
Afrobarometer Round 6

**New data from
across Africa**



Accra, Ghana
22 November 2016

News release

Do Africans still want democracy? Afrobarometer findings warn of democratic recession, point to long-term gains

A decade-long upward trend in African citizens' demand for democracy has ended with a downward turn since 2012, according to a new Afrobarometer analysis.

But despite warning signs of a democratic recession, public demand for democracy remains higher than a decade ago, and most Africans still say they want more democracy than they're actually getting – a good basis for future democratic gains.

One important factor: the quality of elections. African countries with high-quality elections are more likely to show increases in popular demand for democracy.

The Afrobarometer findings, which are being released today (22 November), are based on interviews with about 54,000 citizens in 36 African countries. The report, titled "Do Africans still want democracy?" (Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 36), is available in English and French at www.afrobarometer.org.

Key findings

- On average across the continent, Africans support democracy as a preferred type of political regime. Large majorities also reject alternative authoritarian regimes such as presidential dictatorship, military rule, and one-party government. Smaller proportions agree on all four of these aspects of democratic preference, an index we call "demand for democracy" (Figure 1).
- Large cross-national differences exist in demand for democracy. For example, while three in four respondents in Mauritius are consistent, committed democrats, fewer than one in 10 Mozambicans merit the same description (Figure 2).
- Demographically, demand is highest amongst those who live in urban settings, have a university education, and work in middle-class occupations. There is also an important gender gap, with women significantly less likely to demand democracy than men.
- Across 34 countries included in both of Afrobarometer's two most recent rounds of surveys, popular demand for democracy increased in 10 countries, decreased in 14 countries, and remained essentially unchanged in 10 countries.
- As for longer-term trends in 16 countries surveyed since 2002, a steady, decade-long upward trend in demand for democracy has ended with a downward turn since 2012 (Figure 3).
- The quality of elections helps to explain demand for democracy. African countries with high-quality elections are more likely to register increases in popular demand for democracy than countries with low-quality elections.

- In a positive sign for the future of democracy, popular demand for democracy still exceeds citizen perceptions of the available supply of democracy in most African countries (26 out of 36 in 2015) (Figure 4).

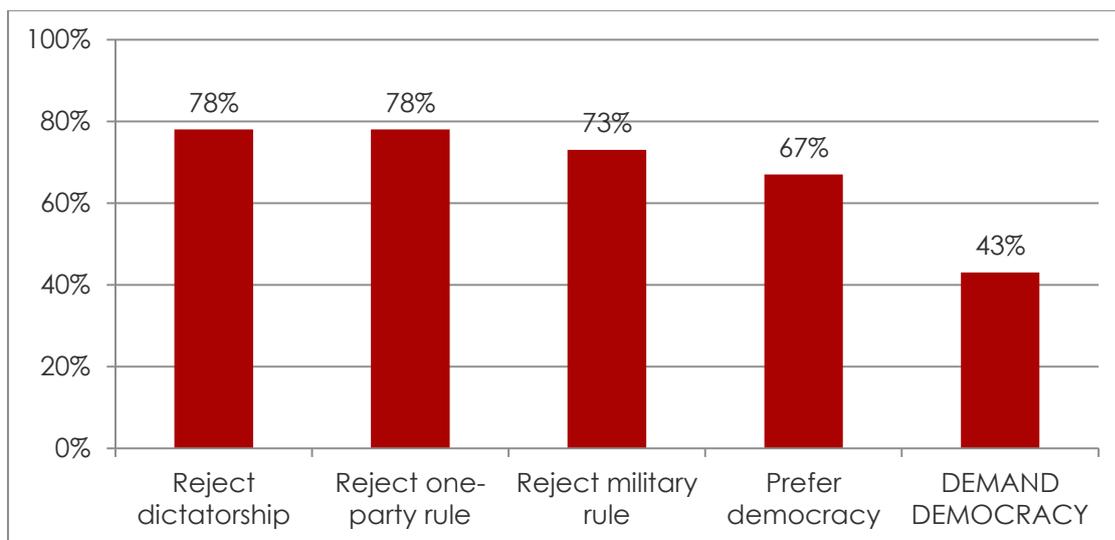
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and findings from Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2% (for samples of 2,400) or +/-3% (for samples of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level.

Interested readers should visit <http://globalreleases.afrobarometer.org> for previous Round 6 releases and watch for additional releases over the coming months.

Figures

Figure 1: Key public attitudes toward democracy | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked:

1. There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?

- A. Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
- B. The army comes in to govern the country.
- C. Elections and the National Assembly are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

(% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove" of each alternative)

2. Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?

Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

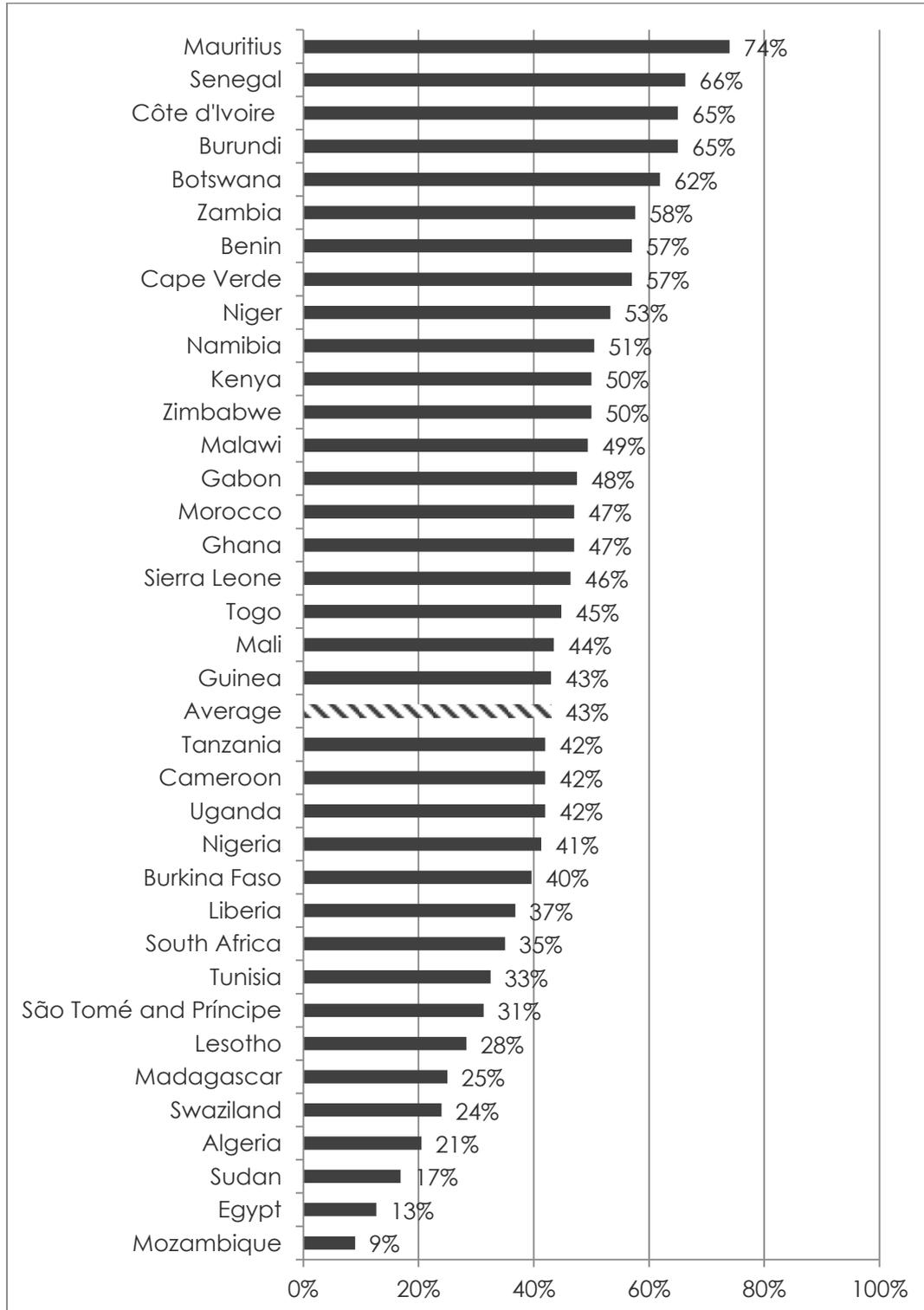
Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

(% who say democracy is preferable)

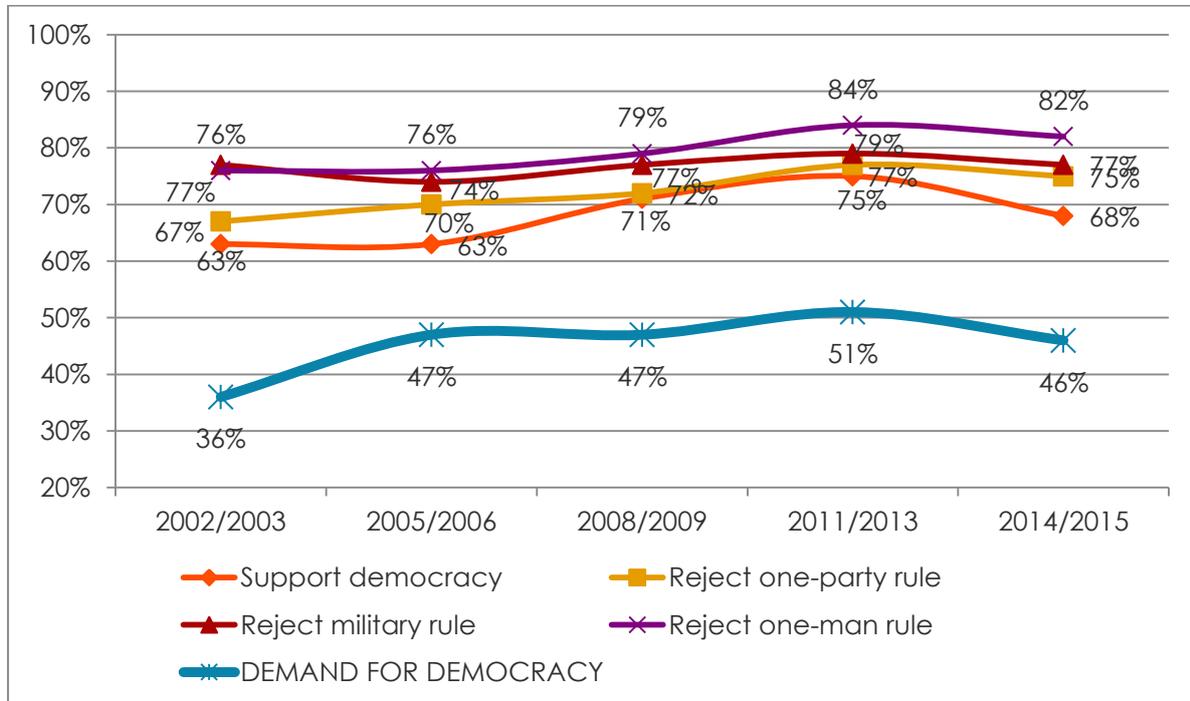
Demand for democracy: % who prefer democracy and reject all three authoritarian alternatives

Figure 2: Demand for democracy | 36 countries | 2014/2015



(% who demand democracy, i.e. who prefer democracy and reject all three authoritarian regimes)

Figure 3: Do Africans want democracy? Average trends | 16 countries | 2002-2015



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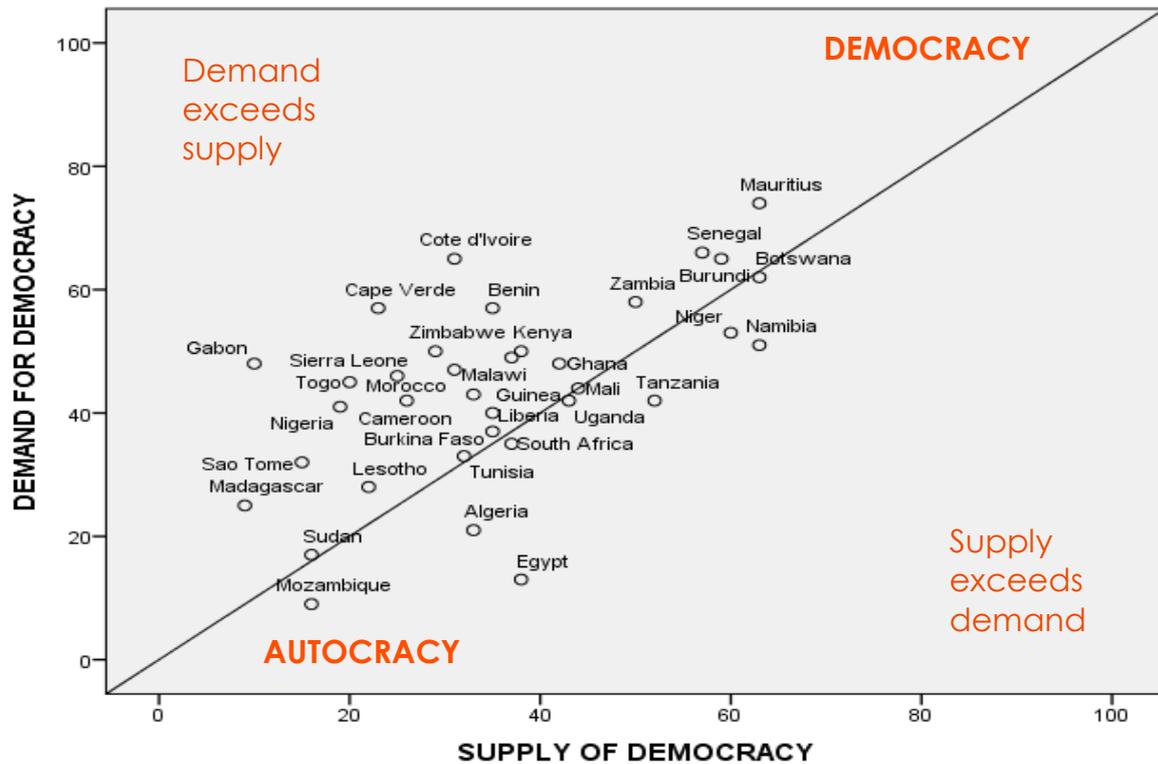
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(% who say democracy is preferable)

Demand for democracy: % who prefer democracy and reject all three authoritarian alternatives

Figure 4: Status of political regimes in Africa: Demand and supply | 36 countries
 | 2014/2015



For more information, please contact:

Brian Howard
 Afrobarometer
 Telephone: 001-713-624-0373
 Email: bhoward@afrobarometer.org

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Democracy in Africa: Demand and supply

36 African countries | 2014/2015

