

AFRO BAROMETER

Afrobarometer Paper No. 22

MOZAMBICANS' VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL REFORM: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by Joao C.G. Pereira,
Yul Derek Davids, and
Robert Mattes

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



The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)
6 Spin Street, Church Square
Cape Town 8001, South Africa
27 21 461 2559 • fax: 27 21 461 2589
Mattes (bob@idasact.org.za)

Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)
14 West Airport Residential Area
P.O. Box 404, Legon-Accra, Ghana
233 21 776 142 • fax: 233 21 763 028
Gyimah-Boadi (cdd@ghana.com)

Michigan State University (MSU)
Department of Political Science
East Lansing, Michigan 48824
517 353 3377 • fax: 517 432 1091
Bratton (mbratton@msu.edu)

afrobarometer.org

Afrobarometer Paper No. 22

**MOZAMBICANS' VIEWS OF
DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL
REFORM: A COMPARATIVE
PERSPECTIVE**

by Joao C.G. Pereira,
Yul Derek Davids, and
Robert Mattes

November 2002

Joao Pereira is Lecturer in the Unit of Training and Research on Social Science, Department of Political Studies, and Manager of the Democracy and Public Opinion Service at Centre for Population Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique. He is also the Afrobarometer National Investigator in Mozambique. Yul Derek Davids is Manager of the Public Opinion Service at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa and manages Afrobarometer surveys in Southern Africa. Robert Mattes is co-founder and co-Director of the Afrobarometer. He is also Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies, and Director of the Democracy In Africa Research Unit in the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town.

We are grateful to the Mozambique Mission of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Mozambique) for funding this study.

AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

Editors: Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes

Managing Editor: Carolyn Logan

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, civil society and other aspects of development. The Afrobarometer is a collaborative enterprise of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Ghana). Afrobarometer papers are simultaneously co-published by these partner institutions.

Electronic copies of Working Papers can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat format from www.afrobarometer.org.

Printed copies of Working Papers are available for \$15.00 each plus applicable tax, shipping and handling charges.

Orders may be directed to:

IDASA POS
6 Spin Street, Church Square
Cape Town 8001 SOUTH AFRICA
(phone: 27 21 461 5229, fax: 27 21 461 2589, e-mail: tanya@idasact.org.za)

An invoice will be sent.

Publications List

AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

- No.1 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Support for Democracy in Africa: Intrinsic or Instrumental?” 1999.
- No.2 Bratton, Michael, Peter Lewis and E. Gyimah-Boadi, “Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Ghana,” 1999.
- No.3 Lewis, Peter M. and Michael Bratton, “Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Nigeria,” 2000.
- No.4 Bratton, Michael, Gina Lambright, and Robert Sentamu, “Democracy and Economy in Uganda: A Public Opinion Perspective,” 2000.
- No.5 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Democratic and Market Reforms in Africa: What ‘the People’ Say,” 2000.
- No.6 Bratton, Michael and Gina Lambright, “Uganda’s Referendum 2000: The Silent Boycott,” 2001.
- No.7 Mattes, Robert, Yul Derek Davids, Cherrel Africa and Michael Bratton, “Public Opinion and the Consolidation of Democracy in Southern Africa,” July 2000.
- No.8 Mattes, Robert, Yul Derek Davids and Cherrel Africa, “Views of Democracy in South Africa and the Region: Trends and Comparisons,” October 2000.
- No. 9 Bratton, Michael, Massa Coulibaly and Fabiana Machado, “Popular Perceptions of Good Governance in Mali,” March 2000.
- No.10 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Popular Economic Values and Economic Reform in Southern Africa,” 2001.
- No. 11 The Afrobarometer Network. “Afrobarometer Round I: Compendium of Comparative Data from a Twelve-Nation Survey.” 2002.
- No.12 Chikwanha-Dzenga, Annie Barbara, Eldred Masunungure, and Nyasha Madingira, “Democracy and National Governance in Zimbabwe: A Country Survey Report.” 2001.
- No.13 Gay, John and Thuso Green. “Citizen Perceptions of Democracy, Governance, and Political Crisis in Lesotho.” 2001.
- No.14 Lekorwe, Mogopodi, Mpho Molomo, Wilford Molefe, and Kabelo Moseki. “Public Attitudes Toward Democracy, Governance, and Economic Development in Botswana.” 2001.
- No.15 Keulder, Christiaan. “Public Opinion and Consolidation of Democracy in Namibia.” 2002.

- No.16 Tsoka, Maxton Grant. “Public Opinion and the Consolidation of Democracy in Malawi.” 2002.
- No.17 Simutanyi, Neo. “Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Zambia: Public Attitudes to Democracy and the Economy.” 2002.
- No.18 Chaligha, Amon, Robert Mattes, Michael Bratton, and Yul Derek Davids. “Uncritical Citizens and Patient Trustees? Tanzanians’ Views of Political and Economic Reform.” 2002.
- No.19 Bratton, Michael. “Wide but Shallow: Popular Support for Democracy in Africa.” 2002.
- No.20 Lewis, Peter, Etannibi Alemika, and Michael Bratton. “Down to Earth: Changes in Attitudes Towards Democracy and Markets in Nigeria.” 2002.
- No.21 Whiteside, Alan, Robert Mattes, Samantha Willan, and Ryann Manning. “Examining HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa Through the Eyes of Ordinary Southern Africans.” 2002.
- No.22 Pereira, Joao C. G., Yul Derek Davids, and Robert Mattes. “Mozambicans’ Views of Democracy and Political Reform: A Comparative Perspective.” 2003

Executive Summary¹

Mozambique's first democratic multiparty election in 1994 was a national watershed, bringing an end to 17 years of political conflict, instability and civil war, and closing a chapter of over a century of authoritarian rule begun by Portuguese colonization. But what do ordinary Mozambicans think about what has occurred since then? This report presents results from a recent nationally representative attitude survey that assesses the views of the country's citizens toward the democratic experiment and sets them in a regional perspective by comparing them to identical questions from Afrobarometer surveys across Southern Africa. Some of the most important findings include:

- A majority of Mozambicans “demand” democracy: while the average respondent says that democracy is “always preferable” to all other regimes (58 percent), this is the second lowest level of support registered by comparable Afrobarometer surveys across Southern Africa.
- The “supply” of democracy, however, does not reach the same levels. While a strong majority demands elected popular government, just over one-third feel that the country is fully democratic (10 percent) or democratic with minor problems (25 percent), and almost four in ten (39 percent) say it is a democracy, but with “major problems.” When compared to Afrobarometer results across the region, this “gap” between the demand for democracy and the perceived supply is one of the highest that has been measured.
- Most Mozambicans describe democracy not in terms of socio-economic outcomes, but as freedom (26 percent) or freedom of speech (17 percent).
- However, significant proportions of Mozambicans will not, or are not able to offer opinions on many of these issues. Located disproportionately in rural areas and amongst those with no formal schooling, one-fifth cannot offer an opinion about whether democracy is preferable or not, or whether Mozambique is a democracy (22 percent). One-third (32 percent) are not able to articulate what democracy means to them.
- On paper, Mozambicans now enjoy far higher levels of political rights and civil liberties than under the former socialist one-party regime. That these are more than simply paper rights is confirmed by the everyday experiences of ordinary Mozambicans. Eight in ten say people are now freer to choose how to vote than they were under the old regime (81 percent), that they are freer to speak their mind (78 percent), and that they can now join the organization or club of their choice (76 percent). While still on the positive side, it is important to note that just one-half (52 percent) think they are better able to influence government now than under the one-party regime. Just four in ten (40 percent) say that government treats people more equally than during the old regime. Finally, less than one-third (31 percent) feel that people's standards of living are better now than in the past.
- Finally, popular perceptions of government performance are relatively negative. In just two areas did anything approaching a majority offer a positive assessment. Forty-nine percent give positive marks to government efforts to fight the AIDS pandemic, and 46 percent say it is doing a good job meeting educational needs. Four in ten (39 percent) approve of government policies to improve health services. In contrast, government efforts to reduce crime (25 percent), improve market services (16 percent), create jobs (12 percent), narrow income gaps (10 percent) and keep

¹ We would like to thank Michael Bratton and Elisabete Azevedo for their comments on earlier drafts. The authors, however, bear full responsibility for the final report.

prices low (9 percent) receive extremely low approval. Again, when viewed in comparative perspective, these approval ratings are among the most negative in Southern Africa.

On their own, these results are not particularly encouraging. When placed in comparative perspective, they suggest many grounds for concern about the country's democratic process. Mozambique's democratic culture is weak, especially among the country's rural and uneducated citizens. They are relatively dissatisfied with the day-to-day performance of elected government. Perhaps all of this is to be expected given the country's legacies of authoritarianism and civil war, as well as more recent experiences of natural catastrophe.

However, Mozambicans do realize that they are far freer now than in the past. This is important and offers something to build upon. However, the existence of palpable political freedoms must be matched by the delivery of democracy and political influence over government in order to develop the kind of society-wide consensus around the legitimacy of democracy that is necessary to sustain or consolidate democratic practices and institutions. Without stronger popular awareness and commitment, democracy will remain dependent upon the benevolence and self-interest of key elite actors and permanently prone to breakdown and reversal.

Introduction

Mozambique's first democratic multiparty election in 1994 was a national watershed, bringing an end to 17 years of political conflict, instability and civil war, and closing a chapter of over a century of authoritarian rule begun by Portuguese colonization. The country's journey away from autocracy began in 1990 when the Frelimo (Mozambican Liberation Front) government implemented a new constitution that ended the one-party state and allowed freedom of speech and freedom of association. Its long-time civil war opponent, Renamo (Mozambican National Resistance) signed a General Peace Agreement in 1992 and began to build a political party and campaign for the forthcoming elections. While Frelimo won the first election, Renamo became a potent opposition force, winning 38 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections in 1994. Democratization took a further step forward in 1996 with elections for local authorities, for which both political parties and civic associations could offer candidates.

Economically, Mozambique began to move away from a socialist command economy as early as 1987 with a Structural Adjustment Program that introduced a market economy. Large-scale privatization of government corporations came about in August 1996 when the government sold 30 percent of shares in the national airline, LAM, to international investors, and another 21 percent stake to domestic investors. Parts of the rail and harbours company, CFM, and the state oil company, Petromoc, have also been sold off (see Harrison, 1999).

In many respects, Mozambique represents one of the more successful examples of democratization and socioeconomic reconstruction in Africa. Politically, it has held two peaceful national elections, both seen as free and fair by the international community. The former rebel movement, Renamo, has settled into its role as official opposition, while the ruling party, Frelimo, remains committed to the discourse of multiparty parliamentary politics (see De Brito, 1995). Economically, Mozambique has recorded some of the highest levels of economic growth in Africa, averaging six percent per annum since 1990. The government has rebuilt transport corridors linking the country to key trading partners, which has led to burgeoning international investment both in transport facilities and processing industries. There has also been a steady increase in the number of small businesses, most notably in the service sector.

But not all has been positive. In comparison to young democracies elsewhere in Africa, the country is characterized by an exceptionally high degree of competitive partisan politics on the national level, yet parts of the country remain virtual one-party fiefdoms, with Renamo dominating the north and central regions, and Frelimo the south. Moreover, Renamo refused to accept the results of the closely contested 1999 elections. While it was encouraging that they took the case to court rather than resorting to armed resistance, the subsequent political tensions resulted in bloody strikes and the deaths of many opposition supporters. Finally, the Mozambican state remains highly centralized, with most political power concentrated in the executive rather than the legislature. While there is democratic local government, the absence of elected provincial government in such a large country helps to concentrate power in national government.

And while the country has achieved significant growth, this proceeded from a very low base: Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Moreover, its economic growth has not been widely distributed, but rather is concentrated mainly in Maputo and in the export sector. Furthermore, most privatized companies have not survived. As a result, the young democratic regime inaugurated in 1994 confronts a daunting array of challenges ranging from the establishment of new institutions to the development of effective political procedures and resolution of numerous policy problems.

Survey Background and Methodology

This report seeks to understand the prospects for consolidating and expanding Mozambique's political gains by examining what ordinary Mozambicans think about the recent political transition. There is very little systematic evidence about the opinions of Mozambican citizens concerning the great political and economic changes they have witnessed. In order to help fill this gap, the Center of Population Studies (CEP) at Eduardo Mondlane University has, since 1997, conducted a series of national- and provincial-level representative surveys of public perceptions of political and market reforms. These surveys were conducted in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development office in Mozambique (USAID/Mozambique). In its most recent national survey, conducted from July to October 2001, CEP began to cooperate with the Afrobarometer project², asking 20 questions from the Afrobarometer that enable us for the first time to place Mozambique in a larger comparative African context. Beginning in 2002, Mozambique will be fully incorporated into Round 2 of the Afrobarometer. This report concentrates only on those items that are comparable to Round 1 Afrobarometer results for 12 other African states that have embarked on significant economic and political reform.

Methodology

Public opinion is commonly measured by sample surveys. If scientifically designed and administered in a culturally sensitive manner, sample surveys are a powerful tool for revealing, among other things, the level of popular support for democracy and citizens' estimates of the performance of the government of the day (see Bratton and Mattes, 1999). In July-October 2001, CEP surveyed a random, stratified, nationally-representative sample of 2,253 Mozambicans; the sample frame was designed by the National Institute for Statistics. Interviews were conducted at 150 sites distributed across all three regions (North, South and Central) and all 11 provinces according to population size, and further stratified proportionately across rural and urban areas within each province. Thus every citizen of Mozambique had an equal and known chance of being interviewed.

A random sample of this size has a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent. In other words, if we conducted the same survey again, the results would differ by no more than plus or minus two percentage points 95 percent of the time. Another reason we can be confident in the sample's representativeness is that the characteristics of the survey sample closely match the distributions of subgroups within the national population in key respects such as occupation, religion, and area of residence (urban/ rural) (see Table 1 for the demographic distribution of the sample).

The only dimension in which the sample did not meet desired criteria was in terms of gender. While a male/female ratio of 48:52 percent was desired, the realized sample contained a male:female ratio of 57:43. This was largely due to obstacles created by Mozambican culture, where woman are often not allowed to speak without their husband's permission. However, we have carefully examined gender differences across the questions reported in this paper and find very few significant differences. Thus, we feel that the gender imbalance will not significantly affect the accuracy of the national results.

² The Afrobarometer is a collaborative, cross-national research program that investigates public attitudes and behaviors towards democracy, economic reform and civil society. Round 1 of the Afrobarometer was conducted between July 1999 and May 2001, and includes interviews with over 21,500 respondents across 12 countries: three in West Africa (Ghana, Mali and Nigeria), two in east Africa (Tanzania and Uganda), and seven in Southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). In Round 2, being conducted between June 2002 and May 2003, the sample has been expanded to include Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Senegal. To varying degrees, all of these countries have undergone transitions to multiparty electoral democracy, a precondition both for conducting meaningful surveys and for measuring popular support for democracy. They are therefore fairly typical of Africa's struggling new multiparty systems. In no sense, however, do they represent the parts of Africa that remain gripped by autocrats or mired in civil war.

Table 1: Demographics of the Sample (figures are percentages of the total sample)

Number of Persons Interviewed		N = 2253		
Gender			Religion	
Male	57		Muslim	19
Female	43		Catholic	36
Place of Residence			Other Christian	30
Urban	44		Non-Christian	<1
Rural	56		No religion	14
Education			Province	
No Schooling	26		Niassa	5
Informal Schooling	8		Cabo Delgado	8
Primary only	55		Nampula	20
Secondary only	17		Zambezia	16
University degree	1		Tete	7
Occupation			Manica	5
Peasant / farmer	46		Sofala	9
Informal Marketer	3		Inhambane	7
Workers	26		Gaza	6
Domestic workers	7		Maputo	8
Civil servants	5		Maputo City	10
Student	5			
Other	2			
No response	5			

The research instrument was a questionnaire containing 150 structured and semi-structured items, administered face-to-face to respondents by teams of trained interviewers. To adapt the questionnaire to local conditions, all items were pre-tested in 68 trial interviews in urban and rural areas. The original Portuguese version was translated into Changane, Sena, Ndaou and Macua. Changane is mostly used in the south, while Sena and Ndaou are predominantly spoken in the central areas. All interviews were administered in the language of the respondent's choice.

Limitations of the study

As already noted, public opinion research in Mozambique confronts a number of challenges. Beside culturally based gender dynamics, the absence of a national transportation infrastructure is a major obstacle to interviewers. The Portuguese colonial authority built few roads linking various sections of the country. Subsequent war and floods have destroyed much of what was built, leaving large portions of the country inaccessible. In addition, land mines still litter large portions of the countryside and severely influence the data collection process as fieldwork teams often must take vast detours around them. Finally, the culture of surveying people's opinions on political issues is very new in Mozambique. People are often reluctant, at least initially, to share their views. As a result of years of civil war and political tension and the authoritarian tradition of colonial and one-party rule that banned political activities, many people do not feel sufficiently confident to air their views about the political system. The most visible manifestation of this in the results is an unusually high number of respondents who will not commit themselves to a substantive response.

Democratic Legitimacy

The success of Africa's democratic experiments depends only partly on the quality of its constitutions and political institutions. Democracy must also be legitimated, that is, seen by all significant elites and the vast majority of its people as "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan, 1996). To assess the extent to which democracy has been legitimated and to gauge possible explanations, we posed five sets of questions to respondents: 1) Have they come to agree that democracy is preferable to all other forms of government?; 2) What do they understand by the word democracy?; 3) How much democracy does Mozambique have today?; 4) How has the multiparty regime improved their lives, politically or economically?; and finally, 5) How do they evaluate the Frelimo government's performance. The responses to these questions are reported in this section.

Support for Democracy in Mozambique

To assess support for democracy, we posed a standard question that has been employed in barometer surveys in Western Europe, Latin America, the former Soviet Bloc, and in a dozen African countries. It asks "Which one of these statements do you most agree with: A) Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government; B) In certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable; or C) For someone like me, it does not matter what kind of government we have." Those persons who find democracy to be the best form of government (option A) were deemed to support democracy.

The results reveal that democracy has yet to take firm root in the hearts and minds of many ordinary Mozambicans (Table 2). Just under six in ten (58 percent) agree that democracy is preferable to any other form of government. One in ten (10 percent) say that non-democratic government may be preferable, and a similar proportion (10 percent) feel that the matter of democratic versus authoritarian government does not matter. Importantly, one-fifth of respondents (22 percent) did not offer any response.

Table 2: Support for Democracy

	Percent
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	58
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	10
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	10
No response (e.g., "don't know" or refused to answer)	22

On a comparative basis, Mozambicans' avowed support for democracy is statistically tied with Namibia (57 percent) as the second lowest level of support measured in Africa (Table 3). Only Basotho (39 percent in April 2000) are less likely to endorse democracy as "the only game in town." In contrast, Mozambique's neighbour Tanzania (84 percent) along with Botswana (83 percent) register the highest levels of popular support for democracy.

Support for democracy is especially low among the 26 percent of Mozambicans with no formal schooling (47 percent) and the 37 percent who say they do not support any political party (50 percent). There were smaller differences related to age: support was lower both among younger people (18 to 24 years of age) who have entered adulthood since 1994 (53 percent) and older people (55 years and up) who came of age during the colonial period (52 percent). In contrast, 61 percent of those who came of age during the civil war (25 to 54 years old) support democracy. Otherwise there are few clear demographic differences. Rural people (56 percent) were only slightly less likely to support democracy than urban residents (60 percent).

Table 3: Support for Democracy, Cross-National Comparisons

	Percent		Percent
Tanzania	84	Malawi	66
Botswana	83	Mali	60
Nigeria	81	South Africa	60
Uganda	80	Mozambique	58
Ghana	77	Namibia	57
Zambia	74	Lesotho	39
Zimbabwe	71		

Perhaps surprisingly, there was no clear regional-political pattern to this response; support for democracy was no different in Renamo’s stronghold in the Central Region (54 percent) than in Frelimo’s heartland in the Southern Region (56 percent). Support was highest in the Northern Region (64 percent). Neither are there many identifiable pockets of authoritarian nostalgia. The main exception is among the one in five Mozambicans with university-level education; an unusually high 20 percent say that an authoritarian regime might be preferable in certain situations.

However, this may in part reflect the major differences with respect to willingness to offer an opinion that are related to level of education. One-third of those with no formal schooling (37 percent) decline to give a response to this question, compared to just 5 percent of those who have attended university. Other groups that were unusually reluctant to respond included rural dwellers (27 percent no response, compared to national mean of 23 percent), Central Region respondents (29 percent), and those aged over 55 (29 percent).

Popular Understandings of Democracy in Mozambique

While the average Mozambican supports democracy, what do people mean when they say that democracy is preferable to any other form of government? What is it that makes democracy preferable to other regime forms? What picture do people have when they think about democracy? We tried to capture the meaning of democracy from the voice of ordinary people by asking: “*What, if anything, do you understand by the word democracy? When you hear the word “democracy,” what is the first thing that comes to your mind?*”

In order to capture specific understandings of democracy and prevent fitting diverse interpretations into a narrow set of predetermined categories, respondents were free to answer in their own words. All answers were therefore recorded verbatim and coded after the fact. We did this especially because we did not want to overlook any distinctive meanings that Mozambicans might attach to democracy. We particularly wanted to avoid an imported, Western-oriented conceptual framework that might exclude any indigenous interpretation. As noted above, the questionnaire and interview was always conducted in the local language of the respondent’s choice. However, the actual word “democracy” was always presented in Portuguese.

We were especially interested in examining whether Mozambicans’ understandings of democracy are broadly similar to the growing international consensus that has emerged since 1989 around a Western liberal vision of democracy, or whether they exhibit a distinctive understanding of the concept. In fact, some scholars of African politics have posited the existence of a peculiar, African understanding of democracy focusing specifically on two alternative mental frameworks to Western emphases on elections, institutions and individual rights. One school has argued that Africans see democracy as a quest for equalizing social and economic outcomes; political institutions and procedures such as constitutions and multiparty elections are mere formalities (see Ake, 1996). Another school has argued that in the post-

colonial period, Africans have understood democracy as a form of collective freedom for the new nation from European colonial rule (see MacPherson, 1967).

In her qualitative study of local government elections, Lundin (1998) argues that Mozambicans view democracy in political as well as economic terms. Citizens referred to democracy in terms of improvement of life, employment opportunities, good roads, transport of agricultural goods to the local markets, education and health. They also defined it in terms of an absence of corruption, or as the practice of morality in society and government (also see Doom, 1998; Hanlon, 1998; and Harrison, 1999).

As it happens, though, the Mozambicans we interviewed have arrived at an understanding of democracy that is more universal (Table 4). Mozambicans see democracy in political and liberal terms. The most frequent response was that democracy means “freedom” (26 percent), or more specifically, “freedom of speech” (17 percent). Smaller proportions see democracy as a substantive outcome, with 8 percent mentioning “peace” and 6 percent “development.” Importantly, just 1 percent each mentioned the “right to vote,” or “government by the people.” At the same time, it is very important to note that 32 percent could not offer an understanding of democracy.

Table 4: Understandings of the term Democracy

	Percent
Freedom	26
Freedom of Speech	17
Peace	8
Development	6
Tolerance	4
Right to Vote	1
Good Governance	1
Bad Governance	1
Government by the People	<1
Other	4
Don't know / No response	32

Mozambicans are not unique when it comes to their understanding of democracy. The fact that the most frequent responses have to do with personal freedoms or civil liberties is true of seven of eight other Southern African countries (Table 5). At the same time, Malawians, Namibians, South Africans and Zambians are far more likely to emphasize this popular view. However, Mozambicans are quite different in the respect that less than 1 percent refer to popular self government or voting and partisan politics. Another area where Mozambique stands out is the inability to offer a response. Only Basotho (45 percent) and Namibians (34 percent) are more likely to be unable to define democracy.

Table 5: Understandings of Democracy, Cross-National Comparisons (percentage)

	Mozambique	Tanzania	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Civil Liberties / Personal Freedoms	43	46	30	30	65	79	17	72	70
Government By the People	<1	3	34	16	12	5	21	3	14
Voting / Electoral Choice / Party Competition	1	20	8	6	8	14	<1	10	12
Peace / Unity	8	6	19	8	2	2	6	7	4
Social / Economic Development	6	6	3	4	2	2	2	3	7
Equality / Justice	0	12	8	7	1	1	1	9	26
Governance / Effectiveness / Accountability / Transparency	2	4	3	6	1	2	3	0	1
National Independence	0	1	2	2	<1	1	1	5	1
Majority Rule	0	2	1	17	1	<1	0	0	8
Rule of Law	0	2	0	0	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Group Rights / Freedoms	0	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Other Positive Meanings	8	13	0	0	1	5	2	0	1
Refused / Won't Explain	0	2	<1	<1	2	<1	<1	0	<1
Don't know / No response	32	14	29	19	23	13	45	34	9

Mozambicans' Perceptions of the Extent of Democracy

We have seen that demand for democracy in Mozambique is relatively low, in the sense that less than six of ten (58 percent) actively say that democracy is preferable over its alternatives. But what is the perceived level of supply of democracy? To measure this, the Afrobarometer asks people “How much of a democracy is Mozambique today?” All in all, it appears that Mozambicans not only recognize that they have a long way to go to become a full democracy, they are also quite critical, pointing to major problems in the system (Table 6). Only about one in three offer an optimistic assessment of the state of the country’s young democracy: one in ten (10 percent) say that the country is fully democratic, and another 25 percent say it is democratic, but with minor problems. Four in ten (39 percent) say the country is democratic, but with major problems, while 6 percent say the country is not a democracy. Again, we see a significant inability or unwillingness to offer opinions on these matters (20 percent).

Table 6: How much of a democracy is Mozambique Today

	Percent
A full democracy	10
A democracy but with minor problems	25
A democracy but with major problems	39
Not a democracy	6
Don't know / No Response	20

Overall, this popular assessment of democracy accords with influential international assessments. While Diamond (1999) classifies Mozambique as an “electoral democracy” with genuine political participation, Freedom House calls it only “partly free” meaning that they detect significant limitations on political right, civil liberties and press freedom (Piana & Puddington, 2001; Karatnycky, 2002). Another

recent assessment has criticized the country’s limited progress toward full democracy, focusing on the highly centralized nature of the state and its real and virtual distance from most citizens.

Education plays a strong role in shaping Mozambicans’ assessments of democracy. Seventy-five percent of those with university education offer generally positive assessments, against just 32 percent of those with no formal schooling. It also increases people’s ability to evaluate the state of Mozambican democracy: the frequency of non-response falls steadily with increasing levels of education, from those who have not been to school (40 percent), to primary (16 percent), secondary (7 percent) and university (0 percent). This suggests either that educated Mozambicans’ possess more political information that allows them to answer survey questions, or that their education gives them greater confidence to speak their minds about political issues to strangers.

Only Zimbabweans are more pessimistic in their assessments of their democracy than Mozambicans (Table 7): 27 percent say their country is wholly or partially democratic. Mozambicans (35 percent) are about as likely to offer positive assessments as Basotho (37 percent). All other citizens across Southern Africa are much more positive about the extent of democracy in their countries.

Table 7: How Much of A Democracy Is Your Country, Cross-National Comparisons (percentage)

	Mozambique	Tanzania	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Completely democratic	10	17	46	9	24	34	24	30	26
A democracy but with minor problems	25	33	36	18	38	28	13	41	34
A democracy but with major problems	39	26	8	17	20	23	13	15	24
Not a democracy	6	8	5	38	7	12	17	3	8
Don’t know / No Response	20		7	22	15	37	17	11	8

Setting the level of demand (popular support for democracy) against supply (the perceived extent of democracy), Mozambicans register a democracy “deficit” of 23 points (Table 8). This is the third largest measured gap in Southern Africa, behind only Zimbabwe (-44 points) and Tanzania (-34 points). By comparison, the “high level equilibrium” registered in Botswana (83 percent support democracy and 82 percent think the country is democratic) offers the public opinion profile of a democracy that may be on the path toward consolidation. It also illustrates the gap between a young democracy with a troubled history and a country that enjoyed a peaceful transition from colonialism to multiparty democracy and is now in its fourth decade of unbroken democratic rule.

Table 8: Democracy Demand / Supply “Gap”

	Mozambique	Tanzania	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Support Democracy	58	84	83	71	74	66	39	57	60
Country Governed Democratically	35	50	82	27	62	62	37	70	60
Democracy “Gap”	-23	-34	-1	-44	-12	-4	-2	+13	0

Has Multiparty Politics Delivered More Freedoms and Rights in Mozambique?

We have seen that Mozambicans perceive a wide gap between what they want and what they are getting in terms of democratic government. However, while they find their new multiparty government

wanting with respect to democratic content, do they think that multiparty politics has improved their lives in comparison to the former system of one-party rule?

On paper, Mozambicans now enjoy far higher levels of political rights and civil liberties than under the former socialist one-party regime (Table 9). That these are more than simply paper rights, however, is confirmed by the everyday experiences of ordinary Mozambicans. Eight in ten say people are now freer to choose how to vote than they were under the old regime (81 percent), that they are freer to speak their mind (78 percent), and that they can now join the organization or club of their choice (76 percent). While still on the positive side, it is important to note that just one half (52 percent) think they are better able to influence government now than under the one-party regime. Just four in ten (40 percent) say that government treats people more equally than during the old regime. Finally, less than one-third (31 percent) feel that people's standards of living are better now than in the past.

Table 9: Comparisons of Old and New Regime (percentage)

	Much Worse	Worse	No Difference	Better	Much Better	Don't Know
Each person can freely choose who to vote for	1	2	8	23	58	8
Anyone can freely say what he or she thinks	2	4	8	29	49	8
People can join any organization	2	3	10	30	46	9
People are able to influence government decisions	4	8	17	26	26	20
Everybody is treated equally and fairly by government	10	16	17	22	18	17
People have an adequate standard of living	14	15	15	19	12	25

Across all these dimensions, Mozambicans closely resemble Zambians, South Africans, Namibians and Malawians in their experience of increased political rights since throwing off their former one-party or *apartheid* regimes (Table 10). Notably, the one area in which Mozambique may lag behind these other countries is in the freedom of association, possibly a reflection of the one-party dominance within Frelimo or Renamo regional strongholds.

Table 10: Increases in Freedoms and Rights Under Multiparty Politics Across Southern Africa (percentage)

	Mozambique	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Each person can freely choose who to vote for	81	60	63	82	94	66	86	84
Anyone can freely say what he or she thinks	78	57	54	76	89	56	80	77
People can join any organisation	76	60	63	84	93	63	85	84
Everybody is treated equally and fairly by government	40	49	44	44	57	47	65	60
People have an adequate standard of living	31	45	28	28	51	42	57	39

Government Performance

The prospects for sustaining and consolidating democratic government are boosted if people can see the benefits of popular self-government. We have just seen that Mozambicans realize and appreciate the significant increases in political freedoms since the end of the one-party regime. However, another benefit of multiparty politics is simply a government that delivers what people want and improves their

quality of life. As of October 2001, however, Mozambicans were far from enthusiastic about the performance of their government.

In just two areas does anything approaching a majority offer positive assessments (Table 11). Forty-nine percent give positive marks to government efforts to fight the AIDS pandemic, and 46 percent say it is doing a good job meeting educational needs. Four in ten (39 percent) approve of government policies to improve health services. In contrast, government efforts to reduce crime (25 percent), improve market services (16 percent), create jobs (12 percent), narrow income gaps (10 percent) and keep prices low (9 percent) receive extremely low approval.

Table 11: Approval of Government Performance in Mozambique

	Percent
Fighting AIDS	49
Addressing educational needs	46
Improving health service	39
Promote democracy	26
Reducing crime	25
Alleviating poverty	22
Improving market service	16
Fighting corruption	15
Creating jobs	12
Narrowing the income gap	10
Keeping prices low	9

These are some of the most negative assessments in the region. Only Zambians have more negative views of government performance in education (43 percent) and health (35 percent). By way of contrast, three-quarters to two-thirds of Batswana approve of their government's efforts in those areas. Only South Africans have worse views of their government's efforts to fight crime (18 percent) or create jobs (10 percent). And only Malawians (8 percent) are more negative in their evaluation of government efforts to fight inflation. Again, Batswana offer the most upbeat assessments in these three policy domains.

Table 12: Government Performance Ratings Across Southern Africa (percentage)

	Mozambique	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Addressing educational needs	46	71	46	43	62	57	62	49
Improving health service	39	69	35	37	46	50	62	43
Reducing crime	25	63	31	35	22	44	46	18
Creating jobs	12	52	20	26	31	38	47	10
Keeping prices low	9	41	14	28	8	20	38	17

Thus, while most Mozambicans feel that they have gained political rights, the vast bulk of people still experience extreme poverty. This may reinforce Harrison's conclusion (1999) that most Mozambicans see the democratization process as a continuation and intensification of the enrichment of a tiny minority while the vast majority still suffer absolute poverty.

Conclusion

On their own, these results are not particularly encouraging. When placed in comparative perspective, they suggest many grounds for concern about the country's democratic process. Mozambique's democratic culture is weak, especially among the country's rural and uneducated peoples.

They are relatively dissatisfied with the day-to-day performance of elected government. Perhaps all of this is to be expected given the country's legacies of authoritarianism and civil war, as well as more recent experiences of natural catastrophe.

However, Mozambicans do realize that they are far freer now than in the past. This is important and offers something to build upon. But the existence of palpable political freedoms must be matched by the delivery of democracy and political influence over government in order to develop the kind of society-wide consensus around the legitimacy of democracy that is necessary to sustain or consolidate democratic practices and institutions. Without stronger popular awareness and commitment, democracy will remain dependent upon the benevolence and self-interest of key elite actors and permanently prone to breakdown and reversal.

Bibliography

- Abrahamsson, H. E & Nilson, A. (1994) *Moçambique em Transição: Um Estudo da História do Desenvolvimento durante o Período de 1974-1992*. Maputo: CEEI.
- Ake, C. (1996) *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Bratton, M., and Mattes, R. (1999) "Support for Democracy in Africa: Intrinsic and Instrumental?" Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 1. Cape Town / Accra / East Lansing: Afrobarometer, www.afrobarometer.org.
- De Brito, L. (1995) "Comportamento Eleitoral nas Primeiras Eleições Multipartidárias em Moçambique." *Moçambique: Eleições, Democracia e Desenvolvimento*. Maputo: Elo Grafico Lda.
- Doom, R. (1998) "Reconstruction, Democracy and Elections: Mozambique at Crossroads?" *Local Government Elections in Mozambique*. Maputo: UFICS.
- Hanlon, J. (1998). *Local Government Elections in Mozambique*. Maputo: UFICS
- Harrison, G. (1999) "Mozambique between Two Elections: A Political Economy of Transition." *Democratization*, vol. 6, no. 4.
- Karatnycky, A. (2002). "The 2001 Freedom House Survey." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1.
- Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996) "Towards Consolidated Democracies," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 7, no. 2.
- Lundin, I. (1998). "A Qualitative Reading of the Results from the First Election." *Local Government Elections in Mozambique*. Maputo: UFICS
- Macpherson, C.B. (1966) *The Real World of Democracy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pereira, J.C.G. (1996) "O Comportamento Eleitoral: Estudo de Caso do Distrito de Marromeu." *Boletim do Arquivo Historico de Mocambique*, No 21. Maputo: AHM.
- Piana, A. and Puddington, A. (2001) "The 2000 Freedom House Survey." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 12, no. 1.
- Wood, G. (1999) "Democratization in Mozambique: Trends and Practices." *Democratization*, vol. 6, no. 2.