



Popular Attitudes toward Democracy in Senegal: A Summary of Afrobarometer Indicators, 2002-2008

4 May 2009

Senegal is one of the few African states that has never experienced a *coup d'état*, and it long enjoyed a reputation as one of the most open and politically liberal countries on the continent. However, four decades of dominance by a single party -- the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS) and its successor, the Socialist Party (PS) -- which had held power continuously since independence in 1960, eventually began to tarnish the country's democratic credentials. The victory of Abdoulaye Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) in the 2000 presidential elections, followed soon thereafter by the introduction of a constitutional two-term limit for presidents, appear to have restored the nation's reputation as one of Africa's leading democracies. President Wade was easily re-elected in 2007 to a five-year term, but allegations of increasing corruption and a boycott of the parliamentary elections by some opposition parties have contributed to a mounting sense of dissatisfaction among the Senegalese electorate. In 2008, Senegal had a Freedom House ranking of "free", with a political rights score of 2 and a civil liberties score of 3.

This document provides a summary of popular attitudes regarding the demand for and supply of democracy in Senegal as revealed over the course of three Afrobarometer surveys conducted between 2002 and 2008 (Nov.-Dec. 2002, N=1200; Sep.-Oct. 2005, N=1200; May-June 2008, N=1200). Samples of this size yield a margin of error of +/- 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).

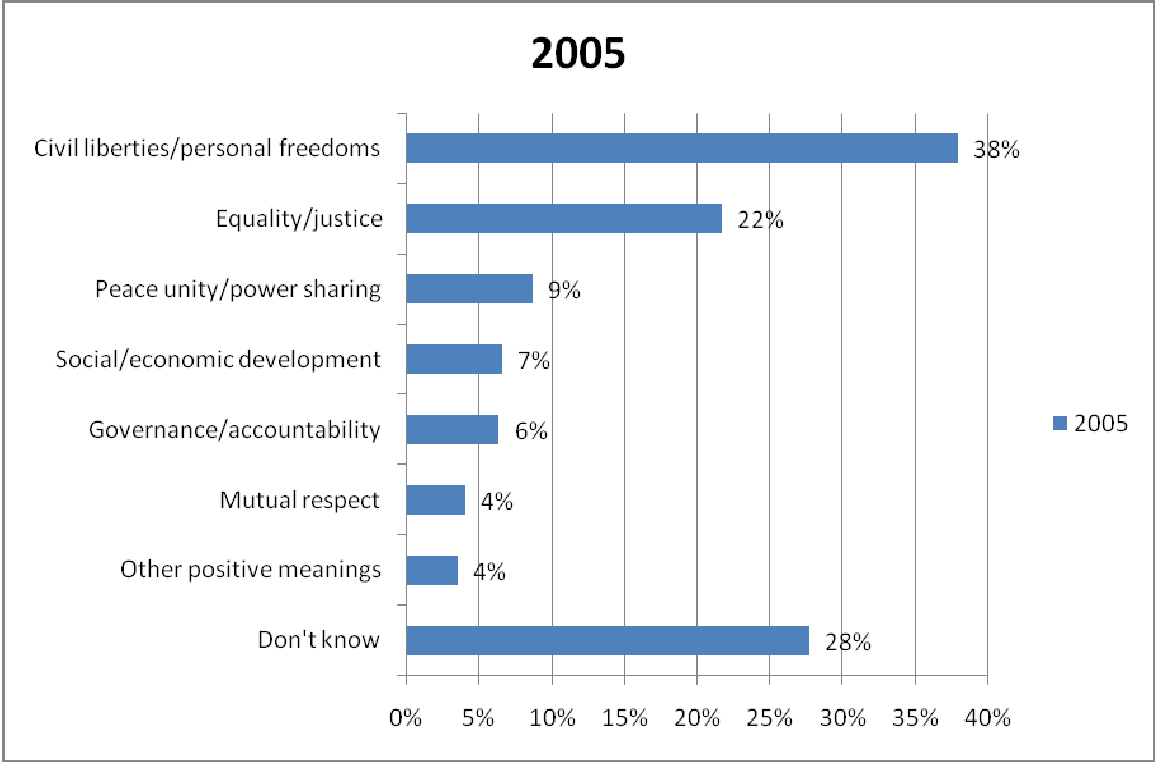
Points of Interest

- Overall, demand for democracy is relatively high; support for democracy is down slightly between 2005 and 2008, but the difference is within the margin of sampling error (2.1)
- Rejection of military rule declined somewhat in 2008, but rejection of one-party rule has increased sharply, and rejection of strongman rule is also up significantly since 2002 (2.2-2.4)
- Patience with democracy has plummeted between 2002 and 2008 (2.5), but support for multiparty competition has risen dramatically over the same period (3.3)
- The most notable change in 2008 is the steep decline in ratings of the supply of democracy, with evaluations of both the extent of and satisfaction with democracy dropping sharply (4.1-4.2)
- Ratings of the quality of the 2007 elections, while still relatively high, are well below those for the 2000/2001 polls (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

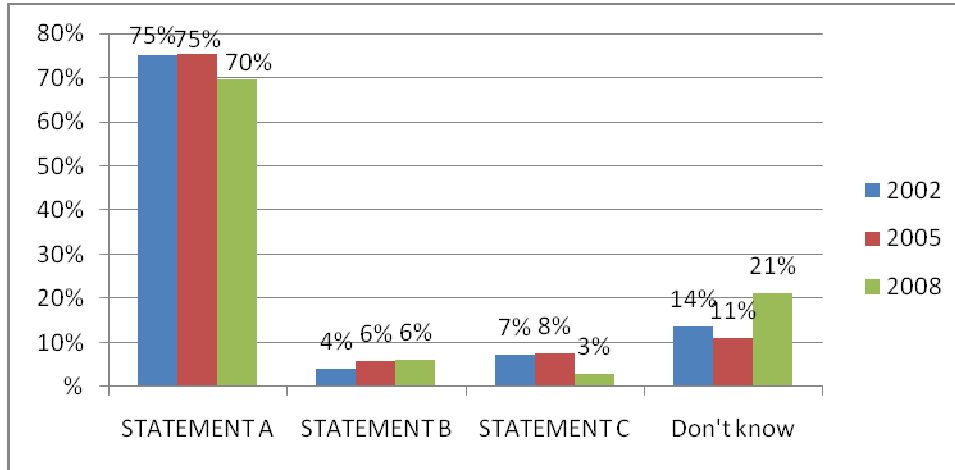
2.1 Variable: Support for democracy

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

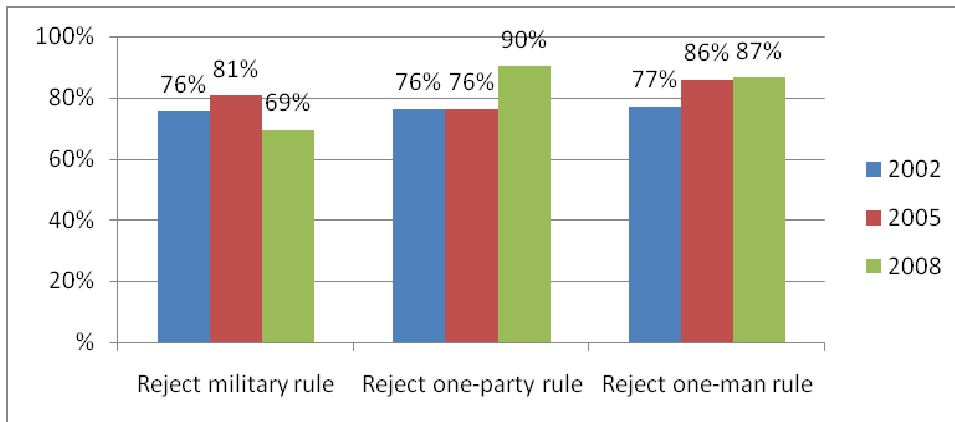
Question: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: The army comes in to govern the country?

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?



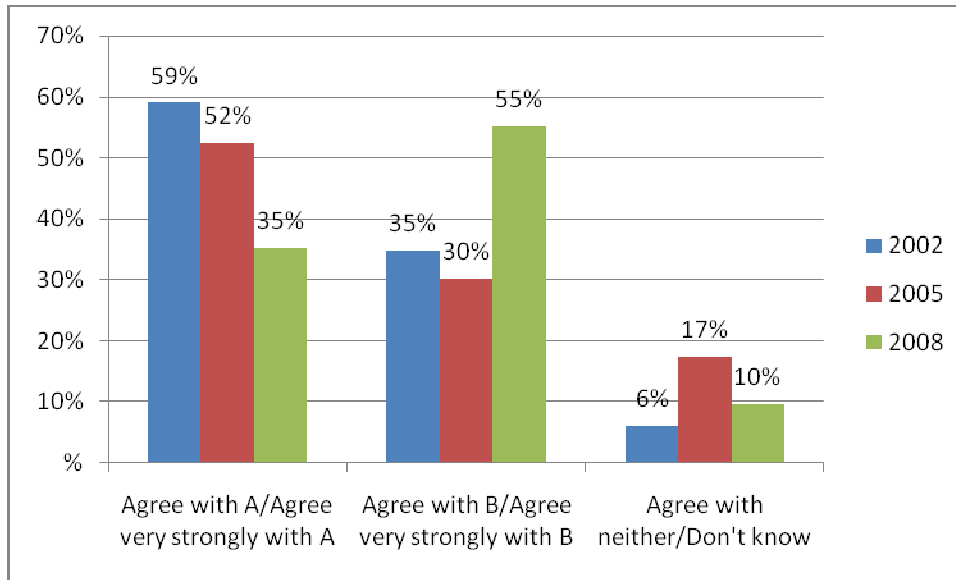
(Percent who disapprove/strongly disapprove of military rule, one-party rule and one-man rule)

2.5 Variable: Patience with democracy

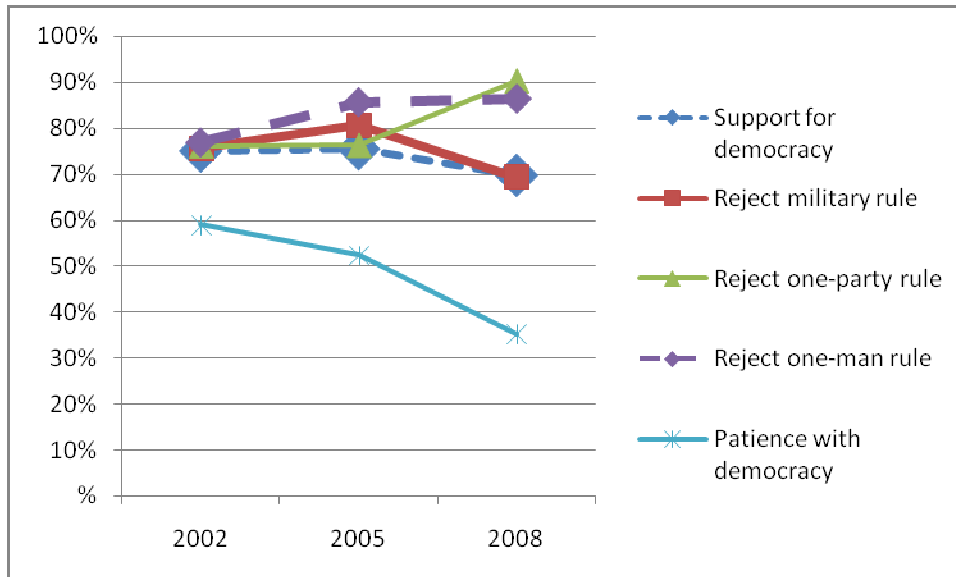
Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement A or Statement B.

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.



2.6 Summary of Demand for Democracy



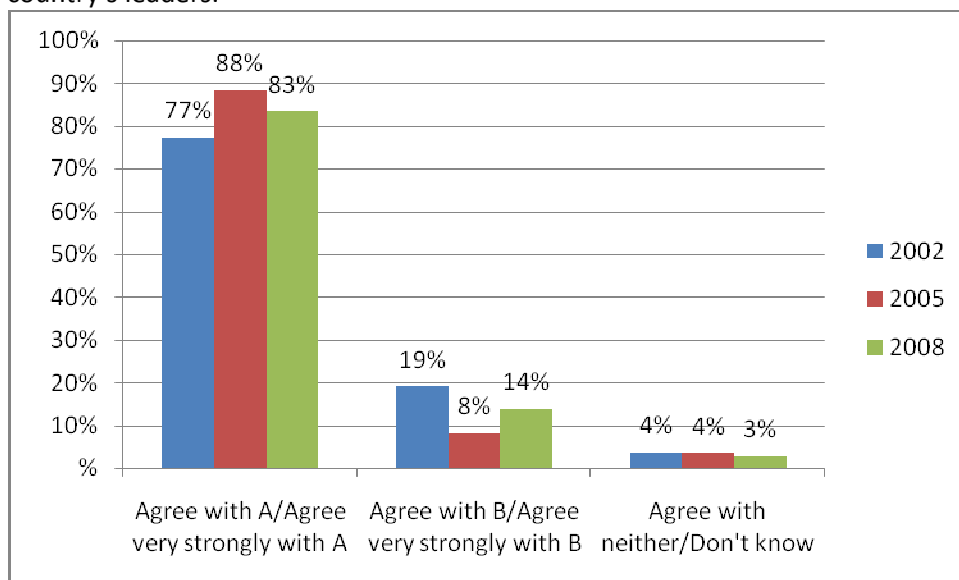
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

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.

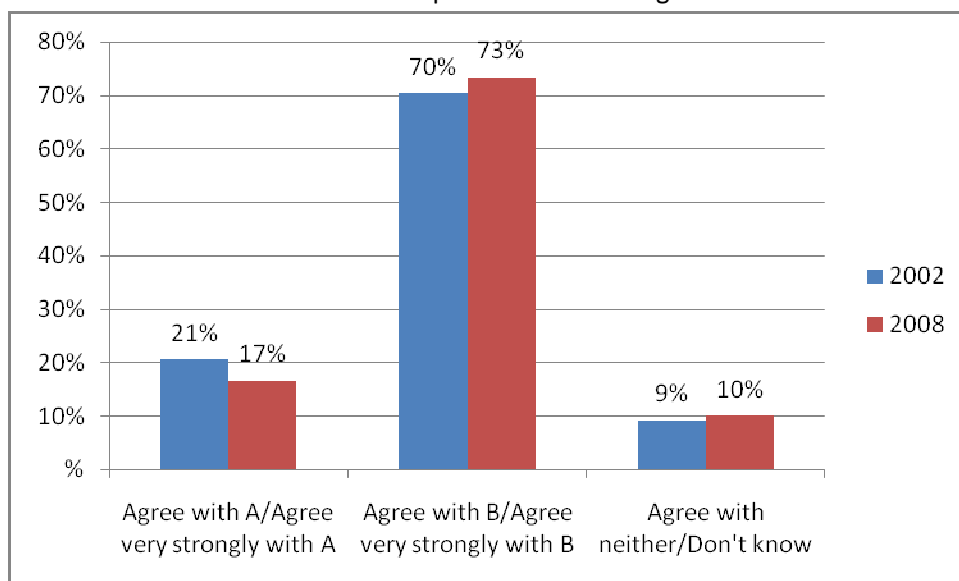


3.2 Variable: No term limits for the president vs. two terms only

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.

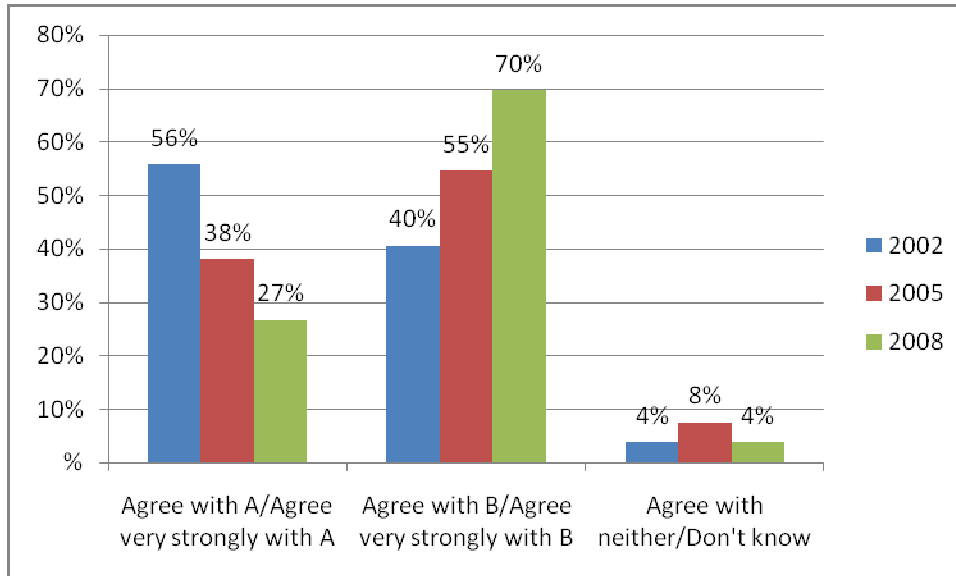


3.3 Variable: Political parties divisive vs. many parties needed

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 Senegal.

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

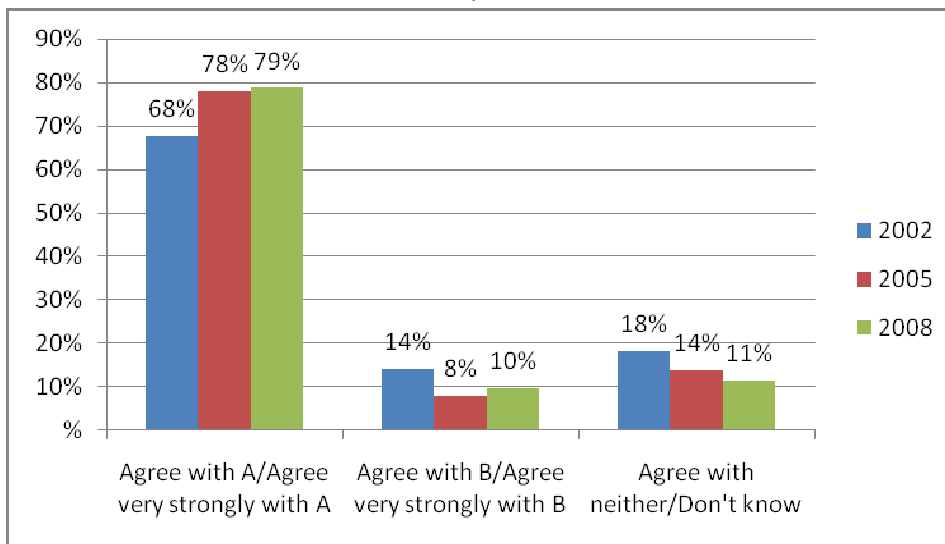


3.4 Variable: Parliament makes laws vs. President does

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.

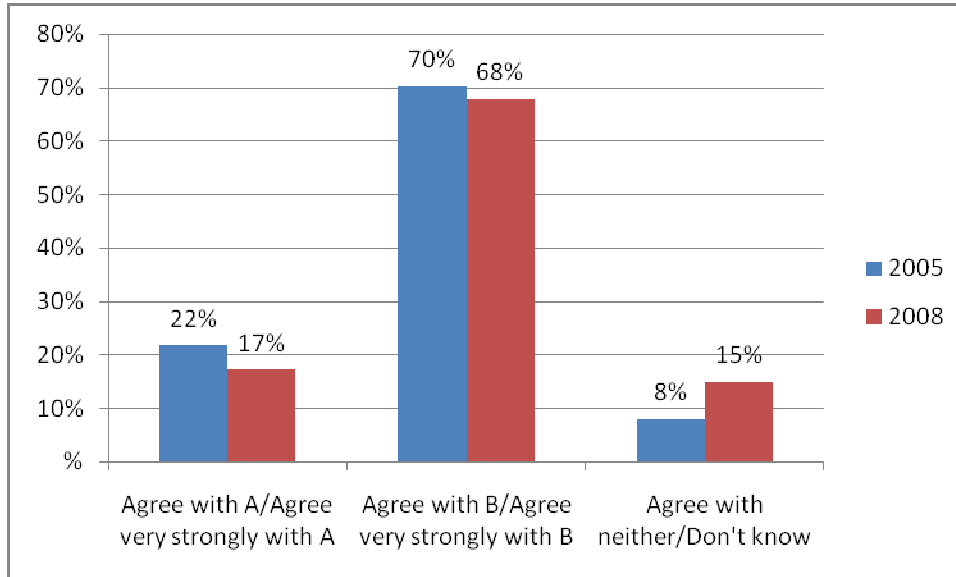


3.5 Variable: President free to act vs. obey the laws and courts

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.

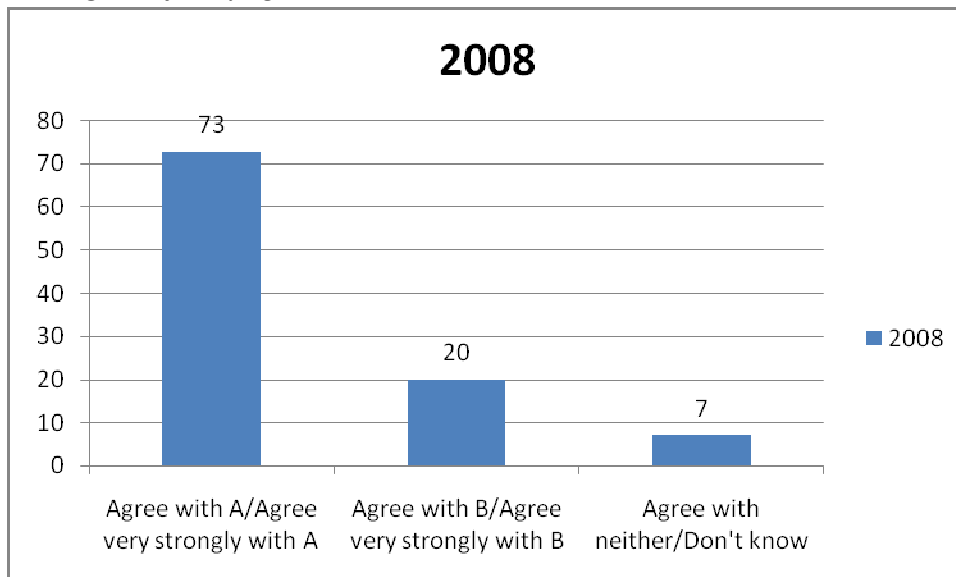


3.6 Variable: Parliament monitors President vs. cooperate

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.

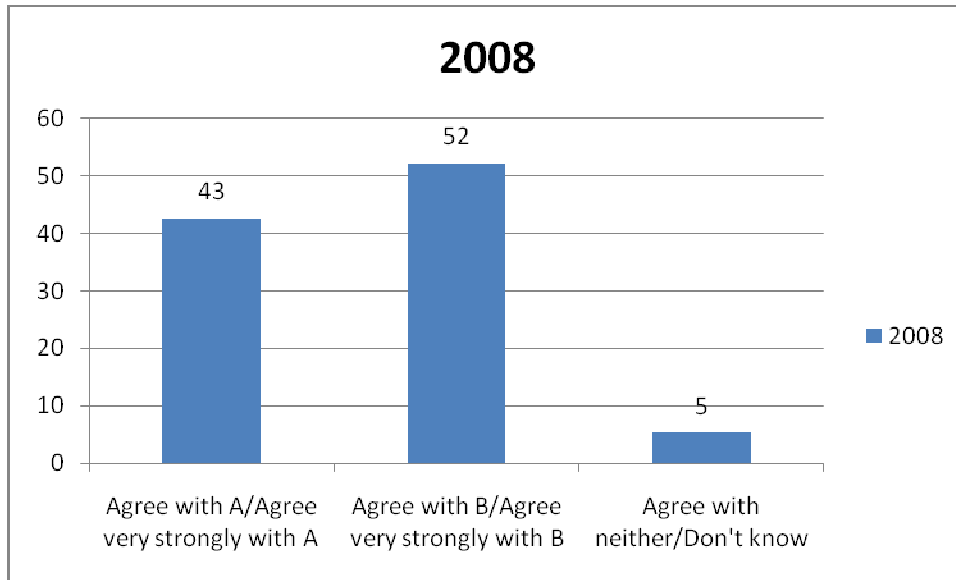


3.7 Variable: Opposition parties examine government vs. cooperate

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.

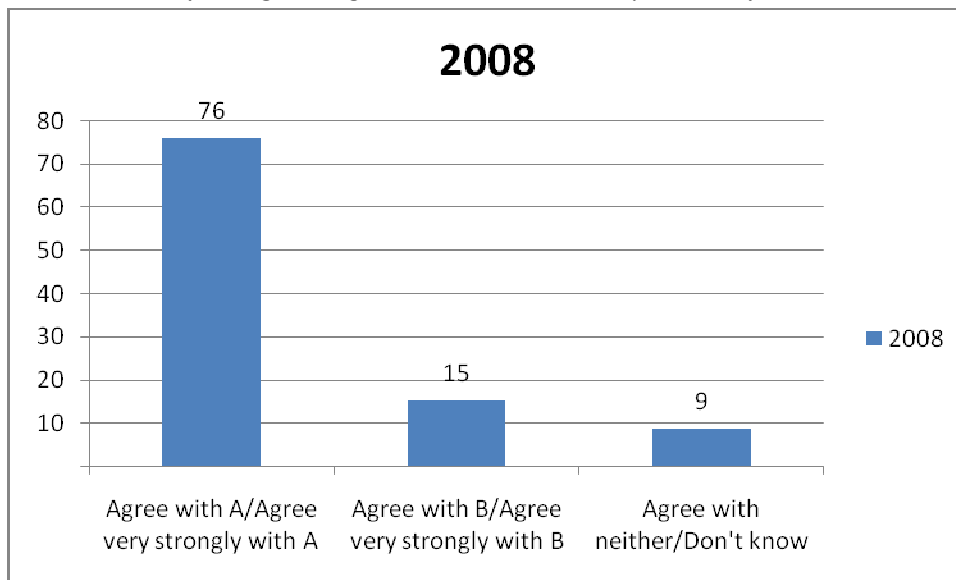


3.8 Variable: Media examines government vs. cooperate

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.

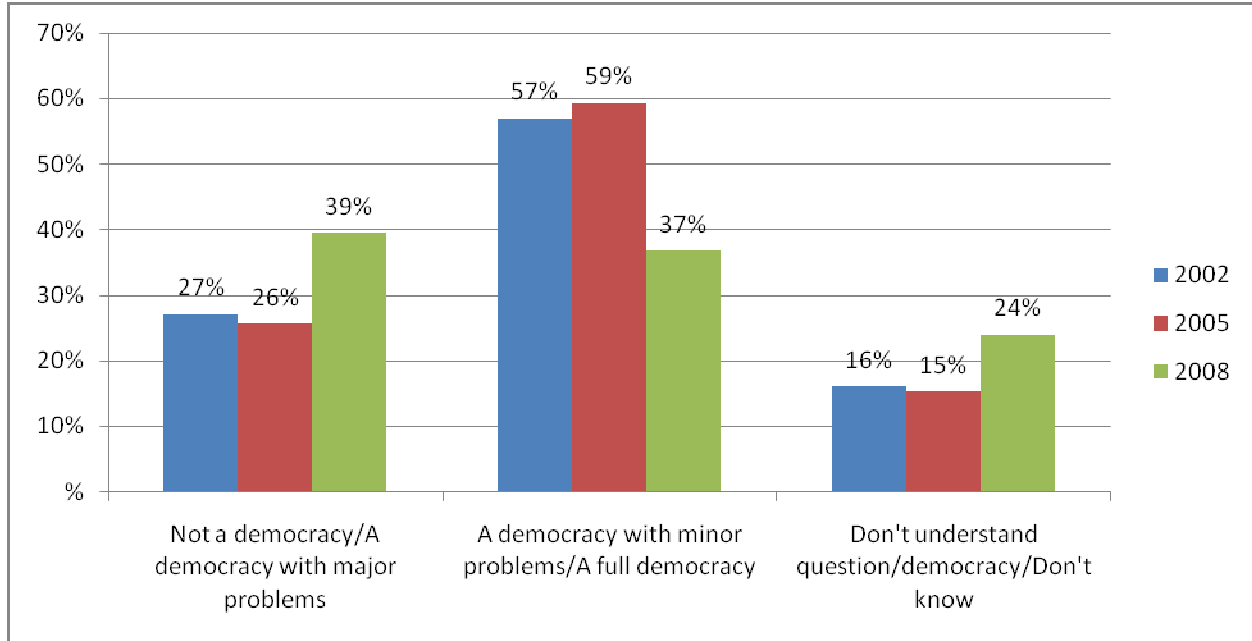
B: Too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country.



SUPPLY OF DEMOCRACY

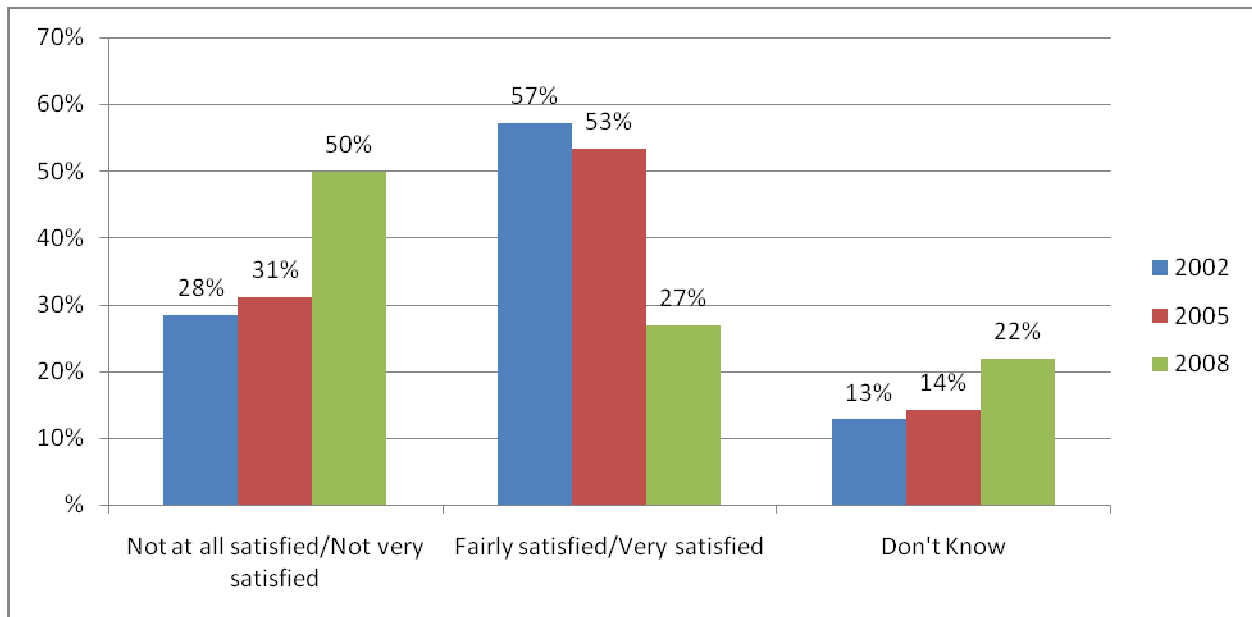
4.1 Variable: Extent of Democracy

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



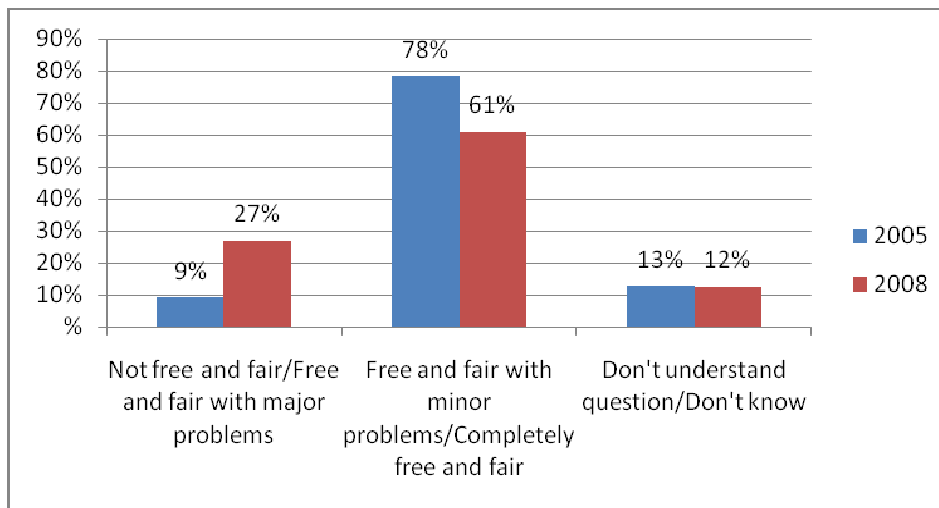
4.2 Variable: Satisfaction with democracy

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



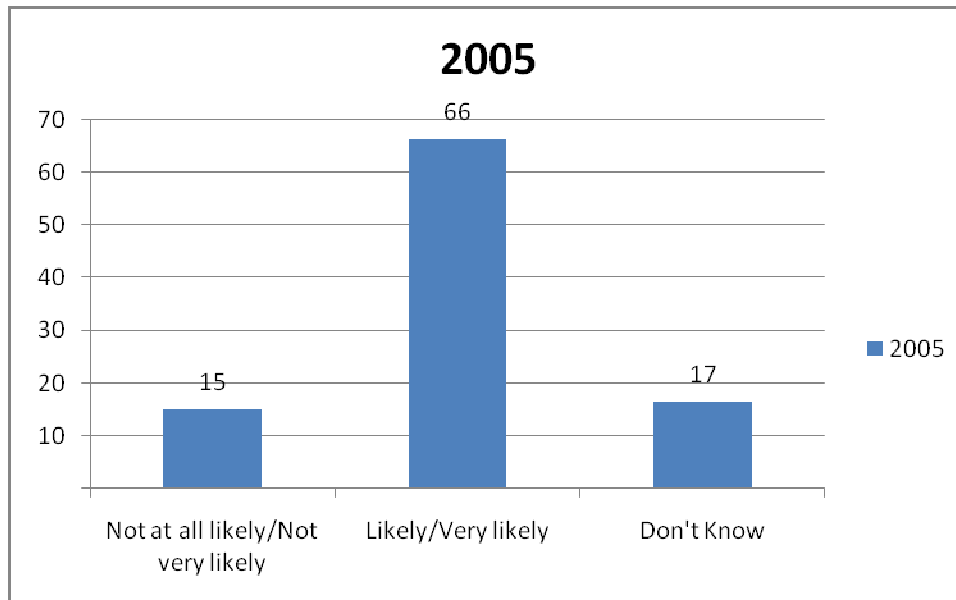
4.3 Variable: Elections free and fair

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



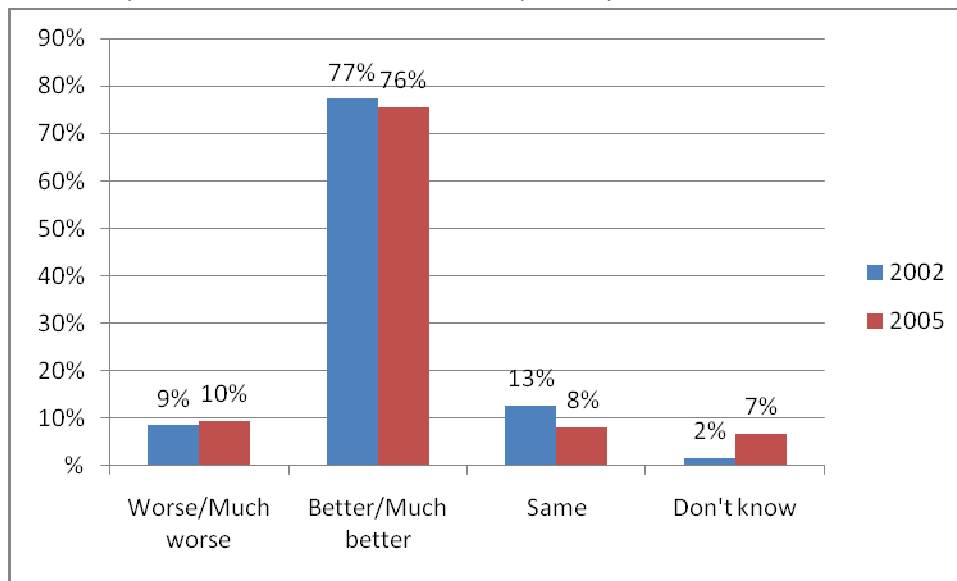
4.4 Variable: Future of democracy

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



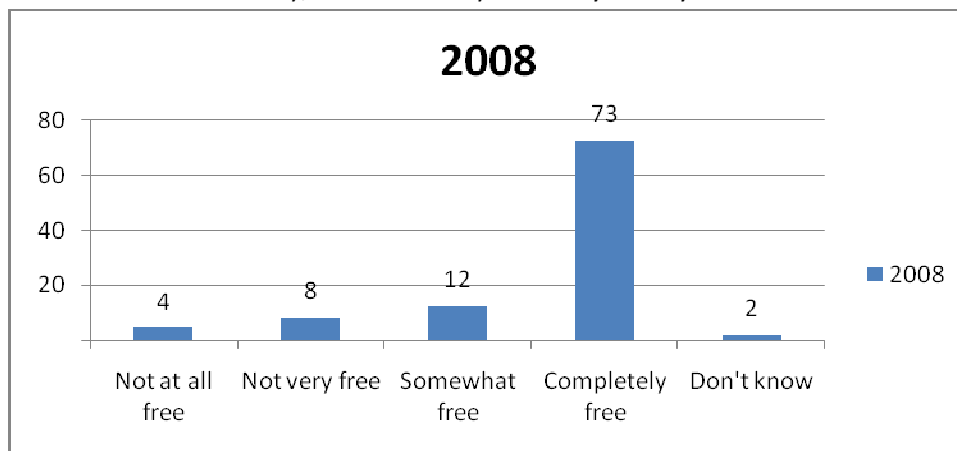
4.5 Variable: Freedom of speech (2002-2005)

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?



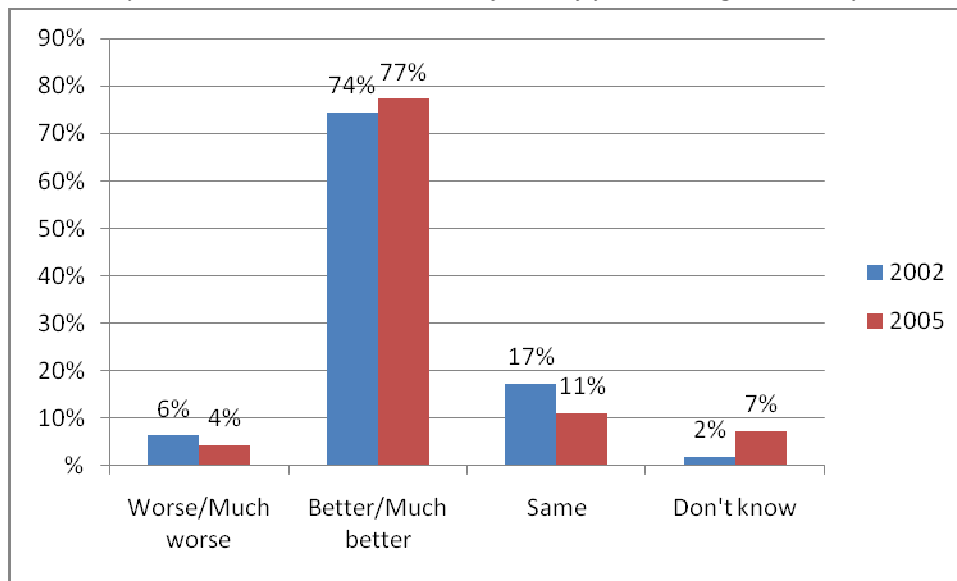
4.6 Variable: Freedom of speech (2008)

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



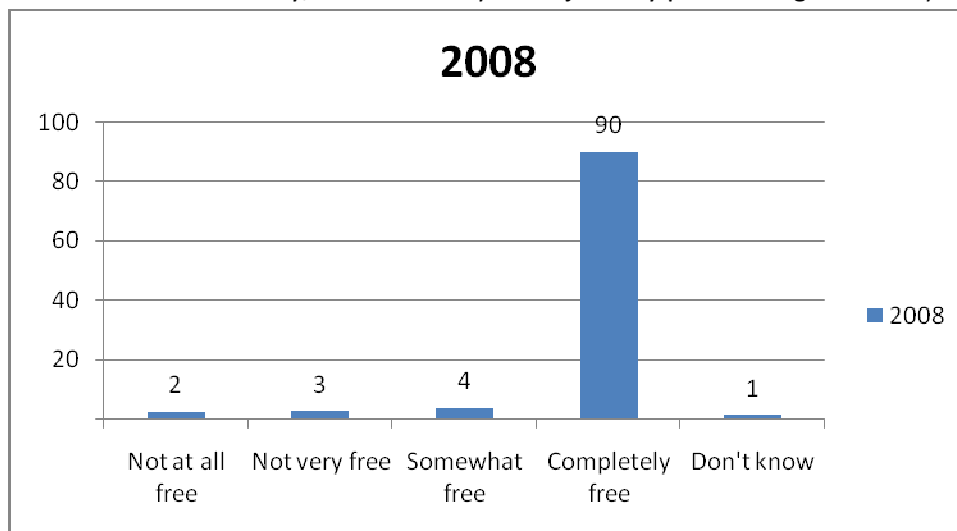
4.7 Variable: Freedom of association (2002-2005)

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?



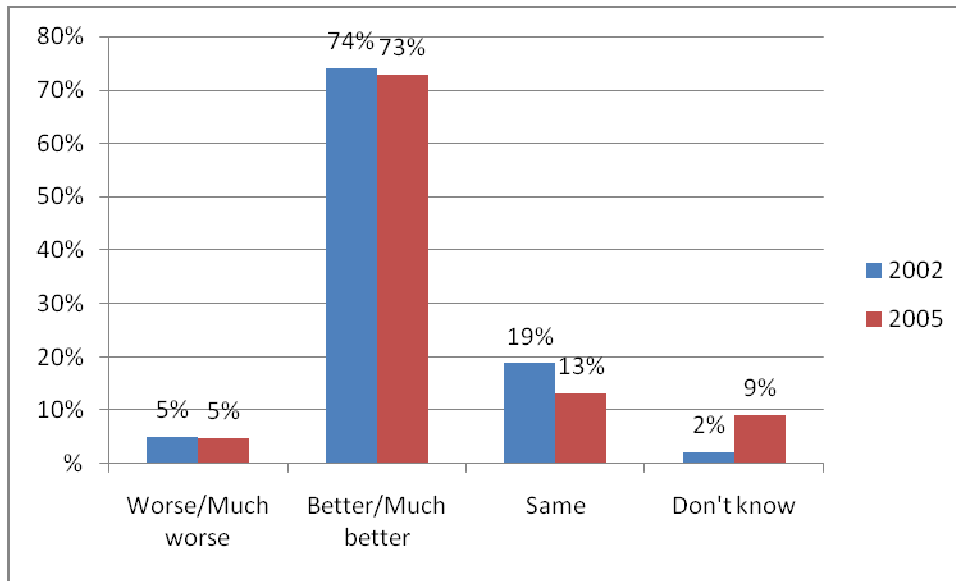
4.8 Variable: Freedom of association (2008)

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



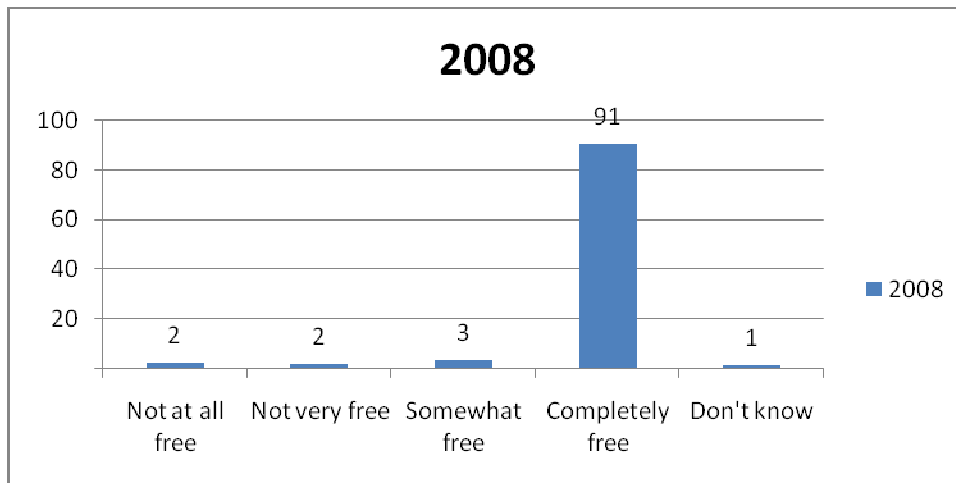
4.9 Variable: Voting freedom (2002-2005)

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?



The Afrobarometer, a cross-national survey research project, is conducted collaboratively by social scientists from 20 African countries. Coordination is provided by three Core Partners: the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), and the Institute for Research in Empirical Political Economy (IREEP, Benin). Michigan State University and the University of Cape Town serve as Support Units to the project. In addition, National Partners in each country directly manage survey fieldwork and data management.

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For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org