

AFRO BAROMETER

Afrobarometer Paper No. 27

**INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS:
VARYING PERCEPTIONS OF
DEMOCRACY AND
GOVERNANCE
IN UGANDA**

by Carolyn J. Logan, Nansozi Muwanga,
Robert Sentamu, and
Michael Bratton

**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)

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AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

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March 2003

Carolyn Logan is a Research Associate in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University, and Associate Director (MSU) of the Afrobarometer. Nansozi Muwanga is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Makerere University. Robert Sentamu is Executive Director of Wilsken Agencies (Uganda) Ltd., a private survey research firm in Kampala. Michael Bratton is co-founder and co-Director of the Afrobarometer. He is also a Professor in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A first Afrobarometer survey was conducted in Uganda in May-June 2000 shortly before Referendum 2000 decided the future, at least for now, of Uganda's no-party Movement system of government. In the two years since, much has happened, including national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2001, a cooling of the economy, and resolution and re-emergence of various insurgencies. A second (Round 2) survey was conducted in Uganda in August-September 2002 to track changes, explore additional issues, and get a measure of public attitudes and behaviors during a more reflective period. This report presents the findings of this survey and places them in a comparative perspective both with respect to the public's state of mind two years previously, and with regard to other countries in Africa. The 2002 survey was again a national sample survey that covered all four regions of the country, with 2400 interviews, yielding overall results that are accurate to within +/- 2 percent.

Overview of Findings

In many respects, Ugandans continue to display a considerable degree of satisfaction with both their political and economic systems. But as memories of Uganda's traumatic pre-Movement past fade and the public's focus shifts from internal conflict and recovery to stability and development, there are also indications of increasingly critical assessments of the nation's other problems, especially economic ones, as well as waning patience with the government's efforts to address them. Moreover, there are deep differences in perceptions between those who can be characterized as "insiders" in the political system – those who express strong affiliation with the Movement as well as people from the central, eastern and especially the western regions – compared to political and social "outsiders" who hail from the north or are affiliated with opposition political organizations. Northerners are far more deeply disaffected with the political and economic system, and there is a mounting gulf between them and the rest of the country, especially the politically much better connected western region. In addition, those who are politically affiliated with the Movement show a much stronger allegiance not just to the current government, as would be expected, but to the political system as a whole. Opposition partisans also do not seem to fully distinguish between the (modified) democratic political regime in Uganda and the Movement government that continues to rule it. At the same time, it is encouraging to find that Ugandans are far more strongly attached to their identity as Ugandans than to sub-national identity groups, and that they remain almost universally committed to the unity and legitimacy of the state.

Continuing Commitment to Democracy

Ugandans remain committed to democratic principles and practices as they understand these, although there may have been a slight decline since the first Afrobarometer survey. Of greater concern is the drop in satisfaction with what democracy has produced for the country, and the differences in perceptions between insiders and outsiders.

- **Support for democracy still high:** 74 percent say that democracy is always best, while 12 percent say sometimes a non-democratic system is preferable, and 7 percent say it doesn't matter to them. This may be slightly lower than the level recorded in Round 1 (although the figures are not exactly comparable), but it still compares well with other Afrobarometer countries (Round 1 mean of 69 percent). Note that many – though apparently not all – Ugandans include the no-party Movement system within their definition of democracy.
- **Relative stability in extent of democracy:** 54 percent believe Uganda is either fully democratic or democratic with just minor problems, which is comparable to Round 1 findings (57 percent).
- **Some decrease in satisfaction with democracy:** In 2000, 72 percent said they were satisfied with the way democracy works in Uganda, while 17 percent were dissatisfied. In 2002, those expressing satisfaction dropped to 60 percent, while dissatisfaction has doubled to 32 percent.

- **Regional and partisan differences:** People from the northern region and those affiliated with the opposition (outsiders) show lower levels of support, ratings of extent, and evaluations of satisfaction with democracy than insiders (Movement partisans or those from the east, center or west).
- **Commitment to elections:** But respondents across all regions and political affiliations express solid commitment to elections as the best means for selecting leaders (83 percent).
- **Relative tolerance for a one-party regime:** Military and strongman rule are soundly rejected (85 and 90 percent, respectively) by both insiders and outsiders. But just 53 percent reject one-party rule, the lowest level measured in any Afrobarometer country. In fact, *majorities* of westerners (55 percent) and of Movement partisans (62 percent) *approve* of one-party rule.
- **Still wary of multipartyism:** Similar to results in 2000, 65 percent believe that party competition often or always leads to conflict, while just 42 percent think parties are nevertheless needed for choice, the lowest level of support measured in any country to date.
- **Declining patience with democracy:** 54 percent are willing to be patient with the current system of government as it deals with inherited problems, a sharp decline from 2000 (72 percent). Northerners and opposition partisans are much less willing to be patient than westerners and Movement partisans. These insider-outsider differences suggest that once again respondents are actually revealing their attitudes toward a *Movement-led* government rather than with the *democratic system* itself.

Mixed Reviews of the Economy and Economic Performance

Ugandans are ambivalent in both their broad economic attitudes, and in their evaluations of national and personal economic conditions. While there is clear decline in economic evaluations compared to 2000, people remain quite hopeful about the future.

- **Decreasing satisfaction with the national economy:** Just 45 percent rate the country's present economic condition as good. This is a sharp decline from 2000, when 64 percent expressed satisfaction with the economy, the highest level of any Afrobarometer country.
- **Decreasing satisfaction with personal economic standing:** In 2002, 35 percent rate their present living conditions positively, down steeply from 57 percent in 2000.
- **Hopefulness about the future:** 51 percent expect the economy to be better in 12 months time, while just 26 percent expect it to be worse. Similarly, 51 percent expect their personal economic conditions to be better in one year. Insiders are more hopeful than outsiders.
- **Uncertain commitment to a privatized market economy:** 57 percent prefer a free market economy, 33 percent would rather have a government-run economy, and 8 percent say it doesn't matter to them. However, 65 percent say the government should be responsible for people's well-being rather than individuals themselves.
- **Mixed support for economic adjustment policies:** 55 percent would prefer to pay fees for improved education standards, rather than enjoying free schooling. But 69 percent would like to see all civil servants keep their jobs rather than undergoing retrenchment to save money.
- **Willing to tolerate the hardships of reform:** Although 73 percent believe the government's economic policies have hurt most people and benefited only a few, 59 percent are nonetheless willing to tolerate the hardship of reform now in order to gain its long-term benefits.

Government Performance

The government fares relatively well with respect to its handling of social services and crime. But on corruption and a host of economic issues – especially reducing poverty and the income gap while producing jobs – it takes a hit. Decentralization appears to be progressing successfully, giving Ugandans a sense of ownership and connection to the government, and producing real gains for communities.

- **Most important problems:** Ugandans rate poverty, health (including AIDS) and unemployment as the country's most important problems in 2002, followed by education, and political tension and instability. This represents a marked shift from 2000, when political insecurity was mentioned most often, and unemployment appeared further down the list.

- **Strong performance on some key issues:** The government gets high positive ratings for its performance with regard to education (83 percent), provision of basic health services (74 percent), combating malaria (79 percent), fighting AIDS (75 percent), reducing crime (72 percent), and resolving conflict (64 percent). There are few regional differences except that northerners are much less satisfied with the government's handling of conflict than other regions.
- **Weaker performance on others:** Only 29 percent say the government is effective in creating jobs. A majority give positive ratings for managing the economy (59 percent), but not for making sure people get enough to eat (40 percent) or reducing the income gap (26 percent). Outsiders are much more critical of the government on many of these issues.
- **Corruption still an issue:** Only 31 percent give the government a positive review for its efforts to fight corruption, and 60 percent think the government is more corrupt now than in the past. Police get the worst ratings: 67 percent believe that most or all are involved in corrupt practices.
- **Decentralization successes:** fully two-thirds (67 percent) agree that leaders in the local councils are accountable to the community. In addition, the performance of District Councils is rated better now compared to five years ago on most issues.

Leadership Institutions

Public perceptions of the country's different leadership institutions vary markedly.

- **Presidential Performance:** President Museveni's performance is still rated very highly by Ugandans: 81 percent approve of his performance (93 percent in 2000). But while 61 percent trust him, at the regional level this is true of just 30 percent of northerners, compared to 82 percent of westerners.
- **The Movement's standing drops:** While 83 percent expressed trust in the Movement in 2000, only 56 percent do so in 2002 (changes in question wording can only explain part of this drop). Just over one-third (36 percent) of respondents claim to be close to the Movement, while 50 percent are not close to any political party or organization, and 13 percent are close to opposition political organizations.
- **Opposition groups gain no ground:** Public trust in opposition groups has dropped from 31 percent in 2000 to just 16 percent now.
- **Support for local government councilors:** Local government councilors at the LC-I, LC-III and LC-V levels get extraordinarily high positive ratings, ranging from 92 percent for the performance of LC-I councilors to 52 percent for trust in LC-V leaders.
- **National Electoral Commission's standing plummets:** In 2000, 76 percent express trust in the Commission, but in 2002 after numerous allegations of abuses and missteps and the dismissal of most of the commissioners, just 21 percent now trust it.

Identity, Legitimacy and the Rule of Law

Ugandans display a strong commitment to national unity, and despite ongoing problems with internal conflict there is a widespread consensus on the legitimacy of the Ugandan state.

- **Ugandan identity predominates:** When asked whether they feel greater attachment to their self-identified sub-group or to their national identity as Ugandans, 70 percent of respondents, both insiders and outsiders, select the latter, suggesting a very strong commitment to their country.
- **National unity is uncontested:** Similarly, when asked whether Uganda should remain united despite conflicts among groups within the country, or whether the divisions are so great that the country should break apart, an overwhelming 96 percent choose unity.
- **The state's right to rule:** Ugandans demonstrate a solid belief in the state's right to rule: 79 percent agree that the courts have the right to make binding decisions; 88 percent agree that people must always obey the law; and 87 percent agree that people must pay their taxes.
- **Mixed reviews for the Constitution:** 64 percent believe that the Constitution reflects the values and aspirations of the Ugandan people, down from 74 percent in 2000, but regional differences are stark: just 44 percent of northerners agree, compared to 90 percent of westerners.

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS: VARYING PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

INTRODUCTION

Uganda has now spent 16 years under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (the NRM or the Movement), during which time the country's political regime has officially consisted of a no-party or Movement system of government. This system features many elements of a liberal democracy, with the major exception that political parties are banned from undertaking most normal activities, including those typically associated with campaigning and elections. This has led many analysts to question the extent of real competition, and hence Uganda's credentials as a democracy.

Ugandans, however, appear to have upheld both the no-party system and Museveni's leadership, the first in a 2000 referendum, and the second during presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2001, although the latter were marred by incidences of intimidation and violence. This raises questions about Ugandans' understandings of what makes for a good political and economic system. But it also raises questions about whether the referendum and elections tell the full story in Uganda.

It is not possible to evaluate the nature of, or the extent of, a democracy without understanding the views of the public, but this demand-side perspective is under-analyzed in most of Africa. The Afrobarometer seeks to overcome this shortcoming by conducting national public attitude surveys in 15 African countries, including Uganda. These surveys explore public opinion on a wide range of issues, including democratization and political reform, economic conditions and attitudes toward market reforms, governance, and conflict. A first Afrobarometer survey was conducted in Uganda in May and June 2000, in the late stages of the campaign for Referendum 2000, and provided a great deal of insight into perceptions of the country's condition, as well as the public's response to the referendum.¹

Much has happened in the two years since – including national elections, cooling of the economy, and resolution and re-emergence of persistent insurgencies – and the country's political and economic systems continue to evolve. Moreover, the Round 1 survey was conducted during a heated political campaign, which may have affected both public perceptions and survey findings in a variety of ways. The somewhat calmer political atmosphere of 2002 offers an ideal time to conduct a second survey to track changes, explore additional issues, and get a measure of public attitudes and behaviors during a more reflective period.

Thus, at the request of the Donor Technical Group (DTG) in Uganda, the Afrobarometer teamed with Wilsken Agencies, Ltd. of Kampala, Uganda and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) to conduct a second survey in August and September 2002. This report presents the findings of this survey and places them in a comparative perspective both with respect to the public's state of mind two years previously, and with regard to other countries in Africa.

¹ Michael Bratton, Gina Lambright, Kimberly Ludwig, Jacqui True and Robert Sentamu, "Democracy, Economy and Gender in Uganda: Report of a National Sample Survey," report prepared in conjunction with the International Foundation for Election Systems for the Donor Technical Monitoring Group for the Referendum 2000, October 2000.

Political and Economic Setting

Before we can analyze and interpret survey findings, we must understand in somewhat greater detail the current political and economic context in which Ugandans presently find themselves. Some of the political milestones of the past two years include the following:

- Referendum 2000, held in June 2000, won overwhelming 91 percent approval for the Movement-led “no-party” system of democracy and just 9 percent support for a shift to a full-fledged multiparty system. The Movement government welcomed these lopsided results as a justification of what it had long claimed was the best system for Uganda, arguing that the country had already suffered too much from the divisiveness inherent in a multiparty system. But low voter turnout, especially among multiparty sympathizers, raised questions about a possible silent boycott.²
- The referendum was followed in 2001 by presidential and parliamentary elections that were hotly contested despite the limitations on political party activity. The entry of a former Movement man, retired Colonel Kizza Besigye, into the arena as a serious presidential candidate laid bare much about the Movement that had previously been hidden from public view, including its internal workings and divisions. The “all-inclusive” nature of the Movement – all adult Ugandans are considered members – was also opened up to unprecedented challenges. However, despite Besigye’s strong challenge to the president and pre-election polling that suggested a closer outcome, President Museveni was elected to a second and final five-year term with 69.3 percent of the vote, compared to just 27.8 percent for Besigye. Although international observers and Uganda’s own Supreme Court recognized that there were some irregularities during the election process, and, in the view of the U.S. State Department and many others the outcome was seriously marred by the limited space for political party activities and some incidences of violence, they nonetheless agreed that the results generally reflected the will of the Ugandan people.
- Three months later in June 2001, parliamentary elections reconfirmed the Movement’s standing, as the NRM retained a strong hold on the institution, with 230 of its 282 seats ultimately held by MPs who are “sympathetic to the president.”
- The Movement’s standing was, however, challenged during these campaigns by the efforts of candidates in both of these elections to appeal to ethnic and religious identities in ways that were at times quite subtle, and at others blatant. Prior to this, the Movement’s broad-based system had sought to minimize ethnic and religious differences.
- All of the presidential aspirants also courted women. President Museveni reminded women of their progress and achievements under the NRM and appealed to them to bear these facts in mind when voting.
- Commissions of inquiry, both national and international, as well as an increasingly aggressive print media and the proliferation of radio stations featuring “talk radio” programs have all increased information available and public awareness. In particular, problems of corruption within the military and elsewhere in the government have been exposed, particularly with respect to the plunder of resources during the intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The heightened level of information currently available to Ugandans may have undermined many of the long-held assumptions about the incorruptible nature of the Movement leadership.
- President Museveni’s post-election cabinet surprised some by the inclusion of several MPs who had previously been censured by Parliament for corruption and abuse of office. Although these MPs had been re-elected by their constituencies and were confirmed in their new positions by Parliament, this nonetheless suggests the possible resurgence of patron-client relations as a key feature of Ugandan elite political behavior.

² For an analysis of this issue, see Michael Bratton and Gina Lambright, “Uganda’s Referendum 2000: The Silent Boycott,” Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 6, Michigan State University, January 2001.

- The dismissal of the chairman and a majority of the commissioners on the National Electoral Commission in July 2002 on charges of corruption, nepotism and general mismanagement has cast a shadow on the objectivity of the commission during the previous years' elections. While the allegations do not point to electoral malpractices, the level of corruption unveiled within the commission may lead Ugandans to question the likelihood of independence in the commission's handling of the electoral process.
- Despite limits on freedom of assembly and association, Uganda has generally received good marks for its protection of freedom of speech and of the press. But the closing of the leading opposition newspaper, the Monitor, for a week in October 2002 after a controversial story about the war in the north, followed by the arrest of a journalist and bringing of charges against several of the paper's editors, raises the troubling prospect that the government is becoming less tolerant of this openness.
- The continuing armed conflict in the north is a challenge that, despite concerted efforts on the part of the government, has become more protracted, with devastating effect on the social, political and economic well-being of the people in that region. The conflict with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the west appears to be over, and there was a lull in the northern conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of more than a year. But there has been a resurgence of violence since mid-2002 following Uganda's restoration of relations with Sudan and the launching of Operation Iron Fist with the goal of finally eradicating the LRA. The Ugandan army's pursuit inside Sudan of the LRA and its leader, Joseph Kony, has in fact led to a resurgence of violence within Uganda, and its extension further south into regions that had previously been relatively unaffected.
- Meanwhile, raiding and banditry in the Karamojong region and neighboring areas in the northeast have shown few signs of improvement. Instability and insecurity make much of the northeast a virtual no-go area as well.
- Uganda's direct intervention in the DRC, however, appears to be winding down following a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed at ending the ongoing conflict in the region. Most of Uganda's troops had been withdrawn by mid-2001, and their redeployment within Uganda is in part credited with the improved security that prevailed from 2001 until mid-2002 within the west and north. There are, however, conflicting reports concerning the extent of the withdrawal of GOU forces from the DRC. The DRC complains that there is still a Ugandan presence in the country, while the government continues to refute this claim.
- While acknowledging the country's respect for selected political liberties, the donor community has been further heightening its calls on the government to deepen the democratization process by liberalizing political competition and respecting all democratic freedoms. International human rights organizations, meanwhile, have raised concerns about a political environment that they believe is growing increasingly hostile to the expression of opposition views.
- There has been continuing progress toward decentralization, which has transferred not only political but also fiscal responsibilities to the local level. In particular, the LC-III level is responsible for tax collection and financial mobilization at the local level, and relatively strict procedures of revenue distribution and accounting have been established. The reality of how local governments actually function, however, inevitably lags behind the changes on the books.
- Since the restoration of traditional leaders in 1993, the Kingdom of Buganda and its leader, Kabaka Mutebi, continue to reinvigorate themselves and play an increasingly prominent role among the Baganda people, and nationally, as a "quasi-state institution" with a growing behind-the-scenes political role.³

³ See for example Pierre Englebort, "Born-again Buganda or the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, 3 (2002): 345-368.

On the economic front, the following points are noteworthy:

- Uganda has undertaken what has been described as “one of the most ambitious programs of economic liberalization on the African continent.”⁴ The country has also seen some of the continent’s most impressive economic growth over the past dozen years. GDP growth averaged 7.1 percent per year during the 1990s (a per capita growth rate of 3.9 percent per year). That rate has dropped in the past few years, but it remained at a respectable 5 percent in 2000 and 5.6 percent in 2001.⁵
- The number of Ugandans living below the poverty line has been reduced substantially, down from 56 percent in 1992 to 35 percent today, but the problem nonetheless remains an enormous one for the country.⁶ Moreover, President Museveni has himself noted that poverty has actually been increasing in the north.⁷
- Praising Uganda for its progress in reducing poverty, both the World Bank and the IMF approved major new loans to the GOU during 2002. Part of the World Bank money is intended for use in the conflict zones of the north and east to help them catch up with the rest of the country.
- In October 2002 – shortly after fieldwork was completed – President Museveni announced in his budget speech an increase in the defense budget, in part to fund improved infrastructure in the north and an expansion of the army’s involvement there in order to defeat the LRA. This raises concerns in part because it reverses a troop-reduction exercise that has been underway since 1991. But perhaps even greater alarms are raised by the fact that this increase will be funded by cuts in all other ministry budgets, including health, by 25 percent. A consortium of NGOs had charged that spending on the war in the north has surpassed spending on health during the 16 years of conflict.⁸
- Unemployment is becoming an issue of real concern, especially among the youth and the educated. While private sector growth has been healthy, the public sector remains the main employer. But government does not have the capacity to absorb all of the available graduates, in part because of government policies (particularly the civil service reforms) that have sought to create a small but efficient public sector. The President has encouraged graduates to be creators rather than consumers of jobs, raising questions about both the state of the economy and the value of education.
- There is continuing concern about the distribution of benefits from economic growth, with the relative prosperity of the country on the one hand, as manifest in the growth of the private sector as well as the continuing goodwill of donors, and the growing economic gap and sense of social exclusion between different population groups on the other. People in the rural areas, in particular, continue to exist at the margins of economic growth.

Overview of 2002 Survey Findings

In many respects, Ugandans continue to display a considerable degree of satisfaction with both their political and economic systems. But as memories of Uganda’s traumatic pre-Movement past fade and the public’s focus shifts from internal conflict and recovery to stability and development, there are also indications of increasingly critical assessments of the nation’s other problems, especially economic ones, as well as waning patience with the government’s efforts to address them. Moreover, there are deep differences in perceptions between those who can be characterized as “insiders” in the political system –

⁴ Paul Collier and Ritva Reinikka, “Introduction,” in *Uganda’s Recovery: The Role of Farms, Firms and Government*, Ritva Reinikka and Paul Collier (eds.) (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2001), 1.

⁵ The World Bank, *Uganda at a Glance (9/23/02)*, www.worldbank.org/data, obtained 26 November 2002

⁶ IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks) of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), “Uganda: IMF Approves Poverty Reduction Loan,” www.irinnews.org, 17 September 2002.

⁷ IRIN, “Uganda: President Acknowledges Rising Poverty in the North,” www.irinnews.org, 30 July 2001.

⁸ IRIN, “Uganda: Budget Cuts Aimed at Ending War Against Rebels,” www.irinnews.org, 21 October 2002.

those who express strong affiliation with the Movement as well as those from the central, eastern and especially the western regions – compared to political and social “outsiders” who hail from the north or are affiliated with opposition political organizations. Our findings clearly confirm that northerners are far more deeply disaffected with the political and economic system, and that there is a mounting gulf between them and the rest of the country, especially the politically much better connected western region. In addition, those who are politically affiliated with the Movement show a much stronger allegiance not just to the current government, as would be expected, but to the political system as a whole. Opposition partisans also do not seem to fully distinguish between the (modified) democratic political regime in Uganda and the Movement government that continues to rule it. At the same time, it is encouraging to find that Ugandans are far more strongly attached to their identity as Ugandans than to sub-national identity groups, and that they remain almost universally committed to the unity and legitimacy of the state.

Methodology of the Survey

The Round 2 Afrobarometer survey of 2002, like the one done in 2000, was designed as a nationally representative sample. Respondents were randomly selected so that every adult Ugandan had an equal chance of being included in the sample. This means that the sample of 2400 individuals provides results that should closely mirror those of the national population. Our sample size of 2400 cases provides a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.0 percent with 95 percent confidence.

There is, however, one major caveat to the representativeness of our sample. Because of the resurgence of violent incidents associated with the LRA in the north, and the instability in the northeast due to ongoing problems with raiding and banditry, it was not possible to safely conduct interviews in a number of northern districts (including Kitgum, Gulu, Pader, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit, with an estimated 8.3 percent of the national population).⁹ In fact, even as sampling and fieldwork were being conducted security incidents in neighboring parts of Lira and Apac districts, areas which had previously been secure, threatened to limit the sampling area still further, but interviewers were able to conduct necessary interviews in secure parts of these districts. Our inability to sample in these six districts is a significant constraint to developing a sense of the *national* perspective in Uganda, especially given that, as we shall see below, northerners’ views on a variety of issues are often quite distinctive from those of other regions. However, we were able to compensate for this limitation to some extent by actually oversampling in those districts of the north that were accessible (Adjumani, Arua, Apac, Lira, Moyo, Nebbi and Yumbe) so as to ensure that we collected a sample that is adequate, to the maximum extent possible, to provide a reliable indication of northerners’ views (although when calculating national averages we compensate for this by underweighting the additional cases so that these averages are not biased in favor of northern views).

Another important methodological issue arises in the reporting process due to differences between Round 1 and Round 2 of the Afrobarometer project. The Afrobarometer Network and its survey efforts arose out of several independent survey research efforts during the late 1990s. Hence, the survey instruments used in Round 1 varied considerably between countries in both major and minor ways. For Round 2 a standard survey instrument has been developed for use in every country, and very similar instruments will be used in future survey rounds as well. Standardization will allow full comparability across countries, and over time within individual countries. However, given the many differences among Round 1 survey instruments, as well as lessons learned during that process about optimal question wording and other issues, there are many unavoidable differences between the Round 1 and Round 2 survey instruments. This is perhaps especially true in Uganda, where the Round 1 survey instrument deviated most substantially from the Round 2 Afrobarometer norm, in part because the first survey was specifically focused on evaluating issues related to the impending referendum, but also because of standardization of

⁹ Based on preliminary counts from the 2002 Census provided to Wilsken Agencies, Ltd.

question wording and response options. It is therefore not always easy or accurate to make exact comparisons between Round 1 and Round 2 results, even on similar questions. Comparisons between results from the two surveys must therefore be handled cautiously; we will note in the text whenever this is the case.

But even where results are exactly comparable, it is important to keep in mind that two observations do not make a trend. While differences between 2000 and 2002 on some questions may suggest the existence of a trend in attitudes, they may instead be attributed to either random variation in poorly formed “non-attitudes,” the momentary influence of some salient event, or a counter-directional “blip” in a longer-term trend that actually runs in another direction.

Demographics of the Sample

Table 1 shows the demographics of the actual survey sample, which closely match the distributions within the national population in key respects such as gender and religion. The sample population is slightly younger and more educated than the national population as indicated by Uganda’s 1991 census, and slightly more urban. But demographic changes in the population itself since 1991 could account for these minor discrepancies.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|-----|
| Number of Respondents | N = 2400 | Language | |
| Male: Female ratio | 48 : 52 | Luganda | 19% |
| Median Age | 30 | Runyankole | 12% |
| Urban: Rural Distribution | 20 : 80 | Luo | 10% |
| | | Lusoga | 10% |
| Education | | Rukiga | 8% |
| No schooling/informal only | 12% | Ateso | 6% |
| Primary only | 40% | Lugbara | 5% |
| Secondary only | 33% | Lumasaba | 5% |
| Post-secondary | 15% | Rutoro | 4% |
| | | Alur | 4% |
| Religion | | Runyoro | 3% |
| Protestant | 46% | Samia-Lugwe | 3% |
| Catholic | 39% | | |
| Muslim | 13% | Income | |
| | | None | 23% |
| Region (weighted) | | Less than 10,000 U.shs. | 19% |
| North | 28% | 10,001-30,000 U.shs. | 17% |
| East | 25% | 30,001-100,000 U.shs. | 19% |
| Central | 28% | More than 100,001 U.shs. | 13% |
| West | 19% | | |

To adapt the questionnaire to local conditions, we translated the English version into nine of the most commonly spoken local languages (Alur, Ateso, Luganda, Lugbara, Lumasaba, Luo, Lusoga, Runyankole-Rukiga, and Runyoro-Rutoro). All interviews were conducted in the language of the respondent’s choice, including English.

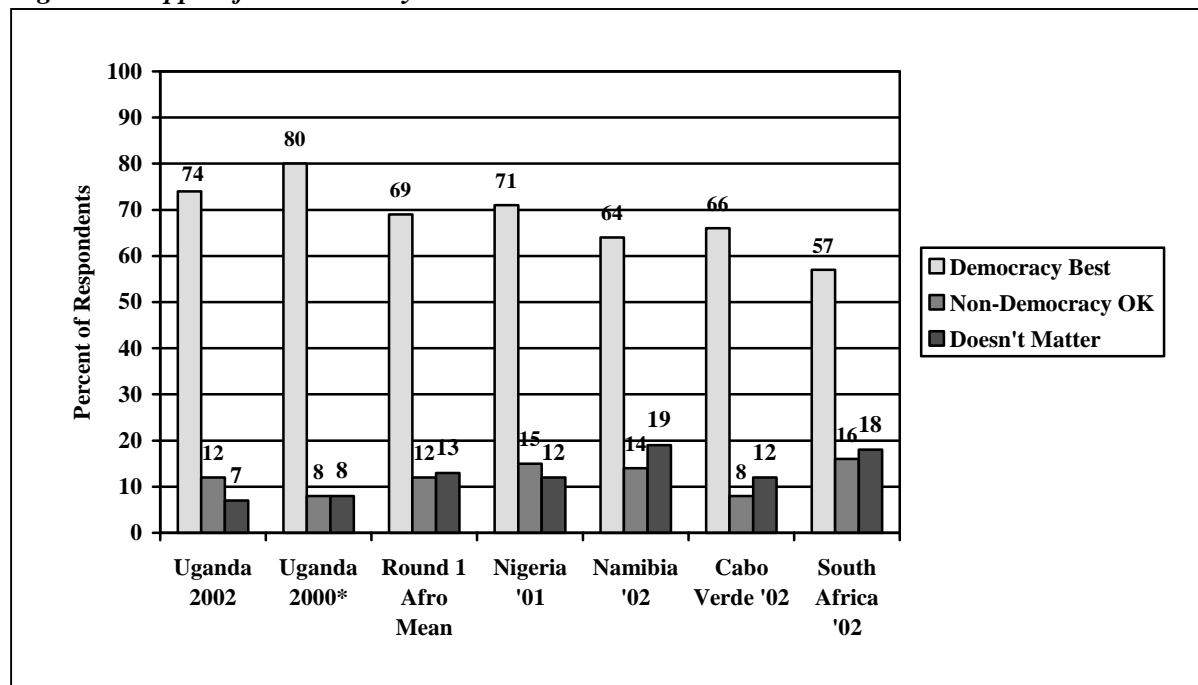
UGANDANS AND DEMOCRACY: COMMITMENT, EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Overall, Ugandans remain quite committed to democracy and democratic principles as they understand these, although there has been some weakening since 2000 in several respects, and differences emerge in perceptions between political insiders and outsiders that are cause for concern.

Support for Democracy

Support for democracy as a system of government remains quite high in Uganda. Fully 74 percent agree that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government, compared to just 12 percent who believe that in some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferable, and just 7 percent who say it does not matter what system of government prevails (Figure 1). This is somewhat lower than the level of support measured in 2000 (80 percent), but the 2000 results may have been boosted by the fact that the 15 percent of Ugandans who had been unable to clearly define democracy were not asked this question. Moreover, by this measure Ugandans' commitment to democracy still compares quite well with the levels seen in other Afrobarometer countries, which averaged 69 percent support in Round 1, and which range from 57 percent (South Africa) to 71 percent (Nigeria) in early Round 2 countries.¹⁰

Figure 1: Support for Democracy



*Note that 2000 and 2002 results are not exactly comparable due to changes in respondent selection.

¹⁰ At the time of this report, Round 2 results are available only for Cabo Verde (June 2002), South Africa (Sept.-Oct. 2002) and Ghana (Sept.-Oct. 2002). In addition, results are available from two pre-Round 2 surveys (or “Round 1.5 surveys”) in Nigeria (August 2001) and Namibia (March 2002) that served as the test cases for the Round 2 survey instrument. Results from these early “Round 2” surveys will be reported where relevant and available. Round 1 results can be found in Afrobarometer Network (Carolyn Logan and Fabiana Machado, compilers), “Afrobarometer Round 1: Compendium of Comparative Data from a Twelve-Nation Survey,” Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 11, Michigan State University (East Lansing)/CDD (Accra)/Idasa (Cape Town), March 2002, available at www.afrobarometer.org.

There are, however, sharp regional differences within the country on this question (Table 2), with the north standing out for its considerably lower levels of commitment to democracy. While support ranges from 74 percent in the east and 76 percent in the center to 85 percent in the west, in the north just 59 percent voice support.

Table 2: Support for Democracy, by Region and Partisan Affiliation

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Democracy Best | 85 | 74 | 76 | 59 | 80 | 72 | 74 |
| Non-democracy OK | 8 | 16 | 9 | 15 | 9 | 17 | 12 |
| Doesn't Matter | 3 | 6 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Don't Know | 3 | 5 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| N | 680 | 608 | 568 | 544 | 840 | 313 | 2400 |

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion: A) Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government; B) In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable; and C) For someone like me it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

We also examined whether support for democracy varies according to respondents' political affiliations. This categorization is based on a question that asked respondents whether they are close to a political party or organization, and if so, which one. Those who are not close to either are categorized as "neutral" (52 percent of respondents), while those close to either the Movement or an opposition group are categorized as Movement partisans (35 percent) or opposition partisans (13 percent) respectively. Note that region and party affiliation are correlated¹¹ – there are nearly five times as many people closely affiliated with the Movement in the west (58 percent) as in the north (12 percent), and nearly five times as many are linked with opposition groups in the north (24 percent) as in the west (5 percent). This means that the results when broken down by region will often – though not always – be similar to those disaggregated according to party affiliation.

Ideally in a democracy we would expect to see differences between supporters of the ruling party and the opposition in terms of their assessments of how a particular government is performing, but not with respect to their commitment to the democratic regime itself, flawed as it might be. But this does not yet prove to be the case in Uganda. While 80 percent of Movement partisans claim to support democracy and 9 percent are willing to consider an alternative system, a somewhat lower 72 percent of opposition backers make this commitment, while nearly twice as many – 17 percent – will countenance an alternative. This is somewhat surprising given that it tends to be multiparty supporters who accuse the present government of not providing enough democracy in the country through its restrictions on political party activities.

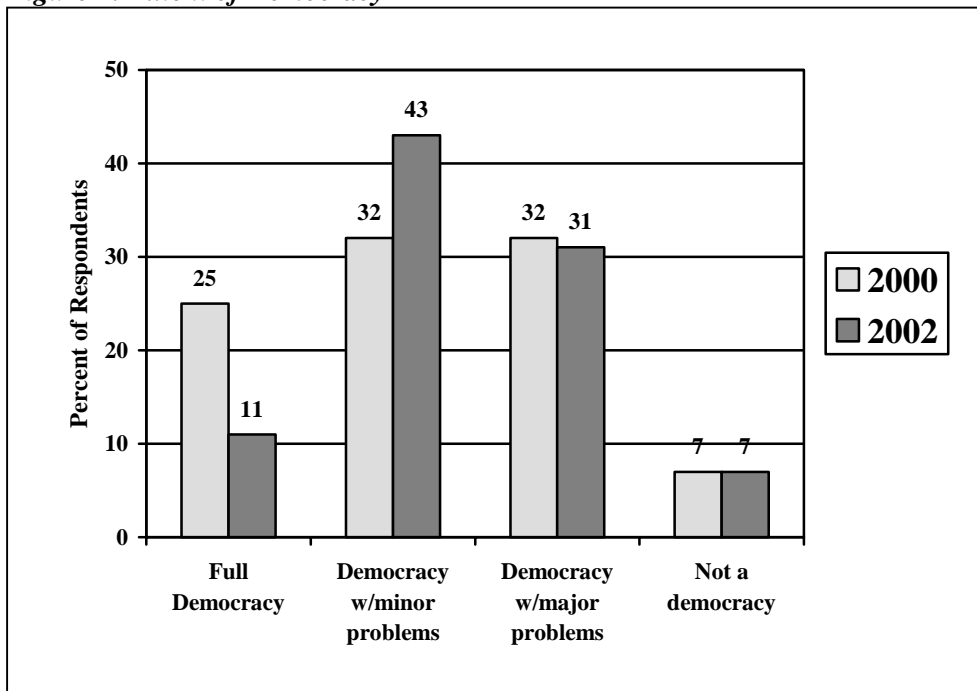
This finding of different levels of support among both northerners and opposition partisans begins to raise questions – which we will be forced to return to repeatedly during the course of this analysis – about the extent to which those who are either antagonistic towards or disappointed in the policies and performance of the present government actually discredit the entire political system or regime of (limited) electoral democracy. It is not necessarily surprising that we encounter this conflation of the Movement government and democratic regime given the fact that the Movement established the present regime and has ruled since its inception. But it suggests that we must be cautious in interpreting these results, while looking for ways to distinguish between responses that mostly tell us about attitudes toward the current government and its policies and performance (even when questions may refer to the democratic political *regime* rather than to the *current government*), versus responses that can truly reveal underlying attitudes toward the practice of democracy itself.

¹¹ Cramer's V .281, significant at .000 level.

Extent of Democracy

While we cannot be sure of the trend in support for democracy, Ugandans' views of the quality of democracy do appear to be shifting slightly downward. The proportion that sees the country as either a full democracy or a democracy with only minor problems has declined only slightly, from 57 percent to 54 percent. But as shown in Figure 2, there has been a substantial shift among respondents from reporting that the country is fully democratic (25 percent in 2000, just 11 percent in 2002) to reporting that it is a democracy with minor problems (32 percent in 2000, 43 percent now). Nevertheless, Uganda still remains slightly ahead of other survey countries. In Round 1, a mean of 50 percent rated their country as either a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems, and with the notable exception of Namibia (76 percent), other Round 2 countries fall below Uganda's mark (Cabo Verde 41 percent; Ghana 45 percent; Nigeria 47 percent; and South Africa 47 percent)

Figure 2: Extent of Democracy



In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Uganda today?

Again, the regional differences are stark (Table 3). Just 33 percent of northern respondents concur with the assessment that Uganda is either a full democracy or has only minor problems, while more than twice as many westerners (68 percent) feel this way.

Table 3: Extent of Democracy, by Region and Partisan Affiliation

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Full democracy | 12 | 15 | 10 | 4 | 16 | 3 | 11 |
| Democracy with minor problems | 56 | 40 | 44 | 29 | 56 | 25 | 43 |
| Democracy with major problems | 23 | 33 | 33 | 38 | 20 | 46 | 31 |
| Not a democracy | 4 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 2 | 22 | 7 |
| Don't know/Don't understand | 5 | 8 | 6 | 18 | 7 | 4 | 8 |

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion: A) Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government; B) In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable; and C) For someone like me it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

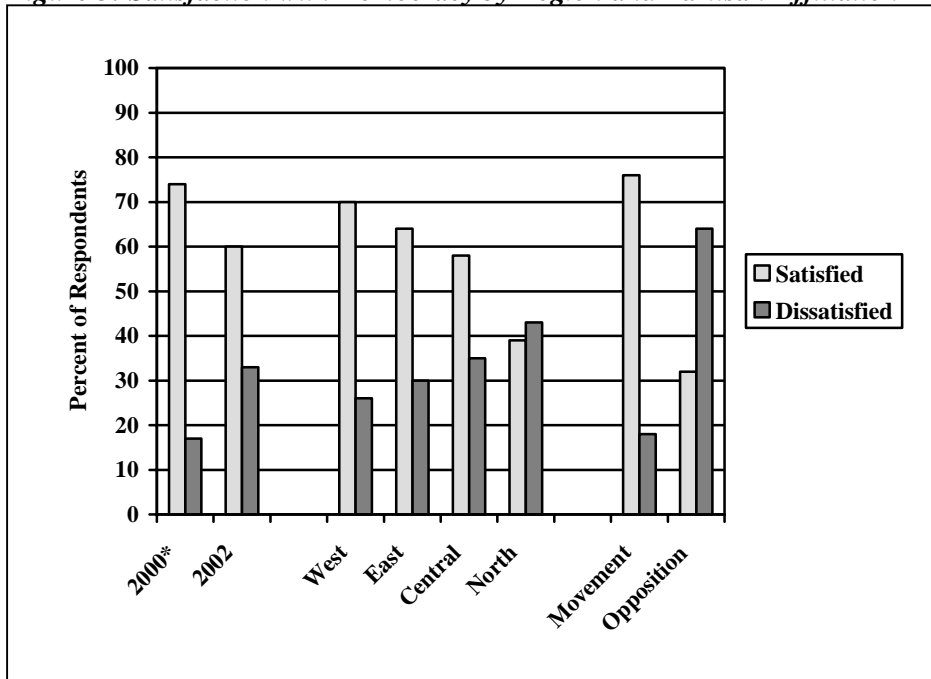
Opposition partisans are also much more critical of the political system: a mere 28 percent rate it as relatively democratic, while more than one out of five (22 percent) contend that Uganda is not a democracy at all. In contrast, 72 percent of Movement backers consider the country fairly democratic, and just 2 percent do not consider it a democracy.

Satisfaction with Democracy

Still greater concern may be aroused by a substantial decrease in the level of satisfaction with Uganda's democratic system (Figure 3). In 2000, fully 72 percent of Ugandans expressed some degree of satisfaction with the way democracy actually works in practice in their country, a level that was surpassed only by an early post-transition Nigeria (84 percent) among other Afrobarometer countries (12-country Round 1 mean of 58 percent). But the number who report being somewhat or very satisfied has dropped to 60 percent in 2002, while the number expressing dissatisfaction has doubled to one-third of all respondents (33 percent). (Note that again the question was not asked of all respondents in 2000, so the figures are not exactly comparable.) Nonetheless, Uganda still compares relatively well with other Round 2 countries surveyed to date. It is surpassed by Namibia (78 percent), but is now trailed by Nigeria (57 percent), as well as Ghana (46 percent), South Africa (44 percent) and Cape Verde (33 percent).

This shift may reflect a greater sense of public unease with the political system since the eye-opening experience of the 2001 election processes, and in the context of increasing revelations about corruption in the political system. During the elections, incidences of violence and intimidation, accusations against all sides of electoral malpractice, efforts to re-politicize ethnicity and religion, and the army's involvement both in terms of stated positions and allegiances, as well as its active intervention in parts of the west, may have begun to undermine Ugandans' confidence in the current political arrangements.

Figure 3: Satisfaction with Democracy by Region and Partisan Affiliation



*Note that 2000 and 2002 results are not exactly comparable due to changes in respondent selection.

Again, we find that northerners are more critical than the rest of the country: only 39 percent are satisfied, compared to more than two out of three respondents (70 percent) in the west. Political insiders likewise express much more positive views of the system: 76 percent of Movement partisans are satisfied with the country’s democracy in practice, compared to just 32 percent of those affiliated with the opposition.

Clearly the responses to this and the previous questions confirm that northerners are feeling more disenchanted with the political system, especially compared to those in Museveni’s home area in the west. Those who are closely linked to opposition parties and organizations are similarly displeased. We begin to see indications that both of these groups see themselves as “political outsiders” who are not served as well by the current political system as are their neighbors in other regions or those linked to the Movement. But we cannot yet resolve the question of whether they feel disaffected from the political system because they are not as attached to democratic principles as other Ugandans, or whether they may be basing their views of democracy *as a system of government* more on their perceptions of – or affiliation to – the current government.

Attitudes Toward Regime Alternatives

One way that we can more carefully assess Ugandans’ commitment to democracy itself, as opposed to the particular government that currently presides over it, is by examining their willingness to countenance other regime types. For example, we asked respondents whether they would approve or disapprove of a government run by the army. It is unsurprising, given Uganda’s past experience with military rule, that a resounding 85 percent of all Ugandans reject this option, reflecting little change since the question was asked in 2000. Moreover, in this case we see few variations in response either with respect to region or political affiliation. Ugandans’ are at least as likely to reject this option as their counterparts in other Afrobarometer countries (Table 4)

Table 4: Rejection of Regime Alternatives in Afrobarometer Countries

| | Reject Military Rule | Reject Traditional Rule | Reject Strongman Rule | Reject One-Party Rule |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Uganda 2002</i> | 85 | 48 | 90 | 53 |
| <i>Uganda 2000</i> | 89 | 79 | 83 | 53 |
| Other Round 2 | | | | |
| <i>Ghana</i> | 83 | 69 | 82 | 79 |
| <i>Cabo Verde</i> | 75 | -- | 67 | 79 |
| <i>Namibia</i> | 64 | 57 | 68 | 72 |
| <i>Nigeria</i> | 81 | 61 | 71 | 78 |
| <i>South Africa</i> | 77 | 63 | 73 | 67 |
| Other Round 1 | | | | |
| <i>Botswana</i> | 85 | 74 | 88 | 78 |
| <i>Ghana</i> | 88 | 71 | 86 | 78 |
| <i>Lesotho</i> | 70 | 59 | 69 | 51 |
| <i>Malawi</i> | 83 | 71 | 87 | 76 |
| <i>Mali</i> | 70 | 47 | 73 | 73 |
| <i>Namibia</i> | 59 | 55 | 57 | 63 |
| <i>Nigeria</i> | 90 | 74 | 83 | 88 |
| <i>South Africa</i> | 75 | 64 | 67 | 56 |
| <i>Tanzania</i> | 96 | 89 | 92 | 61 |
| <i>Zambia</i> | 95 | 80 | 91 | 80 |
| <i>Zimbabwe</i> | 80 | 63 | 78 | 74 |
| Round 1 Mean | 82 | 69 | 80 | 69 |

*There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? (percent “disapprove” or “strongly disapprove.”)

The numbers who reject some system of rule by traditional leaders have, however, declined drastically. In 2000, 79 percent disagreed with the option of going “back to a traditional system of government by kings and chiefs.” But in 2002, only a plurality of 48 percent reject a system in which “all decisions are made by a council of chiefs or elders,” while 39 percent approve of this option. The reasons for this enormous shift may in part be related to changes in the question wording. But ethnic mobilization during the elections and the increasing successes of some of Uganda’s restored traditional kingdoms in securing resources and increasing their profile, combined with the growing sense of frustration and disillusionment that some experienced after the 2001 elections, may also contribute to an increasing interest in the potential of traditional leaders to provide an alternative to the current system of government. We will explore the role of traditional leaders further below.

Regional differences on this question are once again significant, but this time they run in different directions to those seen above. In particular, northerners are most likely to reject this alternative system of government (60 percent), along with easterners (57 percent), while westerners are more willing to consider traditional rulers (47 percent disapprove, 38 percent approve), and those in the central region display particular willingness to go this route as a majority favor this option (33 percent disapprove, 51 percent approve). While this result suggests that northerners are in fact demonstrating the greatest commitment to democracy in this case, we must keep in mind that the results also parallel in expected ways the major regional differences in the past structures and current status and viability of traditional leadership.

In sharp contrast to this, the possibility of a “strongman” government whereby “elections and the parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything” is rejected by an even greater

majority (90 percent) now than in 2000, when 83 percent disagreed with this option. Like military rule, it is especially interesting to note that on this issue Ugandans are united across region and party affiliation, with only minor variations in rejection rate associated with either. Moreover, they reject this alternative at considerably higher rates than their counterparts in almost all of the other Afrobarometer countries (Round 1 mean 80 percent; other Round 2 range from 67 to 82 percent).

Of particular relevance in the context of Uganda’s no-party Movement system are mass attitudes toward multipartyism versus one-party rule. We find no change in the level of rejection of one-party rule in Uganda since 2000: a slim majority of 53 percent disapproves of such a system. This is by far the lowest level measured to date in any Afrobarometer country (12-country Round 1 mean 69 percent; Round 2 range from 67 to 79 percent). But major inter-regional distinctions once again emerge (Table 5), and here again we find that it is northerners, as well as those affiliated with the opposition, who demonstrate the least tolerance for non-democratic alternatives. Northerners are very wary of a one-party state: fully three-quarters of them (73 percent) reject such a system, compared to just 40 percent in the west. Similarly, 80 percent of opposition partisans reject a one-party state, but just 33 percent of those affiliated with the Movement do so.

Table 5: Rejection of a One-Party State, by Region and Partisan Affiliation

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|-------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Disapprove | 40 | 58 | 51 | 73 | 33 | 80 | 53 |
| Neither | 4 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Approve | 55 | 38 | 39 | 21 | 62 | 17 | 40 |
| Don’t Know | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternative: only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.

Thus, while the first set of questions might have suggested that northerners and opposition partisans have somewhat lower levels of commitment to democracy, this battery of questions adds strength to the argument that what these groups are in fact rejecting is the present Movement-run and Movement-style no-party democratic regime specifically, not democratic principles and practice more generally. Meanwhile, these results also suggest that the opposite likely holds true among westerners and Movement partisans. That is, what initially appeared to be their higher level of commitment to and evaluations of democracy as a political system in the country may be inflated by their allegiance to the Movement government which runs that system, to which they feel more connected as political insiders. They in fact demonstrate considerable willingness to tolerate limitations on democracy, as long as they are, in effect, “their” limitations. But it is important to note that, with the major exception of attitudes toward political parties, both insiders and outsiders demonstrate, albeit in different ways, a fairly high degree of commitment to a democratic system of government.

Attitudes Toward Democratic Institutions

Still another measure of the commitment to democracy can be derived from respondents’ attitudes toward various democratic institutions. Although relatively lukewarm – but divided – attitudes toward political parties also emerge here, in most cases the responses to these questions bolster the assertion that democracy continues to be highly valued in Uganda by insiders as well as outsiders.

For example, Ugandans express high commitment to the practice of elections as the best means for selecting their leaders. We asked whether “We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections,” or whether “Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country’s leaders.” Fully 83 percent of respondents stand by elections as

the best option. Moreover, this commitment remains fairly consistent across all regions and across both Movement and opposition partisans. Unfortunately, this widespread attitude has not, to date, translated into consistently high voter participation in the country's elections and referenda. Only an estimated 52 percent of eligible voters participated in Referendum 2000.¹² The presidential elections in March 2001 drew considerably more participants, with turnouts estimated at 70 percent,¹³ but in the June 2001 parliamentary elections turnout dropped again.

Ugandans also strongly support an active parliament and other means of keeping presidential power in check. When asked to choose between the statement that "The members of Parliament represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the President does not agree," and the alternative that "Since the President represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what the Parliament thinks," a huge majority of 82 percent stands by the Parliament's right to make the nation's laws. Likewise, nearly as many (80 percent) stand by the constitutional two-term limit to the presidency, which is comparable to results seen recently in Nigeria (also 80 percent), Ghana (75 percent) and Cape Verde (76 percent), but much higher than in Namibia (57 percent), where President Nujoma recently succeeded in overturning the two-term limit in the face of minimal public opposition.

Given the experience of many African countries with leaders who have clung tenaciously to power, after 16 years under his rule there are questions both within and outside Uganda about President Museveni's own intentions after his election in 2001 to a second and final five-year term. Even in democratic systems with constitutional limitations, there have been several recent examples of presidents who have sought to overturn these limits, including Zambia, Malawi and Namibia, among others. The results here suggest, however, that should President Museveni consider a similar quest to extend his tenure, Ugandans would respond less like Namibians than Zambians, who strongly resisted the efforts of President Chiluba to alter the constitution, forcing him to abandon his efforts.

Political parties, however, remain the democratic institution that generates the least interest and support in Uganda, and the institution on which Ugandans are most divided among themselves. In addition to the relatively high tolerance for one-party rule discussed above, there are several other indicators that attachment to multiparty competition as a key feature of democracy remains relatively weak. On a series of eight questions about the value of political parties in the 2000 survey, an average of just 36 percent gave "pro-party" (or "pro-multiparty competition") responses. The results of the current survey suggest that party competition has not gained any ground since then.

For example, a sizeable majority of 65 percent believes that conflict is often or always the outcome of multiparty competition (Table 6). Not surprisingly, the numbers are even higher in the west (76 percent) where the Movement is more popular, but lower in the north (57 percent), where it holds less sway. Similarly, 73 percent of Movement partisans associate parties with conflict, but surprisingly, even 62 percent of those affiliated with the pro-multiparty opposition agree. It appears that the government's efforts to emphasize the party-conflict linkage have tapped into a strong underlying public sentiment that still makes comparisons between the *relative* peace of the last 16 years and the rampant insecurity of the two decades that preceded it, which many associate with the country's earlier experiments with multipartyism.

¹² Uganda's Electoral Commission reported this voter turnout rate on July 2, 2000.

¹³ International Foundation for Election Systems, www.ifes.org.

Table 6: Political Parties and Conflict, by Region and Partisan Affiliation

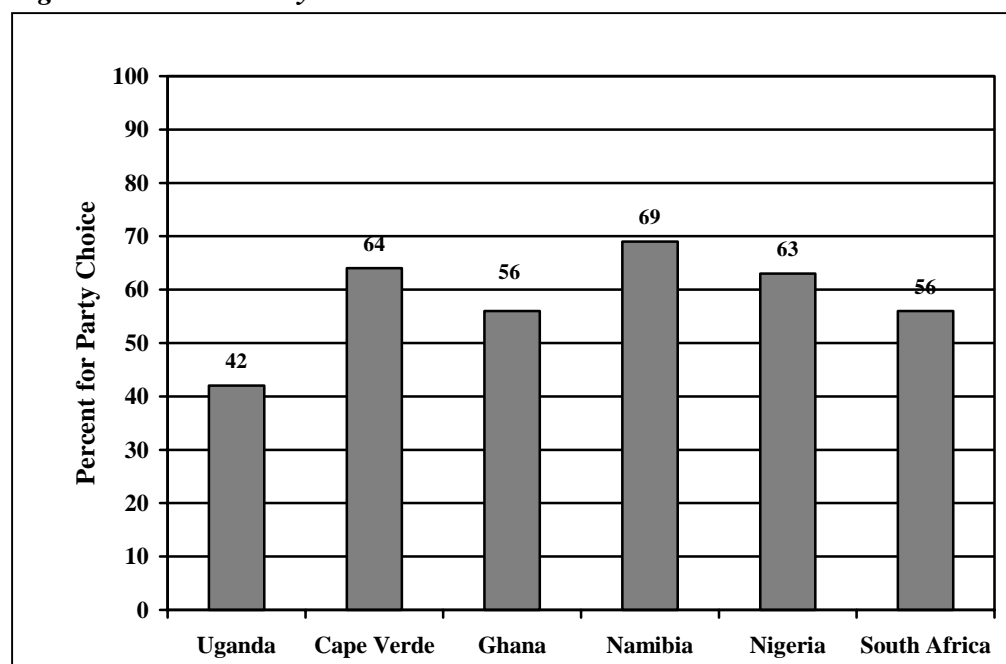
| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|---------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Often/Always | 76 | 64 | 61 | 57 | 73 | 62 | 65 |
| Never/Rarely | 20 | 34 | 34 | 32 | 26 | 34 | 30 |
| Don't Know | 4 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 5 |

In this country, how often does competition between political parties lead to conflict?

On a related question, respondents were asked to choose between the statement that “Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Uganda,” versus the alternative that “Many political parties are needed to make sure that Ugandans have real choices in who governs them.” Just 42 percent of Ugandans concur with the latter pro-party position, although a solid majority of 62 percent takes this position in the north, while less than one out of four respondents (23 percent) adopt this view in the west.

Ugandans are not, however, alone in associating political parties with conflict. Among six countries where both of these questions have been asked, a majority associate party competition with increased conflict in all but Namibia. However, as shown in Figure 4, in all of the other countries a significant majority nevertheless sees parties as necessary for providing citizens with choices – perhaps they see them as a necessary *evil*, to the extent that they are associated with conflict, but they are perceived as necessary, nonetheless. Only in Uganda does a majority reject the need for multiple parties.

Figure 4: Cross-Country Attitudes Toward Political Parties



**Which of the following statements is closest to your view: A) Political parties create division and confusion, it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in [Uganda]; B) Many political parties are needed to make sure that [Ugandans] have real choice in who governs them (percent selecting statement B).*

Citizens versus Subjects

Are Ugandans citizens who control their own political system, or subjects who defer to their political leadership? The findings on this issue are not clear: Ugandans seem to at times regard themselves as effective managers of their own political destiny, and at other times to doubt their own efficacy.

Overall, Ugandans are quite interested in public affairs relative to their counterparts in other African countries (Table 7). The levels of interest expressed in 2002 are much the same as they were in the heated, pre-referendum environment of the 2000 survey, although there has been a small decline in the intensity of interest. Fully 39 percent of respondents describe themselves as “very” interested in public affairs (45 percent in 2000), and another 47 percent consider themselves at least somewhat interested (39 percent in 2000). In Round 1, Ugandans’ levels of interest far surpassed those in almost all other Afrobarometer countries (12-country mean for “very interested” was 23 percent, and for “somewhat interested” 47 percent); early Round 2 results suggest, however, that interest in several other countries is now rising to similarly high levels. Ugandans’ consistently high interest indicates that what seemed to be exceptionally high levels recorded during the 2000 survey were not simply an electoral-cycle anomaly as might have been expected; they may instead reflect a truly engaged political culture.

Table 7: Political Interest and Efficacy Across Countries

| | Uganda 2002 | Uganda 2000 | Cape Verde | Ghana | Namibia | Nigeria | South Africa | Round 1 Mean |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Percent “Very Interested” in Public Affairs | 39 | 45 | 49 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 29 | 23 |
| Percent “Somewhat Interested” in Public Affairs | 47 | 39 | 29 | 37 | 51 | 49 | 44 | 47 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Should Question Leaders (percent agree or strongly agree) | 82 | -- | 63 | 80 | 72 | 74 | 67 | -- |
| Government Like a Parent (percent agree or strongly agree) | 59 | -- | 69 | 61 | 43 | 61 | 44 | -- |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Politics and Government Too Complicated to Understand (percent agree or strongly agree) | 69 | 48 | 63 | 64 | 52 | 68 | 72 | 64 |
| Friends and Neighbors Don’t Listen (percent agree or strongly agree) | 49 | 62 | 39 | 45 | 29 | 31 | 28 | -- |
| Can Make Elected Representatives Listen (percent agree or strongly agree) | 85 | 61 | 56 | 63 | 62 | 55 | 51 | -- |

Yet when Ugandans are asked about their proper role with respect to government, responses are contradictory. Fully 82 percent of all respondents – the highest level in any country so far – agree more with the statement that “As citizens, we should be more active in questioning the actions of our leaders,” than with the alternative that “In our country these days, there is not enough respect for authority” (18 percent). This suggests that Ugandans are strongly attached to a role as critical *citizens*. However, when asked to choose between two other statements, they display more of a subject mentality. Fifty-nine percent agree that “People are like children; the government should take care of them like a parent,” while just 40 percent instead believe that “The government is an employee; the people should be the bosses who control the government.” This contradiction suggests that in their political habits and attitudes Ugandans may still be caught in the middle between an authoritarian and paternalistic past and what is supposed to

be a more participatory and accountable democracy in the present. They want a government that is accountable to them, but they have not let go of a sense of dependency on a government that they would like to provide for them.

There are also apparent contradictions in Ugandans' views of their own personal ability to understand and influence the government. About two-thirds (69 percent) agree that politics and government are sometimes too complicated to understand, up hugely from just 48 percent who felt this way in 2000. These reduced levels of confidence now more closely match those observed in other countries (in Round 1, Ugandans were the most confident citizens by this measure). Nearly half (49 percent) think that others do not listen to them when it comes to politics, which is a sharp drop from the 2000 levels, when 62 percent claimed they could influence others. The sizeable shifts in these two measures perhaps reflect a new political uncertainty after the relative turmoil generated by the 2001 elections.

Yet at the same time, fully 85 percent believe that they can get together with others to make their elected representatives listen to them when necessary, up considerably from 61 percent in 2000. This may reflect the ongoing discrepancies between the democratic rhetoric of transparency, accountability, and participation and the more elusive reality of achieving these goals. But the very high levels of perceived efficacy in influencing elected leaders – Uganda far surpasses any of the other Round 2 countries surveyed thus far (51 to 63 percent) – may also be a reflection of Uganda's decentralization program and what appears to be a relatively high degree of connection to elected local representatives, as opposed to national-level ones.

Expectations and Performance: Political Rights and Patience

What do Ugandans actually expect democracy to do for them, and how quickly do they expect it? The argument is frequently made that Africans see democracy as a means to economic progress more than as a route to political emancipation.¹⁴ However, Ugandans appear to give somewhat greater weight to political goals. When asked to choose between the statement that “Democracy is worth having simply because it allows everyone a free and equal voice in making decisions,” versus the alternative that “Democracy is only worth having if it can address everyone's basic economic needs,” a narrow majority of 54 percent select the first statement focused on political rights. These responses are quite comparable to those in Namibia, Nigeria (52 percent each) and South Africa (51 percent), although Cape Verdians express even greater commitment to the political aspects of democracy (69 percent). There is some cross-regional variation: easterners are equally divided between the two statements (47 percent each), while those in central region opt for voice over basic needs by a two-to-one margin (63 percent to 31 percent). In this case westerners and northerners occupy the middle ground, rather than the poles of opinion.

But whatever their expectations of democracy, Ugandans may be losing patience with a democratic system that is not solving all of their problems or fulfilling all of their goals. When asked in the 2000 survey whether they should be patient with the current system of government as it dealt with inherited problems, or try another system if democracy cannot produce results soon, nearly three out of four respondents (72 percent) expressed a willingness to wait rather than switch. However, in the current survey, a similar question reveals that only 54 percent of respondents are willing to give the current system time. Internationally, Ugandans now occupy the middle ground in terms of patience together with South Africa (51 percent) and Namibia (49 percent), falling far below the levels seen in Ghana (79 percent) and Nigeria (71 percent), but well above impatient Cape Verdians (39 percent).

¹⁴ See for example Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1996), p. 138.

Again, differences with respect to both region and party-affiliation are notable (Table 8). Two-thirds (67 percent) of westerners are willing to be patient while just half that number (35 percent) are willing to wait in the north. The gap is even wider between opposition partisans (26 percent) and those affiliated with the Movement (73 percent). In general, expressions of waning patience may not be surprising given that to most people “inherited problems” probably refers to the pre-Museveni or pre-Movement era, some 16 years ago. But the regional and party-affiliated differences suggest once again that many respondents on both sides of the divide tend to conflate the present Movement government and the political regime of (limited) democracy in responding to this question. When northerners or opposition partisans express a lack of patience with the “system of elected government,” it seems likely that they are in fact expressing a lack of patience with the Movement government, rather than with democracy as a system, while the reverse may be true for westerners and those affiliated with the Movement.

Table 8: Patience with Elected Government, by Region and Partisanship

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Time to deal with problems | 67 | 47 | 61 | 35 | 73 | 26 | 54 |
| Try another form | 30 | 52 | 36 | 59 | 27 | 71 | 42 |

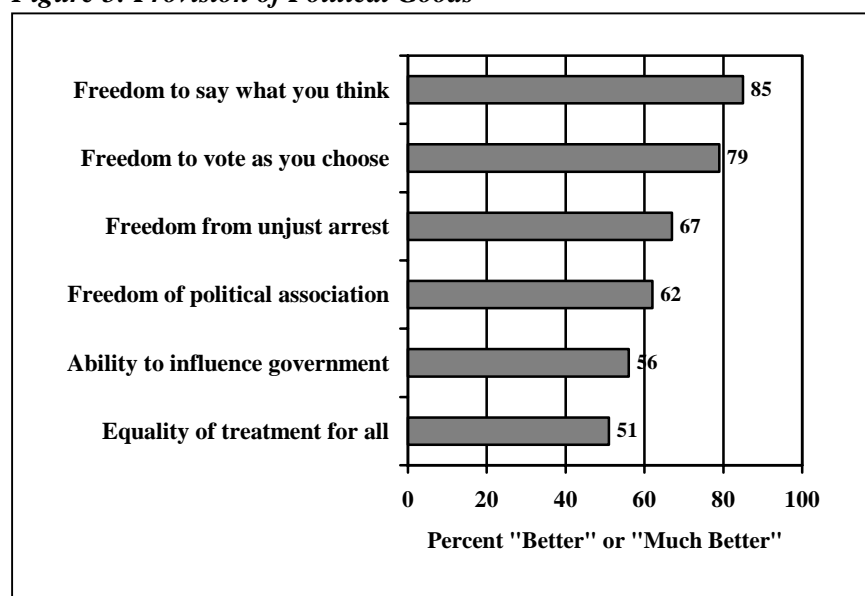
Which of the following statements is closest to your view: A) Our present system of elected government should be given more time to deal with inherited problems; B) If our present system cannot produce results soon, we should try another form of government.

The current government does, however, get relatively good ratings for its performance with respect to improving the provision of political rights and goods (Figure 5). When comparing the present government with that prior to 1995 when the new Constitution came into effect (which was, however, still under the leadership of President Museveni and the Movement),¹⁵ fully 85 percent rate their freedom to say what they think as better than in the past. At the same time, respondents are split on the question of whether or not Ugandans still need to be careful about what they say about politics, with 52 percent claiming that this is never or only rarely necessary, and 46 percent claiming that one must often or always be careful. This relatively high degree of caution and implied fear is clear cause for concern in a purportedly democratic political system, but it may be a reflection more of habit and past learning for Ugandans than of current realities. Moreover, compared to other countries, in which an average of 59 percent suggested a need to be careful in Round 1,¹⁶ Ugandans express one of the lowest levels of concern, comparable to Botswana (49 percent) and Namibia (48 percent), and much less than Tanzania (89 percent), Lesotho (72 percent) and Mali (74 percent). However, Uganda looks worse in comparison to other recent Round 2 surveys: a mere 8 percent of Nigerians feel a need to watch their words, 24 percent of Cape Verdians, 34 percent of South Africans, and 37 percent of Ghanaians.

¹⁵ Although we note here that on these and other questions where participants made comparisons with the past, at least some may have been making their comparisons to the pre-Museveni era prior to 1986.

¹⁶ This question was not asked in Uganda in Round 1.

Figure 5: Provision of Political Goods



Comparing our present system of government with the former system of government under the old Constitution (that is, before 1995), are the following things worse or better now than they used to be, or about the same?

Respondents also report substantial improvement in voting rights, with 80 percent agreeing that they have greater freedom to choose who to vote for now than in the past. Moreover, despite the continuing restrictions on political party activities, a sizeable majority (62 percent) even experiences greater freedom to join the political organizations of their choice.

The government may also be improving opportunities for Ugandans to have their voices heard in the political system, particularly through political decentralization. A smaller, but still significant majority of 56 percent report that their ability to influence government now is better than in the past, consistent with the perception of increasing ability to influence elected representatives discussed above. And just treatment for citizens has also improved according to the 66 percent who say that they are less fearful of being arrested unjustly now than in the past, and the 51 percent who say that the government does a better job now of treating all people equally and fairly.

These generally positive reviews on improvements in the provision of political goods, however, mask deep and disturbing regional differences (Table 9). On support for and satisfaction with democracy we saw the west and the north at opposing ends in the range of views, with the central and eastern regions falling somewhere in-between. In the case of perceptions about provision of political goods, however, the north tends to stand alone, with much less positive views than the other three regions. For example, with respect to the freedom to say what you think, between 87 and 92 percent of respondents in the latter three regions see improvements, while just 64 percent of northerners do – still a majority, but nevertheless one markedly smaller than elsewhere. The same holds true in the case of voting freedom.

Of greater concern is the fact that while overall a solid majority of 62 percent see gains in their freedom to join any political organization, only 41 percent in the north see such improvements, while nearly as many (36 percent) think their situation has actually gotten worse.

Northerners also feel more disconnected from government than others; merely one-quarter (24 percent) report improvements in their ability to influence government, compared to 55 percent in the central

Table 9: Provision of Political Goods, by Region and Partisanship (percent “better”)

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Freedom to say what you think | 92 | 87 | 92 | 64 | 93 | 66 | 85 |
| Freedom to vote as you choose | 84 | 81 | 86 | 64 | 90 | 55 | 79 |
| Freedom from unjust arrest | 78 | 70 | 66 | 48 | 80 | 41 | 67 |
| Freedom of political assoc. | 65 | 63 | 72 | 41 | 76 | 40 | 62 |
| Ability to influence govt. | 68 | 67 | 55 | 24 | 70 | 30 | 56 |
| Equal treatment for all | 62 | 65 | 45 | 24 | 62 | 21 | 51 |

region, 67 percent in the east and 68 percent in the west – nearly three times the number in the north! The same pattern applies to perceptions about whether all people are treated more equally now than in the past. Clearly, northerners feel themselves to be ill served by the current government with respect to the provision of basic political rights and goods, especially compared to their relatively satisfied fellow citizens in the southern regions.

Note that we also see very similar differences between Movement partisans and those affiliated with the opposition. The gap between the proportions of winners and losers who see improvement ranges from 27 to fully 41 points. While it is less surprising to see differences between these two groups when evaluating performance of a government, it is nevertheless a concern that we see such differences not just on policy issues where they would be expected, but on issues such as these that involve the protection and promotion of basic democratic rights. Clearly the differences between the two groups go beyond basic policy differences to fundamental perceptions about the directions the country is heading.

Participation and Engagement

To what extent are Ugandans taking action to address issues and solve problems? The 2000 survey revealed them to be among the most active and participatory societies studied to date. But the 2000 survey was conducted shortly before a hotly contested referendum on multipartyism, a time when we would expect to see political participation and activism elevated above their normal levels. How does participation in 2002 compare? Do we see the anticipated decline in political activism, or a corresponding decrease in civic engagement?

In fact the results suggest that participation is at least holding steady, and possibly even increasing.¹⁷ This is particularly impressive given that Uganda was already ranked as a highly participatory society relative to others in Africa. But the finding may not be as surprising as it at first appears for two reasons. First, while participation may have been elevated by Referendum 2000, it is likely that far more Ugandans were mobilized by the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2001, so participation would likely have peaked in the first half of 2001. Secondly, a liberal interpretation of the “past year” which the question asked about may have included this extra, election-related activity in the first half of 2001 even though it

¹⁷ It is difficult to make precise comparisons given differences in question details between the two surveys. In 2000, respondents were asked about their participation in each activity over the past five years, while in 2002 they were only asked about the previous year. In addition, response categories were slightly different between the two. Nonetheless, there is sufficient information available to support the conclusions drawn in this discussion.

was more than one calendar year prior to the survey. But even if this is the case, the reported participation levels are nonetheless quite impressive.

For example, when asked whether they had attended a community meeting in the past year, fully 89 percent of respondents claim to have done so at least once, a level that is actually substantially *higher* than in 2000 when respondents were asked if they had attended such a meeting *in the past five years* (81 percent). There has been a considerable downward shift in the reported frequency of attending such meetings (often, several times, or once or twice), with fewer reporting that they attend often and more reporting that they have done so only once or twice. However, this can likely be explained by the much shorter time period covered by the question in 2002.

The reported inclination to discuss politics with friends and neighbors also remains extraordinarily high. Seventy-eight percent report having done so at least once within the past year, while in 2000 a similarly high 81 percent claimed to have done so in the past five years (though again there is a downward shift in the reported frequency of such discussions). Among countries included in the Round 1 surveys, only Tanzania came close, with 75 percent reporting that they discussed politics with others, while across 12 countries, the average positive response was just 61 percent.

Ugandans are also remarkably active when it comes to working with others to address important issues. Nearly two-thirds (66 percent) say they have joined with others to raise an issue at least once within the past year, well above the 11-country Round 1 average (the question was asked in all countries except Uganda) of 44 percent. Again, only Tanzania, at 61 percent, even comes close to matching the levels of participation reported in Uganda.

It is only when it comes to attending demonstrations or protest marches that Ugandans fail to surpass their fellow Africans. Just 9 percent report having done so in the past year, compared to an 11-country average of 11 percent in Round 1 (a difference that falls within the margin of sampling error for the survey). Ugandans demonstrate far less frequently than South Africans and Zimbabweans (24 percent each), as well as Namibians (21 percent). Ugandans show even less inclination to use violence in pursuit of political aims; just 3 percent report having done so in the last year.

Uganda also has a reputation for an extremely active associational life. In 1992, there were approximately 708 NGOs in Uganda, and according to some estimates there are now three or four times that number.¹⁸ While many of these NGOs may be mere “briefcase NGOs” that produce few social benefits, others, such as the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) and the Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), have been active in articulating, advocating and lobbying for the needs of specific interest groups, with some success. Survey findings confirm that, in most cases, associational life remains vibrant.

Religious associations remain the strongest linkage for Ugandans, with some 58 percent reporting that they are either active in, or leaders of, religious associations (we do not include those who say they are inactive members), and four out of five Ugandans (79 percent) indicating that they attend religious services at least once a week. Other types of association are considerably less prevalent, but relative to other countries, they still attract many participants in Uganda. Just over one in five (22 percent) are active in community development associations, about the same level seen in 2000 (23 percent). The membership in professional and business associations has declined somewhat, from 15 percent in 2000 to 11 percent in 2002. But membership in trade unions and farmers associations appears to have dropped much more, from 21 percent in 2000 to just 12 percent in 2002. Nevertheless, on the whole Ugandans continue to exhibit one of the highest densities of associational life of any of the countries surveyed.

¹⁸ Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 62.

ECONOMIC ATTITUDES, PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

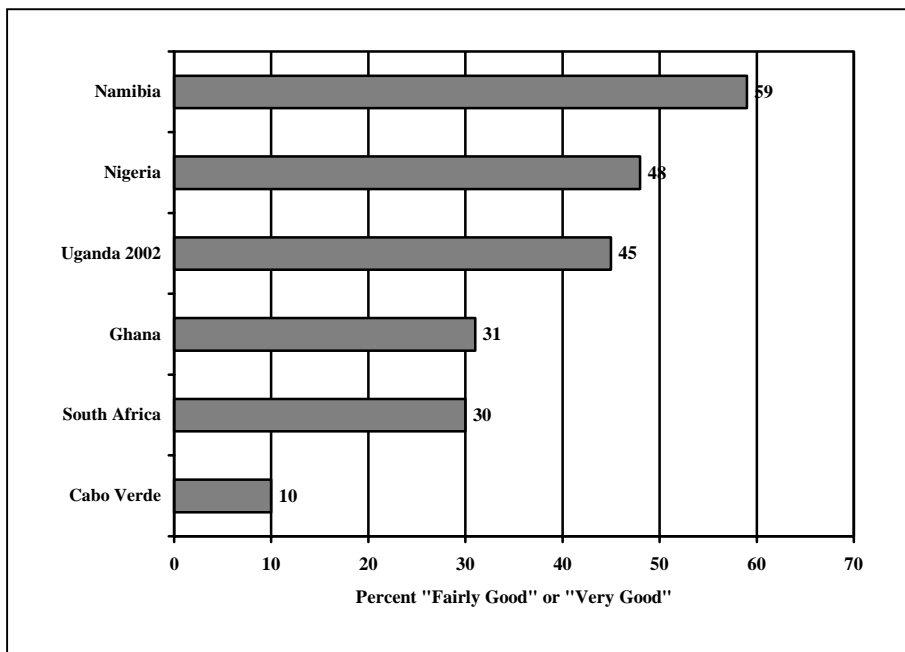
As mentioned, Uganda has experienced exceptional economic growth rates throughout the 1990s. The country's achievements in transforming a devastated, war-torn economy into one characterized by macroeconomic stability and high growth is remarkable, and provides lessons for other post-conflict societies. Moreover, despite a common view to the contrary, the data suggests that the benefits of this growth have been widespread, and that income distribution has not deteriorated.¹⁹ The enormous decline in poverty rates seems to support this contention. But while the Ugandan government may have met the challenge of pulling the country out of post-conflict desperation, it must face new challenges, and new expectations from the public – expectations that will likely focus even more than in the past on economic progress for all, particularly as the ongoing internal conflicts recede. In this context, how does the average Ugandan rate the performance of the national economy and his or her own place within it, as well as the government's economic policies and performance?

Evaluations of the General Economic Situation

In fact, the picture is not as rosy as it was in 2000, when Ugandans expressed a higher degree of satisfaction with their country's economic situation than respondents in any other country surveyed. At that time, 64 percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the current condition of the Ugandan economy, compared to a 12-country mean of just 29 percent. Today, however, only 45 percent rate the country's present economic condition as good or very good, barely above the 43 percent who see it as bad or very bad. While the scales of measurement are somewhat different, it is nevertheless clear that there has been a substantial drop in satisfaction with the economy.

Moreover, comparison with other Round 2 countries confirms that the decline in Uganda does not reflect a continental downward trend (Figure 6). In contrast to its former position at the top of the pack, Uganda now falls solidly in the middle. Satisfaction held steady from Round 1 to Round 2 in Nigeria and Ghana, while it actually increased substantially in Namibia and South Africa.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with the National Economy Across Early Round 2 Countries



¹⁹ Collier and Reinikka, p. 6.

Regional variations are apparent here as well, although they do not follow the same patterns as those seen previously. In this case, it is the central region that is something of an outlier, with a considerably more negative perspective than the others: just 29 percent rate the economic situation as good, compared to a surprising 58 percent in the north. But the level of general dissatisfaction is particularly apparent from the fact that even among Movement partisans only about one-half (49 percent) rate the economy to be in good condition, while just 33 percent of those linked to opposition parties do so.

The economy fares relatively weakly on a number of other indicators as well. When comparing the economy now to the situation one year ago, just 41 percent see improvements, while one in three (35 percent) believe the situation is worse, and one in five (22 percent) think nothing has changed. Roughly equal proportions see their country's economy as being better or worse than their neighbors.

However, there are a few positive signs as well. When asked to compare the economic system today to the one a few years ago, Ugandans see substantial improvement in the availability of goods (81 percent), the security of property (64 percent) and even in overall living standards (55 percent better), and they are highest among the six early Round 2 countries on two of these issues (Table 10). The ratings with respect to job opportunities and the income gap between rich and poor are, however, abysmal, and fall among the lowest across the six countries. Only 22 percent see improvements in job opportunities from a few years ago, while two-thirds (67 percent) see the situation as worse, and the response is even more negative with respect to the income gap between rich and poor (19 percent better, 70 percent worse). In most cases the west, and to a slightly lesser extent the east, have considerably more positive views than the central region and the north. The starkest differences occur with respect to the security of property from seizure. In the west and east, nearly four out of five (78 and 79 percent, respectively) think their property is more secure now than in the past, while the figure drops to just 56 percent in the central region, and plummets to 37 percent in the north.²⁰

Table 10: Ratings of Improvements in the Economic System Across Countries

| | <i>Cape Verde</i> | <i>Ghana</i> | <i>Namibia</i> | <i>Nigeria</i> | <i>South Africa</i> | <i>Uganda 2002</i> |
|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Availability of goods</i> | 56 | 63 | 77 | 46 | 40 | 81 |
| <i>People's standard of living</i> | 44 | 37 | 64 | 43 | 32 | 55 |
| <i>Availability of job opportunities</i> | 27 | 25 | 38 | 36 | 8 | 22 |
| <i>Gap between the rich and the poor</i> | 17 | 20 | 25 | 24 | 13 | 19 |
| <i>Security of property from seizure by the government</i> | 44 | 57 | 55 | 46 | 27 | 64 |

We are now going to compare our present economic system with the economic system a few years ago. Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they used to be, or about the same? (percent "better" or "much better")

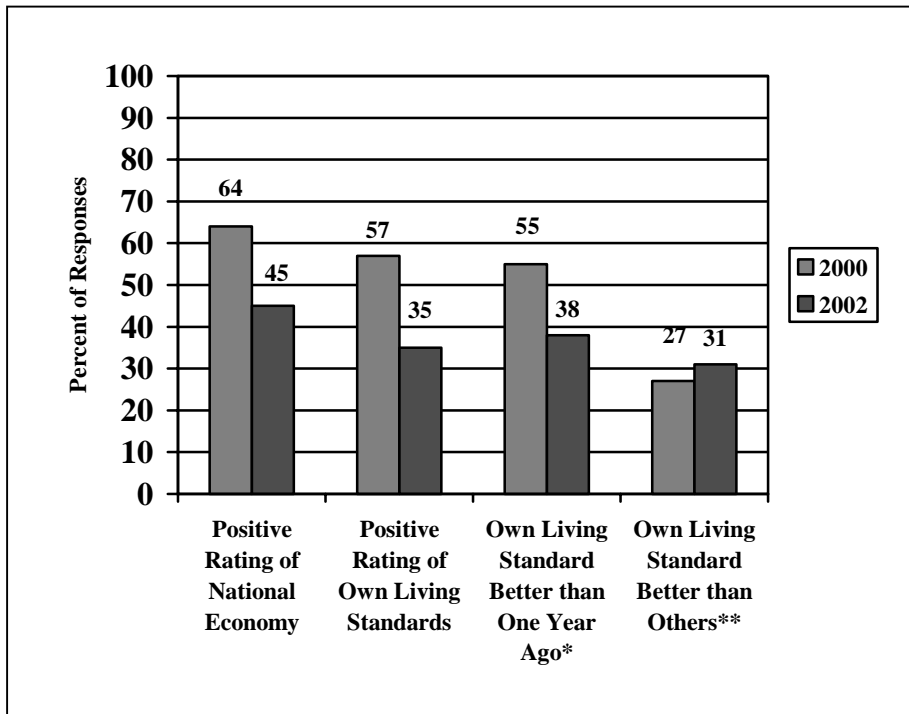
Personal Well-Being

Ugandans' evaluations of their own living conditions are considerably worse than their ratings of the national economy. And again, once predominantly positive attitudes have given way to a much more negative view (Figure 7). In 2000, a majority of 57 percent expressed satisfaction with their own present living conditions, compared to just one-third (35 percent) in 2002. Fully one-half of all respondents rate their present circumstances as bad or very bad. This places Uganda near the bottom in terms of personal economic satisfaction among the six early Round 2 countries, ahead only of Ghana (27 percent satisfied), and well behind Cape Verde (71 percent) and Nigeria (61 percent). Moreover, while 38 percent of

²⁰ However, because the numbers for same (17 percent) and don't know (18 percent) were very high in the north, the differences in the proportions who say the situation has actually gotten worse are less stark, ranging from 9 percent in the west to 28 percent in the north.

Ugandans see themselves as better off now than a year ago, nearly as many (34 percent) rate themselves as worse off.

Figure 7: National and Personal Economic Evaluations



*In 2000, respondents were asked to compare with five years ago.

**Own living standard worse than others increases much more substantially, from 28 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2002.

Ugandans are also more negative when it comes to comparisons between themselves and others. While there is little change in those who rate themselves as better off than others (an increase from 27 to 31 percent), nearly one-half (45 percent) now consider themselves to be worse off than others in 2002, compared to just 28 percent who felt this way in 2000. Overall, these findings represent a considerable decline in economic satisfaction in a relatively short time period, particularly considering that there has not been any major economic disruption or crisis that can easily explain such a shift, and that in fact relatively strong economic growth has continued, albeit at a somewhat lower rate over the last two years.

Again, across all of these measures the regional breakdown shows a consistent pattern, with westerners expressing the most positive evaluations, northerners the most negative, and easterners and those from the central region falling somewhere in between (Table 11).

Table 11: Comparative Ratings of Own Living Standard, by Region and Affiliation (percent)

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Neutral | Opposition | |
| Positive rating | 39 | 37 | 31 | 31 | 40 | 34 | 24 | 35 |
| Negative rating | 43 | 54 | 49 | 57 | 44 | 53 | 59 | 50 |
| Better than others | 38 | 32 | 26 | 27 | 36 | 30 | 27 | 31 |
| Worse than others | 33 | 48 | 51 | 52 | 40 | 48 | 51 | 45 |
| Better than year ago | 47 | 34 | 37 | 31 | 46 | 34 | 28 | 38 |
| Worse than year ago | 25 | 38 | 36 | 38 | 29 | 35 | 43 | 34 |
| Better in one year | 61 | 46 | 51 | 40 | 61 | 45 | 43 | 51 |
| Worse in one year | 13 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 17 | 23 | 32 | 22 |

Reconsidering the views of the national economy mentioned above, it is apparent that while majorities in both the west and the north think the national economy is doing well, westerners also see themselves as partaking of the benefits of this progress, while northerners see it as gains experienced largely by other Ugandans, and not themselves. It is in the north that the sense of relative deprivation that seems to be growing in the country is strongest.

Considering the extraordinary economic growth that Uganda has experienced over the past decade, it is especially surprising to find that Ugandans rate themselves as worse off than their parents were 10 years ago. When asked to score themselves on a scale between 0 and 10, where 0 are “poor” people and 10 are “rich” people, respondents give themselves a mean score of just 3.3. When they rate their parents’ situation 10 years ago on this same scale, however, the mean is 3.9. This suggests that Ugandans in general do not perceive themselves to be benefiting from the country’s spectacular economic growth of the past decade. Given where the country has come from during this decade and the clear economic evidence to the contrary, the fact that respondents nevertheless perceive that on average their economic situation has in fact declined considerably seems almost inexplicable, but several factors likely contribute to this finding. First, as the income gap widens and with it the sense of relative deprivation, many may feel that even if their absolute situation has improved relative to their parents, their *relative* standing in Ugandan society has worsened, and hence they are more likely to feel “poor.” This finding also suggests that Uganda may have turned a fundamental corner, exiting from a phase of post-conflict recovery, but still uncertain of the future. In making this transition, memories of the past they have overcome may have faded just as quickly as expectations for still greater improvements have surged – and with them the potential for great disappointments if these new standards cannot be achieved.

Hopefulness for the Future

But despite the decline in perceptions of both the national and personal economic situation, Ugandans do display considerable hopefulness about the economic future. When asked whether they expect the country’s economy to be better or worse in 12 months time, a slight majority of 51 percent expresses hope for improvement. The same proportion also expects improvement in their own economic situation in the coming year. At the same time, compared to other Round 2 countries, Ugandans actually appear relatively pessimistic. Only South Africans are less hopeful (41 and 42 percent expect improvements in the national economy and their own situation, respectively), while Cape Verdians (80 and 84 percent), Nigerians (79 and 84 percent), Namibians (69 and 62 percent) and Ghanaians (61 and 64 percent) all have much higher expectations.

Ugandans were also asked to rate the future economic status that they expected their children to achieve on the same 0 to 10 scale described above, and here the results are even more striking. The mean score is 5.6, up nearly two and a half points from respondents’ mean ratings of their own situation. Ugandans’

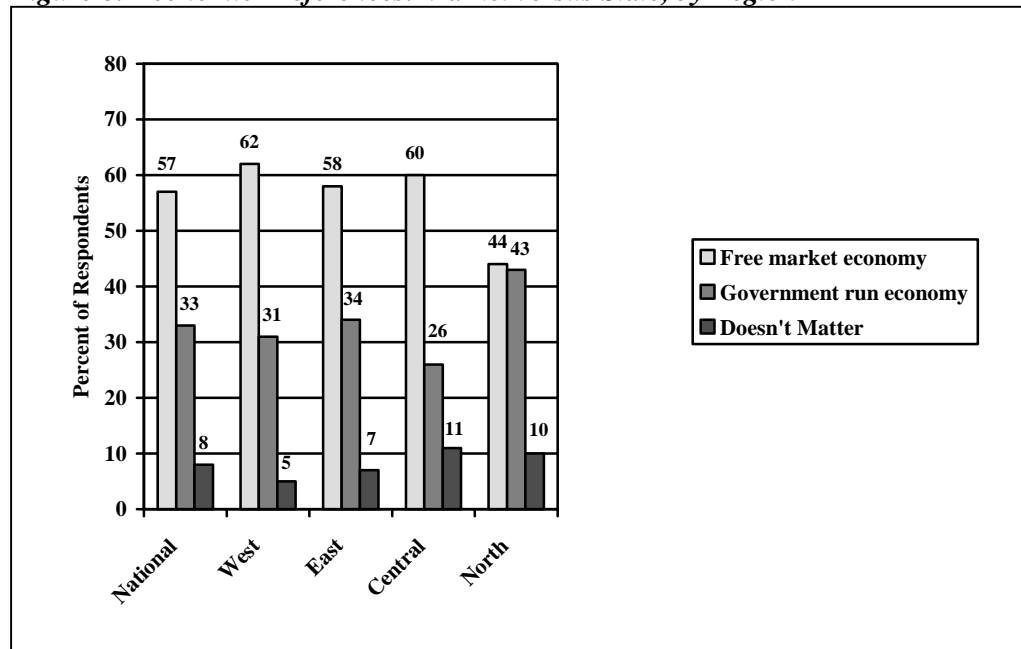
hopefulness about the future thus appears to be not only relatively strong, but also consistent across a variety of measures.

How do we explain this sense of hopefulness despite the relatively negative evaluations of the national and personal economic situations? The results may suggest that despite their complaints, Ugandans do believe that the country is on the right track economically, and that they see themselves as enduring necessary, but hopefully temporary, hardships on the road to economic success. Alternatively, they may simply be hanging on to a less logical, more visceral hope that although the benefits of the country's decade of economic success have not reached them yet, that they may begin to trickle their way soon. We will look for further evidence to suggest which of these views is correct in the sections to follow.

The Market or the State?

Ugandans reveal contradictory attitudes with respect to their preference for a privatized, market-based economy versus an economy run by the government. On a number of questions, respondents reveal pro-market attitudes. For example, when asked whether a free market economy is preferable or whether a government-run economy is better, a solid majority of 57 percent select the former, while just one in three (33 percent) opt for a government-run system, and 8 percent contend that it does not matter to them what kind of economic system prevails in the country (Figure 8). Regionally, however, northerners are evenly split between a privatized versus a government-run economy (44 and 43 percent respectively), while westerners prefer a market economy by a two to one margin (62 percent to 31 percent). Thus, while northerners are in general more critical of the government and its performance, they may also have higher expectations of what the government should be doing for them, particularly given their perception that to date, they have been underserved relative to other regions.

Figure 8: Economic Preferences: Market versus State, by Region



Which of these statements is closest to your own opinion: A) A free market economy is preferable to an economy run by the government; B) A government-run economy is preferable to a free market economy; C) For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of economic system we have.

Ugandans express roughly the same levels of support for a market economy as Namibians (55 percent) and Nigerians (54 percent), while far surpassing Cape Verdians (43 percent) and South Africans (37 percent) (Table 12).

Table 12: Support for a Market Economy Across Countries

| | Cape Verde | Ghana | Namibia | Nigeria | South Africa | Uganda |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|--------------|--------|
| Free market economy | 43 | 51 | 55 | 54 | 37 | 57 |
| Government-run economy | 24 | 31 | 25 | 27 | 28 | 33 |
| Doesn't matter | 14 | 11 | 16 | 16 | 23 | 8 |
| Don't know | 19 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 2 |

Pro-market views are also suggested by the fact that fully three out of four respondents (74 percent) express approval for an economic system in which individuals decide themselves what to produce, buy and sell. Yet at the same time, a solid majority of 57 percent *also* approve of an economic system in which the government plans the production and distribution of all goods and services, a distinctly anti-market preference. And when asked whether people should be responsible for their own well-being, or whether this is a government responsibility, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) assign this task to the government.

These contrasting views suggest that while Ugandans may recognize that the government is often not as effective as a planner and provider as they might hope, and that market reforms may in the end be to their advantage, they do not yet feel adequately prepared to “go it alone,” without government leadership and guidance.

Support for Economic Adjustment Policies

Ugandans may also still feel torn between their recognition of the need for economic adjustment, and an unwillingness to let the government off the hook with respect to their expectations that it should provide for them. While the country has been one of the most aggressive in undertaking the reform policies that comprise the so-called Washington consensus, the average citizen’s views of these policies are again highly variable.

One question asked respondents whether they would prefer free education of lower quality, or paying user fees for better education standards. This is a particularly revealing question in Uganda given that since the implementation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in 1997, which provides free primary schooling for Ugandan children, Ugandans have direct and current experience with the free-schooling option. The finding that a majority of 55 percent would instead prefer to pay user fees to improve the quality of education highlights the findings of other studies which suggest that despite the popularity of this program both inside Uganda and internationally, there is mounting concern about declining education standards witnessed under the UPE system due to increased class sizes and other resource constraints.²¹ At the same time, positive perceptions of the program may be revealed by the fact that Ugandans are far less interested in paying fees for school than their counterparts elsewhere; preference for fees ranges from 67 to 71 percent in the other five Round 2 countries (and the Round 1 mean was 62 percent).

Ugandans are somewhat ambivalent on the question of who should control such key economic activities as marketing of agricultural produce: 47 percent opt for private control, while a slightly larger 49 percent

²¹ Collier and Reinikka, p. 10.

believe the government should serve this function. But government protection of local producers through tariffs on imported goods is preferred over inexpensive imports by nearly two-thirds (63 percent).

It is in the area of employment, however, that Ugandans display the most solidly anti-reform aspect of their policy preferences. When asked whether all civil servants should keep their jobs despite the size of the wage burden on the national economy, or whether some should be laid off, more than two-thirds (69 percent) opt for jobs over budget savings. The increase from 2000, when 54 percent favored jobs over cost cutting, reflects the central importance now accorded to unemployment and job creation among major national concerns. But even at this high level of dependence on government jobs, Ugandans still fall well behind Nigerians (83 percent), and Ghanaians (79 percent). In fact, only South Africa (54 percent) reveals less dependence on government employment.

At the same time, Ugandans seem to both recognize the hardships inherent in many economic reform policies and *accept* them, to a perhaps surprising degree. Three out of four respondents (73 percent) believe that the government's economic policies have hurt most people and only benefited a few. And this view holds relatively consistently across the regions (from 69 percent in the west to 80 percent in the north). In combination with some of the negative views about specific policies described above, this would seem to add up to a fairly strong condemnation of Uganda's reform policies. But again, we see what appear to be contradictory results. When asked to choose between the statement that "The costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore abandon its current economic policies," and the alternative that "In order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary for us to accept some hardships now," a solid majority of 59 percent express a willingness to tolerate the hardships of reform. Again, the cross-regional variations are generally relatively small (from 49 percent in the north to 55 percent in the east and 56 percent in the west), although the central region displays particular willingness to accept hardships in the interest of long-term reform (70 percent).

Perhaps Ugandans' uncertainty about their economic preferences can be summed up in the fact that the public splits almost down the middle on a final question about the government's role in the economy. When asked whether or not they are satisfied with the government's reduced role in the economy, a bare plurality of 49 percent express satisfaction, while a statistically equivalent 47 percent are not. Slightly more substantial regional variations do re-emerge on this question, with northerners leaning more toward dissatisfaction (just 40 percent satisfied) and westerners giving more positive views (60 percent satisfied).

It may well be that Ugandan's views on these issues are "contradictory" because their opinions are still unformed and/or because they don't necessarily understand the policies being discussed and their implications. However, an alternative explanation is that they vary the way they do because Ugandans correctly perceive that the short-run and long-run outcomes of these policies are often different, leading to "inconsistent" responses. At times they may react more to the very immediate and definite short-run pain, rather than the still only hoped-for long-term benefits. This may be revealed by the fact that while recognizing that the policies have hurt many Ugandans – particularly policies that affect the government's ability to provide jobs that are so desperately needed *now* – they not only express, in the end, a willingness to accept the present hardships for the long-term benefits, but they also, for the most part, remain hopeful about their economic future. Northerners, however, are once again the outliers – they clearly perceive that the country's economic successes have failed to fully reach them, contributing the their sense of distance from and disenchantment with the central government.

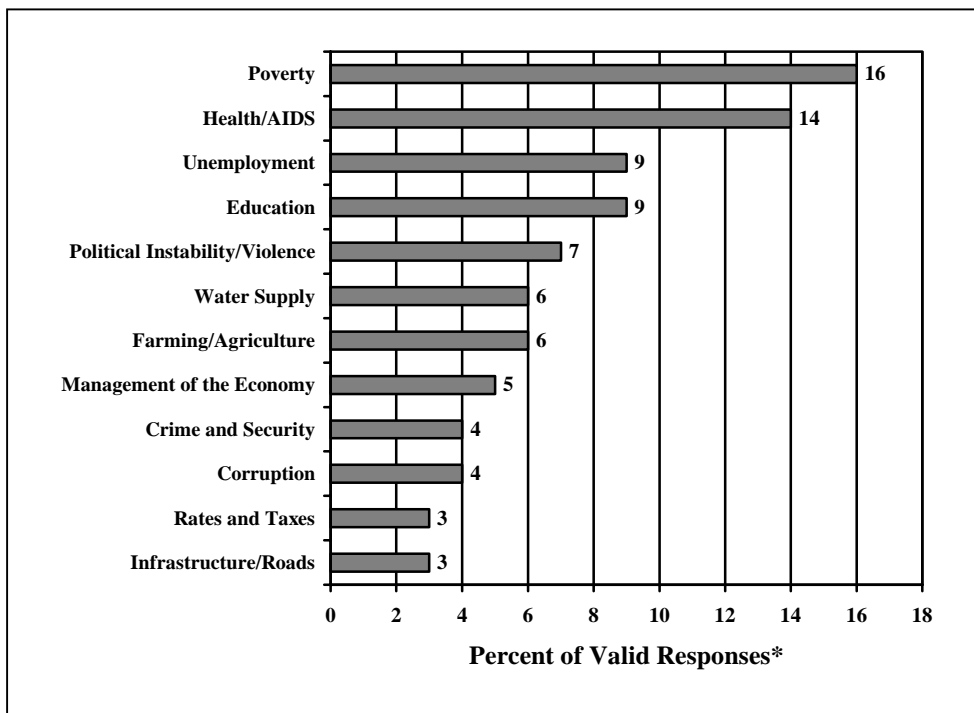
GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

We have discussed Ugandan's attitudes toward systems of government and economic management, and their general ratings of the state of the country and its economy. But how do they view the actual performance of the government on the issues that they struggle with daily?

Uganda's Most Important Problems

Let's begin with the issues on which Ugandans feel the government should focus its efforts. They were asked to identify "the most important problems facing this country that government should address," and given the option of providing up to three answers. Ugandans rate poverty, health (including AIDS) and unemployment as their most critical concerns in 2002, followed by education, political tension and instability, and water supply (Figure 9). This represents a marked shift from 2000, when political insecurity was mentioned most often, and unemployment fell much further down the list.

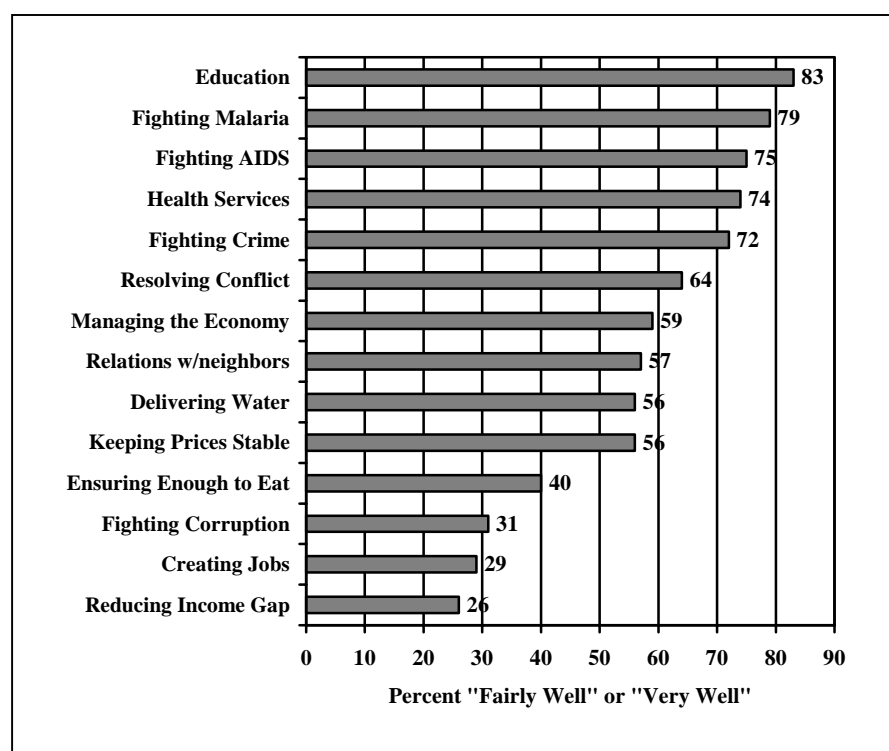
Figure 9: Most Important Problems



**Respondents could give up to three responses. Figures reported are the percent of all valid responses, i.e., excluding "don't know" and "no further answer."*

Ratings of government performance with respect to each of these issues varies widely, as shown in Figure 10 and discussed in the following sections.

Figure 10: Government Performance



How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Poverty

In 2000, 13 percent of all responses cited poverty as one of the country's most important problems, falling slightly behind political insecurity. In 2002, the figure has climbed to the top of the list at 16 percent. This fact may seem surprising given the successes of the past decade in reducing poverty, but it is nonetheless consistent with the increasing concern about the state of the economy apparent from the above discussion, and with the suggestion that as Uganda moves beyond conflict and recovery, the public's focus on, and expectations of, their economic status will increasingly take center stage.

Experiences of the hardships associated with poverty are still commonplace in Uganda. Nearly four out of five (79 percent) have suffered from a lack of cash income on at least an occasional basis over the past year. Another 31 percent have had to do without food several times or more, and 10 percent have done so many times. More than one in three respondents (36 percent) have gone without water, and more than half (54 percent) report doing without medical care several times or more in the past year.

What is the public's perception of the government's general handling of economic management and poverty-related issues? Perhaps surprisingly, given the generally lackluster ratings of the national economy and of personal living conditions discussed above, the government gets relatively good marks from the public for its overall management of the economy, with 59 percent agreeing that it is handling the economy well. Note, however, that deep regional differences emerge here as well, as shown in Table 13. Less than half of respondents in the north (46 percent) and in central region (45 percent) give the government positive marks for economic management, while in the west, fully three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) see the government's efforts as effective, and two-thirds (67 percent) agree in the east.

Table 13: Government Performance, by Region (percent fairly well or very well)

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|------------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Education | 84 | 85 | 80 | 86 | 86 | 79 | 83 |
| Fight malaria | 80 | 73 | 82 | 82 | 81 | 79 | 79 |
| Fight AIDS | 75 | 72 | 79 | 75 | 78 | 76 | 75 |
| Health services | 79 | 69 | 74 | 72 | 75 | 67 | 74 |
| Fight crime | 76 | 76 | 74 | 61 | 81 | 52 | 72 |
| Resolve conflict | 79 | 75 | 59 | 32 | 76 | 40 | 64 |
| Manage economy | 75 | 67 | 45 | 46 | 73 | 29 | 59 |
| Relations w/neighbors | 75 | 66 | 51 | 27 | 72 | 30 | 57 |
| Deliver water | 65 | 61 | 54 | 38 | 60 | 47 | 56 |
| Keep prices stable | 76 | 57 | 43 | 43 | 67 | 36 | 56 |
| Ensure enough food | 63 | 40 | 31 | 17 | 55 | 19 | 40 |
| Fight corruption | 36 | 41 | 24 | 16 | 38 | 15 | 31 |
| Create jobs | 38 | 37 | 23 | 15 | 39 | 13 | 29 |
| Reduce income gap | 33 | 33 | 20 | 11 | 33 | 12 | 26 |

On the more poverty-specific issue of ensuring that everyone has enough to eat, ratings of government performance fall sharply, with just 40 percent saying the government is handling this responsibility effectively.

Of particular concern, especially given the declining ratings of their own situation *relative to others*, may be a growing sense of relative deprivation among many Ugandans. This is confirmed by results suggesting that people perceive a growing gap between the rich and the poor, although as mentioned, hard data fail to confirm this perception of growing inequality. When asked whether large differences of wealth are all right because they mean that those who work hard are rewarded, or whether large differences should be avoided because they create jealousy and conflict, a sizeable majority of 58 percent side with minimizing income gaps (ranging from 51 percent in the west to 74 percent in the north). But they instead believe that the gap is widening. More than two-thirds (70 percent) say that the gap between the rich and the poor is worse now than a few years ago, and a similar number (71 percent) say that the government is handling the problem of reducing the gap badly. This represents a steep decline from the ratings seen in 2000, although even then a majority of 55 percent rated the government's handling of the issue negatively.

We have already seen that inequality in income distribution is a particularly sensitive issue in the north, and this is confirmed by the regional breakdown in findings. While sizeable majorities are dissatisfied with the government's efforts in the east (64 percent) and the west (65 percent), in the north a much larger proportion (86 percent) charge that the government's efforts are not effective.

Thus, while Ugandans seem willing to tolerate a great deal of hardship and still remain hopeful about their future, their evaluations of the government and the economic system are tempered by the perception that the economic gains of the past have been unevenly distributed.

AIDS/Health

In contrast to its mixed reviews on economic and poverty issues, the government receives resoundingly positive ratings for its efforts to improve health care and manage disease epidemics in the country. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) say it is handling the task of improving basic health services well, roughly the same proportion as two years ago (72 percent positive ratings, although proportion of "very well" has decreased somewhat). And these positive results hold across all regions. A similar number (75

percent) give the government high marks for its handling of the fight against HIV/AIDS (also comparable to the ratings in 2000), and an even higher proportion (79 percent) support its efforts to combat malaria.

Unfortunately, despite its efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS, for which the GOU has also received international recognition and acclaim, it appears that the disease continues to take a heavy toll on the population. Nearly one-half of all respondents (47 percent) report that they spend at least some time each day caring for orphaned children. Although it can only serve as a proxy measure of the impact of HIV/AIDS, since children can of course be orphaned by other causes as well, this is a problem that has strong links to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The reported incidence of poor health, both physical and mental, can also serve as proxy indicators. The levels of ill health observed are certainly cause for concern. Nearly one-third of respondents (30 percent) indicate that in the past month physical health problems have reduced the amount of work they can do “many times” or “always.” Surprisingly, levels of psychological ill health appear to be considerably higher: more than one-half of the population (53 percent) report that in the past month they have been so worried or anxious that they have felt tired, worn out, or exhausted.

The most startling indicator, however, of the impacts of HIV/AIDS, comes from a question on AIDS deaths. Respondents were asked how many of their close friends or relatives had died of AIDS. A mere 6 percent of Ugandans say that they do not know of anyone who has died of AIDS, 40 percent know between one and five people who have died this way, and another 27 percent have lost between six and ten friends or relatives to AIDS. A handful of respondents report knowing 20, 30, 50 or even 100 people who have died. Clearly, few Ugandans have avoided being personally touched by this disease.

It is significant, however, to note that despite these obvious impacts and the rating of health issues generally (including, but by no means limited to, the HIV/AIDS problem) as one of the nation’s top problems, respondents are not only quite satisfied with the GOU’s current programs to combat the problem as discussed above, but many do not see this as a high priority for additional resources and funding. When asked to indicate whether more money should be spent on fighting AIDS, or whether other problems are more in need of solution, a bare majority of 52 percent opt for more resources toward fighting AIDS, but the margin is very narrow: 47 percent suggest that other problems are more important priorities for resources and resolution.

Employment

As the concern over poverty and economic standing grows, and as the government has made it increasingly clear to youth and young graduates that the public sector can no longer remain the country’s predominant employer, unemployment has shot up from seventh to third on the list of most important national problems between 2000 and 2002. Lack of jobs and the coincident lack of income or even outright poverty has become a serious concern for many Ugandans. As we saw above, this concern results in widespread disagreement with prescribed economic reform measures that involve civil service retrenchments, which are opposed by nearly three out of four Ugandans. In addition, when asked to choose between a situation in which everyone has a job, but wages are low, versus a scenario with higher wages but fewer jobs, an overwhelming majority of 88 percent opts for jobs over higher wages.

Considering the high degree of concern about this issue, it therefore raises a warning flag to see that ratings of government success in job creation are very poor. Two out of three Ugandans believe that job opportunities are worse now than they were a few years ago, and a similar proportion (67 percent) give the GOU bad marks for handling job creation. These poor ratings hold across all four regions, ranging from 61 percent in the west to 79 percent in the north. This represents a very marked decline from 2000, when nearly one-half (49 percent) of all respondents thought the government was effective in its handling of job creation.

Education

On education, however, the fourth most important problem identified by respondents, the GOU's efforts once again fare quite well. This has been a hallmark issue for the Movement government, particularly since the implementation of the UPE in 1997. The expansion in primary school enrollment has had a particularly positive effects for girls, children from poor households and households with poorly educated parents, and children from the poorest regions of the country.²² The program has not been without major problems, however, as it increased enrollment from an estimated 2.3 million students in 1996 to 6.9 million by 1999.²³ The burgeoning class sizes and declining quality that have resulted may even be leading some children to drop back out. Nevertheless, the governments programs to improve education, focused around the UPE, are one the few efforts that have won it nearly universal praise within the country. More than four out of five respondents (83 percent) rate the government's handling of education positively, the highest score on any issue, and a proportion only slightly below the 2000 figure of 87 percent (although there has been some shift from those rating the governments handling as "very well" to those rating it as "fairly well"). As in the case of health care provision, the results across all four regions are consistently very positive.

In addition, fully 88 percent report that it is easy to get a place in primary school for a child, and an even larger proportion (93 percent) say that they have not had to pay a bribe of any sort to a government official to get a child into school in the past year. In addition, teachers and school administrators get good scores with respect to corruption, with fully 80 percent reporting that the problem is relatively uncommon; only religious leaders score higher. Overall, education has clearly been among the Movement's most winning issues.

Water Supply

Fully one-half of all respondents report that they had to do without enough clean water for home use at least once in the past year, and more than one-third had to do so several times or more. Interviewers report that 79 percent of the households surveyed did not have access to a piped water supply of any kind. It is therefore not surprising that this issue appears fairly high on Ugandans' list of priority national problems. The government's efforts to address this problem receive moderately good marks. Fifty-six percent of respondents say the government is handling the water supply problem fairly or very well.

Crime and Security

The problem of crime and personal insecurity falls further down Ugandans' list of priorities, ranking ninth overall. This is true despite the fact that more than one-quarter of respondents report that they have been victims of crime in the past year. But it is consistent with a general perception of considerable government success in managing a variety of law enforcement issues.

When asked how often in the past year they had feared crime in their own home, more than four out of ten Ugandans (42 percent) report that they have done so on at least one occasion. Seven percent live in constant fear of crime. More shocking is the news that fully one our of four Ugandans (27 percent) has actually experienced a break in and theft in their home at least once in the past year, and 8 percent have

²² Collier and Reinikka, p. 10.

²³ Samson James Opolot, "Universal Primary Education (UPE) for Who? A Case Study on Equity Dimensions of Access, Retention and Performance in UPE Schools in Northern Uganda," Centre for Basic Research (CBR), Kampala, Uganda, January 2001.

experienced this problem several times or more. Actual physical attacks are also disturbingly frequent: 15 percent report having been attacked at least once in the past year.

Despite what appears to be quite a high incidence of crime, however, Ugandans seem relatively content with the government's efforts to address this problem. Two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) think that their safety from crime and violence is better now than in the past, and an overwhelming majority (83 percent) believe that the current government is better able to enforce the law than it could several years ago. Likewise, fully 72 percent say the government is doing fairly or very well in reducing crime. This reflects a substantial decline since 2002, when 84 percent gave a positive review, but it is still a strongly positive assessment.

Confidence in law enforcement is also evident from a variety of more specific questions. For example, an incredible 94 percent have confidence in the ability of authorities to enforce the law if someone like them commits a serious crime, 86 percent believe it is likely that authorities would catch them if they evaded income taxes (although this does not seem consistent with the perception that tax avoidance is a key impediment to local revenue generation), and 75 percent say the same with respect to anyone who avoids paying for services like water and electricity. Two out of three respondents (67 percent) also have less fear of being unjustly arrested now than in the past.

These positive assessments of state capacity also seem surprising in light of relatively low expressions of trust in the police and the courts, and relatively high perceptions of the levels of corruption in these institutions. A sound majority of respondents (56 percent) claim that they do not trust the police at all, or only a little bit. Moreover, fully two-thirds (66 percent) believe that most or all police are involved in corruption, the worst rating for any of the institutions considered. In addition, nearly half (46 percent) of respondents contend that it is difficult to obtain help from the police when they need it, and nearly one in five (18 percent) have had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor for government officials at least once in the past year to avoid problems with the police.

The courts get somewhat higher marks, with one-half (50 percent) expressing high levels of trust. Fewer Ugandans believe that judges and magistrates are actually corrupt, but a still-sizeable minority of 38 percent believe that all or most of them are.

Conflict and Violence

As mentioned, the problem of conflict, violence and internal political instability took center stage for Ugandans in 2000, but while still important, it is a significantly lower priority in 2002. We have already discussed some of the likely reasons for this: the resolution of the conflict with the ADF in the west, the winding down of Uganda's involvement in the DRC, and the year-long lull in the conflict with the LRA, which, although it has unfortunately come to an end, may still have affected respondents' views at the time of the survey. In fact, the reduction of conflict may in part explain some of the lower levels of economic satisfaction observed in 2002, as their increasing sense of security allows Ugandans to focus more of their attention – and criticism – on other issues, particularly economic ones. But what are Ugandans perceptions now about the nature of conflict in their homes, communities and country, and of the government's efforts to resolve it?

We asked respondents how often they experience violent conflict within their families. Fully 69 percent indicate that such conflicts occur only rarely or not at all, while one in four (25 percent) report that they sometimes occur, and just 5 percent say they often or always experience this problem. Given the high profile of domestic violence problems and the fact that much of the violence within the home is likely to take this form, we looked at the views of men and women separately to see if they report this problem differently, but in fact we find little difference between the two groups.

That the levels of violence in the home are not higher might be considered surprising given that nearly four out of ten (39 percent) Ugandans agree that a man has a right to beat his wife and children. The gender differences on this question are, however, distinct: one-third (33 percent) of women accept men's right to beat them, compared to nearly half (46 percent) of men.

Respondents report that violent conflict is more common within their communities, with nearly two-thirds (64 percent) experiencing such conflicts sometimes, often or always. But the most prevalent form of conflict in Uganda, not surprisingly, is conflict between communities in the country; three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents say such conflicts happen with some frequency. Ugandans attribute these conflicts to a variety of issues, including political differences and leadership disputes (21 percent), land and boundary disputes (14 percent), social deprivation (10 percent), ethnic or tribal differences (6 percent), discrimination and inequality (3 percent), and religion (3 percent), among others.

Has Uganda struggled with so much internal conflict because its people have an unusually high tolerance for the use of violence in politics? This does not appear to be the case, as nearly three-quarters (73 percent) agree that violence is never justified in politics, even in pursuit of a just cause. Moreover, Ugandans are relatively unified in this view, although westerners are somewhat more likely to reject violence (84 percent) than respondents in the other three regions (68 to 70 percent).

Finally, to what extent do Ugandans give credit to the government for its efforts to reduce conflict? Overall, about two out of three (64 percent) rate the government's handling of the problem positively. In this case, however, there are massive cross-regional differences. More than three-quarters of respondents in the west (79 percent) and the east (75 percent) are satisfied, while the number drops to 59 percent in the central region. But it is the north that provides a real reality check on this issue: in the region that has suffered most from conflict, the government's efforts win positive reviews from just 32 percent of the populace. While the government may have succeeded in reducing perceived levels of conflict in much of the country, northerners have not felt the benefits of these efforts.

Of course, in addition to family, community, and national violence, Uganda has also been party to international conflict in the Great Lakes Region in the past several years, a policy which has proved highly controversial within the country. Fifty-seven percent of respondents think that the government has been doing a good job of handling relations with neighboring countries, but just 27 percent think so in the north, and only 30 percent of opposition partisans agree, compared to 75 percent in the west and 72 percent of those affiliated with the Movement. We asked respondents whether the government was spending too much on "managing relations with neighboring countries" and should focus more on solving problems at home, or whether these expenditures were necessary to protect the nation's security. A relatively narrow majority (55 percent) choose the first statement; perhaps the government's pullback from its intervention in the DRC is, at least in part, a response to this public sentiment.

Corruption

Corruption ranks relatively far down Ugandans' list of the country's most important problems, falling roughly tenth overall. Nonetheless, pervasive corruption can have implications for government performance and effectiveness across the board, as well as for the economy as a whole, where it has an adverse effect on the growth of private firms, the driving forces in a reformed economic system. Uganda has consistently ranked near the bottom among countries surveyed by Transparency International: in 2001, Uganda was ranked 88th out of 91 countries surveyed.²⁴ Combating corruption has therefore been

²⁴ Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2002), p. 236. See also Jakob Svensson, "The Cost of Doing Business: Firms' Experience with Corruption in Uganda," Africa Region

identified as one of the key economic challenges the government now faces if high growth rates are to be sustained.²⁵ The government has undertaken at times quite successful efforts to address this problem – for example, by publishing, broadcasting and posting information on transfers of public funds to school districts. But in other cases, commissions of inquiry or other means of exposing corruption and giving the public more information on the problem have nonetheless produced little in the way of changes or penalties for the perpetrators. What then are the average Ugandan’s perceptions of the problem in the context of expanding information and a litany of revelations about corruption in army procurement, the practices of the Uganda revenue authority, the behavior of the Electoral Commission, and others?

In general, the results are not particularly good. The government gets some of its lowest performance ratings on this issue, with just 31 percent giving it positive marks, and 64 percent saying it is doing a poor job. Although one-half of the population (51 percent) rate the government now as more trustworthy than it was a few years ago, 60 percent also consider the government now to be more corrupt. These results appear to be contradictory, but particularly given Uganda’s history of conflict and at times arbitrary rule, respondents may consider a number of factors *in addition to* corruption when rating the government’s trustworthiness. Other results indicate, for example, that Ugandans feel far less threatened by arbitrary arrests, property seizures and government violence than they did in the past, and these factors may all contribute to this result.

Among different groups in the country, police get the worst ratings (Table 14); 67 percent think most or all are involved in corruption. They are followed by government officials (47 percent), border officials (46 percent), and judges and magistrates (38 percent). Religious leaders (5 percent), teachers and school administrators (13 percent) and NGO and community leaders (also 13 percent) generate the most positive responses. Uganda’s police get the worst ratings among six Round 2 countries, followed closely by Nigeria (66 percent), and more distantly by Ghana (53 percent), South Africa (38 percent), Namibia (36 percent) and Cabo Verde (8 percent).

Table 14: Perceived Levels of Corruption Among Different Groups (percent)

| | None of them | Some of them | Most of them | All of them | Don’t know |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| President and officials in his office | 8 | 45 | 18 | 10 | 19 |
| Elected leaders (parliamentarians, etc.) | 8 | 55 | 20 | 8 | 10 |
| Government officials | 3 | 41 | 32 | 15 | 9 |
| Police | 2 | 27 | 32 | 35 | 5 |
| Border officials | 3 | 29 | 24 | 22 | 22 |
| Judges and magistrates | 5 | 45 | 22 | 16 | 12 |
| Local businessmen | 15 | 55 | 16 | 6 | 9 |
| Foreign businessman | 11 | 46 | 14 | 6 | 25 |
| Teachers and school administrators | 24 | 56 | 9 | 4 | 7 |
| Religious leaders | 45 | 41 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| Leaders of NGOs or community orgs. | 16 | 50 | 10 | 3 | 21 |

How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?

Nevertheless, the majority of Ugandans do not appear to have first-hand contact with corrupt practices among government officials on a regular basis. Respondents were asked whether they had had to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favor to obtain a number of specific services or avoid problems within the past year. Consistent with the conventional wisdom, avoiding problems with the police accounts for the

Working Paper Series No. 6, World Bank, Washington, D.C., June 2000, which rates Uganda as second worst in the region on the corruption ladder.

²⁵ Collier and Reinikka, p. 9.

largest number of such experiences, reported by 18 percent of respondents. Ugandans are next most likely to find themselves encountering corrupt officials in their pursuit of the documents and permits required to conduct their daily lives; within the past year, 14 percent had been forced to offer something unofficial to obtain such documents. Fewer (10 percent) had been forced to succumb to corrupt practices in order to cross borders, while just 6 percent have had to take such actions in order to obtain household services.

These rates appear surprising given the perception that corruption is pervasive and an essentially inevitable and unavoidable fact of life for most citizens. However, Afrobarometer Round 2 surveys have consistently found that actual experiences with corruption appear to be considerably less frequent than commonly assumed (Table 15). Moreover, Ugandans' reported experiences with corruption do compare in ways we would expect with those in other countries: Nigerians report the highest levels of corrupt contacts (average of 16 percent across 6 categories), followed by Ghana and Uganda (10 percent average), with Namibia (8 percent), South Africa (5 percent) and especially Cabo Verde (2 percent) trailing well behind.

Table 15: Perceived and Actual Corruption Across Countries (percent)

| | Cabo Verde | Ghana | Namibia | Nigeria | South Africa | Uganda 2002 |
|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Current government more corrupt* | 25 | 22 | 25 | 29 | 53 | 60 |
| Government handling corruption well | 24 | 63 | 58 | 48 | 29 | 30 |
| In the past year, bribe, gift or favour to**: | | | | | | |
| Get a document or permit | 5 | 13 | 9 | 20 | 6 | 14 |
| Get a child into school | 2 | 9 | 14 | 22 | 4 | 7 |
| Get a household service | 2 | 13 | 12 | 20 | 5 | 6 |
| Cross a border | 2 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 10 |
| Avoid a problem with the police | 1 | 12 | 8 | 20 | 7 | 18 |
| Anything else | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

*Comparing the current government with the system of government under the old Constitution, would you say that the one we have now is more or less corrupt?

**In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for government officials in order to ____? (percent "once or twice," "a few times," or "often")

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTIONS

So far we have considered governance and the performance of the GOU as a whole, but of course in Uganda's democratic and decentralized political system, the public is served by a number of different political institutions both at the central government level and in their local communities, districts and regions. In addition, a variety of non-governmental leaders play important roles in society. What are the public's perceptions of the performance, trustworthiness, and corruption of these different leaders? How do they compare to one another, and how important are they in the daily lives of the average citizen?

First let's consider the public's views about the responsibilities and effectiveness of their leadership more generally, beginning with the question of who should lead. Respondents were asked whether it is better to have wealthy people who can help provide for the community as their leaders, or whether it is better to have ordinary people who understand their needs play this role. Fully three-quarters (73 percent) prefer ordinary citizens like themselves to fill leadership positions, suggesting that Ugandans do not buy the notion that wealthy leaders are either more responsible for the community, more ethical because they have already built their fortunes, or more skilled at leading than ordinary citizens.

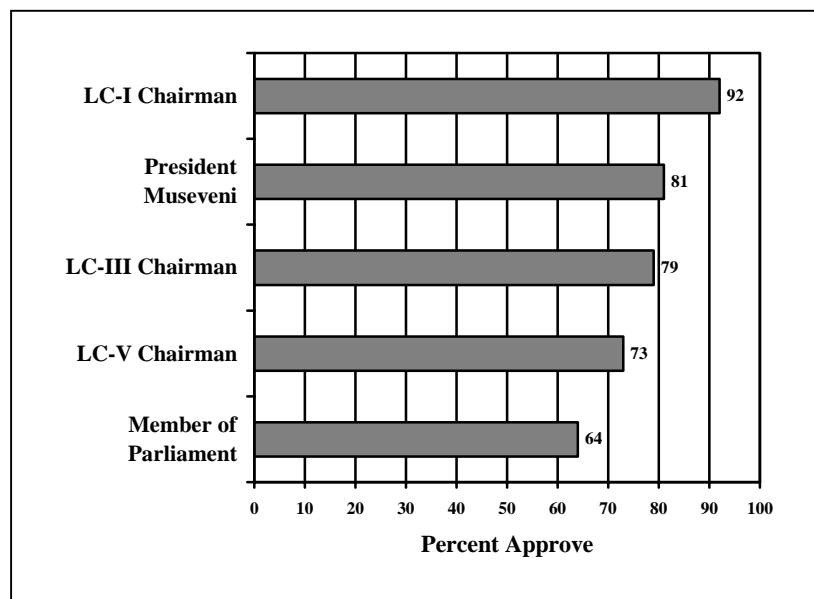
Moreover, contrary to the claims of many, the vast majority of respondents do not expect their leaders to favor their own communities. When asked to choose between the statement that “Since everyone is equal under the law, leaders should not favour their own family or group,” versus the alternative that “Once in office, leaders are obliged to help their home community,” over two-thirds (68 percent) select the first statement. Ugandans thus have high expectations of fairness from the “ordinary people” who should be their leaders.

Elected leaders as a whole, however, get quite low marks from the public for their service to society. An overwhelming majority (86 percent) say that these leaders only look after the interests of people like them never or some of the time, and roughly the same proportion (85 percent) believes that elected leaders never or only occasionally listen to what people like them have to say. This would appear to be a resounding condemnation of the quality of political representation provided by their elected leaders. However, we will see in the discussions about specific categories of leaders below that ratings on a number of other factors are both considerably higher for *all* categories of leaders, elected and non-elected, government and non-government, but also that there is enormous variation in the evaluations of different types of leaders.

The President and the Executive Branch

As discussed above, the Ugandan public soundly rejects an excessively strong presidency, and appears to desire clear limitations on the reach of this branch of government. At the same time, President Museveni himself continues to receive solid positive ratings, particularly for performance, where he gets an 81 percent approval rating in 2002. This is down substantially from the 93 percent who said they were satisfied with his performance in 2000, but it is nonetheless a level of approval that many leaders would envy. As shown in Figure 11 this puts him near, but not at, the top among elected leaders in Uganda.

Figure 11: Performance of Elected Officials



Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

It is not surprising that 96 percent of Movement partisans approve of President Museveni's performance, while just 43 percent of those affiliated with the opposition do so (Table 16). Although regional

discrepancies are of greater concern, majorities give a positive assessment in all four regions, with approval ranging from 56 percent in the north to 94 percent in the west.

Table 16: Ratings of Elected Officials, by Region

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | | Total |
|--------------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Neutral | Opposition | |
| President | | | | | | | | |
| Performance | 94 | 84 | 83 | 56 | 96 | 80 | 43 | 81 |
| Trust | 82 | 62 | 60 | 30 | 83 | 54 | 21 | 61 |
| MP/Parliament | | | | | | | | |
| Performance | 73 | 62 | 57 | 60 | 65 | 63 | 59 | 64 |
| Trust | 56 | 52 | 38 | 45 | 53 | 48 | 40 | 48 |
| Movement | | | | | | | | |
| Trust | 76 | 60 | 52 | 26 | 82 | 47 | 15 | 56 |
| Opposition groups | | | | | | | | |
| Trust | 10 | 16 | 16 | 24 | 7 | 14 | 47 | 16 |

President Museveni fares very well in comparison to his counterparts in other Afrobarometer countries. He scores far above the Round 1 mean positive rating of 64 percent, and in Round 2, only President Nujoma in Namibia scores higher (87 percent). The presidents of Ghana and Nigeria also score quite well (74 and 72 percent), while President Mbeki in South Africa lags behind at 51 percent, and the president of Cape Verde receives support from just 37 percent of the public.

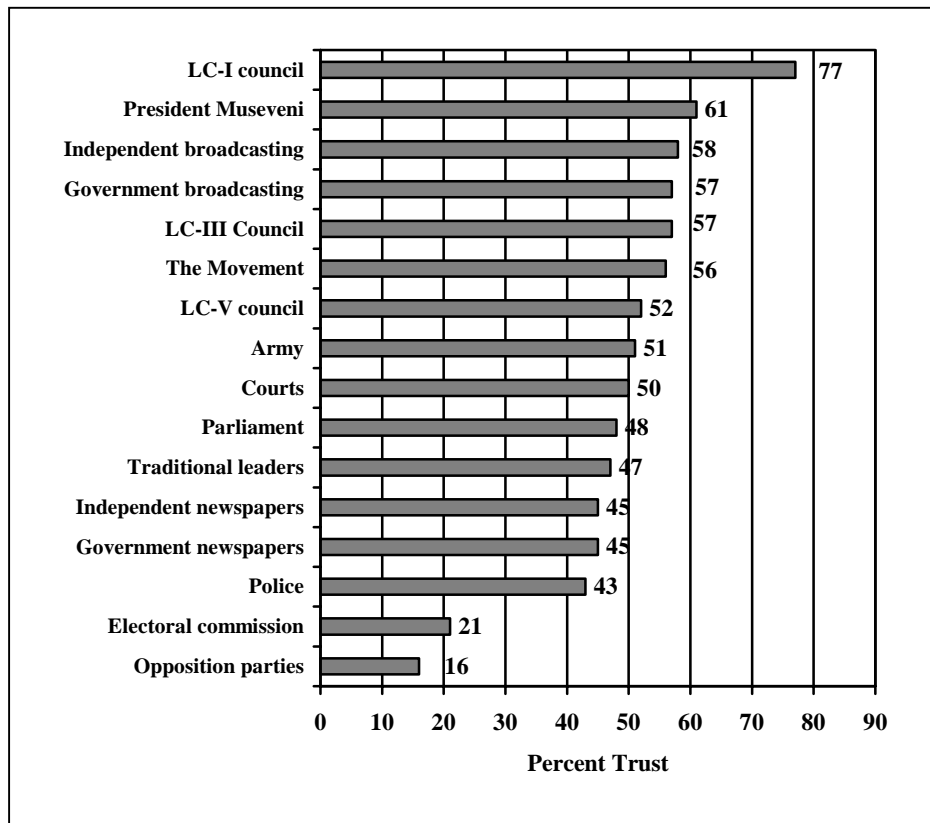
The President’s ratings are considerably lower with respect to levels of trust and perceptions of corruption in his office, but majorities have positive views on both of these issues as well. A solid 61 percent say that they trust the president a lot or a very great deal (Figure 12), although the regional differences are enormous: just 30 percent in the north feel this way, compared with 82 percent in the west. Fifty-four percent believe that few or none of the officials in the office of the president are corrupt. A slim majority also has confidence in the President’s adherence to the rule of law: 56 percent say he never or only rarely ignores the constitution.

Members of Parliament

Members of Parliament fall well behind the president in public approval. They receive the lowest ratings for performance among elected leaders (Figure 11), but still get a positive review from nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 percent). MP scores for trust, however, are considerably worse, with the population evenly split between those who trust them (48 percent) and those who do not (50 percent). The question on corruption asked about elected leaders “such as parliamentarians or local council chairmen” generally. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) perceive relatively low levels of corruption among their elected leaders, while just 27 percent feel that there is a serious problem. But it is not possible to determine the extent to which these reasonably good marks can be attributed to perceptions about MPs as opposed to perceptions about the much more highly regarded local council chairmen (see below).

We asked respondents what they thought the most important responsibilities of their elected representatives were, recording up to three verbatim responses, which were later coded into broad categories. Ugandans display a hybrid understanding of the role of an MP, focusing in part on their political and procedural role (“represent us,” 21 percent; “listen to the people,” 7 percent; and “give us feedback from the government or parliament,” 6 percent), and in part on delivery of material benefits

Figure 12: Trust in Individuals and Institutions



How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (percent answering "a lot" or "a very great deal")

("deliver development," 18 percent; "improve infrastructure," 10 percent; and "improve health and education," 10 percent). However, although MPs should be the public's main link to the central government, the public only makes limited use of their representational role. Just 16 percent have contacted their parliamentary representative at least once in the past year, and only 8 percent have done so more than once. This puts MPs roughly even with officials in government ministries, who occupy non-elected and non-representative positions.

National representatives score higher only in Namibia, where 74 percent rate their performance positively, and 57 percent trust their National Assembly representative. Ghanaian representatives are rated slightly lower than in Uganda, while those in South Africa, Nigeria and Cape Verde fall well behind (Table 17).

Table 17: Ratings of Elected Officials Across Countries (percent positive ratings)

| | Cape Verde | Ghana | Namibia | Nigeria | South Africa | Uganda 2002 |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|
| President | | | | | | |
| Performance | 37 | 74 | 87 | 72 | 51 | 81 |
| Trust | 22 | 65 | 79 | 39 | 37 | 61 |
| MP/Parliament | | | | | | |
| Performance | 40 | 57 | 74 | 46 | 45 | 64 |
| Trust | 22 | 48 | 57 | 21 | 31 | 48 |
| Ruling Party/Movement | | | | | | |
| Trust | 19 | 51 | 63 | 26 | 32 | 56 |
| Opposition Groups/Parties | | | | | | |
| Trust | 22 | 28 | 27 | 16 | 13 | 16 |

The Movement and Opposition Organizations

As discussed above, one of the great debates in Ugandan politics continues to revolve around the role and status of political parties versus the no-party system under the leadership of the Movement. As we saw, Ugandans continue to display a considerable degree of ambivalence about multiparty competition and a relatively high tolerance for a one-party state in principle. How do they perceive these political players in practice, both the Movement, and the opposition political parties?

The results should raise concerns for both. While a majority of 56 percent continues to express trust in the Movement, this reflects an enormous decline in the organization’s standing in the two years since the 2000 survey, when 83 percent trusted it. Part of this decline may arise from changes in question wording and response categories,²⁶ but this explanation is unlikely to account for such a steep drop. It could be that the heated electoral processes of 2001, while confirming the Movement’s present hold on power, also exposed more of its flaws to public scrutiny. Ugandans may still see the Movement as the best option that they have at the moment, but many of them appear to have nonetheless come to the conclusion that it is a less-than-perfect option.

But if the Movement has reason to be concerned about its public image, existing opposition parties should be doubly concerned. Not only has multiparty politics in principle failed to gain any additional support since 2000, as discussed above, but the level of trust in the current array of opposition political organizations has declined substantially. It started at an already low level in 2000, when just 31 percent professed trust, but now a mere one out of six Ugandans (16 percent) express trust in these organizations. It appears that opposition parties may have exposed even deeper flaws during the election process than did the Movement. While we saw above that Ugandans’ lukewarm attitudes toward multipartyism appear to be linked at least in part to the conceptual link between political parties and divisiveness and conflict, the lack of trust in the current array of political alternatives may also play a part in explaining these attitudes.

²⁶ In 2000, the question was asked as follows: “How much do you trust each of [the following] to do what is right?” Response options were: I do not trust them at all; I distrust them somewhat; I trust them somewhat; I trust them a lot; don’t know. In 2002, we asked “How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?” and the response options were: not at all; a little bit; a lot; a very great deal; don’t know/haven’t heard enough. In each case, the first two categories were combined to represent those who distrust the institutions, and the next two categories to represent those who trust them.

Local Government Councils

Uganda has undertaken an extensive program of decentralization that has been rated as among the most effective in Africa according to a recent World Bank analysis.²⁷ Importantly, progress towards political and administrative decentralization has been matched in Uganda by a comparatively high degree of fiscal decentralization as well. The sub-county or LC-III council is responsible for collection of local tax revenues, which are then shared out among the other councils according to specified shares. The local councils are expected to follow strict procedures with respect to bookkeeping and reporting. All local councils are also responsible for designing and approving their own development plans.

In theory, therefore, decentralization should offer opportunities for greater participation by citizens in decision-making processes, enhance development progress through local decision making, and ensure greater accountability of government to the people both through elections and through transparent procedures for accounting for resources. There can be little question that the reality does not quite match these expectations for a variety of reasons, including insufficient local capacity to meet the new requirements, illiteracy that inhibits the public's ability to effectively monitor council activities and spending, and at times uncertain willingness to hand over real power from the center. But how do Ugandans perceive these local institutions and the work that they do?

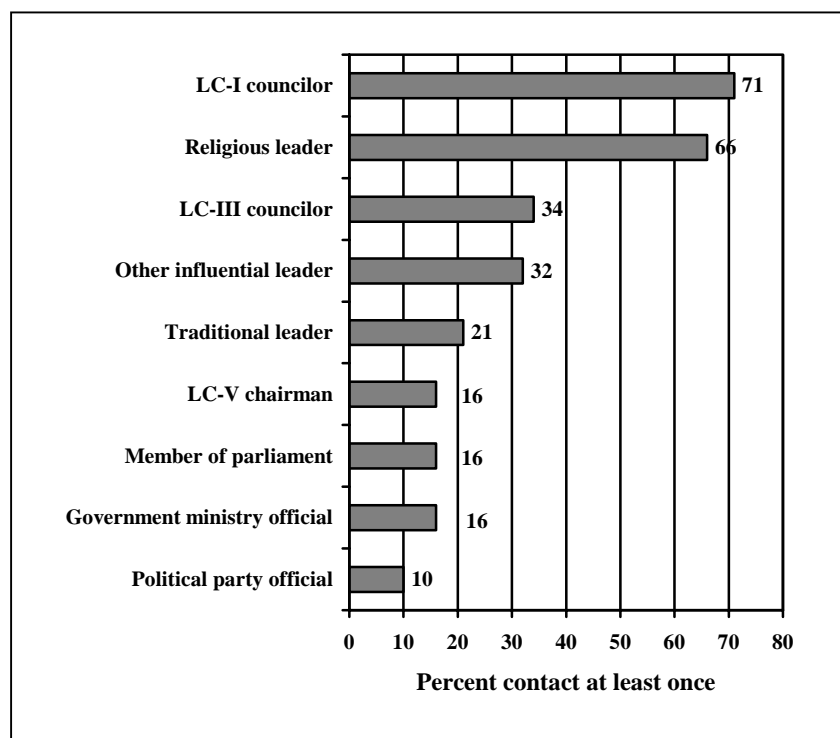
To begin with, the results shown in Figures 11 and 12 make it remarkably clear that the government officials who are consistently rated among the highest in the perceptions of the Ugandan public are the chairmen and councilors of the local councils. The more local they are, the better their ratings. We asked respondents to rate their LC-I, LC-III and LC-V councils or chairmen on a number of factors. A stunning 92 percent of respondents give their LC-I chairman positive performance ratings, followed by the LC-III chairman with 79 percent and the LC-V chairman with 73 percent. The ratings vary only slightly across regions – those in central region give marginally lower ratings to LC-III and LC-V councilors, but otherwise there is little difference among them – and not at all between Movement partisans and pro-opposition respondents.

The ratings for trust are not quite as high, but they are still very positive at the LC-I level, with three-quarters (77 percent) expressing trust in the LC-I council (as opposed to just the chairman). A slimmer majority of 57 percent trusts their LC-III council, while the LC-V council is trusted by a slim majority of 52 percent.

These positive ratings are given further weight when we look at information on citizen contact of various representatives (Figure 13). Ugandans report more contact with their LC-I councilors than with any other group of individuals, including religious leaders. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) contacted an LC-I councilor at least once in the past year, and 59 percent did so on more than one occasion.

²⁷ Stephen N. Ndegwa, "Decentralization in Africa: A Stocktaking Survey," Africa Region Working Paper Series Number 40, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., November 2002.

Figure 13: Contacting Leaders



During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem or to give them your views?

These positive perceptions may in large part arise simply from proximity. The LC-I level of government is small enough and local enough, that respondents are often being asked, in effect, whether they trust a nearby neighbor, someone who is well known to them, so it is perhaps not surprising that we see a high level of trust at this level. This explanation is also consistent with the fact that ratings of trust and performance do decrease steadily as the level of government and hence the distance – both literal and figurative – from the respondent increases.

But there is also evidence to suggest that there is a considerable degree of satisfaction with the real performance of the local governments that goes beyond simple support for a trusted neighbor. When asked whether service delivery by their LC-V councils is better or worse now compared to five years ago, the responses are mostly positive. More than three-quarters (77 percent) see improvement in the LC-V's delivery of primary education services. More than two-thirds (69 percent) think primary health care service has improved, and nearly as many (64 percent) think the construction and maintenance of feeder roads, also an LC-V responsibility, has improved. More than half (54 percent) also see gains in water and sanitation efforts. Only with respect to agricultural extension is there less than an outright majority (46 percent) that sees progress. So with respect to the key services that are now the responsibility of the district or LC-V governments, the public perceives real gains over the past five years, and this too may play a significant role in explaining their positive ratings of their representatives in this and the more local levels of government.

But decentralization has not yet had the hoped for impact on citizens' perceptions of their ability to influence government decisions, at least at the local level. We asked respondents to choose between the statements that "Decentralization has led to a situation in which everyone has power to influence important decisions made by the local councils," versus the alternative that "Despite decentralization, there are only a few individuals who have the power to influence important decisions made by the local

councils.” A plurality (49 percent) agree with the latter statement, compared to 44 percent who believe that all citizens can now play a role in decision making.

But this does not appear to mean that Ugandans feel completely disconnected from their local governments either. When asked to choose between a second pair of statements, fully two-thirds (67 percent) agree that “Our leaders in the local councils are accountable to the community for the decisions that they make,” while just 31 percent instead choose the statement that “Our leaders in the local councils make decisions without any consideration for what the community wants.” Decentralization may therefore have gained some ground towards the goal of empowering local citizens to play an active role in governance, but there is clearly still some distance to go as well.

The National Electoral Commission

Finally, again looking at Figure 12, we can see that a number of other government institutions get mixed reviews. Of greatest concern is the National Electoral Commission. In 2000, three-quarters of respondents expressed some degree of trust in this institution which is so critical to democratic functioning. However, in the intervening two years, the Commission was the subject of repeated accusations concerning both its effectiveness and fairness in the conduct of elections – several court challenges have alleged irregularities in the management of the 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections, some of which have been successful – and the personal behavior and financial dealings of individual commissioners. Public confidence in the Commission dropped so low that President Museveni finally dismissed the chairman and the majority of the commissioners in July 2002 shortly before the survey. This loss of confidence is clearly reflected in the survey findings: whereas in 2000, 76 percent trusted the Commission, just two years later the tables had turned to the point where a nearly equal number (74 percent) did *not* have significant trust in the Commission. Rectifying this situation before the next elections is likely to be a critical challenge for Museveni’s government if perceptions of the still relatively good perceived supply of democracy in Uganda are to be maintained.

Across Afrobarometer countries, the level of trust in electoral commissions varies widely – Ugandans are not alone in facing a crisis of confidence in this pivotal democratic institution. Just 16 percent of Cape Verdians and 21 percent of Nigerians express trust, and the ratings are only slightly better in South Africa (31 percent). In Ghana, however, nearly one-half (49 percent) trust the commission, and in Namibia a solid two-thirds (66 percent) have confidence in their election managers. The mean level of trust in Round 1 was 55 percent.

Traditional Leaders

The government of Uganda’s handling of traditional leaders, including especially the restoration, ostensibly in a cultural capacity only, of several of southern and western Uganda’s traditional monarchies, has received considerable attention during the past decade. The Kingdom of Buganda, the most powerful of the traditional kingdoms, has drawn particular attention as the Kabaka returned from exile in 1993, and has led the Baganda into a major – and controversial – restoration of the kingdom’s political institutions while taking on an active, if behind-the-scenes, role in Ugandan politics.²⁸

What do ordinary Ugandans think about the role of these and other traditional leaders in modern society and politics? Are the kingdoms, as some contend, succeeding in capturing resources and producing benefits for their constituents, or are they, as others charge, succeeding only in restoring institutions that absorb resources from their constituents while producing little tangible benefit?

²⁸ See for example Englebert, “Born-again Buganda.”

Respondents were asked to choose which of the following three statements most closely matched their own views: A) Traditional kings, chiefs and elders are still important to many people; they should play an active role in Ugandan politics; B) Traditional kings, chiefs and elders should continue to have a cultural role only, and not participate directly in politics; or C) Traditional kings, chiefs and elders interfere with a modern way of life, and they should be abolished. Fully 70 percent of respondents agree with the government's position: they believe that traditional leaders should be restricted to playing only a cultural role and stay out of politics. Just one in five (18 percent) take the position that traditional leaders should play an active political role, while one in ten (10 percent) would prefer that they once again be abolished entirely.

However, as we saw earlier, the number of respondents who approve of a system of government in which chiefs and elders make the most important decisions is surprisingly high at 39 percent – double the proportion who approve of a political role for traditional leaders. In the 2000 survey, only 16 percent expressed a desire to go back to a traditional system of government by kings and chiefs.

The reason for this increased support is not clear, although one possible reason for the change is that in 2000 the question specifically referred to “going back” to the traditional system of rule, whereas in 2002 this was not the case. The question structure in 2002 leaves open the possibility for participation by traditional leaders within more modern structures, such as the Houses of Elders that have been established as part of the legislative branch of government in a number of countries. Perhaps this explains why Ugandans seem much more open to the possibility in 2002 than they did two years previously. It may also be that as some Ugandans have become more disillusioned with the modern political system after the 2001 election cycle, they are willing to consider alternatives that they previously dismissed, and in particular they may be feeling some nostalgia for traditional institutions.

Ugandans' levels of trust in traditional leaders are, however, quite moderate relative to a number of other institutions such as the LC-I and LC-III councils and the president. With roughly equal shares expressing trust (47 percent) and distrust (46 percent), traditional leaders find themselves on a par with the army, the courts, and parliament. They also fall well behind LC-I and LC-III officials with respect to the frequency with which constituents contact them: 21 percent had contacted a traditional leader at least once in the past year, suggesting that they are much less important as problem solvers in people's daily lives than their closest “competition” in handling local affairs.

IDENTITY AND LEGITIMACY

We have seen deep divisions among different sub-groups of Ugandans with regard to attitudes toward, and assessments of, the political and economic system. In addition, alarms have been raised about the increased mobilization of potentially divisive ethnic and religious identities during the 2001 elections. These divisions raise questions about the cohesiveness of Ugandan society, and the extent to which all Ugandans perceive the state to be legitimate and are committed to its unity and integrity.

We will look first at how people define their identities in Uganda. Are individuals mobilized first and foremost by their ethnic identities as is often charged? Or are they driven by the religious identities that have become increasingly prominent in the global arena recently? Or have they adopted occupational or class identities, or some other source of identity? To understand how Ugandans identify themselves, we asked them “Besides being Ugandan, which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?”

When we asked this question in 2000 the results were somewhat surprising. Fully 63 percent of Ugandans identified themselves according to their occupation. This put Ugandans behind only Tanzanians in their reliance on occupation to identify themselves (77 percent in Tanzania). The next

closest country was Lesotho, with 31 percent relying on this measure of identity. Just 12 percent of Ugandans identified themselves according to their language, tribe or ethnic group, placing them among the countries where this source of identity had the least salience. Another 8 percent relied on religion to place themselves, and 6 percent on gender – again, Uganda falls behind only Tanzania in reliance on gender as a source of identity.

The 2002 results provide some confirmation that a shift in mobilized identity may indeed have occurred (Table 18). The number of Ugandans who identify themselves primarily according to their occupation in 2002 has dropped considerably, down to 52 percent (although this still far surpasses any other country), while ethnic, tribal or language-based identification has increased to 19 percent. Religious and class identities have, however, stayed roughly constant. Very few Ugandans actually identify themselves according to either region or party affiliation.

Table 18: Sub-National Identity Groups Across Countries (percent)

| | Cape Verde | Ghana | Nigeria | South Africa | Uganda 2002 | Uganda 2000 | Round 1 Mean |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------|---------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Language/tribe/ethnic group | 1 | 37 | 28 | 10 | 19 | 12 | 25 |
| Occupation | 14 | 19 | 28 | 24 | 52 | 63 | 27 |
| Religion | 7 | 32 | 21 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 17 |
| Class | 11 | 2 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 5 | 13 |
| Gender | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Race | 1 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Refused to differentiate | 43 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 |

The government’s treatment of different identity groups receives at best mixed reviews. Just 20 percent of Ugandans say that their group is never treated unfairly, while one in three respondents (32 percent) feel that their group is often or always the victim of unfair treatment at the hands of government. While the response categories were different when a similar question was asked in 2000, making precise comparisons difficult, it appears that perceptions of unfair treatment have increased (unfair treatment “hardly at all” or “never” was 43 percent, and “to a large extent” or “always” was 18 percent). This too is consistent with the thesis that politicians mobilize certain identity groups, often around a theme of unfair treatment, for election purposes.

These negative perceptions about treatment of identity groups may, however, be less destructive to national unity and integration than one might expect. In fact, when asked whether they feel more attached to their group identity or to their national identity as a Ugandan, a large majority (70 percent) choose their national identity, compared to just 25 percent who identify more strongly with their group. Moreover, contrary to many of our other findings, these results are quite consistent across region – in fact, contrary to what we might expect, northerners are actually slightly more attached to national identity than westerners – and there are no differences associated with strong affiliation to either the Movement or an opposition group.

Commitment to the Ugandan state is confirmed by the response to another question that asked respondents to choose between the statement that “Even if there are conflicts among different groups, Uganda should remain united as one country,” versus the alternative that “The differences among Ugandans are too strong; for the sake of peace, the country should be broken apart.” An overwhelming majority of 96 percent opts for unity, a fact that is particularly notable in a country that has long been riven by internal conflict. Moreover, northerners, who have suffered the most from that conflict, are just as adamant about remaining united as westerners.

Ugandans also demonstrate a very high commitment to the state’s right to rule: 79 percent agree that “the courts have the right to make decisions that people always have to abide by,” 88 percent agree with the statement that “the police always have the right to make people obey the law,” and 87 percent say that “the government always has the right to make people pay taxes.” Differences associated with both region and partisanship were relatively small on all three of these measures.

A final, somewhat weaker, indicator of legitimacy concerns the validity of the Constitution. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) agree that the Constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the Ugandan people. This represents some decrease from the level of support for the Constitution recorded in 2000 (74 percent), which is certainly a cause for concern, but it constitutes a sizeable majority in support nonetheless.

Table 19 reveals that Ugandans demonstrate some of the highest levels of commitment to the state’s legitimacy among Round 2 countries surveyed to date, although all reveal relatively high degrees of belief in the state’s “right to rule.”

Table 19: Indicators of State Legitimacy Across Countries (percent that agree)

| | Cape Verde | Ghana | Namibia | Nigeria | South Africa | Uganda 2002 |
|--|------------|-------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|
| More attached to national than group identity | 78 | 58 | 83 | 49 | 76 | 70 |
| Country should remain united despite differences | 89 | 93 | 94 | 74 | 85 | 96 |
| Courts have the right to make binding decisions | 83 | 70 | 61 | 72 | 68 | 79 |
| Police have the right to enforce laws | 81 | 85 | 70 | 75 | 67 | 88 |
| Government has the right to make people pay taxes | 72 | 80 | 51 | 73 | 60 | 87 |
| Constitution expresses our values and aspirations | 51 | 65 | 70 | 56 | 60 | 64 |

It is, however, troubling that sizeable regional differences re-emerge on this question. As shown in Table 20, while 90 percent of westerners believe the constitution expresses Ugandans’ values, a mere 44 percent of northerners agree (though fully 27 percent simply “don’t know”). Thus, while northerners appear to be as committed as others to the Ugandan state by most measures, they appear to be far less satisfied with its current content with respect to a whole host of factors, starting with the Constitution itself.

Table 20: Validity of the Constitution, by Region and Partisanship

| | Region | | | | Affiliation | | Total |
|-------------------|--------|------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | West | East | Central | North | Movement | Opposition | |
| Agree | 90 | 57 | 59 | 44 | 76 | 48 | 64 |
| Neither | 3 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 6 |
| Disagree | 5 | 29 | 15 | 20 | 9 | 30 | 17 |
| Don’t know | 2 | 11 | 18 | 27 | 11 | 12 | 13 |

For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: Our Constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the Ugandan people.

CONCLUSION

Deep divides are apparent among Ugandans with respect to many of the issues evaluated in the Round 2 survey of the Afrobarometer. Most commonly, the cleavages of interest are those between the northern region and the three southern regions, and between partisan supporters of the Movement and of opposition political parties. It is clear that northerners and those affiliated with the opposition are much more disenchanted with many aspects of politics and economics in their country – we have characterized them as “outsiders,” as opposed to the “insiders” who live in the south (and especially in the western region) and/or are affiliated with President Museveni’s National Resistance Movement.

Of critical importance is that the differences between insiders and outsiders apply not just in the case of government policies and programs where we would expect to find them, for example on economic policies or in evaluations of performance on key economic and social issues. In fact, it is in these areas that we occasionally see agreement between the two groups. Rather, differences emerge most sharply on issues such as the provision of political rights and goods, and evaluations of the nature and performance of the political system as a whole – in other words, on issues that are fundamental to the practice and consolidation of democracy. In particular, outsiders are often so disaffected with the Movement government that they appear more inclined to reject the entire (modified) democratic political regime, while insiders appear at times to almost blindly lend their approval to the government, limits and all.

But further analysis demonstrates that although both insiders and outsiders often equate the political regime and the current Movement government in offering their assessments, there are other indicators that suggest that, despite their differences, both groups remain deeply committed to many aspects of democracy, including elections and protection of most political rights. In fact, the debate about an elected system of government seems to be relatively resolved in Uganda. The debate that remains unresolved concerns the space that should be carved out for political opposition, an issue on which Ugandans are still, at best, ambivalent. Nevertheless, the consolidation of a democratic political system cannot fully succeed in Uganda as long as Ugandans base their expressed commitment to it on whether or not their preferred leadership is in power.

Moreover, the very real disaffection of the north on a host of issues is a problem that the government must grapple with. While it is encouraging to find that northerners, despite their perceived exclusion from many of the economic and political benefits enjoyed by the rest of the country, have not been driven into the arms of rebels or others who advocate the dissolution of the state, the depth of northern disenchantment cannot be taken lightly. Yet the contrast between programs designed earlier in 2002 and funded by international donors to “help the north catch up” with the rest of the country, and the recently announced GOU plans to put more resources into the north in the name of winning the war with the LRA, mean that real improvements to the lives of northerners in the near future are by no means assured.

Meanwhile, the government must also face the challenge of a southern population that is perhaps increasingly forgetful about the past and of how far it has come, and increasingly demanding in its expectations for the future. The Ugandan government can be credited with helping to bring about enormous improvements in national well-being, but it will have no opportunity to rest on its laurels. While Ugandans continue to express a considerable degree of satisfaction with their economic and political systems, they are increasingly critical in their assessments of their own situations and of their government’s performance, even as they remain consistently hopeful about their future.