

AFRO BAROMETER

Afrobarometer Paper No.11

**AFROBAROMETER ROUND I:
COMPENDIUM OF
COMPARATIVE DATA FROM A
TWELVE -NATION SURVEY**

by the Afrobarometer Network
Compilers: Carolyn Logan and Fabiana
Machado

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



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March 2002

Carolyn Logan is Research Associate and Fabiana Machado is Data Manager, Afrobarometer Project, Michigan State University. This publication would not have been possible without the hard work of survey research teams headed by Mogopodi Lekorwe (Botswana), E. Gyimah-Boadi (Ghana), Thuso Green (Lesotho), Stanley Khaila (Malawi), Massa Coulibaly (Mali), Christiaan Keulder (Namibia), Shola Fatodu (Nigeria), Robert Mattes (South Africa), Deo Mushi (Tanzania), Robert Sentamu (Uganda), Neo Simutanyi (Zambia) and Annie Dzenga (Zimbabwe). They collected the data on which the tables and text are based.

The Afrobarometer is a joint enterprise of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in Ghana, and Michigan State University (MSU), working in collaboration with the above National Partners. The Directors of the Afrobarometer are Michael Bratton (MSU), Robert Mattes (IDASA) and E. Gyimah-Boadi (CDD).

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The Afrobarometer Series, launched in October 1999, reports the results of national sample surveys on the attitudes of citizens in selected African countries towards democracy, markets and other aspects of development. The Afrobarometer is a joint enterprise of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, Ghana). Afrobarometer papers are simultaneously co-published by these partner institutions. The objective of the Afrobarometer is to collect, analyze and disseminate cross-national, time-series attitudinal data for up to a dozen new democracies on the African continent.

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INTRODUCTION

Africans have begun to reform their governments and national economies. But these initiatives have usually been led by elites. All too often, the orientations of the general public towards political and economic change are unknown, undervalued or ignored. How do Africans understand democracy? Which aspects of good governance and structural adjustment do they support or reject? And how do they behave as citizens and as actors in civil society? The Afrobarometer seeks to answer these and many other, related questions. By giving voice to African citizens, it challenges the view that elites understand the preferences of “the people,” including minority groups within society. Afrobarometer results enable Africans and interested outsiders to educate themselves about public opinion in Africa and to influence policy makers accordingly.

The Afrobarometer is a state-of-the-art research instrument that measures the social, political and economic atmosphere in Africa. A first round of Afrobarometer surveys has been conducted in a dozen African countries and will be repeated on a regular cycle. Because the instrument asks a standard set of questions, countries can be systematically compared.

The Afrobarometer is dedicated to three main objectives:

- to produce scientifically reliable data on public opinion in Africa;
- to build a pan-African capacity for survey research; and
- to broadly disseminate and apply survey results.

Because of its broad scope, the Afrobarometer is organized as an international collaborative enterprise. The Afrobarometer Network consists of three Core Partners who are jointly responsible for project leadership and coordination: the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Centre for Democracy and Development in Ghana (CDD-Ghana), and Michigan State University (MSU). The Afrobarometer Network also includes National Partner institutions – NGOs, university research institutes, independent think tanks, or private polling firms – which conduct the surveys.

Round 1 of the Afrobarometer, completed in September 2001, covers 12 countries: Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This report provides a preliminary overview of the results from all 12 national surveys. Its purpose is to catalogue and describe the data gathered in Round 1. At this stage, interpretation of results has been kept to a minimum, and is, for the most part, left to the reader.

Just as the conduct of elections and the rule of law are critical to the *persistence* of a democratic system, so too will public attitudes and the evolving political culture that they reflect play a pivotal role in determining the long-term fate of these regimes. Measuring these public attitudes has been one of the key goals of the Afrobarometer surveys.

Moreover, in many cases the transformations that these countries have undergone have not been limited to the political arena. Most of the sample countries have in fact been undergoing dual transitions, introducing not only democratic political reforms, but market-based economic reforms as well. Afrobarometer surveys have therefore also been designed to measure the understanding of, impact, and support for these economic reforms, as well as to gather

information about a range of other attitudes, values and actual and potential behaviors related to governance, and to civil society and the individual's role within it.

Round 1 of the Afrobarometer began with a survey of public attitudes conducted in Ghana in July 1999. This was followed by surveys carried out in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the latter half of 1999. Similar research was then conducted in Lesotho, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda in the first half of 2000. Finally, the round was completed with surveys in Mali and Tanzania in 2001. Several particular points about the timing of specific surveys are worth noting:

- On the Tanzania mainland, the survey was carried out from January-March 2001, shortly after the national elections of October 2000. These polls were politically sensitive in Zanzibar and Pemba, resulting in post-election tension and unrest, and an unstable political climate on the islands in early 2001. The Zanzibar interviews were therefore conducted five months after those on the mainland, from August-September 2001, to avoid jeopardizing the safety of interviewers.
- At the request of donors, the Uganda survey was conducted in the late stages of the 2000 referendum campaign, which may have influenced respondents' attitudes and openness.
- The Zimbabwe survey was conducted *before* the mounting political turmoil that surrounded the 2000 national parliamentary elections.
- The Nigeria survey was carried out a mere eight months after the inauguration of a new democratic regime on May 29, 1999, under the leadership of Olusegun Obasanjo, and may reflect a momentary public euphoria.
- The survey in Lesotho was conducted about a year and a half after serious political upheaval that followed contested 1998 elections that led to riots in the capital and military intervention by South Africa.

To date, design of the questionnaires used in each country has been an evolutionary process. All contained certain standard questions, some of which have also been used in other regions of the world. Identically worded items are useful for purposes of comparison and locating public attitudes in specific African countries in relation to those elsewhere on the continent and globally.

Other questions and topics, however, were not standardized or only partly standardized. The wording of specific questions at times varied as questionnaires were pre-tested and adapted to local conditions. And questions were changed or new questions were added as flaws or gaps in some of the earliest instruments were identified. In these cases, direct comparisons of responses across countries may be more difficult, although we believe that for the purposes of preliminary analysis, there is enough similarity among the items presented in the tables to treat them as equivalent. Major variations in question wording are indicated in the footnotes to each table. Note that the base questionnaire, which was produced in English in all countries except Mali, where it was written in French. In each country this questionnaire was then translated into a number of local languages, and interviews were conducted in the language of the respondent's choice during face-to-face interviews by teams of trained interviewers. The only exception is Tanzania, where all interviews were conducted in Swahili.

Afrobarometer Round 1 is only the first stage of what is expected to be an ongoing project. We anticipate conducting follow-up surveys in each of the 12 countries (and possibly several others) in order to assess whether change is occurring, and to measure how attitudes respond to

particular events or political trajectories. Round 2 surveys will be carried out using a fully standardized questionnaire.

Technical Notes

To understand and interpret the results presented in the text and tables, the reader should bear the following considerations in mind:

- In each country, we interviewed a representative sample of the adult population (i.e., those over 18 and eligible to vote). We developed a random sample based on a multi-stage, stratified, area cluster approach, which gave every eligible adult in each country an equal chance of being selected. In the 12 countries, a total of 21,531 respondents were interviewed. Individual country samples are as follows: Botswana (1200); Ghana (2004); Lesotho (1177); Malawi (1208); Mali (2089); Namibia (1183); Nigeria (3603); South Africa (2200); Tanzania (2198); Uganda (2271); Zambia (1198); and Zimbabwe (1200).
- A sample size of 1200 is sufficient to yield a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percent. All of the figures presented, except where noted, can be assumed to have this maximum margin of sampling error. In countries with larger sample sizes, the margin of sampling error may be less. Exceptions include cases where significant proportions of missing data were excluded from the calculations, thus reducing the sample size. Such instances are indicated in the footnotes to the tables.
- The percentages reported in the tables only reflect *valid responses* to the question, i.e., unless otherwise noted, they include responses such as “don’t know,” but missing data, refused answers, and cases where a question was not applicable are excluded from the calculations. Except where noted, the share of missing data is small and does not significantly change the sample size or margin of error. In the few cases where a significant proportion of non-valid responses was encountered, caution must be used in interpreting results, as the proportions of respondents appearing to have various substantive opinions will be artificially inflated, and the margin of error may be increased.
- All percentages have been rounded to whole numbers for presentation here. This occasionally introduces small rounding errors, so that in some cases the sum of total reported responses does not equal 100 percent. For responses recorded on a scale of 0 to 10, average scores are reported to one decimal place.
- As mentioned, Round 1 questionnaires differed slightly across countries. Some questions were asked in some countries, but not in others. A dash (“-”) in a table indicates that either a specific response option was not offered, or an entire question was not asked in that country. Missing items are most common for Ghana, the first survey to be conducted, and in Uganda where the survey had a specialized purpose (assessment of attitudes toward the upcoming referendum).
- A “<1” reported in the table indicates that a response option was offered, and responses in this category were recorded, but that they totaled less than 0.5 percent of total responses. On open-ended questions, a “0” is recorded for those categories in which *no* respondents volunteered a given response, while “<1” again indicates that this response was offered by at least one, but less than 0.5 percent of respondents.
- In many cases, we have combined response categories in the figures reported in the tables. For example, “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses are often added and reported as one figure. Rounding was applied only after response categories were aggregated.
- Several questions allowed respondents to give open-ended responses, which were initially recorded verbatim. These responses were then coded into categories within each country, and while all Southern African countries generally used the same recoding categories,

countries in East and West Africa often used a different list (or lists). These categories were then further condensed into those reported in Tables 1-1, 2-1 and 4-1. The in-country coding processes using different lists of categories introduced some inter-country differences in coding patterns, which affects the comparability of results. For example, in the case of “most important problems,” some countries reported water and electricity as separate categories, while others combined them into a single “water and electricity” category. The latter had to be reported as problems with “services (general)” in Table 2-1, rather than under the separate and more specific “water” or “electricity” categories.

- In some cases, statistical weights were used within individual countries to calculate the cumulative response. For example, if under-sampling inadvertently occurred in a given country with respect to gender or a particular region, responses were weighted to correct for these discrepancies, and the country-level data reported here incorporate this modification.
- In addition to individual country statistics, we also report a twelve-country mean in the last column, identified as Afro Mean. This mean includes the “within country” weights just described, plus an “across country” weight. Afro Mean scores treat every country sample as if it were the same size (1200 respondents). That is, each country carries equal weight in the calculation of Afro Mean, regardless of its sample size or overall population.
- Our samples adequately represent national, voting-age populations in each country surveyed, but the countries selected cannot be considered fully representative of the sub-Saharan African continent. Non-English speaking countries are not well represented, and countries experiencing serious conflict or collapse, and those that have not undergone democratic transitions (or at least held multiparty elections), are excluded entirely. Occasional references to “Africans” are therefore made with a much more limited populace in mind.

The results presented in the tables that follow cover 97 of the total of 137 variables included in our twelve-country data set. Basic demographic indicators are excluded, as are most variables for which we obtained measurements in fewer than seven countries. The results are presented in five sections, which focus on popular understandings of and attitudes toward democracy, economic life, the quality of governance, engagement in civil society, and citizenship.

SECTION 1: DEMOCRACY

1-1 Understandings of Democracy

Are people aware of the concept of democracy? What meanings do they associate with the term? We approach these issues as a starting point for understanding popular views about recent political changes. We begin with the question “What, if anything, do you understand by the word ‘democracy’? What comes to your mind when you hear the word?” This question was always asked in whichever local language the respondent had selected for the interview, but the word “democracy” was always presented in English, except in Mali where French (*la démocratie*) was used, and Botswana, where national research partners felt that a local Setswana phrase for democracy was likely to be more familiar. Respondents were able to give open-ended answers in their own words, which were later coded into categories. They were asked to provide up to three meanings they associated with the term. The results are presented in Table 1-1.

The level of public awareness of democracy – i.e., the proportion who are able to provide at least one meaning for the term – is generally quite high in these twelve countries, though there is considerable variation among them. On average, 78 percent of respondents are able to offer at least one meaning for the term, although only 59 percent are able to do so in Lesotho, while fully 92 percent of Malawians and 94 percent of Nigerians succeed. However, while awareness of democracy and some idea of its meaning may be widespread, it also appears to be relatively thin – a maximum of 19 percent are able to provide as many as three meanings in South Africa, but this figure did not top 10 percent anywhere else.

One of the most striking features of this data is that an overwhelming majority of responses (93 percent) represented positive associations with democracy, followed by neutral meanings (7 percent) such as a change of government or civilian government. Only about 2 percent of responses associated any negative meanings with democracy such as conflict, corruption, or social and economic hardship. Negative responses are, however, more common in Mali, where about 8 percent of responses reflect negative interpretations, and in Lesotho (4 percent).

Among the positive responses offered by respondents, civil liberties and personal freedoms are cited most frequently by a considerable margin, encompassing 40 percent of responses on average. This is the most common response in ten of the twelve countries. In Namibia and Zambia this category represents a sizeable majority of total responses (65 and 64 percent, respectively). Only in Nigeria and Lesotho does it play a somewhat less prominent role, but even in these countries it is the second most frequently cited response.

The second most common meaning identified is “government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” a definition cited by an average of 14 percent of respondents. This is, in fact, the most popular definition in both of the countries that did not give civil liberties and personal freedoms top billing, and it also scores quite high (as the second or third most frequent response) in Botswana, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, in the other 4 countries it registers much less noticeably. Voting (or “electoral choice” or “multiparty competition”) takes third position, with an average of 10 percent of total responses.

Overall, procedural elements of liberal democracy such as protection of civil liberties and voting and multipartyism, score highly among the Africans we interviewed, claiming a bit more than 50 percent of all responses, although the fact that only a relatively modest 10 percent focus on

electoral practices suggests that this particular element may be relatively less important to Africans themselves than it is to donors and the international community.

At the same time, substantive interpretations of democracy – often associated with more locally or “culturally-based” interpretations of democracy – also receive significant attention, garnering nearly 20 percent of total responses, led by definitions of democracy such as “peace, unity or power sharing” (8 percent), “social and economic development” (4 percent), and “equality and justice” (3 percent). Mali stands out in this regard as having the most “substantive,” “cultural” or even “communitarian” interpretation of democracy; more than 40 percent of total responses revealed substantive definitions, including significant numbers of responses in several categories that seem to draw from traditional values – “mutual respect,” “people’s self-determination,” and “working together” – that are not recorded elsewhere. It is also worth noting that the country with the second-highest proportion of such “cultural” interpretations is Botswana (28 percent), a country seen as one of the most consolidated democracies on the continent.

It is interesting, though not surprising given the country’s troubled past, that Ugandans regard peace and unity as a key meaning of democracy (19 percent), but perhaps less expected that they should actually be surpassed by Botswana (21 percent) who have, in contrast, experienced one of Africa’s most peaceful and stable post-independence regimes. The impact of past political trajectories is also apparent in several other countries. For example, 16 percent of Zimbabweans associate democracy with “majority rule,” a meaning that is also of some importance in South Africa (5 percent). Finally, in Namibia, 5 percent link the concept of democracy directly to “national independence.”

Note that the results reported here are percentages of all valid responses, but another way to look at the results is in terms of the proportion of all respondents who gave a particular answer, an approach that reveals important dimensions of the understanding of democracy. For example, while 51 percent of South African responses refer to civil liberties or personal freedoms, 61 percent of all South African respondents cite these freedoms as at least one of their three responses. On the other hand, while 36 percent of Ghana responses cite civil liberties, only 29 percent of Ghanaian respondents offer a response in this category.

Table 1-1: Understandings of Democracy

	Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
A. Awareness of Democracy¹													
Don't Know/Can't Explain	26	26	42	8	30	34	6	9	12	30	23	19	22
Able to provide only one answer	49	68	49	67	49	38	94	44	65	60	62	61	59
Able to provide only two answers	19	6	9	18	15	21	0	28	16	9	13	14	14
Able to provide three answers	6	0	1	7	6	8	0	19	6	<1	2	6	5
B. Meanings of Democracy²													
Positive Responses³													
Civil liberties/Personal Freedoms	29	36	22	53	23	65	15	51	39	26	64	32	40
Government by the People	23	28	30	4	6	3	41	8	2	17	12	9	14
Voting/Electoral Choice/Multiparty Competition	7	13	1	17	4	10	15	8	17	13	8	5	10
Peace/Unity/Power Sharing	21	9	9	2	9	6	5	3	5	19	2	8	8
Social/Economic Development	3	5	3	2	3	6	4	5	5	4	2	4	4
Equality/Justice	4	0	2	1	11	1	1	3	10	3	<1	1	3
Majority Rule	1	0	0	<1	4	0	0	5	2	1	1	16	3
Governance/Effectiveness/Accountability	6	3	3	1	2	0	1	1	3	6	1	7	3
National Independence	2	0	2	1	3	5	0	<1	<1	<1	<1	2	1
Mutual Respect	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Working Together	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<1
People's Self-Determination	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<1
Other Positive Meanings	2	1	9	16	9	5	1	8	14	3	4	4	7
Negative Responses													
Conflict/Confusion	0	<1	0	0	<1	0	<1	0	<1	1	0	0	<1
Corruption/Abuse of Power	0	<1	0	0	<1	0	<1	0	0	<1	0	0	<1
Social/Economic Hardship	0	<1	0	0	1	0	<1	0	<1	<1	0	0	<1
Other Negative Meanings	1	<1	4	1	6	<1	<1	<1	<1	1	1	1	1
Null/Neutral Responses													
Nothing/Democracy is Meaningless	2	0	10	<1	0	0	0	1	<1	0	4	10	2
Civilian Politics/Government	0	5	0	0	1	0	18	0	<1	0	0	0	2
Change of Government/Leadership/Laws	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	<1	<1	<1	<1	0	<1
Other Null/Neutral Meanings	0	0	5	1	2	<1	<1	7	2	6	1	0	2

¹ Ghanaians were asked to provide up to two meanings, and Nigerians only one.

² Respondents were asked: "What, if anything, does 'democracy' mean to you? What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word?"

³ Percentages of all responses (i.e., up to three per respondent) that were both valid (i.e., missing data was excluded) and provided a meaning (i.e., those whose response was "don't know" or "never heard of democracy" are excluded).

1-2 Essential Features of Democracy

A second approach used to further probe respondents' understandings of democracy reveals interesting contrasts with those generated by the first, open-ended question. In this case, eight possible features of democracy were identified, and respondents were asked how important each was for a society to be called "democratic." Four of these – majority rule, freedom to criticize the government, regular elections, and at least two competing political parties – can be classified as political or procedural components of the classic liberal democratic model. The other four – universal access to basic necessities, jobs for everyone, equal access to education, and income equality – include possible socioeconomic or substantive components that some advocates propose as suitable goals for African democracies.

Although as we saw in Table 1-1, the understandings of democracy *volunteered* by respondents largely focus on political aspects of democracy, both procedural and conceptual, the findings here suggest that economic and substantive aspects of democracy may actually be more important to Africans, with the exception of income equality. The average proportion responding that the component is "important" or "very important" for the other three substantive aspects of democracy is 88 percent (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 1-2), considerably above the average proportion who rate the four procedural elements this way of 75 percent. If we compare just the percentages of those who rated features as "very important" (not shown in Table 1-2), the distinction is even more noticeable. On average, 63 percent rate the three socioeconomic features as very important, compared to only 44 percent who grant this status to the political/procedural components.

There is, however, substantial inter-country variation. For example, while Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia, like the others, give higher ratings to the three socioeconomic or substantive features than to the four political procedural ones, the difference in average ratings for each set of features is just 7 percentage points or less (and in Nigeria and Malawi, the difference is just 9 and 10 percentage points respectively). On the other hand, the gap is much wider in Mali and South Africa (18 points), Lesotho (20 points) and especially in Tanzania (31 points). South Africans place the highest importance on the three socioeconomic factors, with 95 to 96 percent identifying each as important or very important, followed closely by Nigeria and Namibia.

On the other hand, Lesotho stands out for the consistently low scores it gives to each feature – the lowest of any country (and the second lowest on majority rule). In addition, the percentage of respondents answering "don't know" in Lesotho is exceptionally high in every category, ranging from 23 to 29 percent, consistent with the high proportion who could not supply a meaning for democracy (see Table 1-1). Tanzania is also somewhat unusual. While it scores relatively near to the mean for most features, the importance accorded to majority rule and regular elections is extremely low at just 43 and 45 percent respectively.

Note that reporting combined "important" and "very important" (or "absolutely essential") responses can conceal some significant distinctions. For example, of the 80 percent of South Africans who think majority rule is important, just 38 percent say it is essential. Similarly, just 35 percent (of 78 percent total) think freedom to criticize is essential, and 37 percent (of 80 total) rate elections this highly. On the other hand, 67 percent (of 95 percent total) rate provision of basic necessities as essential, and the figures for providing jobs (73 of 96 percent) and education (66 of 96) are similar. Thus, the gap between how South Africans value substantive and procedural aspects of democracy may be even greater than the aggregate figures would suggest.

Table 1-2: Essential Features of Democracy

In order for a society to be called democratic, how important is: ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Majority Rule	Important/Very Important	88	–	52	87	84	84	86	80	43	–	82	89	78
	Not important/Not at all Important	8	–	19	12	11	9	11	15	53	–	12	7	16
	Don't know	4	–	29	1	5	7	3	4	2	–	6	5	7
Freedom to Criticize the Government	Important/Very Important	86	–	52	82	68	68	83	78	71	–	80	82	75
	Not important/Not at all Important	11	–	22	17	27	29	14	20	27	–	15	14	20
	Don't know	3	–	26	1	4	4	3	3	2	–	5	5	6
Regular Elections	Important/Very Important	84	–	43	73	85	86	80	80	45	–	81	86	74
	Not important/Not at all Important	13	–	31	27	9	11	18	17	53	–	14	10	20
	Don't know	3	–	26	1	6	3	3	3	2	–	5	4	6
At Least Two Parties Competing	Important/Very Important	83	–	49	74	67	63	89	69	63	–	82	83	72
	Not important/Not at all Important	13	–	24	25	25	31	8	27	35	–	14	12	21
	Don't know	4	–	27	1	9	6	3	5	2	–	4	5	6
Basic Necessities For Everyone	Important/Very Important	92	–	69	94	84	92	93	95	91	–	92	90	89
	Not important/Not at all Important	5	–	7	6	13	6	5	4	7	–	4	6	6
	Don't know	3	–	23	0	3	2	2	1	1	–	4	5	4
Jobs for Everyone	Important/Very Important	87	–	71	82	88	94	95	96	77	–	87	90	87
	Not important/Not at all Important	10	–	5	17	9	4	4	3	22	–	10	5	9
	Don't know	2	–	23	0	3	2	2	1	2	–	3	5	4
Education for Everyone	Important/Very Important	90	–	67	90	89	94	95	95	94	–	87	86	89
	Not important/Not at all Important	8	–	9	10	7	4	3	4	5	–	9	8	7
	Don't know	3	–	24	0	3	2	2	1	1	–	3	5	4
Small Income Gap Between Rich and Poor	Important/Very Important	73	–	48	74	81	65	82	69	74	–	63	73	70
	Not important/Not at all Important	21	–	24	25	15	30	15	27	23	–	33	21	23
	Don't know	5	–	28	1	4	5	3	5	3	–	4	6	7

¹ In Southern African countries, the question was: “In order for a society to be called democratic, is each of these absolutely essential, important, not very important, or not at all important?”

1-3 Support for Democracy

After probing respondents' understandings of democracy, we sought to determine the level of popular support for democratic systems of government in comparison to other alternatives. We took several approaches to measuring this support, presented in Tables 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4. Table 1-2 presents responses to a standard question about support for democracy which has been used in surveys in Europe, the former Soviet bloc countries, and Latin America. It asks respondents whether democracy is always preferable to any other form of government, whether there are certain circumstances in which non-democratic forms of government might be preferable, or whether the form of government really does not matter to a person like themselves. This was followed with two questions that asked respondents to rate "the current system of government with free elections and many parties" and the expected future government.

Across the twelve Afrobarometer countries, a mean of 69 percent of respondents agree with the statement that democratic forms of government are always preferable, indicating a solid base of support for democracy on the continent. Four countries – Botswana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda – score 80 percent or higher, and Ghana is not far behind at 77 percent. In fact, Africans demonstrate a preference for democracy at rates that compare quite favorably with findings in other regions of the world, falling below Western Europe (82 percent in the 1990s), but above six Eastern and Central European countries (65 percent), as well as Latin America (59 percent in 2000).ⁱ

Lesotho stands out as a stark exception to this finding; only 40 percent of respondents agree that democracy is always preferable. However, this may not be surprising given that the survey was conducted not long after a contested 1998 election that led to riots and foreign intervention from South Africa, with continuing political uncertainty. Moreover, even though support for democracy seems quite low, the bulk of responses (49 percent) are in the categories of "don't know" or "to people like me it doesn't matter." A mere 11 percent of Basotho actually assert that a non-democratic government is sometimes preferred. Interestingly, similar findings hold true in some of the other relatively low scorers, particularly Namibia, where 12 percent believe that non-democratic government may be better, compared to 31 percent who did not know or believe it does not matter, and 58 percent who regard democracy as always preferable. Mali and Malawi, on the other hand, record the highest levels of stated support for non-democratic alternatives at 16 and 22 percent respectively.

The respondents' ratings of the current and expected future systems of government suggest similar trends. Nigerians rate their present system "with elections and many parties" most highly (7.4), while Lesotho and Zambia bring up the rear at 5.9 and 6.0, respectively. Nigerians, already at the top of the scale, are also the most optimistic about the future, rating the system of government they expect in five years time a full 1.5 points higher at 8.9. Meanwhile, Lesotho and Zambia are the most pessimistic; ratings for their expected future governments (in 10 years time) decline by 1.3 and 1.7 points respectively to scores of just 4.6 and 4.3. (Note that while the intent of these two questions was to evaluate support for and expectations about current and future *regimes* of government, rather than rating the performance or expectations about incumbent governments, respondents may have conflated these two. These results should therefore be evaluated in conjunction with other data regarding *support for* and *satisfaction with* democracy.)

Table 1-3: Support for Democracy

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Support for Democracy¹	Democracy is preferable to any other form of government.	85	77	40	65	60	58	81	60	84	80	75	71	69
	In certain situations a non-democratic government can be preferable.	7	9	11	22	16	12	9	13	12	8	9	11	12
	To people like me it doesn't matter what form of government we have.	6	15	24	11	24	12	10	21	5	8	12	13	13
	Don't know	3	—	25	2	—	19	<1	6	—	4	4	5	6
Rating of the current system of government.³	Mean on Scale of 0-10 ² 0 = worst 10 = best form of government	—	6.3	5.9	6.1	6.3	—	7.4	6.1	6.4	—	6.0	—	6.3
Rating of the expected future system of government.⁴	Mean on Scale of 0-10 ² 0 = worst 10 = best form of government	—	6.3	4.6	5.9	6.7	—	8.9	5.9	6.7	—	4.3	—	6.3

¹ Relatively high proportions of missing data were recorded in Botswana (2.8 percent) and Lesotho (3.7 percent). In addition, 15.4 percent were recorded as “not applicable” in Uganda because respondents had been unable to supply a meaning for democracy. These cases are excluded from the calculations.

² In Southern African countries the scale was 0 to 10, while in other countries a scale of 1 to 10 was used. The latter responses were recoded onto a 0 to 10 scale by shifting values from 1 to 5 down one point (i.e., 1 becomes 0, 2 becomes 1, etc.). Values from 6 to 10 were left unchanged (leaving no responses for 5).

³ In Southern Africa: “What grade would you give to our current system of government where everyone can vote and there are at least two political parties?” All other countries asked for the rating of “our present system of governing with free elections and many parties.” “Don’t know,” refused, and missing data are excluded from the calculations. These numbers were relatively small except in Lesotho (20.6 percent), Malawi (4.4 percent) and Zambia (6.3 percent).

⁴ In Southern Africa: “What grade would you give to the political system of this country as you expect it to be in 10 years time?” All other countries asked for the rating of “the system of governing that you expect (your country) to have in 5 years time.” Significant proportions of excluded data are encountered in Lesotho (34.4 percent), Malawi (17.3 percent), and Zambia (29.3 percent).

1-4 Rejection of Authoritarian Rule

As another means of judging the level of support for democracy, respondents were asked whether their country might be better off if governed by one of several alternative systems of government: rule by an (un-elected) strong leader; a system with only one political party; military rule; government by traditional elders or leaders; and government by (un-elected) “experts” who control key decisions. Note that, strictly speaking, not all of these alternatives are necessarily authoritarian. In some places traditional rule had many features that were quite democratic, and Uganda’s one party (or “no-party”) state meets some democratic criteria and is more open than the authoritarian systems of that country’s past. It might be more correct to argue that all are alternatives to *liberal democratic* regimes, as the degree of authoritarianism implied by each may vary.

On average, respondents soundly reject four of the five alternative systems considered. Military rule is the least popular, rejected by a mean of 82 percent of respondents across our sample, followed closely by the 80 percent who disapprove of rule by a strongman leader or a president acting alone. Nearly 70 percent reject rule by a single party or traditional leaders. On the other hand, a government controlled by economic experts was rejected by only 39 percent across the twelve countries, while a greater number of respondents – 48 percent – found such a system *preferable*. Note, however, that rule by technocrats can be a complement to or even a variety of *democratic* governance (just as many Western democracies rely on economic experts to make certain decisions independently of direct control by the public or elected officials).

Among the individual countries, rejection of authoritarian alternatives varies considerably. At the low end of the scale, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia and South Africa show the lowest *average* levels of rejection of the five alternative systems (calculated from, but not shown on, Table 1-4), ranging between 55 and 60 percent. The “most democratic” according to this measure include Botswana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia, with average rejection rates of 72 to 81 percent. These rankings are confirmed by a look at the proportions who reject one, several, or all four of these alternative forms of rule (rule by technocrats is not included in this measure). Zambia is clearly in the lead, with fully two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents rejecting all four alternative systems. Botswana and Nigeria follow at 59 and 58 percent, respectively. Lesotho, Mali and Namibia lag far behind; only about one-third (30 to 32 percent) reject all four alternatives, and in Namibia nearly one in five (19 percent) do not reject any of them.

But even within a given country, great variations can exist. Nigeria scores high overall, and with its recent very difficult experience with military rule, an overwhelming 90 percent reject this alternative. At the same time, Nigerians prefer rule by economic experts to democracy by a very substantial 70 to 25 percent margin – the highest level of support given to this system of rule in any of the countries.

Similarly, Uganda, perhaps reflecting popular experience with Museveni’s “movement system,” is actually quite moderate in its rejection of a government with only one political party. Compared to others in this cohort, a bare majority of 53 percent rejects such a system. At the same time, Ugandans decisively oppose a strong leader, with 84 percent registering disapproval. Malians, who score relatively low overall in support for democracy, are evenly split, at 47 percent each, between those who support and reject rule by traditional leaders, in significant contrast to any of the other countries in the survey, where this alternative is consistently and substantially rejected.

Table1-4: Rejection of Authoritarian Rule

Would the country be better off if it were governed by:		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
A Strong Leader Who Could Decide Everything¹	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	88	86	69	87	73	57	83	67	92	84	91	78	80
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	3	–	4	3	–	11	–	15	–	–	2	6	4
	Agree/Strongly Agree	7	12	19	9	23	24	15	15	7	13	5	11	13
	Don't Know	2	2	8	1	4	7	2	3	1	3	3	5	3
Only One Political Party	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	78	78	51	76	73	63	88	56	61	53	80	74	69
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	–	5	3	–	6	–	17	–	–	3	5	3
	Agree/Strongly Agree	17	19	33	19	21	24	9	23	39	41	15	14	23
	Don't Know	2	2	12	1	5	8	2	4	1	6	2	6	4
The Army	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	85	88	70	83	70	59	90	75	96	89	95	80	82
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	–	5	3	–	11	–	12	–	–	1	6	3
	Agree/Strongly Agree	9	10	18	13	24	24	8	9	4	9	3	10	12
	Don't Know	4	2	7	2	6	6	2	3	<1	2	2	5	3
A Traditional System of Rule by Kings and Chiefs	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	74	71	59	71	47	55	74 ²	64	89	80	80	63	69
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	5	–	6	6	–	18	–	16	–	–	2	10	6
	Agree/Strongly Agree	18	25	28	22	47	22	26	16	10	15	15	23	22
	Don't Know	3	5	8	1	7	6	–	4	1	5	3	4	4
Experts Who Make the Most Important Decisions	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	52	36	49	39	27	40	25	26	33	51	59	34	39
	Neither Agree nor Disagree ¹	11	–	6	5	–	17	–	19	–	–	5	8	6
	Agree/Strongly Agree	28	59	35	51	68	30	70	49	65	33	31	51	48
	Don't Know	8	4	11	5	6	12	5	5	2	16	5	7	7
Number of forms of authoritarian rule that are rejected.³	Rejects none	6	3	14	3	10	19	2	9	<1	3	3	9	7
	Rejects one	5	5	10	5	11	15	5	13	2	5	3	7	7
	Rejects two	9	11	21	13	17	15	7	20	10	16	9	13	13
	Rejects three	21	29	24	28	32	19	28	21	35	39	18	24	27
	Rejects four	59	52	31	50	30	32	58	37	52	37	67	47	46

¹ In Western and Eastern Africa, respondents were asked what they thought of the idea of “getting rid of elections so that a strong leader can decide everything.” In Southern African countries, respondents were asked whether they would approve “if parliament and political parties were abolished, so that the president could decide everything.”

² For Nigeria, the question presented here about rule by traditional leaders was not asked. However, responses to a related question were recoded to produce the results presented here. The question asked was “Let us say that the best government gets 10 marks out of 10, and the worst government gets only 1 out of 10. What mark would you give to the old system of government by traditional rulers?” Responses were recoded as follows: 1-2 is “strongly disagree,” 3-5 equals “disagree,” 6-8 equals “agree,” and 9-10 equals “strongly agree.”

³ This reports the proportion of individual respondents who reject from none to all four of the authoritarian alternatives: a strongman leader, a one-party state, military rule, and rule by traditional leaders (i.e., rule by technocratic experts is not included in this calculation, as it is not necessarily authoritarian).

1-5 Defense of Democracy

A final way in which we evaluated support for democracy was by asking respondents how they would respond should the government take anti-democratic steps such as closing down newspapers or other media outlets that criticize it, dismissing judges who rule against it, or dissolving parliament and canceling elections. Respondents were asked whether they would support or oppose the government if it took such steps, and whether they would do nothing, or actually take action to oppose the government action such as discussing the issue with others, contacting a media outlet, contacting elected officials or representatives, or joining a demonstration or a boycott.

Overall, the responses to these questions suggest that the support for democracy is not quite as deep as it is widespread. On the one hand, high levels of allegiance to democracy are also still apparent in the fact that, on average, only 7 to 10 percent of respondents say that they would actually support the government if it took such undemocratic actions. But a further one-third of respondents say that they would not do anything if the government took such steps, so not all of those who express support for democracy as their preferred system of government claim a similar willingness to *take action* to defend democratic principles. Nevertheless, the same would likely be true in even the most consolidated democracies, and it is still impressive that for all three infractions, just about half of respondents claim that they would take steps to oppose the government.

The individual country results are relatively consistent with those shown in Table 1-3. Botswana, Ghana and Zambia are among the countries expressing the greatest willingness to actively defend democracy, just as they are among those most likely to reject non-democratic alternatives. Meanwhile, people in Lesotho and Mali are least likely to take action against their government; in the event that any of these anti-democratic measures were undertaken, more would “do nothing” than would “do something.” However, this time these two “low scorers” are joined by Tanzania, a surprising result given that Tanzanians appear to be among the staunchest advocates of democracy based on the data in the previous two tables. Thus, while Tanzanians express high levels of support for democracy over other alternatives, they appear to be the least willing to back up their words with action – support for democracy may be particularly shallow in this country.

Another interesting case is Nigeria. Nigerians are least likely to actually support the government in the face of anti-democratic reversals, with only 2 to 3 percent claiming they would back such moves. At the same time, the remainder of the populace is fairly evenly split between those willing to take action and those who would remain silent.

Table 1-5: Defense of Democracy

What would you do if the government took any of the following actions: ²		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho ¹	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Shut down newspapers that criticize the government³	Support the Government	3	5	11	4	9	6	2	7	14	–	4	6	7
	Do Nothing	20	38	47	38	43	28	45	25	47	–	15	36	35
	Do Something to Oppose	63	57	35	57	39	58	51	59	35	–	77	53	53
	Don't Know	14	–	7	2	9	8	2	9	4	–	4	5	6
Dismiss judges who rule against the Government	Support the Government	6	5	12	11	11	23	3	17	11	–	5	7	10
	Do Nothing	20	37	49	39	43	25	46	25	51	–	16	38	35
	Do Something to Oppose	59	58	32	49	39	44	47	46	32	–	73	50	48
	Don't Know	16	–	7	2	7	8	3	12	6	–	6	6	6
Suspend parliament and cancel the next elections	Support the Government	3	3	17	6	8	10	2	8	7	–	4	4	7
	Do Nothing	20	30	45	37	43	27	44	26	47	–	15	39	34
	Do Something to Oppose	62	67	31	55	42	55	51	54	39	–	76	51	53
	Don't Know	14	–	7	2	7	9	3	12	6	–	5	6	7

¹ Levels of missing data were unusually high for Lesotho on all three questions (7.8, 9.2 and 9.2 percent, respectively). These cases were excluded from the calculations.

² In East and West Africa, the response options offered included “support the government,” “nothing,” “contact an elected representative,” “support an opposition party,” “join a protest or boycott,” and “other.” These were recoded into the categories listed. In Southern African countries, the responses to two questions were combined to produce the reported results. The first question was “If the government were to take the following actions, would you support it, neither support nor oppose, or oppose it?” The second question asked “What, if anything, would you do about it?” with response options that included “do nothing,” “speak to others about it,” “write a newspaper,” “phone a radio or TV program,” “contact a government official or representative,” and “join a march or demonstration.” The number who would “support the government” is taken from the first question. For those who would oppose the government or neither support nor oppose it, the response to the second question was used to determine whether these individuals would “do nothing” or “do something to oppose” the government’s actions. Note that this means that “do nothing” responses for these countries therefore include both respondents who said they would “neither support nor oppose the government” and therefore do nothing, as well as those who would “oppose the government,” but also do nothing about it.

³ In Southern Africa, the question referred to the government shutting down “newspaper, or radio or television stations that were critical of it.”

1-6 Satisfaction with Democracy

The previous two sections focused on *support* for democracy as a *preferred* system of government. There can, however, be a sharp distinction between such support and *satisfaction* with the actual performance of the government. We therefore continued by asking respondents about the quality of the last national elections and whether they consider their own countries to be democracies. We then probed levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country. Not surprisingly, at this point we begin to see even larger variations across countries.

Evaluations of the honesty of national elections are quite good. Those rating the latest elections “quite honest” or “very honest” outnumbered those who felt they were “dishonest” or “very dishonest” by a ratio of three to one (67 percent to 22 percent). More than three-quarters of respondents rated elections positively in Botswana, Namibia, Nigeria and Tanzania, and in all other countries except Zimbabwe a solid majority rated them as honest.

Most of the countries in the survey also receive relatively high marks for being democratic, albeit often with minor or even major problems. A mean of 71 percent of respondents rate their country as a democracy to at least some degree. In fact, more than 80 percent of respondents rate their country as a democracy in seven of the twelve countries, including an overwhelming 96 percent of Nigerians (where a mere 1 percent contend the country is not a democracy), and 90 percent of Botswana. But while Nigerians often appear to be euphoric about their new government, they can be realistic as well; 46 percent identified Nigeria as “a democracy with major problems,” and another 33 percent acknowledge at least minor problems. In Botswana, on the other hand, the much more consolidated state of democracy is reflected in the fact that 46 percent evaluate the country as “fully democratic,” while only 8 percent identify major problems.

There are two exceptions to these optimistic evaluations. In Zimbabwe, continuing rule by the ZANU party has frustrated many and challenged democratic principles; 38 percent claim that the country is not a democracy. In Lesotho, political instability in 1998 several years after the transition may have seriously undermined satisfaction with this new system; 17 percent doubt that the country is a democracy, while 33 percent simply “don’t know.”

Given the extremely high expectations of democracy apparent in many countries after widely heralded transitions, the fact that satisfaction with the actual performance of democracy lags behind levels of support (see especially Table 1-3) may not be surprising. Satisfaction is lowest in Zimbabwe, where a mere 18 percent are either “somewhat” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy presently works, followed by 38 percent of Basotho. Elsewhere, satisfaction ranged from lows of 52 to 54 percent in South Africa and Ghana, to highs of 75 percent in Botswana, and an exceptional 84 percent in Nigeria – a figure that is actually *higher* than the 81 percent who express unqualified *support* for democracy. Again, this high level of satisfaction in Nigeria may in part reflect continuing euphoria over the transition and a honeymoon period for the new and still largely untested government. This figure will bear watching over time, as Obasanjo’s government faces the difficult challenge of matching expectations with real progress.

Further comparisons with the level of support for democracy revealed in Table 1-3 indicate that for most countries the support-satisfaction gap is relatively moderate. In Mali and Lesotho, support and satisfaction are roughly equal, while in Botswana, Malawi and South Africa, levels of satisfaction are between 8 and 10 percentage points lower than levels of support for democracy. However, in Zimbabwe the gap widens enormously to 53 percent.

Table 1-6: Satisfaction with Democracy

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
How honest were the last national elections?¹	Dishonest/Very Dishonest	10	38	29	34	24	11	15	20	16	7	18	47	22
	Quite Honest/Very Honest	83	62	54	63	55	78	76	73	80	79	67	31	67
	Don't Know	7	—	17	3	20	11	8	8	4	14	16	22	11
How much of a democracy is (your country) today?²	Not a Democracy	5	12	17	12	6	3	1	8	7	5	7	38	10
	Democracy w/Major Problems	8	—	13	23	37	15	46	24	26	27	20	17	21
	Democracy w/Minor Problems	36	—	13	28	21	41	33	34	33	27	38	18	27
	Full Democracy	46	—	24	34	24	30	17	26	17	21	25	9	23
	Yes, It is a Democracy ³	—	69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
	Don't Know, etc. ⁴	5	18	33	3	11	11	3	8	17	20	9	17	13
How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (your country)?	Not a Democracy	1	—	4	2	0	1	—	1	2	3	1	17	3
	Very Dissatisfied	7	16	22	20	17	6	3	16	6	6	12	37	14
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	14	16	9	19	17	20	11	27	13	9	24	21	17
	Neutral	—	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
	Somewhat Satisfied	43	37	14	31	41	36	58	36	49	37	43	13	37
	Very Satisfied	32	17	24	26	19	28	26	16	14	25	16	5	21
Don't Know, etc. ²	3	—	27	2	6	10	2	4	16	21	4	7	8	

¹ In Ghana, Mali, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda, respondents were asked whether the most recent national election was conducted honestly or dishonestly. In Southern Africa, respondents were asked how they would rate the freeness and fairness of the last national elections. For these countries, therefore, responses were recoded so that “dishonest/very dishonest” includes the responses “not free or fair” and “on the whole, free and fair but with several major problems,” and “quite honest/very honest” includes the responses “free and fair, with some minor problems” and “completely free and fair.”

² In Southern Africa, respondents were asked “On the whole, is the way (your country) is governed completely democratic, democratic but with some minor exceptions, democratic but with some major exceptions, or not a democracy?” In Ghana respondents were asked “In your opinion, is Ghana today a democracy or not a democracy?”

³ In Ghana respondents were only offered the choices of “yes, it is a democracy” or “no, it is not a democracy.”

⁴ “Don't know, etc.” includes both “don't know” responses, as well as responses recorded as “not applicable.” Interviewers in Uganda and Ghana were instructed to select “not applicable” and skip the question if the respondent had not previously been able to provide a meaning for the term democracy (see Table 1-1), although the number of “not applicable” responses actually recorded is considerably lower than the proportion of respondents who met this criteria. It thus appears that “not applicable” may have been used inconsistently by interviewers. All “not applicable” responses are thus treated as “don't know.”

SECTION 2: ECONOMY

2-1 Most Important Problems

What are the public's perceptions of the most important problems their nations face that government should be trying to tackle? Using an open-ended question that recorded verbatim responses, respondents were asked to identify the top two or three problems facing their country. Responses were then coded into the categories listed in Table 2-1, which summarizes data (as percentages of total responses given) from the first two responses given by each individual.

These data reveal a startlingly low level of concern about *political* problems. In most countries, well under 10 percent of responses involve political concerns, and no single political issue stands out. The one exception is Uganda, where 18 percent of total responses concern political issues, with "political tensions" raising the most concerns at 7 percent, followed by international war (included in "other political problems") and political violence at 4 percent each. Given that Uganda was deeply involved in both internal and international conflicts at the time of the survey in May 2000, this is hardly surprising. It is perhaps more unusual that the numbers for these three categories are not higher in Uganda itself, or in countries such as Lesotho, which has suffered serious political turmoil since 1998, or in Namibia and Zimbabwe, both of which are also presently involved in international conflict. Mean values across ten countries identify corruption as the most common political problem, which drew about 2 percent of total responses. Meanwhile, problems such as discrimination, inequality, and lack of rights – concerns frequently raised by international observers – barely register.

Economic problems and social issues and services both draw much more attention from respondents. Economic problems are identified in a mean of 51 percent of responses, with a high of 63 percent in Zimbabwe. Social issues are cited in 42 percent of responses, although in Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania social problems are raised more often than economic ones.

The outstanding economic problem, which is also the most commonly cited problem in the survey as a whole, is job creation, which is identified as the number one problem in four countries, and places among the top three in six countries. In South Africa, for example, 31 percent of responses cite job creation (and fully 76 percent of South Africans name this issue as one of their responses). In the other four countries, however, the public perceives this as a relatively unimportant problem, identifying it in 5 percent or fewer of their responses. The overall state of the economy comes next; this is the number one problem identified in Malawi and especially in Zimbabwe, where fully 32 percent name this issue. This is followed by poverty, food supply and farming issues, which are of particularly high importance to Malians, constituting 39 percent of their total responses.

Among social issues, education and health rank the highest, followed by crime and security, which is a particularly important concern to South Africans, who name it in 22 percent of their responses. Perhaps surprisingly, AIDS is only identified as a significant problem in a mean of 3 percent of responses. It registers most noticeably in hard-hit Botswana, where it is identified in 12 percent of responses (and 24 percent mention it as one of their responses), and Namibia where it registers 6 percent. But in several other countries facing severe infection rates, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Malawi, it barely registers as an issue of public concern.

Table 2-1: Most Important Problems

What are the most important problems facing the country that the government should address? ¹	Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Political Problems													
Corruption	1	–	1	2	1	1	–	3	2	2	1	1	2
Political Violence	<1	–	1	<1	2	2	–	<1	1	4	0	<1	1
Political Tension	<1	–	2	<1	1	0	–	<1	2	7	<1	<1	1
Discrimination/Inequality	1	–	<1	1	<1	1	–	2	<1	<1	<1	1	1
Democracy	1	–	1	<1	<1	1	–	<1	<1	0	1	1	<1
Other Political Problems	2	–	1	1	1	1	–	1	2	5	1	2	2
Economic Problems													
Job Creation	30	–	36	4	5	29	–	31	5	5	13	16	17
Economy	3	–	1	18	4	3	–	3	6	2	7	32	8
Poverty/Destitution	8	–	5	5	14	3	–	4	3	13	6	2	6
Food/Famine/Food Shortage	1	–	10	12	16	2	–	<1	3	2	4	5	6
Farming/Agriculture	1	–	3	6	9	0	–	0	7	3	9	<1	4
Infrastructure	1	–	4	6	5	0	–	2	5	6	7	2	4
Loans/Credit	<1	–	<1	2	3	0	–	<1	7	2	2	<1	2
Wages	2	–	1	1	1	2	–	1	<1	2	1	2	1
Rates and Taxes	<1	–	<1	0	1	0	–	<1	3	4	<1	1	1
Other Economic Problems	4	–	1	1	2	2	–	1	4	2	2	2	2
Social Issues and Services													
Education	8	–	2	4	12	21	–	3	11	9	14	3	9
Health	6	–	3	11	11	7	–	3	15	11	19	7	9
Crime and Security	5	–	14	12	2	<1	–	22	1	1	4	2	7
Water	1	–	4	6	5	0	–	2	9	7	4	3	4
AIDS	12	–	<1	1	0	6	–	4	<1	<1	0	2	3
Services (General)	1	–	1	1	0	10	–	2	1	0	<1	9	3
Transportation	<1	–	<1	1	0	<1	–	<1	6	1	1	2	1
Housing	1	–	<1	<1	<1	1	–	7	<1	0	1	2	2
Other Social/Services Problems	6	–	2	2	3	3	–	5	4	2	3	5	4
Other													
Nothing/No Problems	<1	–	1	1	<1	0	–	2	<1	1	<1	<1	1
Don't Know	2	–	3	<1	1	1	–	<1	2	1	1	<1	1
Other	6	–	2	<1	<1	3	–	2	2	6	<1	<1	2

¹ Respondents' open-ended responses were coded into categories within each country, and some differences in coding patterns arose. For example, some recorded "Water" separately from "Electricity," whereas in others "Electricity and Water" were combined. These latter are therefore included in the "Services (General)" category.

2-2 Economic Satisfaction

In the previous chapter we considered how satisfied Africans are with political systems. Now we turn to the question of how satisfied they are with the state of the national economy and their place within it. The survey questions are relatively straightforward. We asked respondents first, how satisfied they are with the condition of the national economy in their country, second, how satisfied they are with their own life now compared with the past, and finally, whether they think their own living conditions are better, worse, or about the same as those of their fellow countrymen and women.

It is immediately clear from the results recorded in Table 2-2 that respondents are not generally satisfied with either the state of their national economy or their personal economic situations. Nearly two-thirds pronounce themselves either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the state of the economy in their country. Zimbabwe leads the field, with 94 percent expressing dissatisfaction, followed (somewhat distantly) by Tanzania, Lesotho and Zambia at 78, 77 and 75 percent respectively. Only Uganda and Namibia break this trend, although even in Namibia, those expressing satisfaction account for only 42 percent, compared to 31 percent who are dissatisfied. In Uganda, however, nearly two out of three respondents are actually satisfied with the state of the economy, a remarkable reversal of the findings elsewhere that probably reflects the country's 7 percent annual economic growth rate during the 1990s.

A relatively high 54 percent of Ugandans also rate themselves as more satisfied with their life now compared to five years ago, perhaps in part explaining the high levels of satisfaction with the present state of the economy. In Namibia, too, 42 percent find themselves better off, as compared to just 20 percent who consider themselves worse off. In both countries respondents are relatively evenly divided between those who feel better off than others in their country, those who feel worse off, and those who see their conditions as about equal to those of others.

However, some anomalies also arise. For example, in Nigeria a resounding 68 percent consider themselves better off than five years ago, and 64 percent consider their living conditions better than those of others, the highest level in any country by an enormous margin. Yet 55 percent are dissatisfied with the present state of the economy, as compared to 45 percent who are satisfied. Thus, while Nigerians have clearly seen progress, they apparently have expectations of much further improvement. In both Botswana and Tanzania, respondents were relatively evenly divided between those who felt worse off, the same, and better off compared to a year ago, while in six of the remaining seven countries between 44 and 59 percent are less satisfied with their lives today. Zimbabwe is again an outlier, with an overwhelming majority of 92 percent feeling less satisfied with their lives now than they did the previous year, and 75 percent seeing themselves as worse off than others.

The generally negative view of personal living conditions in comparison to others, i.e., a sense of "relative deprivation," is shared (though in smaller proportions) by Botswana, Basotho, Malawians, South Africans and Zambians. However, in Mali, Tanzania and Uganda at least a plurality considered themselves to be about equally well off as others. The number who felt this way was by far the highest in Mali at 63 percent. This seems to suggest that, in these poor countries, respondents clearly distinguish between poverty and inequality.

Table 2-2: Economic Satisfaction

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia ¹	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
How satisfied are you with the state of the national economy?²	Satisfied/Very Satisfied	32	34	12	26	34	42	45	15	22	64	19	3	29
	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	9	–	4	4	–	17	–	16	–	–	6	3	5
	Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied	55	66	77	69	66	31	55	68	78	35	75	94	64
	Don't Know	4	–	8	1	–	10	–	1	–	3	1	1	2
How satisfied are you with your life now compared to one year ago?³	More Satisfied/Much More Satisfied	26	39	20	24	29	42	68	15	29	54	19	3	31
	About the Same	38	17	22	20	19	26	11	25	33	17	21	4	21
	Less Satisfied/Much Less Satisfied	30	44	49	54	51	20	21	59	37	27	59	92	45
	Don't Know	6	–	9	2	1	12	<1	1	<1	2	1	1	3
Are your living conditions better or worse than those of others in your country?⁴	Better/Much Better	19	–	15	29	12	37	64	17	21	28	24	10	25
	About the Same	25	–	17	18	63	21	27	33	43	35	17	13	28
	Worse/Much Worse	54	–	66	53	23	39	7	50	36	28	58	75	44
	Don't Know	1	–	2	<1	2	3	2	1	1	9	1	2	2

¹ Levels of missing data were unusually high for Namibia on the first question (4.1 percent) and the second question (4.5 percent). These cases were excluded from the calculations.

² In Southern African countries, “At the moment, are you dissatisfied, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, or satisfied with economic conditions in (your country)?”

³ In East and West Africa the actual wording was “When you look at your life today, how satisfied do you feel compared with one year ago (“five years ago” in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda).” In Southern Africa, respondents were asked “How do economic conditions in (your country) now compare to one year ago? Are they much worse, worse, about the same, better, or much better.” Answers were then recoded into the response categories listed.

⁴ In East and West Africa, the actual wording was “Would you say that your own living conditions are worse, the same, or better than other (Ugandans, etc.)?” In Southern African countries, “Now let us speak about your personal economic conditions. Would you say they are worse, the same, or better than other (South Africans, etc.)?”

2-3 Government Performance

The public's level of satisfaction with government performance was also assessed by asking about the government's handling of a number of specific social and economic issues, including job creation, keeping prices low, narrowing income gaps, reducing crime, addressing educational needs, improving health services, fighting corruption, and fighting HIV/AIDS.

Overall, governments in these twelve countries do not fare especially well in the view of their people, although the ratings vary considerably across the eight issues. The lowest scores arise on economic management, including narrowing income gaps, keeping prices low or stable, and creating jobs, with a mean of 60 percent or more reporting that their governments are doing "fairly badly" or "very badly" in handling each of these issues. Governments roughly break even on reducing crime and fighting corruption, where nearly equal numbers rate their performance positively and negatively. They fare the best in the social services fields of addressing educational needs (59 percent positive ratings, 38 percent negative), improving health services (54 percent positive, 44 percent negative) and fighting HIV/AIDS (62 percent positive, 31 percent negative; but note that this question was only asked in four of the twelve countries). Averaging across the eight issues, opinion on mean government performance is relatively evenly split, with 50 percent negative responses, and 46 percent positive.

But public evaluations of government performance also vary quite substantially across the twelve countries. This becomes especially clear if we compare the average positive and negative ratings within each country across five issues (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 2-3). The average negative score (i.e., those responding "fairly badly" or "very badly") in South Africa, the country most dissatisfied with its government's performance, is 71 percent, compared to only 27 percent who see the government as doing "fairly well" or "very well." South Africans are especially disappointed in their government's handling of job creation, prices, and crime, all of which scored above 80 percent negatives, but they give their government some of the lowest ratings on seven of the eight issues studied (and on all five of the issues included in the average score).

Other dissatisfied publics include Zimbabweans (average 68 percent negative responses across five issues), and Malawians (66 percent negative), who are especially concerned about crime and prices. Zambians (65 percent negative) are much less satisfied with the provision of health and education services than in many other countries.

At the other end of the spectrum, average *positive* ratings range from 60 to 69 percent in Uganda, Botswana and Nigeria. Uganda's government receives especially strong positive performance evaluations in reducing crime (84 percent positive), providing education (87 percent positive), and health and HIV/AIDS services (73 percent positive in each), but at least a plurality gives the government positive marks in every category except narrowing income gaps. Roughly the same holds true in Nigeria. Again, the government rates better on providing social services than on economic issues, but even in these latter categories, the government gets considerably more positive reviews (58 percent for prices, 55 for jobs) than negative ones (40 for prices, 41 for jobs).

Table 2-3: Government Performance

How well would you say the government is handling the following problems:		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Creating Jobs	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	46	59	53	67	56	51	41	89	66	39	72	77	60
	Fairly Well/Very Well	52	38	38	31	36	47	55	10	29	49	26	20	36
	Don't Know	2	3	9	2	8	2	5	<1	6	12	2	2	4
Keeping Prices Low/Stable	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	47	65	57	92	70	51	40	80	50	43	70	84	62
	Fairly Well/Very Well	41	34	20	8	28	38	58	17	48	50	28	14	32
	Don't Know	11	1	23	<1	2	11	2	2	2	7	2	2	6
Narrowing Income Gaps	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	–	62	–	–	66	–	54	69	70	56	–	–	63
	Fairly Well/Very Well	–	30	–	–	28	–	39	23	25	33	–	–	30
	Don't Know	–	8	–	–	6	–	6	8	5	11	–	–	7
Reducing Crime	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	35	42	49	78	49	51	35	82	36	14	63	66	50
	Fairly Well/Very Well	64	56	44	22	48	47	62	18	64	84	35	31	48
	Don't Know	2	2	7	<1	3	2	3	<1	1	2	2	3	2
Addressing the Educational Needs of All Citizens	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	26	50	32	37	39	33	35	49	40	11	56	50	38
	Fairly Well/Very Well	72	48	56	62	59	62	61	49	59	87	43	46	59
	Don't Know	2	1	11	1	2	5	3	1	1	1	1	3	3
Improving Health Services	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	29	46	39	54	35	35	33	57	49	25	62	63	44
	Fairly Well/Very Well	70	53	50	46	63	63	64	43	50	73	37	35	54
	Don't Know	1	1	11	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	<1	2	2
Fighting Corruption in Government	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	–	61	–	–	51	–	31	66	43	37	–	–	48
	Fairly Well/Very Well	–	31	–	–	37	–	64	30	55	52	–	–	45
	Don't Know	–	7	–	–	12	–	5	4	3	11	–	–	7
Fighting HIV/AIDS	Fairly Badly/Very Badly	–	–	–	–	18	–	–	57	26	22	–	–	31
	Fairly Well/Very Well	–	–	–	–	64	–	–	38	72	73	–	–	62
	Don't Know	–	–	–	–	18	–	–	5	2	5	–	–	8

2-4 Economic Values

Before addressing public perceptions about economic policy and economic reforms (see Table 2-5), it is necessary to measure the public's underlying economic values. In the view of the public, what are the responsibilities of the government in economic management vis-à-vis the role of private individuals? For each of the four questions presented in Table 2-4, respondents were presented with two contrasting statements, and asked to indicate which one was closest to their own opinion. The first three pairs of questions contrast state versus individual or private sector responsibility with regard to ensuring people's well-being, providing employment, and regulating inequalities. The fourth measures attitudes to economic risk by asking whether investing in a new business is a worthwhile endeavor.

Overall, respondents display very moderate to quite strong *individualistic* leanings, rather than dependence on the *state*. The margin on the issue of who bears responsibility for people's well being is quite narrow: only 51 percent advocate that welfare be left up to individuals and 46 percent attribute this responsibility to the state. Note that this difference falls within the margin of sampling error for the surveys. The margin is slightly wider with regard to job creation: 53 percent agree that this is best left to the private sector, but a still considerable 44 percent believe that this, too, is a state responsibility. The margin is much wider, however, on the question of regulating earnings; 63 percent reject such state intervention, while just 32 percent contend that this is an appropriate role for the state.

The variation among countries is again quite considerable. Zimbabweans exhibit the most consistently statist leanings. In fact, they are the *only* population which support government regulation of earnings rather than oppose it, and sizeable margins also allocate responsibility to the state for ensuring well-being and creating jobs. Nigeria and Lesotho both reject earning limits, but otherwise support a significant role for the state as well. Nigerians advocate state responsibility for jobs and well-being by margins of 56 to 43 percent in both cases, while Basotho believe in state responsibility for job creation by an even wider margin: 57 percent support state responsibility, versus 39 percent for individual responsibility.

On the other hand, several countries – particularly Malawi, Mali, Namibia and Tanzania – show strong individualistic tendencies across all three issues, preferring a minimal role for the state, often by quite wide margins. Malawians have particularly low expectations of the state; across the three issues, an average of 71 percent (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 2-4) believe in individual or private sector responsibility and initiative, compared to just 26 percent who advocate state intervention, and the margins are nearly as great for the other three. Botswana and Ghana also prefer individual responsibility, although by much narrower margins, while South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia all demonstrate some degree of ambivalence.

Meanwhile, the Africans we interviewed display an impressive confidence in their entrepreneurial ability. An overwhelming 76 percent agree that it is worthwhile to invest one's savings, or even borrowed money, in a new business, compared to just 18 percent who believed that this is likely to be a money-losing proposition. Strong tolerance for personal economic risk held across all countries; even among those populations that displayed the least confidence, Basotho and Namibians, the public agrees by wide margins that investment is worthwhile.

Table 2-4: Economic Values

Which statement do you agree with most, A or B? (See full text of statements in footnotes.)		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
A. People responsible for own well-being.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	49	55	43	73	65	55	43	52	50	35	51	36	51
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	44	45	54	25	33	40	56	47	48	61	44	59	46
	Don't Agree with Either	4	–	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	5	3	2
	Don't Know	4	–	2	<1	1	5	<1	1	<1	1	1	1	1
B. Government responsible for people's well-being.¹														
A. People should create own jobs by starting businesses.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	57	51	39	68	66	64	43	42	66	56	47	41	53
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	38	49	57	30	32	31	56	57	30	40	48	55	44
	Don't Agree with Either	1	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	2	2
	Don't Know	3	–	2	<1	1	4	<1	1	<1	2	1	2	1
B. Government should provide full employment.²														
A. People should be free to earn as much as they can.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	48	70	59	72	66	65	55	63	75	73	59	45	63
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	41	30	34	22	29	24	39	33	21	21	35	51	32
	Don't Agree with Either	3	–	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	3	4	2	3
	Don't Know	8	–	4	2	1	6	2	2	1	3	2	3	3
B. Government should impose limits on earnings.³														
A. New businesses lose money.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	13	14	28	10	–	35	17	19	–	–	10	16	18
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	78	86	59	89	–	52	81	77	–	–	80	78	76
	Don't Agree with Either	2	–	6	1	–	4	1	2	–	–	6	3	3
	Don't Know	7	–	8	<1	–	9	1	2	–	–	3	3	4
B. It is worthwhile to invest in a new business.⁴														

¹ In Southern Africa, A: People should be responsible for their own success and well being. B: Government should bear the main responsibility for ensuring the success and well being of people. In all other countries, A: People should look after themselves and be responsible for their own success in life. B: The government should bear the main responsibility for ensuring the well being of people.

² A: The best way to create jobs is to encourage people to start their own businesses (in Southern Africa, “their own large or small businesses”). B: The government should provide employment for everyone who wants to work.

³ A: People should be free to earn as much as they can, even if this leads to large differences in income. B: Government should place limits on how much rich people can earn, even if this discourages some people from working hard.

⁴ A: There is no sense in trying to start a new business because it might lose money (in East and West Africa: “because many enterprises lose money”). B: If a person has a good idea for business, they should invest their own savings or borrow money to make it succeed.

2-5 Attitudes Toward Economic Reform Policies

We turn next to the economic reform and the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that have been implemented in many African countries since the 1980s. First, using questions similar in format to those presented in the previous table, we measure public attitudes toward four of the most common components of reform programs: market pricing; fees-for-service; civil service retrenchment; and privatization of public sector holdings.

The responses to these questions, presented in Table 2-5, demonstrate that respondents are ambivalent about economic reform packages as a whole, but they hold relatively clear opinions on the individual components of reform. Across twelve countries, we find that majorities *support* two reform policies, market pricing and fees-for-service (by margins of 54 to 36 percent, and 63 to 33 percent, respectively), but roughly similar majorities *reject* civil service retrenchment and the privatization of government businesses (by margins of 60 to 32 percent, and 58 to 35 percent, respectively).

Another striking feature of these results is their relative *consistency* across the twelve Afrobarometer countries (as compared to the high levels of inter-country variation seen on many other issues). For example, a plurality in every country agrees that paying fees for better quality health or education services is better than having free access to low-quality services. This policy is supported by very wide margins in Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria and Tanzania, whereas only slight majorities support it in Malawi and Namibia. Similarly, in nine of twelve countries at least a plurality support market pricing arrangements in which “goods are available even if prices are high,” in preference to “low prices even if shortages occur.” People in Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda support this policy by margins of more than 40 percent. Lesotho, Malawi, and Zimbabwe are the exceptions, revealing some preference for low prices over the availability of goods.

In contrast, a majority *rejects* civil service retrenchment in ten of twelve countries (Tanzania and Zimbabwe are the exceptions), in many cases by very wide margins of 45 points or more. Likewise, in ten of twelve countries a majority believe that government should retain ownership of its businesses, led by Ghana, Mali and Zambia. Botswana are the only dissenters, choosing privatization by a 49 to 36 percent margin.

On the whole, then, Tanzanians indicate a stronger overall level of support for reform than is found in most other countries. They not only back market and fees-for-service reforms, but also support civil service retrenchment by a considerable margin (59 percent in favor, 30 percent opposed). Likewise, Botswana support privatization in addition to market prices and fee-for-service programs, but generally by much smaller margins than are observed in Tanzania. Lesotho and Malawi, on the other hand, exhibit some of the lowest levels of support for reform, rejecting not only retrenchment and privatization, but also market pricing. Lesotho, however, shows a strong preference for higher quality fee-for-service systems, while in Malawians show only a slight preference for this approach, suggesting that Malawians are less enthusiastic about economic reforms than populations in any of the other Afrobarometer countries. This stands in sharp contrast to the results presented in Table 2-4, where we saw that Malawians showed some of the strongest pro-individualist and anti-statist attitudes of any population.

Table 2-5: Attitudes Toward Economic Reform Policies

Which statement do you agree with most, A or B? (See full text of statements in footnotes.)		Bot- swana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tan- zania	Uganda	Zambia	Zim- babwe	Afro Mean
It is better if: A. goods are available even if prices are high. B. prices are low even if shortages occur.¹	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	50	72	38	41	52	44	56	50	70	69	60	43	54
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	33	28	45	53	41	34	34	43	26	21	31	50	36
	Don't Agree with Either	7	–	8	6	6	15	10	5	4	9	7	5	7
	Don't Know	11	–	8	<1	<1	6	1	3	<1	1	2	2	3
It is better to have: A. free schooling (or health care) even if quality is low. B. better quality even if we have to pay fees.²	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	35	23	29	44	32	44	26	37	16	37	43	35	33
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	57	77	66	48	65	49	69	60	82	57	52	58	62
	Don't Agree with Either	4	–	2	7	3	4	4	2	2	4	5	6	4
	Don't Know	4	–	3	<1	<1	3	1	1	<1	1	1	2	1
A. All civil servants should keep their jobs. B. Government should lay some off to save money.³	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	69	73	69	73	59	65	73	50	30	54	58	41	60
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	21	27	23	21	30	20	19	42	59	35	36	51	32
	Don't Agree with Either	4	–	4	4	8	7	6	4	8	5	4	4	5
	Don't Know	6	–	4	2	3	7	2	3	3	6	2	4	4
A. Government should retain ownership of its businesses? B. Government business should be privatized.⁴	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	36	70	61	57	69	58	61	51	53	61	66	49	58
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	49	30	29	32	25	32	35	42	45	30	29	42	35
	Don't Agree with Either	3	–	6	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	3
	Don't Know	12	–	5	8	4	7	2	5	1	6	2	6	5

¹ A: It is better to have goods available in the market, even if the prices are high. B: It is better to have low prices, even if there are shortages of goods.

² In Southern Africa, A: It is better to be able to visit clinics and get medicine for free, even if it means we cannot raise health care standards. B: It is better to raise health care standards even if we have to pay medical fees. In all other countries, A: It is better to have free schooling for our children, even if the quality of education is low. B: It is better to raise educational standards, even if we have to pay school fees.

³ A: All civil servants should keep their jobs, even if paying their salaries is costly to the country. B: The government cannot afford so many public employees and should lay some of them off. In Southern Africa, statement A is worded slightly differently: “The number of people who work for government should not be reduced, even if paying their salaries is costly to the country.”

⁴ A: The government should retain ownership of its factories, businesses and farms. B: It is better for the government to sell its businesses to private companies and individuals.

2-6 Satisfaction with Economic Reform

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have been implemented in nine of the Afrobarometer countries over the last one to two decades (Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia are the exceptions). The responses reported in Table 2-6 record the levels of knowledge about and satisfaction with these reforms.

The generally quite low levels of awareness about the SAPs are quite striking; this lack of awareness held even when the local name of the country's reform program was used, such as the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) in Ghana, and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) in South Africa. Zimbabwe is the clear exception; 85 percent of those surveyed had heard of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). In Uganda and Malawi, only very slight majorities had heard of the reform program, and in the remaining six, less than 42 percent are familiar with it (including a mere 13 percent in South Africa, and 24 percent in Tanzania).

Among those who had heard of the SAP (see Table 2-6, Footnote 2), reviews of economic reform are generally poor. Across nine countries, 55 percent report that they are "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the SAP's effect on their lives, compared to just 21 percent who express some degree of satisfaction, and 24 percent who are either neutral or "don't know." Only in Mali are respondents more satisfied (39 percent) than dissatisfied (18 percent), and in Tanzania roughly equal numbers report satisfaction and dissatisfaction (41 and 44 percent, respectively). Oddly, in South Africa, fully 56 percent of the relatively few (13 percent) who had heard of the SAP are neutral on its effect on their lives. Everywhere else, respondents express much more dissatisfaction than satisfaction; in Uganda and Malawi, 50 percent are dissatisfied (compared to 31 and 18 percent who are satisfied, respectively), a figure which rises to 56 percent in Zambia, and 68 percent in Nigeria. Zimbabweans are the most disenchanting; an overwhelming 90 percent of the (well-informed) respondents report dissatisfaction with the ESAP.

Asked whether the SAP, or more generally "the government's economic policies," had helped most people and hurt only a few, or hurt most people and only benefited a few, the public's review of the impacts of reform is equally negative. Those contending that it had hurt more than it had helped outnumbered more positive respondents by more than two to one. A surprisingly small 2 percent were neutral on this issue.

This wide margin of dissatisfaction held across nearly all countries. Zimbabweans remain consistent in their extremely negative views of the ESAP, with 90 percent again agreeing that the SAP had had negative impacts on the majority of people. Zambia, Ghana and Malawi all follow suit, with 65 percent or more sharing this negative evaluation. In fact, the negative response fell short of an outright majority only in South Africa, where 48 percent (of the few who had heard of the program) see its impacts as primarily negative, compared to 30 percent who give it a primarily positive review. Clearly, while the public supports at least some elements of economic reform in principle (Table 2-5), in practice reform programs consistently prove to be quite unpopular, at least among the relatively small proportions of the population that are even aware that such reform packages exist.

Table 2-6: Satisfaction with Economic Reform

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Have you heard about the SAP? ¹	Yes	–	41	–	51	40	–	40	13	24	54	42	85	43
	No	–	59	–	47	60	–	60	80	76	46	55	13	55
	Don't Know	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	7	–	–	3	2	2
Are you satisfied with the SAP's effect on your life? ²	Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied	–	38	–	50	18	–	68	17	44	50	56	90	55
	Neutral/No Effect	–	9	–	23	13	–	10	56	11	14	15	5	13
	Satisfied/Very Satisfied	–	24	–	18	39	–	14	14	41	31	18	3	21
	Don't Know	–	29	–	9	30	–	8	12	4	5	11	2	11
The SAP has: A. helped most people. B. hurt most people. ³	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	–	31	–	22	41	–	33	30	33	–	18	8	28
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	–	68	–	65	53	–	60	48	59	–	72	90	66
	Don't Agree with Either	–	–	–	3	2	–	3	9	4	–	2	1	2
	Don't Know	–	1	–	10	4	–	3	14	4	–	8	1	4

¹ Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia did not have Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). In other countries, the country-specific names for SAPs were used where applicable. For example, in Ghana the question was “Have you heard about the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP)?”

² Those who had not heard of the SAP were not asked this question. The responses reported here do not include these missing data, so sample sizes are much smaller than the normal N for these countries. Percentages recorded as “not applicable” are as follows: Ghana, 49 percent; Malawi, 49 percent; Mali, 61 percent; Nigeria, 61 percent; South Africa, 87 percent; Tanzania, 76 percent; Uganda, 43 percent; Zambia, 55 percent; and Zimbabwe, 14 percent. However, note that these figures do not precisely match those responding that they had not heard of the SAP, suggesting that the “not applicable” response was not always used consistently by interviewers.

³ In Southern Africa and Ghana, A: The (local name for the SAP) has helped most people; only a minority have suffered. B: The (local name for SAP) has hurt most people and only benefited a minority. In Mali, Tanzania and Nigeria, A: The government's economic policies have helped most people; only a few have suffered. B: The government's economic policies have hurt most people and only benefited a few. Also, footnote 2 applies to this question as well, except to add that because in three countries, Mali, Nigeria, and Tanzania, this question asked about “the government’s economic policies” generally, rather than the SAP specifically, even those who had not heard of the SAP could respond. However, in Ghana, although the question referred to the SAP, it was asked of all respondents. Percentages recorded as “not applicable” are as follows: Ghana, 16 percent; Malawi, 50 percent; South Africa, 87 percent; Zambia, 56 percent; and Zimbabwe, 14 percent.

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE

3-1 Trust in Public Institutions

To evaluate perceptions about the quality of governance, we began by asking respondents about their levels of trust in various individuals and national institutions, including the police, courts, army, electoral commission, national broadcasting agency, and the president. We also asked them to report on how honest (or free and fair) they considered the last national elections to be. The results are shown in Table 3-1.

Across the twelve Afrobarometer survey sites, we found moderate to moderately high levels of trust in government institutions, but again, there is a great deal of variability within and between countries. National broadcasting agencies score the best; an average of 68 percent of respondents trust them “somewhat” or “a lot,” while just 23 percent express distrust. Six countries rate this institution most highly, with Mali, Tanzania, Namibia and Ghana all scoring between 79 and 88 percent positive responses.

The army followed, with a mean of 61 percent expressing some degree of trust (32 percent distrust). Four countries – Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, none of which has ever experienced a military regime – give it the highest rating of any institution. On the other hand, Lesotho and Nigeria, which still recall recent experiences of military rule, as well as South Africa, are much less trusting of the military, reporting more distrust than trust. But in Ghana, which also has a long history of military rule, people express trust over distrust at a rate of two to one. A decade of civilian rule (although much of it under the auspices of the “civilianized” former military ruler, Jerry Rawlings) appears to have built Ghanaians’ confidence in the army.

The least trusted institution – rating the lowest level of trust in seven of twelve countries – is the police. But despite quite low ratings in several countries (70 percent “distrust” in Nigeria, for example), on average the police still roughly broke even, with 47 percent expressing trust, and 50 percent distrust. The president, courts, and electoral commissions all score somewhat higher (trust levels at or near 55 percent). The president scores lowest among all institutions in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, while receiving the highest rating of any institution in Nigeria (77 percent trust), and also scoring very well in Namibia (73 percent trust), Mali (72 percent), and Tanzania (90 percent).

Tanzanians are the most trusting people, with average levels of trust across the six institutions of 81 percent (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 3-1), perhaps a legacy of former president Nyerere’s efforts to build a sense of identity with the political system. Namibians are also quite trusting (average across six institutions of 71 percent), followed by Botswana, Ghanaians, and Malians. Zimbabweans, on the other hand, once again reveal their dissatisfaction with the government, reporting an average level of *distrust* across six institutions of 51 percent. President Mugabe scores the lowest, earning the trust of a mere 20 percent of respondents.

Table 3-1: Trust in Public Institutions

How much do you trust the following people or institutions? ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
The Police	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	37	50	51	55	42	29	70	64	38	43	60	61	50
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	60	49	40	42	48	69	29	35	62	53	38	36	47
	Don't Know	2	1	9	3	9	2	<1	1	<1	4	2	3	3
Courts of Law	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	24	38	42	46	48	25	45	52	27	29	38	45	38
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	65	58	40	47	43	64	54	43	72	63	57	43	54
	Don't Know	11	4	18	6	9	11	2	5	1	8	5	12	8
The Army	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	16	34	46	20	16	25	62	50	5	—	41	37	32
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	73	63	39	71	80	66	37	44	94	—	54	53	61
	Don't Know	10	3	15	8	4	8	1	6	<1	—	6	10	7
The Electoral Commission	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	20	31	31	44	34	22	34	38	17	8	29	48	30
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	60	63	32	49	46	67	62	49	82	76	45	26	55
	Don't Know	21	6	38	7	21	11	4	14	2	15	25	26	16
National Broadcaster	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	18	16	31	38	9	13	—	30	11	—	23	41	23
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	71	79	53	56	88	85	—	62	87	—	58	40	68
	Don't Know	10	4	16	6	3	3	—	7	2	—	19	18	9
The President	Distrust Somewhat/A lot	36	—	44	48	24	22	20	52	9	—	58	75	39
	Trust Somewhat/A lot	44	—	41	50	72	73	77	41	90	—	38	20	55
	Don't Know	20	—	15	2	4	5	2	7	1	—	4	5	7

¹ In Southern Africa, respondents were asked “What about the following institutions? How much of the time can you trust them to do what is right: never, only some of the time, most of the time, or just about always?” Answers were then recoded into the response categories listed.

3-2 Corruption

Perceptions of the level of official corruption can also be a useful indicator of how individuals evaluate the quality of governance. In this case, respondents were asked how common corruption was among public officials, civil servants, and elected officials. Note, however, that the distinctions between public officials and either civil servants or elected officials may not have been clear to all respondents. We also asked whether or not corruption was worse under the previous regime. Responses are detailed in Table 3-2.

The figures suggest that corruption, or at least the public's perception of it, continues to be a major problem for African governments. Elected officials are rated as the least corrupt, on average, but even here the public is evenly split between those who see corruption among these officials as "fairly or very common," and those who see it as "fairly or very rare" (40 percent each). Civil servants score somewhat worse, with nearly half of respondents (48 percent) citing corrupt practices among them as common (36 percent rare). Public officials score the worst, with 52 percent citing corruption as a common problem. Note, however, the high levels of "don't know" responses in all three cases, up to 20 percent in the case of elected officials.

Ghanaians clearly perceive the greatest problems; 85 percent of them believe that corruption is common, and fully 63 percent cite the problem as "very common" (not shown in Table 3-2). They are followed by Nigerians, 73 percent of whom see corrupt behavior as commonplace (nearly 50 percent "very common"). A key difference between these two, however, is that 63 percent of Ghanaians believe that corruption is worse now (i.e., in 1999) than under the previous regime, while 83 percent of Nigerians claim that corruption was worse in the past. Note, however, that Ghanaians have had years of experience with their new regime, while the survey in Nigeria was conducted less than a year after the transition from a highly corrupt military regime; Nigerians' feelings may reflect their *hopes* for the future, rather than any actual experience of change.

Zimbabweans also rate their government poorly, as 70 percent cite corruption as a commonplace among public officials (66 percent among civil servants, 64 percent among elected officials). The Tanzania response appears more surprising, however. Despite expressing some of the highest levels of trust in public institutions (see Table 3-1), 69 percent of Tanzanians nonetheless report that corruption is common among public officials (as well as 62 percent for civil servants and 46 percent for elected officials). Tanzanians and Zimbabweans both contend that corruption is worse now than under previous regimes.

Perceptions of corruption were lowest in Namibia (25 percent or less consider it common), Lesotho (30 percent or less), and Botswana (33 percent or less). These three countries also record exceptionally high numbers of "don't know" responses of 20 to 30 percent or even more on each question.

Table 3-2: Corruption

How common is corruption (or bribery) among:		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Public Officials¹	Fairly Common/Very Common	33	85	28	43	44	25	73	50	69	51	52	70	52
	Fairly Rare/Very Rare	38	15	48	39	45	53	24	40	28	42	32	19	35
	Don't know	30	<1	24	18	11	22	2	10	4	7	17	12	13
Civil Servants²	Fairly Common/Very Common	32	–	30	46	59	25	–	50	62	64	50	66	48
	Fairly Rare/Very Rare	38	–	47	38	29	55	–	39	34	26	33	20	36
	Don't know	30	–	23	16	12	21	–	11	4	10	17	14	16
Elected Leaders³	Fairly Common/Very Common	29	–	20	31	48	19	–	45	46	59	40	64	40
	Fairly Rare/Very Rare	42	–	47	43	35	54	–	44	49	33	33	18	40
	Don't know	29	–	33	26	17	27	–	11	5	8	27	17	20
Corruption was a worse problem under the previous government?⁴	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	24	63	25	50	35	27	15	43	63	–	45	57	41
	Agree/Strongly Agree	24	37	36	29	52	42	83	27	31	–	28	19	37
	About the same	14	–	17	13	–	21	–	26	–	–	17	14	11
	Don't know	37	<1	21	7	13	10	3	4	6	–	11	10	11

¹ Respondents in Southern African countries were asked “How many officials in the government do you think are involved in corruption?” while in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania, the question was posed this way: “Do you agree or disagree: Bribery is not common among public officials in (your country)?” Finally, in Uganda respondents were asked “Do you agree or disagree: Corruption is a fact of life in Uganda today; there is little that anyone can do about it.” Answers to all three questions were then recoded into the listed response categories.

² In Mali, Tanzania and Uganda, respondents were asked: “Please tell me how common or rare you think corruption is within each of the following groups or organizations: civil servants.” In Southern African countries, the question was “How many civil servants, or those who work in government offices and ministries, do you think are involved in corruption?”

³ In Mali, Tanzania and Uganda, respondents were asked: “Please tell me how common or rare you think corruption is within each of the following groups or organizations: elected leaders.” In Southern African countries, the question was “How many people in parliament do you think are involved in corruption?”

⁴ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked “Is government today more, about the same, or less corrupt as under (the previous regime)?” Answers were later recoded into the categories listed. “Missing data” was recorded for nearly 8 percent of respondents in Botswana on this question. These cases were not included when calculating percentages for each response.

3-3 Performance of Elected Officials

As another measure of the perceived quality of governance, respondents were asked to rate the performance of elected officials, including members of parliament, local government councillors, and the president. In some countries the question referred to the institutions of parliament and local government as a whole. Responses are shown in Table 3-3.

Although presidents receive relatively moderate marks for trustworthiness (mean of 55 percent, see Table 3-1), they score somewhat better on overall performance, with an average satisfaction rating of 64 percent, the highest among the three types of elected official. Nine out of ten countries give the president at least a 50 percent approval rating, and more are satisfied than dissatisfied with his performance. Uganda and Tanzania give the president exceptionally high marks, with 90 percent or more of respondents expressing satisfaction (note that Uganda was not included in the earlier question about trust in the president, which may help to explain the lower scores in that category). Namibia and Mali follow with approval ratings of 79 and 73 percent respectively. The lowest level of satisfaction is reported in Zimbabwe, where fully 70 percent of respondents *disapprove* of the president's performance (21 percent approve), consistent with the 75 percent who expressed distrust in the president. Zambia is perhaps the least consistent country; the president's performance wins a 64 percent approval rating, despite the fact that 58 percent register some degree of distrust.

Both parliament and local government generally fare less well than the president, with average satisfaction scores of 49 percent and 53 percent respectively (dissatisfaction of 38 and 35 percent, and relatively high levels of "don't know" responses at 12 percent each). Even so, more are satisfied than dissatisfied with their parliamentarian's (or parliament's) performance in ten of twelve countries (all except Ghana and Zimbabwe), though in Malawi, South Africa and Zambia the margin is so small that parliament effectively breaks even. Parliament receives its highest scores in Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania, where each receives approval from 60 percent or more of respondents. Botswana is the only country in which parliament scores somewhat better than the president (64 percent approval, compared to 57 percent for the president). Even in Zimbabwe, where presidential approval ratings hit rock bottom, approval of parliament's performance is even lower at only 19 percent.

Local government (or local government representatives) scored quite respectable ratings in five countries, with satisfaction levels above 60 percent in Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda. On the other hand, in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, disapproval outweighed approval by up to 23 points. Fully 38 percent of Basotho "don't know" about the performance of parliament, suggesting considerable disengagement from the world of politics. Note that the proportion of "don't know" responses is consistently high in Lesotho, as well as in several other countries such as Botswana and Namibia. In South Africa, respondents may not know much about legislators who are selected from a party list, rather than as constituency representatives.

Overall, Tanzania, Uganda, and Namibia report the highest levels of satisfaction across the three institutions (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 3-3), with average scores in each country ranging from 68 to 72 percent. However, while all three institutions do relatively well in each country, it is the extremely high ratings of presidential performance that really set them apart. Zimbabwe again occupies the last position, with an average approval rating of only 25 percent, followed by Lesotho at 41 percent, results that are consistent with those observed elsewhere.

Table 3-3: Performance of Elected Officials

Since the last election, how satisfied have you been with the performance of: ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Your Legislative Representative²	Somewhat/Very Unsatisfied	20	54	31	44	37	14	32	44	36	37	44	67	38
	Somewhat/Very Satisfied	64	46	38	48	48	65	58	45	59	52	47	19	49
	Don't know	15	—	30	8	15	21	10	11	5	10	10	14	12
Your Local Government Councillor^{1,3}	Somewhat/Very Unsatisfied	24	44	26	—	29	21	28	55	23	27	51	55	35
	Somewhat/Very Satisfied	55	56	36	—	64	61	67	32	68	61	40	34	53
	Don't know	21	—	38	—	7	18	5	13	8	12	10	11	12
The President	Somewhat/Very Unsatisfied	20	—	30	35	23	14	—	40	10	5	30	70	28
	Somewhat/Very Satisfied	57	—	50	63	73	79	—	50	90	93	64	21	64
	Don't know	22	—	20	2	4	7	—	10	1	2	6	9	8

¹ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked “What about the way ____ has performed its job over the past twelve months. Do you strongly disapprove, disapprove, approve, or strongly approve, or haven’t you had a chance to hear enough about it?” Responses were later recoded into the categories listed.

² In Southern African countries, respondents were asked about the performance of parliament and their local government generally, rather than specifically about the respondent’s own member of parliament or local government councillor.

³ These percentages are calculated not including those for whom the question was “not applicable” because they have no local government or local government councillor. This includes 35 percent of all respondents in Lesotho, and 10 percent in Namibia; in all other countries the proportions were quite small.

3-4 Legitimacy of the State

We now shift our focus to measuring the strength of state legitimacy as seen by citizens. We begin by asking respondents whether their country's constitution adequately expresses the values and aspirations of its people. Second, does the state have the right to make decisions and expect all citizens to abide by them, even when they disagree? Finally, we turn to public perceptions of state responsibility. Is a state obligated to treat all citizens equally? And how well, in practice, has it succeeded in doing so?

On average, respondents offer a somewhat positive review of the legitimacy of state constitutions, with a majority of 58 percent agreeing that these documents represent the values and aspirations of their society. The only people clearly dissatisfied with their present constitution are Zimbabweans; 50 percent feel that it does not adequately reflect the public's views, compared to just 23 percent who believe it does. Ugandans, Malians, Tanzanians and Namibians, on the other hand, give relatively high marks to the source of ultimate legal authority (75, 70, 67 and 67 percent, respectively), while Basotho and Zambians are more moderate in their approval (49 and 50 percent, respectively).

Respondents display mixed and somewhat uncertain views about the authority of their government to make decisions on behalf of all citizens. On average, just 38 percent support the state's right to command obedience, while 48 percent deny it. Only in four countries did a plurality agree – Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Uganda – but in all cases the margin of support for the state's authority is quite narrow (9 percent or less), and in no case does an actual majority offer their backing. Botswana, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia show opposite tendencies: more reject this proposition than accept it, although again the margins are slim. Only Malawi and Zimbabwe soundly reject the right of the government to make decisions for all (by a 62 to 29 percent margin in Malawi, and an even larger 64 to 20 percent margin in Zimbabwe). It is unclear whether the relatively large numbers of undecided responses in South Africa (17 percent), Namibia (15 percent) and Botswana (14 percent) reflect the view that the state's authority is conditional, or simply mass confusion over the issue.

Perceptions of the extent to which governments fulfill their obligations to represent all of their citizens vary widely. Botswana, a country which is ethnically relatively homogeneous, credits its government with a very high rate of success (85 percent) in fulfilling this objective. Somewhat surprisingly, much more diverse Nigeria, Namibia and South Africa – all with histories of inter-communal tensions – follow at 77, 77 and 71 percent respectively. The low scorer is again Zimbabwe, where respondents are relatively evenly split between those who believe the government favors a particular group, and those who believe it effectively represents the interests of all of its native-born population.

Table 3-4: Legitimacy of the State

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the people in (our country).	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	17	–	19	29	17	8	–	17	25	8	26	50	22
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	–	5	8	–	16	–	20	–	–	9	12	8
	Agree/Strongly Agree	63	–	49	57	68	67	–	59	70	75	50	23	58
	Don't Know	7	–	27	7	15	9	–	4	5	17	15	15	12
Our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by, whether or not they agree with them.	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	43	–	35	62	53	35	–	38	53	42	52	64	48
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	–	5	7	–	15	–	17	–	–	6	11	8
	Agree/Strongly Agree	37	–	44	29	42	41	–	42	45	49	33	20	38
	Don't Know	5	–	16	2	5	9	–	2	1	9	9	5	6
Do you think that the government represents the interests of all citizens, or of one group only?	One Group Only	11	–	29	35	–	18	4	22	–	–	39	46	25
	Just a Few Groups ¹	–	–	–	–	–	–	15	–	–	–	–	–	2
	All Citizens	85	–	61	63	–	77	77	71	–	–	56	49	68
	Don't Know	4	–	10	3	–	5	4	7	–	–	5	5	5

¹ In Nigeria, “just a few groups” was also offered as a response option.

SECTION 4: CIVIL SOCIETY

4-1 Identity

How do individuals identify themselves in relation to groups within their society? The set of questions reviewed in Table 4-1 was designed to measure how respondents define and value their own identity. We began with an open-ended question asking respondents to identify which specific group, besides being a Motswana, Ghanaian, etc., they feel they belong to first and foremost. This was followed by questions such as how proud they are to be members of this group, whether they have stronger ties to members of this group than to others, and how fairly this group is treated. We also asked respondents whether everyone born in the country, regardless of their group, should be treated equally as citizens, and closed by asking respondents to indicate how much they trust other people in general.

This process of self-selecting group identity leads to some interesting, and perhaps unexpected, results. While much of the interpretation of African political and social behavior still focuses on ethnic or tribal identity, and occupation and economic class are often regarded as “modern” sources of identity that have not taken root in Africa, the results suggest that this is far from the case. While the “traditional” category of “language, tribe or ethnic group” takes precedence for the *second* highest share of respondents, at 25 percent, and is obviously still very important, it actually falls slightly behind identification with an occupational group, at 27 percent. Third and fourth positions are also split between another “traditional” source of identity, religion (17 percent), followed by the quintessential “modern” source of identity, class (13 percent). All other sources of identity fall far behind these four in importance.

Inter-country variations reveal deep differences in how people identify themselves across the continent. For example, sizeable majorities identify themselves according to occupation in Tanzania (76 percent) and Uganda (63 percent), and this is also the most commonly cited source of identity in Lesotho (31 percent). But this source of identity barely registers in South Africa (2 percent), and is of only quite moderate importance in Mali (7 percent) and Botswana (8 percent).

Identity based on language, tribe or ethnic group, on the other hand, takes precedence in Nigeria (48 percent), Namibia (46 percent), Mali (39 percent), Malawi (38 percent), and Zimbabwe (36 percent). In Botswana, 28 percent rely on this criterion. Note, however, that in Botswana an even greater number – 33 percent – took the unusual step of refusing to differentiate themselves at all. In South Africa, race predominates as a source of identity (30 percent), and another 22 percent turn to language or ethnicity. In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere might be given credit for success in his efforts to unify the country by taking steps to reduce ethnic and tribal identities. A mere 3 percent of Tanzanians cite this as their key source of identity, a low matched only by relatively homogenous Lesotho.

Despite the widely varying sources that respondents cite for identifying themselves, they are quite consistent in taking pride in their identity. On average, an overwhelming 89 percent feel this way, and this high rate holds in every country except Lesotho, where “only” 64 percent are proud of their identity (compared to 30 percent who are not), and Zimbabwe, where 74 percent take pride (17 percent do not). Cross tabulations reveal that in Lesotho, more than three-quarters of those who *do not* feel pride identify themselves according to class (i.e., 23 of the 29 percent who identify themselves according to class are not proud of their class identity).

The pride most respondents feel in their identity translates into a roughly comparable desire to see their children think of themselves as part of the same identity group. A mean of 81 percent feel this way, and again, this finding is relatively stable across countries, the exception being Lesotho, where just 59 percent agree, and 34 percent disagree.

As much as respondents take pride in their identity, in general they appear to be relatively moderate in their tendency to rate their group as being better than all others. On average, 59 percent made this claim for their group, and seven of eight countries fall within the range of 48 to 64 percent who believe their group is best. The key exception is Nigeria, where a much greater majority of 80 percent feel that their own group is the best, suggesting that the internal divisions within that country may run deeper than elsewhere.

Respondents are somewhat more likely to agree that they have stronger ties to people of their own group (68 percent agree on average). Nigeria stands out even more noticeably here, with fully 88 percent professing stronger ties to people like themselves, followed by South Africa and Namibia. Malawians and Zambians are most open to people who are different, with just 56 and 57 percent respectively indicating that they maintain strongest ties primarily within their own group.

Finally, we come to question of how respondents feel their group is treated by the government, and here we see wide cross-country variations. Botswana and Tanzanians are the most satisfied with how the government treats their identity group. In Botswana, 69 percent find that the government rarely discriminates against their group, compared to 25 percent who feel it does to some extent or a large extent, and the ratio in Tanzania is 66 to 34 percent in favor of those who do not perceive government discrimination. On the other hand, high proportions of Zimbabweans (77 percent), Zambians (67 percent) and South Africans (66 percent) believe their group experiences unfair treatment from the government to at least some extent. Nevertheless, respondents overwhelmingly agree that all those born in a country should have the right to equal treatment as citizens by the government. On average, 88 percent back this proposition, a result that is quite consistent across all countries.

On a broader note, the last question in the table measures general levels of social trust. Respondents were asked if they can generally trust most people, or if they instead must be very careful in dealing with others. The results suggest that levels of social trust are quite low in the Afrobarometer countries, as a sizeable majority of 79 percent indicate that caution in dealing with others is a better choice, while only 18 percent feel that most people can be trusted. The most trusting societies appear to be those in Malawi and Namibia, where “only” 54 and 59 percent express distrust, respectively. The least trusting people are those in Lesotho (95 percent distrust others), Tanzania (89 percent) and Mali (86 percent), though in all of the other countries more than 75 percent are cautious about dealing with others. Given that these are among the poorest countries in the sample, the possibility arises that poverty and distrust go together.

Table 4-1: Identity

		Bot-Swana ¹	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zim-babwe	Afro Mean
Besides being (Motswana, etc.) which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?²	Occupation	8	–	31	22	7	20	18	2	76	63	25	19	27
	Language/Tribe/Ethnic	28	–	2	38	39	46	48	22	3	12	8	36	25
	Religion	5	–	27	26	23	6	21	18	5	8	35	8	17
	Class	2	–	29	5	16	16	10	13	3	5	23	19	13
	Race	3	–	<1	2	0	12	0	30	<1	0	5	13	6
	Region	17	–	0	1	<1	0	0	<1	<1	1	0	0	2
	Gender	0	–	0	0	4	<1	0	<1	8	6	0	0	2
	Individual/Personal	<1	–	4	<1	4	0	2	3	<1	2	<1	0	2
	Party Affiliation	3	–	<1	<1	0	<1	0	1	<1	0	0	0	<1
	Other	1	–	3	<1	6	<1	0	8	3	1	<1	0	2
Won't Differentiate	33	–	1	<1	<1	<1	0	0	<1	2	1	2	3	
Don't Know	2	–	4	6	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	4	2	
Are you proud to be a member of (your identity group)?	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	3	–	30	3	1	7	2	3	7	–	9	17	8
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	–	1	<1	<1	2	1	3	4	–	1	3	2
	Agree/Strongly Agree	95	–	64	96	98	90	97	92	89	–	90	79	89
	Don't Know	<1	–	4	<1	<1	1	<1	1	<1	–	<1	1	1
Do you want your children to think of themselves as members of (your identity group)?	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	5	–	34	7	–	11	6	8	–	–	17	17	13
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	–	2	2	–	5	3	6	–	–	1	8	4
	Agree/Strongly Agree	90	–	59	91	–	82	90	84	–	–	81	74	81
	Don't Know	1	–	5	<1	–	2	1	2	–	–	<1	1	2
Are members of (your identity group) the best?	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	25	–	32	36	–	20	9	13	–	–	36	29	25
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	–	6	15	–	12	9	20	–	–	6	17	13
	Agree/Strongly Agree	51	–	56	48	–	63	80	64	–	–	57	52	59
	Don't Know	8	–	6	1	–	5	2	3	–	–	1	2	4

¹ Note that there is an unexplained anomaly in the data from Botswana for this and several other questions on this table. Fully 33 percent of Batswana refused to differentiate themselves in any way, yet 95 percent are reported to be “proud to be a member of this identity group.” This inconsistency warrants further investigation of the original, non-recorded responses of Batswana respondents.

² Respondents’ open-ended, verbatim responses were recoded into the categories listed in Column 2.

Table 4-1: Identity (cont.)

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Do you have stronger ties to (your identity group) than to other (Batswana, etc.)?	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	20	–	26	32	–	16	6	11	–	–	40	17	21
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	11	–	6	12	–	10	5	14	–	–	3	12	9
	Agree/Strongly Agree	65	–	63	56	–	70	88	73	–	–	57	70	68
	Don't Know	5	–	6	<1	–	4	1	2	–	–	<1	2	3
How often are (your identity group) treated unfairly by the government?	Always/To a Large Extent	8	–	37	19	18	16	20	26	13	18	27	47	23
	To Some Extent	17	–	15	30	25	28	34	40	21	34	40	30	28
	Hardly at All/Never	64	–	31	48	52	43	41	30	66	43	28	19	42
	Don't Know	11	–	17	3	5	13	5	4	1	5	4	5	7
All people who were born in this country, regardless of what group they belong to, should be treated as equal citizens.	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	6	–	18	6	–	5	3	3	–	–	8	5	7
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	–	5	2	–	4	3	6	–	–	2	4	4
	Agree/Strongly Agree	89	–	73	92	–	87	93	89	–	–	90	89	88
	Don't Know	1	–	5	<1	–	3	1	1	–	–	1	1	2
Can most people be trusted, or must you be very careful in dealing with people?	Most People Can Be Trusted	14	–	4	44	13	32	15	20	10	16	19	13	18
	You Must Be Very Careful	81	–	95	54	86	59	84	76	89	82	77	84	79
	Don't Know	5	–	1	2	1	9	1	4	1	2	4	3	3

4-2 Associational Life

We asked the set of questions presented in Table 4-2 in an effort to evaluate the extent of associational life within African countries by measuring individuals' participation in civic, religious, professional and political organizations. Respondents were asked whether they were a member of, or had attended meetings of, religious associations, development associations, professional or business organizations, farmers' associations, or trade unions. They were also asked whether they were "close to" a political party.

It is immediately clear that religion motivates the greatest levels of civic participation. Although variations in question wording make direct comparisons between countries difficult (see Table 4-2, Footnotes 1 and 2), the magnitude of positive responses in each country, particularly in comparison to participation in other activities, is nonetheless revealing. In Ghana, for example, over 90 percent of respondents attend religious services at least occasionally. Similarly high figures for membership in a religious organization such as a church or mosque are observed in Tanzania (90 percent), Uganda (80 percent), and Nigeria (79 percent). Malians, on the other hand, profess one of the lowest levels of active religious affiliation, with only 50 percent reporting membership in a religious organization of some type. In the Southern African countries, respondents were asked to exclude attendance at regular religious services and only report on additional participation with a church group, so the generally lower figures are not surprising. Even so, Zambia still reports a striking 82 percent participation rate in such activities, and Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe all score above 60 percent. Botswana and South Africa show somewhat lesser zeal at 46 percent each, while Lesotho shows by far the lowest levels of religious activity outside of attendance at church services; only 27 percent claim to do so even on an occasional basis.

Development associations, professional or business organizations, and trade unions and farmers associations all generate considerably less associational activity, although participation is still considerable in some countries. More than one-quarter of respondents participate in community development organizations in seven of eleven countries, led by Malawians and Zimbabweans (44 percent and 42 percent respectively), and followed closely by Namibians and South Africans. Somewhat lower rates are reported for professional, business or commercial organizations, but Malawi, Zimbabwe and Namibia again contain the most active citizens. Malians and Ugandans are among the most active participants in trade unions and farmers' associations. Zimbabwe boasts the most active trade union sector with 21 percent reporting attendance at trade union meetings, followed by Botswana at 15 percent, and South Africa tying with Namibia at 13 percent in a surprisingly distant third position. Meanwhile Tanzanians, although demonstrating some of the highest levels of religious participation, are among the least inclined towards associating in other ways, as are Nigerians and Basotho.

Malawians, Tanzanians and Botswana show strikingly high percentages who profess "closeness to" a political party (82, 79 and 75 percent respectively), and roughly two out of three Ghanaians and Namibians make similar claims. On the other hand, just over one-third of Nigerians and Zambians claim such ties. In Uganda's "no-party" system, only 30 percent see themselves as close to a party. Although this is the lowest level reported in any country, it suggests that, while Museveni has convinced many of the value of his "no-party" Movement system, he has by no means persuaded all Ugandans.

Table 4-2: Associational Life

Are you a member, or do you attend meetings, of a: ¹	Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Religious Association²													
Yes	46	91	27	65	50	62	79	46	90	80	82	60	65
Development Association³													
Yes	24	–	23	44	28	38	11	37	5	30	30	42	28
Professional, Business or Commercial Organization⁴													
Yes	17	–	15	31	20	27	9	13	6	22	22	31	19
Trade Union or Farmers' Association⁵													
Yes	15	–	8	4	40	13	17	13	17	30	9	21	17
Do you feel close to any political party?													
Yes	75	67	57	82	58	70	37	46	79	30 ⁶	37	45	57

¹ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked “Over the past year, how often have you attended meetings of a (church group, etc.)?” These responses were recoded into “yes, I attend,” or “no, I do not attend” for each type of organization. In Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda, respondents were asked “For each of the following voluntary organizations, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member of that type of organization?” These responses were recoded into “yes, I’m a member” (including “inactive members”) or “no, I’m not a member.”

² Note that because of differences in the details of question wording and response options in different countries, the figures presented cannot be considered directly comparable across countries, though within the sub-set of Southern African countries they are comparable. For example, in Ghana the question asked was simply: “Excluding weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?” In Southern African countries, on the other hand, respondents were asked to exclude attendance at religious services, and only include separate or additional attendance at meetings of religious associations. In Mali and Tanzania, the inclusion or exclusion of religious services was not specified. Respondents were simply asked whether they were a member of a religious organization. In Uganda they were asked if they were a member of “a religious organization like a church or a mosque,” and in Nigeria they were asked if they were a member of “a church, mosque, or religious organization.”

³ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked about attendance at meetings of a “local self-help association (such as *stokvel*, burial association or neighbourhood watch).” In Mali, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda, respondents were asked about membership in a “community development association.”

⁴ In Southern African countries: “local commercial organization such as a business group or farmers’ association.” In Mali, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda: “professional or business association.” (Compare to Footnote 5)

⁵ In Southern African countries: “a trade union.” In Mali, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda: “trade union or farmers’ association.” (Compare to Footnote 4)

⁶ An unusually high proportion of Ugandans (4.1 percent) refused to answer the final question about whether or not they are close to a political party. These refused answers are excluded from the calculations.

4-3 Use of Media

Do Africans enjoy access to sources of information about local and especially national-level issues? Those who regularly receive news from at least one media source are likely to be better informed than others. Therefore, responses regarding the frequency with which respondents get news from radio, television and newspapers are recorded in Table 4-3.

Radio is by far the most accessible source of news for the vast majority of Afrobarometer respondents, and it appears that many of them take advantage of this medium. If we take “frequent” listeners to be those who listen “a few times per month” (or “about once a week”) or more (figures calculated from, but not shown in, Table 4-3), then 82 percent of respondents qualify as frequent radio news listeners, quite an impressive figure. Moreover, these high levels prevail across nearly all of the Afrobarometer countries, with South Africa and Namibia reaching levels of 90 percent or more. Somewhat lower levels of listenership are, however, recorded in Lesotho (66 percent “frequent”) and Ghana (69 percent).

Not surprisingly, television newscasts are much less accessible, although even so, more than one in three are frequent viewers. These figures are much more variable however, with lows of only 11 percent frequently seeing TV news reports in Malawi, and 16 percent in Uganda and Lesotho, to highs of 79 percent in South Africa, 61 percent in Nigeria, and 54 percent in Zimbabwe. Note that while we might expect a high correlation between national income and TV ownership, and therefore with TV viewing as well, this does not completely hold true. Most notably, although Mali ranks as one of the poorest countries in the survey, as many as 35 percent nevertheless report relying in part on television news as a source of information.

The trends are quite similar for access to newspapers as a source of information. The mean level of frequent use is the same as for television – 37 percent – but again, there is very high inter-country variability. Mali stands out in this instance for its strikingly low level of newspaper readership – just 7 percent report frequent access to this source – and Lesotho registers just 18 percent. South Africans and Zimbabweans, this time accompanied by Botswana, again report the highest access rates of 54 to 65 percent.

An important feature of both television news viewing and newspaper readership that is not apparent from the data presented in Table 4-3 is the extent to which these activities reinforce radio listening. For example, in the three countries reporting the highest levels of television access as a source of news, South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, cross tabulations indicate that 95 percent or more of those who report regular TV viewing also frequently listen to news on the radio. The same holds true for newspaper readers: in South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, the countries recording the highest levels of newspaper reading, once again 95 percent or more of regular readers are also frequent radio listeners. Thus, it is clear, though not particularly surprising, that newspapers and television do little to *expand* access to news, although they may do a great deal to *deepen* the awareness and understanding for those who do have access to multiple sources of news and information.

Table 4-3: Use of Media

How often do you get news from the following sources? ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Radio	Never	8	20	24	15	13	7	12	4	12	13	23	13	14
	Once a Month or Less	3	10	10	3	6	2	8	2	7	4	2	4	5
	A Few Times per Month	7	13	11	8	10	5	9	4	6	8	7	6	8
	A Few Times per Week	24	15	18	14	24	18	27	18	16	23	21	16	20
	Every Day	58	41	37	61	46	67	44	71	60	52	47	61	54
Television	Never	52	–	78	86	57	52	29	16	62	77	60	38	55
	Once a Month or Less	8	–	7	2	9	6	10	4	13	5	2	8	7
	A Few Times per Month	9	–	4	3	7	5	9	5	5	3	3	11	6
	A Few Times per Week	13	–	5	2	10	7	22	13	8	5	6	9	9
	Every Day	18	–	7	5	18	29	30	61	11	7	29	32	22
Newspaper	Never	32	58	68	61	86	45	53	24	41	48	59	33	51
	Once a Month or Less	8	11	14	9	6	11	15	11	22	9	5	13	11
	A Few Times per Month	12	11	8	11	3	10	10	16	12	15	12	13	11
	A Few Times per Week	27	8	6	12	2	15	10	25	14	14	12	16	13
	Every Day	21	13	4	7	2	19	11	24	11	12	12	24	13

¹ In East and West Africa the response categories were “never,” “less than once a month,” “about once a month,” “about once a week,” “several times a week,” and “every day.” Answers were later recoded into the categories listed.

SECTION 5: CITIZENSHIP

5-1 Political Efficacy

How interested are respondents in politics, and how confident are they of their ability to make a difference in the political arena? This set of questions deals with respondents' perceptions of their own political effectiveness. Respondents were asked to rate their own level of interest, as well as how often they discuss politics and government with other people. Perceptions of ability to affect the government were evaluated by means of two questions which asked first whether respondents felt that they could understand government operations, or whether they are often too complicated to understand, and secondly whether they feel that their votes can really make a difference to their country's future. Responses to all four questions are recorded in Table 5-1.

For the most part, respondents in the Afrobarometer countries express a relatively high degree of interest in politics. A mean of 23 percent describe themselves as "very interested," and another 47 percent as at least "somewhat interested" (total 70 percent interested), compared to just 28 percent who are uninterested. This relatively high level of interest holds across most countries, with all but one registering 59 percent or more of respondents who are either "somewhat" or "very" interested. Uganda, Tanzania and Namibia lead the way, with interest levels above 80 percent, though among Ugandans that includes 45 percent who describe themselves as "very interested," compared to just 18 percent in Namibia. The clear outlier is Mali, where a mere 33 percent of respondents claim to have any interest in politics. The most surprising result, however, is from Lesotho, where 69 percent – about the same as the twelve-country mean – express an interest in politics. This seems inconsistent with results presented elsewhere indicating that Basotho display some of the lowest levels of knowledge of political systems.

This apparent anomaly makes the response to the second question regarding the frequency with which respondents *discuss* politics particularly interesting. In this case, a mere 40 percent of Basotho claim to do so either "sometimes" or "often." This is the lowest level reported in any country, and seems more consistent with other findings. Zambians and Namibians joined Basotho in showing considerably less inclination to discuss politics than the expressed level of interest would suggest. In most other countries, the proportions claiming to discuss politics are somewhat smaller than the numbers expressing interest. Another surprising result, therefore, is the fact that considerably *more* Malians discuss politics (28 percent sometimes and 15 percent often, or 43 percent total) than the number that expressed an interest in politics (33 percent total).

Respondents clearly have very mixed feelings about their ability to understand and affect politics. Almost equal proportions find that most of the time government is too complicated to understand (64 percent), and, on the other hand, that an individual's vote matters and can help make things better in the future (65 percent). There is not a single country in which a majority feels that it can usually understand how government operates, although Uganda and Tanzania are both fairly evenly split on the question. In *all* of the other Afrobarometer countries, majorities found government too complicated to understand by quite sizeable margins (26 to 64 points), with Zambians, South Africans and Basotho expressing the least confidence in their abilities.

On the other hand, in every country a majority *does* believe that an individual's vote can make a real difference to the country's future. Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Lesotho are the least confident of this, with only between 53 and 58 percent agreeing. On the other hand, 80 percent or more of Ugandans and Nigerians believe votes do indeed count.

Table 5-1: Political Efficacy

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
How interested are you in politics and government?¹	Very Interested	15	25	31	17	10	18	25	12	36	45	22	21	23
	Somewhat Interested	44	47	38	61	23	63	39	65	47	39	50	45	47
	Not Interested	38	28	30	20	64	12	35	22	16	15	26	31	28
	Don't Know	3	–	1	1	2	7	1	2	1	2	2	4	2
How often do you discuss politics and government with other people?²	Often	14	22	13	19	15	20	16	11	30	37	14	25	20
	Sometimes	38	46	27	45	28	41	49	52	45	45	40	38	41
	Never	46	32	59	36	55	37	33	37	25	18	44	34	38
Which statement do you agree with most, A or B?														
A. Government is too complicated to understand.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	67	63	77	65	60	55	68	76	51	48	73	63	64
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	23	37	15	30	27	26	29	12	46	47	18	25	28
	Don't Agree with Either	8	–	5	4	7	14	2	12	2	2	6	8	6
	Don't Know	2	–	3	1	6	5	1	<1	1	3	3	3	2
B. I can usually understand the way government works.³														
A. No matter how you vote, things won't get any better in future.	Agree with A Somewhat/Strongly	27	32	28	27	–	37	16	36	–	14	44	42	30
	Agree with B Somewhat/Strongly	67	68	58	68	–	56	81	62	–	80	53	53	65
	Don't Agree with Either	2	–	6	2	–	1	2	1	–	3	2	2	2
	Don't Know	4	–	8	2	–	6	1	1	–	4	1	3	3
B. The way you vote could make things better in the future.⁴														

¹ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked: “Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs always, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?” Answers were later recoded into the categories listed.

² In Southern African countries, respondents were asked: “When you get together with friends, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally, or never?” Answers were later recoded into the categories listed.

³ In Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda, A: The way the government operates sometimes seems so complicated that I cannot really understand what is going on. B: I can usually understand the way that government works. In Southern African countries, respondents were asked: “Do you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with the statement ‘sometimes political and government affairs seem so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on.’” Answers to this latter question were later recoded into the categories listed.

⁴ In Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda, A: No matter how we vote for, things will not get any better in future. B: We can use our power as voters to choose leaders who will help us improve our lives. In Southern African countries, A: No matter how you vote, it won’t make things any better in the future. B: The way you vote could make things better in the future.

5-2 Electoral Participation

Another indicator of public engagement in politics is the extent of participation in election-related activities, including registering to vote and voting, attending campaign rallies, and working for political parties or candidates. Tables 5-2 presents responses to these questions.

Survey data on voter registration is only available for a handful of countries. Claimed levels range from moderate in countries like Mali and Nigeria (77 and 78 percent respectively) to quite high in Tanzania and Ghana (90 and 94 percent respectively). Respondents' claims regarding their turnout to vote are relatively good, averaging 71 percent across the twelve countries. Note that for those countries for which registration data is available, in most cases reported voter turnout is not much below the claimed registration level, except in Nigeria, where the turnout of just 66 percent is a full 12 points below the already relatively modest rate of voter registration.

Looking across all countries, however, we see even greater variation. Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana all report quite low voter turnout rates of around 50 percent. Note, however, that in Zimbabwe fully 23 percent claim that they "decided not to vote," as did 19 percent of Zambians. Conscious decisions based on political disaffection may therefore be playing at least some role in producing low turnouts in these countries.

Rates of participation in other election-related activities are much more moderate, and again vary substantially across countries. An interesting facet of the responses is that respondents in Southern African countries were offered the option of saying that although they had not participated in certain electoral activities in the past, they nevertheless would in future "if they had the chance." On average, a total of 55 percent indicated that they have never attended election rallies, but 15 percent said that they would if they had the chance. The remaining 44 percent had participated sometimes or often. Ugandans and Tanzanians are the most active, with 66 percent attesting to occasional or frequent attendance at campaign rallies. Namibia, Malawi and Ghana follow (54, 51 and 50 percent, respectively). Nigerians are the least likely to attend rallies; only 17 percent have attended sometimes, and a mere 2 percent have done so often. Malians and Basotho participate at similarly low rates. It is worth noting, however, that in all of the countries where "I would if I had the chance" was offered as a response options, quite high numbers selected this option (20 to 34 percent of respondents in six of the seven countries), suggesting that there is at least an interest in becoming more actively involved in politics.

Fewer still report working for political parties or candidates. Fully 83 percent have never participated in such activities, though in this case even higher numbers (29 to 46 percent) reported that they would in future if they had the chance in those countries where this was an option. Ugandans stand out with the highest participation rates by a sizeable margin (28 percent sometimes, 15 percent often, total of 43 percent). Ghana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe follow distantly with total participation rates of 19 to 21 percent. Least active are South Africans with a mere 7 percent reporting such participation, Malawians with 10 percent, and Zambians with 11 percent. Clearly many Africans still see their main opportunity to participate in – and influence – political outcomes primarily through the most basic electoral activity: voting.

Table 5-2: Electoral Participation

		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Are you registered to vote?	Yes	–	94	–	–	77	–	78	–	90	85	–	–	–
	No	–	11	–	–	29	–	34	–	13	21	–	–	9
Did you vote in the last general (or presidential) election?¹	No, I decided not to vote	17	–	11	3	–	7	–	8	–	–	19	23	7
	No, I was unable to vote	24	–	18	5	–	22	–	9	–	–	27	21	11
	Yes	54	89	69	90	71	64	66	82	87	79	50	46	71
	Don't Know, etc. ²	4	–	2	2	–	6	–	1	–	–	4	11	2
How often have you attended an election rally?³	Never	30	50	44	16	79	23	80	35	34	34	30	28	40
	Would if had the chance	30	–	34	13	–	20	–	31	–	–	25	23	15
	Sometimes	25	35	12	33	16	40	17	29	40	42	32	30	29
	Often	14	15	7	38	5	14	2	4	26	24	12	17	15
How often have you worked for a political candidate or party?⁴	Never	51	81	45	44	86	47	87	47	79	56	56	49	61
	Would if had the chance	37	–	39	46	–	35	–	43	–	–	32	29	22
	Sometimes	5	13	7	6	10	12	11	6	13	28	7	13	11
	Often	5	6	6	4	5	4	2	1	8	15	4	8	6

¹ In East and West Africa, respondents were asked to answer yes or no to the question “Did you vote in the last general (or presidential) elections?” In Southern African countries, respondents were also asked if they voted, but instead of simply answering “no,” they could chose “I decided not to vote” or “I was not able to vote.”

² Includes those who responded “don't know,” “can't remember,” or “no election in my area.” These response options were not included in East and West Africa.

³ In East and West Africa, respondents were asked how often they have participated in these activities during the last five years, while in Southern African countries, no time frame was specified.

5-3 Community-Level Participation

Less obvious than electoral participation, but equally important to a thriving, truly democratic society, is the extent to which individuals take action to address issues and problems within their communities. Table 5-3 presents responses to three questions about respondents' community-level activism: whether respondents have ever 1) attended a community meeting, 2) joined with others to raise an issue or address an important problem, or 3) attended a demonstration or protest march.

We can see from the table that the first two activities are, on average, moderately common. A mean of about 42 percent say they have attended a community meeting either "sometimes" or "often," and nearly the same number – 43 percent – say they have joined with others to raise an issue. These levels are similar to those for attendance at election rallies (44 percent – see Table 5-2), though they are much lower than those for voting (71 percent), and considerably higher than reported rates of working for candidates (17 percent). The least common form of participation in political or community-level activities is engaging in demonstrations or protest marches. Only 11 percent claim to ever have done so. Note that once again, the number of respondents who indicated that they had not ever participated in these community-based activities, but "would if they had the chance," is quite substantial, ranging from a mean of 16 percent who might attend a demonstration, to 22 percent who would work with others to address community issues.

Once again, the levels of participation varied enormously across the twelve Afrobarometer countries. In the case of attending a community meeting, participation (attending either "sometimes" or "often") ranges from highs of 81 percent in Uganda, 75 in Tanzania and 63 in Ghana to a mere 23 percent in Botswana and 24 percent in Lesotho. The frequency with which respondents join with others to raise issues varies less widely, but Botswana again rates lowest along with Mali at 28 percent, and South Africa is equally inactive at 30 percent – a surprise in a country with a reputation for high levels of political and social activism. On the other hand, Tanzania, a country with a reputation for social mobilization, again leads the way, with 59 percent, followed by Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana (56, 54 and 53 percent).

All countries show much lower levels of participation in demonstrations and protests. In this case, more consistent with expectations, South Africa scores the highest with 24 percent who have participated in such activities, the same level recorded for neighboring Zimbabweans. They are followed closely – and perhaps unexpectedly – by Namibians (21 percent). All others display much less tendency towards protest, with participation rates of 10 percent or less.

Average levels of participation ("sometimes" or "often") within each country across the three issues (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 5-3) indicate that the most activist countries include Tanzania (48 percent average), Namibia and Ghana (both 41 percent averages). Uganda would likely fall within this group too, although data is only available on the first of the three questions. Botswana and Lesotho appear to be the least activist at 20 and 22 percent respectively, an interesting contrast given that the former is believed to be one of the most consolidated democracies on the continent, while Lesotho rates as one of the most troubled democracies in the Afrobarometer sample. Apparently, levels of community activism do not suffice as an indicator of the extent of democracy in a country.

Table 5-3: Community-Level Participation

How often have you: ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Attended a Community Meeting? ²	Never	77	37	75	64	48	49	55	59	25	19	69	66	53
	Sometimes	17	39	12	17	30	37	34	32	38	47	17	20	29
	Often	6	24	12	19	22	13	11	8	37	34	14	12	18
Joined with Others to Raise an Issue? ³	Never	27	47	18	22	71	24	46	28	41	–	31	17	34
	Would if had the chance	45	–	42	36	–	23	–	42	–	–	30	26	22
	Sometimes	20	36	18	25	20	42	43	25	35	–	25	26	28
	Often	8	17	20	17	8	9	11	5	24	–	14	30	15
Attended a Demonstration or Protest March?	Never	63	92	69	67	93	54	93	45	89	–	68	50	71
	Would if had the chance	27	–	25	27	–	22	–	30	–	–	21	25	16
	Sometimes	8	7	3	5	6	18	6	21	8	–	7	15	9
	Often	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	3	–	2	9	2

¹ In East and West Africa, respondents were asked how often they have participated in these activities during the last five years, while in Southern African countries no time frame was specified except in the case of attending a community meeting, where respondents were asked if they had done so within the past year.

² In Southern African countries, respondents were asked how often they have attended meetings of “a group that does things for the community.”

³ In Southern African countries, respondents were asked how often they have “participated with others to address an important problem affecting the community or nation (other than an election).”

5-4 Identifying and Contacting Leaders

Finally, we appraise political awareness and participation between elections. Respondents were asked to name four local and national representatives or leaders. We also investigated the frequency with which they contact some of these political or community leaders for assistance. Results are shown in Table 5-4.

By this measure, levels of political awareness can be judged to be relatively low in the Afrobarometer countries. On average, a majority (62 percent) is able to correctly name the country's vice-president. The very low success rate in naming the Minister of Finance – a mean of just 24 percent were able to do so correctly – is not particularly surprising. But the fact that respondents' own legislative representatives or MPs could be named by just one in three people (34 percent), and that the relevant local government representative could be identified by only 39 percent might be considered disappointingly low indicators of awareness.

As usual, wide inter-country variations underlie these mean figures. For example, legislative representatives can be named by a low of just 1 percent of Basotho and South Africans, and less than 10 percent are successful in Nigeria and Tanzania, while 85 percent of Malawians and 75 percent of Batswana are able to correctly identify their representative.

Based on averages calculated across the four individuals within each country (calculated from, but not shown in, Table 5-4), Malawians appear to be the most politically aware populace, with an average of 63 percent able to name the politicians (although data are only available on three of the four), followed by Batswana and Zimbabweans, with average success rates of 57 percent each, and Ghana at 50 percent. Low scorers include Lesotho, where an average of just 24 percent could name each office holder, although a very high 72 percent were able to name the vice-president, suggesting that awareness of national-level politics is greater than local politics. The opposite holds in Mali. Here an average of only 28 percent could name the four office holders, but 56 percent could name the local government representative, compared to much lower figures for the other three. The attention of Malians therefore appears to be much more focused on local-level political activity.

Contacting influential community or political leaders appears to be a method of meeting personal or societal needs for only a handful of the Africans interviewed. A mean of only 14 percent report contacting government or party officials "sometimes" or "often," although twice as many – 27 percent – make contact with "other influential people" on at least an occasional basis (See footnotes to Table 5-4 regarding limits on inter-country comparison of this data). Namibians, Ugandans and Nigerians are the most likely to contact others. Note that Namibians and Zimbabweans contact political officials and other influential people at roughly similar rates, while both Nigerians and Ugandans are considerably more likely to contact "other influential people" rather than politicians. South Africans, Malians and Batswana are the least likely to look toward influential individuals for assistance, with 13 percent or less reporting that they have ever contacted either group.

Table 5-4: Identifying and Contacting Leaders

Can you tell me who presently holds the following positions: ¹		Botswana	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Mali	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Afro Mean
Your (Local Government Representative) ²	Incorrect	7	10	1	–	9	1	7	<1	9	–	2	3	5
	Correct	55	59	14	–	56	6	43	1	39	–	31	59	39
	Don't Know	38	31	85	–	35	93	50	99	52	–	67	38	56
Your (Legislative Representative) ³	Incorrect	3	6	1	3	6	6	9	<1	4	–	2	3	4
	Correct	75	49	1	85	26	24	8	<1	7	–	46	55	34
	Don't Know	23	45	98	13	68	70	83	99	89	–	52	43	62
Minister of Finance ⁴	Incorrect	8	5	2	13	3	4	2	6	9	–	11	3	6
	Correct	14	32	7	26	4	37	16	38	26	–	26	42	24
	Don't Know	78	62	91	61	93	59	83	57	65	–	62	55	70
Vice-President ⁵	Incorrect	2	3	3	5	1	2	2	9	10	–	8	2	4
	Correct	84	60	72	79	24	71	56	57	51	–	58	73	62
	Don't Know	14	36	25	15	75	27	42	34	40	–	34	25	34
In the past year, how often have you contacted:														
Government or Political Party Official ⁶	Never	91	89	86	91	97	69	87	94	91	79	78	70	85
	Sometimes	7	9	9	8	3	28	12	5	7	18	14	18	11
	Often	2	2	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	8	12	3
Some Other Influential Person ⁷	Never	89	73	84	76	87	60	51	90	74	59	68	67	73
	Sometimes	8	20	9	19	8	36	39	8	18	29	23	24	20
	Often	3	7	7	5	5	4	10	1	8	12	9	8	7

¹ Missing data, refused answers, “not applicable” responses, and responses where coders were unable to determine whether or not the correct response had been given are all excluded from these calculations. In several countries these cases comprise a large share of the data, thus reducing N significantly. “Not applicable” applies in some parts of several countries where no local government structures or representatives exist (this is the case throughout Malawi). In South Africa, political parties did not provide official data on which representatives were assigned to which constituencies, or lists of local government councilors. Most respondents did not even venture a guess, but it was not possible to code answers as right or wrong even for those who did (with a few exceptions). Similar problems may have been encountered when coding responses in other countries as well. The source of large quantities of missing data in some countries is unknown.

² In each country, an appropriate title was used; e.g., in Ghana, “the Assemblyman/woman for this area” was substituted, and in Mali it was “the Mayor of the Council in this area.” Large proportions of “invalid” responses were excluded in Botswana (7.4 percent), Lesotho (44.7), Namibia (47.7), Zambia (30.0) and Zimbabwe (8.9).

³ In Southern African countries, Ghana and Tanzania, “the Member of Parliament for this area”; in Mali “the National Assembly Deputy”; in Nigeria, “the Member of the House of Representatives for this area.” Proportions of invalid responses were: Botswana (2.3), Lesotho (12.7), Namibia (16.8), Zambia (31.5) and Zimbabwe (4.2).

⁴ Large proportions of “invalid” responses were excluded in Botswana (7.1 percent), Lesotho (12.9 percent), Namibia (18.3 percent), and Zambia (6.6 percent).

⁵ In Mali, “the President of the National Assembly”; in Tanzania, “the Speaker of the National Assembly (Parliament)”; and in Namibia, “the Prime Minister.” Proportions of invalid responses were: Lesotho (43.5), Namibia (8.8), and Zambia (6.6).

⁶ In East and West Africa, respondents were asked about contacting “an official of a government ministry” within the last five years.

⁷ In East and West Africa, respondents were asked about contacts in the last five years. In Southern African countries, this specifically included church or community leaders, while in all other countries religious leaders, as well as chiefs or headmen, were excluded (i.e., contacting of religious leaders and chiefs and headmen were measured in separate questions for which the responses are not reported here). This suggests that caution must be used in doing inter-country comparisons of these figures. Note, however, that the average contact rates are actually higher in those countries where the boundaries of “other influential person” were more limited.

ENDNOTES

¹ See Russell J. Dalton, "Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies," in Pippa Norris (ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 70; and Marta Lagos, "Between Stability and Crisis in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (1) (January 2001), p. 139. The Western Europe scores are derived from the Eurobarometer and *World Values Survey* for 1993-1997. See also *New Democracies Barometer IV* (1995), cited in William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Five Years After the Fall: Trajectories in Support for Democracy in Post-Communist Europe," *Studies in Public Policy*, No. 298 (Glasgow, Scotland: University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 1998), p. 13; and *Latinobarometro* (1995) cited in Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 222.