



Popular Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya: A Summary of Afrobarometer Indicators, 2003-2008

26 June 2009

Kenya achieved independence from Britain in 1963 under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, who remained President until his death in 1978, when he was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi. The country effectively fell under single party rule by the Kenyan African National Unity (KANU) in 1969. This system remained in effect until President Moi, facing both domestic and international pressure, ushered in multiparty elections in 1992. Facing a divided opposition, Moi won re-election in 1992 and again in 1997. However, as term limits forced Moi from office, the opposition finally succeeded in uniting behind the candidacy of Mwai Kibaki, and his National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) won power in the 2002 elections. The coalition soon faltered, however, and severe violence broke out following the closely contested 2007 elections, as Kibaki claimed victory but supporters of the opposition Orange Democratic Movement claimed the polls were rigged. After international diplomatic intervention, the crisis was eventually resolved by formation of a coalition government in April 2008. Kenya was rated by Freedom House as “partly-free” in 2008, with a political rights score of 4 and a civil liberties score of 3.

This document provides a summary of popular attitudes regarding the demand for and supply of democracy in Kenya as revealed over the course of three Afrobarometer surveys conducted between 2003 and 2008 (Aug.-Sept. 2003, N=2398; Sep. 2005, N=1278; Oct.-Nov. 2008, N=1104). Samples of this size yield a margin of error of +/- 2 to 3 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent. The charts that follow capture perceptions of:

- The meaning of democracy;
- The demand for democracy (including individual support for democracy, patience with democracy and rejection of military rule, one-party rule, and one-man rule);
- Support for democratic institutions (including attitudes towards elections, term limits, multi-party rule, and checks on presidential powers); and
- The supply of democracy (including satisfaction with democracy and the perceived extent of democracy, quality of elections and the protection of key freedoms).

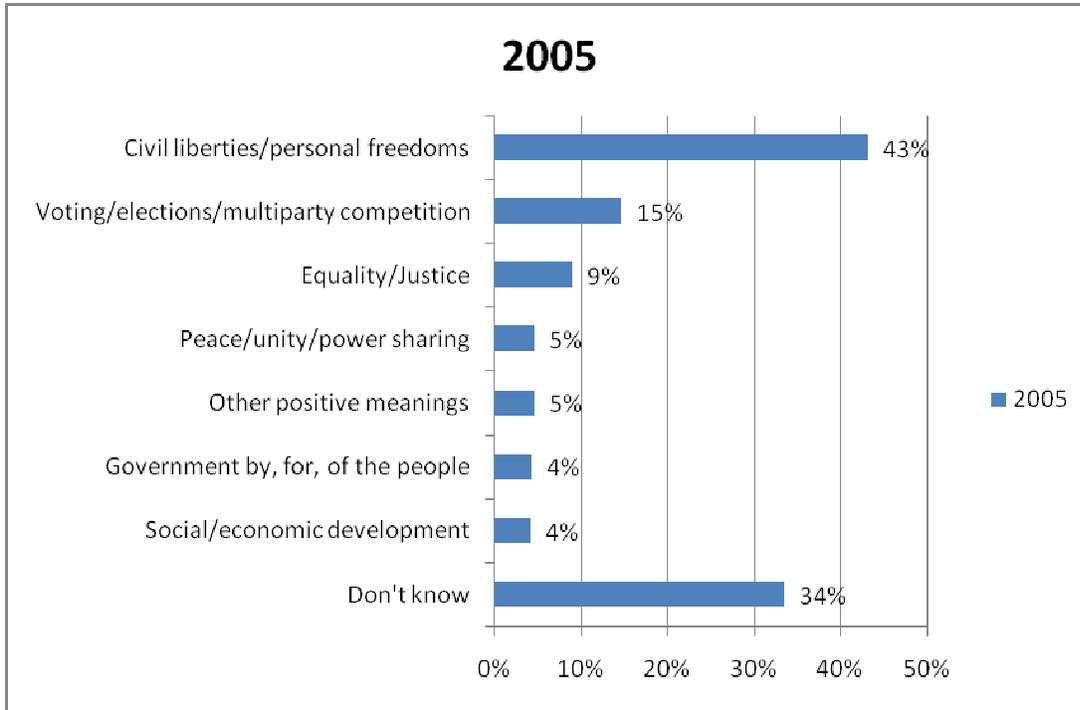
Points of Interest

- Demand for democracy has remained high despite the country’s recent troubles, with over three-fourths of Kenyans supporting democracy and rejecting authoritarian rule (2.1-2.4)
- Patience with democracy dropped sharply between 2003 and 2005, but held steady as a majority position in 2008 (2.5)
- Support for multiparty competition has dropped steadily since 2003 (3.3)
- The perceived supply of democracy plummeted between 2003 and 2008. Ratings of the extent of democracy and satisfaction with democracy are down, and assessments of election quality have completely reversed, with only 20% claiming that the 2007 elections were largely free and fair (4.1-4.3).

MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

1.1 Variable: Meaning of democracy

Question: What if anything does democracy mean to you?



** In 2005 respondents could offer up to three meanings. Figures shown are the percentage of all substantive responses offered.*

DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY

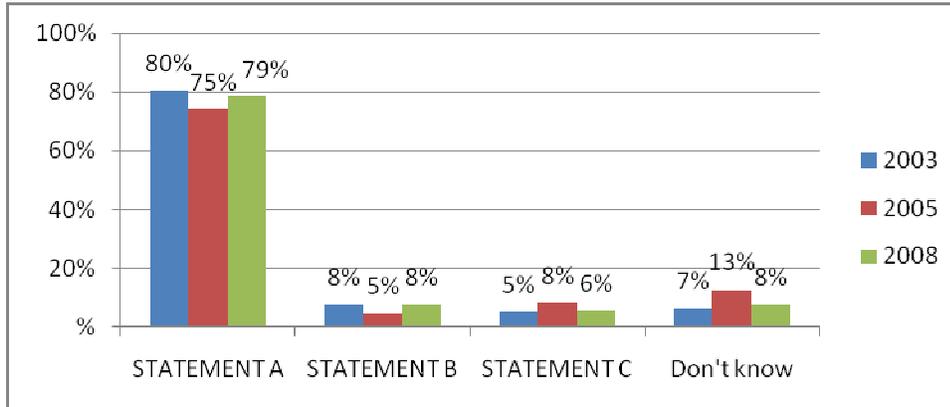
2.1 Variable: Support for democracy

Question: 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.

C: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.



2.2 Variable: Reject military rule

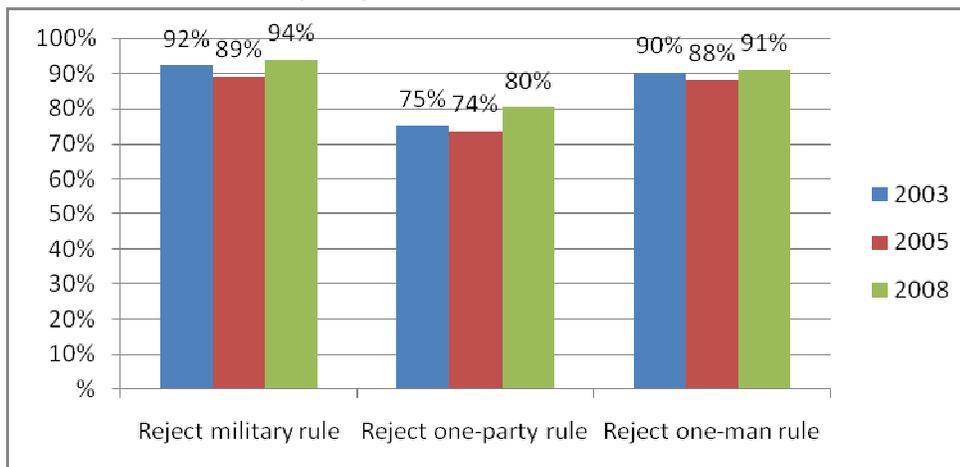
Question: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: The army comes in to govern the country?

2.3 Variable: Reject one-party rule

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

2.4 Variable: Reject one-man rule

Question: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament/National Assembly are abolished so that the President/Prime Minister can decide everything?



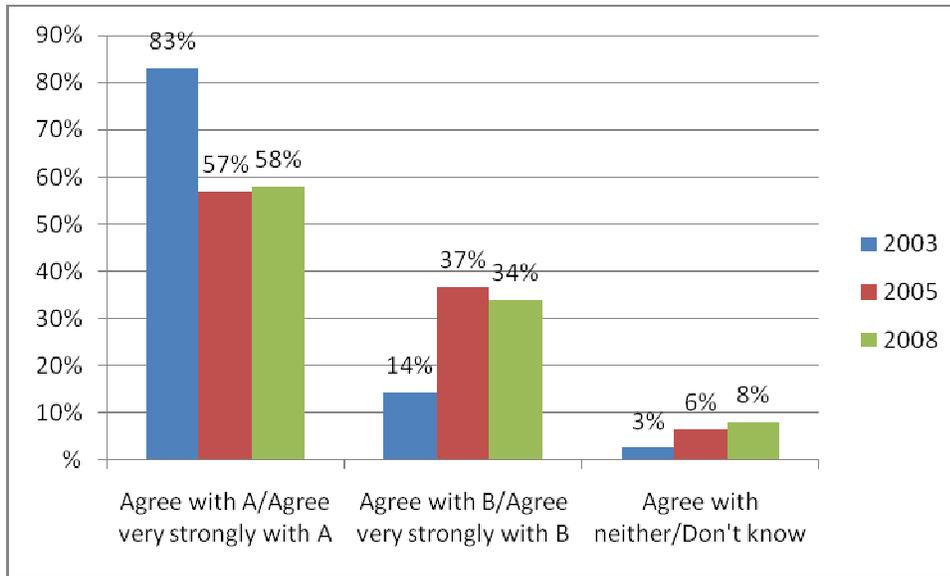
(Percent who disapprove/strongly disapprove of military rule, one-party rule and one-man rule)

2.5 Variable: Patience with democracy

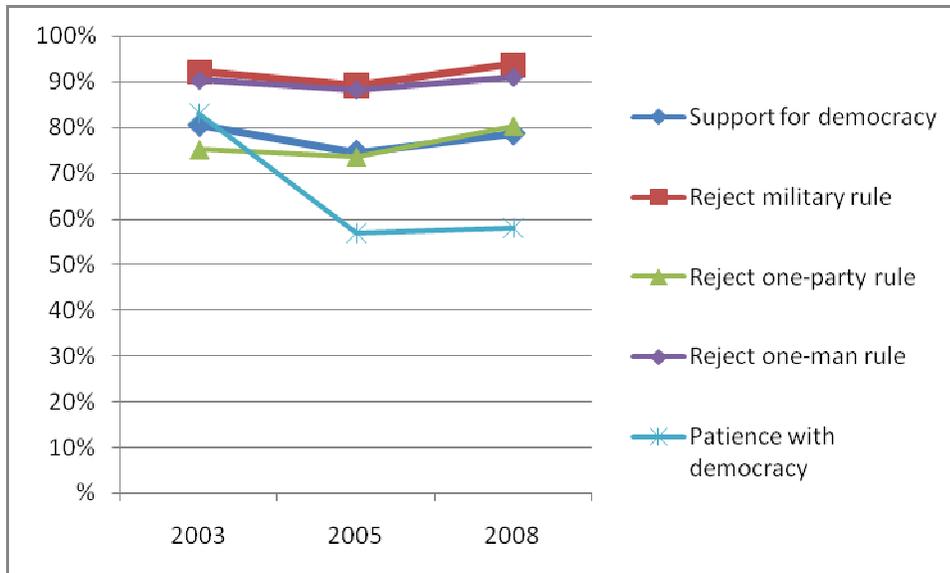
Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

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.



Summary of demand for democracy



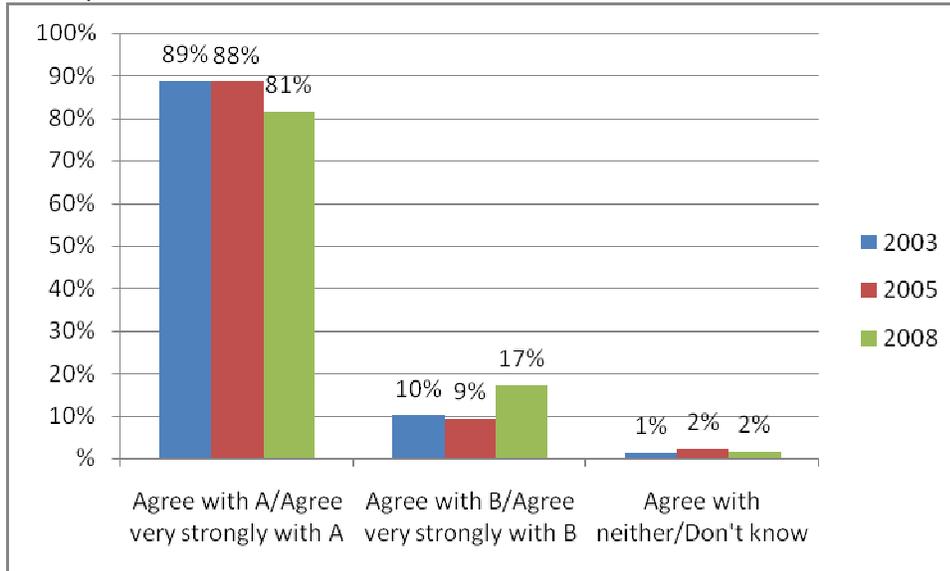
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

3.1 Variable: Choose leaders through elections vs. try another form

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections.

B: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

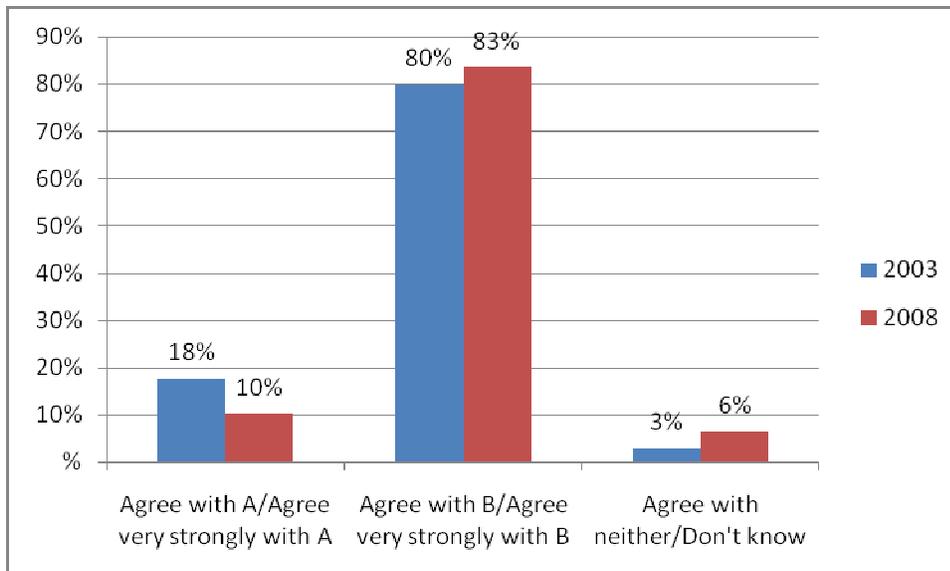


3.2 Variable: No term limits for the president vs. two terms only

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.

B: The constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.

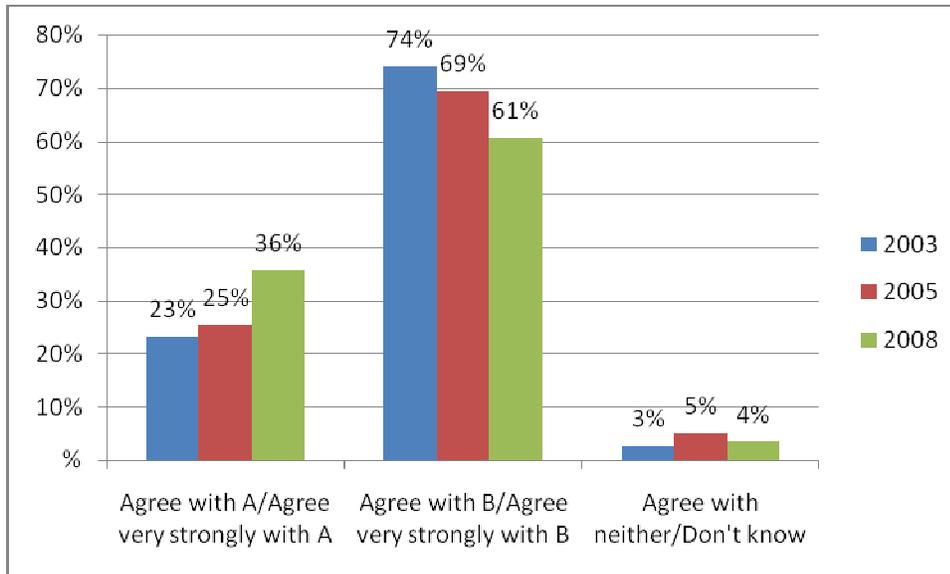


3.3 Variable: Political parties divisive vs. many parties needed

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Kenya.

B: Many political parties are needed to make sure that Kenyans have real choices in who governs them.

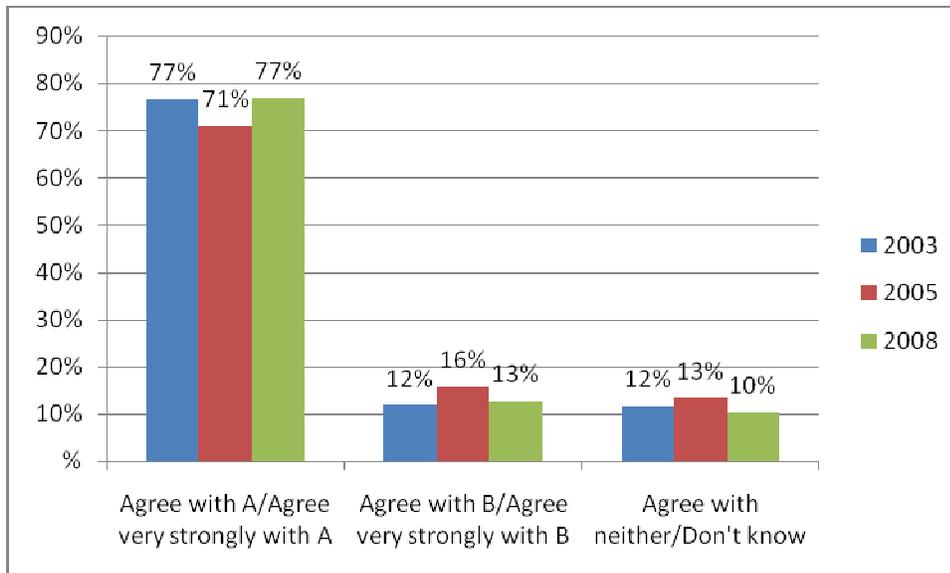


3.4 Variable: Parliament makes laws vs. President does

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: The members of Parliament/National Assembly represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the President/Prime Minister does not agree.

B: Since the President/Prime Minister represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what the Parliament/National Assembly thinks.

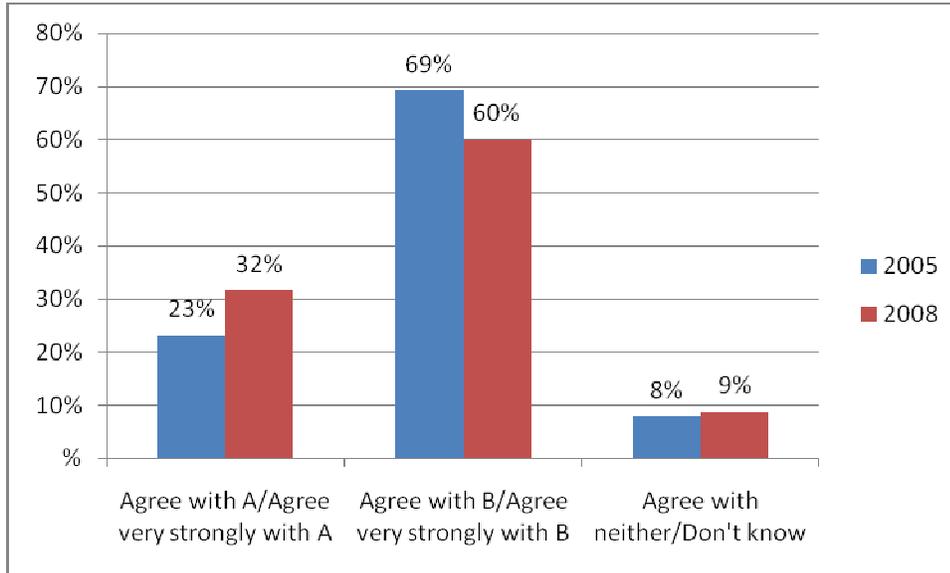


3.5 Variable: President free to act vs. obey the laws and courts

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: Since the President/Prime Minister was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong.

B: The President/Prime Minister must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong.

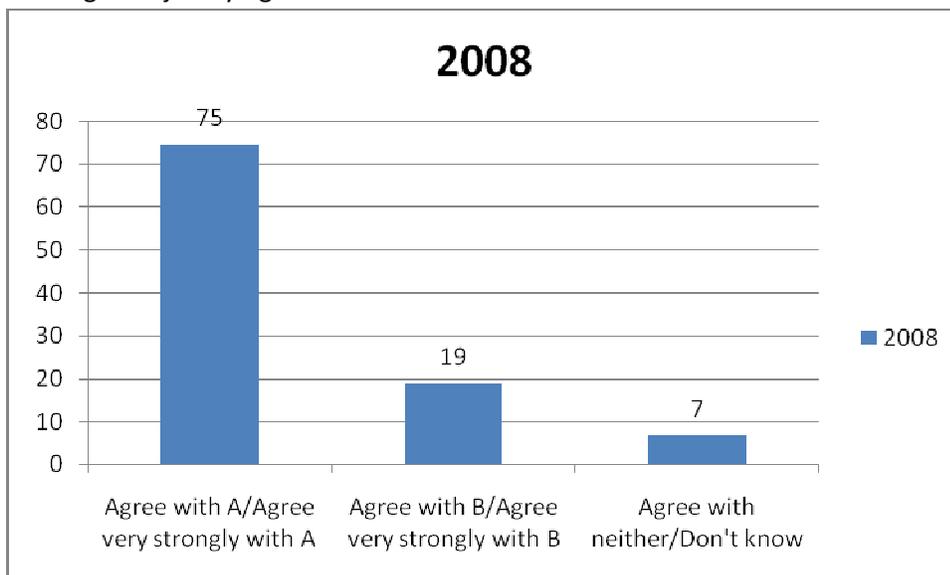


3.6 Variable: Parliament monitors President vs. cooperate

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: Parliament should ensure that the president explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends the taxpayers' money.

B: The President should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions.

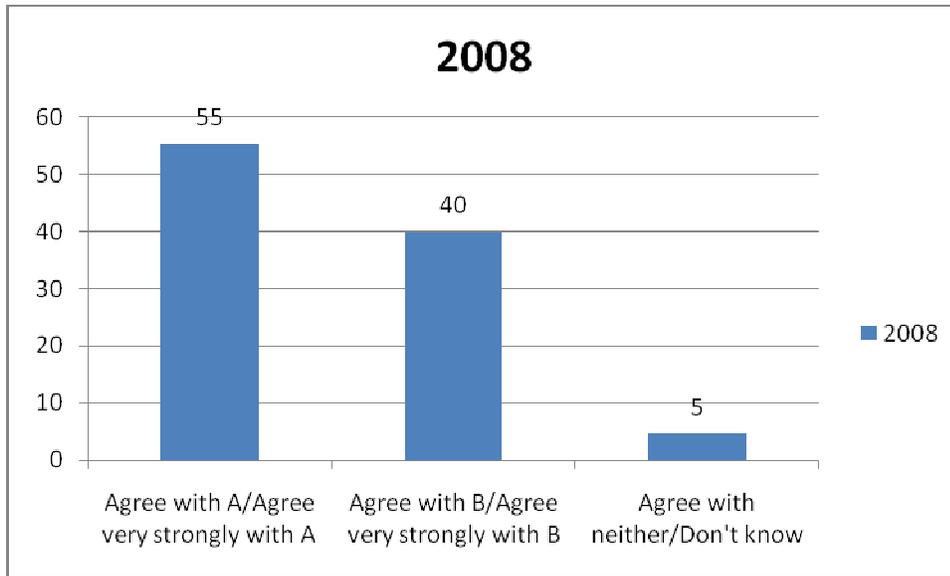


3.7 Variable: Opposition parties examine government vs. cooperate

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: Opposition parties should regularly examine and criticize government policies and actions.

B: Opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating with government and helping it develop the country.

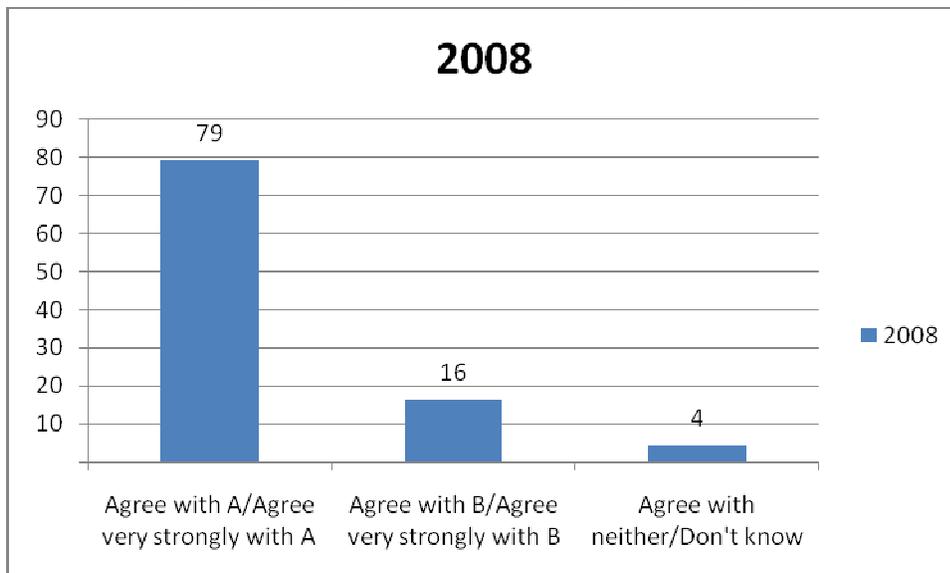


3.8 Variable: Media examines government vs. cooperate

Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

A: The news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the government.

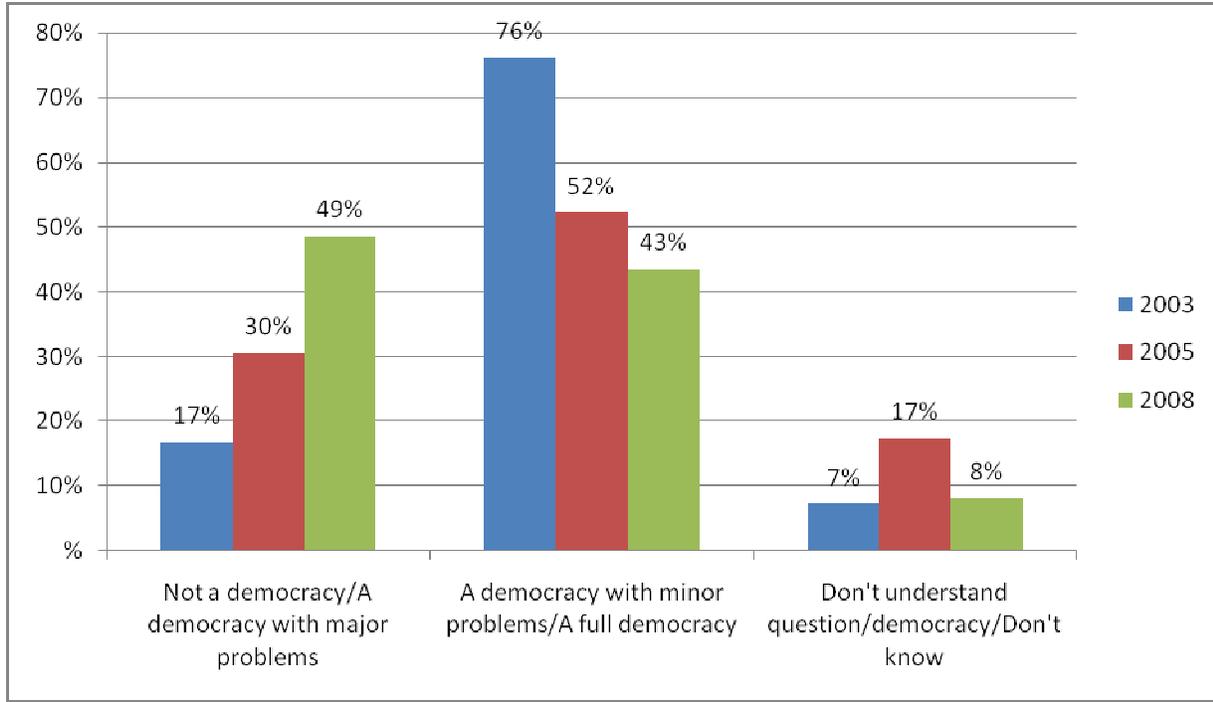
B: Too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country.



SUPPLY OF DEMOCRACY

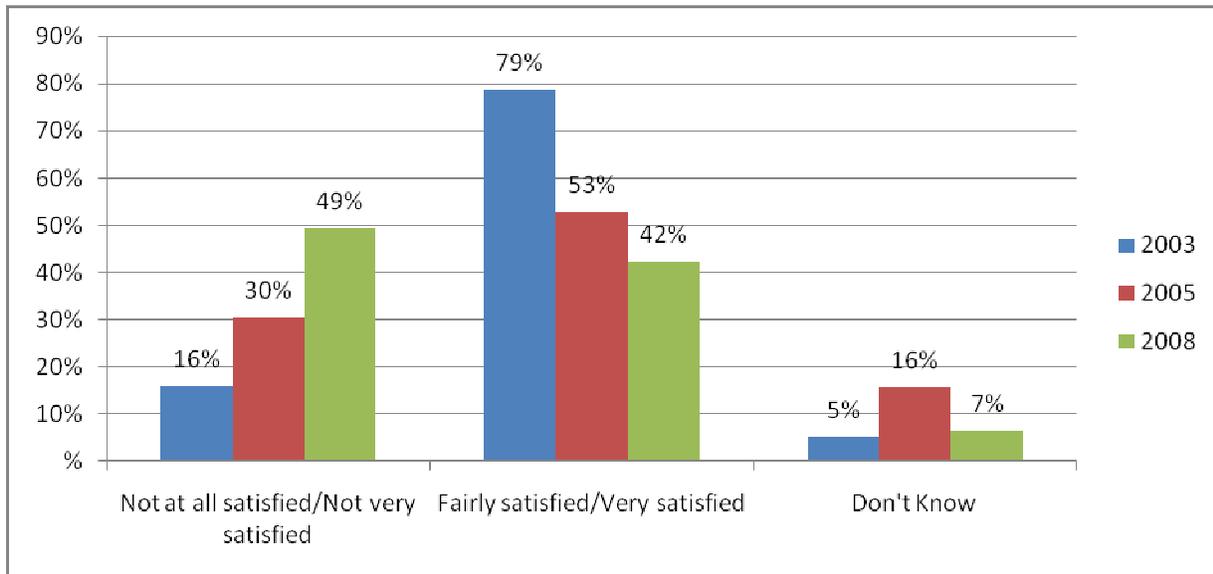
4.1 Variable: Extent of Democracy

Questions: In your opinion how much of a democracy is Kenya today?



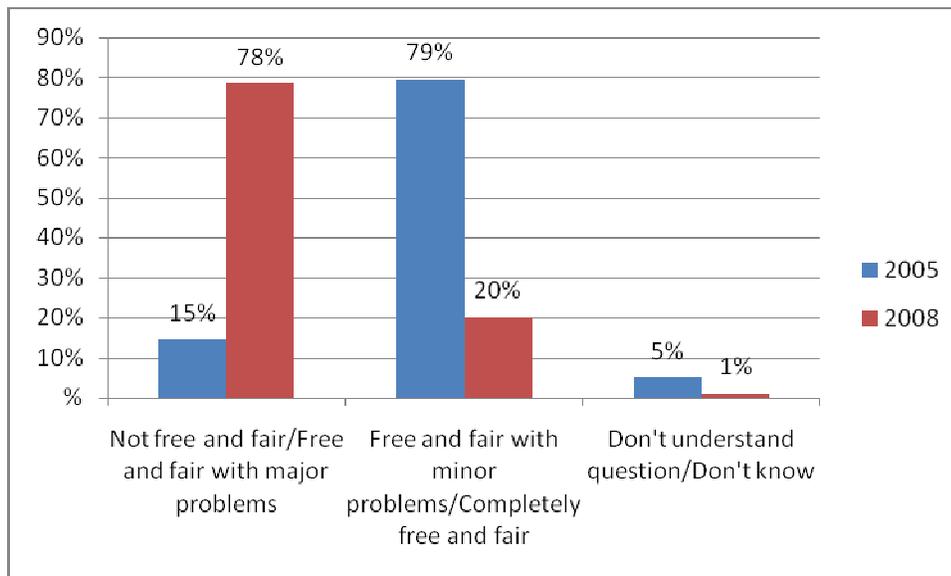
4.2 Variable: Satisfaction with democracy

Question: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Kenya?



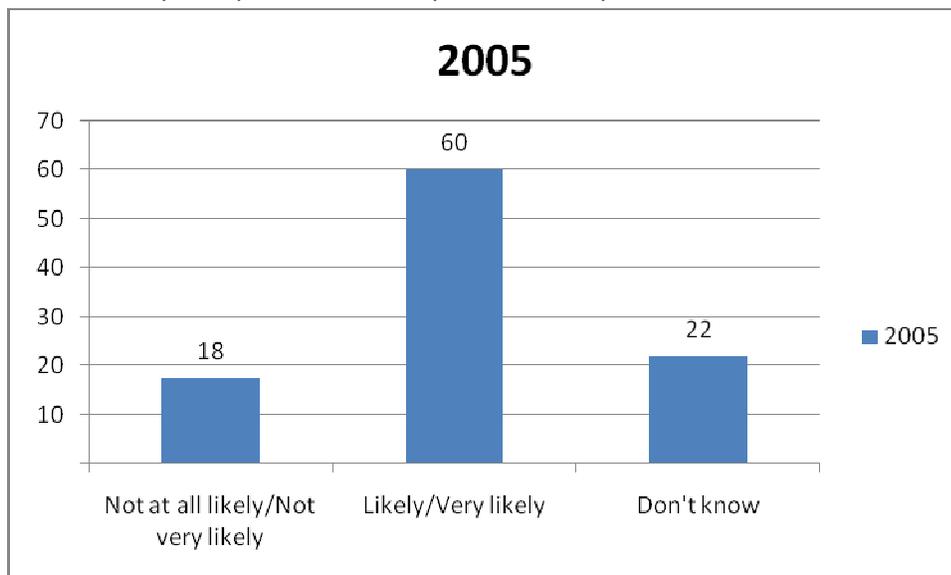
4.3 Variable: Elections free and fair

Question: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in [20xx]. Was it:



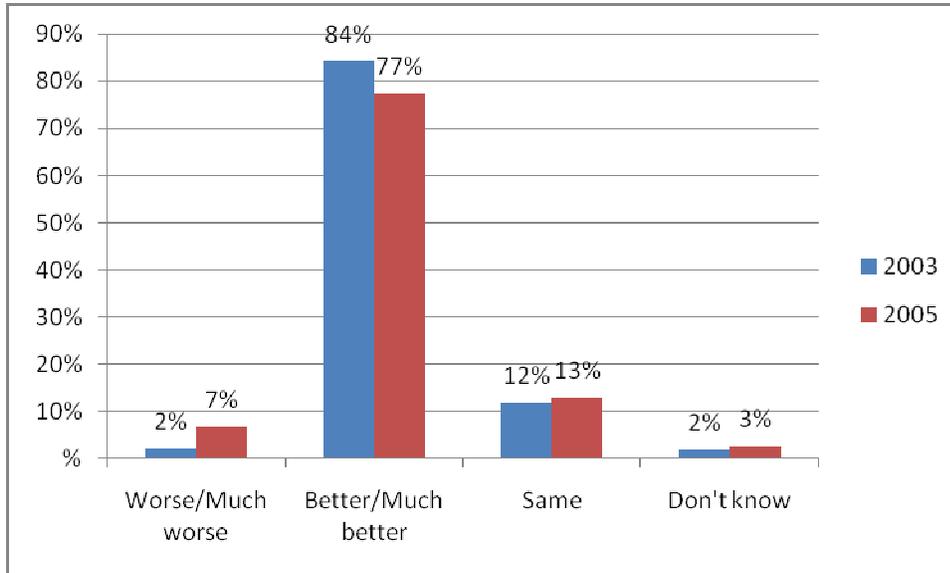
4.4 Variable: Future of democracy

Question: In your opinion, how likely is it that Kenya will remain a democratic country?



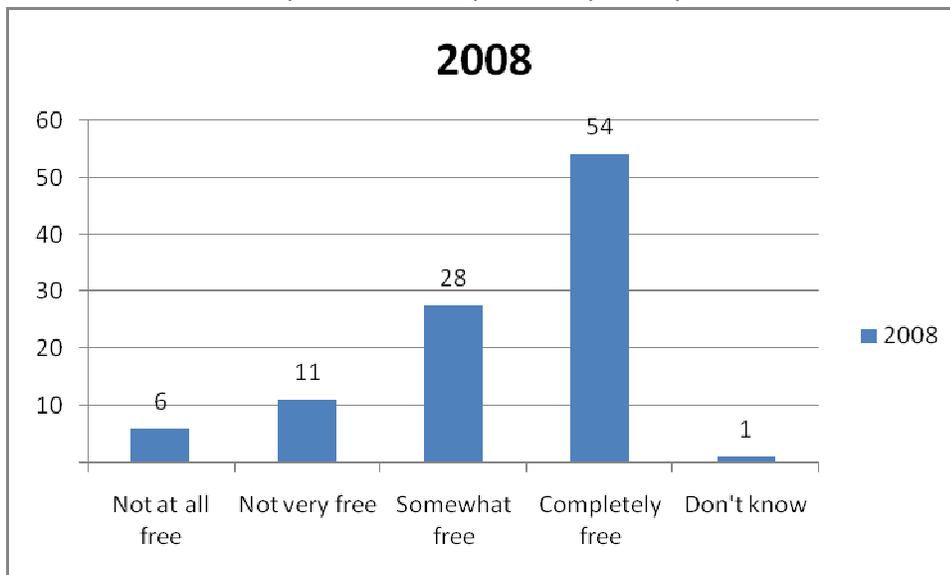
4.5 Variable: Freedom of speech (2003-2005)

Question: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Freedom to say what you think?



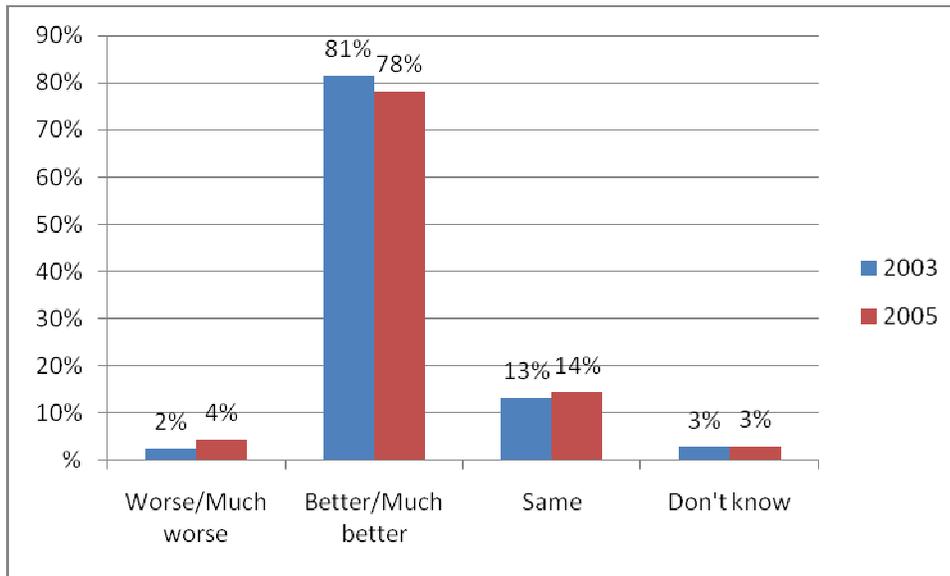
4.6 Variable: Freedom of speech (2008)

Question: In this country, how free are you: to say what you think?



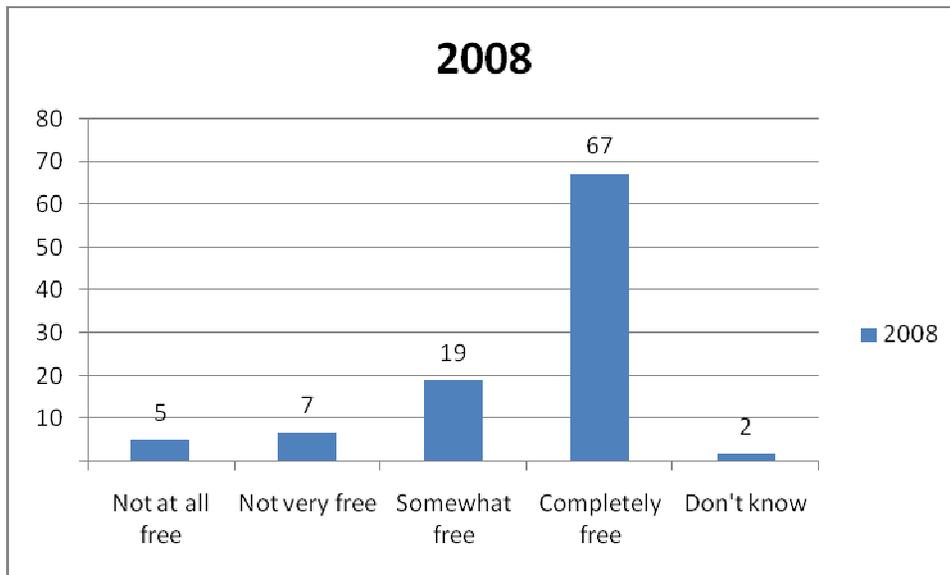
4.7 Variable: Freedom of association (2003-2005)

Question: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Freedom to join any political organization you want?



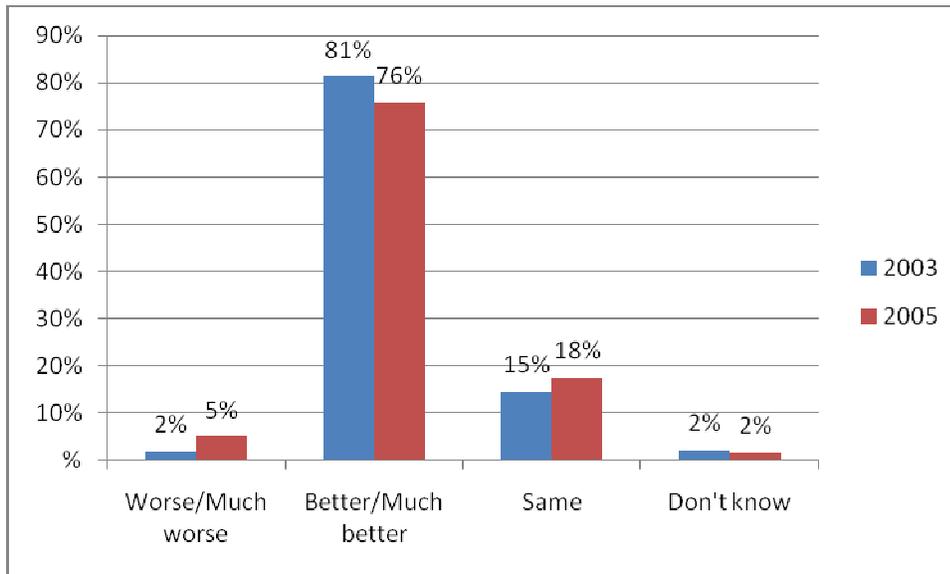
4.8 Variable: Freedom of association (2008)

Question: In this country, how free are you: to join any political organization you want?



4.9 Variable: Voting freedom (2003-2005)

Question: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?



4.10 Variable: Voting freedom (2008)

Question: In this country, how free are you: to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?

