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**DEMOCRACY, ECONOMY, AND
GENDER IN UGANDA**

Report of a National Sample Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the run-up to Uganda's referendum of June 29, 2000, a national sample survey was conducted of a representative cross-section of 2271 adult Ugandan citizens. The survey covered all four regions of the country (northern, eastern, central and western), including 36 of the 45 administrative districts. The purpose of the survey was to assess popular attitudes to democracy, economy, civil society and gender.

Referendum 2000

- Of intended voters surveyed before the referendum, 91 percent said they would support the movement and 7 percent preferred the multiparty side, figures almost identical to the actual vote tally.
- But actions speak louder than words. Whereas 83 percent said that they intended to vote in the referendum, only 52 percent actually voted according to the Electoral Commission. We suspect that the discrepancy between expressed voting intention and actual voter turnout conceals an element of silent boycott.
- Moreover, Ugandans do not distinguish clearly between elections and referenda, with 62 percent thinking that these two voting events are "the same thing".
- Most people heard about the referendum through informal channels like friends (87 percent) and family (71 percent), though a majority (59 percent) claimed contact with "civic educators".
- More than half of all Ugandans thought that media coverage of the referendum was balanced; when bias was perceived, however, three-quarters said that information was tilted to the "government" side.
- The lopsided referendum result is moderated if the question is differently posed. Fewer Ugandans, though still a clear majority (72 percent), are willing to give the present political system "more time to solve inherited problems"; but almost one in four (22 percent) thought that "if our system of government can't produce results soon, we should try another system".
- Similarly: although an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (84 percent) agree that we "should keep the present movement system", a sizeable minority (37 percent) simultaneously agrees that "we should have many political parties that compete in free elections".

Democracy

- Most survey respondents declared themselves "interested" in politics and government (83 percent). The minority in Uganda who said they were "not interested" was far smaller than in other African countries like Nigeria or Ghana.
- Ugandans frequently engage in community-based activities: for example, 81 percent claim to have attended a community meeting versus 66 percent of Zambians.
- Men were significantly more likely than women to say that they felt politically competent, for example by being able to influence the political opinions of other people (72 versus 54 percent).
- When it comes to participation in civic life, Ugandans are just as likely to use informal political networks (like churches) as formal organizational channels (like local government). They rarely turn to their parliamentary representatives for help to solve problems.

- Various survey results suggest that the quality of political participation in Uganda is more “mobilized” than “autonomous,” with citizens responding to the social pressures of a mass movement.
- ✓ In Uganda, fewer citizens are aware of the term “democracy” (74 percent) than in six other African countries where this question was asked in 1999-2000.
- To Ugandans who know about it, democracy means civil liberties (20 percent), government by the people (13 percent), and voting rights (8 percent).
- To many Ugandans, democracy also means peace and unity (14 percent). In their view, it is a system of government that puts an end to political violence and unites and stabilizes the country.
- Almost two-thirds of all citizens consider the form of democracy practiced in Uganda to have “major” (32 percent) or “minor” (32 percent) shortcomings.
- Regional differences were important on most political attitudes. For example, northerners were most likely to say that Uganda was “not a democracy” (24 percent), whereas easterners and westerners were inclined to consider that Uganda had attained “full democracy” (33 and 30 percent respectively).

Civil Society And The State

- ✓ Most Ugandans (63 percent) define their political identity in terms of their occupation, for example as a farmer, a student or a businessperson. Only 13 percent choose an ethnic or regional label and just 8 percent a religious identity (versus 48 and 21 percent respectively in Nigeria).
- Regardless of expressed identities, however, voluntary associations in Uganda form mainly along religious rather than occupational lines (80 percent claim to belong to churches).
- Regarding the state, more than six out of ten Ugandans think that corruption is common in the executive branch, especially in the police force (76 percent).
- Indeed, government is seen as more corrupt than the private sector. Within the private sector, public opinion indicts Ugandan businesses more frequently than foreign businesses.
- President Museveni received an overwhelmingly positive job performance rating (93 percent) from survey respondents in June 2000.
- Members of Parliament were seen as least effective (52 percent). As in other African countries, many citizens complain that M.P.s neglect their constituencies, visiting only when elections roll around.
- The NRM tops the list as the body that most Ugandans find trustworthy (83 percent). At the other end of the scale, few people say they have confidence in political parties (32 percent). Trust in one or other of these “polarizing” institutions is an excellent predictor of an individual’s intended vote in the June 2000 referendum.
- Likewise, partisan preference is the best predictor of state legitimacy. A majority (60 percent) of those who intended to vote for the movement system in the referendum said that government decisions should always be obeyed, whether or not citizens agreed. By contrast, a majority (57 percent) of those who intended to vote for the multiparty option in the referendum said that citizens

should reserve the right to resist public commands with which they disagree. Thus, at least for multiparty supporters, the referendum of June 2000 did not resolve the basic controversy about whether the present holders of state power actually have the right to rule.

The Economy

- Ugandans express a measure of contentment with the economic conditions prevailing in their country. Clear majorities say they are satisfied with their own current living standards (57 percent) and the state of the national economy (62 percent).
- Positive assessments of current conditions seem to derive from favorable comparisons with the country's economic past. A clear majority feels "more satisfied" today than five years ago.
- Ugandans are uncertain, however, about what the economic future holds. Thirteen percent expected to be "less satisfied" in one year's time, one quarter (26 percent) expected no change, and more than a third (35 percent) said "don't know", the highest proportion found so far across eight African countries.
- Ugandans mentioned four economic issues among their top ten personal concerns: inadequate household income, the cost of education, unemployment, and perceived over-taxation.
- By contrast, political insecurity is named as the top priority among national problems requiring government attention, although Ugandans are almost equally concerned about the prevalence and persistence of poverty.
- The survey reveals great ambiguity, even contradiction, on basic economic values. On one hand, we discovered a sturdy culture of "statism". Some 61 percent of Ugandans agree that "the government should bear the main responsibility for ensuring the well-being of people."
- On the other hand, even more people embrace selected market values: for example, 73 percent agree that "everyone should be free to earn as much as they can, even if this leads to differences of income among people." Remarkably, Ugandans are more economically liberal on this question than any other Africans surveyed so far.
- Yet very few people (28 percent) had ever heard about the government's structural adjustment (SAP) program.
- Moreover, among those who know about the SAP, almost half (47 percent) are unsatisfied with it. Only 29 percent are satisfied. To put this finding in perspective, however, Ugandans are more satisfied with their economic reform program than all other Africans surveyed except Ghanaians (34 percent).
- Who composes Uganda's budding reform constituency? The following groups are more likely to be satisfied with SAP: men rather than women; country dwellers rather than townspeople; and persons with higher rather than lower incomes. ✓
- The survey also showed that, like other Africans, Ugandans will tolerate "getting the prices right" for consumer goods and social services. Nonetheless, they also share the African mass consensus against institutional reform within the public sector by opposing privatization and civil service retrenchment.

- Ugandans seem inclined to persist with the NRM's economic reform program. Fewer people think that "the costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore change its economic policies" (34 percent) than affirm that "in order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary for us to accept some hardships now" (47 percent). In their patience with economic reform, Ugandans surpass Africans in six other countries, including Ghana.
- Nevertheless, public approval of government performance varies greatly according to specific policies. In contrast to low performance ratings for economic management (creating jobs, controlling inflation), the government's performance is evaluated positively in socio-political sectors (improving education, reducing crime).
- Most strikingly, only 17 percent approve the government's performance at closing income gaps between the rich and the poor.

Gender

- Approximately half of all men and two-thirds of all women think that a woman ought to be able to become President of Uganda, implying that women's leadership is gradually becoming accepted.
- But cultural conservatism continues. About two in ten people (22 percent of men and 17 percent of women) believe that "a woman's place is in the home", and therefore, that women "should not try to speak out about politics".
- The survey revealed that women lag behind men in Uganda in all forms of political participation. A gender gap of about ten percentage points was evident, not only in electoral, informal and community participation, but also in voter registration.
- Gender gaps are explained by both economic and cultural factors. Poor and low-income women, who are engaged in daily struggles for economic survival, are least likely to register and to vote. And women who hold traditional cultural viewpoints are least likely to engage in political discussions or to attend community meetings.
- Institutional factors provide insight into how such gender gaps might be closed. Women's associations, even more than religious associations or associations in general, are a gateway to active citizenship.
- There is convergence between women's organizations and movement advocates concerning equal rights and opportunities. Support for the NRM is therefore greater among female members of women's organizations (91 percent) than among women in general (88 percent) or among men (81 percent).

Theme

The theme of the report is that Uganda has achieved differential forms of success in the political and economic spheres. Politically, much more progress has been made in mobilizing mass participation than in institutionalizing political competition. Economically, the opposite holds true. Whereas there are few constraints on economic competition, many Ugandans feel that they have not fully participated in the economy's recent growth. Thus, though for different reasons, democratization and market reform in Uganda are only partially complete.

INTRODUCTION

Political and Economic Setting

During the last fourteen years, Uganda has once again attracted international attention, though this time for more positive reasons than the rampant chaos of the 1970s and early 1980s. In almost every respect, the country has traveled a long way since 1986, experiencing gains in political stability, economic growth, and gender equality.

The advent of relative peace has not erased the religious and ethnic conflicts of the past. But the policies of the National Resistance Movement, including a ban on political party activity, have significantly diminished the ability of politicians to make sectarian appeals. President Museveni has repeatedly criticized the role of multiparty politics in inciting conflict, preferring instead a broad-based, inclusive, "no-party" form of government, which he calls the "movement" system. Despite restrictions on freedom of association, the NRM government has cautiously opened up a measure of political space, best exemplified in a vocal opposition press.

Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 1996 — and declared free and fair by international observers — which offered Ugandans a first opportunity to elect leaders since the flawed elections of 1980. A referendum was held in June 2000 to decide the future political system for the country in which voters were asked to choose between a continuation of the movement system or a return to multiparty politics. The formal results revealed that many Ugandans accept the political status quo and, for the moment, give credit to the movement system for the country's stability. However, the low turnout of voters for the referendum (just over half of the eligible electorate) suggests that other citizens may be ready to embrace political change.

Moreover, despite advancement, Uganda's violent past has not been laid entirely to rest. Populations in outlying regions continue to suffer from political insecurity born of rebel insurgencies. The political and economic effects of random attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army in the north and the Allied Democratic Forces in the west threaten to unravel the stability achieved in the rest of the country and weaken the legitimacy of the NRM government.

In the economic arena, the government has remained committed since 1987 to a structural adjustment program based on World Bank and IMF recommendations. Reform efforts have focused on currency devaluation, liberalizing agricultural prices, and downsizing the public sector, among other policies. The economic benefits of the government's strategy are evidenced by annual growth rates that have averaged 7.1 percent in the 1990s¹, as well as a generous debt relief package (\$650 million) from the World Bank in 1998.

Yet growth has not trickled down evenly, leaving many Ugandans concerned about poverty and inequality. Moreover, instances of high-level corruption and extravagant defense expenditures (to respond to domestic unrest and to prosecute a war in the Congo) strain the public budget and, if continued, will likely impede future economic growth.

Institutionalizing Gender Equality

Uganda presents a distinctive and interesting opportunity to analyze gender and politics in the context of political and economic reform. Although Uganda remains in many respects a patriarchal society and gender gaps persist, the 1990s have seen the efflorescence of a vibrant women's movement and policy interventions by a "woman-friendly" government. Together, women's organizations and state institutions have enhanced gender equality and expanded the role of women in the political process.

In 1995, innovative changes were made to the Ugandan Constitution to reflect the concerns of various groups in society.² Most importantly, article 78 set aside one third of elected local council positions specifically for women, and made provision for at least one female representative in each district. The same article also established the principle of group representation in the Ugandan parliament, although it did not designate a "gender quota" in national government as in local government. Like the constitutional gender quota in India, these measures have global as well as continental significance. After South Africa, Uganda's institutional gender reforms are the most far-reaching in sub-Saharan Africa.

President Museveni also took a number of executive actions to promote gender equality. He appointed the first woman vice-president in Africa, and included women in his cabinet, several in strategic roles.³ Affirmative action policies are now in place for all major decision-making positions, such as permanent and under-secretaries and central government representatives at various levels.⁴ In the state administration, Museveni increased the budget and enhanced the policy-making role of the Ministry for Gender and Community Development. The Ministry has developed a "National Gender Policy," to fulfill the commitments made at the 1995 United Nations Beijing women's conference⁵ aimed at redressing outstanding gender imbalances in education, poverty, property rights, and decision-making.

The actual achievement of gender equality depends, however, on the implementation of policy goals. The government's under-funding of the gender ministry and the parliament's failure to enact progressive amendments to legislation on land ownership and domestic relations point, in practice, to the persistence of significant gender gaps in Uganda.

Theme of the Report

Efforts to ensure equal opportunities for all Ugandans are crucial for democratic and economic reform. The challenges of reform are twofold. The first is to promote broad-based popular *participation*, both in political decision-making and in the benefits of economic growth. Second, reform involves the replacement of existing monopolies of power and wealth with pluralistic regimes based on political and economic *competition*.

In this report, we present evidence to suggest that Uganda has achieved differential forms of success in the political and economic spheres. Politically, much more progress has been made in mobilizing mass participation than in institutionalizing political competition. Economically, the opposite holds true. Whereas there are few constraints on economic competition, many Ugandans feel that they have not participated in the economy's recent growth. Thus, though for different reasons, democratization and market reform in Uganda only partially complete.

Background to the Survey

If democracy is "government by the people", then reliable means are needed to know what "the people" want. Sample surveys are a proven method of measuring public opinion. If scientifically designed and carefully administered, then surveys can reveal, among other things, popular support for democracy, mass satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the economy, and citizen perceptions of the performance of the government of the day.

The purpose of the present study is to find out what ordinary Ugandans think about the political and economic status of their country. The results are based on a survey of a representative cross-section of 2271 adult Ugandans conducted between May 17 and June 21, 2000. Because every adult Ugandan had an equal chance of selection into the sample, the results depict the national population of Uganda as a whole.

The research instrument was a questionnaire containing 85 items that was administered face-to-face by teams of trained interviewers. The questions covered a diverse range of topics: from the respondents' social background to their self-defined identity; from their attitudes to democracy to their opinions on economic reform; and from citizens' involvement in voluntary associations to their voting behavior in past elections and the recent referendum.

In order to place Uganda in context, and to aid the interpretation of results, the questionnaire contained various items derived from surveys already conducted in several countries in West and Southern Africa. To aid comparison, the wording of such items was usually identical in each country. As a result, Uganda now forms part of an ongoing, twelve-country "Afrobarometer" project that tracks and contrasts public attitudes to democracy and economy across the continent.⁶

The margin of sampling error for the reported results is plus or minus 2.5 percent.⁷ At the request of the Donor Technical Monitoring Group, the survey was conducted in the late stages of campaign for the Referendum 2000. Because the heated political atmosphere at the time may have induced some citizens to provide socially or politically "correct" answers, the level of response error may be higher in this survey than in Afrobarometer surveys conducted in other countries under calmer circumstances. When using this report, therefore, readers should bear both sources of possible error in mind.

The report opens by examining popular attitudes to the referendum and an accompanying civic education campaign. The remainder of the presentation digs below the surface of these current events to reveal the basic values, preferences and behaviors of Ugandans with regard to democracy, economy and civil society.

Demographics of the Sample

As a representative sample, the survey population closely matches the distributions of subgroups within the national population in key respects such as gender, occupation, and religion (See Figure 1). The survey also covers all four regions of Uganda (northern, eastern, central and western) in proportion their relative size in the national population, including 36 of the 45 official districts.⁸ The procedures of random selection of survey respondents produced a sample population that was slightly younger and more educated than indicated by Uganda's 1991 census, though demographic changes in the population itself since 1991 could well account for these minor discrepancies.

To adapt the questionnaire to local conditions, we translated the English version into nine local languages: Luganda, Luo, Rutooro, Lusoga, Rukiga, Lumasaba, Ateso, Runyoro and Lugbara. All interviews were administered in the language of the respondent's choice, including English.

Figure 1: Demographics of the Sample (figures are percentages of the total sample)

Number of Persons Interviewed	N = 2271	Languages	
Male: Female ratio	50:50	Luganda	22
Median Age	30 years	Luo	14
Urban: Rural Distribution	15:85	Rutooro	12
		Lusoga	10
Education		Rukiga	7
No schooling	13	Lumasaba	6
Primary only	42	Ateso	5
Secondary only	33	Runyoro	4
Post-secondary	12	Lugbara	3
		Income	
Occupation		None	24
Farmer/fisher	44	Less than 10,000 U.shs.	23
Businessperson	10	10,001 - 30,000 U.shs.	20
Homemaker	9	30,001 - 70,000 U.shs.	21
Unemployed	6	Over 70,001 shs.	13
Student	6		
Informal marketeer	4	Region (weighted)	
		North	18
Religion		East	26
Protestant	46	Central	29
Catholic	38	West	27
Muslim	13		

In the analysis that follows, we consider the effects of numerous demographic factors. Where subgroups of the population do not meaningfully influence public attitudes or behaviors, we maintain the discussion at a summary, national level. If we find variations, however, especially between men and women, then we highlight them.⁹ The final section of the paper seeks to explain gender gaps.

REFERENDUM 2000

On June 29, 2000, Ugandans faced an historic choice. They went to the polls to register their preferences on a form of government for their country. The referendum question asked citizens to choose between an existing "movement" system, associated since 1986 with the incumbent president (Yoweri Museveni) and the National Resistance Movement, and a "multiparty" system, which would allow political parties (like the Democratic Party, Uganda Peoples' Congress, and a host of newer parties) to compete openly in elections.

The NRM devoted substantial resources to the referendum campaign; the DP and the UPC urged their supporters to boycott the polls; and other multiparty advocates mounted a modest effort to get voters to choose the multiparty option. At the same time, a coalition of church-based, community-based and civic organizations, working closely with the national Electoral Commission, undertook to monitor the campaign and the polls and to dispense civic education.

Voting Behavior

Voter registration. Ugandans show considerable interest in taking part in the electoral process. According to the survey a substantial majority of respondents (85 percent) said they had registered to vote. This figure is somewhat lower than the Electoral Commission's estimate that 92 percent of voters had registered.¹⁰ But it is high by African standards, compared, for example to the 78 percent of eligible voters who presently say they are registered in Nigeria.

Average figures, however, can sometimes conceal important details. In Uganda, for example, voter registration varies significantly by gender and age. Whereas 91 percent of men assert that they are registered, only 80 percent of women do so. And, even more strikingly, whereas 91 percent of middle aged and older persons (over 36 years old) say they are registered, only 74 percent of young people (aged 18-25 years) make the same claim. Prominent among eligible voters without voting cards are young people who have recently turned 18 years old.

Why are some Ugandans not registered as voters? Roughly 11 percent of the survey respondents said that they wanted to register but were unable to do so. This response was particularly prevalent among young people (21 percent). These people cited several common reasons for not registering. Either they missed the voter registration drive in their area (29 percent), were absent from the area when registration took place (18 percent), or were physically unwell during registration (15 percent). A further 15 percent of unregistered persons said they were simply not interested in voting.

Only a small minority of Ugandans (4 percent) report making a conscious choice to abstain from voter registration. For whatever reasons, more than twice as many people in Kampala (9 percent) consciously turned their backs on voter registration than in the rest of the country. At this stage we cannot determine whether abstention from voter registration is an act of protest or an expression of apathy. But Ugandans are not generally apathetic about politics: when we add together the people who chose not to register with those who express no interest in voting, we find that, at most, 5 percent openly display political apathy. This figure compares somewhat favorably with Zambia in 1996, where 8 percent said that they chose not to register because they were not interested in voting.

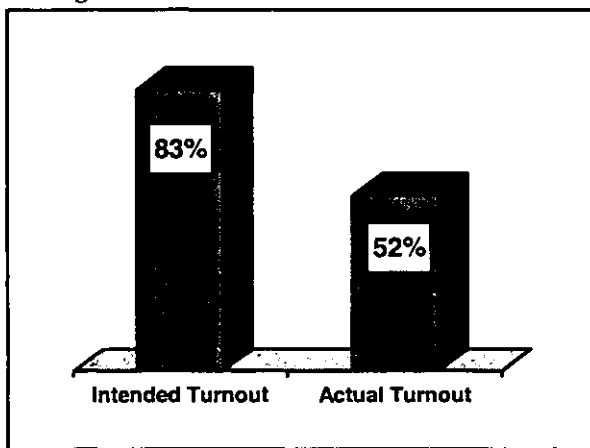
Intention to vote. The survey asked all respondents, regardless of whether they were registered to vote, whether they intended to cast a ballot in the referendum. At face value, this potentially sensitive question did not seem to threaten respondents since only 12 individuals (one-half of 1 percent) refused to answer it. Of course, a high response rate does not preclude the possibility that people protected themselves by offering a safe answer.

More than eight out of ten respondents (83 percent) said that they intended to vote in the referendum. More men than women and more older than younger people expressed an intention to vote. A strong regional difference was also evident: 90 percent of the respondents in western Uganda said they intended to vote compared to 75 percent in northern Uganda. The lower level of intended voting in the north was due apparently in large part to problems of access to voter registration; this region had the largest proportions of people who said both that they “wanted to register” (13 percent) and “wanted to vote” (15 percent) but were unable to do either.

Overall, about one out of ten adult Ugandans (11 percent) said that they would like to vote but could not. Not only in the north, but countrywide, this group was made up overwhelmingly of persons who were not registered as voters.¹¹

In response to the survey, few people came out openly in support of the campaign to boycott the referendum. Just 2 percent were willing to say to the survey interviewers that they agreed with the statement “I plan to boycott the referendum”. These self-identified boycotters were outnumbered, not only by intended voters, but also by those who said that they aimed to abstain from voting in the referendum for other (i.e. non-boycott) reasons (3 percent).

Figure 2. Intended and Actual Turnout



But we have major concerns with the reliability of the data on respondents' stated intention to vote. The 2 percent of boycotters is surely an underestimate. And the figure of 83 percent intended turnout stands in stark contrast to the actual voter turnout rate of 52 percent reported by the Electoral Commission on July 2, 2000. A discrepancy of this magnitude begs explanation. Did large numbers of survey respondents say they planned to vote when really they had no intention of doing so? Does the low actual turnout represent obstacles (like rain) that arose on polling day? Or does it represent widespread, if silent, support for the boycott campaign?

We conclude that a mass survey during a referendum campaign dominated by a mass-mobilizing incumbent government cannot accurately capture the breadth or depth of political disengagement. In this instance, actions speak louder than words. A “turnout gap” of some 30 percentage points between intended and actual voting strongly suggests that not all respondents felt free to state their real intentions. In short, we suspect an element of silent boycott.

The extent of any silent boycott (abstention can also be thought of as a “protest vote”) cannot be assessed with survey data alone. To further explore this question, we await separate sources of information, including figures on voter turnout by district, which can be analyzed against selected survey results. This analysis will be published separately.

Intended Referendum Choice. We also asked about citizen preferences on the referendum issue. The survey question on this critical matter was worded as follows: “in the upcoming referendum of June 2000, will you vote for the movement system or for a multiparty system?” The refusal rate (19 percent) was somewhat higher on this genuinely sensitive question, with many respondents asserting their right to keep their voting intentions secret. Nevertheless, sufficient responses were obtained to allow analysis.

Whereas 78 percent of the remaining respondents said they intended to vote for the movement system, some 6 percent planned to choose the multiparty option. Others said they would not vote (14 percent) or did not know how they would vote (2 percent). To arrive at an accurate prediction of the actual vote tally, it is necessary to exclude non-voters and to assume that the "undecided" voters will split in the same proportions as those who are willing to declare their preferences. By this calculation the survey data show that 91 percent intended to vote for the movement system and that 7 percent intended to vote for the multiparty system.

This distribution of the intended vote closely matches the Electoral Commission's announcement of final results. Official figures stated that the movement system captured 4,322, 901 (90.7 percent) of the valid votes cast countrywide and that multiparty crusaders received 442, 823 votes (9.3 percent).¹² In other words, the survey results exactly predict the share of the vote going to the movement side but slightly underestimate the share captured by multiparty sympathizers. This stands to reason: whereas movement supporters had nothing to lose by declaring their political loyalties to a survey interviewer, multipartyists were probably more cautious about revealing that they held a minority view.

The survey also found regional variations in the intended vote that are consistent with officially reported results. The survey indicated that the movement would run strongest in western Uganda (where it would garner 96 percent of the valid vote) and weakest in northern Uganda (where it would garner 76 percent). A regional breakdown of this order in fact came to pass. The survey also predicted that the multiparty side would run reasonably well in Kampala (where it would capture 19 percent), though at a slightly higher level than the 17 percent reported by the Electoral Commission.

All told, the survey revealed that the geographic region where a citizen lives is the best predictor of his or her (intended) vote choice. Whether voters came from the north or the west (or from Kampala) was much more determinative of their referendum preferences than how old they were or whether they were male or female.

Information About the Referendum

The referendum was preceded by a civic education campaign to alert citizens to their voting rights and responsibilities and to publicize the choice of governmental systems that was at stake. The survey assessed whether citizens felt well informed about the referendum and whether the information they possessed was accurate. It also reviewed and compared the various sources of information to which citizens were exposed during the referendum campaign.

Extent of information. Rightly or wrongly, Ugandans felt subjectively quite well informed about the June 2000 referendum. When asked, "how much have you heard about the upcoming referendum of June 2000 or haven't you had an opportunity to hear about it yet", they replied as follows.

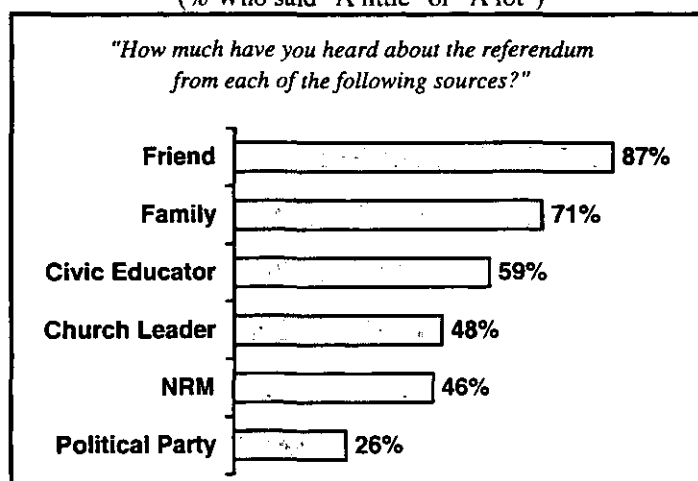
Exactly half of all respondents (50 percent) said that they had "heard a lot". A smaller group asserted that they had "heard a little" (43 percent). And, despite having been offered the option of saying that they "(hadn't) had an opportunity to hear about it yet", only a small minority claimed to have heard nothing at all about the referendum (8 percent).

Perhaps predictably, women (12 percent) and northerners (17 percent) were significantly more likely than other Ugandans to say that they had heard "nothing" about the referendum. This finding suggests civic education of any kind was least likely to have reached these social groups. Formal schooling also had a profound effect on awareness of the referendum: whereas only a quarter of persons with no schooling said that they had heard "a lot" about the referendum, more than eighty percent of university graduates claimed to have done so. But formal education did not wipe out the gender gap in referendum awareness.

At best, therefore, civic education workshops for leaders of women's groups may have reduced the gender gap in referendum awareness but the workshops did not eliminate this gap.

Sources of information. People heard about the referendum primarily through informal channels such as friends (87 percent) and family (71 percent) rather than through organized programs of civic education. Nevertheless, almost six out of ten respondents (59 percent) reported having derived some information about the referendum from individuals whom they identified as "civic educators". Since this figure is unexpectedly high, we surmise that some respondents may be referring to *chaka muchaka*, a mandatory program of political education sponsored by the "movement" that ended just a few months before the referendum.

Figure 3. Sources of Information about Referendum
(% Who said "A little" or "A lot")



It is worth noting, however that almost twice as many people said they obtained only "a little" information (rather than "a lot") from civic educators. Friends were apparently regarded as being more informative, being equally likely to provide "a lot" (as opposed to "a little") information.

People usually learned about the referendum from neutral rather than partisan sources. More people heard about the upcoming vote from civic educators than from either contending side, that is the National Resistance Movement or political coalitions advocating the multiparty option. Nonetheless, people were just as likely to have heard a partisan message from the NRM (46 percent) as to have heard a (supposedly) non-partisan message from a church leader (48 percent). And the NRM was a much more effective purveyor of referendum information than political parties, whose message apparently reached only 26 percent of respondents. Thus, if Ugandans received partisan information, it was most likely to favor the movement side.

Methods of dissemination. Which methods worked best in informing people about the referendum? Radio was far and away the most effective method, with more than nine out of ten respondents (91 percent) saying they got information from a radio message (see Figure 4). Moreover, radio was three times as likely to provide "a lot" of information as only "a little". Posters were seen by many people (76 percent), but had the drawback of conveying only "a little" information. Community meetings of various kinds also achieved relatively wide coverage (64 percent), but respondents rated these as conveying even less information than posters. Pamphlets (33 percent) and television (21 percent) had the weakest reach.

Figure 4. Methods of Dissemination

Radio	Posters	Meetings	Newspapers	Pamphlets	TV
91%	76%	64%	54%	33%	21%

Given the concentration of media coverage, television and newspapers were more effective means of civic education in urban areas rather than in the countryside. But, perhaps more surprisingly, radio had significantly more impact in urban areas too. Posters were equally effective in both urban and rural areas. And community meetings worked better in the countryside than in the towns in getting out messages about the referendum.

Fairness of information. How did people evaluate the information they received about the referendum? Did they regard it as biased or as even-handed? Respondents were asked to rate radio, television and newspapers by standards of fairness. Whereas 57 percent thought that the media were balanced in their coverage of the referendum campaign, 43 percent found them biased. If media bias was perceived, it was more often seen as tilted toward the "government" side (33 percent) than toward the "opposition" (10 percent). This perception was similar for the three different types of media, though television was seen to be slightly more biased in favor of the government (37 percent) than were newspaper (30 percent), no doubt reflecting the greater diversity of private print sources than private television stations. Also, almost all posters portrayed the bus rather than a dove.

We emphasize that more people got referendum information from the radio than from any other source and that one-third of respondents saw radio as leaning towards the government (34 percent). Taken together, these data suggest that official radio messages played an important role in the referendum outcome.

Quality of information. Objectively, were citizens well informed? In some respects, Ugandans had a justified confidence in their own knowledge of the referendum. For example, clear majorities of correctly answered key questions about its purposes and procedures. For example, an overwhelming majority (92 percent) knew that voter registration was a legal prerequisite to referendum voting. Most people also knew that the referendum would employ a secret ballot (71 percent) though, significantly, more one in five respondents (22 percent) thought, "others will know how you voted". A similar proportion was aware that the purpose of the referendum was to choose a system of government for the country (76 percent), though 17 percent thought that the referendum had some alternate purpose.

In other respects, the survey shows that some respondents knew less about the referendum than they thought they did. We discovered several widespread popular misconceptions. A clear majority regarded a referendum as "the same thing as an election" (62 percent). Probing this issue further, we asked whether, in a referendum, "Voters choose candidates for political office". While a slim majority knew this to be wrong (51 percent), a significant minority (42 percent) thought that they were going to the polls to elect leaders. As further confirmation we asked, "If the voters in the referendum reject the movement system, (will) the government...have to resign?" By a slight margin (47 to 44 percent), more people thought (incorrectly) that a victory by multiparty advocates would lead to the immediate ejection from office of the NRM government.

Similar responses were obtained to the open-ended inquiry, "in your opinion, what is the referendum about?" As Figure 5 shows, fewer than half of all respondents (42 percent) knew that the referendum was about a choice among political systems. The next largest group thought the referendum, like an election, was about choosing government leaders (21 percent), followed by those who admitted to having no idea what the referendum was about (16 percent).

Figure 5. Popular Perceptions of the Purpose of the Referendum

Question: "In your opinion, what is the referendum about?"	
A choice of political systems	42%
A choice of government leaders	21%
Don't know	16%
About choice (general, undefined)	13%
Other	8%

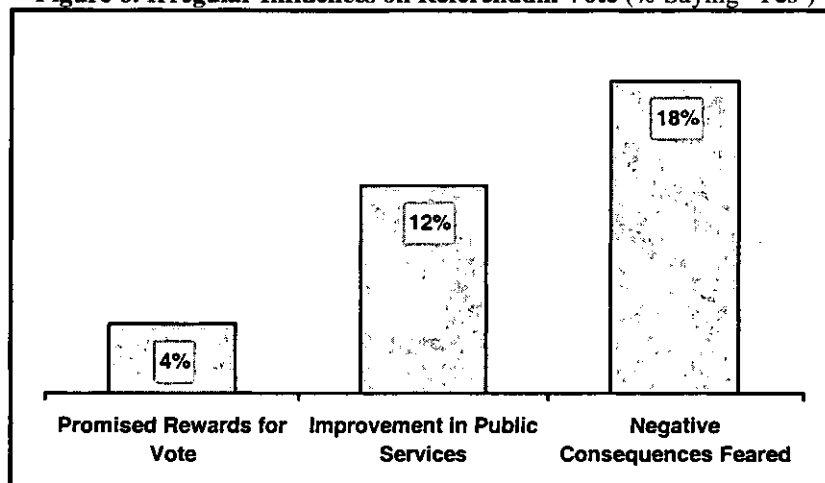
Taken together, these results point to relatively low levels of knowledge about the purpose of the June 2000 ballot and a substantial conflation of referenda and elections in the popular imagination. Thus, to many voters, the contest was about the tenure in office of President Museveni and the performance in government of the NRM. This elision may well have arisen from the way the NRM framed the referendum issue in the media.

Moreover, civic education had little observable effect on the quality of available information about the referendum. To be sure, the survey data show variation in levels of knowledge about the referendum among people who heard "a lot" from civic educators. In some cases, civic education seemed to make a positive impact. For example, it increased the proportion of people who knew that the referendum was about a choice of political systems (from 74 percent to 87 percent). In other cases its effect was slight: it reduced the number of people who "didn't know" whether a referendum was the "same thing" as an election (from 8 percent to 2 percent), but did not at the same time reduce the proportion who thought that this statement was true! On occasion, civic education was even a vehicle for misinformation. For example, compared with those who heard "nothing", those who heard "a lot" from civic educators were more likely to think that "if citizens do not like the results of the referendum, they do not need to abide by them" (43 percent versus 35 percent).

Influences on the Referendum Vote

Did inducements and pressures play any part in the referendum campaign? The survey asked whether voters were promised "carrots" or threatened with "sticks".

Figure 6. Irregular Influences on Referendum Vote (% Saying 'Yes')



Very few respondents (only 4 percent) admitted that anyone had "tried to influence your vote by promising rewards to you personally". But, when vote buying was attempted, both sides appear to have

been equally active. Among the few people who had been offered an inducement, 42 percent had been approached by the NRM and 41 percent by political parties. Most commonly, the promise of reward took the form of money (47 percent), whether or not it was ever actually paid, followed by alcohol (7 percent), probably when advocates of the movement or multiple parties bought beer for prospective voters. Given the low levels of reported vote-buying and the fact that, when it occurred, it came from both sides, we suspect that material inducement had little effect, one way or the other, on the referendum result.

More people (12 percent) held the opinion that "public services (were) delivered, improved or repaired in (their) area for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the referendum". They confirmed that Museveni's NRM made ample use of the advantages of incumbency to distribute patronage benefits as a campaign strategy. Those who cited such incidents said that the government delivered or upgraded the following facilities during the referendum campaign: roads (34 percent), schools (26 percent), water supplies (14 percent) and clinics (10 percent).

Fear of possible retribution for voting the "wrong" way was even more prevalent. Almost one out of five respondents (18 percent) reported that they were concerned that "negative consequences for you personally" might follow "if you fail to vote a certain way in the referendum". Among those who expressed these concerns, respondents worried about consequences for their personal safety (37 percent), the safety of their families (14 percent), or the protection of their property (9 percent). In some cases, respondents seem to have referred to national conditions (e.g. the resumption of war, general political violence) rather than effects on themselves personally (11 percent). In other cases, the expected "negative consequences" were self-imposed and reflected a sense of civic obligation, as with those who said "I would feel bad because I did not vote" (6 percent).

In any event, the survey did not reveal any widespread or systematic political intimidation during the campaign. The June referendum in Uganda did not resemble the June election in Zimbabwe. Fear of "negative consequences" was either relatively isolated, quite subtle, or connected to memories of earlier periods of political instability in Uganda's recent history. And unlike carrots, which were dangled in front of a few voters by both sides, sticks were wielded mainly by the multiparty side. When asked about "consequences from whom", fully half the respondents named political party officials (50 percent) as compared to just 16 percent for NRM officials.

These findings suggest two interpretations. Either multiparty advocates were more likely than movement supporters to resort to strong-arm tactics. Or, more likely in our view, President Museveni had succeeded in planting an association in people's minds between multiparty politics and political instability in Uganda. In this regard, fear for personal safety was particularly high in the central region, which contains the Luwero Triangle, a former epicenter of political terror.

We do not mean to imply that movement supporters never applied undue stress on voters. Indeed, those respondents who doubted the secrecy of the referendum ballot were somewhat more likely to say that they planned to vote for the movement system. This suggests that, even in the absence of overt intimidation, voters may have felt strong peer pressure to go along with a community consensus. Given the pervasive presence of NRM officials, structures, and supporters at the grassroots level in most regions, there were strong social expectations that loyal citizens would support the movement. In this regard, we detected stronger concerns about negative consequences in western Uganda, a movement stronghold, than in northern Uganda, where parties garner more support (19 versus 11 percent). Thus, at least some voters felt compelled to side, perhaps unwillingly, with the majority.

DEMOCRACY

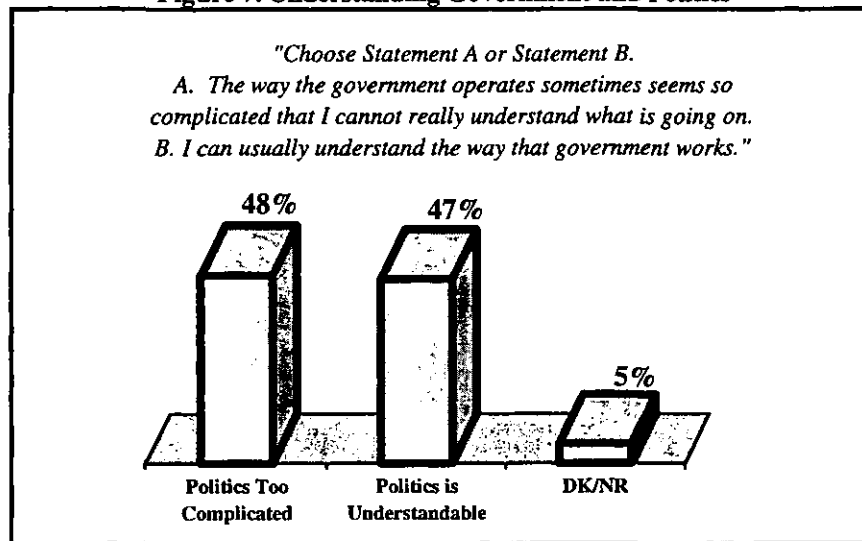
Democracy is a tricky subject in Uganda because of the enigmatic nature of the existing political regime. Has the National Resistance Movement created a novel form of popular democracy that is competitive and responsive? Or is it an authoritarian one-party state in disguise? Alternatively could the "movement" be a partial, hybrid political regime that is democratic in some sectors (e.g. a free press) but undemocratic in others (e.g. the party system)?

Interest in Politics

Uganda has a participant political culture. Most survey respondents declared themselves "interested" in politics and government (83 percent, of which 45 percent were "very interested"). The 15 percent minority who said they were "not interested" was far smaller than the one-third of Nigerians and Ghanaians who expressed this kind of detachment. Remember, however, that the survey in Uganda was conducted during a referendum campaign when political sensibilities were at a peak.

Men express more interest in politics than women, not only because they report significantly greater access to all types of news media, but especially because they are twice as likely to engage in daily political discussions with others (32 percent for men, 16 percent for women).

Figure 7. Understanding Government and Politics



Exposure to political information does not necessarily lead to a sense of citizen self-confidence. Ugandans are split on the question of whether public affairs are "too complicated to understand" (48 percent) or "usually understandable" (47 percent). Even though many survey respondents find politics hard to fathom, a majority nonetheless feel competent enough to get involved. Six out of ten think that they can influence the opinions of others and eight out of ten think that they can use their vote to choose leaders who will make the future better.

Although these levels of subjective citizen competence may seem high, Uganda is on a par with other countries like Zambia, Ghana and Nigeria. Greater variations in political competence occur within the country. For example, men are significantly more likely than women to say that they can influence the political opinions of other people (72 percent versus 54 percent). And educated people and residents of the western Uganda also express a stronger sense of political efficacy than do fellow citizens.

Political Participation

To what extent, then, have Ugandans become actively engaged in public life? There are many forms of political participation. In addition to informal activities like discussing politics with others, this report refers to several other dimensions: electoral participation (e.g. voting), inter-electoral representation (e.g. contacting leaders), and community-based participation (e.g. attending meetings and rallies). At this time we present an overall national profile of political participation, reserving analysis of any gender gaps for the last section of the report.

Electoral participation in the referendum has been summarized above. We simply add that, like people everywhere, Ugandans consistently claim high rates of voter turnout (for example, 80 percent in the 1996 Presidential election), usually higher than official turnout figures (in this case 73 percent).

Between elections, citizens participate by interacting with selected leaders (see Figure 8). We asked: "In the last five years, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem". People most frequently seek help from officials of Local Councils (62 percent, 17 percent "often"), in large part because the council structure is based at the village level and is accessible. NRM adherents often dominate the council hierarchy though, in some places, the composition of councils is politically plural.

At the same time, citizens frequently approach religious leaders (59 percent) and rely heavily on private patrons (41 percent). Similarly, when seeking a solution to a problem, people turn equally to traditional rulers as to government officials (both 23 percent). They are least likely to make contact with Members of Parliament. We conclude that informal political networks are just as important for political participation as formal organizational channels and that citizens are more likely to link with central government through council and movement hierarchies than through parliamentary representatives.

Figure 8. Inter-Electoral Representation (percent citing at least one contact with a leader)

<i>"In the last five years, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem?"</i>			
Local Council official	62%	Government official	23%
Religious leader	59%	Traditional ruler	23%
Other influential person	41%	Member of Parliament	16%

If a local government system has begun to take root, one would expect to find extensive community-based participation. This is what survey respondents declare in Uganda (see Figure 9). More than eight out of ten persons report attending a community meeting during the last five years. Almost two-thirds say they have attended a civic education meeting, though it is not clear what respondents mean by this. Since attendance at a civic education meeting correlates closely with attendance at an election rally, one wonders again whether respondents are referring to partisan "political" education or to non-partisan "civic" education.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Ugandans engage in community-based politics more frequently than citizens of other African countries: in Zambia in 1996, for example, 66 percent said they had attended a community meeting (versus 81 percent in Uganda) and just 14 percent said they had actively promoted a candidate for office (versus a hard-to-believe 43 percent in Uganda).

Figure 9. Community-Based Participation (percent citing at least one instance)

<i>"I will read out a list of things that people sometimes do as citizens. Please tell me how often you personally have done any of these things in the last five years?"</i>			
Attend community meeting	81%	Attend election rally	65%
Attend civic education	66%	Work for candidate	43%

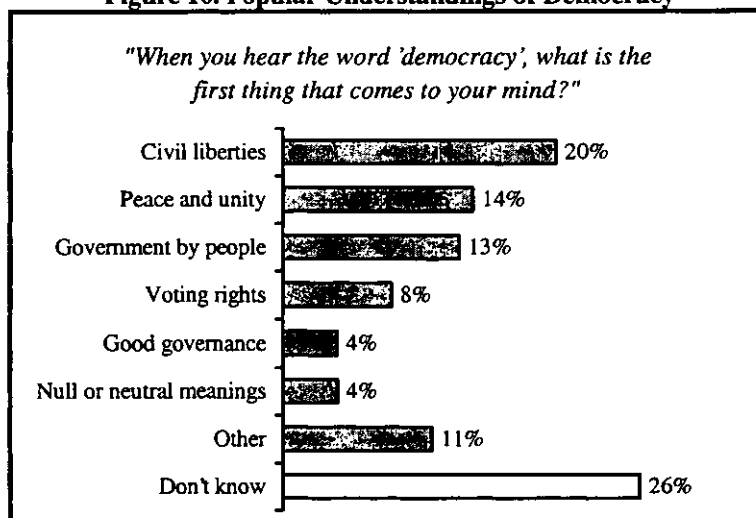
But what is the quality of this participation? Is it "autonomous," being based on open political competition and voluntary individual choice, or is it "mobilized," responding to the social pressures of a mass movement? Although we cannot settle this issue here, we lean towards the latter interpretation. To check for social pressures, recall that we asked people whether they expected "negative consequences for you personally if you fail to vote a certain way in the referendum". Those who felt pressured said that they were more likely to vote for the movement system than for a multiparty regime. In addition, this group also said that they were more likely to attend community meetings and election rallies. Thus, at least some Ugandans are participating in politics because they feel that they are expected, even required, to do so.

Understandings of Democracy

A good starting point for any discussion of democracy is to define terms. Accordingly, the survey inquired: "When you hear the word 'democracy', what is the first thing that comes to your mind?" The question was posed in a local language but the word "democracy" was stated in English. In order to avoid influencing respondents, answers were solicited in open-ended form, that is, without predetermined response categories. Thus the survey participants could say whatever they liked and we recorded their responses verbatim.

As Figure 10 shows, the most common response is that the concept has no popular meaning. One-quarter of all Ugandans (26 percent) say that they "don't know" what democracy means, perhaps because the popular political discourse in Uganda has focused mainly on political stability. Indeed, more citizens are unaware of the term "democracy" in Uganda than in six other African countries where this question was asked in 1999-2000 (and where an average 17 percent said "don't know"). Ugandans more closely resemble the citizens of Namibia (29 percent of whom say "don't know") than those of Botswana (8 percent) or Nigeria (6 percent).

Figure 10. Popular Understandings of Democracy



Within Uganda, awareness of democracy varies across various social groups. Women are more than twice as likely as men to say that they don't know what democracy means (40 percent versus 17 percent). A gap in awareness also exists between urban and rural dwellers (31 percent versus 16 percent). Education is the best predictor, with the spread between people with secondary schooling and those with primary schooling being the widest of all (42 percent versus 12 percent). Interestingly, lower levels of female awareness of democracy are not due to the fact that girls receive less education than boys; a significant gender gap in awareness exists regardless of level of education.

What, then, does democracy mean to those Ugandans who know about the concept? Contrary to arguments that Africans have specific cultural interpretations of democracy, Ugandans express rather liberal and universal views. In order of importance, democracy means civil liberties like freedom of speech (20 percent), government by the people between elections (13 percent), voting rights at election time (8 percent), and open and accountable decision-making: in short, good governance (4 percent). The rank order of these values in Uganda – civil liberties, followed by popular government and voting rights – is exactly the same as in six other African countries for which survey results are available.¹³

Ugandans stand apart from other Africans, however, in the extent to which they associate democracy with social peace and national unity. These are important values in other African countries, being the sixth most frequently cited interpretation of democracy elsewhere and accounting for 6 percent of all responses. But, in Uganda, peace and unity ranks third overall and accounts for 14 percent of all responses. Thus democracy for Ugandans means more than a set of procedures for guaranteeing rights and electing responsive governments. It has an added substantive meaning: democracy is a system of government that puts an end to political violence and unites and stabilizes the country.

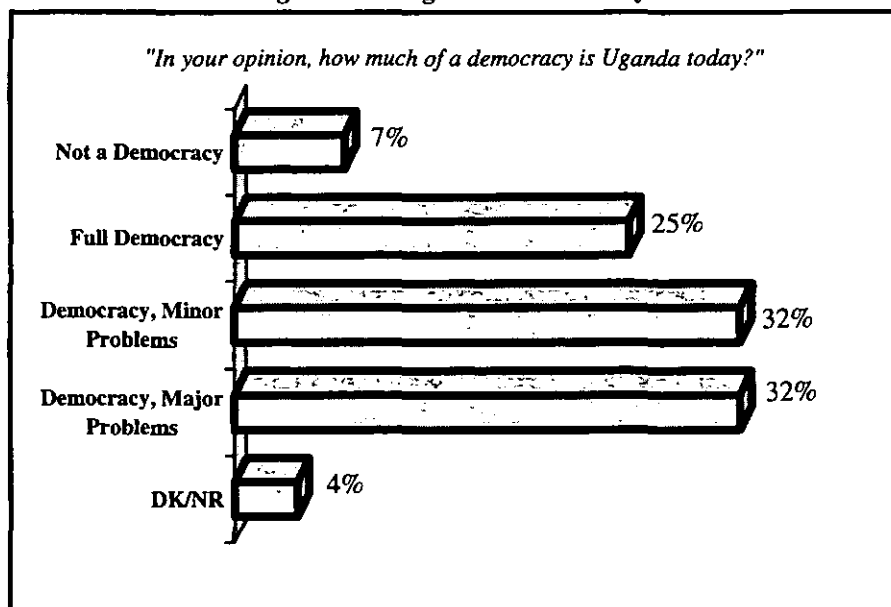
Since the end of the Cold War, democracy has become a broadly valued political symbol around the world. Citizens therefore tend to project onto it the value that they most desire: Eastern Europeans see it in terms of personal freedoms (e.g. to speak their minds and to travel), South Africans in term of jobs and housing. We show later in this paper that Ugandans cite political security as the country's most elusive and pressing goal. Thus, they portray "democracy", however fully or partially understood, as a means for banishing the violent conflicts that have marred the country's recent past.

Before closing this discussion, a couple of short observations are in order about what democracy does *not* mean in Uganda. Again contrary to conventional wisdom, only a few Ugandans associate democracy with substantive outcomes like economic development (3 percent) and social justice (2 percent). Importantly, few Ugandans make a connection between democracy and multiparty competition (2 percent). In other words, rather than stressing political competition, they place more emphasis on political participation (e.g. "government by the people"). This finding opens up the possibility that Ugandans consider that democracy is possible even in the absence of multiple competing political parties, a subject that we now address.

Is Uganda a democracy?

Without doubt, Ugandans consider the existing political regime in their country to be a democracy. Asked directly "how much of a democracy is Uganda today?" only 7 percent say that it is not a democracy at all (see Figure 11). By the same token, only 25 percent are willing to venture that it is a "full" democracy, compared to the 34 percent in Malawi and 46 percent in Botswana who think that their own democratic regimes are completely consolidated. Almost two-thirds of Ugandans consider their democracy to have "major" (32 percent) or "minor" (32 percent) shortcomings.

Figure 11. Is Uganda a Democracy?



Hefty regional differences were observed on this question. Whereas northerners were most likely to say that Uganda was "not a democracy" (24 percent), easterners and westerners were most inclined to hold the opinion that Uganda had attained "full democracy" (33 and 30 percent respectively). Gender differences were less obvious, though men were somewhat more critical of present political arrangements than women.

Regime Support and Satisfaction

The fact that Ugandans think that their present political regime is a democracy helps to explain why they support democracy as their preferred form of government (80 percent), and are satisfied with the way it actually works in practice in their country (72 percent). These levels of support and satisfaction are high by African standards, coming close to those found in Botswana and Nigeria, which currently lead the continent.

But results from standard survey items require extra interpretation in the Ugandan context. More so than in more open African countries, questions about political support and satisfaction seem to tap attitudes to the existing ("movement") regime rather than to "democracy" understood as a form of government based on competitive, multiparty elections. This inference is supported by the extremely high correlation among survey respondents who think that Uganda is a democracy and those who are satisfied with the way that the present regime works.¹⁴ As such, respondents may be expressing support and satisfaction for a familiar system, which itself may be an incomplete version of democracy.

Having said that, we do find evidence of popular commitment to basic democratic values, universally defined. Clear majorities of survey respondents asserted that it was "very important" to them that the government of Uganda protects the following rights: the freedom to criticize the government (71 percent), the rights of minority groups (65 percent), and the freedom to choose one's own religion (59 percent). These respondents apparently find no contradiction between their support for such core democratic values and their support for "democracy" in its Ugandan form. *Ergo*, they must believe that the movement system delivers these valued political goods.

Attitudes to Multiparty Competition

The survey sought to gauge how Ugandans approach the idea of multiparty competition. Do they think that competing parties are necessary for good governance? For democracy?

We asked people what first comes to their minds when they heard the term "political party". Ugandans offered multiple definitions, the most common of which was to mention the names of existing parties, especially the UPC and DP (12 percent). Unlike democracy, parties do not have positive connotations: the next most common response was "war" or "political violence", even "death" (6 percent).

Respondents were then asked to agree or disagree with eight statements about political parties and their functions in a competitive political system. Figure 12 shows the percentage that took a "pro-party" (i.e. "pro-competition") stance on each item.

Figure 12. Popular Attitudes to Political Parties
(Percentages, including "don't knows")

<i>"Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements."</i>	Percent Pro-Party	
	Agree	Disagree
By causing conflict and confusion, political parties undermine national unity		24%
In order to get elected, political parties simply make promises that they can never fulfill		25%
Many political parties are needed to make sure that all points of view are represented in government	35%	
Even without political parties, we already have enough choice among candidates for office		36%
Political parties will not necessarily include people like you in political discussions and decisions		38%
At least two political parties are needed to provide people with real choices of leaders	40%	
Political parties help to ensure that people in government don't abuse their power	44%	
Through political parties, young leaders will arise to replace the older leaders who have run this country	49%	

We conclude from these data that Ugandans are generally suspicious of political parties, which they apparently associate with the array of parties (the DP, UPC etc.) that exist within the country today. When the opinions of persons who "don't know" are included, respondents never express an absolute majority in favor of multiparty competition on any individual item.¹⁵

Specifically, respondents are most concerned about the potentially disruptive effects of party competition on national political stability. This result gives one more indication that President Museveni has struck a popular chord in linking party politics with "conflict and confusion". Ugandans also take a skeptical view of the promises made by out-of-power politicians, regarding them largely as empty electioneering.

As for political representation -- which is supposed to be a key function of political parties -- Ugandans seem to see little advantage in making their system more competitive. Clear majorities tend to think that the existing NRM system provides enough choice of leadership and adequate space for the expression of diverse viewpoints. They suspect that multiple parties would be insufficiently inclusive of people like themselves.

People nevertheless support political parties in two respects. Substantial minorities of respondents (which turn into slim majorities if "don't knows" are excluded) recognize that multiple parties may confer a

couple of advantages. They can help to control abuses of government power; and they can refresh the ranks of the political elite by recruiting alternate and younger leaders. These results can be read to mean that at least some citizens in Uganda have underlying concerns that the NRM leadership may have stayed too long in office and that such a situation invites potential abuses of power.

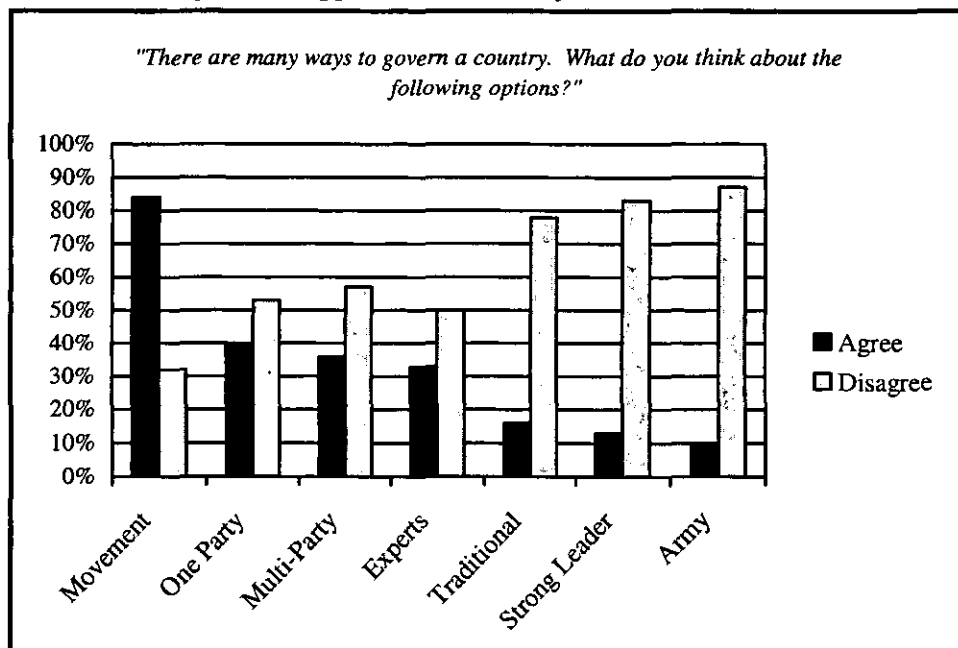
Preferences for Governmental Systems

Thus, despite the referendum result and notwithstanding strong popular reservations about political parties, Ugandans do not entirely dismiss competitive politics. They have not closed their minds on the issue of multiparty rule. This finding stands out when the referendum question is recast, which we did in two ways in the survey.

First, we asked about patience with the existing political regime, without using symbolically fraught words like “movement” or “parties”. We simply asked people to choose between two statements: “A. Our present system of government should be able to deal with problems inherited from the past, even if this takes time;” or “B. If our system of government can’t produce results soon, we should try another system”. More than seven out of ten respondents (72 percent) chose “A”, thus showing patience with the political *status quo*; only 22 percent chose “B”, thereby opting for a change of political regime. Although regime support remains high, many more people are willing to countenance change when the question is posed this way.

Second, we asked people to compare various types of political regime that Uganda has experienced or might conceivably adopt. The survey reminded respondents “there are many ways to govern a country” and asked them, “What do you think about the following options?”

Figure 13. Support for Different Systems of Government



These results cast new light on the levels of support for a multiparty option. On one hand, the overwhelming majority of respondents prefer the existing movement system, though at a slightly lower level (84 percent) than in the referendum (91 percent). On the other hand, multiparty democracy was voted the third most popular form of government for Uganda. In this instance, the gap between the referendum result (9 percent support for the multiparty option) and survey result (37 percent agree with a

system based on multiparty elections) is extremely wide. Measured by the survey, more than a third of adult Ugandans say they are willing to countenance the reintroduction of competitive party politics, if not now then at some time in the future.

This multiparty sentiment was concentrated among the social groups that one might expect: males, younger people, urbanites and educated persons. But, yet again, the key discriminating factor was geographic region. We even found majorities in two regions who agreed with the statement that “we should have many political parties that compete in free elections”: in Kampala (where 50 percent agreed and 43 percent disagreed) and in the north (where 50 percent agreed, compared to 17 percent in the west). Indeed, this last distinction was the strongest in the study.

Against such multiparty tendencies, we note that Ugandans are also tolerant of the prospect of one-party rule. It is difficult to say whether they prefer a single party to multiple parties since the difference in levels of support for these two types of regime lies within the study’s margin of sampling error. But, by entertaining the possibility of one-party rule, Ugandans clearly diverge from other Africans: in all other places surveyed, few citizens still support it: under 12 percent in Nigeria and under 20 percent in Ghana and Zambia.

Nonetheless, Ugandans clearly prefer the idea of multiparty democracy to numerous other forms of government. Echoing what was said earlier about the dangers of unchecked rule by a strongman, Ugandans also resoundingly reject the option of “get(ting) rid of elections so that a strong leader can decide everything” (only 13 percent agree). Finally, Ugandans also rebuff two other forms of government with which they are intimately acquainted. The survey found little nostalgia for the return of traditional chiefs (16 percent) or army officers (9 percent) to the national helm.

Thus preferences of Ugandans about systems of government are less fixed than the lopsided referendum result implies. Outside of the heated context of a referendum contest, Ugandans express more reflective and open-minded opinions on this subject. The survey question on alternative regimes shows that a strong plurality of Ugandans is not opposed to multiparty democracy *per se*. In our opinion, the survey indicates that they may be willing to consider such a regime at some time in the future. But, at the moment of the June 2000 referendum, they thought that Uganda was not yet ready to return to a system in which the present set of parties would be permitted to contest for state power.

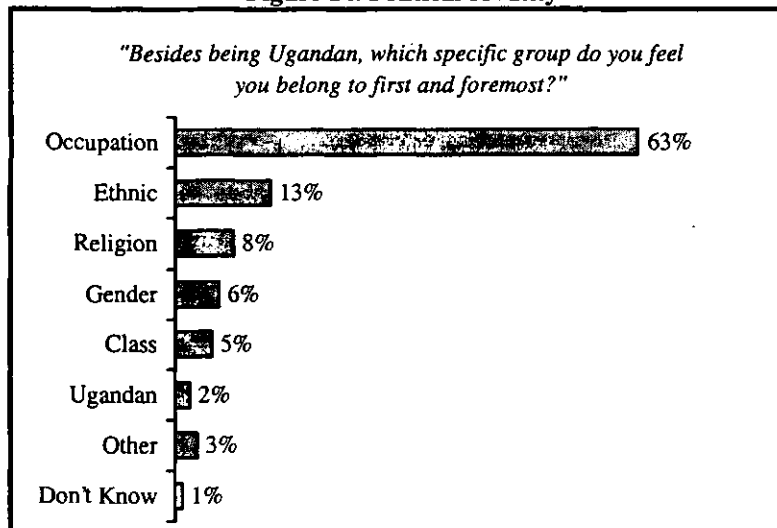
CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

One might argue that mobilized participation would block the emergence of an autonomous civil society. Yet the outlines of a civil society can be found in the Ugandan survey data. This section explores the political identities and associational memberships that Ugandans have adopted. After summarizing these and other features of civil society, we examine the attitudes of citizens to the state. Do they think that public institutions are trustworthy, responsive, and legitimate?

Political Identity and Interpersonal Trust

When we asked, “besides being Ugandan, which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?” the results were surprising. Given the nature of past political conflicts in the country, one might expect Ugandans to identify themselves in ethnic or regional terms. For example, 48 percent of Nigerians do so. On the contrary, most Ugandans (63 percent) chose an occupational identity, for example a farmer, a student or a businessperson. Only 13 percent chose an ethnic or regional label and just 8 percent a religious identity (versus 21 percent who cited their religion in Nigeria). And only 6 percent identified themselves in gender terms, though women did this twice as often as men.

Figure 14. Political Identity



Various explanations are possible for Uganda’s distinctive pattern of political identities. Given the NRM’s efforts to promote pan-ethnic politics, respondents may have felt that it was socially or politically unacceptable to admit to ethnic pride. Alternatively, the survey interviewers may have inadvertently prompted an occupational answer. Most likely, however, Ugandans really do define their political identities primarily in terms of the work they do, which itself may be a reflection of the country’s relatively well-developed educational and market systems.

Whatever identity people ascribe to themselves, Ugandans do not harbor a sense of grievance that the government treats their self-defined group unfairly. Overall only 18 percent feel that the state discriminates against their group “always” or “to a large extent”; on the contrary, 42 percent say that official discrimination “never” occurs or “hardly at all”. Interestingly, political exclusion is most likely to be felt by those who define their identities in regional terms, and in Uganda these people commonly are northerners. Interestingly too, people who express a gender identity are likely to say that the government “never” treats their group unfairly, probably reflecting a public appreciation of the NRM’s reforms to advance the status of women.

Do Ugandans expect fair treatment from their fellow citizens? We asked the standard questionnaire item that has been used in values surveys around the world: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people?"

The results revealed a good deal of public wariness, with only 16 percent of Ugandans finding their fellow citizens generally trustworthy and 82 percent expressing caution. In this case, Uganda resembles Nigeria (where only 15 percent express trust), but falls well short of Namibia and Malawi (where 32 and 44 percent express trust). The combination of occupational identities and low levels of interpersonal trust in Uganda suggests a society that is relatively individualistic by African standards.

These findings are partly offset by the 80 percent of respondents who say that they trust members of their own ethnic group "somewhat" or "a lot". Significantly fewer people trust members of other ethnic groups (66 percent), which implies the persistence of at least some ethnic consciousness. All types of interpersonal and intergroup distrust increase with education and urban residence. And people from the central region are particularly distrusting of members of their own ethnic groups.

Associational Life

Perhaps voluntary associations help link together individuals in Uganda. The survey found quite a high density of associational life (see Figure 15). The most widespread forms of association are churches, mosques or other religious communities, to which 80 percent claim to belong. Almost half of all Ugandans say they are active in their religious groups (48 percent) and 9 percent claim to hold church leadership positions.

Figure 15. Membership in Voluntary Associations (percentage of sample)

Religious organization	80%	Women's organization	26%
Sport or recreation club	32%	Professional/business association	22%
Development association	30%	Environmental group	18%
Trade union/Farmer association	30%	Democracy/human rights group	15%
Educational association	29%	Charitable organization	13%

Regardless of expressed identities, therefore, voluntary associations in Uganda form mainly along religious rather than occupational lines. In terms of frequency of membership, occupational groups like trade unions and farmer associations rank third and professional or business associations rank seventh. Even so, Ugandans organize around occupation much more commonly than other Africans. Despite the apparent importance of trade unions and farmers associations in Zambia, just 2 percent of Zambians claim union or cooperative membership (versus 30 percent in Uganda). And, even though Nigeria is known for its business and professional associations, only 6 percent of Nigerians say they belong (versus 22 percent in Uganda).

Ugandans are apparently keen on sports, with 32 percent belonging to a football or other kind of recreational club, including drinking clubs for men. Almost as many respondents claim affiliation with a development association, including savings clubs for women. Pro-democracy or human rights groups attract few adherents, at least by local standards. And, regrettably, participants in organizations devoted to democracy promotion report the lowest levels of "active membership" and "official leadership" of any type of association.

As might be expected, men and women join different sorts of groups. While both genders attend churches in approximately the same proportions, males are more likely to join occupational associations (34 percent) and females to join women's organizations (41 percent). We did however find a handful of men who claimed to be active members, even leaders, of women's groups.

Educated people are more likely to belong to, and to lead, professional bodies, parent-teacher associations, and human rights groups. Importantly, while women's organizations are often led by middle-class women, education or income are not requisites for membership of these groups.

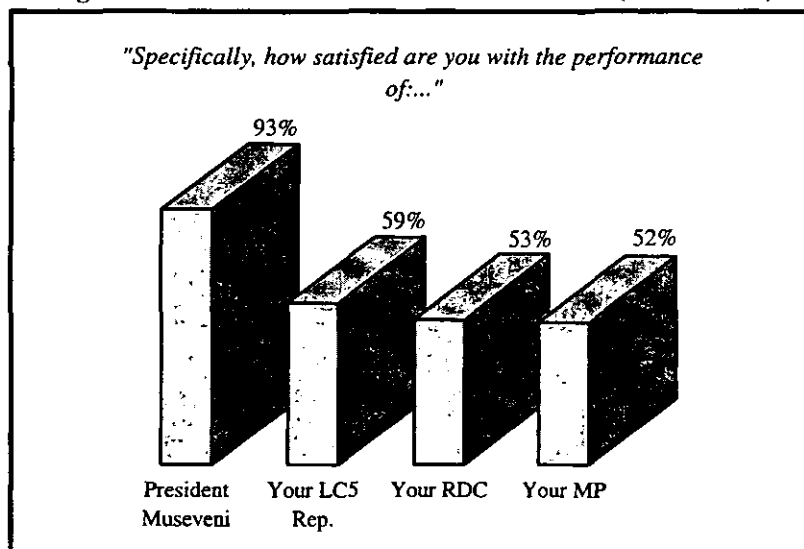
Associational life seems to have positive effects on the availability of social capital in civil society. For example, members of occupational associations are more likely to think that humanity is generally trustworthy. Churchgoers are more likely to have confidence in persons with ethnic backgrounds different to their own. And, although the effects are slight, membership in women's groups seems to boost both interpersonal and inter-ethnic trust.¹⁶

Political Representation

We now shift focus from civil society to the state. How satisfied are citizens with the performance of their political representatives? One is immediately struck that Ugandans feel unusually competent about being able to "make our representatives listen to our problems": 62 percent feel that they can demand attention from elected leaders compared to 51 percent in Ghana and only 34 percent in Zambia.

Much depends, however, on which leader's performance is being evaluated (see Figure 16). President Museveni received an overwhelmingly positive job performance rating (93 percent) from survey respondents in June 2000. People also endorse the performance of other leaders, though less wholeheartedly. At the district level, locally elected LC5 representatives score higher than centrally appointed Resident District Commissioners (RDCs).

Figure 16. Evaluation of Performance of Leaders (% 'Satisfied')



Members of Parliament were seen as least effective (52 percent). As in other African countries, many citizens complain that M.P.s neglect their constituencies, visiting only when elections roll around. While disaffection with parliamentary representation has not reached Zambian proportions (where only 25 percent approve of M.P. performance), it cannot increase much further in Uganda without becoming a majority complaint.

Perceptions of Corruption

As of mid-2000, however, Ugandans seem ready to give their political leaders the benefit of the doubt. A clear majority (59 percent) agrees that “politicians and civil servants are trying their best to look after the interests of people like me”. Surveys elsewhere show that most Africans disagree with this statement. Apart from affirming an identity of interests, sentiments of solidarity with leaders may have a darker side in which clients are saying that they think they can obtain undue advantage by manipulating ties to patrons. As evidence, an even larger majority (72 percent) considers that “the best way to get ahead in this life is to have contacts with important people in high places”.

Moreover, government in Uganda is not perceived as free of corruption. Again, perceptions of corruption vary by type of leader or department of government (see Figure 17). Three quarters of Ugandans (76 percent) think that corruption is “fairly common” or “very common” in the police force. And more than three out of five Ugandans (over 60 percent) say the same about other agents of the executive branch, with legislative leaders faring almost as badly. And one half of Ugandans see corruption in the judiciary.

Indeed, government is seen as more corrupt than the private sector. And, within the private sector, public opinion indicts Ugandan businesses more frequently than foreign businesses. Teachers get off rather lightly, but the fact that almost one-quarter see them as participating in corruption (e.g. when some school officials insist on fee payments for free educational services, for example in primary schools) is a worrying sign for the integrity of education in Uganda. Women’s organizations and churches receive a relatively clean bill of health. Yet leaders of women’s groups, who presumably are in a position to know, are more likely to say that financial and other abuses occur in their organizations too.

Figure 17. Perceptions of Corruption (percent saying corruption is ‘common’)

<i>“Please tell me how common you think corruption is within each of the following groups or organizations.”</i>			
Police	76%	Ugandan businessmen	44%
Civil servants	64%	Foreign businessmen	30%
Customs agents	61%	Teachers	22%
Elected leaders	59%	Women’s organizations	17%
Judges	52%	Churches	17%

The above figures should be taken viewed with caution. It is worth remembering that, in other African countries, corruption is generally more often perceived than actually experienced. We were unable to squeeze questions on the actual frequency of bribery or gift-giving onto the questionnaire. But we suspect that reported levels of perceived corruption in Uganda are based in part on hearsay and rumor, just as they are everywhere else. Perhaps the most balanced judgment is provided by the 51 percent of Ugandans who disagree (and the 42 percent who agree) with the statement that “corruption is a fact of life in Uganda today; there is little that anyone can do about it”.

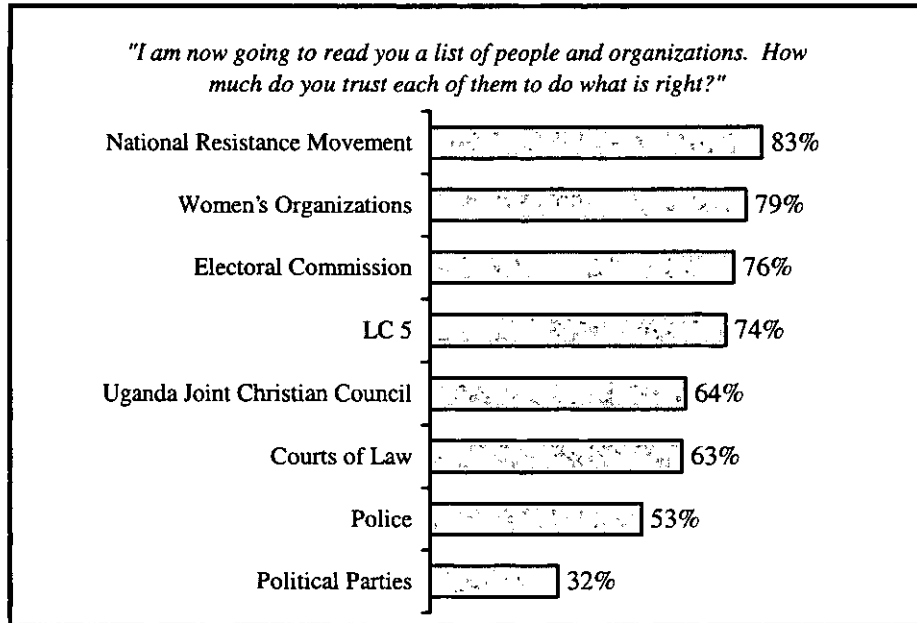
Trust in Public Institutions

Attitudes to corruption shape trust in public institutions. And, in countries like Uganda where political relationships are highly personal, opinions about individual leaders also color how people view political organizations as a whole. Taken together, these factors give rise to a (by now) predictable pattern of trust in public institutions (see Figure 18).

The NRM tops the list as the body that most Ugandans find trustworthy. At the other end of the scale, few people have confidence in political parties. Trust in one or other of these “polarizing” institutions is

an excellent predictor of an individual's intended vote in the June 2000 referendum and whether he or she is willing to countenance political party competition in Uganda at some time in the future.

Figure 18. Trust in Public Institutions (percent expressing "trust")



New findings include the following. Women's organizations are highly trusted, in major part because they are seen as free of corruption. The Electoral Commission is also trusted, in this case because many Ugandans regard the administration of the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections to have been above board. Along with the law courts, the Uganda Joint Christian Council (which played a coordinating role in civic education and vote monitoring campaigns for the referendum) receives a slightly lower trust rating. This is partly because many people do not recognize the name of the UJCC or know what it does. Oddly, considering their reputation as the most corrupt agency of government, the police manage (barely) to win trust from a majority of Ugandans.

One would not expect trust in public institutions to be uniform across all regions or social groups. This is indeed the case. Northerners are unusually distrustful of the NRM, though a majority (75 percent) in this region is still trustful. People from the central region, in this case a majority (53 percent), are most likely to distrust the police. And westerners are especially likely to condemn political parties, often vehemently (76 percent distrust, 67 percent "strongly").

As for gender, men are generally more skeptical than women; they are therefore more likely to express suspicion about *all* political institutions, including *both* the NRM *and* political parties. Because women are less well informed politically than men, they are more likely to say that they "don't know" whether the Electoral Commission is trustworthy. Finally, it comes as no surprise that women's organizations elicit more trust from women than from men.

The Legitimacy of the State

If citizens regard the institutions of the state as trustworthy, they will tend to voluntarily comply with official decisions. The survey used several questions to test whether Ugandans think that the state is legitimate and whether they respect the rule of law.

On one hand, there is no doubt that Ugandans want their governments to be legally incorporated and constitutionally governed. An overwhelming majority (91 percent, 66 percent "strongly") rejects the proposition that "the army should come in to govern the country". Vetoes of military rule were particularly frequent among middle-aged and older persons who were old enough to remember the offenses of the Amin and Okello administrations of the 1970s and early 1980s. To determine if the present 1996 national constitution is seen as legitimate, we asked whether it embodies "the values and aspirations of the Ugandan people". A strong majority (75 percent) readily agreed with this "easy" question, though it is worth noting that 17 percent "didn't know" either what a constitution was, or whether the Ugandan one was legitimate.

On the other hand, respondents were much more equivocal when asked whether "it is acceptable to bend the law, as long as one does not break it". Whereas 52 percent disagreed, 39 percent agreed. And respondents were split right down the middle on the toughest standard of state legitimacy: does "our government have the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by, whether or not they agree with them?" One half agreed (49 percent) and the other half either disagreed (42 percent) or "didn't know". Thus, because a significant proportion of the population extends only conditional compliance to the state, we must conclude that the rule of law remains seriously incomplete in Uganda.

Willingness to comply with the law of the land varies along familiar lines. Men are somewhat more likely than women to question the state's authority (46 percent versus 38 percent). And northerners are very much more likely than westerners to say they would withhold compliance if they disagreed with a public decision (49 percent -- almost a majority -- versus 35 percent).

The best predictor of state legitimacy, however, is partisan preference. A majority (60 percent) of those who intended to vote for the movement system in the referendum said that government decisions should always be obeyed, whether or not citizens agreed. By contrast, a majority (57 percent) of those who intended to vote for the multiparty option in the referendum said that citizens should reserve the right to resist public commands with which they disagree. Thus, at least for multiparty supporters, the referendum of June 2000 did not resolve the basic controversy about whether the present holders of state power actually have the right to rule.

THE ECONOMY

There are many ways to create political legitimacy. For regimes that are less than completely democratic, economic performance is a tried and true method for winning popular compliance and support. This section of the report reviews the economic values, preferences and evaluations of a representative cross-section of Ugandans as revealed by the June 2000 survey.

Economic Satisfaction

Ugandans seem to be relatively content with the economic conditions prevailing in their country. Clear majorities say they are satisfied with their own current living standards (57 percent), the state of the national economy (62 percent), and “the general situation in the country today” (82 percent). In these ways, Ugandans resemble Nigerians, 58 percent of whom expressed satisfaction with their own living standards in a parallel survey in early 2000. They also look like Namibians, two-thirds of whom said they were satisfied with the condition of their national economy in late 1999. But, in this regard, Ugandans differ dramatically from citizens in most African countries – for example, Botswana (47 percent), Ghana (34 percent) and Zimbabwe (6 percent) – where satisfaction with the national economy is a minority sentiment.¹⁷

Many Ugandans feel positive about their current economic situation because it compares favorably with the country’s economic past. When asked to weigh living conditions today against those five years ago, survey respondents were twice as likely to be more satisfied now (54 percent, versus 27 percent who felt less satisfied). This seems to point to the trickling down to the mass level of at least some economic growth. The majority of Ugandans who report recent personal economic gains stands in stark contrast to the minorities who report such gains in other African countries: only 39 percent in Ghana, 26 percent in Malawi and, especially, just 3 percent in Zimbabwe.

Which segments of society are most satisfied? The survey revealed no gender or urban-rural differences in evaluations of economic conditions (whether personal or national, past or present). Instead, age and income had consistently strong effects.¹⁸ For example, younger people (aged 25 years and below) were significantly more likely to be satisfied with current economic conditions than middle-aged and older persons (over 36 years old). And 69 percent of persons earning over 90,000 Ushs. (about US\$60) per month saw improvements in their personal economic conditions over the past five years, compared with 45 percent of persons earning less than 10,000 Ushs (about US\$7).

Rosy economic assessments are partly offset, however, by some countervailing evidence.

First, economic satisfaction is lukewarm in Uganda. Whether referring to personal or national economic conditions, or to the “general situation in the country”, people who are “somewhat” satisfied greatly outnumber (by at least three to one) those who are “very” satisfied.

Second, Ugandans are uncertain about what the economic future holds. The survey asked: “When you look forward at your life’s prospects, how satisfied do you expect to be in one year’s time?” While only 13 percent said “less satisfied”, fully one quarter (26 percent) expected no change, and more than a third (35 percent) said, “don’t know”, the highest proportion found so far across eight African countries. Thus, although many Ugandans expect to be more satisfied with their lives in one year’s time (39 percent), they are significantly less optimistic about the future than Ghanaians (52 percent), Namibians (57 percent), and, especially Nigerians (87 percent).

Third, Ugandan women are markedly less likely than Ugandan men to express economic optimism. Not only do more women say that they “don’t know” what the future holds, but barely one-third of women

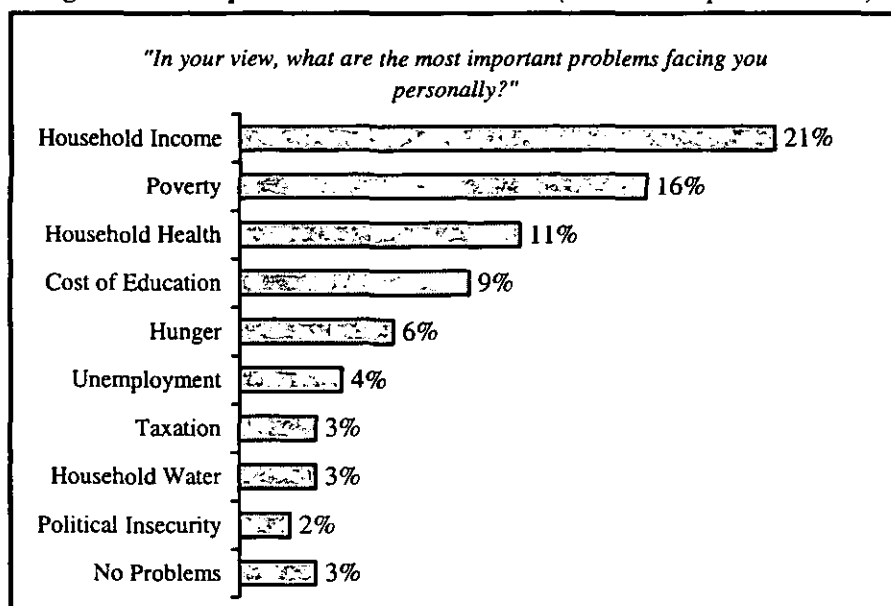
(34 percent, versus 42 percent for men) think that their lives will get better anytime soon.

Personal and National Problems

Economic concerns predominated when we asked, "In your view, what are the most important problems facing (a) you personally? and (b) the country?" The question was open-ended, allowing respondents to offer multiple responses and to say whatever they wished.¹⁹ The results can be thought of as a "people's agenda" for personal and national development.

As indicated in Figure 19, Ugandans mentioned four economic issues among their top ten personal concerns. Heading the list were shortfalls in household income, identified 21 percent of the time. Together, the economic items (household income, the cost of education, unemployment and over-taxation) amounted to 37 percent of all problems mentioned. Next came problems that had both economic and social dimensions (like poverty and hunger), which together accounted for 22 percent of all responses. The prevalence of popular concerns about poverty, hunger and purchasing power indicates that, even in the midst of national economic recovery, more than a few Ugandans think that a growing economy has left them behind.

Figure 19. Perceptions of Personal Problems (as % of total problems cited)

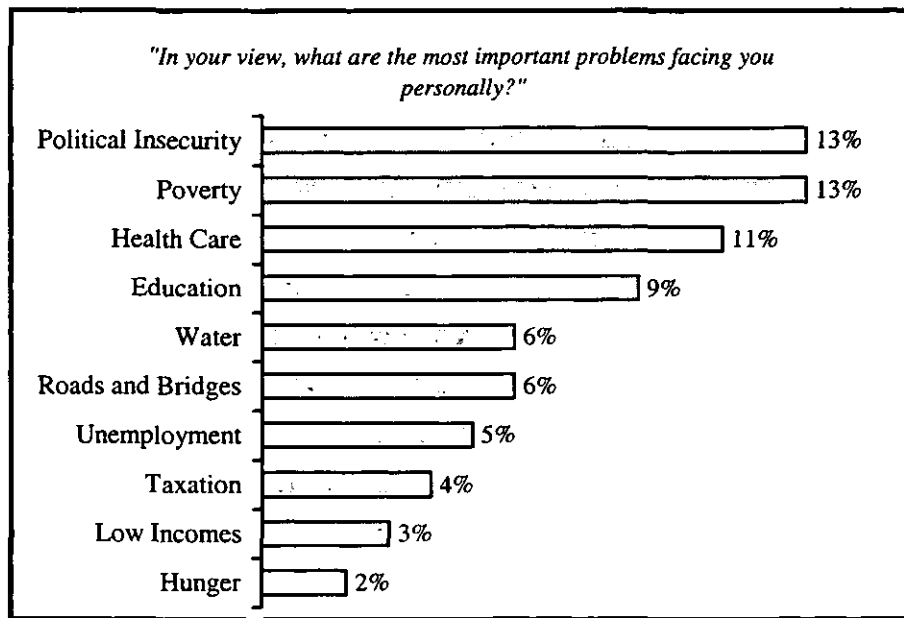


Purely social problems (illness among household members, unreliable water supply) were mentioned by a smaller proportion (14 percent), though health concerns ranked third overall (among 11 percent of respondents). In a related finding, fully six out of ten Ugandans reported that their daily routine was inhibited "a lot" by "feeling tired, stressed or sick". Not only were women more likely than men to say that they felt physically run down, but females were also twice as likely to voluntarily cite family health as an issue of personal concern.

Only three percent of Ugandans claimed to have no personal problems. And only one political issue made the top ten list, in this case, political insecurity (2 percent). Mirroring the geographical locations of opposition insurgencies, political violence caused more personal expressions of concern in the north and the west than in central Uganda.

The picture changes at the macro-level. Political insecurity is named as the top priority among national problems requiring government attention. Figure 20 indicates that Ugandans are equally concerned about the prevalence of poverty (13 percent) but, for two reasons, political insecurity edged ahead: it was cited by more people (a fact masked by rounding of percentage figures) and it was usually the first national problem that respondents raised (reserving poverty as their second-mentioned problem). Thus, before anything else, Ugandans want the state to provide political order.

Figure 20. Perceptions of National Problems (as % of total problems cited)



Otherwise, the rankings of problems on the personal and national development agendas are similar. In order of next importance, Ugandans desire poverty alleviation, health care for their families, and education for their children. As before, the cost of education is mentioned as a more pressing issue than the quality or availability of schools. But people expressed more concern with the low quality of health care services than they did with the cost of medicines or availability of clinics.

The infrastructure for development, like water supplies and roads and bridges, also figures prominently on the popular national agenda. For water supplies, the problem is seen primarily as one of availability of basic facilities like dams, wells, and reticulation systems; for roads and bridges, people mention both the need for new construction as well as the necessity to maintain the country's existing network.

Interesting regional variations were apparent in developmental priorities. Northerners were very much more likely than people from central Uganda to cite political insecurity (42 percent versus 11 percent). Easterners were most likely to put poverty at the top of their list (24 percent versus 11 percent for other Ugandans). And, whereas northerners complained about the quality of roads, westerners were more likely point to a lack of water. Gender differences were less marked, though men were more likely to grieve about taxation and women about poverty.

Just as interesting as the problems that people articulated are the items they did not raise. We were surprised to find very few concerns expressed about the war in the Congo, domestic violence, and AIDS (all less than 1 percent). Either these topics are considered taboo, or they do not figure as prominently in the popular imagination as they do in the preoccupations of professionals and journalists.

Basic Economic Values

Where do Ugandans stand in the great economic debate of our time about state versus market? The survey reveals great ambiguity, perhaps even contradiction, on basic economic values.

On one hand, we discovered a sturdy culture of "statism". Some 61 percent of Ugandans agree (47 percent "strongly") that "the government should bear the main responsibility for ensuring the well-being of people." This contrasts with the 35 percent who think that "people should look after themselves and be responsible for their own success in life". Indeed, Ugandans profess more "statism" than Africans in any other country where this question has been asked. Reliance on government for public well-being ranges elsewhere from a high of 59 percent in Zimbabwe to a low of 25 percent in Malawi.

On the other hand, Ugandans are not convinced that the public sector should be the country's main employer. Only four out of ten respondents (40 percent) agree that "the government should provide employment for everyone who wants to work." Instead, they tend to support the view that "the best way to create jobs is to encourage people to start their own businesses" (56 percent, 37 percent "strongly"). In this regard, public opinion in Uganda aligns more closely to popular views in other African countries, especially Ghana (57 percent), where majorities think that job creation is a task for entrepreneurs rather than for government.

Ugandans hold even stronger market values with regard to income distribution. More than seven out of ten respondents (73 percent, 54 percent "strongly") think that "everyone should be free to earn as much as they can, even if this leads to differences in income among people". Many fewer people (21 percent) say that "the government should place limits on how much the rich can earn, even if this discourages some people from working hard." Remarkably, the Ugandan sample is more market-oriented on this question than any other national sample of Africans surveyed so far.

Thus Ugandans appear to be caught between state and market. Depending on the issue at hand, they oscillate between being either strongly pro-state, strongly pro-market, or somewhere in between. We might conclude from the above results that most Ugandans want the state to provide an infrastructure of human services, but not to be mainly responsible for employment, or that the citizenry is broadly accepting of income inequalities. But such conclusions would be premature, as subsequent results will show. The best we can say for the moment is that Ugandans are still trying to figure out where they stand in an era of expanding markets and shrinking states.

Attitudes to Economic Reform

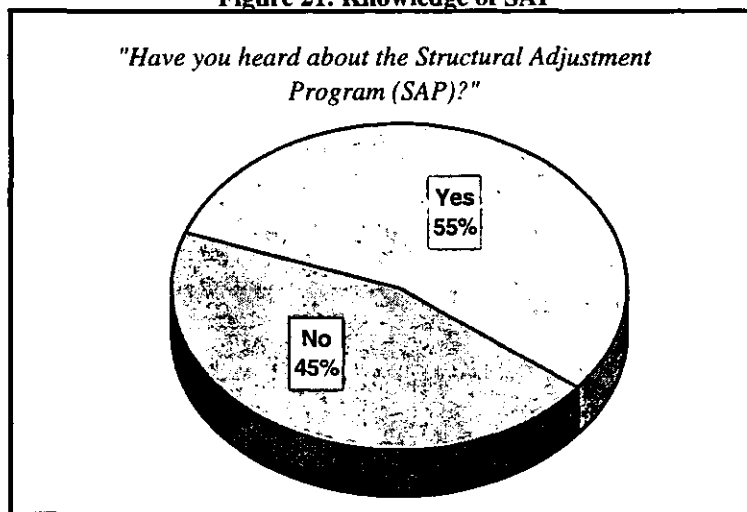
To cast further light on these topics, the survey asked a battery of questions about popular attitudes to stabilization and adjustment of the Ugandan economy.

First, had people heard about the government's structural adjustment (SAP) program? When this question was asked without elaboration, only 28 percent answered affirmatively; when we added an illustrative prompt about "the freeing of prices, the sale of public companies, and job cuts in the civil service", then 62 percent claimed to have heard of the SAP. Overall, 55 percent of respondents claimed some familiarity with the national economic reform program. This last figure puts Uganda in line with the average for four other African countries, where about half the population had heard about the SAP and the other half had not.

Even so, Ugandans display a relatively low level of popular awareness of the government's economic reform program, which is held up as a model of one of the most far-reaching and sustained adjustment efforts on the African continent. Fewer people claim to comprehend something about "adjustment" (55

percent) than are aware of “democracy” (74 percent) in a context where the government and donors have emphasized the former.

Figure 21. Knowledge of SAP



Moreover, among those who know about the SAP, almost half (47 percent) are unsatisfied with it. Only 29 percent are satisfied. And 13 percent feel neutral.

Two interpretations are possible of these important results: from inside Uganda and without. From within the country, the findings suggest that a base of popular support for the government's economic strategy has yet to emerge. More people are unsatisfied with the effects of structural adjustment than are satisfied with it. The economic reform program appears to remain an elite initiative that has yet to be fully embraced a mass of intended beneficiaries.

A different interpretation is possible, however, from a perspective beyond Uganda's borders. The proportion who are satisfied with adjustment is higher in Uganda (29 percent) than in almost all other African countries where the same survey question has been asked: 19 percent in Malawi, 16 percent in Nigeria, and 4 percent in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the only African country that exceeds Uganda in the expressed a level of popular satisfaction with adjustment is Ghana (34 percent), which has sustained the longest-running adjustment program on the continent (from 1983 until recent reform reversals in 2000). From this perspective, one can discern the gradual emergence of an important (though minority) constituency for economic reform within the Ugandan population.

Who composes this reform constituency? The following groups are more likely to be satisfied with SAP: men rather than women (34 versus 23 percent); country dwellers rather than townspeople (urbanites are twice as likely to feel neutral about SAP); and persons with higher rather than lower incomes (35 versus 27 percent). The gender divide is consistent with the argument that structural adjustment programs throughout Africa have tended to have a greater negative impact on women. The urban-rural divide is consistent with the conventional view that townspeople “lose” under SAPs (e.g. through job retrenchment) whereas rural folk “win” (e.g. from the deregulation of agricultural producer prices).

To reliably tap popular sentiment toward economic reform, however, the adjustment package must be split into its component policies. We asked about four such policies: market pricing for consumer goods, user fees for educational services, the privatization of public corporations, and retrenchment in the civil service. To a greater or lesser extent, these measures have been introduced in Uganda since the late

1980s. Therefore we expected that people would have formed opinions on these policies and their effects, often on the basis of direct personal experience.

The survey showed that Ugandans support (or at least will tolerate) "getting the prices right". A large majority would prefer to "have goods available in the market, even if the prices are high" (69 percent) than "to have low prices, even if there are shortages of goods" (21 percent). Reflecting concerns noted earlier about the cost of education, a somewhat smaller majority (57 percent) support paying school fees, as long as the quality of education is improved. In accepting these kinds of price reforms, Ugandans fall squarely within an emerging popular consensus in Africa in support of the removal of consumer subsidies and the market pricing of social services.

The survey also revealed, however, that Ugandans oppose the institutional reforms associated with structural adjustment. A majority feels that "all civil servants should keep their jobs, even if this is costly to the country" (54 percent), compared with a minority who hold the view that "the government cannot afford so many public employees and should lay some of them off" (35 percent). An even larger majority opposes privatization: 61 percent want the government to retain ownership of its factories and farms; only 30 percent want the government to sell these holdings. Again, these views in Uganda are consistent with an evident pan-African mass consensus against institutional reform within the public sector.

Finally, to summarize overall popular attitudes to economic reform, we note a striking difference between Uganda and other "adjusting" countries in Africa. Whereas Ghanaians, for example, express fatigue with the stringencies of adjustment, Ugandans seem much more inclined to persist with the NRM's reform program. Fewer people think that "the costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore change its economic policies" (34 percent) than affirm that "in order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary for us to accept some hardships now" (47 percent). To be sure, this group is not a majority, but it is clearly larger than the 37 percent minority in Ghana who think that the temporary sacrifices of adjustment will turn out to be worthwhile.

From a national perspective, however, Ugandans do not express bottomless patience with economic reform. They are clearly much more indulgent of political reform. Whereas fewer than a half of all citizens want to give the market more time to work its supposed magic, more than seven out of ten are willing to give the "present system of government" more time to deal with "problems inherited from the past". And, although men and women differ little on basic economic values and attitudes to reform, men are less patient than women in allowing time for reforms to work.

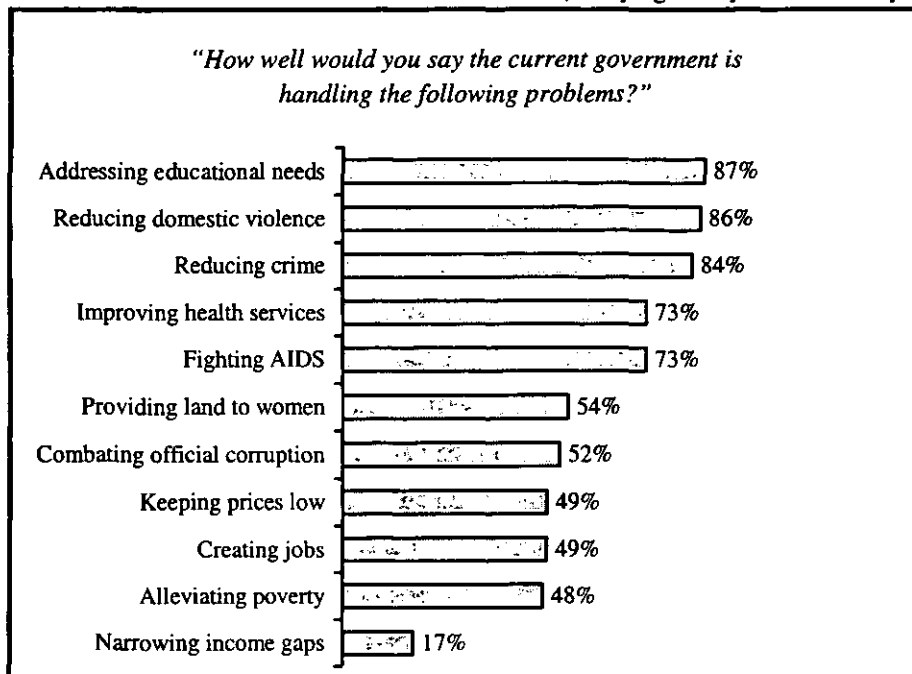
Evaluations of Government Performance

To conclude, how do Ugandans assess the performance of Museveni's NRM government at various socioeconomic tasks? They see it in a generally positive light: almost eight out of ten (78 percent) judge the government's overall accomplishments as "good" (57 percent) or "very good" (21 percent). A positive performance rating of this order is more often associated with a new government during a post-election honeymoon (like the Obasanjo government's 82 percent in Nigeria in February 2000) than with a government that has been in power for a decade and a half (like the Rawlings government's 36 percent in Ghana in July 1999).

Nevertheless, public approval varies greatly according to specific policies. In contrast to the economic sector, the government's performance is evaluated most positively in socio-political sectors. As Figure 22 shows, the public strongly approves of the NRM's performance in education (perhaps reflecting its policy of universal primary education) and crime control (perhaps reflecting the achievement of relative social peace since 1986). The public also commends the government for its performance in curbing domestic violence, improving health services and fighting AIDS though, as with education, approval does not

imply that these problems, previously listed as high national priorities, have in any sense been fully resolved.

Figure 22. Evaluations of Government Performance (% saying “fairly well” or “very well”)



The government fares far less well in public opinion with regard to economic performance. Its macro-economic management is questioned by the majorities of people who do not approve of its handling of inflation, employment, and poverty. And the government is roundly condemned (with just 17 percent approving) for its performance in narrowing gaps between the rich and the poor. This exceptional protest can be taken as clear evidence of a popular backlash against the widening inequalities that seem to have accompanied economic adjustment.

GENDER

With respect to socio-economic attitudes and political participation, the survey results show Ugandan men and women to be distinct groups. Gender disparities are hardly unusual, being found in other African countries, as well as globally. But the persistence of “gender gaps” in Uganda suggests that further efforts are still required by government and women’s organizations to bring about social equality.

Attitudes to Gender Roles

What do Ugandans’ think about equality between the sexes?

Overall, both men and women express resounding support for women’s political participation (see Figure 23). Not only should women have the right to vote, but they should be able to hold positions of political leadership from local councils all the way up to the Cabinet. As the decision-making stakes get higher, however, the less men accept women’s leadership. Even so, approximately half of all men (and two-thirds of women) think that a woman ought to be able to become President of Uganda, implying that women’s leadership is gradually becoming accepted.

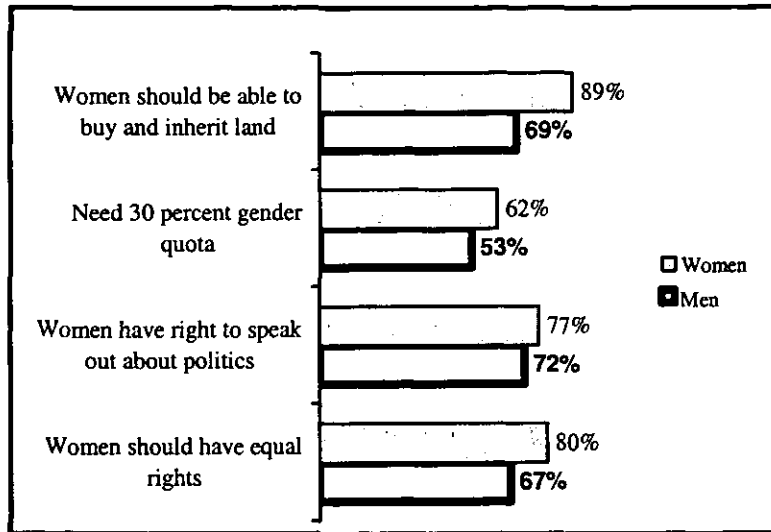
Figure 23. Should Women Be Permitted...? (percent saying ‘yes’)

<i>“In your opinion, should women be permitted to...?”</i>			
Men		Women	
To vote	97%	To vote	99%
To join political organizations	90%	To join political organizations	95%
To be local councillors	92%	To be local councillors	97%
To lead political organizations	84%	To lead political organizations	94%
To be members of parliament	91%	To be members of parliament	95%
To be cabinet ministers	86%	To be cabinet ministers	93%
To be President of Uganda	49%	To be President of Uganda	66%

Turning to broader attitudes towards gender equality, there are significant gaps – greater than 10 percentage points in some cases – between men and women (see Figure 24). Females express strong support for equal treatment, political expression, and land rights. For example, more than six out of ten (62 percent) approve of the existing gender quotas that ensure women’s representation in elected positions. Moreover, 89 percent agree that women in Uganda should be able to buy, inherit or co-own land. These findings suggest that women generally favour the government’s institutional reforms designed to empower them. One might speculate further that the reforms themselves have raised women’s political consciousness of their group interests.

Compare these opinions to men’s attitudes towards gender equality. While there is considerably less support among men for women’s rights, it is striking nonetheless that the majority of men support existing gender quotas. With respect to a highly politicised issue such as land rights, with potentially negative economic implications for men, as many as 69 percent agree that women should be able to buy, inherit or co-own land. Perhaps this male majority for equal rights – which would be controversial even in established democracies – can be attributed to the way in which these reforms were introduced in Uganda. Consensus seems to have been built through a process of lobbying, struggle and deliberation involving the women’s movement, politicians of both genders, and the broader Ugandan public.

Figure 24. Equal Rights for Women (percent who agree)



Having acknowledged the strong support among both men and women for gender equality, let us not lose sight of people who do not accept this norm. Conservative cultural attitudes are known to be a major factor constraining women's political and economic participation in Africa. In Uganda, 30 percent of men and 18 percent of women disagree that women should have equal rights and receive the same treatment as men. Two out of ten people (22 percent of men and 17 percent of women) believe that "a woman's place is in the home", and therefore, that women "should not try to speak out about politics". While these groups are minorities in the Ugandan population, we will show later that their traditional and patriarchal attitudes help to explain lingering gender gaps.

Attitudes to political competition also deserve comment. Survey respondents were asked whether "all members of a family should hold the same political opinions" or whether everyone "should be free to make up their own mind on political issues." More women than men agreed with the former statement (31 percent compared with 26 percent). While this conformist response appears to contradict women's otherwise strong support for equal political rights, we think it should be interpreted in the context of women's role in the kinship group and their responsibility for family harmony. Alternatively, it may reflect the pressures (including cases of domestic violence) that some husbands exert on their wives.

Types of Political Participation

Across states and societies, women have typically been less likely than men to participate in the formal aspects of politics, especially when it comes to standing for elected positions and being involved in decision-making. In sub-Saharan Africa, the level of women's political participation is comparatively low; in some countries (like Mauritania or Mali) it is among the lowest in the world. But perhaps women participate in the political process in other ways. In Uganda, women say they are almost as interested in politics as men (82 percent compared with 85 percent) and just 6 percent cite disinterest in politics as a reason for not participating in political activities.

Seeking to gauge the various ways in which women might join in political life, we return to distinctions made earlier about types of participation. For purposes of analysis here, we define *formal, electoral participation* to consist of three acts – registering to vote, voting in the 1996 Presidential election, and intention to vote in the national referendum of June 2000. *Informal political participation* is defined as raising political issues in family and friendship networks, including talking to one's spouse and one's friends about politics, as well as teaching children about politics. *Community-based participation*

consists of four possible actions: attendance at community meetings, civic education meetings, election rallies, and promoting political candidates.

The survey revealed that 64 per cent of Ugandan women participated in all three forms of electoral activity compared with 74 per cent of men. A gender gap of about ten percentage points was also evident in voter registration (91 percent compared with 80 percent) (see Figure 25). But the gender gap shrinks to 8 and 7 percentage points respectively, when we consider those men and women who said they voted in 1996 or would vote in 2000.

Figure 25. Formal, Electoral-based Political Participation (percent saying 'yes')

Men		Women	
Registered to Vote	91%	Registered to Vote	80%
Voted in 1996 Election	83%	Voted in 1996 Election	75%
Intend Vote Referendum	87%	Intend Vote Referendum	80%

Figure 26. Informal Participation (percent saying 'sometimes' or 'often')

Men		Women	
Discuss politics with spouse	66%	Discuss politics with spouse	56%
Discuss politics with friends	86%	Discuss politics with friends	71%
Teach children about politics	42%	Teach children about politics	33%

Gender gaps widen for informal participation (see Figure 26). Almost one-half (44 percent) of women have never (or only once) discussed politics with their spouse, compared with 34 per cent of men.²⁰ Some 29 percent of women have never (or only once) discussed politics with their friends compared with only 14 percent of men. Even when it comes to teaching children about politics, something we might expect women to do more than men, 42 percent of men compared with 33 percent of women say they do this.

Figure 27. Community Participation (percent saying 'sometimes' or 'often')

Men		Women	
Attend community meeting	84	Attend community meeting	68
Attend an election rally	62	Attend an election rally	44
Attend civic education meeting	64	Attend civic education meeting	47
Work for political candidate	43	Work for political candidate	26

As for community participation, twice as many women (32 percent) have never (or only once) attended a community meeting compared with just 16 percent of men (see Figure 27). The gender differences are even more evident between men and women who attend civic education meetings (64 percent compared with 47 percent) and between those who say they work for political candidates (43 versus 26 percent).

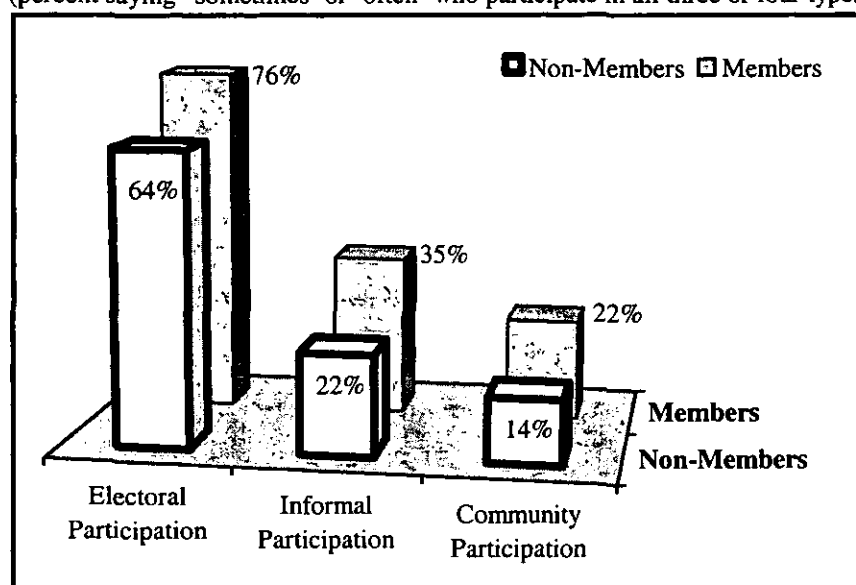
Moreover, women are significantly less likely than men to make contact with leaders between elections, whether with religious leaders (where the gender gap is narrowest) or local council officials (where the gender gap is widest). When women do contact leaders or attend community meetings, they are usually motivated by similar reasons to men. Both genders report being driven primarily by personal concerns (rather than community spirit or civic duty), though men are more likely to try "get a job or advance a career" and women to "get help for a personal or family matter". To the extent that women become politically engaged to represent their families, they display more communitarian than individualist orientations to political life.

The Role Of Women's Associations

Still a marginal group in formal political structures, Ugandan women have become increasingly engaged in civic associations. More than 80 percent belong to a church group. And 41 percent of Ugandan women say they belong to women's associations.

The survey shows that membership in a women's association positively influences women's engagement in politics (see Figure 28). Compared with women generally, members of women's groups are more active in formal, informal, and community-based politics. For example, more members of women's associations (76 percent) register and vote in national elections, compared to 64 percent of women generally. Not surprisingly, female leaders of women's associations are even more engaged, with 91 percent reporting being involved in all three forms of electoral participation.

Figure 28. Comparing Political Participation Among Women, by Association Membership
(percent saying "sometimes" or "often" who participate in all three or four types)



What motivates women to get involved in politics? Is it associational life in general or membership in women's associations in particular? Consider the much more limited effects of women's membership in church groups: 61 percent of women members of church groups compared with 64 percent of women generally participated in all three forms of electoral politics. This finding suggests that it is women's associations, rather than associations in general, that are the gateway to active citizenship.

Figure 29. Does It Make a Difference to Have Women in Government?

<i>"How much difference does it make to you to have women in government, especially in terms of whether the government addresses your concerns?"</i>			
Women		Men	
Yes, a big difference	58%	Yes, a big difference	36%
Yes, a small difference	28%	Yes, a small difference	37%
No, no difference	13%	No, no difference	27%
Don't know	2%	Don't know	1%

Women's associations empower ordinary women: rural and urban, educated and uneducated, young and old. They serve to diffuse the institutional changes designed to promote women's participation in Ugandan politics. Presently, women express strong support for their institutional inclusion in politics and

government. When asked whether having women in government makes any difference to whether the government addresses their concerns, a stunning 86 percent majority of women responded in the affirmative (compared to 73 percent of men) (see Figure 29). Integrating women in government and politics is not merely a question of nominal group representation but in the minds of Ugandans' it has improved the representation of their substantive concerns as constituents.

Explaining Gender Gaps

We have noted a number of gender gaps in the ways that Ugandans think and act in civil society and other political arenas. What explains these persistent differences? Are they due to the structure of women's work? Or do they arise from cultural values embodied in traditional gender roles?

As Figure 30 shows, women spend nearly as much time each day in paid labor as men.²¹ In addition, however, they are responsible for the lion's share of unpaid care work, a social norm slow to change not only in Uganda, but in other, both developing and developed countries.²² One would expect that time spent on both paid labor and unpaid care puts a squeeze on the time that women have available for participating in political activities. Even such a nominal political act as voting is time-consuming, for instance when lining up for local elections can occupy a whole day.

Figure 30. Percentage of Men and Women who spend more than 5 hours Each Day...

Men		Women	
Working for Money	61%	Working for Money	46%
Doing Housework	11%	Doing Housework	36%
Caring for Children	19%	Caring for Children	40%
Caring for Others	16%	Caring for Others	29%
Being Sick	56%	Being Sick	63%

In practice, we found unexpected results here. First, men were more likely than women to say that "I have too much work" or "I don't have enough time" to participate in politics. In explaining non-participation, women were more likely to admit that "I am not interested in politics" or "I am not educated enough". Second, we found that time spent working for money actually had a positive, rather than inhibiting, effect on voter registration and turnout. In other words, people who are engaged in self- or wage employment are also active citizens. The very deed of leaving the household to engage in income-generating activity seems to broaden not only economic horizons but political ones too. Third, caring for children or for others did not consistently undermine voter registration or voter turnout. The main predicted effects we found for unpaid care were that household chores slightly reduced the propensity of individuals to vote in 1996 Presidential election and to contact local council officials.

Thus, when considering economic explanations, we prefer to point to income disparities between men and women to explain gaps in their participation. Almost three in ten (28 percent) of women report that their household has no monthly income (compared with 18 percent of men). As reported income gets higher, there are fewer women relative to men in all income categories.²³ Moreover, one third of head of households in Uganda are women (36 percent), which typically means that they are the only breadwinners in a family, and thus more susceptible to poverty. Those with no income were significantly less likely to have either registered or voted than those with median incomes or higher. It is poor women, who are engaged in considerable struggle at the level of everyday life, who rarely have the time or energy to focus on politics.

Finally, do inherited cultural attitudes about gender relations, especially among men, continue to constrain women's participation? Even while the large majority of men agree that the sexes should be treated

equally, three in ten believe that a woman's place is in the home. Ugandan women's groups cite instances of husbands refusing to let their wives vote, sometimes physically abusing them for disobedience, and a political climate at the local level which is often hostile to women's participation and especially to women candidates.²⁴ In the survey, some women voluntarily explained their non-participation by saying that "I was prohibited by a relative".

While the survey did not directly measure the effects of men's attitudes on women's political behavior, we can assume that women who express conservative gender values are members of traditional families. Women who say that "a woman's place is in the home" may well have internalized a male-dominant view of the world. Here the survey findings were clear. Women who held this traditional cultural viewpoint were significantly less likely to engage in political discussions (with husbands or, especially, with friends) or to attend community meetings.

Closing Gender Gaps

Thus, both cultural and economic considerations help to explain existing gender gaps in Ugandan politics. Other, institutional factors provide insight into how such gaps might be closed. Women's organizations and the institutional representation of women in politics are among those factors. For example, membership in a women's organization is associated with virtually unanimous support of women's political rights. Women who belong to or lead women's associations are much more likely than non-members to express feminist attitudes: that women should be free to make up their own mind on political issues, that women should have equal rights with men (including land rights), and that they should speak out about politics. And they are also more likely than women who are not members to assert that political gender quotas continue to be necessary.

Membership in a women's organization is also associated with high levels of all sorts of political participation. But do women's groups also promote political competition? We asked earlier whether mass politics in Uganda are based on autonomous choice or mobilized cooptation by the National Resistance Movement. This question is especially relevant to women's political roles. This is so because support for the NRM is greater among female members of women's organizations (91 percent) than among women in general (88 percent) or among men (81 percent). The survey reveals that people who think that "all members of a family should hold the same political opinions" (among whom women are a majority) are also very likely to reject a multiparty system and to think that parties undermine national unity.²⁵ At very least, these findings suggest that the preferences of many women for familial harmony are consistent with the NRM's vision of a politics of "no-party" consensus.

But we should not interpret these results as evidence that women's associations are mere appendages of the NRM. Women's organizations have mounted vigorous opposition, for example to the Land Bill's co-ownership clause, which confirms their independence from the NRM. Most likely, the results represent an ideological convergence between women's organizations and movement advocates concerning equal rights and opportunities. It makes sense that some members of women's organizations are voluntary supporters of the movement system because the NRM has been responsive to their concerns as women.²⁶

CONCLUSION

A survey conducted in June 2000 indicates that Ugandans say that they participate actively in politics but not in the benefits of economic growth. And at the same time as they value increased competition in the economy, Ugandans say they are open to a wider choice of political options than just the “movement” system. Thus reformers face a different set of challenges in the political and economic arenas.

Politically, the major challenge in Uganda’s democratization is the further expansion of competition. The present government has made noteworthy gains in giving voice to various mass actors. To its credit, the government has even allowed a modicum of political pluralism in selected sectors like the print press and women’s associations. But the regime has yet to extend a stake in the system to those citizens who do not accept the leading role of the National Resistance Movement and who seek an alternate choice of leaders. Indeed, public perceptions of limited political options appear to have led many Ugandans decided to stay away from the polls for Referendum 2000.

Economically, the major challenge in the transition to a market economy is to expand participation in the benefits of economic growth. To be sure, economic competition has been introduced into various markets, for example for agricultural products, export commodities and foreign exchange. Not only do too few people feel that they can take part in these new markets, but a popular view has arisen that those in political power are arrogating the best opportunities for themselves. It is a telling indictment that, in a context where the NRM government is generally seen to have performed well, fewer than one in five Ugandans think it has done enough to close income gaps between the rich and the poor.

The survey results corroborate that President Museveni, and the “movement” are broadly popular. This popularity is a resource that can be deployed to redirect and reinvigorate reform. To achieve a market economy, Ugandans must participate more broadly in the benefits of economic growth. To achieve a democratic polity, citizens require an expanded range of political choices.

ENDNOTES

¹ World Bank, *African Development Indicators 2000*, <http://www.worldbank.org/data>.

² Sylvia Tamale describes the successful mobilization of women during the constitution-drafting process, and the important lobbying role of the women's caucus in the 51-member constituent assembly. A Gender Information Centre was set up alongside the CA, and conducted series of "gender dialogues" during the constitutional debates. The women's caucus built the consensus among men and women representatives necessary to pass constitutional changes, such as the gender quota, benefiting women. *When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

³ Currently, women constitute 19 percent of parliamentary representatives, 11 percent of ministers, 18 percent of Judges and 6 percent of local authority representatives.

⁴ NAWOU, *Women's Landmarks in the Democratization Process in Uganda* (Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Kampala. November 1995).

⁵ See The Republic of Uganda, *The National Gender Policy* (Ministry of Gender and Community Development: Kampala, 1997).

⁶ The Afrobarometer is a joint venture of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, Ghana). Thanks are due to Robert Mattes and Yul Derek Davids of IDASA who played major roles in the sample and questionnaire designs for this study.

⁷ At a 95 percent confidence level.

⁸ Because 30 returns from the northern region had to be discarded because data collection did not meet the project's quality standards, the sample was weighted by region to ensure that the north was represented in accordance with its true population size. All descriptive statistics in this report reflect this weighting.

⁹ No relationships are reported unless they are statistically significant at the .001 level or better.

¹⁰ Calculated from the official figure of 9,609,703 registered voters out of a projected national population aged 18 years or older of 10,463,934 in mid-1999.

¹¹ Contingency coefficient = .689, sig. = .000.

¹² As reported in *Africa News Online*, June 10, 2000. Spoiled ballots are excluded.

¹³ Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

¹⁴ To make this paper easy to read, we have omitted statistical coefficients throughout. Because this relationship is so strong and significant, however, we make an exception here: contingency coefficient = .766, sig. = .00000.

¹⁵ When "don't knows" are excluded, more respondents are "pro-party" than "anti-party" on the last two items. Even so, all eight items cohere into a single attitudinal dimension that might be thought of as "support for multiparty competition" (Reliability index: Cronbach's alpha = .8653).

¹⁶ Because correlation does not equal causation, the effects may run in the opposite direction: i.e., associations may attract people who are more trusting to begin with.

¹⁷ Because the question on present satisfaction with the national economy was asked in a slightly different way in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe (with a middle, neutral category), the figures reported here for these three countries include all persons who said they were *not* dissatisfied. The question wording was identical in Ghana and Uganda.

¹⁸ Measured as self-assessed, monthly income of household head and spouse.

¹⁹ After the fact, we post-coded the first two problems mentioned.

²⁰ This particular gender gap raises the question of subjectivity, since more men/husbands say they talk to their spouse about politics than do women/wives. Presumably, women are discounting political conversations with their husbands in which they merely listen and do not initiate opinions.

²¹ According to World Bank figures, women's economic activity (participation in the paid labour force) is 90 per cent of men's.

²² Structural adjustment programmes have tended to have a greater impact on women because in moving toward more market coordination, the state has shifted the burden of social reproduction onto women in families and communities. This may be why women are less satisfied than men with market reforms.

²³ It is difficult to ascertain men and women's income from the survey data since respondents were asked to report household rather than individual income.

²⁴ Ugandan Women's Network, *Women Emerging in Uganda's Democracy: A Documentation of Women's Experiences in Council and Local Government Elections*, UWONET, August 1998.

²⁵ These were strong relationships: contingency coefficients = .295 and .270, sig. = .000.

²⁶ Aili Mari Tripp argues that what sets the Ugandan women's movement apart from other women's movements in Africa is precisely its *autonomy* from the state. In spite of efforts by the NRM to coopt women's activism and women as a constituency, she contends that the Ugandan women's movement has maintained its independence. *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).



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