105,000 interviews over four rounds of surveys, starting in 1999.⁵ This data will allow us to look also at trends in democratic citizenship over time in 11 of these 19 countries.

¹ E. Gyimah-Boadi, ed., 2004, *Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

² See Christiaan Keulder and Tania Wiese, “Democracy without Democrats? Results from the 2003 Afrobarometer Survey in Namibia,” Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 47.

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. 1.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Round 1 covered 12 countries between 1999 and 2001 (Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Round 2 surveys, conducted in 2002-3, also included Cape Verde, Kenya, Mozambique and Senegal. Round 3 in 2005-6 covered 18 countries with the inclusion of Benin and Madagascar. Burkina Faso and Liberia were added in Round 4. 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. Note that all findings from Zambia 2008 should still be considered provisional; final results will be released in mid-2009.

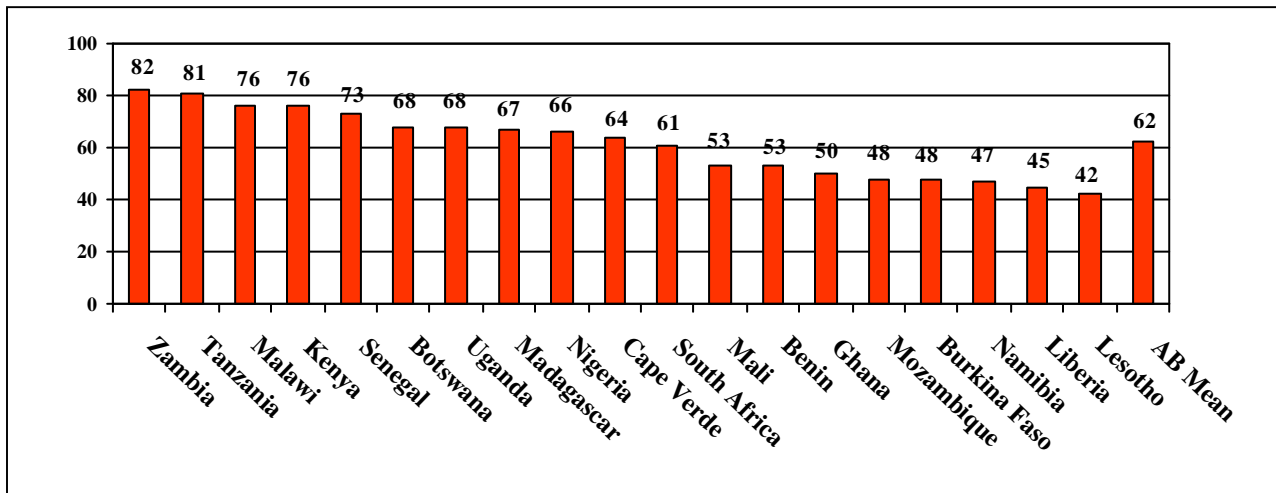
Democratic Attitudes and Values

We begin by tracking prevailing popular beliefs and attitudes among the Africans we surveyed to determine the extent to which they conform to those commonly attributed to democratic citizenship. Are our respondents committed to democracy? And do they see their role in society as democrats, with the consequent rights and responsibilities relative to their governments?

Encouragingly, *democracy enjoys relatively high levels of support amongst the Africans we interviewed*. Seven in every ten Africans prefer democracy to any other form of government.⁶ Indeed, similar majorities rejected one-party, military and one-man rule (73, 75 and 79 percent respectively). Only Lesotho and Madagascar had less than half of their nationals indicating a preference for democracy (46 and 39 percent respectively). And majorities in all countries reject all three forms of authoritarian rule, although the majority was occasionally a very slim one, notably in Lesotho and Mozambique (with respect to one-party rule) and Burkina Faso (with respect to military rule).

Further evidence of democratic attitudes is revealed by the finding that a *majority of Africans believe in questioning the actions (and inactions) of their leaders*. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of respondents stated that the public should not allow the actions of their leaders to go unquestioned. However, this is a minority opinion in Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Namibia, Liberia and Lesotho (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Democratic Attitudes: Questioning the Actions of Leaders, 19 countries, 2008
(% agree / strongly agree with Statement 1)



“Which of the following statements is closest to your view:

Statement 1: Citizens should be more active in questioning the actions of leaders.

Statement 2: In our country, citizens should show more respect for authority.”

Other popular attitudes, however, are less indicative of democratic citizenship. For example, *a solid majority (60 percent) of Africans see their government as a parent who ought to take care of them*, rather than perceiving of themselves as the bosses who should control their governments (Figure 2). This view found majority support in all the countries surveyed except Kenya and Lesotho. In fact, in Kenya and Lesotho, majorities (51 and 62 percent, respectively) instead think citizens should be the ones in charge.

⁶ We asked respondents: “Which of these statements is closest to your opinion:

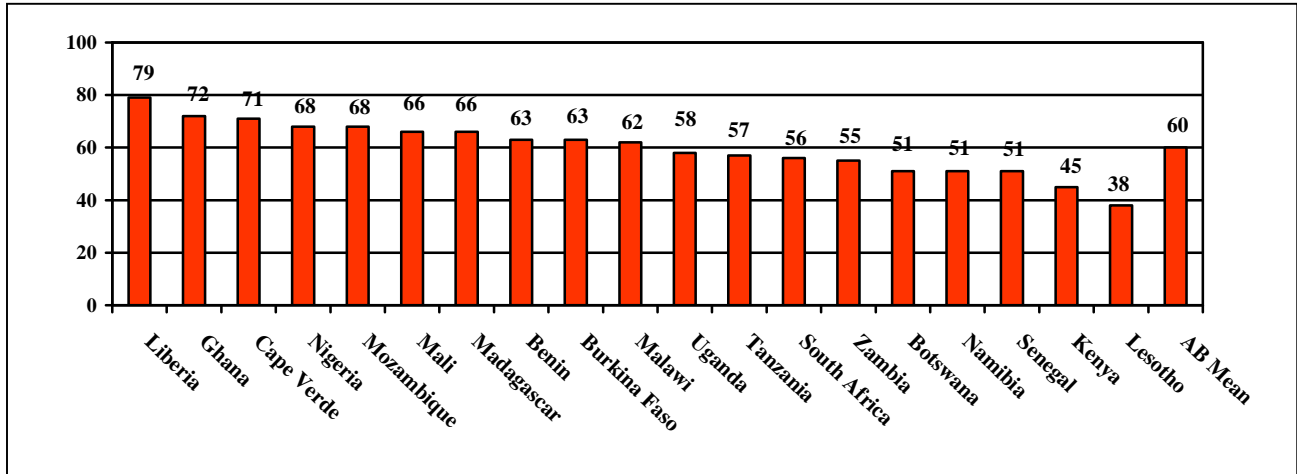
Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have.

Figure 2: (Un-)Democratic Attitudes: Government Should Care for Citizens Like a Parent, 19 countries, 2008

(% agree / strongly agree with Statement 1)



“Which of the following statements is closest to your view:

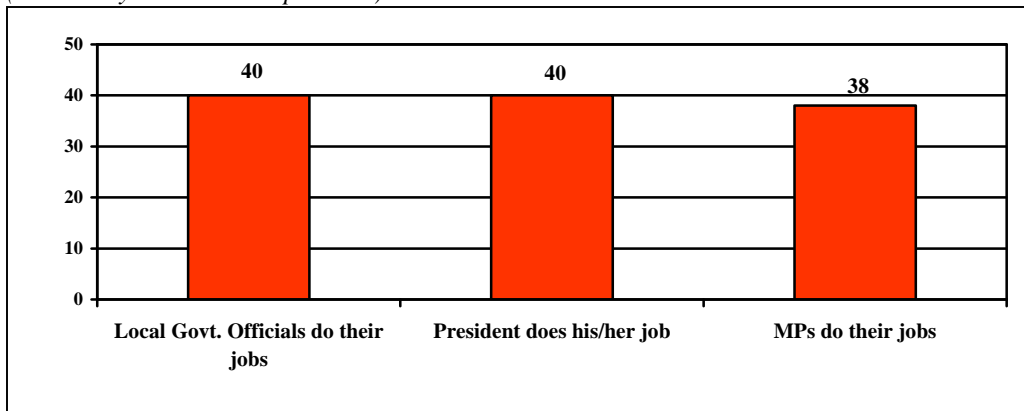
Statement 1: People are like children; the government should take care of them like a parent.

Statement 2: In our country, citizens should show more respect for authority.”

Popular views regarding citizen responsibilities are also scarcely encouraging. When asked who is responsible for holding elected leaders (local government councillors, presidents, and MPs) accountable once they are in office, **less than half of the Africans we spoke to assigned this oversight responsibility to voters** (Figure 3). Madagascar and Benin are the only countries where solid majorities believe that voters are responsible in all three cases (average across three questions of 71 and 65 percent, respectively), followed by Malawi, where large majorities believe that MPs and the president should be accountable to voters (70 and 63 percent, respectively), but only 45 percent believe voters should oversee local government, perhaps reflecting the more recent introduction of elections at the local government level.

Figure 3: Democratic Attitudes: Responsibility for Ensuring Leaders Do Jobs, 19-country mean, 2008

(% who say voters are responsible)



“Who is responsible for making sure that, once elected,:

a. Local government councillors do their jobs?

b. The president does his/her job?

c. Members of Parliament do their jobs?”

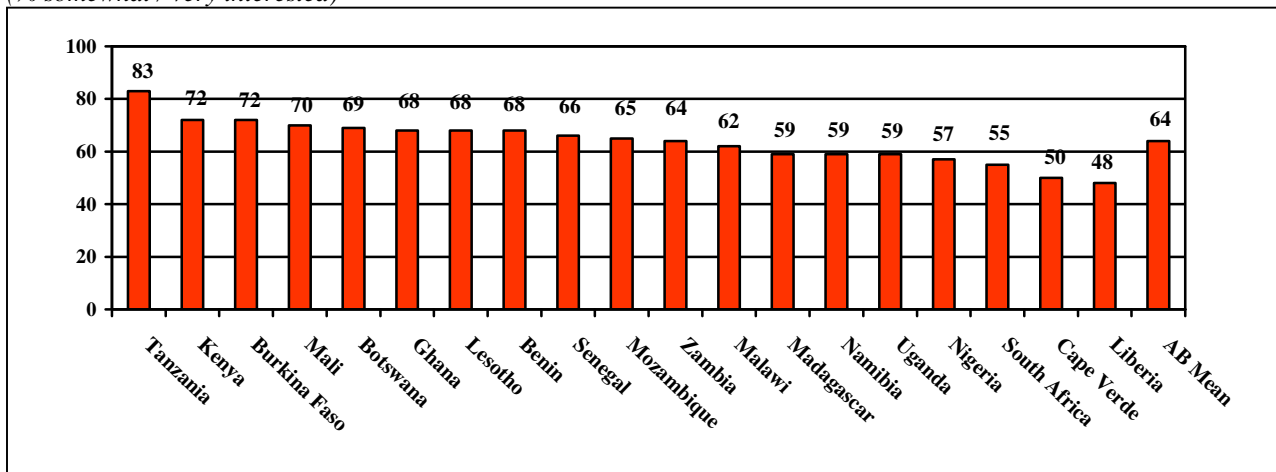
Response options: The President/Executive; The Parliament or Local Council; Their Political Party; Voters

So in sum, the Africans we surveyed in 2008 reveal a mixed-bag of attitudes and beliefs regarding democracy and their role as citizens. We take the majority espousal of a belief in the notion of citizens questioning leaders, and their expression of a preference for democracy and rejection of non-democratic forms of government as positive indicators. But we take the responses regarding the parental role of government vis-à-vis the public, and the majority denial of the responsibility of voters to ensure that elected officials perform their jobs well as inconsistent with democratic citizenship. Our overall conclusion is that gaps in democratic citizenship prevail among Africans at least in terms of popular attitudes and values.

Political Knowledge and Engagement

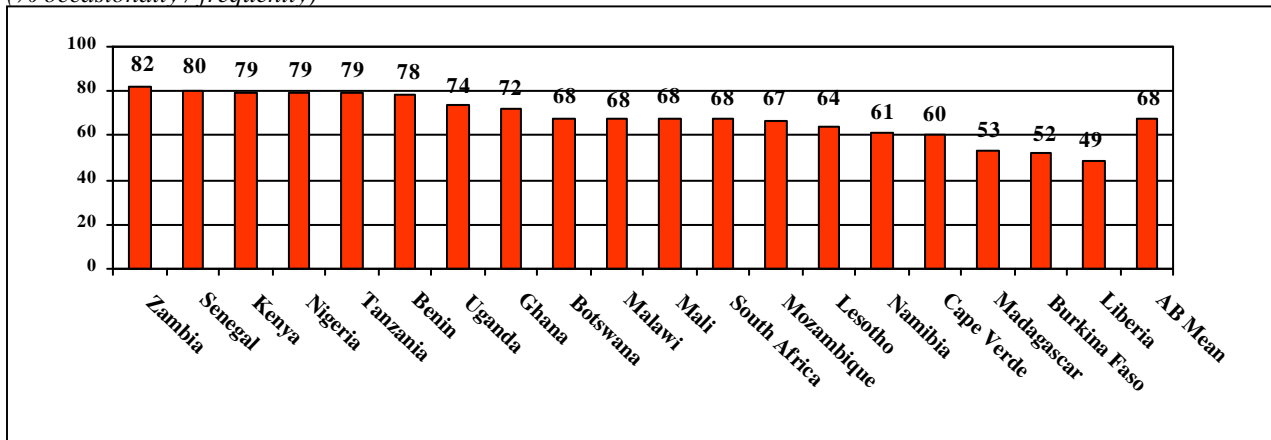
To successfully engage with their governments as *democrats*, Africans must have some awareness of and engagement with the political world around them. To test for this, we begin by ascertaining the extent to which Africans are interested in and are engaged in political discourse. **A clear majority of Africans expresses an interest in public affairs (64 percent). An even larger majority (68 percent) reports engaging in political discussions with relatives and friends (Figures 4 and 5).** It is only in Liberia where less than 50 percent of adults espouse an interest in politics or in discussing political issues with their friends. Perhaps most interesting are those countries with sizeable gaps between the two attitudes. Burkinabe express some of the highest levels of interest in politics (72 percent), but they are among the least likely to discuss politics (52 percent), perhaps reflecting more restricted opportunities to speak freely in their country. Ugandans and Zambians, on the other hand, apparently discuss politics even if they are not particularly interested, since both show considerably higher rates for discussing politics than for interest.

Figure 4: Political Engagement: Interest in Politics, 19 countries, 2008
(% somewhat / very interested)



“How interested would you say you are in public affairs?”

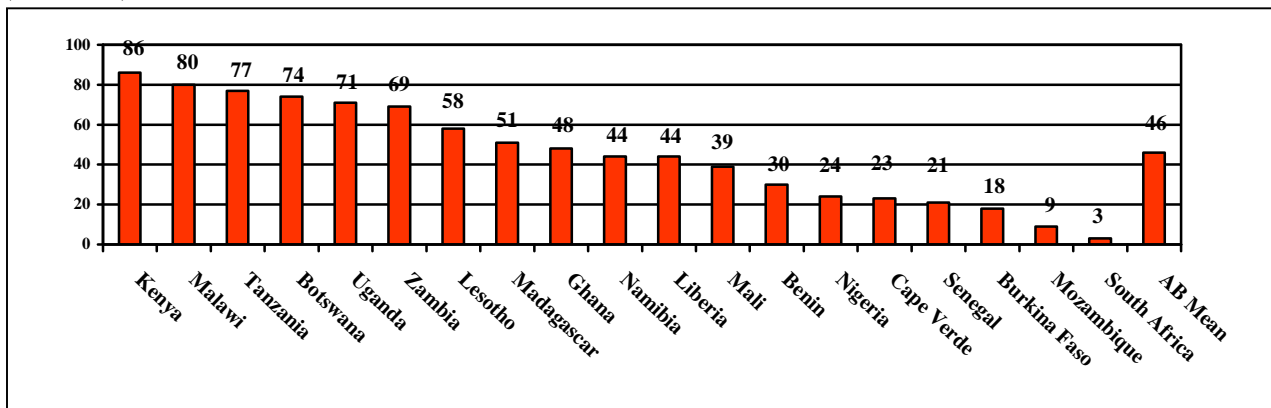
Figure 5: Political Engagement: Discussing Politics, 19 countries, 2008
 (% occasionally / frequently)



“When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters: frequently, occasionally or never?”

But are these discussions well informed? Here the answer is not so positive. **Expressed interest in public affairs and involvement in political discussions does not appear to translate into high levels of political knowledge.** On average, less than half of Afrobarometer respondents could correctly name their member of parliament (46 percent) and just about one-quarter (25 percent) could name the finance minister of their country (Figures 6 and 7). But the picture is uneven across the 19 countries. Very large majorities in Kenya (86 percent) and Malawi (80 percent) know their MPs, as do large majorities in Tanzania, Botswana, Uganda and Zambia. But less than half of the adult population could name their MPs in 11 other countries, with the worst cases being in South Africa and Mozambique, both countries with proportional representation systems, at 3 percent and 9 percent respectively. Interestingly, however, adults in South Africa top the league in terms of their ability to correctly identify the Finance Minister by name (76 percent), probably reflecting the current minister’s extremely long tenure in office.⁷

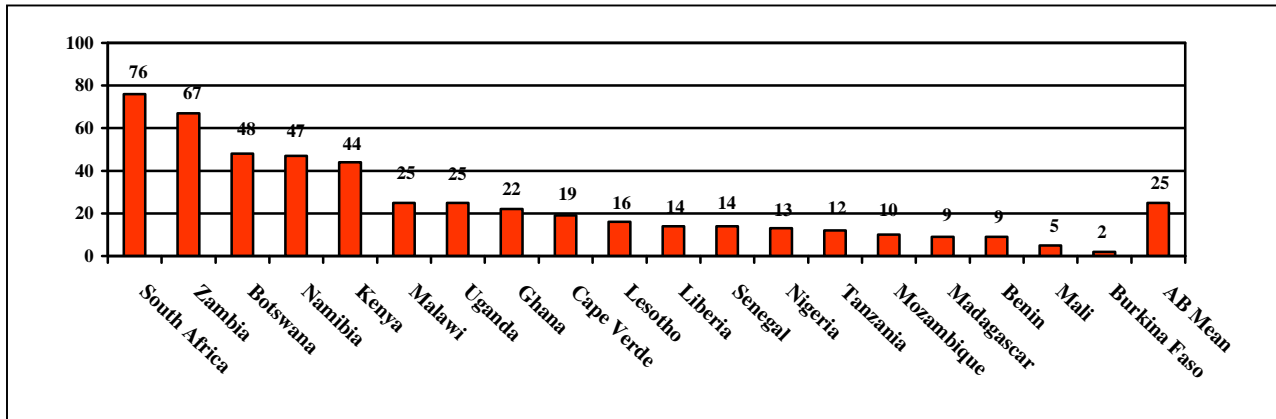
Figure 6: Political Knowledge: Naming Your MP, 19 countries, 2008
 (% correct)



“Can you tell me the name of your Member of Parliament?”

⁷ Trevor Manuel is currently the longest serving finance minister in the world.

Figure 7: Political Knowledge: Naming the Finance Minister, 19 countries, 2008
(% correct)



“Can you tell me the name of your country’s Minister of Finance?”

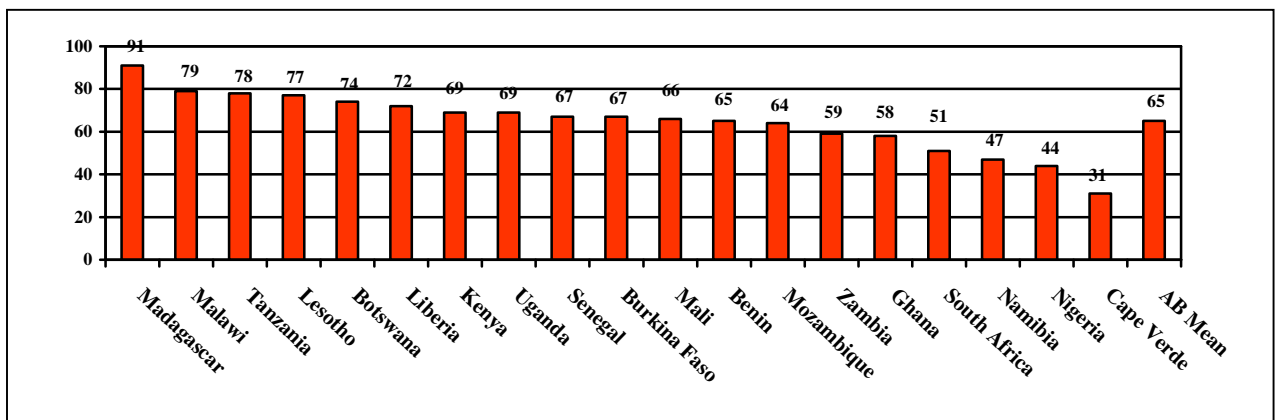
In sum, we find that while political interest and engagement are relatively high across most countries surveyed, political knowledge still lags considerably.

Civic Participation

Adult Africans may be enthusiastic participants in political discussions, but does this translate into action and engagement in civic affairs? Civic participation is a key factor in the sustenance of the democratic process. Participation enables citizens to learn about politics, and to influence political and policy decisions at both national and local government levels. The Afrobarometer tracks a number of different types of civic participation.

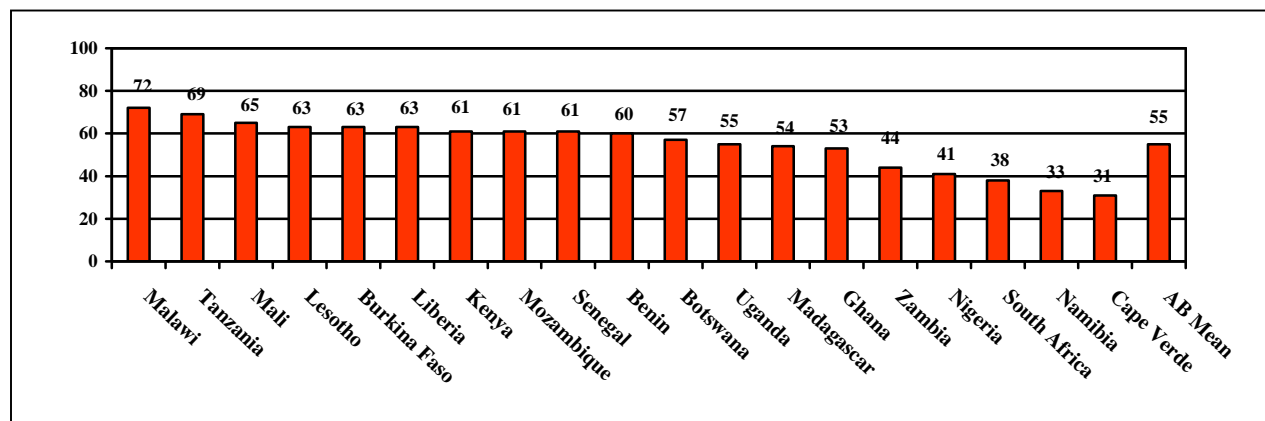
To begin with, **majorities of respondents reported attending community meetings to deliberate on issues (65 percent; Figure 8) and joining others to raise issues (55 percent; Figure 9)**. However, fewer than half reported participating in community meetings in Namibia, Nigeria and Cape Verde. South Africa and Zambia join these three at the low end of the scale on joining others to raise an issue. Protest marches, however, are much less popular. Only a small minority (13 percent) report attending a demonstration or protest (Figure 10).

Figure 8: Civic Participation: Attending a Community Meeting, 19 countries, 2008
(% once/twice, several times or often)



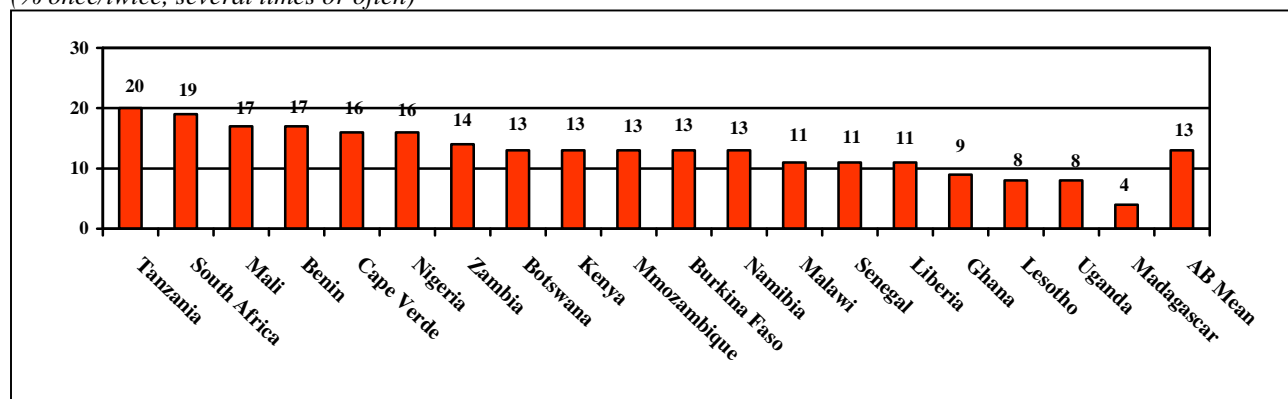
“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attended a community meeting?”

Figure 9: Civic Participation: Join Others to Raise an Issue, 19 countries, 2008
 (% once/twice, several times or often)



“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Got together with others to raise an issue?”

Figure 10: Civic Participation: Attend Demonstration or Protest, 19 countries, 2008
 (% once/twice, several times or often)

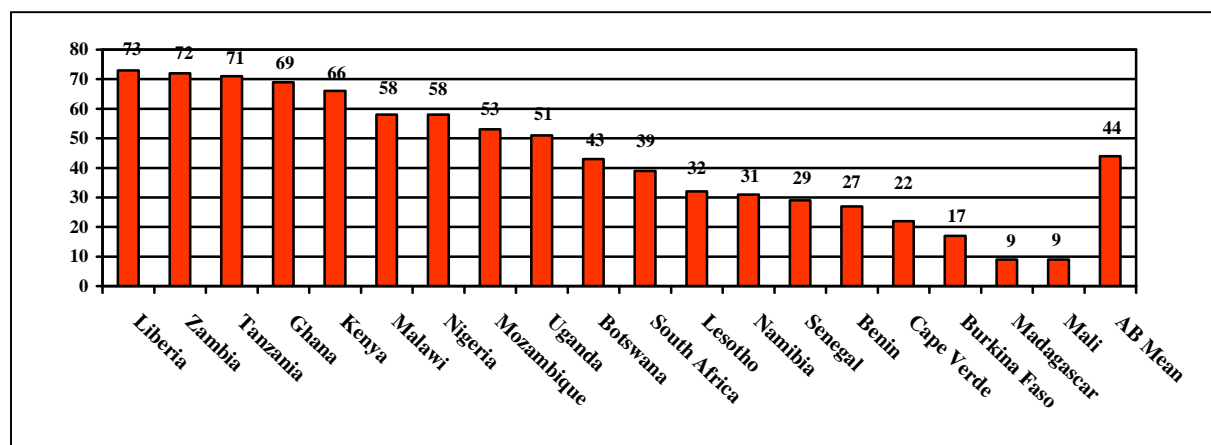


“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attended a demonstration or protest march?”

In addition, **only a minority of Africans report engagement in civil society networks, particularly secular ones.** Twenty-four percent of those interviewed report active membership in or leadership of voluntary associations, while nearly twice as many (44 percent) claim to be active members of religious groups.

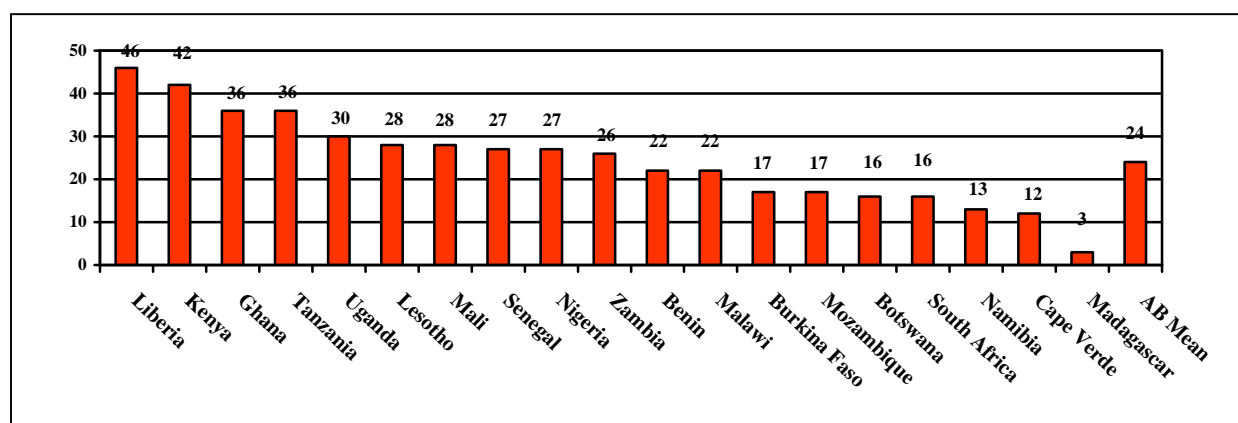
But once again, there are wide country variations in membership of religious bodies. A large majority of respondents in Liberia (73 percent), Zambia (72 percent) and Tanzania (70 percent) reported active membership in religious groups, while only a small minority report the same in Burkina Faso (17 percent), Madagascar and Mali (9 percent each). Whereas active membership in a religious body is over 50 percent in nine of the countries surveyed, no country reported active membership in voluntary organizations above 50 percent (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11: Civic Participation: Membership in Religious Organizations, 19 countries, 2008
(% official leaders or active members)



“Now I am going to read out a list of groups that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: A religious groups (e.g., church, mosque)?”

Figure 12: Civic Participation: Membership in Voluntary Associations, 19 countries, 2008
(% official leader or active member)



“Now I am going to read out a list of groups that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: Some other voluntary association or community group?”

Contact with formal leaders remains a rarely utilized tool among African citizens. **Only a small minority contacted a local government official (27 percent), a parliamentarian (13 percent) or another government official (13 percent) at least once in the past year (Table 1).** In fact, just one in three Africans interviewed in the 19 countries reported having had contacts with any of these formal leaders.

When they do contact leaders, **Africans are far more likely to contact informal leaders than formal ones.** Forty percent of respondents report contacting religious leaders, 24 percent contacted traditional leaders, and 18 percent contacted “some other influential person”. Fully half (50 percent) of all respondents had contacted at least one of these informal leaders in the past year. Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and Liberia – where half or more of the population reported contacting religious leaders – are primarily responsible for the relatively high contact rate for religious leaders.

Table 1: Civic Participation: Contacting Leaders, 19-country mean, 2008

(% only once, a few times, or often)

	Formal leaders		Informal leaders		
	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Local government councilor	73	27	Religious leader	59	40
Member of Parliament	86	13	Traditional leader	68	24
Government official at a ministry	86	13	Influential person	81	18

“During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views?”

Finally, **very few respondents report paying taxes**. This can be an important factor, since some findings suggest that paying taxes is one key mechanism by which people begin to develop a sense of rights and ownership relative to their government. Willingness to properly pay any taxes that ones owes also reflects a commitment to the legitimacy of the political regime. Yet we find that over two-thirds of respondents report not paying taxes on their incomes (75 percent), landed properties such as residences (73 percent) and local government fees (72 percent) during the past year (Figure 13). Across the 19 countries surveyed, the percentages of respondents who have not paid these taxes range from around 50 to more than 90 percent in each case. We concede the possibility that the low levels of tax payment registered here may reflect lack of obligation (e.g., for those with no regular taxable income), as well as the weak tax collection capabilities of the African state, rather than the recalcitrance of the citizens. But we find it noteworthy that clear majorities of respondents who claimed to be fully or partially employed reported not paying taxes in respect of licences and fees (68 percent), property (65 percent), or incomes (61 percent).

Figure 13: Civic Participation: Paying Taxes, 19-country mean, 2008



“Have you had to make any of the following payments during the past year?”

Our general conclusion, then, is that the behavioural attributes of Africans generally suggest relatively weak development of democratic citizenship.

Are Africans Emerging as Democratic Citizens?

Given the long years of living under authoritarian governments, it is perhaps not unexpected that popular attitudes, beliefs and behaviour would register a democratic citizenship gap. Nonetheless, the sustainability of African democracies is largely contingent on Africans themselves, in particular on the growth and deepening of democratic behaviour and attitudes among the population. So it is important to ask: “Are Africans democrats, or emerging as democrats?” We attempt to answer this question by tracking the over-time trends in popular displays of democratic attitudes and behaviours. For this part of

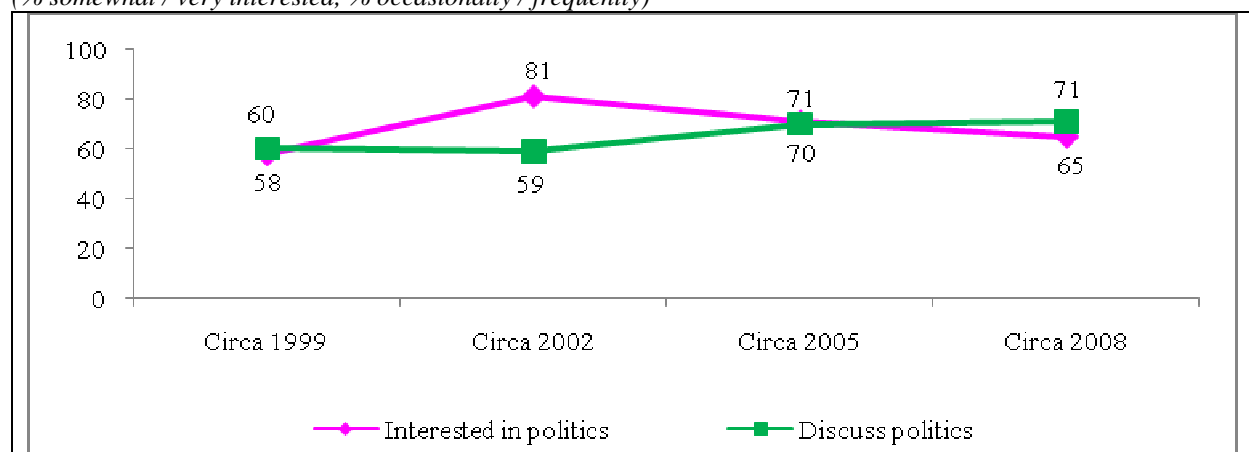
the analysis, we focus on the 11 countries where we have data starting from the first round of surveys in 1999-2001.⁸

Here, a more sanguine picture emerges. **We find that, in general, democratic citizenship attitudes and values, knowledge and engagement, and civic participation indicators are increasing rather than declining over time.**

Trends in political engagement are generally positive: Across 11 countries, popular engagement in political discourse has increased by +11 percentage points between 1999 and 2008.⁹ Interest in politics improved by 7 percentage points over the same period (Figure 14).

There are, however, remarkable cross-country variations in these trends. Some countries, led by Mali, experienced significant improvements in citizens' interest in politics over the period (+37 percentage points), followed by Botswana (+32 percentage points), Lesotho (+19 percentage points) and Malawi (+12 percentage points). Uganda, however, suffered significant decline (-24 percentage points). Major improvements in the percentage of citizens who engage in political discussions were recorded in Zambia (+27 percentage points), Mali (+26 percentage points), Lesotho (+24 percentage points), Botswana (+17 percentage points) and Nigeria (+13 percentage points). It appears that as Africans spend more time living with greater freedom to speak and discuss politics openly, and as a younger generation that has not lived long under authoritarian rule comes of age, political engagement may be expanding markedly.

Figure 14: Trends in Political Engagement, 11-country means, 1999-2008
(% somewhat / very interested, % occasionally / frequently)



Note: The 2002 figure for interest in politics was likely inflated by a change in response options during that survey round (the option “not very interested” was not included in that round, so choices were limited to “not at all interested”, “somewhat interested” and “very interested”).

Trends in political knowledge also show significant improvements: Popular political knowledge appears to have improved significantly (+21 percentage points) over time in the case of MPs (Table 2). This upturn in MP name recognition is driven by major improvements in Tanzania (+69 percentage points),

⁸ Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. During 2008, we could not conduct a survey in Zimbabwe, the 12th country included in Round 1 (1999-2001).

⁹ Note: Round 1 surveys took place between mid-1999 and mid-2001 (i.e. Circa 1999); Round 2 mid 2002 and late 2003 (Circa 2002); Round 3 between February 2005 and February 2006 (Circa 2005) and Round 4 by the close of 2008 (Circa 2008). All trend paths are based on data from 11 out of the 12 countries that started the Afrobarometer because Zimbabwe is yet to undertake fieldwork.

Lesotho (+57 percentage points), Zambia (+38 percentage points), Namibia (+24 percentage points), Nigeria (+16 percentage points), and Mali (+13 percentage points). As they become more accustomed to campaigns, elections, and the concept of constituency services, Africans are perhaps developing higher expectations of their leaders, and consequently, may be paying more attention to just who those leaders are.

Name recognition of the Finance Minister also improved dramatically between 1999 and 2008, up by 11 percentage points. Zambia (+43 percentage points), South Africa (+38 percentage points), Botswana (+35 percentage points), Namibia (+17 percentage points) and Lesotho (+10 percentage points) are the main countries responsible for the improvement in this indicator, though Ghana (-11 percentage points) and Tanzania (-15 percentage points) witnessed major declines. It is notable that Tanzania showed the most improvement on MP name recognition, but the most decline on the finance minister. This may be an anomaly of survey timing relative to new ministerial appointments, but this remains to be explored.

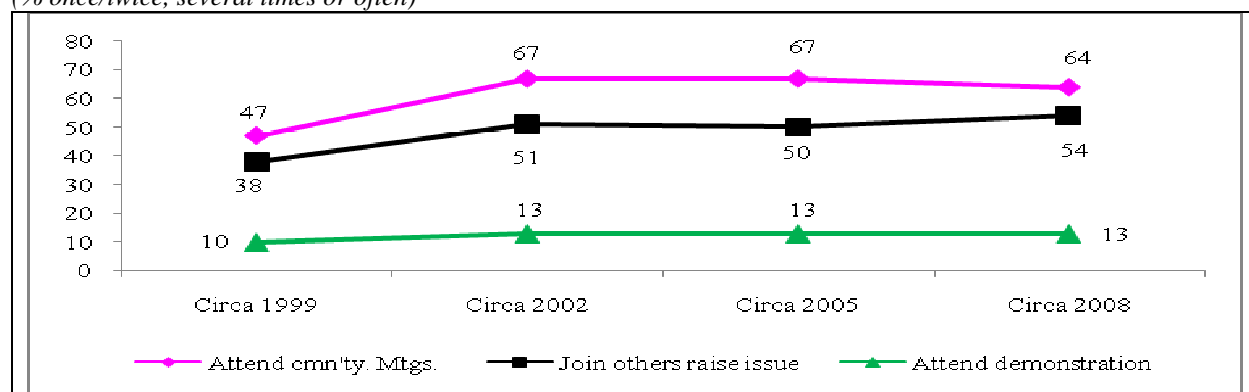
Table 2: Trends in Political Knowledge, 10-country means*, 1999-2008
(% correct)

	1999	2002	2005	2008
Know MP Name	30	-	52	51
Know Finance Minister Name	22	-	-	33

Note: Questions were not asked in Uganda in Round 1 (circa 1999).

Civic participation is also trending upward: Generally, participation in collective action has improved between 1999 and 2008, by +17, +16 and +3 percentage points for attendance at community meetings, joining others to raise issues, and going to a demonstration or protest (Figure 15). But the trends reveal interesting variations. Uganda recorded a significant drop in attendance at community meetings (-11 percentage points). Similarly, Namibians and Nigerians cut back on their involvement with others to raise issues, by -18 and -13 percentage points respectively. Compared to the global improvement of +3 percentage points, the improvement in Malians' involvement in demonstrations is quite remarkable (+10 percentage points).

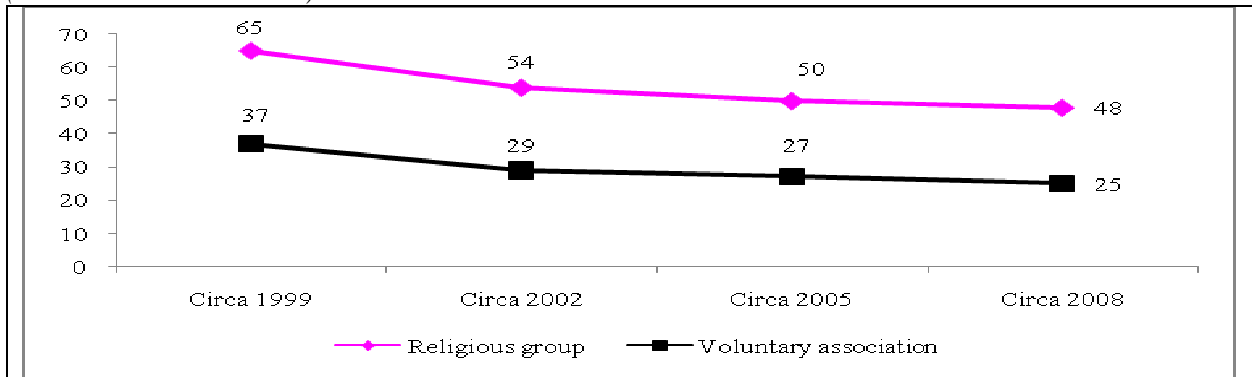
Figure 15: Trends in Civic Participation – Collective Action, 11-country means, 1999-2008
(% once/twice, several times or often)



But trends in engagement in civil society networks show a marked decline: Active membership of both religious and voluntary associations dropped significantly, by 17 and 12 percentage points respectively, between 1999 and 2008 (Figure 16). With the exception of Lesotho, which registered a marginal increase in participation in religious groups, all other countries suffered reductions. In fact, the reductions are particularly remarkable in Mali, Namibia, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia (-41, -31, -29, -22, -21, -19 and -10 percentage points, respectively). Namibia, Malawi, Mali, South Africa, Uganda,

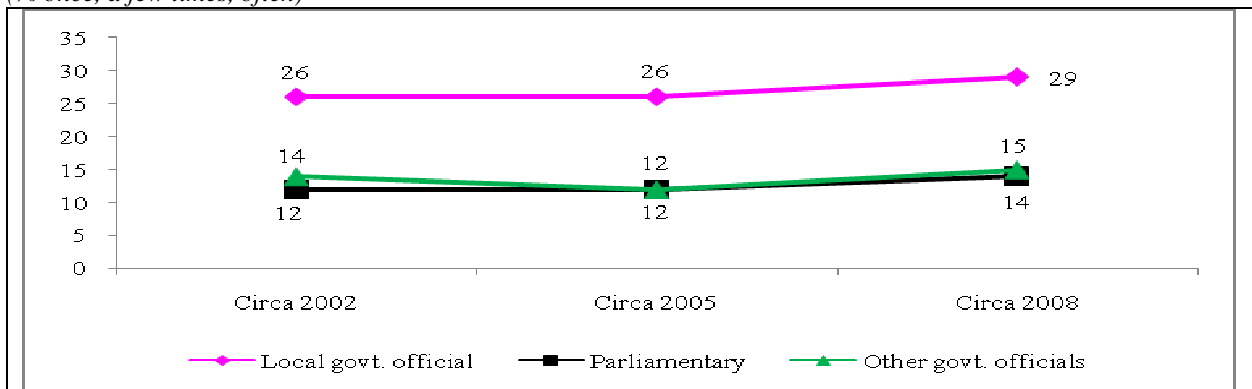
Botswana and Zambia are largely responsible for the over-time decline in membership in voluntary associations (-37, -31, -27, -27, -18, -17 and -13 percentage points, respectively).¹⁰

Figure 16: Trends in Civic Participation – Group Membership, 11-country means, 1999-2008
(% leader or active member)



And trends in contact with formal and informal leaders are generally stable with the exception of significant drops with respect to local government officials in some countries: Generally, contact with formal leaders has remained stable between 1999 and 2008. However, contact of local government officials has dropped considerably in three countries: Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania (by -28, -13 and -12 percentage points, respectively). Contact with officials at government ministries also plummeted by -21 percentage points in Tanzania (Figure 17).

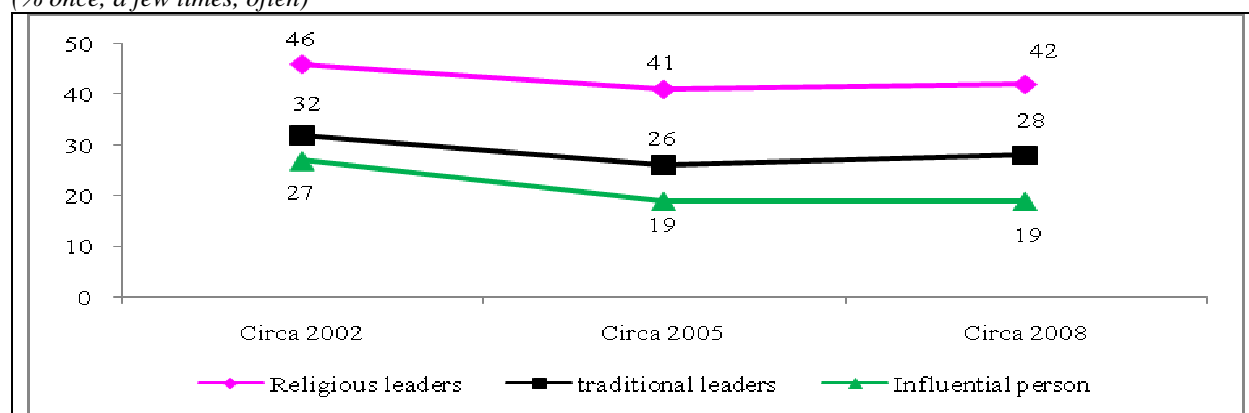
Figure 17: Trends in Civic Participation – Contacting Formal Leaders, 11-country means, 2002-2008
(% once, a few times, often)



Over time, **contact with informal leaders has experienced marginal decline** (Figure 18). Tanzania and Malawi are largely responsible for the slump in contact with religious and traditional leaders as well as influential persons. Contact with “other influential persons” also declined significantly in Nigeria, Namibia and Uganda also declined significantly.

¹⁰ Membership in voluntary association for Rounds 1 to 3 is based on a scale developed using membership in trade unions/farmers coops, business and community development associations. The Alpha values of these scales are 0.5430 for Round 1, 0.7891 for Round 2 and 0.6011 for Round 3. It should be kept in mind that we regard these figures as approximately comparable, but not exactly comparable, to the Round 4 (2008) figures for participation in voluntary associations generally.

Figure 18: Trends in Civic Participation – Contacting Informal Leaders, 11-country means, 2002-2008
 (% once, a few times, often)



Summary and Conclusions

As we have seen, the indicators that we have examined here reveal something of a mixed picture. In the most recent survey, there are some encouraging indicators in all aspects of democratic citizenship that we investigated (attitudes and values, knowledge and engagement, and participation), but there are also indicators in all areas that raise questions about the depth and extent of democraticness among Africans in the countries we surveyed. Based on this information, we conclude that the development of democratic citizenship among Africans is still relatively weak.

The good news, however, is that the trends on many indicators appear to be going in the right direction, with citizenship attributes increasing in many cases since 1999. The positive trends indicate that democratic citizens are beginning to emerge in Africa to complement the democratic structures and processes that are being established in the countries surveyed. As their experience with democratic practices and institutions grows, and their opportunities to freely think, act and speak as democrats expand, we might expect that Africans will increasingly exhibit the attributes of democratic citizens who are not only committed to democracy in principle, but who fully understand and embrace the rights and responsibilities that they have as democratic citizens in practice.

This Briefing Paper was prepared by E. Gyimah-Boadi (gyimah@cddghana.org) and Daniel Armah Attoh (daniel@cddghana.org) of the Center for Democratic Development in Ghana (CDD-Ghana).

The **Afrobarometer** is produced collaboratively by social scientists from 20 African countries. Coordination is provided by 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) in Benin. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RDMFA/DANIDA), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for Afrobarometer Round 4 research, capacity building and outreach activities. For more information, see:

www.afrobarometer.org