

## UGANDANS DIVIDED ON POLITICAL TRANSITION

Ugandans are divided on the major questions of political transition, according to a survey just released by the Afrobarometer and the International Republican Institute. While Ugandans overall are almost evenly split about the political direction for the country, urban dwellers and men tend to favor a multiparty system and presidential term limits. A majority of Ugandans are opposed to the creation of a regional tier of governments.

The survey, carried out from 12 April to 4 May 2005, was based on a nationally representative random sample of 2400 Ugandan men and women of voting age. The survey covered 47 of Uganda's 56 districts, reaching both urban and rural areas. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 2 percent. Because of the relatively small urban population in Uganda, urban areas were over-sampled to 30% of the total interviews conducted. However, results presented here are based on weighted data that reflect the actual national urban-rural distribution. All fieldwork was conducted by Wilsken Agencies Ltd., a Ugandan research and development consultancy firm.

### Demographic Distribution of the Sample

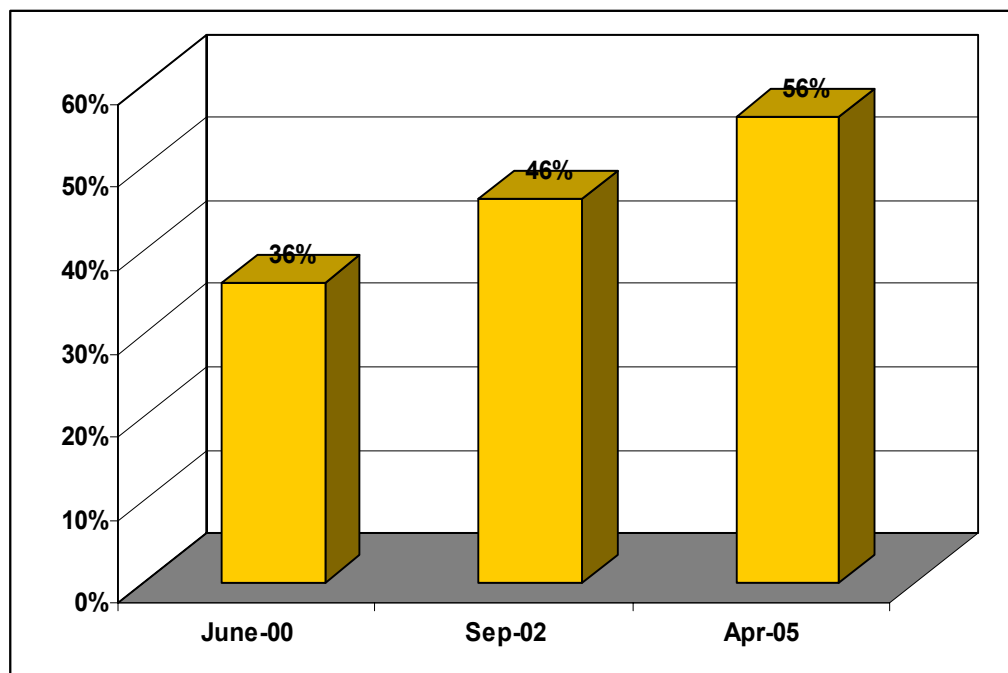
<b>Number of Respondents</b>	N = 2400		
<b>Male: Female ratio</b>	50 : 50	<b>Region</b>	
<b>Urban: Rural ratio (weighted)</b>	12 : 88	Central	27%
<b>Education</b>		East	24%
No schooling/informal only	11%	North	23%
Primary only	48%	West	26%
Secondary only	33%	<b>Age</b>	
Post-secondary	9%	18 – 24yrs	27%
<b>Religion</b>		25 – 34yrs	34%
Protestant	43%	35 – 44yrs	21%
Catholic	42%	45 – 54yrs	10%
Muslim	11%	55+	8%
Other	4%		

## Multiparty Political System vs. Movement Political System

There is support for a shift to a multiparty political system by a narrow majority, with 51% favoring this shift and 45% expressing the desire to remain in the Movement system.

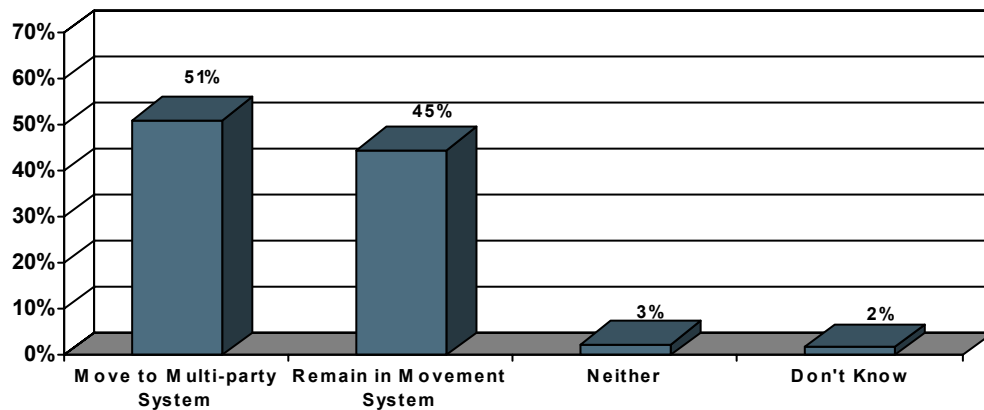
This is an apparent change of heart, even in rural areas. In an Afrobarometer survey carried out in June 2000, only 36% of Ugandans agreed with the statement that, "We should have many political parties that compete in free elections." By September 2002, 46% of Ugandans agreed that, "Many political parties are needed to make sure that Ugandans have real choices in who governs them." Now, in this most recent survey (April 2005), 56% favor being able to choose among parties. Although there are differences in question wording between the 2000 survey on one hand and the 2002 and 2005 surveys on the other, the availability of choice under multiparty competition has moved from being a minority to a majority perception. Concomitantly, only a minority now feels that parties cause "division and confusion," down from 62% in 2000 to 42% in 2005.

### Trends in Support for Multiple Parties, 2000-2005

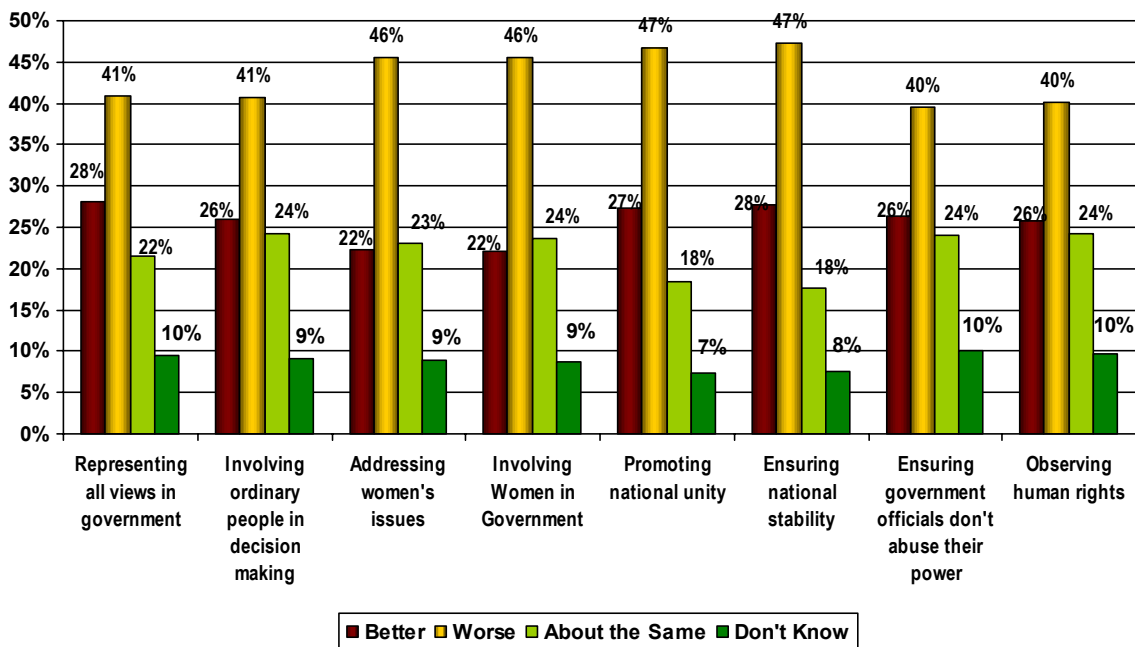


However, this change of opinion may still be quite fragile, since a significant percentage of Ugandans (in most cases, about 4 out of every 10) believes that the Movement system will perform better than a multiparty system at provision of good governance and securing of basic rights and freedoms. When asked to compare the expected performance of a multiparty system with that of the Movement on a variety of issues -- including representing all views in government, involving ordinary people in decision-making, addressing women's issues, involving women in government, promoting national unity, ensuring national stability, ensuring that government officials don't abuse their power, and observing human rights - in all cases a plurality expects better results from the Movement system.

**Qn: Should Uganda move to a multi-party system or retain the Movement system?**



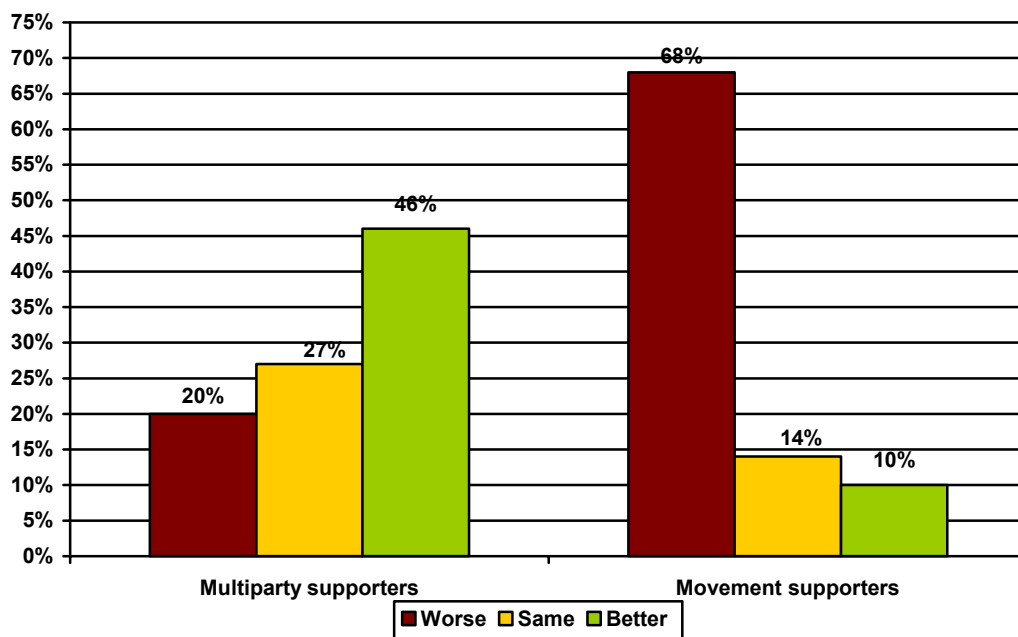
**Qn: Would a multiparty system perform better or worse than the Movement system at the following?**



This apparent contradiction - majority support for multiparty politics despite the fact that more people believe that the Movement will perform better - is explained by the fact that those who want to keep the Movement tend to strongly believe in its performance, while multiparty supporters are more measured in their expectations of their preferred system. For example, among those who support keeping the Movement system, 68% say the

Movement will do better at representing all views in government, while 14% say performance will be the same, and 10% say a multiparty system will perform better. In contrast, among those who support changing to a multiparty system, only 46% say a multiparty system will perform better, while 27% say it will be about the same, and 20% actually say the Movement would do better. In other words, about half of multiparty supporters appear to prefer a multiparty system based on principle or other reasons, rather than simply for the instrumental reason that it will perform better. The same general pattern of responses holds for all of the comparisons of expected performance between the two systems.

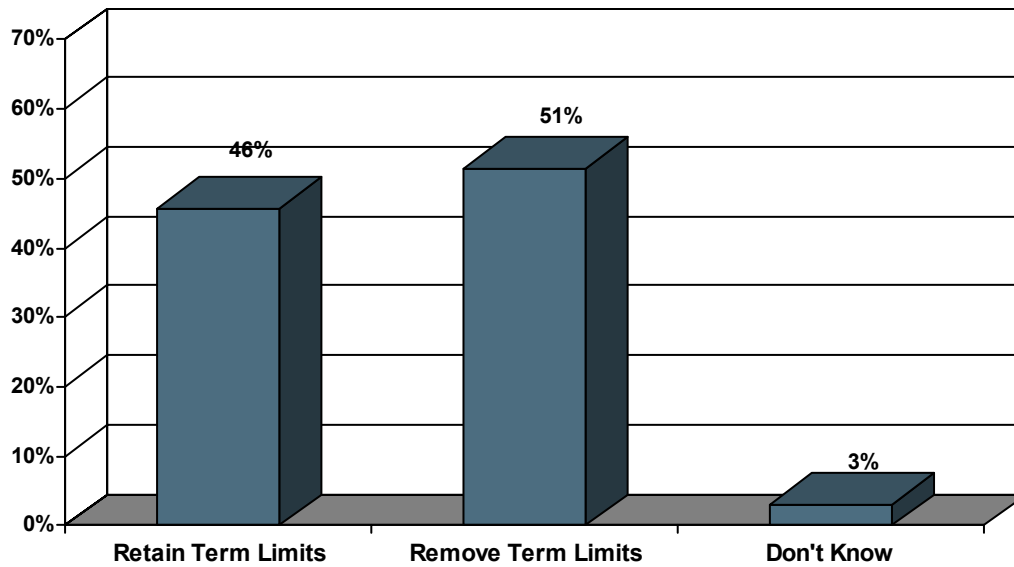
**Qn: Would a multiparty system perform better or worse than the Movement system at representing all views in government?**



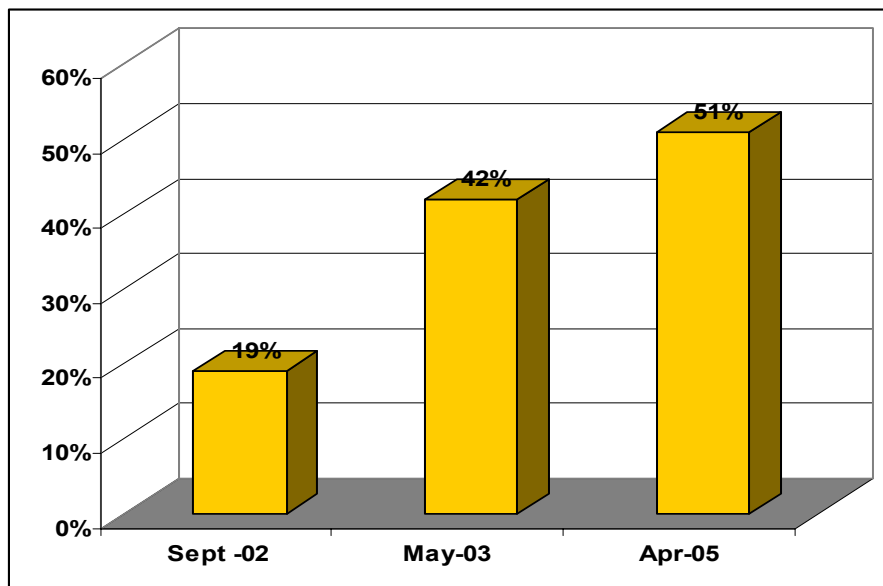
## Presidential Term Limits

On the controversial question of presidential term limits, results of the survey indicate a progressive shift towards support for lifting terms limits. Whereas the Afrobarometer survey of September 2002 found that 19% agreed that a president of Uganda should be able to serve as many terms in office as he wishes, an IRI survey of July 2003 found that support for lifting of term limits had gone up to 42%. Now a slim majority of 51% favors the removal of term limits.

**Qn: Should Uganda retain or remove presidential term limits?**



**Trends in Support for Lifting Presidential Term Limits, 2002-2005**



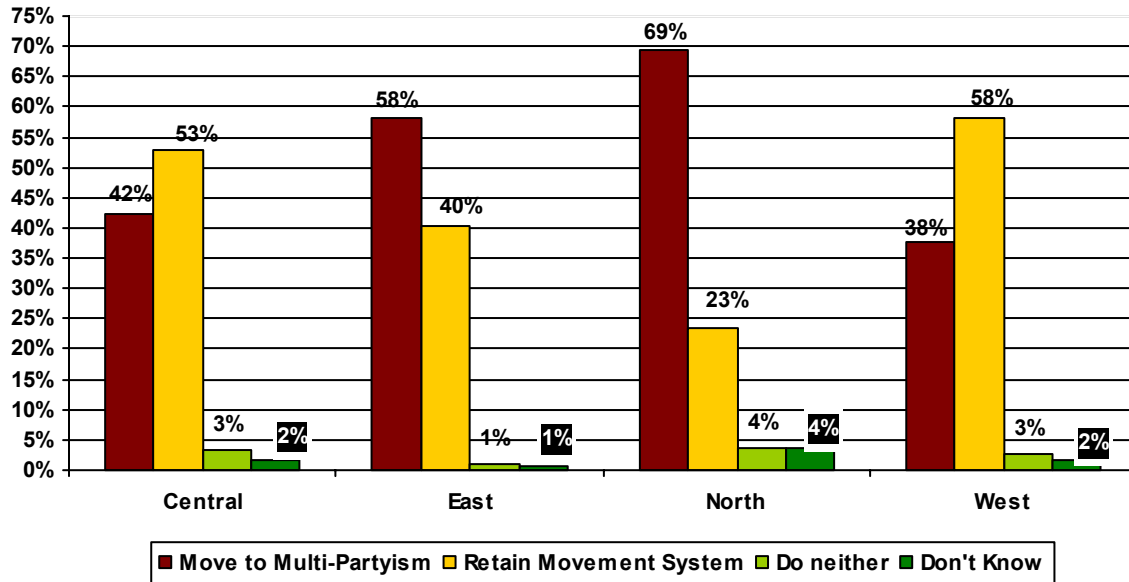
### **Effects of Region, Gender and Urban or Rural Location**

Regional, gender and urban-rural identities continue to divide Ugandans on both of these constitutional issues.

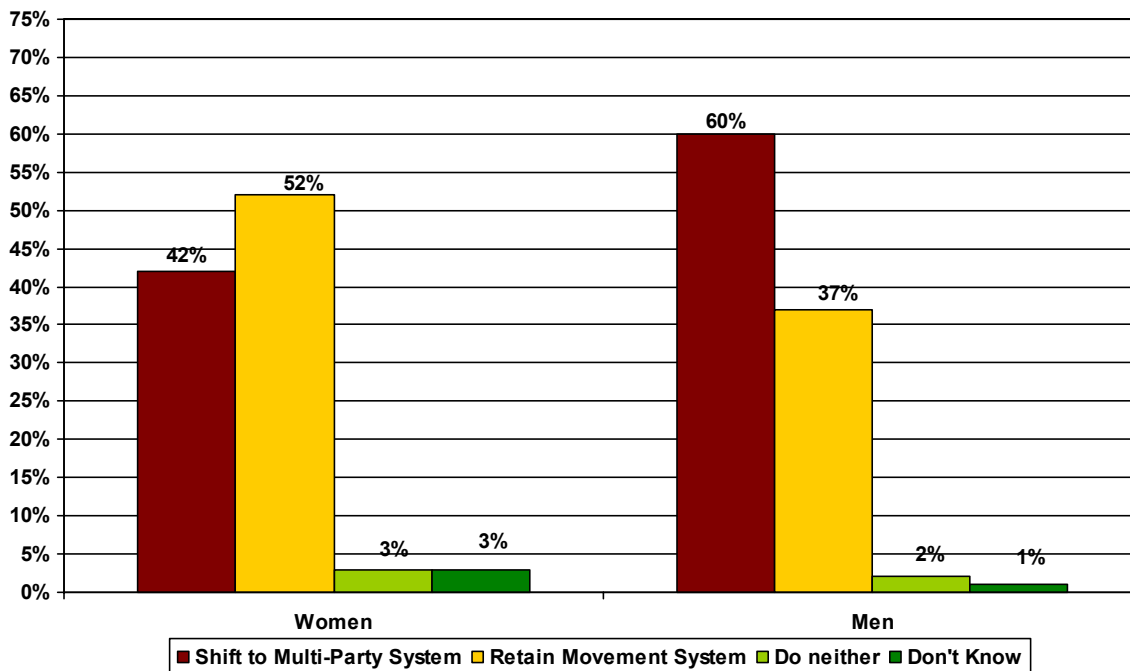
On the question of changing the political system, significant majorities in the West and Central regions favor the retention of the Movement system, while those in the North and

the East favor a change to a multiparty system. Likewise women are much more likely than men to support the retention of the Movement system. For the first time, rural dwellers join urbanites in supporting a shift to multiparty politics, although at a lower percentage than urban dwellers.

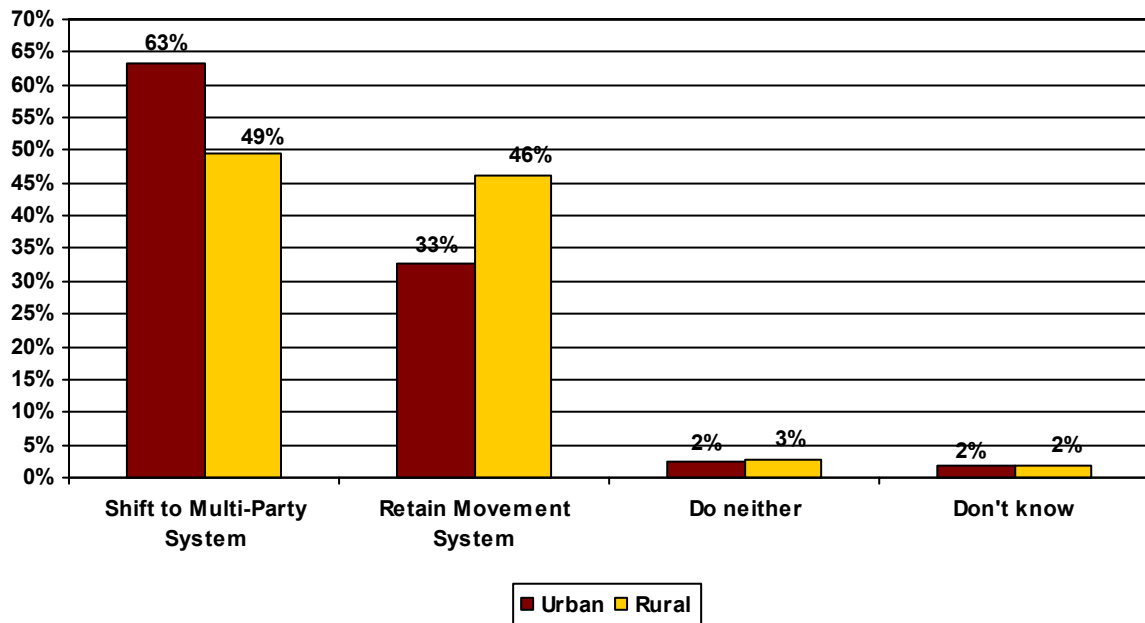
### Support for Change of Political System, by Region



### Support for Change of Political System, by Gender

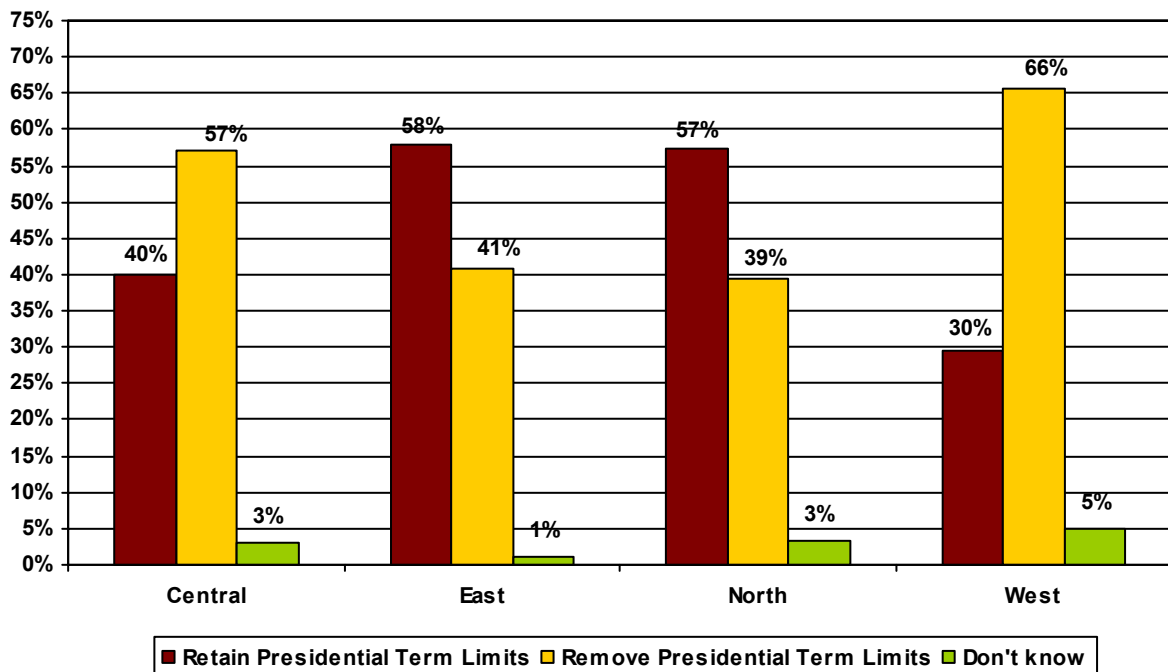


### Support for Change of Political System, by Urban-Rural Divide

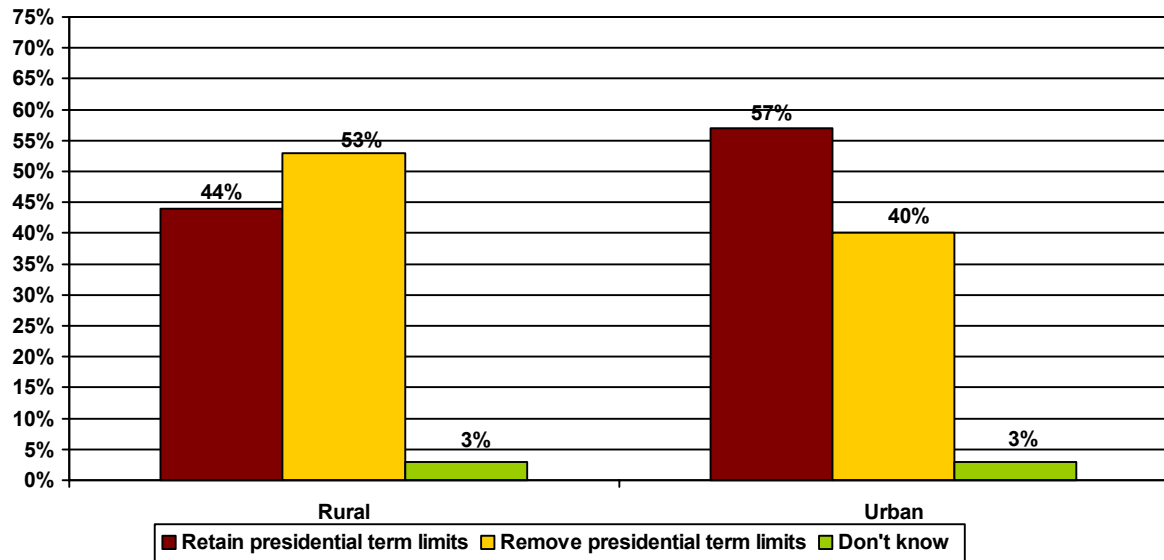


On the question of presidential term limits, Ugandans again hold different attitudes along lines of region, gender and residential location. Whereas a significant majority in the West and Central regions favor the lifting of the presidential term limits, significant majorities in the North and East favor the retention of the constitutional two-term limit. Women and rural dwellers are favorable towards lifting presidential term limits, whereas men and urban dwellers prefer to retain them.

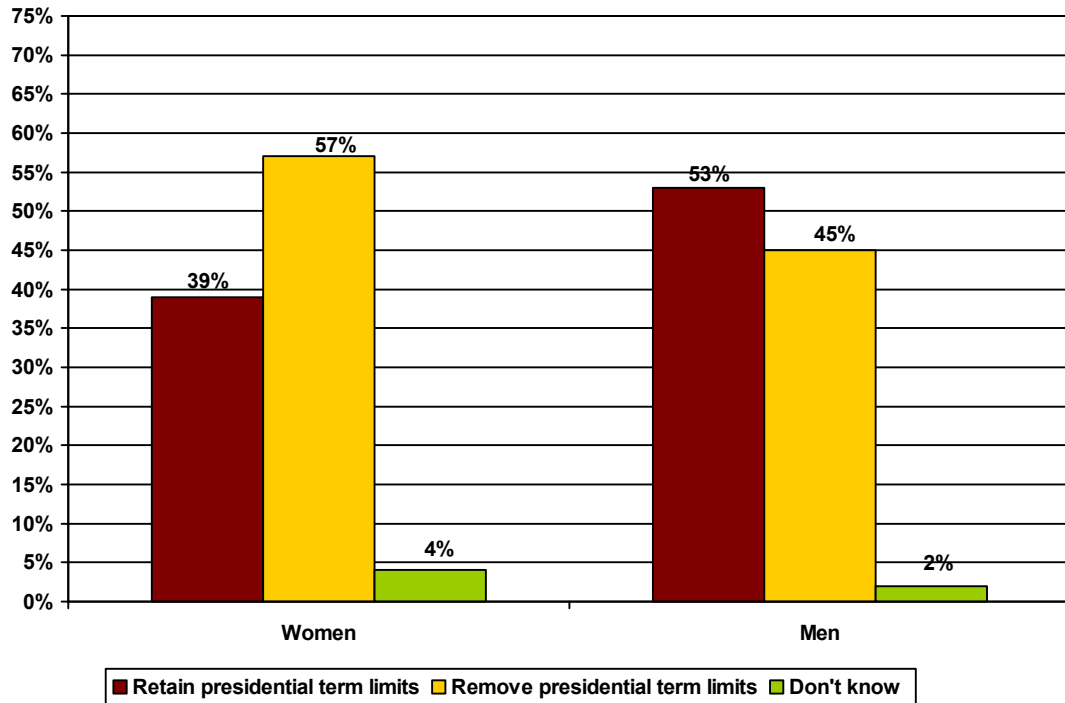
### Support for Retention or Removal of Presidential Term Limits, by Region



## Support for Retention or Removal of Presidential Term Limits, by Urban-Rural Divide



## Support for Retention or Removal of Presidential Term Limits, by Gender

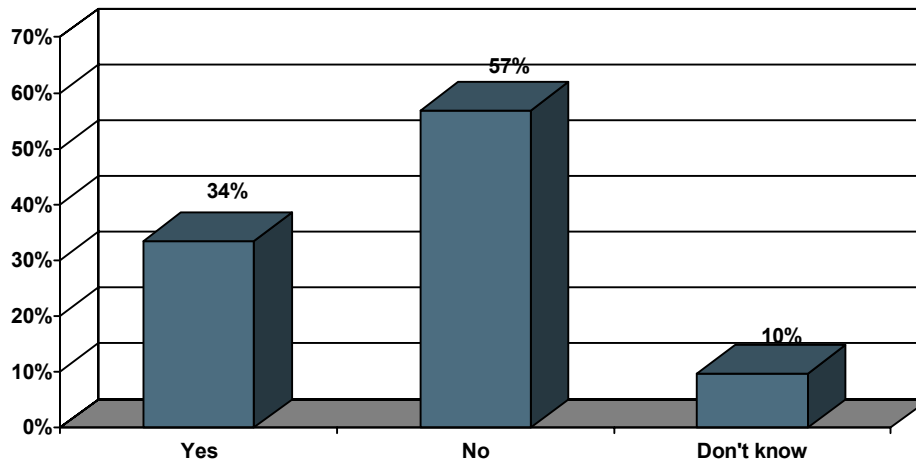




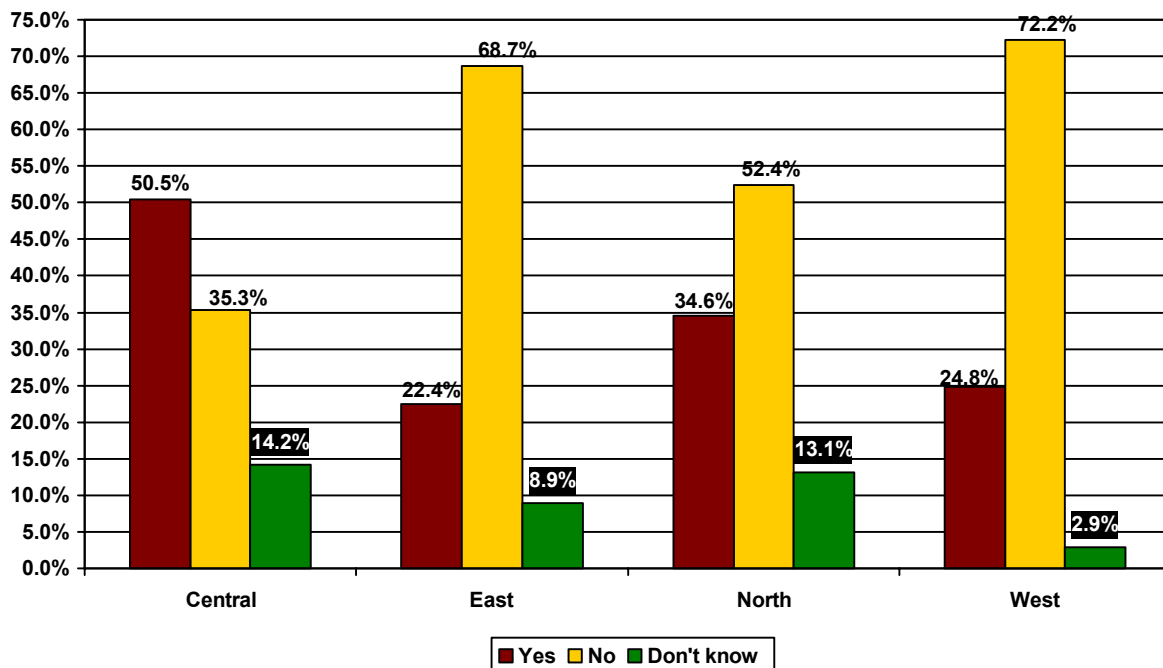
## Support for Regional Governments and Other Constitutional Amendments

On other proposed constitutional amendments, Ugandans express a continued interest in maintaining representation of special interest groups in Parliament. Fully 85% oppose ending special representation in Parliament for social groups such as women and people with disabilities, and 70% want to maintain the army's special representation as well. In a striking finding, a significant majority of 57% opposes the creation of a tier of regional governments. This proposal has majority support only in Central region.

**Qn: Should Uganda create a tier of regional governments?**

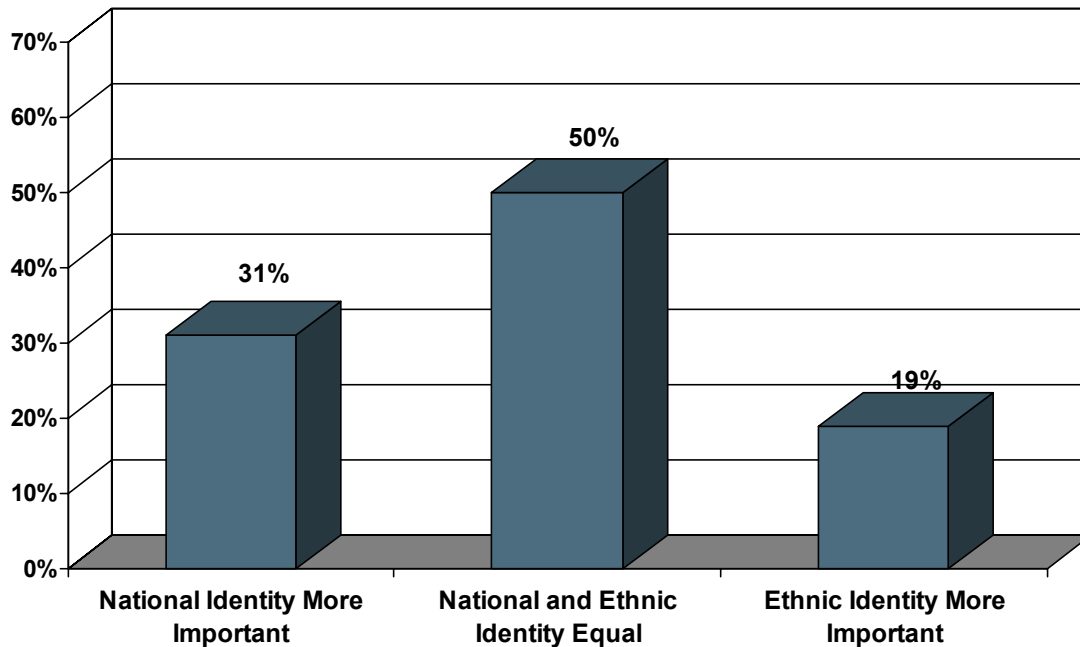


## Support for Creating Regional Governments, by Region



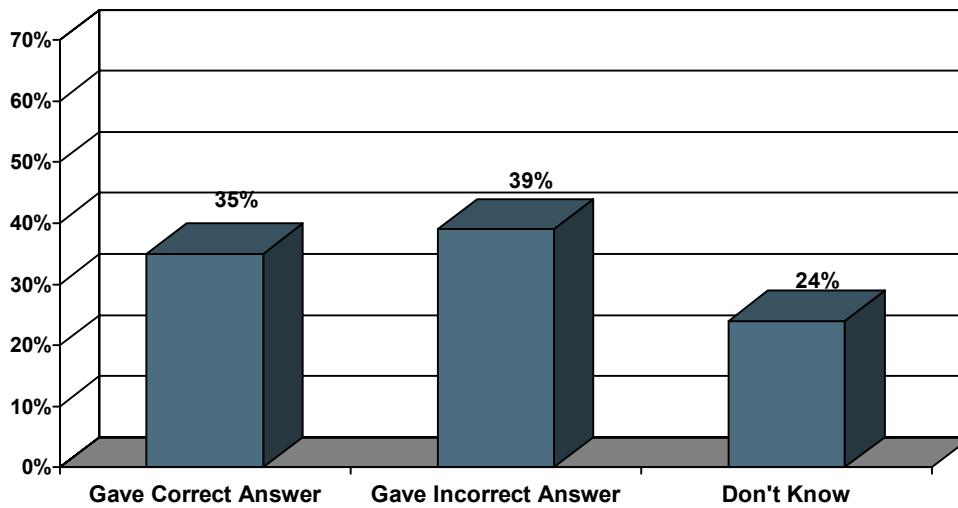
The opposition to creating a regional tier of governments correlates with the finding that a plurality of respondents indicate that their national identity (31%) is more important than their ethnic identity. Only 19 percent of respondents consider their ethnic identity to be more important than their national identity. This represents a decline from 2002, when 25 percent of respondents considered their ethnic identity to be more important than their national identity.

**Qn: Is your national or ethnic identity more important?**



The ambivalent responses about a transition to multiparty politics and the stark divisions over term limits indicate that the country has not yet reached a consensus on how to proceed in the political transition. At the same time, Ugandans have not received clear signals from their leadership on transitional questions. Finally, the public does not yet understand certain issues of constitutional amendment and the operation of a multiparty political system in a manner that can ensure a smooth political transition. For example, only 35% of the population correctly identified the number of terms that a president can be elected to office. If the public does not understand the changes being proposed, gaining meaningful approval for these changes and implementing them will be difficult.

**Qn: How many times can a president be elected to office?**



The **Afrobarometer** is produced collaboratively by social scientists from 18 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Michigan State University. Several donors support the Afrobarometer's research, capacity-building and outreach activities, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Donor Democracy and Governance Group and the U.S. Agency for International Development. For more information, see: [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)