Botswana's democratic consolidation: What will it take?

By Rorisang Lekalake

Introduction

Botswana is Africa's oldest continuous democracy, having enjoyed decades of peaceful multipartyism since independence in 1966. However, this success is tempered by growing concerns that the country's remarkable stability has come at the cost of further political development. Significant weaknesses in Botswana's democracy include low civic participation, relatively weak opposition and civil society sectors, and a lack of incumbent turnover in 11 consecutive free and fair elections. Despite these challenges, Botswana has maintained its reputation as an African success story due to the scale, pace, and endurance of its socioeconomic and political development, particularly given setbacks elsewhere in the region.

Democracy is one of Botswana's four founding principles and is a pillar of its National Vision 2016, which has driven development plans since 1997 (Presidential Task Group, 1997).[1] The Vision 2016 Council's evaluation of the country's progress on this front is largely positive, citing high rankings on international benchmarks relative to other African countries (Botswana Vision 2016 Council, 2015). Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), for example, ranks Botswana as the least corrupt country in sub-Saharan Africa, while Freedom House has classified the country as "free" since 1973. In recent years, however, the country's CPI score has declined (Transparency International, 2015), and in 2009, Freedom House downgraded Botswana's political rights rating as a result of "decreased transparency and accountability in the executive branch under President Seretse Khama Ian Khama's administration" (Freedom House, 2015a).

Both Freedom House and Transparency International rely on surveys of experts to monitor political freedoms and accountability around the world, but Bratton and Mattes (2003) argue that public opinion is a better measure of democratic consolidation: "No matter how well or badly international donors or academic think tanks rate the extent of democracy in a given country, this form of regime will only consolidate if ordinary people themselves believe that democracy is being supplied" (p. 2). Recent analysis of public opinion data from Afrobarometer surveys demonstrates that although Batswana continue to report enjoying high levels of democracy compared to citizens of other African countries (Bentley, Han, & Penar, 2015), there have been significant declines in public assessments of freedom of expression (Lekorwe & Moseki, 2015) and accountability (Molomo, Molefe, & Seabo, 2015) in the country. In September 2015, President Khama's office reasserted his commitment to democratic principles and refuted rumours that he planned to pursue a third term, citing Afrobarometer results as evidence of the country's high democratic standing on the continent (Office of the President, 2015).

As democratization has been an explicit goal of national policy since the late 1990s, this paper explores trends in citizens' attitudes toward and evaluations of democracy in Botswana over the same time period (1999-2014). Have Botswana's prospects for democratic consolidation improved over the past 15 years? How can the post-Vision 2016 development agenda facilitate this process?

This preliminary analysis indicates that most (but not all) Batswana are familiar with the concept of "democracy" and are supportive of its tenets. While the data suggest that the country has some way to go before achieving democratic consolidation, its prospects are not too different from those of other relatively developed democracies in the region. Overall, citizens in sub-Saharan Africa's best-performing democracies are increasingly critical of their respective countries' implementation of the regime.[2] Future policy initiatives should therefore

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[1] The other three principles are development, unity, and self-reliance. National Vision 2016 identifies seven key development goals, or "pillars," the fifth one of which is "An open, democratic and accountable nation."

[2] This paper uses the term "political regime" to indicate "the 'rules of the political game' for choosing leaders and exercising power; simply conceived, regimes fall on a continuum from democracy through hybrid arrangements to autocracy" (Bratton & Gyimah-Boadi, 2015, p. 3).

focus on increasing popular awareness of democracy and its benefits among sub-populations that are less familiar with the concept and on addressing recent setbacks in its institutionalization in order to promote greater citizen support.

Afrobarometer survey

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. Six rounds of surveys have been conducted between 1999 and 2015. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200 or 2,400 respondents.

For its Round 6 survey in Botswana the national Afrobarometer team, led by Star Awards (Pty) Ltd., interviewed 1,200 adult Batswana in June and July 2014. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of sampling error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2012.

Key findings

- Eight in 10 Batswana (82%) claim to understand the term "democracy" in either English (50%) or Setswana (32%). Urban residents, men, and educated Batswana are more likely to understand the term than rural residents, women, and less educated citizens.

- Batswana view democracy primarily in terms of its liberal and procedural components rather than material outcomes. Since 1999, there has been a substantial shift in how respondents define democracy; they now place greater emphasis on civil liberties and elections and multipartyism and less on popular rule and peace and unity.

- About two-thirds (64%) of Batswana demand democracy (i.e. prefer democracy over other forms of government and reject non-democratic alternatives) – roughly the same proportion as in 1999.

- Importantly, the proportion of Batswana who perceive an adequate supply of democracy in their country (i.e. those who both see the country as a democracy and are satisfied with the way democracy works) has declined by 17 percentage points since 2008, to 63%.

- Demand for democracy (64%) and supply (63%) are roughly in equilibrium, suggesting that the regime may be consolidating, but both measures are at a relatively low level (i.e. less than a full democracy) (Bratton & Mattes, 2003). Furthermore, this equilibrium has not been stable for long enough to indicate true consolidation, despite the country's reputation and its history of electoral democracy.

- Batswana are not alone in reporting a declining supply of democracy. Across 10 of Africa's most developed democracies, the perceived supply of democracy declined by 9 percentage points between Round 5 surveys (2011/2013) and Round 6 (2014/2015), from 54% to 45%. Citizens of Mauritius, Africa's other notable democratic success story, report the highest levels of both demand for (77%) and supply of democracy (63%, tied with Botswana and Namibia).[3]

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[3] Freedom House currently rates 11 African countries as "free": Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, São Tomé and Princípe, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia (Freedom House, 2015). Round 6 (2014/2015) was the initial Afrobarometer survey in São Tomé and Princípe, so comparisons are available for only 10 countries.
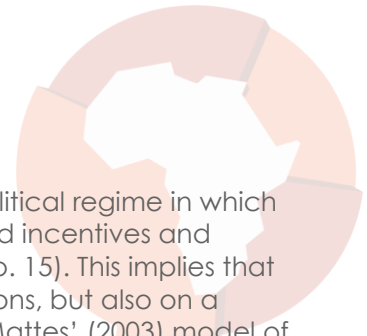
Democratic development in Botswana

Linz and Stepan (1996) define a consolidated democracy as "a political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, 'the only game in town' " (p. 15). This implies that consolidation relies not only on institutional and procedural conditions, but also on a supportive political culture to assure this legitimation. Bratton and Mattes' (2003) model of regime consolidation employs public opinion data to measure these attributes via popular *demand for democracy* (i.e. regime legitimation) and *perceived supply of democracy* (i.e. regime institutionalization). According to this model, regime consolidation is achieved when these two measures are in equilibrium over a sustained period of time.

This paper asks: *What does "democracy" mean to Batswana? Do citizens demand democracy? What are their evaluations of its implementation in the country? Is the regime consolidating? And if so, is it consolidating as a democracy?*

Although Botswana has successfully institutionalized many of the rules and procedures of electoral democracy, the country still faces several key democratic challenges. One of its longstanding weaknesses has been low levels of civic engagement. Voter turnout as a proportion of the eligible population has failed to exceed 50% in seven of the country's 11 elections, and voter apathy is a particular challenge among the nation's youth. The country's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has struggled to increase voter registration since its creation in 1997 (see Appendix A, Table A.1, for details on voter registration and turnout). Weak electoral participation is exacerbated by the absence of a strong civil society sector to promote civic education and participation between elections.

Political opposition in Botswana has also been relatively weak, and opposition parties have struggled to present themselves as an alternative to the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which subtitled its 2004 election manifesto "There is still no alternative." According to the June/July 2014 Afrobarometer survey, however, a plurality (44%) of Batswana agree (vs. 38% who disagree) that the opposition does provide a viable alternative to the ruling party. Furthermore, the combined strength of the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) coalition resulted in a highly competitive election in October 2014. For the first time in the country's history, the BDP won less than a two-thirds majority of parliamentary seats in contention, and its share of the popular vote dipped below half (46.45%)(see Appendix A, Table A.2). This unprecedented opposition success may point toward further gains in 2019, but similar advances by the Botswana National Front (BNF) in the 1994 elections were lost after infighting led to the creation of a breakaway party in 1998, further splitting the opposition vote.

This paper will present citizens' understanding and interpretation of "democracy" and then measure the regime's legitimation and institutionalization. A comparison of Botswana's scores with those in other relatively advanced African democracies will help contextualize this analysis.

Popular understanding of 'democracy' in Botswana

"Democracy" is a widely recognized yet contested term due to a wide range of definitions and measurements, each placing varying emphasis on procedural, institutional, and substantive aspects. Schumpeter (1942) defines democracy procedurally as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Lipset, 1959, p. 1). Huntington (1991) builds on this conceptualization in proposing the "two-turnover test" (two peaceful democratic turnovers) for full consolidation. After five decades of multipartyism, Botswana clearly meets Schumpeter's criteria but has failed to meet Huntington's benchmark due to its lack of political turnover.

In addition to procedural components, democracy is often understood in terms of its liberal values (i.e. civil rights and personal freedoms) and substantive outcomes (i.e. material benefits such as socioeconomic development and service provision). The conventional view

is that Africans' interpretations of democracy are largely based on substantive outcomes, thus leading to instrumental, rather than intrinsic, support for the regime (i.e. based on what it *does* rather than what it *is*) (Bratton & Mattes, 2003).

Afrobarometer has measured Africans' interpretation of "democracy" on three occasions: Round 1 (1999/2001), Round 3 (2005/2006), and Round 6 (2014/2015). Respondents were asked *"What, if anything, does democracy mean to you?"* in order to gauge both their understanding of the term in the official language (i.e. English, French, Arabic, or Portuguese) and its meaning.[4] In Botswana, all respondents were asked the question using the English term, "democracy," regardless of the interview language. This was translated into Setswana (as "*Puso ya batho ka batho*") only if the respondent did not understand the English term.

Awareness of 'democracy'

Unlike in most African countries, Botswana's democratic transition took place at independence, and most citizens have no direct experience with non-democratic political regimes.[5] As democracy is one of Botswana's founding principles, it is unsurprising that a large majority of Batswana (82%) say they understand the term in either the country's official language, English (50%), or in the national language, Setswana (32%) (Figure 1). This is a slight improvement from 2005, but the fact that 17% of respondents still do not recognize the term indicates the need for further civic education.

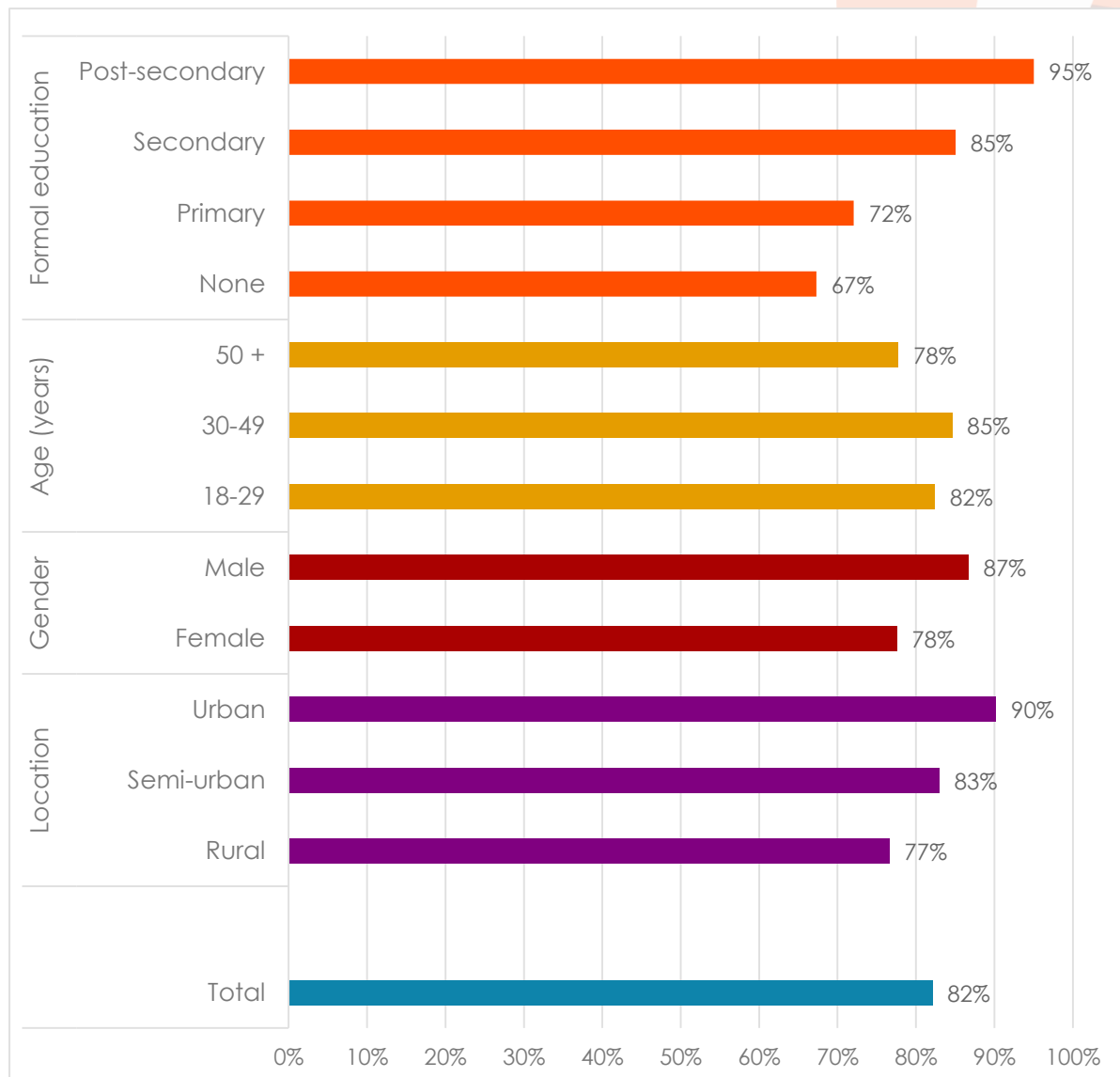**Figure 1: Understanding 'democracy'** | Botswana | 2005 and 2014
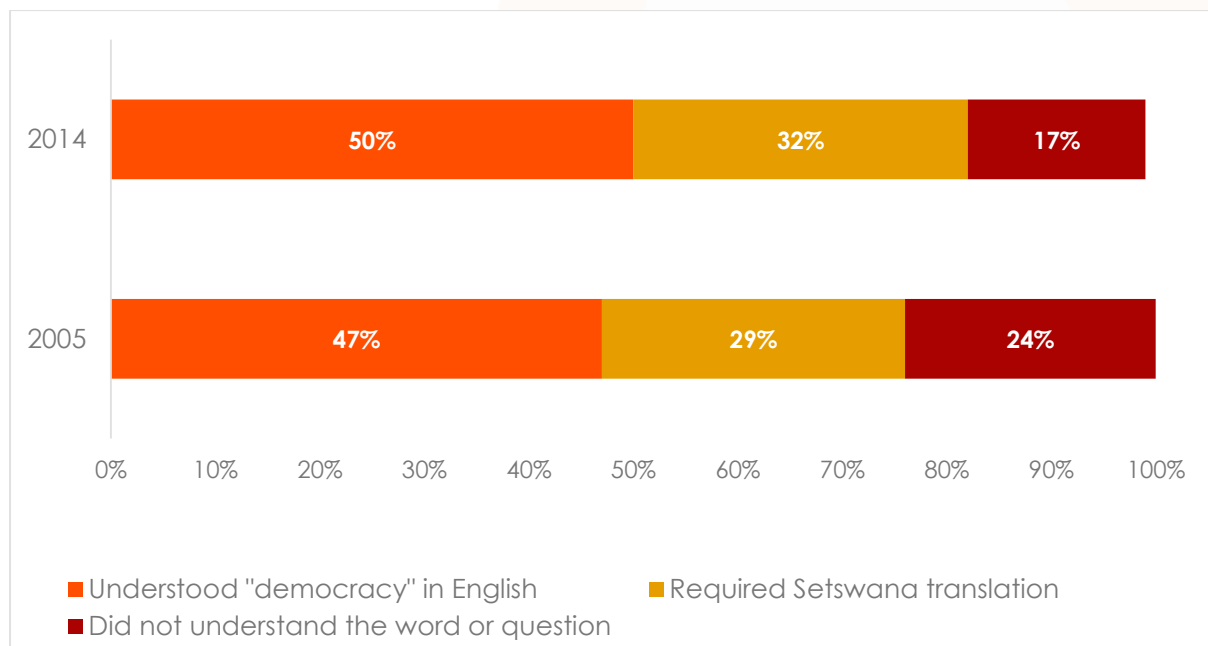
Respondents were asked: *What, if anything, does "democracy" mean to you?*

Levels of understanding (in either English or Setswana) differ by key demographic indicators (Figure 2). Understanding of "democracy" increases with urbanisation, from 77% in rural areas to 90% among urban dwellers. Batswana men are more likely to understand the term (87%) than women (78%). Older citizens (50 years and older) have slightly lower awareness levels than younger citizens. And understanding of democracy increases with education, although even among citizens with no formal education, two-thirds (67%) understand the term.

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[4] The question is open-ended, and respondents can provide up to three responses. This analysis focuses on each respondent's first answer because of low response rates for the two subsequent responses.

[5] In 2014, only 25% of respondents were born prior to independence.

Figure 2: Understanding of 'democracy' | by social attributes | Botswana | 2014


(% who understand "democracy" in English or Setswana)

Interpretations of 'democracy'

In Botswana, four interpretations of "democracy" account for approximately 60% of total responses: civil liberties, popular rule, peace/unity/power sharing, and electoral competition (Figure 3). These findings demonstrate that Batswana largely view democracy in either liberal or procedural terms, with very few alluding to material outcomes (for full frequencies, see Appendix B, Table B.5).

Figure 3: Meaning of 'democracy' | first response | Botswana | 1999-2014
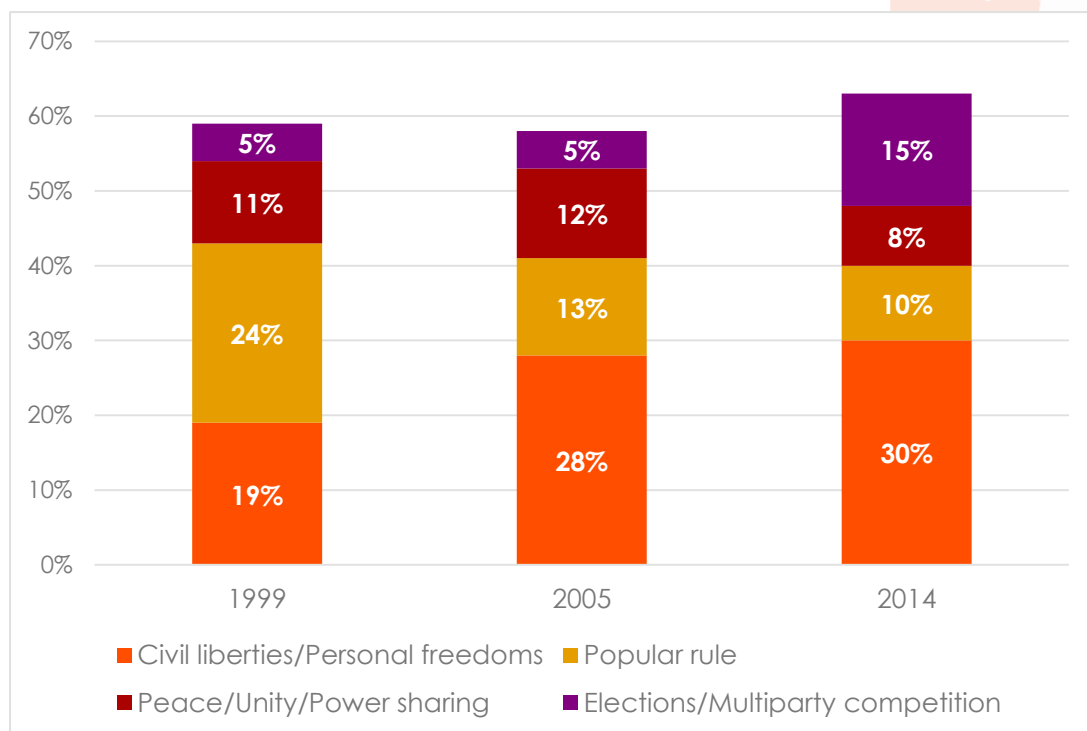
Respondents were asked: *What, if anything, does "democracy" mean to you? (Note: Figure shows the four most frequent responses.)*

Interestingly, civil liberties (for example, basic freedoms of speech, assembly, and association) overtook popular rule as the most frequently cited meaning of democracy between 1999 and 2005. As of 2014, such liberties were the primary interpretation of democracy for 30% of Batswana. The proportion of responses related to electoral competition had the largest increase over the past 15 years, tripling to 15% in 2014. Conversely, democracy's association with popular rule declined from the most frequently cited response (24%) in 1999 to third place (10%) in 2014, and its association with peace and unity declined by 3 percentage points.

In sum, most Batswana understand and can offer a definition of the term "democracy," although there are some variations by key social attributes. Further analysis of the interaction between these demographic variables would help to shape targeted policies to increase awareness. Batswana associate the term with its liberal and procedural components, and this understanding has shifted toward a greater emphasis on civil liberties/personal freedoms and elections/multiparty competition.

These findings provide context for understanding the results reported in the next sections on demand for and supply of democracy in Botswana.
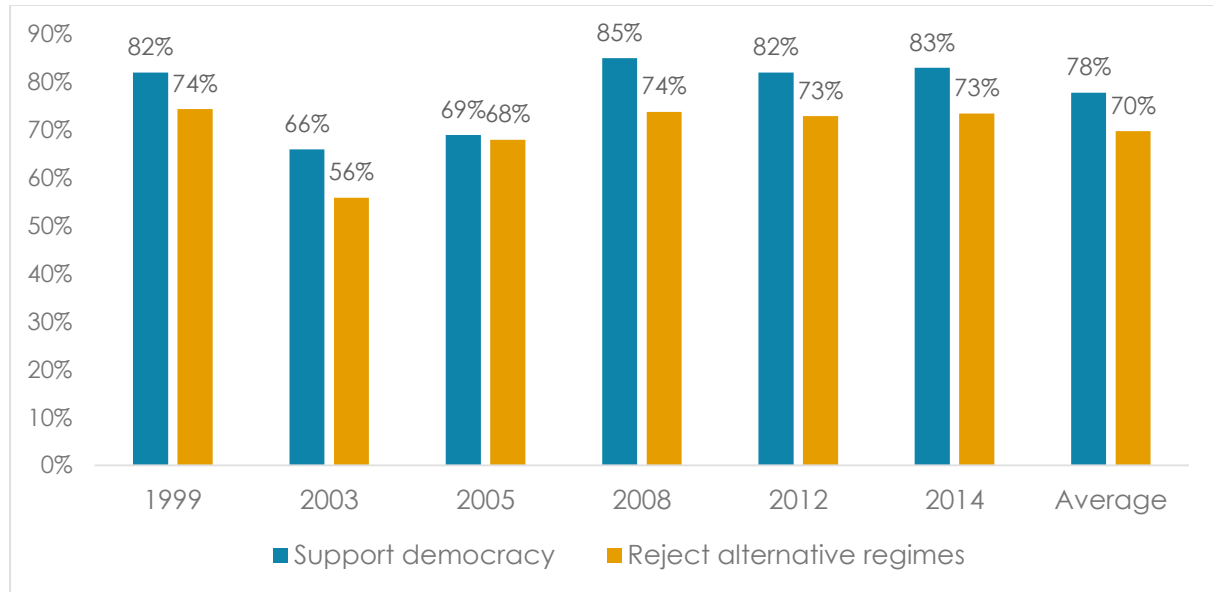
Political legitimation in Botswana

Democratic consolidation requires legitimation of the regime by both political elites and ordinary citizens (Bratton & Mattes, 2003). As an indicator of the views of ordinary citizens, Afrobarometer uses an index of "demand for democracy." It is measured as a combination of stated support for democracy along with rejection of three non-democratic alternative regimes (one-party rule, military government, and presidential dictatorship). Combining these components provides a more comprehensive picture of citizen commitment to democracy than support for democracy alone, as it addresses the potential for lingering authoritarian nostalgia and variations in interpretations of the term "democracy."

Popular demand for democracy, 1999-2014

Both support for democracy and rejection of non-democratic regimes have been the majority view in Botswana since 1999. On average across 15 years, 78% have expressed support for democracy as the preferred system of government, while an average of 77% have rejected one-party rule, and even higher proportions have rejected military rules (85% on average) and one-man rule (89%) (see Appendix C, Table C.1, for results by year). The proportion of Batswana who say they support democracy has consistently been higher than the proportion who reject all three alternative (i.e. non-democratic) regimes (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Components of demand for democracy | Botswana | 1999-2014

**Respondents were asked:**
1.   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 to any other kind of government")
2.   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 Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.
(% who "disapprove" or "disapprove strongly" of all three alternatives)

The Demand for Democracy Index is a cumulative measure based on whether respondents reject none, one, two, or all three authoritarian alternatives, and for those at the top of the scale, whether they both reject all alternative systems and express support for democracy. Despite the large majorities rejecting individual authoritarian alternatives reported above, this more stringent measure shows somewhat more modest results. In 2014, just 73% rejected all three authoritarian alternatives, and just 64% rejected all authoritarian alternatives and expressed support for democracy (Figure 5) (for disaggregated results, see Appendix C).

Popular demand for democracy in Botswana started at about this same level (66%) in 1999, but had declined significantly by 2003 (48%). Demand has now largely recovered to the original level. Still, demand for democracy is not as high in Botswana as one might expect for a country with such a long, successful history of electoral democracy; at present, almost four in 10 Batswana (36%) express some ambivalence toward the regime.

Figure 5: Demand for Democracy Index | Botswana | 1999-2014
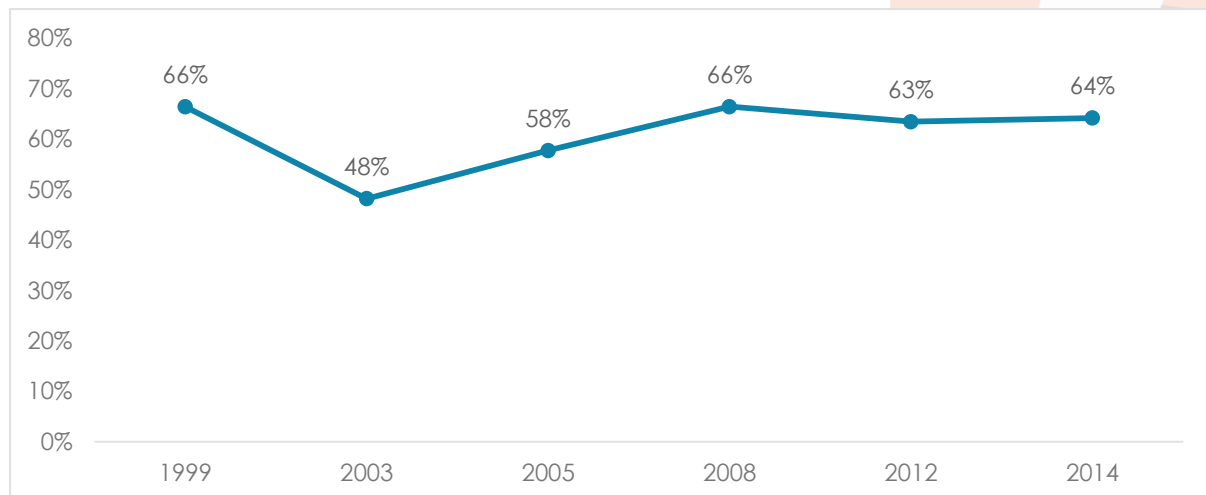
*(Four-item index: % who both support democracy and reject all three alternative political regimes)*

Institutionalization of democracy in Botswana

In addition to legitimation, democratic consolidation requires the institutionalization of its rules and procedures (Bratton & Mattes, 2003). Perceived supply of democracy is measured as a combined index of respondents' assessments of the extent of democracy in their country and their level of satisfaction with its implementation.

Perceived supply of democracy, 1999-2014

Between 1999 and 2014, the proportion of Batswana who believed that their country was "a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems" was consistently higher (on average 76%) than the proportion who said they were "very" or "fairly" satisfied with its implementation (69%) (Figure 6). Both measures recorded steep declines between 1999 and 2003, then peaked in 2008 before declining again by 15-16 percentage points.

**Figure 6: Components of supply of democracy** | Botswana | 1999-2014
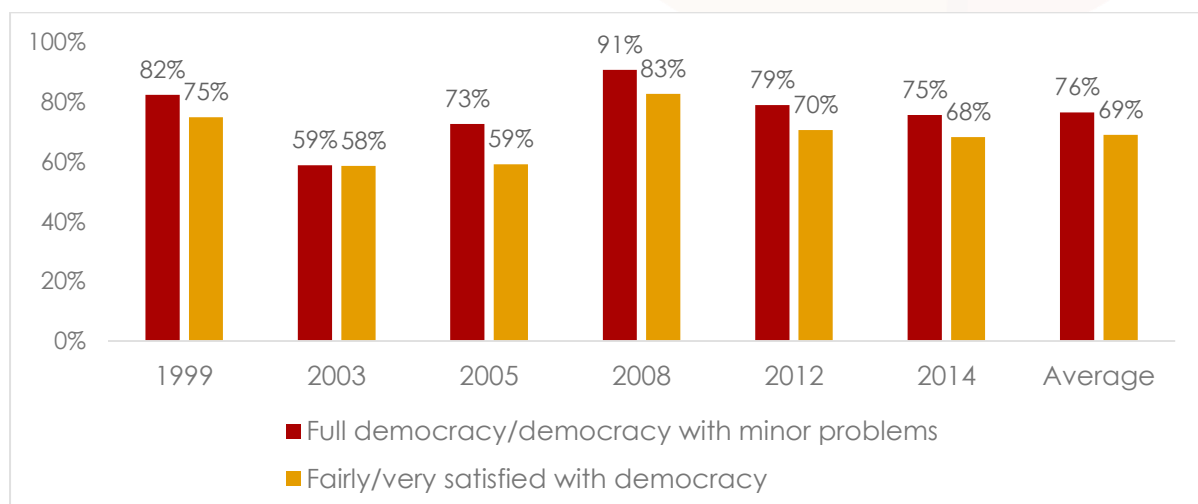
Respondents were asked:
1. *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Botswana today: A full democracy? A democracy, but with minor problems? A democracy with major problems? Not a democracy? (% who said "a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems")*
2. *Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Botswana? (% who said "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied")*

The Supply of Democracy Index is also cumulative, capturing those who both believe that Botswana is a democracy ("a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems") and who are "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with its implementation. The index of supply of democracy in Botswana has been markedly less stable than the index of demand for democracy. After peaking at 80% in 2008, the index records a dramatic decline (by 17 percentage points) to just 63% in 2014 (Figure 7).

This is an important finding; Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi (2015) argue that the two-item concept (defined negatively, i.e. as the proportion of respondents who are dissatisfied with the way democracy works and who consider that their country is "not a democracy" or is "a democracy with major problems") may provide an "early warning indicator" of potential regime instability. However, there was no significant crisis in Botswana at the time of an even larger decline (25 percentage points) between 1999 and 2003. It is unclear why measures of both demand for and supply of democracy experienced these declines at that time.

Figure 7: Supply of Democracy Index | Botswana | 1999-2014
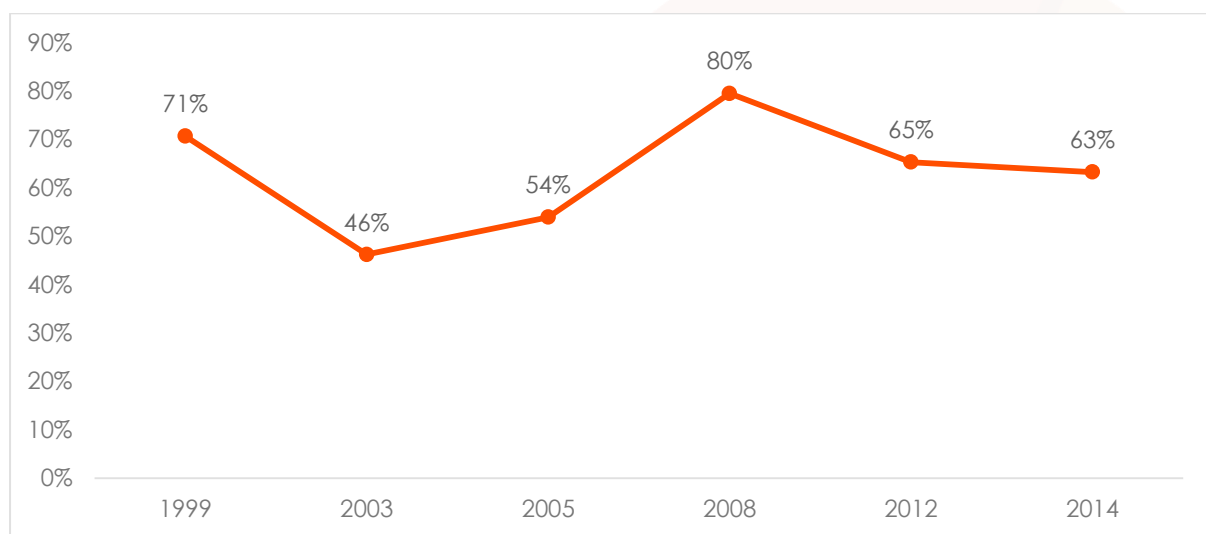
(Two-item index: % of respondents who both believe that Botswana is "a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems" and are satisfied with the way democracy works in Botswana)

While Afrobarometer does not ask respondents to explain their views on their country's democracy, declines in the perceived supply of democracy since 2008 mirror similar trends in key international democracy and accountability indicators. The latest Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), for example, reports significant declines on key indicators of participation and accountability between 2008 and 2014: political rights (16.7 points), diversion of public funds (12.5 points), prosecution of abuse of office (14.3 points), and access to information (12.5 points) (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2015). Following President Khama's confirmation in April 2008, analysts feared that his military background would have a detrimental effect on the country's democracy, reflected in his assertion, during his inaugural address, that "there can be no democracy without discipline" (Lekorwe, 2009, p. 4). Concerns were heightened by a series of controversies that included a number of extrajudicial killings linked to state security forces (2008-2009),[6] the first major split in the ruling party following an internal power struggle (2010),[7] and the termination of striking public sector workers (2011) (Freedom House, 2015).

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[6] According to Freedom House's 2010 country report, government statistics and media reports counted 10-12 extrajudicial killings between April 2008 and the end of 2009 (Freedom House, 2010).

[7] The breakaway Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) captured 30% of the vote in 2014 as one of the coalition partners in the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC).

Since Botswana is not in a transitional stage of democracy, however, declines in the perceived supply of democracy may alternatively reflect the fact that "citizens routinely re-evaluate regime performance as democracies mature, often raising their expectations" (Bratton & Gyimah-Boadi, 2015, p. 21). Significant drops in supply of democracy have also been recorded in a number of other relatively well-established democracies, including Benin and Ghana.

Prospects for democratic consolidation in Botswana

The supply/demand model of political development asserts that consolidation incorporates three dimensions: demand for democracy, perceived supply of democracy, and time. A political regime achieves consolidation when, over a sustained period of time, the proportion of citizens who demand democracy is equal to the proportion who believe that democracy is adequately institutionalized in the country. This can be an indication of democratic consolidation (when both measures are high, i.e. at least 70%) or of the consolidation of autocratic rule (when both measures are low).

Demand for and perceived supply of democracy in Botswana have followed the same general trajectory over time (Figure 8). Both measures peaked in 2008, but at that time there was a large gap between the proportion of Batswana who saw democracy as the most legitimate form of government (66%) and those who believed that democracy was adequately institutionalized (80%), indicating a "surplus of authority" in which "mass demands are relatively limited and people say they are satisfied with (whatever elites choose to call) 'democracy' " (Bratton & Houessou, 2014, p. 20).

Although demand and supply in Botswana have in most cases been near equilibrium, the equilibrium has not been stable, suggesting the regime has yet to fully consolidate. Furthermore, the country's prospects for consolidating at a highly *democratic* level appear to be regressing given the significant decline in the level of perceived institutionalization between 2008 (80%) and 2014 (63%). Demand for democracy, on the other hand, has remained fairly stable. At less than two-thirds of citizens, however, both measures are significantly lower than one might expect given the endurance of electoral democracy in Botswana. As previously mentioned, it is unclear whether the decline in perceived institutionalization is a reflection of higher citizen expectations of democracy (i.e. growth in what Norris (1999) calls "critical citizenship") or rather reflects real failures on the part of the regime to protect and extend democratic procedures and institutions.[8]

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[8] Using empirical evidence from advanced and developing democracies, Norris (1999) argues that the decline in public trust in democratic institutions during the 1990s was a reflection of "the emergence of more 'critical citizens,' or 'dissatisfied democrats,' who adhere strongly to democratic values but who find the existing structures of representative government … to be wanting" for 21st-century concerns (p. 3).

**Figure 8: Demand and supply: Equilibrium without consolidation** | Botswana
| 1999-2014
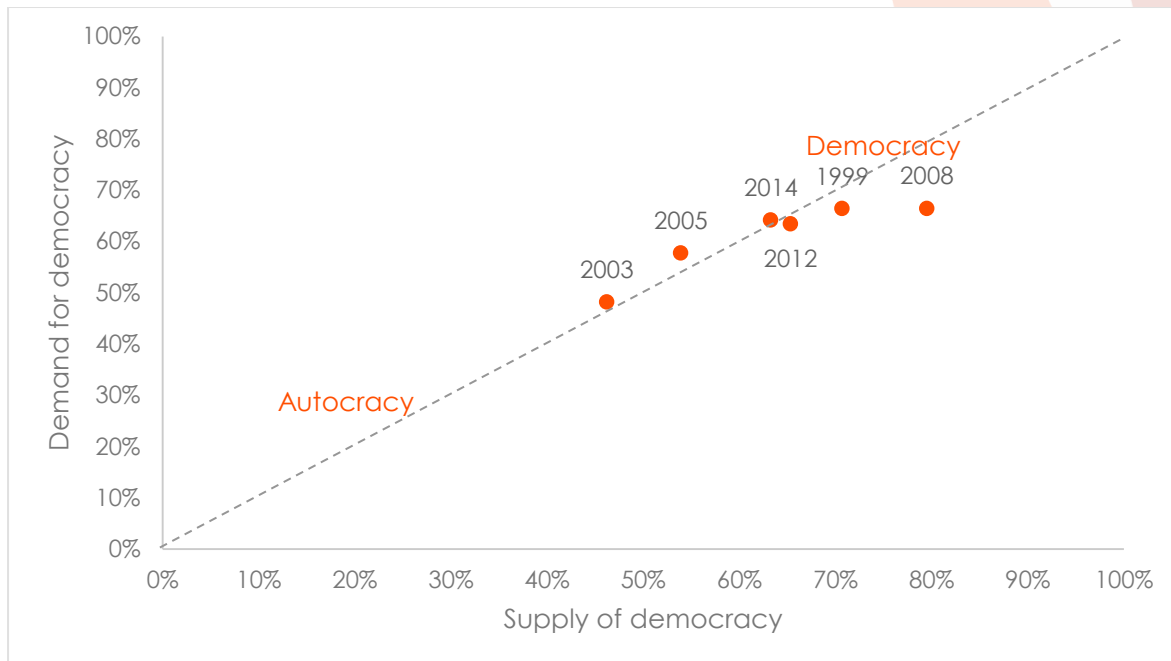
Botswana's regime consolidation in comparative context

Across 34 African countries in 2011/2013, supply of democracy lagged behind popular demand for democracy by 7 percentage points (Bratton & Houessou, 2014). This supply deficit is reflected in objective measures and expert surveys: At present, only 12% of sub-Saharan Africa's population live in "free" states (as defined by Freedom House), which is significantly lower than for the populations of Europe (86%), the Americas (71%), and Asia-Pacific (38%) but higher than for the populations of the Middle East and North Africa (5%) and Eurasia (0%) (see Appendix A, Table A.3, for Freedom House ratings of "free" African countries). Furthermore, while there were improvements in two countries between 2013 and 2014 (Tunisia and Guinea-Bissau), six African countries experienced declines in their ratings during the same period due to significant reversals in either civil liberties or political rights: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda (Freedom House, 2015b).

As Figure 9 shows, there is a deficit of democratic implementation in the 11 "free" African countries, that is, average demand for democracy exceeds the perceived supply. While Botswana, South Africa, and Tunisia all approach equilibrium, demand and supply in South Africa (36% and 37%, respectively) and Tunisia (34% and 32%, respectively) are significantly lower than in Botswana. In fact, Botswana has above-average levels of democratic demand and supply: On average across the 11 countries, 53% of citizens demand democracy, while less than half (41%) believe that it is adequately institutionalized in their respective countries. Senegalese (72%) and Mauritians (77%) show higher levels of demand for democracy than Batswana, but the latter is tied with Namibia and Mauritius for highest perceived democratic supply (63%) even though Freedom House ranks both of them as more democratic than Botswana (Appendix C, tables C.4-C.7).

Bratton and Mattes (2003) argue that public opinion is a better measure of consolidation than expert surveys, suggesting that ordinary citizens are the best judges of the extent to which democracy is supplied in a given country. Of the 11 countries under consideration in this analysis, all but Lesotho have better scores than Botswana on Freedom House's index, yet none has a higher score on the Supply of Democracy Index. This suggests that citizens in these democracies are more likely to be critical about conditions on the ground than expert opinion, which appears to support the argument of a growth in "critical citizenship."

Figure 9: Regime consolidation | 11 'free' countries | 2014/2015
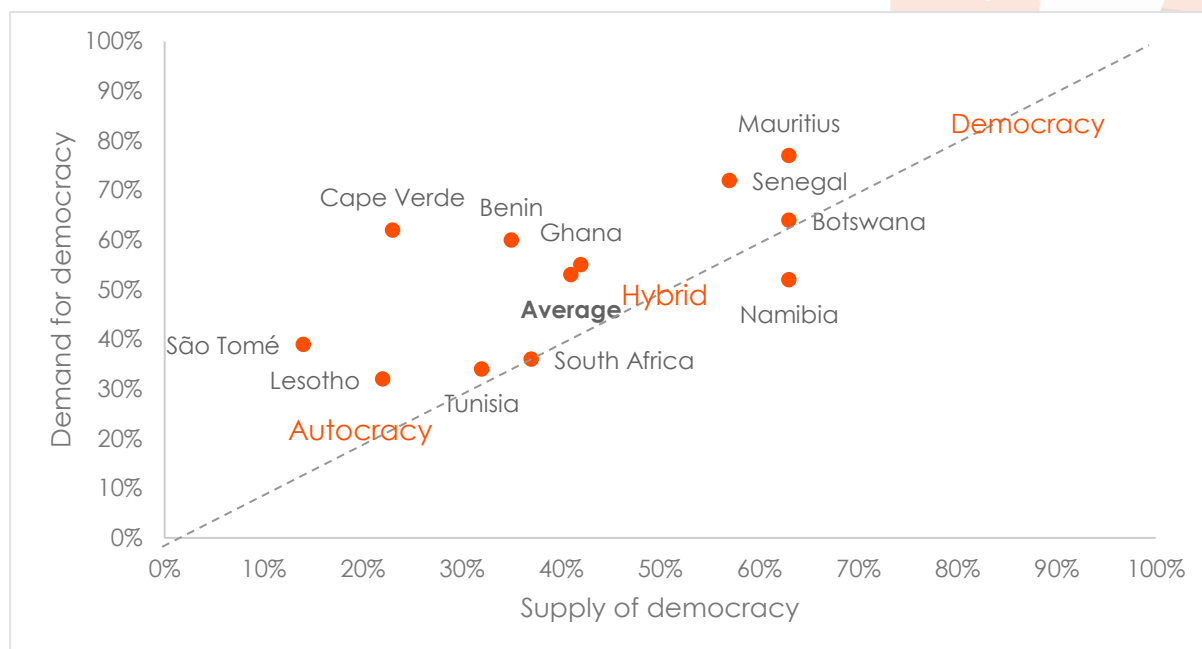
Namibia and Tunisia are the only countries that have made progress on both measures of democratic consolidation since the previous round of surveys in 2011/2013 (Figure 10). Most countries have experienced an increase in demand (3 percentage points, on average), with significant rises in Namibia (14 points), Senegal (11 points), and Tunisia (7 points). Conversely, perceived supply has declined by 7 percentage points on average, with significant declines in Ghana (-23 points), Benin (-16 points), Cape Verde (-15 points), Lesotho (-15 points), and South Africa (-12 points).

Figure 10: Trends in demand and supply of democracy | 10 'free' countries | 2011/2013 vs. 2014/2015[9]
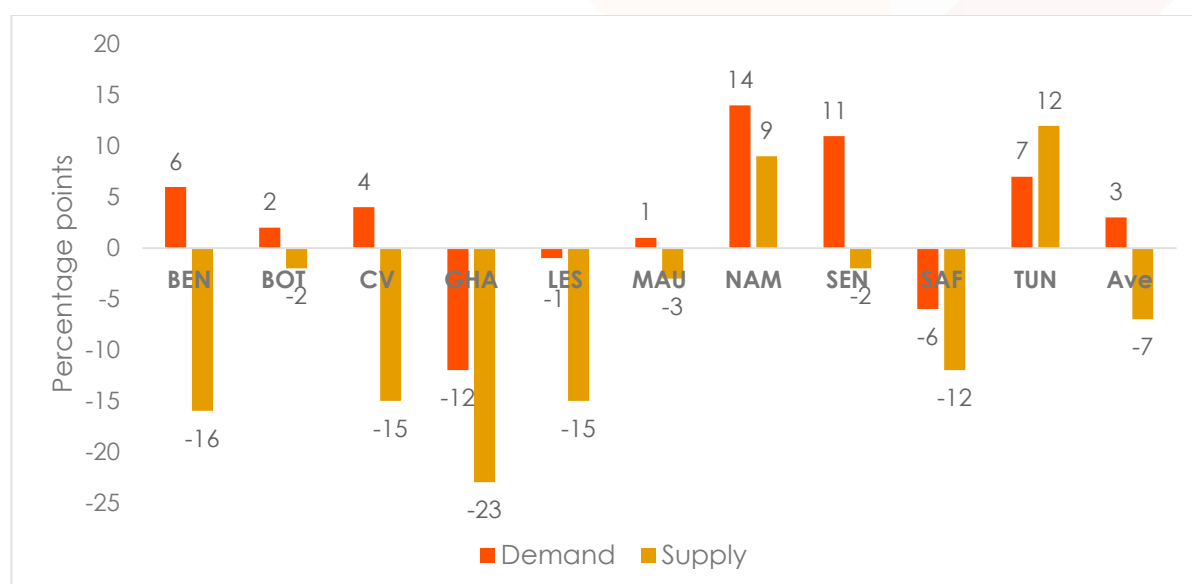
(Figure shows % in 2014/2015 survey minus % in 2011/2013 survey for demand and supply indices)

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[9] Countries rated as "free" by Freedom House exclude São Tomé and Princípe because 2015 was its initial Afrobarometer survey. See Appendix C, tables C.6 and C.7 for 2011/2013 frequencies.

Given this analysis of the region's most lauded democracies, it appears that much is still to be done to consolidate democracy, not only in Botswana but throughout the continent. Although some countries have approached convergence in democratic demand and supply, the proportions of citizens expressing positive attitudes are significantly lower than required for *democratic* consolidation. The levels of democratic demand and supply in South Africa and Lesotho are particularly concerning given the longevity of democracy in these countries compared to Tunisia (the first Arab country to achieve "free" status in four decades) and the significant declines in perceived supply since 2012 (Freedom House, 2015b).

Further exploration of the determinants of demand for democracy is required in order to explain why Batswana have consistently reported lower levels of demand than one would expect given the regime's critical role in the country's post-colonial success. More research is also required to determine whether the general trend toward lower perceived institutionalization is an indication of regression in democratic indicators on the ground or whether this in fact reflects a rise in critical citizenship as seen in mature democracies.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to analyze popular understanding of democracy and levels of its legitimation and institutionalization in Botswana. Overall, while citizens' understanding of democracy is high, their demand for democracy and perceptions of its implementation are lower than one might expect given the central role assigned to democracy in Botswana. Any future policy should therefore focus on increasing both legitimation and institutionalization.

Since 1999, while the two measures have moved in the same direction from one survey to the next, the fluctuations in supply have been larger. The fact that supply occasionally exceeds demand (e.g. in 2008) suggests that increasing demand for democracy is likely to be more difficult than raising perceived supply. First, demand levels have never increased above two-thirds (66%) of citizens, while supply levels have reached as high as eight in 10 (80%, in 2008). Second, if the reversal in perceived institutionalization of democracy since 2008 reflects events on the ground, this would imply that supply levels may recover once recent reversals in democratic development are addressed and these factors are documented by international expert surveys. It is important that future policies address these reversals in order to avoid long-term damage to the regime's legitimacy in Botswana.

Developing democratic citizenship in Botswana may therefore require the deliberate inculcation of these values and practices via civic education. Given limited donor funding and a weak civil society, the Botswana government will probably have to take the lead in promoting awareness of democracy in the country outside of formal education, either via the Independent Electoral Commission or by supporting local civic and nongovernmental organisations. Fortunately, a large number of initiatives exist in the region to serve as templates, and as most are donor-funded, monitoring and evaluation data are often available to help the Botswana government to maximise the impact of its efforts.

The IEC's pre-election awareness campaigns are a key mechanism for civic education in Botswana outside of formal education. This analysis suggests that the IEC's efforts should concentrate on rural populations and women, perhaps through radio programming between election cycles. Further examination of the specific effects of different socioeconomic and cognitive determinants of democratic attitudes will facilitate the crafting of finer tools by determining exact target population groups (e.g. women in general vs. rural women) and the best means by which to reach them.

On the regional level, an analysis of other relatively mature African democracies shows that perceived institutionalization of democracy has declined in all countries except Namibia and Tunisia. While Tunisia is a very new democracy and has made significant progress in the past few years, the trend in most of the established democracies may be an indication of the growth of a more critical citizenry and/or popular dissatisfaction with current governments,

rather than with democracy in general. However, failure to address weaknesses in democratic institutions in these countries could lead to long-term disillusionment with the regime itself. More robust analysis of determinants of the decline, not only in Botswana but in all of the continent's more established democracies, would strengthen efforts to avoid long-term reversals.

International donor agencies and civil society organisations should therefore consider the need for democracy promotion initiatives in these countries, in addition to such efforts in transitional societies. These could be relatively inexpensive by supporting existing networks or by working with governments to incorporate civic education into formal schooling.
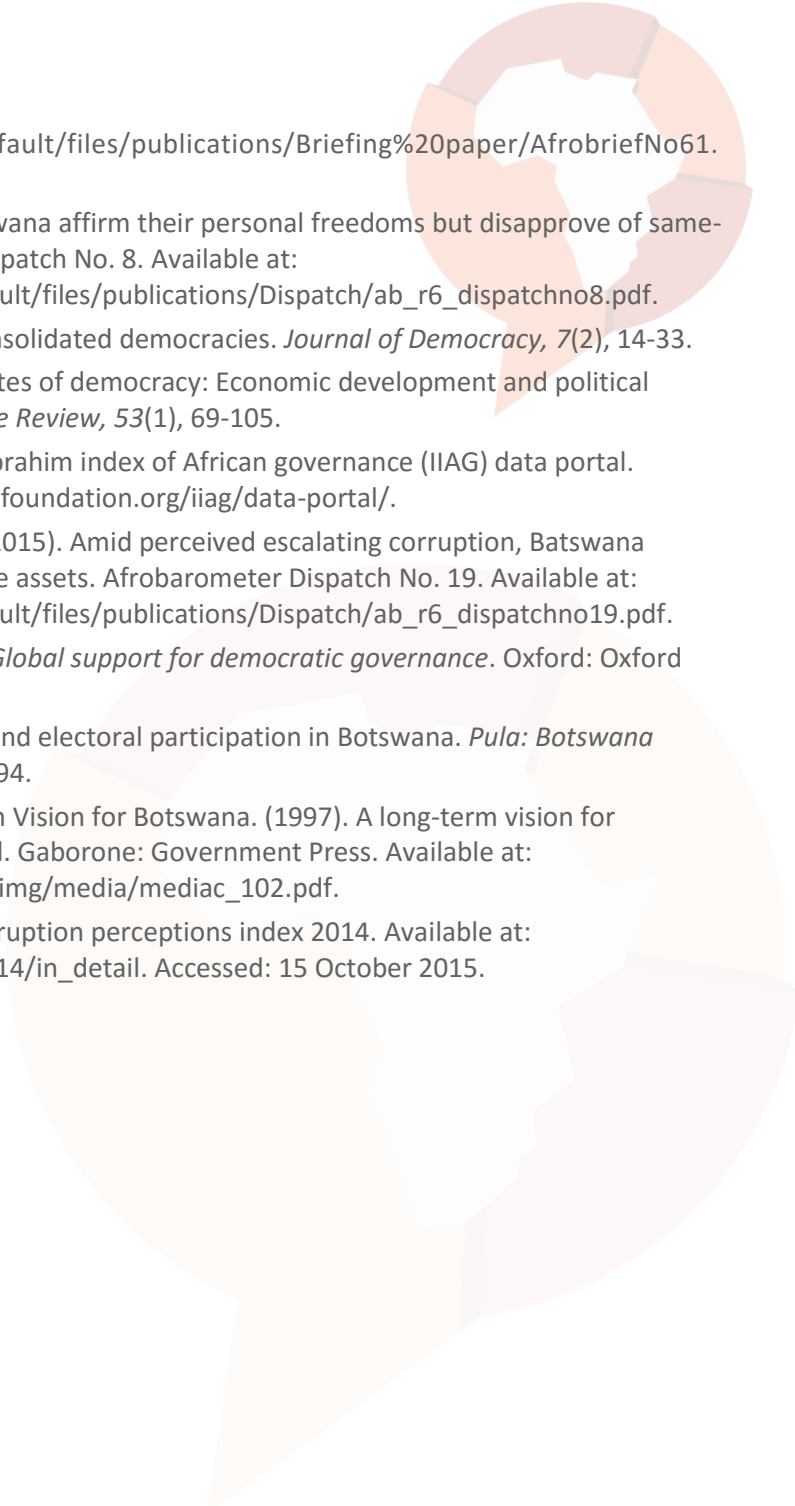
Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question, for any country and survey round. It's easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

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Appendix A: Democracy indicators

Table A.1: Voter turnout | Botswana | 1965-2014

Year	Voting-age population	Registration	Voter turnout (%)	Voting-age population turnout (%)	Freedom House score
1965	202,800	-	-	69.42	-
1969	205,200	140,428	54.73	37.46	-
1974	244,200	205,016	31.22	26.21	2.5
1979	290,033	243,483	55.24	46.37	2.0
1984	420,400	293,571	77.58	54.18	2.5
1989	522,900	367,069	68.24	47.90	1.5
1994	634,920	370,173	76.55	44.63	2.5
1999	844,338	459,662	77.11	41.98	2.0
2004	957,540	552,849	76.20	44.00	2.0
2009	892,339	723,617	76.71	62.20	2.0
2014	1,267,719	824,073	84.75	55.09	2.5

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2015)

Table A.2: Parliamentary election results | Botswana | 1994-2014[10]

Year	Seats won	Seats won (%)	Votes achieved	Votes achieved (%)
1994				
BDP	26	67	151,031	54.43
BNF	13	33	102,862	37.07
1999				
BDP	33	83	192,598	54.34
BNF	6	15	87,457	24.67
BCP	1	3	40,096	11.31
2004				
BDP	44	77	213,308	50.63
BNF	12	21	107,451	25.51
BCP	1	2	68,556	16.27
2009				
BDP	45	79	290,099	53.26
BNF	6	11	119,509	21.94
BCP	4	7	104,302	19.15
BAM	1	2	12,387	2.27
Independent	1	2	10,464	1.92
2014				
BDP	37	65	320,657	46.45
UDC	17	30	207,113	30.01
BCP	3	5	140,998	20.43

Source: Democracy Research Project (2002), IEC (2000), IEC (2005), and IEC (2010).

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[10] Parties: Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Botswana National Front (BNF), Botswana Congress Party (BCP), Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), and Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC, a coalition that includes BNF, BAM, and Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD)).

Table A.3: 'Free' countries | Africa | Freedom House | 2014

Country	Political rights (1=best, 7=worst)	Civil liberties (1=best, 7=worst)	Freedom House score (average)
Cape Verde	1	1	1.0
Ghana	1	2	1.5
Mauritius	1	2	1.5
Benin	2	2	2.0
Namibia	2	2	2.0
São Tomé and Príncipe	2	2	2.0
Senegal	2	2	2.0
South Africa	2	2	2.0
Tunisia	1	3	2.0
Botswana	3	2	2.5
Lesotho	2	3	2.5

Source: Freedom House (2015)

Appendix B: Understanding of 'democracy'

Respondents were asked: *What, if anything, does "democracy" mean to you?*

Table B.1: Understanding of 'democracy' | by location | Botswana | 2005 and 2014

	2005		2014		
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural
Understand "democracy" in English	61%	37%	69%	53%	36%
Require Setswana translation	22%	34%	21%	30%	40%
Don't understand the word/question	18%	30%	10%	16%	23%

Table B.2: Understanding of 'democracy' | by gender | Botswana | 2005 and 2014

	2005		2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Understand "democracy" in English	53%	42%	57%	43%
Require Setswana translation	29%	28%	30%	34%
Don't understand the word/ question	18%	30%	13%	22%

Table B.3: Understanding of 'democracy' | by age | Botswana | 2005 and 2014

	2005			2014		
	18-29	30-49	50 +	18-29	30-49	50 +
Understand "democracy" in English	66%	45%	17%	61%	55%	25%
Require Setswana translation	15%	33%	48%	22%	29%	53%
Don't understand the word/question	19%	23%	35%	17%	15%	21%

Table B.4: Understanding of 'democracy' | by educational attainment | Botswana | 2005 and 2014

	2005				2014			
	No formal	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary	No formal	Prim.	Sec.	Post-sec.
Understand "democracy" in English	10%	26%	66%	89%	8%	27%	56%	86%
Require Setswana translation	44%	46%	16%	8%	59%	45%	29%	9%
Don't understand the word/question	45%	28%	18%	3%	31%	27%	15%	5%

Table B.5: Interpretations of 'democracy' | first response | Botswana | 1999, 2005, and 2014

	1999	2005	2014
Civil liberties/Personal freedoms	19%	28%	30%
Don't know/Did not understand the question	29%	26%	17%
Voting/Elections/Multiparty competition	5%	5%	15%
Government by, for, of the people/Popular rule	24%	13%	10%
Peace/Unity/Power sharing	11%	12%	8%
Working together	0%	4%	4%
Social/Economic development	2%	2%	3%
Governance/Effectiveness/Accountability/Rule of law	2%	1%	3%
Other positive meanings	0%	1%	3%
Equality/Justice	4%	5%	2%
Majority rule	0%	1%	2%
N	1,200	1,200	1,200

Appendix C: Demand for and supply of democracy

Table C.1: Components of demand for democracy | Botswana | 1999-2014

	1999	2003	2005	2008	2012	2014	Average
Support democracy	82%	66%	69%	85%	82%	83%	78%
Reject one-party rule	78%	68%	82%	79%	80%	77%	77%
Reject military rule	84%	79%	80%	89%	90%	88%	85%
Reject one-man rule	86%	85%	89%	93%	92%	88%	89%

Respondents were asked:

1. 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 to any other kind of government")
2. 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 Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.
(% who "disapprove" or "disapprove strongly" of all three alternatives)

Table C.2: Demand for democracy | Botswana | 1999-2014

	1999	2003	2005	2008	2012	2014	Average
Reject none	4%	6%	4%	4%	2%	7%	5%
Reject 1	6%	13%	10%	5%	6%	6%	8%
Reject 2	16%	26%	18%	17%	18%	13%	18%
Reject 3	74%	56%	68%	74%	73%	73%	70%
Reject 3 + support democracy	66%	48%	58%	66%	63%	64%	61%

Table C.3: Supply of democracy | Botswana | 1999-2014

	1999	2003	2005	2008	2012	2014	Average
Botswana is a democracy	82%	59%	73%	91%	79%	75%	76%
Satisfied with democracy	75%	58%	59%	83%	70%	68%	69%
Botswana a democracy + satisfied	71%	46%	54%	80%	65%	63%	63%

Respondents were asked:

1. In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Botswana today: A full democracy? A democracy, but with minor problems? A democracy with major problems? Not a democracy? (% who said "a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems")
2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Botswana? (% who said "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied")

Table C.4: Components of demand for democracy | 11 'free' countries[11] | 2014/2015

	BEN	BOT	CV	GHA	LES	MAU	NAM	STP	SEN	SAF	TUN	Ave.
Supports democracy	81%	86%	88%	79%	56%	86%	76%	62%	93%	66%	69%	77%
Reject 0 alt. regimes	3%	8%	5%	5%	7%	2%	6%	8%	2%	9%	11%	6%
Reject 1	5%	6%	9%	8%	16%	4%	10%	14%	5%	14%	18%	10%
Reject 2	22%	13%	19%	24%	30%	9%	21%	24%	17%	26%	29%	21%
Reject 3	71%	73%	67%	62%	47%	85%	64%	54%	76%	51%	43%	63%
Reject 3 + support democracy	60%	64%	62%	55%	32%	77%	52%	39%	72%	36%	34%	53%

Table C.5: Components of supply of democracy | 11 'free' countries | 2014/2015

	BEN	BOT	CV	GHA	LES	MAU	NAM	STP	SEN	SAF	TUN	Ave.
[Country] is a Democracy	54%	76%	55%	52%	37%	76%	72%	52%	65%	47%	38%	57%
Satisfied with Democracy	40%	68%	26%	56%	32%	66%	72%	19%	64%	48%	58%	50%
[Country] a Democracy + Satisfied	35%	63%	23%	42%	22%	63%	63%	14%	57%	37%	32%	41%
Freedom House score (average)	2.0	2.5	1.0	1.5	2.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9

Table C.6: Demand for democracy | 10 'free' countries[12] | 2011/2013

	BEN	BOT	CV	GHA	LES	MAU	NAM	SEN	SAF	TUN	Ave.
No demand for democracy	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	1%	3%	1%	6%	6%	3%
Agree w/ 1 of 4 components	5%	4%	6%	4%	8%	2%	9%	3%	15%	14%	7%
Agree w/ 2 of 4 components	10%	8%	11%	7%	22%	3%	15%	7%	15%	22%	12%
Agree w/ 3 of 4 components	30%	25%	24%	21%	33%	18%	35%	28%	22%	32%	27%
Full demand for democracy	**53%**	**62%**	**59%**	**67%**	**33%**	**76%**	**38%**	**61%**	**42%**	**27%**	**52%**

[11] African countries that are rated as "free" by Freedom House: Benin (BEN), Botswana (BOT), Cape Verde (CV), Ghana (GH), Lesotho (LES), Mauritius (MAU), Namibia (NAM), São Tomé and Princípe (STP), Senegal (SEN), South Africa (SAF), and Tunisia (TUN).

[12] Excludes São Tomé and Princípe because 2015 was the country's first Afrobarometer survey.

Table C.7: Supply of democracy | 10 'free' countries | 2011/2013

	BEN	BOT	CV	GHA	LES	MAU	NAM	SEN	SAF	TUN	Ave.
Perceive no supply	21%	16%	30%	13%	37%	17%	19%	24%	24%	53%	25%
Perceive supply of 1, not both	28%	19%	31%	21%	25%	18%	28%	18%	27%	27%	24%
Perceive full supply of democracy (Extent + satisfaction)	52%	65%	39%	65%	38%	65%	54%	58%	50%	20%	50%

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