

# AFRO BAROMETER

Afrobarometer Paper No. 28

## THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY IN GHANA DESPITE ECONOMIC DISSATISFACTION: A POWER ALTERNATION BONUS?

by E. Gyimah-Boadi and  
Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah

**A comparative series of national public  
attitude surveys on democracy, markets  
and civil society in Africa.**



The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)  
6 Spin Street, Church Square  
Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
27 21 461 2559 • fax: 27 21 461 2589  
Mattes (bob@idasact.org.za)

Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)  
14 West Airport Residential Area  
P.O. Box 404, Legon-Accra, Ghana  
233 21 776 142 • fax: 233 21 763 028  
Gyimah-Boadi (cdd@ghana.com)

Michigan State University (MSU)  
Department of Political Science  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824  
517 353 3377 • fax: 517 432 1091  
Bratton (mbratton@msu.edu)

[afrobarometer.org](http://afrobarometer.org)

AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

**Afrobarometer Paper No. 28**

**THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY  
IN GHANA DESPITE ECONOMIC  
DISSATISFACTION: A POWER  
ALTERNATION BONUS?**

by E. Gyimah-Boadi and  
Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah

**April 2003**

E. Gyimah-Boadi is the Executive Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development in Ghana (CDD-Ghana) and Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Ghana-Legon. Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah is a freelance analyst.

*Funds for this study were provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.*

## AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

Editors: Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes

Managing Editor: Carolyn Logan

The Afrobarometer Series, launched in October 1999, reports the results of national sample surveys on the attitudes of citizens in selected African countries towards democracy, markets, civil society and other aspects of development. The Afrobarometer is a collaborative enterprise of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Ghana). Afrobarometer papers are simultaneously co-published by these partner institutions.

Electronic copies of Working Papers can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat format from [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

Printed copies of Working Papers are available for \$15.00 each plus applicable tax, shipping and handling charges.

Orders may be directed to:

IDASA POS  
6 Spin Street, Church Square  
Cape Town 8001 SOUTH AFRICA  
(phone: 27 21 461 5229, fax: 27 21 461 2589, e-mail: [tanya@idasact.org.za](mailto:tanya@idasact.org.za))

An invoice will be sent.

## Publications List

### ***AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS***

- No.1 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Support for Democracy in Africa: Intrinsic or Instrumental?” 1999.
- No.2 Bratton, Michael, Peter Lewis and E. Gyimah-Boadi, “Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Ghana,” 1999.
- No.3 Lewis, Peter M. and Michael Bratton, “Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Nigeria,” 2000.
- No.4 Bratton, Michael, Gina Lambright, and Robert Sentamu, “Democracy and Economy in Uganda: A Public Opinion Perspective,” 2000.
- No.5 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Democratic and Market Reforms in Africa: What ‘the People’ Say,” 2000.
- No.6 Bratton, Michael and Gina Lambright, “Uganda’s Referendum 2000: The Silent Boycott,” 2001.
- No.7 Mattes, Robert, Yul Derek Davids, Cherrel Africa and Michael Bratton, “Public Opinion and the Consolidation of Democracy in Southern Africa,” July 2000.
- No.8 Mattes, Robert, Yul Derek Davids and Cherrel Africa, “Views of Democracy in South Africa and the Region: Trends and Comparisons,” October 2000.
- No. 9 Bratton, Michael, Massa Coulibaly and Fabiana Machado, “Popular Perceptions of Good Governance in Mali,” March 2000.
- No.10 Bratton, Michael and Robert Mattes, “Popular Economic Values and Economic Reform in Southern Africa,” 2001.
- No. 11 The Afrobarometer Network. “Afrobarometer Round I: Compendium of Comparative Data from a Twelve-Nation Survey.” 2002.
- No.12 Chikwanha-Dzenga, Annie Barbara, Eldred Masunungure, and Nyasha Madingira, “Democracy and National Governance in Zimbabwe: A Country Survey Report.” 2001.
- No.13 Gay, John and Thuso Green. “Citizen Perceptions of Democracy, Governance, and Political Crisis in Lesotho.” 2001.
- No.14 Lekorwe, Mogopodi, Mpho Molomo, Wilford Molefe, and Kabelo Moseki. “Public Attitudes Toward Democracy, Governance, and Economic Development in Botswana.” 2001.
- No.15 Keulder, Christiaan. “Public Opinion and Consolidation of Democracy in Namibia.” 2002.

- No.16 Tsoka, Maxton Grant. "Public Opinion and the Consolidation of Democracy in Malawi." 2002.
- No.17 Simutanyi, Neo. "Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Zambia: Public Attitudes to Democracy and the Economy." 2002.
- No.18 Chaligha, Amon, Robert Mattes, Michael Bratton, and Yul Derek Davids. "Uncritical Citizens and Patient Trustees? Tanzanians' Views of Political and Economic Reform." 2002.
- No.19 Bratton, Michael. "Wide but Shallow: Popular Support for Democracy in Africa." 2002.
- No.20 Lewis, Peter, Etannibi Alemika, and Michael Bratton. "Down to Earth: Changes in Attitudes Towards Democracy and Markets in Nigeria." 2002.
- No.21 Whiteside, Alan, Robert Mattes, Samantha Willan, and Ryann Manning. "Examining HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa Through the Eyes of Ordinary Southern Africans." 2002.
- No.22 Pereira, Joao C. G., Yul Derek Davids, and Robert Mattes. "Mozambicans' Views of Democracy and Political Reform: A Comparative Perspective." 2003
- No.23 Mattes, Robert, Michael Bratton, and Yul Derek Davids. "Poverty, Survival, and Democracy in Southern Africa." 2003.
- No.24 Mattes, Robert, Christiaan Keulder, Annie B. Chikwana, Cherrel Africa, and Yul Derek Davids. "Democratic Governance in South Africa: The People's View." 2003.
- No.25 Ames, Barry, Lucio Renno, and Francisco Rodrigues. "Democracy, Market Reform, and Social Peace in Cape Verde." 2003.
- No.26 Norris, Pippa, and Robert Mattes. "Does ethnicity determine support for the governing party?" 2003.
- No.27 Logan, Carolyn J., Nansozi Muwanga, Robert Sentamu, and Michael Bratton. "Insiders and Outsiders: Varying Perceptions of Democracy and Governance in Uganda." 2003.
- No.28 Gyimah-Boadi, E. and Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah. "The Growth of Democracy in Ghana. Despite Economic Dissatisfaction: A Power Alternation Bonus?" 2003.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                             | <b>v</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                  | <b>2</b>  |
| Political and Economic Setting                       | 2         |
| Overview of 2002 Survey Findings                     | 2         |
| Methodology of the Survey                            | 3         |
| Demographics of the Sample                           | 4         |
| <b>Part One: Economic Attitudes and Behaviours</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| Livelihoods and Social Capital                       | 6         |
| Economic Perceptions and Expectations                | 9         |
| Assessments of NPP Government's Economic Performance | 12        |
| Support for Market Principles                        | 14        |
| Attitudes to Economic Reform                         | 18        |
| <b>Part Two: Political Attitudes and Behaviours</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| Orientation to Politics                              | 20        |
| Political Participation                              | 22        |
| Political Affiliation                                | 23        |
| Political Knowledge                                  | 25        |
| Support for Democratic Institutions and Processes    | 28        |
| Extent of and Satisfaction with Democracy            | 32        |
| Influence over Politics                              | 33        |
| Political Trust                                      | 37        |
| <b>Part Three: Attitudes to the Rule of Law</b>      | <b>39</b> |
| Official and Unofficial Corruption                   | 39        |
| Conflicts and Conflict Resolution                    | 41        |
| Identity and National Unity                          | 43        |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                                    | <b>43</b> |
| <b>Appendix A: Sampling Protocol</b>                 | <b>45</b> |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To help assess political and economic conditions in Ghana, the extent to which democracy and market reforms are taking root, and to ascertain what the people say about current political and economic developments, the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) undertook a nationwide survey of public opinion in September 2002. The survey sampled the opinions of 1200 respondents in all 10 regions of the country. The 2002 survey is part of a cross-national study in 15 African countries, collectively known as Afrobarometer Round 2. (The Afrobarometer Round 1 was conducted in Ghana in May 1999, and reported in October 1999).

### Key Findings

- **A profile of the real economy of Ghana finds both a disturbingly high incidence of genuine poverty and extreme deprivation, and a widespread sense of economic alienation and exclusion.**
  - ***Most Ghanaians have negative perceptions of the overall state of the economy and of their own standard of living.*** Fifty-nine percent think the national economy is in bad shape (the comparative figure for 1999 was 66 percent); and 40 percent feel that Ghanaians are worse off than citizens of neighbouring countries. A staggering total of 85 percent of respondents score their personal wealth between 0 and 5 on a scale from 0 to 10. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) describe their living conditions as bad, and the same number report no improvement in their standard of living during the previous 12 months.
  - ***Two-thirds of Ghanaians face permanent economic uncertainty.*** Sixty-six percent of respondents report that they do not rely on a regular wage or salary for their livelihood. This includes 35 percent who say they earn their living from petty trade, and a further 26 percent who can only count on occasional informal payment-in-kind arrangements. More than half (54 percent) of all respondents say they live from hand to mouth, and only 18 percent are able to save money regularly.
  - ***Many Ghanaians cannot afford basic necessities of life such as food, water and medical care.*** Forty percent of respondents say they have gone without food, and 43 percent have gone without water, at some time during the past year. More than half (54 percent) of Ghanaians report having gone without medical attention at some time during the same period, and 39 percent did so regularly.
- **Given these extremes of hardship and deprivation, to whom do Ghanaians turn when in need?**
  - ***Ghanaians tend to rely on the extended family for economic support.*** In the absence of an official welfare safety net, 21 percent of respondents, i.e., more than half of those in need, report turning to relatives, rather than to community groups or to the government, for help with food. A similar proportion of those in need of medical care fell back on their families.
  - ***But many do not have “families” to turn to.*** More disturbingly, significant numbers of Ghanaians admit having no fallback at all. Two-fifths of the deprived and most vulnerable underclass of Ghanaians (16 percent of all respondents) say they have no one to turn to when they are in need of food, and 17 percent could find no one to help meet their need for water.

These findings highlight weaknesses in the country's social safety net.

➤ **The survey found that Ghanaians feel the nation's most pressing economic problem is...**

- ***Unemployment.*** The urgent need to increase the rate at which the economy is generating job opportunities is ranked as the people's highest economic priority by a wide margin, with 34 percent of respondents citing it as the issue that most merits government concern. This is followed by the need to reduce poverty and marginalization, which is the top priority of 11 percent of respondents.

Tangible evidence of the depth of the unemployment problem can be gleaned from the fact that when asked about their work situation, just 19 percent of respondents describe themselves as "employed and not looking for a job." Even among the 36 percent of respondents who classify themselves as being in full-time employment, most (21 percent) say they are still looking for work. This attests to the low pay and poor working conditions that are typical of the jobs on offer.

Ghanaians also perceive a worsening of the unemployment problem, with 45 percent reckoning that there are fewer job opportunities now than there were a few years ago, as opposed to 25 percent who think there are more. A further 25 percent perceive no change in the availability of jobs.

Indeed, on average, 11 percent of all respondents actually equate poverty with unemployment. The lack of a job is considered more synonymous with poverty than other manifestations such as dependence on charity, homelessness, childlessness and illiteracy.

The strength of feeling among Ghanaians about the desperate need for more employment opportunities is reinforced by the finding that nearly nine out of every ten Ghanaians think it is better for everyone to have a job, *even if this means a lower average wage*, than for only some people to have jobs.

- ***HIV/AIDS hardly features as an important area of public concern among Ghanaians.*** Half of respondents say they have not suffered any AIDS related bereavements; only 7 percent know of a single relative or close friend who died of AIDS-related illness; and 11 percent know two or more who have died. Another 30 percent say they don't know how many friends or relatives have died due to HIV/AIDS. Not surprisingly, then, a mere one-third of respondents agree that more public expenditures should be devoted to controlling the spread of AIDS even if this means diverting resources away from areas like education, while 57 percent feel that the country faces many other pressing problems that must be addressed first. This indicates inadequate public awareness of the disease and the magnitude of the potential threat it represents.

➤ **The survey reveals a deep ambivalence over market-centered economic reforms, reflected in strong support for state interventions that offsets the expression of a lukewarm preference for a market economy.**

- ***Ghanaians say they prefer a market-run economy to a government-run economy.*** Just over half (51 percent) of all respondents endorse the market model, versus a sizeable minority of almost one-third (31 percent) who prefer the command model.



- ***Ghanaians accept the principle of market pricing, even for some socially sensitive goods and services.*** Seventy-one percent of respondents feel it is better to pay school fees in order to raise educational standards than for their children to have access to low quality free education.
  - ***At the same time, however, many Ghanaians prefer a planned economy.*** Almost half (49 percent) of all respondents approve of the suggestion that the government should plan the production and distribution of all goods and services, as against 37 percent who do not.
  - ***Ghanaians favor government protection of domestic industry against low-cost foreign competition.*** Sixty-five percent of all respondents favor the imposition of tariffs on imports in order to safeguard the jobs of some Ghanaians, even though this might mean higher prices.
  - ***Ghanaians show little enthusiasm for further retrenchment of labor from the public services.*** The vast majority (79 percent) of Ghanaians oppose further reductions of the reportedly over-manned civil service.
- **Despite their apparent repudiation of many of the market-based economic principles, how do Ghanaians feel about economic reform in general?**
- ***The overwhelming majority of Ghanaians support the principle of economic adjustment.*** Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of Ghanaians believe that for the economy to improve, it is necessary for them to continue to accept some hardships in the short term (in 1999, only 38 percent of respondents endorsed a similar proposition). Indeed, only 16 percent of respondents feel that the social costs of reform have been so high as to warrant the immediate abandonment of the idea of economic reform (as compared to 62 percent who endorsed changing economic policies in Afrobarometer Round 1).
- **Ghanaians offer a mixed assessment of the record of economic adjustment. Asked to assess the performance of the economy over the long term, and in particular to compare various aspects of the economy before and after the introduction of the market reforms...**
- A two-thirds majority (63 percent) of Ghanaians report a major improvement *only* in the availability of goods.
  - The people's verdict on the impact of reform on living standards generally is mixed: 38 percent think there has been a decline in the standard of living, while 36 percent think there has been a rise, and 23 percent detect no change.
  - On the down side, 71 percent of respondents feel that market reforms have not delivered any improvement in the area of their highest priority: unemployment. Just one-quarter (25 percent) of respondents perceive an increase in the number of job opportunities.
  - Seventy-four percent of respondents feel market reform has brought about no reduction in the gap between rich and poor. In fact, nearly half (47 percent) of the sample group perceive an exaggeration of inequities in the distribution of national wealth under the reform programs. Fewer than half as many (20 percent) disagree.
- **Nevertheless, most Ghanaians are very optimistic about the country's prospects and have faith that they and their children will soon reach a state of relative prosperity.**

- Seventy-one percent of the sample population foresee better than average wealth for their children, and 61 percent say they expect dramatic improvements in their own economic fortunes within one year.
- **Evaluations of the NPP administration’s economic performance after 20 months in office are generally positive.**
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of those surveyed approve of the government’s handling of the economy generally, though one-quarter (25 percent) of respondents disapprove.
  - More than half (57 percent) of the sample approve of the government’s performance in managing inflation; but a sizeable minority (37 percent) disapprove.
  - Fifty-five percent of respondents approve of the government’s performance in ensuring that every Ghanaian has enough to eat, but a large minority (37 percent) are not satisfied.
  - The areas in which the government is seen as **doing least well** are job creation (or employment generation) - the public’s most pressing concern - and narrowing the gap between rich and poor. Just under half (45 percent) of respondents think the NPP government has performed adequately in its efforts to reduce unemployment, but a larger proportion (47 percent) think the government has performed badly in this area.
  - Also, barely one-third (36 percent) of the population feel that the NPP government has brought about a reduction in the inequitable distribution of wealth, as against more than half (54 percent) who think the government has done badly. Almost one-quarter (24 percent) characterize the government’s performance here as “very bad”.
- **The political front presents a far more positive picture. There is generally strong support for democracy and for the freedoms associated with it.**
- *Democracy is the preferred system of government for an overwhelming majority of Ghanaians.* Eighty-two percent express a preference for democracy.
  - *A clear majority of Ghanaians (76 percent) perceive Ghana’s current political system to be fully democratic or to be democratic with only minor problems.* However, a large minority (24 percent) thinks it is a highly imperfect democracy with major problems.
  - *The overwhelming majority (87 percent) of Ghanaians believe that the best means of choosing their national leaders is through open, competitive, elections.*
  - *By consistently resounding majorities, Ghanaians reject a variety of undemocratic alternative forms of government.* Eighty-three percent reject military rule, 82 percent reject personal dictatorship, 79 percent reject a one-party state, and 69 percent reject traditional rule.
  - *Compared to 55 percent who expressed satisfaction in 1999, more and more Ghanaians are expressing satisfaction with the democratic process in the country.* Seventy-two percent declare themselves to be satisfied with the way democracy works in Ghana.
  - *Ghanaians believe that since the restoration of democratic rule, respect for their civil liberties has generally increased.* Sixty-nine percent of respondents feel less fearful of being arrested

unlawfully than in the past, and an identical proportion believe that their freedom of speech has increased. Sixty-eight percent believe that there is greater freedom of association, and 67 percent feel that their right to vote as they choose is more secure. Fifty-four percent feel that equal treatment of citizens before the law has improved.

➤ **Despite their readily expressed enthusiasm for politics and strong preference for the essence of democracy, Ghanaians are poorly informed about political issues.**

- ***Ghanaians recognize their own lack of political knowledge.*** Sixty-four percent of survey respondents say they find matters of politics and government too complicated to understand. Only one person in five (20 percent) claims to understand political issues all the time – a marked decline from the nearly two in five (37 percent) recorded just three years earlier. This finding highlights a deficit in civic education and civic competence in Ghana.
- ***The Ghanaian population is also overwhelmingly ignorant of the existence and functions of a range of international organizations.*** When asked about the effectiveness of the African Union (Organization of African Unity), 56 percent declare that they do not know enough about it to make a judgment. Similarly, 52 percent plead ignorance when invited to judge the effectiveness of the UN, while 52 percent did the same when asked about the World Bank. Fifty-eight percent also demur when asked about the effectiveness of the IMF. Even with regard to the leading regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), just over half of all respondents do not know enough to judge the effectiveness of the organization.
- ***Ghanaians rely more on the electronic media than on printed matter for their political information and opinions.*** Fully 60 percent of respondents claim to listen to the radio news daily, as against only 14 percent who say they never listen to radio news. Conversely, 58 percent of respondents admit that they *never* read the newspapers. The electronic media are obviously, therefore, assuming increasing importance in the lives of Ghanaians, but apparently are not succeeding in raising the levels of public awareness and understanding of politics.

➤ **There is a growing level of public confidence in political leaders. The survey found that Ghanaians are increasingly satisfied with the performance of their democratic representatives compared to 1999.**

- A three-to-one majority (74 percent) considers the President's job performance satisfactory (this was not asked in 1999).
- A majority (57 percent) of respondents approves of the performance of their directly elected Member of Parliament. This is an inversion of the corresponding statistic from the 1999 Afrobarometer survey, when an identical proportion were *dissatisfied* with their MP's performance.
- There is also a fair degree of satisfaction with the performance of unelected government appointees. Fifty-four percent of respondents in each case are satisfied with the performance of their Regional Minister and their District Chief Executive (DCE).
- ***Most perceive an improvement in the accountability of their political representatives.*** A solid majority (63 percent) feel they can command the attention of their elected representatives. This is a significant increase on the corresponding measure (49 percent) in the 1999 Afrobarometer

survey, and is corroborated by the fact that 58 percent report a sense that their influence over government decisions has increased.

These findings signal a narrowing of the representation gap in Ghanaian politics.

➤ **Ghanaians profess varying degrees of trust in ...**

- ***Political personalities.*** Relative to other political institutions, the President scored a very high 65 percent in his individual trust rating, with 35 percent of all respondents trusting him a lot. The governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) is also trusted by a comparatively high 51 percent of the population.
- ***Democratic institutions.*** Forty-nine percent of respondents express high levels of trust in Parliament, and the politically independent Electoral Commission enjoys the same overall level of public trust. The judiciary receives a comparable vote of confidence, being rated trustworthy by 44 percent of respondents. The District Assemblies (38 percent) and Regional Coordinating Councils (31 percent) fare less well in the trust ratings.
- ***Media.*** Government broadcasting (GBC) is trusted more (53 percent) than independent broadcasting (46 percent), and government newspapers are more trusted (35 percent) than independent newspapers (27 percent).
- ***Opposition political parties.*** The political parties in opposition to the NPP score very low in the public's trust, with just 28 percent of respondents expressing high levels of trust in them. This confirms pervasive mistrust of opposition in Africa.

➤ **In the area of participatory democracy and active involvement in civil society ...**

- ***While declaring widespread interest in politics, and demonstrating a high rate of participation in electoral politics, Ghanaians admit nevertheless to be much less politically active in the periods between elections.*** Seventy-four percent say they are interested in public affairs, a figure that is broadly consistent with the observed voter turnout in the general election of December 2000. However, just 49 percent of respondents say they are in the habit of discussing politics, and only 13 percent claim to discuss politics frequently.
- ***Contact with elected representatives and government officials is relatively infrequent.*** Few respondents (15 percent) report having ever contacted their DCE, while just 12 percent have sought out their Assemblyman, and fewer still (9 percent) have contacted an official of central government.
- ***Ghanaians continue to be engaged in civil society at many levels.*** A very large majority (83 percent) of respondents claim to belong to religious groups, and 53 percent describe themselves as active members. Seventy-two percent say they take part regularly in religious activities, while 54 percent are involved in other voluntary activities. A similarly large majority (77 percent) say they attend community meetings at least occasionally, or would do so if they had the chance.

However, 37 percent of all respondents say there are no circumstances under which they would get together with others to raise an issue of public concern, and the overwhelming majority (83 percent) say they would never attend a demonstration or take part in a protest march.

- **Party affiliation.** Forty-four percent of respondents claim affiliation with the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), 15 percent with the National Democratic Congress (NDC), 2 percent with the People's National Convention (PNC), 1 percent with the Convention People's Party (CPP), and 1 percent with other political parties. One-third (33 percent) claim to be politically uncommitted.
- **Finally, with regard to access to key government services, corruption, and the rule of law, the survey found that...**
- Nearly half of the population report significant difficulty with obtaining household amenities (electricity, water, telephone service or fault repair).
  - Forty percent report significant difficulty with obtaining money (salaries, allowances, reimbursements, scholarships and entitlements) from state institutions.
  - Over one-third of Ghanaians find it difficult to obtain help from the police or basic official documents such as a passport, driver's license, and birth certificate.
- **In light of the above is not surprising that ...**
- ***Over one-quarter of Ghanaians use unofficial means (bribery and influence) to access key public services.*** However, only a minority of respondents would admit to paying, or even to contemplating paying, bribes to any of the listed categories of public officials. Just 13 percent of respondents say they paid a bribe to obtain a license or permit during the previous year.
  - ***Ghanaians believe that corruption among public officials is quite commonplace.*** Specifically, Ghanaians are most suspicious of officers of the Ghana Police Service, with 79 percent of respondents judging *at least some* police personnel to be corrupt. Indeed, more than half (53 percent) of all respondents are of the view that *most* policemen are corrupt. Customs officials run a close but unenviable second to the police, with 73 percent of all survey participants saying they believe at least some, and nearly half (48 percent) saying most, border guards to be corrupt.
  - Sixty-two percent of all respondents in the survey feel that at least *some* government officials are corrupt, while 23 percent believe that *most or all* government officials are. Other identifiable classes of public officials have a poor image in the eyes of the Ghanaian public. More than two-thirds of respondents think that at least some judges and magistrates are corrupt, and 59 percent believe the same of teachers and school administrators.
  - More than half (51 percent) of respondents think there is some corruption going on among elected leaders (e.g., MPs).
  - The Office of the President is considered to be the least corrupt of all the official categories tested, with just 37 percent of respondents saying they think at least some of the President's staff are corrupt.
  - A majority of respondents think that at least some Ghanaian businessmen (63 percent) and some foreign businessmen (60 percent) are corrupt.
  - Religious and NGO leaders are perceived as corrupt by 41 percent and 29 percent respectively.
- **Nevertheless, Ghanaians:**

- ***Respect the authority of the judiciary.*** Seventy percent of respondents accept that decisions of courts are final and binding.
- ***Believe that laws are important.*** Eighty-five percent of respondents in the survey profess respect for the law, and 80 percent acknowledge their civic responsibility to pay taxes.
- ***See improvements on the corruption front.*** Almost half of all respondents think the present government is less corrupt than the previous one.
- ***Express satisfaction with the government’s anti-corruption measures.*** Most Ghanaians (70 percent) are relatively impressed with the government’s efforts to combat corruption.

### **Ghanaian public opinion on other issues:**

#### ➤ **Attitudes to Gender:**

- Seventy-six percent of respondents approve of the proposition that women should not be subject to different courts of traditional law and must have equal treatment under the law.
- Seventy-eight percent identify with the proposition that men have no right to beat their errant wives and children.
- Forty-six percent agree that women must constitute half of representatives to political institutions.

#### ➤ **Conflict and conflict mediation**

- The most common causes of violent conflict in Ghanaian society are “poor communication and misunderstanding” (19 percent); “boundary or land disputes” (16 percent); traditional leadership disputes (13 percent); and “political issues, party rivalry, disputes over political leadership, and political exclusion” (10 percent).
- Ghanaians cite traditional leaders and native courts (30 percent) and armed forces or the police (30 percent) as the preferred avenue for conflict resolution.

#### ➤ **Identity and National Unity Issues**

- Over one-third of Ghanaians (37 percent) identify themselves primarily according to their ethno-linguistic background, while another one-third identify themselves according to their religious beliefs. One in five Ghanaians (19 percent) identify themselves according to their occupational grouping.
- Half of all respondents judge that their identity group is not treated fairly.
- About one-third (32 percent) feel that their identity group is better off than other groups, 30 percent believe that their economic situation is about the same as other groups, and 30 percent see their group as worse off economically when compared to other identity groups.
- When asked whether they would prefer to vote for someone from their area as opposed to a party representative from a different area, 49 percent of Ghanaians prefer a local candidate, while 40 percent prefer to vote for a representative regardless of where he comes from.

- Despite some misgivings, almost all respondents agree that the country should remain united, as opposed to breaking apart into smaller entities.

## **Conclusions**

The Afrobarometer Round 2 survey in Ghana shows that democracy has continued to gain ground in Ghana despite continuing economic dissatisfaction. The survey presents a picture of a great deal of dissatisfaction with economic conditions. It also shows that poverty remains persistent, and the public is deeply ambivalent over key aspects of neo-liberal economic reforms. At the same time, the survey confirms that Ghanaians remain fully committed to democratic principles. Moreover, support for democratic politics remains very high, and there is growing satisfaction with the way democracy actually works in the country.

Survey findings also suggest that the prospects for democracy and development in Ghana are good, though the country is at the same time experiencing a crisis of expectations that may be difficult to satisfy.

Finally, the results suggest that Ghana appears to be enjoying something of a “power alternation bonus.” A truly stunning change from 1999 is that the proportion of the adult population who are “willing to endure hardships now” has doubled, from 36 percent in 1999 to 72 percent in 2002. In addition, political patience has increased slightly, from 74 percent in 1999 to 79 percent in 2002.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Ghana is one of many African countries that have embarked on reforms to democratize their politics and liberalize their economies. The Afrobarometer surveys have been tracking popular attitudes to political and economic reform in more than a dozen countries in Southern, Eastern and Western Africa.

The first round of the Afrobarometer survey in Ghana was conducted in 1999. At that time, Ghana had emerged from 11 years of quasi-military rule under Flight-Lieutenant (retired) Jerry John Rawlings and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), and was being governed as a republic under an elected President Rawlings and his National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration. While the democratically elected Rawlings-NDC administration continued broadly to pursue the World Bank/IMF neo-liberal economic reforms initiated in the mid-1980s, there was a growing perception that the macroeconomic environment was deteriorating, fiscal discipline had been abandoned,<sup>1</sup> and corruption was on the rise.<sup>2</sup> The country was about a year and a half away from a presidential election that President Rawlings could not contest due to constitutional term limits.

Since then, Ghana has successfully held a third consecutive multiparty election (in December 2000). Most significantly, the keenly contested election produced the country's first-ever peaceful transfer of power between political parties, with the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) defeating the incumbent NDC in races for both the presidency and control of Parliament. An important political milestone was reached in Ghana on 7 January 2001, when the new administration of John Agyekum Kufuor and the NPP was sworn into office.<sup>3</sup>

A somewhat optimistic mood prevailed in the country in September 2002 at the time the study was conducted. The new government was settling into office reasonably smoothly. The NPP was learning to conduct itself as a governing party, and the NDC was getting used to being in opposition. There was a clear recognition that the country was faced with daunting challenges, but the new government's promises to heal social and political divisions through a policy of an "all-inclusive government," and to promote clean government by pursuing a policy of "zero tolerance for corruption," appeared to have generated considerable popular optimism. Similarly, the government's promise to promote foreign and domestic private investment appeared to have rekindled hopes of economic revival.

Nevertheless, the economic challenges remained formidable: mass unemployment, appalling poverty, chronic balance of payments and budget deficits that were adding to already unsustainable levels of external and internal public debt, and an unstoppable brain drain threatened the imminent collapse of social services, especially in the key areas of education and health.

The press headlines at the time of the survey were dominated by disturbing news of the violent conflict in the kingdom of Dagbon in the Northern Region of Ghana, including the brutal killing of the Dagbon king and over 30 members of his clan, as well as the imposition of a state of emergency in the conflict area. Also in the news were a controversy o

---

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Aryeetey, et al., eds., Economic Reforms in Ghana: the Miracle and the Mirage (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2000); Eboe Hutchful, Ghana's Adjustment Experience: The Paradox of Reform (Oxford: James Currey 2002): pp. 214-248; and CEPA, Ghana Macroeconomic Review (1996-2000 issues) (Accra: Center for Policy Analysis)

<sup>2</sup> CDD, Governance and Anti-Corruption Survey, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> E. Gyimah-Boadi, "A Peaceful Political Turnover in Ghana," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 12 (2001) pp. 103-117.



ver the government's plan to source a commercial loan from the International Finance Consortium; the importation of Peugeot cars from Nigeria for the Ghanaian police on a sole source basis; the violent conflict and civil war in the Ivory Coast; and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

This document reports the main findings of the Round 2 Afrobarometer survey, undertaken in September 2002 by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).<sup>4</sup> It provides an updated assessment of popular attitudes to democratic and market reforms in Ghana, as well as an opportunity to identify changes and continuities in popular attitudes in key aspects of Ghanaian political, social and economic life from 1999 to the present. The 2002 Afrobarometer survey helps to draw tentative conclusions about the extent to which the Ghanaian democratic political process and its institutions are gaining public confidence and legitimacy, and whether Ghana is enjoying a "power alternation bonus" whereby the election of new leaders enhances the prospects for democratic consolidation.

### **Objectives and Design of the Study**

The objective of the study is to measure the opinions and attitudes of ordinary Ghanaians about recent social, political and economic developments in Ghana at both the micro and macro levels. The study is also useful for comparing the current findings with those of the Afrobarometer Round 1 survey conducted in 1999, in order to track changes and to detect trends in the socio-economic and political behaviors of Ghanaians over the three year period.

The study was designed as a national sample survey. The sampling frame was the updated list of enumeration areas used in the Ghana 2000 Population and Housing Census, with the requisite information on households and population for the respective enumeration areas. A subset of the population was randomly selected and asked a common schedule of questions on the political economy of Ghana. A total of 1200 respondents were interviewed. With a sample of this size, responses can be taken to represent the opinion of all Ghanaians on these issues at a 95 percent confidence level with a confidence interval of  $\pm 2.5$  percent.

The target population for the survey was eligible voters in Ghana, i.e., citizens aged 18 years and above at the time of the survey. A multi-stage, stratified, area cluster sampling technique was used to draw a representative sample from the voting population, giving each Ghanaian of voting age an equal chance of being included in the sample. The selection process was randomized at each stage. To indigenize the questionnaire, it was also translated into Akan, Dagbani, Ewe, Ga and Hausa, and interviews were administered in the language of each respondent's choice. Details on the sampling methodology can be found in Appendix A.

On the whole, the rural-urban distribution of the sample reflects the current settlement pattern of Ghana: 48 percent of the respondents live in urban areas and 52 percent in rural areas. The survey's classification

---

<sup>4</sup> Many persons contributed to this study. Survey data was collected under the direction of Elvis Otoo (CDD) and C.B. Wiafe Akenten (University of Ghana) who managed a field staff of five translators, 9 survey supervisors, and 45 survey enumerators to conduct field work in all 10 regions of the country. The field supervisors were Patrick Osei Kuffour, Omar Seidu, Andrew Chireh, Opere Addo, Emmanuel Tinkorang, Asamani Baniehi, Kwesi Dickson, Harriet Takyi, and Ransford Kani. John Larvie, Thomas Buabeng (both of the programs department of CDD) and Wiafe Akenten undertook back checks in the field, while Edem Selormey (CDD Afrobarometer team) ran the survey secretariat and handled SOS requests from the field.

The data was entered and cleaned in machine readable format by a team of eight data clerks under the direction of Elvis Otoo and Edem Selormey. Research assistance on questionnaire design, data analysis, and report preparation was provided by Egya Appiah (CDD research intern), Edem Selormey and Elvis Otoo. Baah Wadieh of the Ghana Statistical Service Authority served as the sampling specialist and consultant at large.

of rural and urban areas was based on the classifications in the Ghana Statistical Service’s updated sampling frame, which classifies any settlement of more than 5000 inhabitants as urban. This makes the data comparable with any data in the country in terms of rural-urban distribution.

The survey is conducted in all 10 administrative regions of Ghana, with the number of respondents from each region proportional to the size of the region’s population. The regional groupings ranged in size from 4 percent of the sample drawn from the Upper West Region to 19 percent from the Ashanti Region.

**Table 1: Regional Distribution of the Sample**

| <i>Region</i> | <i>Number of Respondents</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Ashanti       | 232                          | 19.3           |
| Brong-Ahafo   | 112                          | 9.3            |
| Central       | 104                          | 8.7            |
| Eastern       | 136                          | 11.3           |
| Greater-Accra | 184                          | 15.3           |
| Northern      | 112                          | 9.3            |
| Upper East    | 56                           | 4.7            |
| Upper West    | 48                           | 4.0            |
| Volta         | 104                          | 8.7            |
| Western       | 112                          | 9.3            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1200</b>                  | <b>100.0</b>   |

The topics for the survey were chosen carefully on a theoretical basis and with reference to relevant academic and policy literature. The research instrument was a 26-page interview schedule of 95 items. All but 10 of the questions were closed-ended. There were three parts to the questionnaire: introductory questions, core attitudinal questions and contextual questions. The core attitudinal questions covered economic, political, institutional and social attitudes. Respondents were not expected to answer the introductory or contextual questions directly. Instead, the interviewer completed these questions in order to put the interview in perspective.

Nine teams, each comprising one supervisor and four interviewers, were trained during a five-day workshop at CDD,<sup>5</sup> and deployed to the field for up to 14 days to administer the questionnaire.<sup>6</sup> The data was entered at CDD by a team of 18 data entry clerks using SPSS. CDD also did the data analysis.

To allow for a comparison of results of the current survey with the previous one, most of the items from the first survey were maintained. The Afrobarometer survey is being administered concurrently in 14 other African countries with few changes, if any, to the core items in the questionnaire. This allows for horizontal (cross-country) and vertical (time-line) comparisons of Afrobarometer findings, and should provide a medium-resolution motion picture of public opinion on contemporary political, economic and social developments in Africa.

### **Social Characteristics of the Study**

Fifty-one percent of the 1200 interviewees were men and 49 percent were women, giving a fairly accurate gender balance. Unlike in the last Afrobarometer survey, interviewers did not encounter the problem of husbands speaking on behalf of their wives, or not allowing their wives to grant interviews at all. Thus the

<sup>5</sup> Including one day of field work to pre-test the translated questionnaires and also to simulate field experiences.

<sup>6</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> August to 13<sup>th</sup> September.

male-to-female ratio in the 2002 survey did not vary so much from the gender distribution of the country's population, in which 51 percent are women and 49 percent are men.

The median age of respondents is 37 years, which is higher than the 34 years for the Round 1 survey. Again, this reflects the current population census, which reports that the population of Ghana is aging. The age range of the sample population is from 18 to 105. Young people (between 18 and 26 years of age) make up 23 percent, young adults (aged between 27 and 45 years) make up 45 percent, and older adults (aged over 45 years) account for 32 percent of the sample.

Forty-four percent of respondents refer to themselves as the head of their households. About 87 percent live in households with children under 18 years of age.

When asked by the survey team, respondents mention over 40 local dialects as their native languages. However a few major languages predominate: Akan (53 percent), Ewe (12 percent), Ga (6 percent) and Dagbani (6 percent). The other languages account for the remaining 24 percent. Two-thirds (65 percent) of interviews were conducted in Akan, 12 percent in English, and the rest in the other four major Ghanaian languages.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents say they have no formal education, 13 percent have had some formal education, 48 percent have between 8 and 11 years of formal and secondary education, and the remaining 11 percent have had some form of tertiary education. The majority (64 percent) of those who admit to not having had any formal education are women. Men are also disproportionately represented among those with higher levels of education, accounting for 61 percent of respondents who had completed secondary school but not gone on to university, 71 percent of those with non-university tertiary education, and 100 percent of those with graduate or post-graduate qualifications.

Occupationally, the largest group in the sample (30 percent of respondents) is made up of farmers who cultivate a surplus for sale. The next biggest occupational group is that of traders, hawkers and vendors, who make up about 15 percent of the total. Workers in the formal sector account for less than 10 percent of the sample.

On the social level, most of the respondents are active, particularly in the area of religion. Of those who profess religious belief, a total of about 70 percent claim to be Christians and 13 percent are Moslems. Among Christians, the largest single bloc (nearly half of all Christians, or 32 percent of the total sample) claim to belong to one or other of the rapidly proliferating unofficial Protestant evangelical/pentecostal sects commonly referred to as spiritual or charismatic churches. Practitioners of African traditional religions account for 5 percent of the total. A total of 1 percent of all respondents claim adherence to a variety of other recognized religious faiths. More than half (53 percent) of respondents describe themselves as active members of a religious group, and three-quarters (73 percent) say they attend services of religious observance (excluding weddings and funerals) at least once a week.

Interestingly, 11 percent of all respondents claim to be "official leaders" of a religious group. This further attests to the proliferation of independent spiritualist movements, led by freelance "pastors" and self-ordained "bishops." In the absence of credible official sources of moral authority, these groups have filled the void by providing a range of social services such as unlicensed marriage guidance counselling. These religious leaders also commonly substitute for the lack of a state welfare system, by levying taxes ("tithes") on their adherents in order to fund charitable activities.

Between 15 and 24 percent of respondents claim membership in professional or business associations, trade unions or farmers' groups, and community development or self-help (voluntary) associations. Typically, half of those who are involved in such community organizations describe themselves as active

members; 60 percent say they have had attended meetings of community groups at least occasionally during the past year.

The dwelling places of respondents vary from non-traditional formal houses (46 percent), through traditional houses (40 percent), single rooms in shared (or so-called “compound”) houses (8 percent), and flats or apartments (4 percent), to temporary shacks (2 percent).

## **PART ONE: ECONOMIC ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS**

### **Livelihoods and Social Capital**

The Afrobarometer sought to gain an idea of how Ghanaians earn their living and what kind of livelihood they enjoy. A frightening picture of mass formal unemployment and under-employment emerges. The sheer scale of unemployment exacts a heavy price on the economy of Ghana in terms of lost production. Additionally, the bias towards informal or unregistered employment poses equally serious economic and social challenges to the nation in terms of massive shortfalls in income tax revenues and scant provision for the social security and retirement benefits of an aging population. Ghanaians even perceive a worsening of the unemployment situation, with 45 percent of respondents reckoning that there are no more job opportunities now than there were a few years ago. The impact of mass unemployment on Ghanaian society cannot be overstated. After the lack of money and hunger, joblessness is cited as the next most common definition of poverty; 11 percent of all respondents actually equate unemployment with poverty. The lack of a job is considered more synonymous with poverty than other manifestations such as dependence on charity, homelessness, childlessness and illiteracy. These statistics explain the high priority Ghanaians attach to the demand for the creation and preservation of jobs.

One significant cause of the discontent expressed in the 2002 Afrobarometer survey appears to be unemployment. Just 19 percent of respondents describe themselves as “employed and not looking for a job.” Even among the 35 percent of all respondents who classify themselves as being in full-time employment, most (21 percent of the total) say they are still looking for work. This attests to the low pay and poor working conditions that are typical of the jobs on offer.

The survey discovered that only a minority of Ghanaians earn regular salaries and wages. Asked to indicate the extent to which they depend for their living on wage or salary earnings, nearly two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents answer that they do not have the benefit of a wage or salary at all. Only 21 percent of the population are primarily dependent, and a further 13 percent are partly dependent, for their living on a regular earned income.

These statistics mirror the finding that just 36 percent of Ghanaians over age 18 have full-time jobs. About one in five (18 percent) say they are in part-time employment. Almost half (45 percent) of all respondents describe themselves as unemployed, including a hard core of 30 percent of the total who say they are unemployed and not seeking employment.

The geographical distribution of salaried job opportunities appears to be skewed towards the urban areas, with the Greater Accra Region (which is home to 15 percent of the population) accounting for more than one-third (36 percent) of all of those who say they depend “a lot” on a salary for their livelihood. At the opposite end of the spectrum, none of the 48 respondents in the Upper West Region is dependent to this extent on a regular wage or salary. The most plausible interpretation of this statistic is that there is a significantly higher rate of unemployment in the Upper West than in Accra. Alternatively, it suggests that average wages in the Upper West are significantly lower than in the capital, and are therefore more likely to have to be supplemented with other income-generating activities.

More than one-third (35 percent) of all respondents say they depend on “buying and selling” for their living. This quantifies the highly visible phenomenon of unlicensed hawkers and petty traders on the streets and pavements of Ghana’s cities. A further one-quarter (26 percent) of Ghanaians report being dependent on payments in kind for occasional labour.

In terms of occupations, two out of five Ghanaians (42 percent of respondents) describe themselves as farmers. Most of these (31 percent of the total) classify their mode of farming as mainly commercial, while the remaining 11 percent farm for subsistence purposes only. The next largest occupational group are the one-seventh (15 percent) who describe themselves as traders, hawkers or vendors. Eight percent are artisans or skilled manual workers, 4 percent are teachers, 4 percent are students, and 5 percent say they have never had a job.

The state continues to be a dominant provider of employment, with 20 percent of respondents reporting that someone in their household earns a salary from the public purse.

One in eight respondents (13 percent) say there is no income-earner in their household. Including this number, a cumulative total of three-quarters (76 percent) of Ghanaians say they live in households with a combined monthly income of less than 455,000 Cedis (US\$56). The typical respondent lives in a household where the total monthly income is between 5 and 11 US dollars. Just 5 percent of Ghanaian families live on incomes of more than 800,000 Cedis (US\$100) per month. Contrary to the popular stereotype, only 13 percent of respondents admit to depending on remittances of cash from relatives in foreign countries, while 20 percent say they depend on the incomes of relatives working elsewhere within the country. Perhaps surprisingly, while 52 percent of those who say they depend on remittances from expatriate relatives are women (in keeping with a familiar stereotype), men are more likely than women (by 57 percent to 43 percent) to depend on domestic remittances.

More than half (54 percent) of all respondents say they live from hand to mouth, spending all of their household income on a regular basis. Another one-fifth (21 percent) say they resort to spending their savings or to borrowing money to make ends meet. Just 18 percent of all respondents earn enough money to be able to accumulate savings.

Not surprisingly, given these appallingly low cash incomes, the survey found that crushing poverty and deprivation are widespread. Sixty-nine percent say they ran out of cash at some time during the 12 months before the interview, and nearly one-third (29 percent) of the population say that being completely without money has been a frequent experience for them during that period. One person in ten (10 percent) says they never have any money.

Two out of every five Ghanaians (40 percent) say they have gone without food during the previous year, including 8 percent for whom hunger is a regular experience. A similar two-fifths (42 percent) of the population report having had no access to clean water at least occasionally during the past year, and one in seven (15 percent) say this is a common occurrence. There is a surprising regional variation in this index. The parts of the country that appear to suffer the least frequent disruptions of clean water are not the predictable areas with the highest degree of urbanization, but rather the Western and Brong-Ahafo regions, where 75 percent and 71 percent of respondents, respectively, say they *never* faced water shortages during the previous year. The *most* deprived part of Ghana in this respect, and by a very wide margin, is the Volta Region, where 28 percent of respondents report suffering water shortages “*always*.” Access to a reliable supply of electricity is a problem for most people, with 38 percent reporting that they had enjoyed *no supply at all* during the year. (This figure is actually much less than the estimated 60 percent of the population who are not served by the national power grid.) In total, 61 percent of respondents report having suffered power cuts on at least one occasion in the past year. Medical care is

another service that is regularly unavailable to many Ghanaians: 39 percent say they have been regularly unable to secure medical attention when they needed it.

Ghana's social security system inadequately serves a very narrow segment of the population, and there is no effective permanent state welfare programme that covers the large areas of deprivation uncovered by the Afrobarometer survey. In the absence of any such formal social safety net, Afrobarometer asked a series of questions to find out to whom Ghanaians turn for support in times of need. The responses indicate that recourse to the extended family network is the predominant choice of respondents.

Respondents are most likely to seek assistance from relatives when they needed help with money (34 percent), food (21 percent) or medical care (20 percent). However, Ghanaians are more likely to seek assistance from other community sources (15 percent) than from their families (6 percent) when they need clean water.

These findings confirm strongly that neither central nor local government authorities are able to offer much direct assistance to people in need. However, the relatively high availability of an extended family support network is a significant expression of the extent of "social capital,"<sup>7</sup> which is a measure of the strength of community relationships based on trust, collaboration and reciprocity. On the other hand, the data contain indications of the weakness of other types of social capital in Ghanaian society, such as "bridging"<sup>8</sup> social capital. It is noteworthy also that relatively few Ghanaians turn to community groups for support, considering their high rates of participation in community activities, especially those that are faith-based. This raises interesting questions as to why citizens who participate in religious and community groups so actively and in such large numbers are deriving so little material assistance from these organizations in times of need.

It is also troubling that the 2002 findings suggest that access to basic needs has worsened since 1999, when the proportions of respondents reporting difficulty with access to food and water were 33 percent and 39 percent respectively. Also worrying is the fact that significant numbers of respondents report having *nobody at all* to turn to when they needed social support. This validated earlier findings of a perceived widening of the gap between rich and poor. One-quarter (24 percent) of respondents say they have no one to turn to when they need money, and one-fifth (20 percent) are left to fend for themselves when they need medical treatment. Slightly smaller proportions report being without recourse when they are without water (17 percent), food (16 percent) and cooking fuel (14 percent). These statistics suggest a further weakening of the safety net. The retrenchment of labour from the public services may have undermined the social security of many Ghanaians, and created a void that has not been adequately filled by community or voluntary associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There is clearly a need for economic development programmes to place a special emphasis on measures to reduce the large gaps that have arisen in the distribution of wealth, and to improve access to social services for the most vulnerable members of society.

---

<sup>7</sup> Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, values and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Essentially, social capital glues together the institutions that underpin society. There is increasing evidence to show that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Therefore, the quality of social capital ensures the vitality of democratic institutions and civic life. Bonding social capital refers to the strong ties between immediate family members, neighbors, close friends, and business associates sharing similar demographic characteristics. See Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000) pp. 21-24.

<sup>8</sup> Bridging social capital refers to ties between people from different ethnic, occupational and geographical backgrounds, but with similar economic and political status. See Putnam, *ibid.*

## Economic Perceptions and Expectations

The survey sought each respondent's perception of the general economic condition of Ghana, especially relative to those of neighbouring countries, as well as assessments of their individual economic circumstances, both absolutely and in comparison with other Ghanaians. We also asked for their evaluations of the economic circumstances.

More than half (59 percent) of all respondents rate the condition of Ghana's economy as poor, with more than one-quarter (26 percent) of the total describing the country's economic situation as very bad. Fewer than one-third (31 percent) judge economic conditions in Ghana now to be good. In the 1999 survey, 66 percent of respondents were dissatisfied with the economy as a whole. Superficially, therefore, there would appear to have been a marginal improvement in the perceived state of the economy.

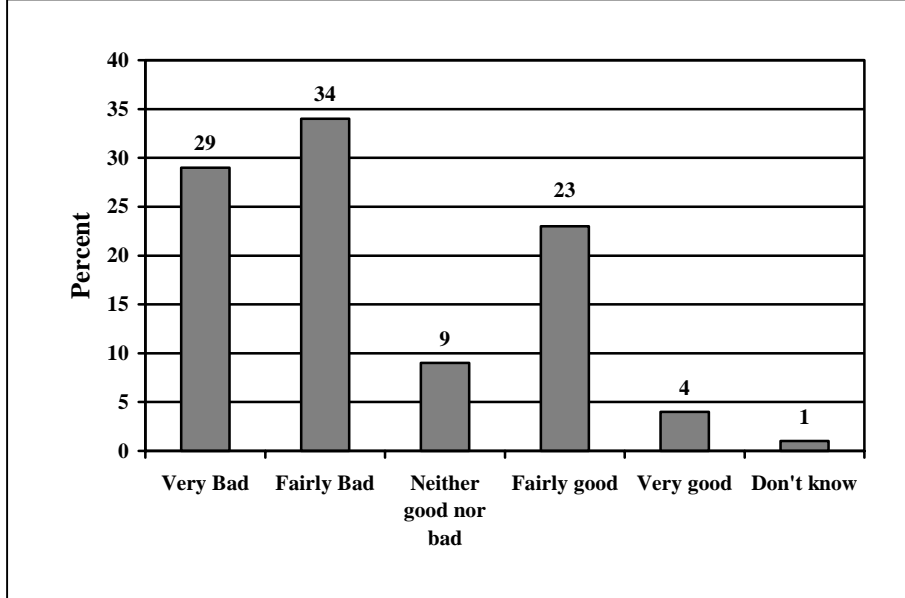
Views on the state of the general economy are positively correlated with individual circumstances. As in other countries, Ghanaians in the upper income brackets are much more likely to think the general state of the economy is healthy than are those at lower incomes. Women are more inclined to perceive economic failure, representing 53 percent of those who described the general economic situation as negative. Men are even more disproportionately represented among those who expressed a *positive* view of the state of the economy, making up 57 percent of that segment, and 68 percent of those who say the state of the economy is "*very good*". The most positive views of the economy are observed in the Northern and Greater Accra Regions, which, while they are home to 9 percent and 15 percent of the sample respectively, each account for 29 percent of all those who describe the state of the economy as "*very good*." The worst assessments of the economy are made by residents of the Brong-Ahafo and Western Regions, with 9 percent each of the population, but with 18 percent and 15 percent respectively of those who describe the economy as "*very bad*."

Forty percent of all respondents think that economic conditions in Ghana are worse than those in neighbouring countries, while one-third (33 percent) think the opposite is true. A significant minority (17 percent) have no opinion on this matter, perhaps reflecting the poor flow of local information across West African borders and the resultant continuing lack of progress towards the declared goal of regional integration.

The findings relating to perceptions of individual living conditions mirror those on the national economy (Figure 1). Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of all respondents describe their own present living conditions as bad. Only about one-quarter (27 percent) of the sample group feel able to describe their living conditions as good. This is little changed from the 1999 survey, when 68 percent of Ghanaians are dissatisfied with their personal circumstances. Men generally describe their living conditions more positively than women, accounting for 56 percent of those who described their living conditions as good. The Brong-Ahafo Region registers the worst perceptions of individual living conditions, the region accounts for just 9 percent of the total population, but 18 percent of those who describe their personal circumstances as bad.

When asked to rate their personal wealth now on a scale from 0 (poorest) to 10 (richest), a staggering cumulative total of 85 percent give answers in the range of 0 to 5, including 10 percent who give themselves a score of 0. The modal score of 5 is chosen by 22 percent of respondents. The ordering of scores also illustrates the general picture of a widespread sense of impoverishment.

**Figure 1: Your Present Living Conditions**



More than one-third (39 percent) of all respondents rate themselves worse off than other Ghanaians, but a similar proportion (34 percent) rate their living conditions better than those of other Ghanaians. The spread of this last cluster of statistics would appear to indicate a broad perception among Ghanaians that the burden of poverty is evenly distributed. However, taken together with the other findings, it is far more likely to indicate that even in their situation of need, many Ghanaians are still able to perceive the more extreme poverty of others in society. This interpretation is corroborated by other evidence in the survey of a strong and persistent sense of community among Ghanaians. Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of the population are of the opinion that each person should put the well-being of the community ahead of his or her own interests, while just half as many (34 percent) think that everybody should be free to pursue what is best for them as individuals.

When asked to score the wealth of their parents 10 years ago, respondents judge themselves only marginally worse off than their parents, with 73 percent scoring their parents' wealth at or below average (between 0 and 5 on the scale of 0 to 10). This reinforces indicators of real reductions in per capita national income.

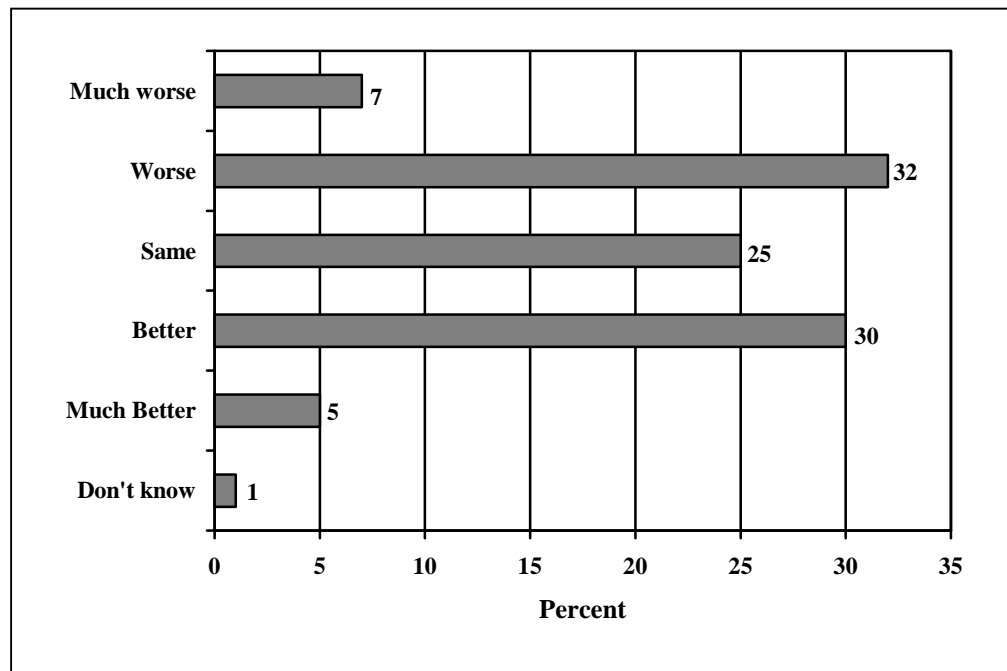
In stark contrast to their assessment of their own wealth, or lack of it, respondents are exceedingly optimistic when rating the economic prospects of their children in 10 years time. Almost three-quarters (71 percent) of the population foresee better-than-average wealth (between 6 and 10 on the 0-to-10 scale) for their children. Indeed, more than one-quarter (28 percent) foresee their children experiencing – *in the space of just one decade* – such a dramatic leap of fortune as to score a perfect 10 on the scale of riches.

These elevated expectations would be encouraging even to the extent that they reflect nothing more than a sense of optimism. The detection of such a widespread mood of optimism might support in turn an assumption by advocates of market reform that Ghanaians would be willing to endure further short- to medium-run sacrifices necessary to complete the adjustment process begun in the mid-1980s. Indeed, that assumption is confirmed by survey data showing that 72 percent of respondents believe that further sacrifice is necessary now to ensure future prosperity. However, the shortness of the time frame within which so many Ghanaians expect their children to go from sharing their own desperate poverty to being



fantastically rich may instead suggest nothing more than a suspension of reality and an uninformed assessment of the magnitude of the economic problems confronting Ghana.

**Figure 2: Your Living Conditions 12 Months Ago**



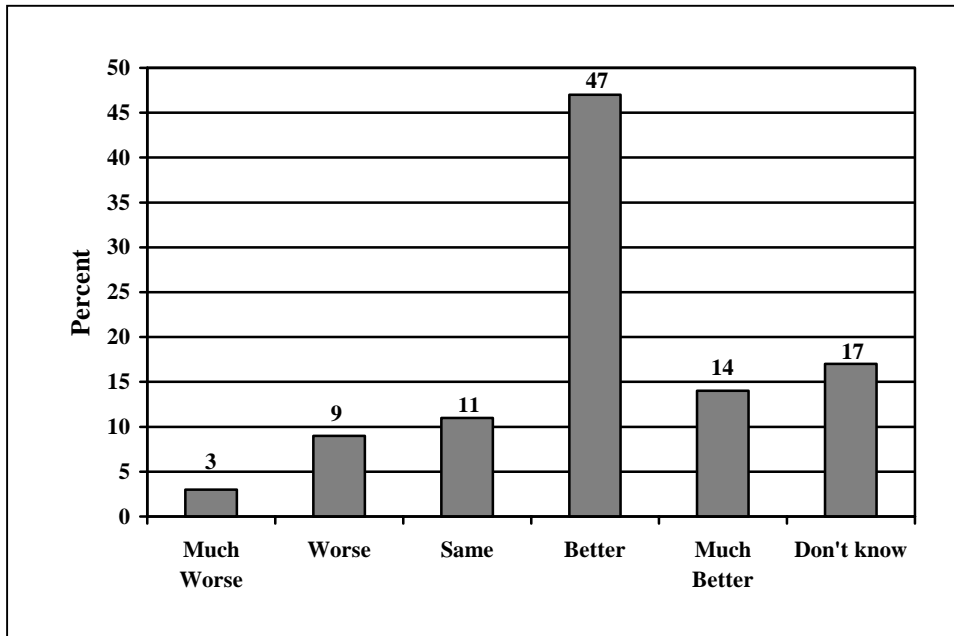
The disconnection between hope and reality is capped by the fact that while nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of all respondents report no improvement in their living conditions in the previous year (Figure 2), an almost identical number (64 percent) estimate that their living conditions will be better in a year's time. In the 1999 Afrobarometer survey, 61 percent reported no improvement in their circumstances over the previous five years, while 52 percent thought that they would be better off the following year. In keeping with this unexplained mood of growing optimism in 2002, 61 percent of the sample estimate that the country's economic condition will improve measurably within the same time frame (Figure 3), even though just as many people (61 percent) report no improvement in the economy during the previous 12 months. Thus, Ghanaians' own recent past experience is not a decisive factor in the calibration of their future economic expectations.

The sense of economic optimism is widespread, but it is not felt equally by all sections of the population. While the Brong-Ahafo Region led the way among the determined optimists (its 9 percent of the population accounting for 19 percent of the most bullish predictions of a "much better" economy within 12 months), this is balanced by greater degrees of pessimism in the Upper West, Upper East and Western Regions. These regions produce 22 percent, 13 percent and 19 percent, respectively, of the admittedly small minority (3 percent) of respondents who say they expect the national economy to be "much worse" in 12 months' time, as against 4 percent, 5 percent and 9 percent of the sample. Respondents in the Ashanti Region are most prominent among the 11 percent of the total that display the most pragmatic tendency. While Ashanti provide 19 percent of the population sample, it is home to 30 percent of those who say they expect the condition of the economy to be "the same" in one year's time.

There is also a marked difference at the margins between the outlooks of the sexes. The most extreme pessimists are far more frequently female than male, while the most incurable optimists are likelier still to be male than female. In particular, 59 percent of those who say they expected the economy to be "much

worse” in 12 months’ time are women, as are 63 percent of those who say they expected their own living conditions to be much worse. Conversely, 57 percent of those who expect the economy to improve significantly in just a year are men.

**Figure 3: Country’s Economic Condition in 12 Months**



Political party affiliation is also a factor that appears to influence respondents’ views of the country’s economic prospects. Respondents who claim affiliation to the governing New Patriotic Party are by far the most likely to display optimism (and conversely the least likely to express pessimism) about the country’s near-term economic future. NPP supporters, who comprise 44 percent of the sample, make up 58 percent of those who say they think the economy will be “much better” a year on. Unsurprisingly perhaps, supporters of the largest minority party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), are most likely to be pessimistic about the prospects for the economy. The 15 percent of the sample that claim affinity to the NDC account for 38 percent of the most pessimistic tendency, predicting “much worse” economic performance during the next year.

Taken together, these results attest to the fact that after a generation of declining economic fortunes, Ghanaians have internalized a sense of individual and collective impoverishment. It is evident also that Ghanaians are not sufficiently well informed about the nature and scale of the adjustment required to bring about a reversal of their economic fortunes. They remain eternally hopeful that their fortunes will turn around at some point in the ever-near future, but do not necessarily recognize the causal relation between their individual actions and the national outcomes they hope for.

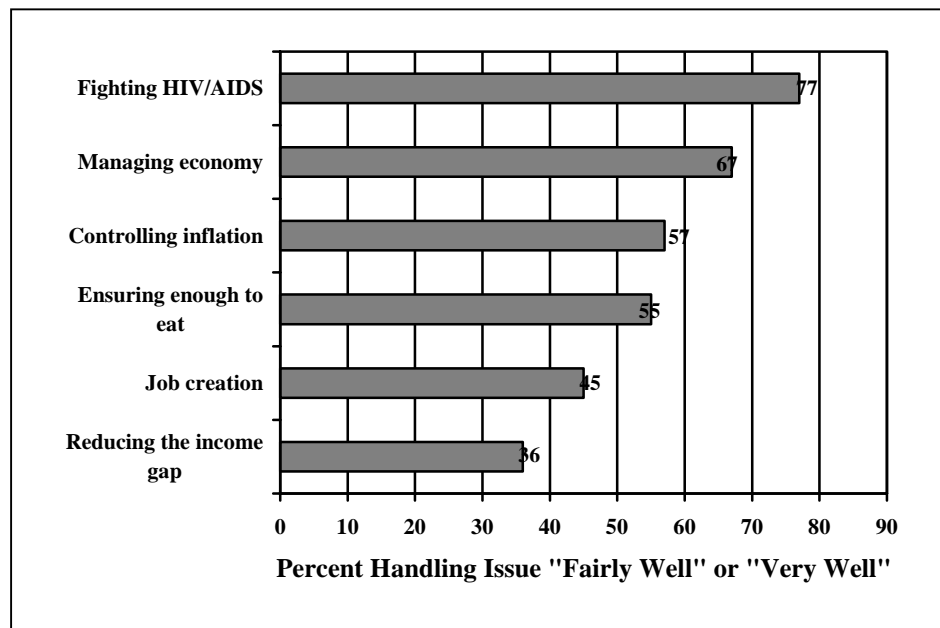
**Assessments of the NPP Government’s Performance**

In response to a question about the most pressing national problems, a number of economic issues emerge as Ghanaians’ major priorities for the attention of their government. By a sizable margin, unemployment is rated the biggest challenge facing the nation. More than one-third (34 percent) of respondents rank this as the issue that most merits government concern. The next highest priority is poverty and destitution, which is the first pick of 11 percent of respondents. After these specific problems, the general

management of the economy is the next major issue with which respondents are preoccupied: 10 percent rank it as the most important challenge confronting the government.

Respondents were invited to assess the NPP government's efforts in addressing these and other economic problems during the 20 months it had been in office (Figure 4). Two-thirds (67 percent) of those surveyed approved of the government's handling of the economy generally, although the majority of these (49 percent of the total) think the government is doing only "fairly well." While more than half (57 percent) approve of the government's performance in managing inflation, a sizeable minority (37 percent) disapprove. The other point on which survey participants give the government credit for its efforts is in the area of ensuring that every Ghanaian has enough to eat: 55 percent of respondents approve of the government's performance. Approval of the government's performance on this score can be seen as a compliment to the World Bank-supported Emergency Social Relief Programme, which featured substantial disbursements of cash shortly before the survey to members of deprived communities. It probably also reflects the bumper harvests recorded during the last two main farming seasons, which resulted in falls in food prices.

**Figure 4: Ratings of Government Performance**



The areas in which the government is seen as having done least well are job creation - the public's most pressing concern - and narrowing the gap between rich and poor. Just under half (45 percent) of respondents think the NPP government has performed adequately in its efforts to reduce unemployment, but a larger proportion (47 percent) think the government has performed badly in this area. Barely one-third (36 percent) of the population feel that the NPP government has brought about a reduction in the inequitable distribution of wealth, as against more than half (54 percent) who think the government has done badly. Almost one-quarter (24 percent) characterize government's performance here as "very bad."

Perhaps these assessments, positive and negative, based as they are on such a brief record of government, are more a measure of public perceptions than of objective facts. Respondents were also asked to assess the performance of the economy over the long term, and in particular to compare various aspects of the economy before and after the introduction of market reforms. Recalling accurately the severe shortages during the late 1970s and 1980s of even the cheapest of imported (and in some cases also locally manufactured) consumer goods, a two-thirds majority (63 percent) of Ghanaians report a major

improvement only in the availability of goods. On the down side, 71 percent of respondents feel that the market reforms have not delivered any improvement in the area of their highest priority - unemployment. Just one-quarter (25 percent) of respondents perceive an increase in the number of job opportunities. Moreover, 74 percent of respondents feel market reform has brought about no reduction in the gap between rich and poor. In fact, nearly half (47 percent) of the sample group perceive an exaggeration of inequities in the distribution of national wealth under the reform programmes. The people's verdict on the impact of reform on living standards is generally mixed: 38 percent think there has been a decline in the standard of living, while 36 percent think there has been a rise. However, given that one expects living standards to rise over time, and that the per capita national income has in fact fallen over the period of adjustment, this assessment would seem, on balance, more negative than positive.

The threat to public health of AIDS, and the warnings of its dire consequences for social cohesion, are issues that have become the subject of keen interest and intense public debate in Ghana. The Afrobarometer sought to measure the real impact of AIDS on Ghanaian society, by inquiring of respondents how many of their relatives and close friends they had lost to the syndrome. Exactly half (50 percent) of the population report that they have suffered no AIDS-related bereavements, while 7 percent know of a single relative or close friend who has died of an AIDS-related illness, and 11 percent know of two or more such cases. A further 30 percent say they don't know how many losses they have suffered, perhaps suggesting that Ghanaians are still reluctant to acknowledge personal experience with the disease.

Respondents were asked how well they think their government is doing at combating the spread of AIDS. Three-quarters (77 percent) of the sample group think the government is handling its responsibilities at least fairly well. Respondents were further probed for their opinion on fiscal priorities, with specific reference to public spending on the AIDS control programme. This produced a noteworthy finding: when asked whether they would support the proposition that much more public expenditure should be devoted to controlling the spread of AIDS even if this meant diverting resources away from areas like education, just over one-third (35 percent) agree. But a clear majority (57 percent) identify themselves more closely with the counter-argument, that even if large numbers of people are dying of AIDS (a factually inaccurate premise), the country faces many other problems that the government needs to focus on solving instead. This finding betrays evidence of a growing discomfort, among sections of the Ghanaian population, with the culturally inappropriate character of some of the public commentary on AIDS.

### **Support for Market Principles**

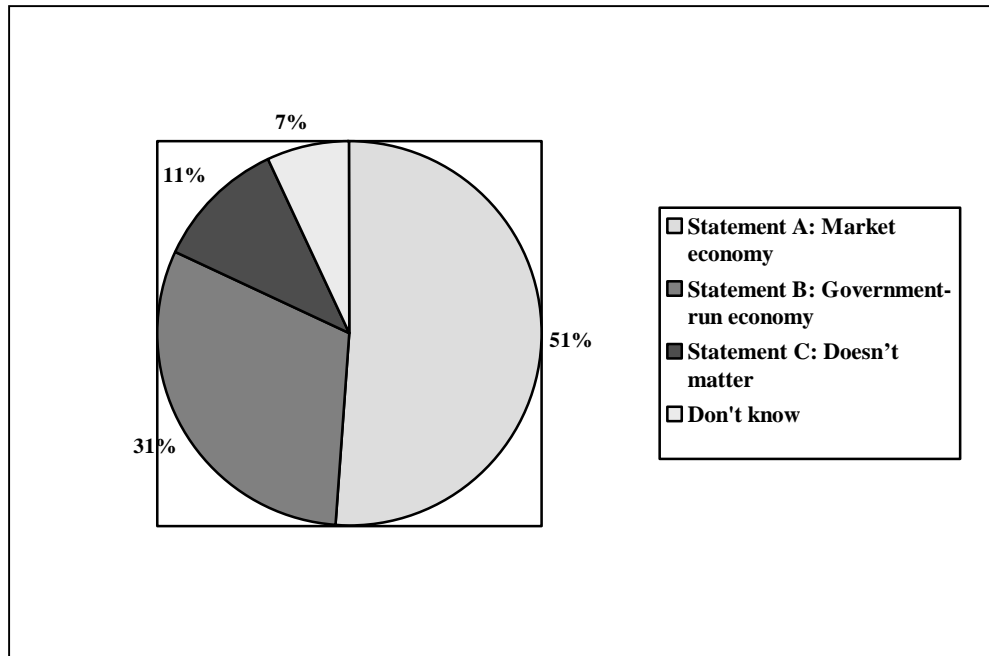
A key goal of the Afrobarometer survey is to understand public attitudes toward market principles. We began with a straightforward question about whether respondents prefer a free market economy to a "government-run" economy (Figure 5).<sup>9</sup> Just over half (51 percent) of all respondents opt for the free market model, versus a sizeable minority of almost one-third (31 percent) who prefer the command model. A further 11 percent say that the choice is of no consequence to them. Overall, Ghanaians are split almost evenly between those who express positive support for an undefined market economy (51 percent) and those who do not (49 percent).

Ghanaian women are less likely than men to prefer either the free market *or* the command model. The strongest gender bias is observed among the "don't know" responses, where women account for fully 70 percent.

---

<sup>9</sup> The full question is: Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? Statement A: A free market economy is preferable to an economy run by the government; Statement B: A government-run economy is preferable to a free market economy; and Statement C: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of economic system we have.

**Figure 5: Prefer Market or Government-Run Economy**



The propensity of respondents to favour a market economy is correlated positively with the amount of formal education they have received. Ninety percent of the graduate degree-holders and 100 percent of the post-graduate degree-holders in the sample prefer a market economy. The converse is not true, however. Among those in the sample who have no education at all, the clearest discernible tendencies are not towards preference for a government-run economy, but rather towards uncertainty and indifference. The 28 percent of uneducated respondents represent more than half (56 percent) of those who say they “don’t know” which economic system they prefer, and 36 percent of those who say the choice of economic model “does not matter to them.”

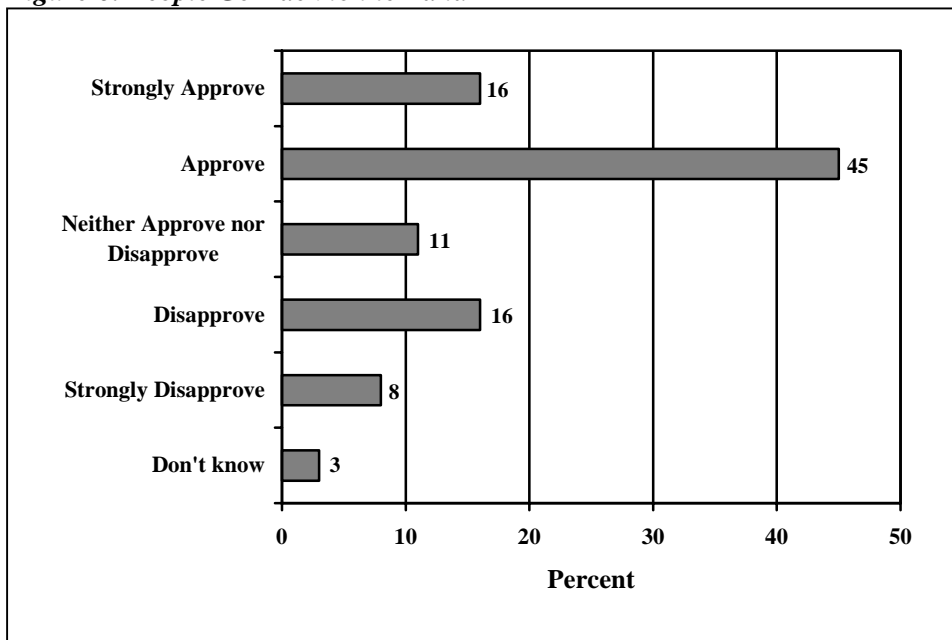
The survey next sought to establish Ghanaians’ views about how particular aspects of the economy should be managed. A series of propositions were put to respondents, reflecting a range of choices as to how market forces should be mediated. The sample group agrees by a margin of almost two to one (64 percent approve and 23 percent disapprove) that individuals should decide what to produce buy and sell. This finding appears to validate the expressed preference for a market economy.

However, when asked whether they approve of the suggestion that the government should plan the production and distribution of all goods and services, almost half (49 percent) of all respondents say they do, while a minority of just over one-third (37 percent) do not. Considering that the survey presupposed an understanding of a market economy as the antithesis of a “government-run” economy, these results, while statistically valid, are evidently anomalous, since they reveal a significant overlap between supporters of mutually exclusive models. It could be assumed that this contradiction reflects at least partially the Ghanaian population’s lack of information and poor understanding of policy issues documented elsewhere in this report. It appears that a majority of Ghanaians, albeit a narrow one, approve of a “market economy” mainly as the most frequently heard label for their economic aspirations. Despite this, judging by their answers to subsequent related questions, Ghanaians oppose, by consistently large majorities, many of the fundamental precepts of free market economics.

For example, respondents were asked whether they think it is better for agricultural produce marketing to be handled by private traders or by the government. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) prefer state control of this area of the economy, while barely one-quarter (28 percent) is in favour of private produce marketing. This finding is unsurprising given many Ghanaians' experience of private marketing of agricultural produce. The majority of Ghanaians live in rural areas and earn the greatest share of their livelihoods from small-scale farming. The internal marketing of most food and cash crops, with the notable exception of cocoa (Ghana's main export cash crop), is run largely by private traders. This private trade is not well regulated, and in some areas the traders are also the sole source of credit to small-scale tenant farmers. These factors give traders significant leverage in the determination of produce prices, and the freedom to exploit their market advantage over poorly organized farmers. This unhappy experience may have fostered a tendency for a significant constituency of Ghanaians to be wary of privately owned, or otherwise purely profit-motivated markets. This is further borne out by the relatively low trust ratings respondents in this survey gave market traders (38 percent) and small businessmen (35 percent). One clear implication of the above finding is that while rural farmers may have fared poorly under the state produce marketing boards of the pre-liberalization period,<sup>10</sup> the private licensed buying agencies that have replaced them under structural adjustment are not doing any better. This calls for a review of the current internal marketing of agricultural commodities.

Respondents were next asked if they think people should "go back to the land and provide mainly for the needs of their own communities" along the lines of a collectivized agrarian model (Figure 6). This idea is supported by nearly two-thirds (61 percent) and disapproved of by just one-quarter (24 percent) of all interviewees. This finding confirms the persistence of a traditional regard for farming as an honourable occupation.

**Figure 6: People Go Back to the Land**



<sup>10</sup> Problems associated with – and the ruinous impact of – state marketing of cocoa in Ghana are discussed in Robert Bates, Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Bjorn Beckman, Organizing the Cocoa Farmers: Cocoa Politics and National Development (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1976); and T. E. Anin, Essays on the Political Economy of Ghana (London: Selwyn Publishers, 1987).

Respondents were also asked whether they think wealthy Ghanaians should provide for the needs of their communities. Again, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of all respondents approve of this idea, including one-quarter (25 percent) who approve strongly. The willingness to burden the wealthy with responsibility for the welfare of the community is partly ironic, considering the sample group’s expressed unwillingness to delegate political power to wealthy people. However, this finding is less likely to indicate a yearning for a formal system of patronage than solid support for the traditional value of fairness in the distribution of wealth. There is, however, evidence in the survey of some erosion of this ethic. For example, the sample group is surprisingly divided in its opinion of whether great disparities of personal wealth are justifiable as an incentive to individual industry and achievement. While a plurality (50 percent) of respondents say that large gaps of wealth between rich and poor must be avoided because they created jealousy and conflict, this familiar cultural tendency is closely paralleled by the emergence of a very large minority (43 percent) who feel that large disparities of wealth are an acceptable price to be paid by society in exchange for hard work being recognized and rewarded.

On a related note, 62 percent of Ghanaians believe that each person should put the well-being of the community *before* their own interests, as opposed to 34 percent who feel that individuals should be free to pursue their desires without regard for the interests of the community (Table 2). This finding confirms and encapsulates another core value of Ghanaian culture: community solidarity.

**Table 2**

| <b>A: Put Community Well-Being First vs. B: Pursue Individual Interests</b> | <b>percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Agree very strongly with A  | 31             |
| Agree with A  | 31             |
| Agree with neither  | 3              |
| Agree with B  | 22             |
| Agree very strongly with B  | 12             |
| Don't know  | 2              |
| Total   | 100            |

Finally, in this section of the survey interviewees were asked whether they approve of the suggestion that the most important economic decisions should be left to “economic experts.” Almost half (46 percent) of the sample group are receptive to this idea, versus one-third (32 percent) which does not support it. This reveals a willingness among Ghanaians to delegate to the government key economic decision-making powers. This finding testifies to Ghanaians’ awareness of the shallowness of their understanding of economic matters, and to their trust of leaders, both of which are documented elsewhere in this survey.

Clearly, while a small majority of Ghanaians say they support market economics, the preference, in practice, of a considerably larger majority is for a system that does not fit the definition of a free market economy.

This fundamental contradiction can be explained partly by reference to the political and historical context within which it arises. The principles of market economics, or at least the neo-liberal economic policies dictated by the primacy of the market, were adopted officially by the Ghanaian government during the early- to mid-1980s, shortly after the seizure of power by the quasi-military regime that lasted from 1982 to 1993. The market reforms were continued when this regime transformed itself into a constitutional administration, under the same leader, for a further eight years. Popular consent was neither required nor sought for the introduction of the sweeping policy changes that occurred at that time. Decision-making power during the first 10 years of reform was vested theoretically in the self-appointed Provisional National Defence Council, but in effect was exercised exclusively by its Chairman, whose edicts were not

subject to public debate or institutional review. There were protests against the introduction of the market-centred policies, but popular dissent was either muted or crushed. Indeed, arguments over the direction of policy raged most fiercely *within* the PNDC, but ended with a purge of its membership after about a year, when the leading dissenters from the free market tendency were branded dissidents and exiled, imprisoned or executed. Thus, having voted into office, just a few years previously and by a handsome majority, a left-leaning civilian leadership, in what is still acknowledged universally to have been the most open and honest election in the country's history, Ghanaians went along involuntarily with this most radical reversal of ideological orientation.<sup>11</sup> Attempts were made by the PNDC to persuade the people of the wisdom and necessity of the market reforms, but ultimately decisions of the Council were simply imposed on the nation by the issuance of decrees. A generation later, it appears that Ghanaians remain acquiescent but far from convinced.

### **Attitudes To Economic Reform**

Since market reforms have been pursued continuously in Ghana for the past two decades, Ghanaians are possibly more familiar than the citizens of any other country in Africa with the policies of market reform and, more especially, with their effects. The survey included questions to determine the attitudes of Ghanaians to economic reform policies, both separately and as a package.

The central pillars of the standard market reform programme, in Ghana as elsewhere, have been internal price deregulation (and in particular the abandonment of the fixed currency exchange rate regime), trade liberalization, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. The Afrobarometer analyzed the responses to questions about attitudes to elements of the *decomposed* market reform programme.

Two-thirds (65 percent) of all respondents agree with the suggestion that tariffs should be imposed on imported goods in order to make them more expensive than locally-produced alternatives. Only one-quarter (26 percent) supports allowing in cheap imports regardless of whether it costs some Ghanaians their jobs. Apparently, therefore, Ghanaians do not support an open-door trade policy, in spite of the ostensible cost-of-living benefit to themselves of the liberalization of imports. This finding is more remarkable when considered against the background of the wealth of anecdotal evidence of a strong cultural preference among Ghanaians for foreign-made goods, which are assumed to be of superior quality to home-made substitutes. Perhaps the possibility that cheap imports would reduce the local availability of jobs is enough to induce Ghanaians to prefer import controls.

Survey participants were asked how satisfied they are with the reduction of the government's role in the economy. More than half (54 percent) of all participants indicate their satisfaction, while one-third (33 percent) express dissatisfaction. This suggests some support for the privatization of public assets. However, this conclusion has to be weighed against an interpretation of respondents' answers to related questions in a different section of the survey. First, when asked whether they think of government more like a parent or like an employee, the by now familiar proportion of nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of respondents say they think of government more as a parent to the people, including nearly one-third (29

---

<sup>11</sup> For accounts of the context of political repression within which the quasi-military Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC) government introduced and sustained the implementation of the harsh neo-liberal structural adjustment and economic reform program see E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Politics and Economic Recovery in the PNDC's Ghana" *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. XXVIII (1990) pp. 328-343; "The Search for Development and Democracy in Ghana: From Limann to Rawlings" and "The PNDC and Organized Labor: The Anatomy of Political Control" (with A. Essuman Johnson) in E. Gyimah-Boadi, ed., *Ghana Under PNDC Rule* (CODESRIA, 1993) pp. 1-12 and pp. 196-212, respectively. See also Eboe Hutchful, *Ghana's Adjustment Experience*, *op. cit.*; Jeffrey Herbst, *The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1981-1991* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and E. Gyimah-Boadi and Richard Jeffries, "The Politics of Reform," in Ernest Aryeetey, et al., eds., *Economic Reforms in Ghana* *op. cit.*



percent) of the total who feel this very strongly. Fewer than one-third (29 percent) of respondents see the people as bosses of the government. On a related question, when respondents were asked whom they think is primarily responsible for the well-being of the people, the public is evenly divided in attributing this responsibility to “the government” and “the people themselves” (47 percent as against 46 percent).

A second indicator is that a very large majority (86 percent) of Ghanaians express confidence in the government’s ability to solve some or all of the country’s problems. Only one person in ten (10 percent) considers government irrelevant to the solution of problems. Thus Ghanaians clearly do not believe that exclusive reliance on the private sector is the panacea to the nation’s problems. Third, it has been reported already in this survey that Ghanaians favour active state intervention in vast areas of the economy such as agricultural marketing and employment generation.

A secondary imperative of market reform has been the imposition of stricter controls on government spending, which has meant, in practice, the substantial retrenchment of labour from the public workforce. The Afrobarometer survey tested popular attitudes to this aspect of market reform. A large majority (78 percent) of respondents say that the size of the public workforce should not be reduced further, even if the wage bill is high.

Indeed, one of the clearest points of convergence of public opinion in the entire 2002 Afrobarometer survey concerns the attitude of Ghanaians to employment. An overwhelming majority of Ghanaians consider full employment a cardinal economic objective. Nearly nine of every ten respondents (88 percent) agree that it is better for everyone to have a job, even if this means a lower average wage – and three out of five (62 percent) respondents agree strongly with this proposition – while a mere 8 percent prefer higher wages even if that means some of their compatriots will go without a job.

These results, and the weight of opinion indicated by the size of the majority in each case, would seem to offset the small majorities that favour a market economy and approve of the government’s reduced economic role. On balance, the sample group’s expressed preference for a market economy is inconsistent with its rejection of many of the underlying market principles and reforms. Also, the approval expressed for the government’s reduced role appears perverse in the context of the repeated expressions of strong enthusiasm for an activist, interventionist state.

These attitudes may arise from Ghanaians’ experiences of the effects of market reforms. When asked whether the economic reforms have helped or hurt most Ghanaians, well over half (59 percent) of all respondents in the survey agree that the policies have hurt most people and benefited only a few. Clearly, therefore, the majority of Ghanaians do not yet perceive the tangible benefits of market reform.

As market reforms are acknowledged broadly not to have benefited the majority of the people, the sample group were asked how much tolerance they have left for a continuation of these policies. The response to this question is quite surprising. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of all interviewees are of the opinion that in order for the economy to improve, it is necessary for Ghanaians to continue to accept some hardships now. Only one out of every six respondents (16 percent) feels that the social costs of reform have been so high as to warrant the abandonment of the reform programme. If one accepts the market-centric assumption that rational individuals will usually make choices that maximize their self-interest, then this discovery is indeed counter-intuitive. It would appear at face value to demonstrate that Ghanaians have made a principled and irrevocable commitment to the neo-liberal market reforms, which they are determined to honour *in spite of the severe pain that the reform process is causing them*. However, it has been established already in this report that the majority of Ghanaians have not been converted to the gospel of the market in much more than name.

So, it would appear Ghanaians are overwhelmingly in favour of sticking with a reform programme that has not made their lives appreciably better after nearly two decades of consistent application, and the core elements of which they do not support in principle. This observation would appear to defy logic. However, there is a possible rational explanation.

Market reforms have been a non-negotiable condition of financial support from Ghana's principal foreign bilateral and multilateral creditors. The magnitude and gravity of Ghana's chronic economic malaise have meant that the pursuit of an endogenous, non-market-centred adjustment process, without substantial external assistance, would have exacted a higher political cost than most seekers of elected office are willing to contemplate. Not surprisingly, the major contenders in the elections of 1992, 1996 and 2000 have all pledged to adhere strictly to the market reform conditionalities: deregulation (and by implication open-ended devaluation of the *cedi*), trade liberalization, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. Since the last interruption of constitutional rule at the start of the 1980s, Ghanaians have not been offered a credible alternative economic programme. Therefore, these contradictory findings – solid support for a continuation of the market reform programme and equally emphatic repudiation of its contents- may simply reflect the pragmatic assessment, across the spectrum of Ghana's political establishment, that there is no workable alternative to market-centred economic reform.

The most plausible interpretation of the 2002 Afrobarometer findings on attitudes to economic reform is that Ghanaians accept the principle of reform, and are willing to endure the necessary sacrifices to achieve reform. However, the majority of Ghanaians doubt whether *market* reforms are the solution to their particular problems.

## **PART TWO: POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS**

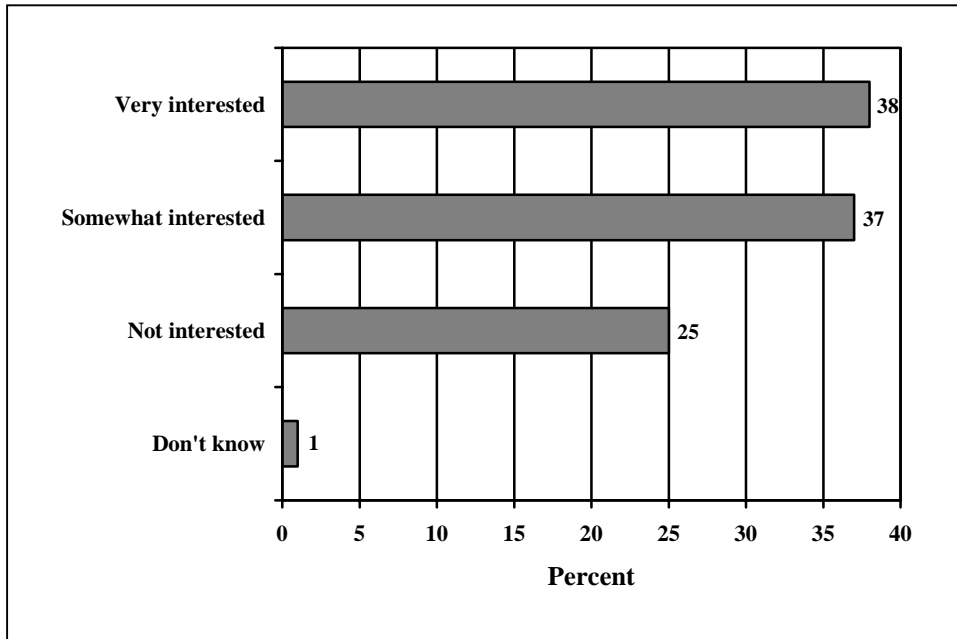
### **Orientation To Politics**

In keeping with convention, the survey sought first to gauge the general level of interest of Ghanaians in politics. The methodology used is the same as in other surveys of this kind. In addition to being asked directly how interested they are in public affairs, respondents were asked how often they discuss politics and how likely they are to participate in various forms of civic action or political advocacy.

Three-quarters of the sample (74 percent) profess at least some interest in public affairs (Figure 7). This is a slight increase from the level of interest reported in the 1999 Afrobarometer survey (72 percent). A significantly higher proportion in this survey (38 percent) claimed a *strong* interest in public affairs than did in the 1999 survey (25 percent).

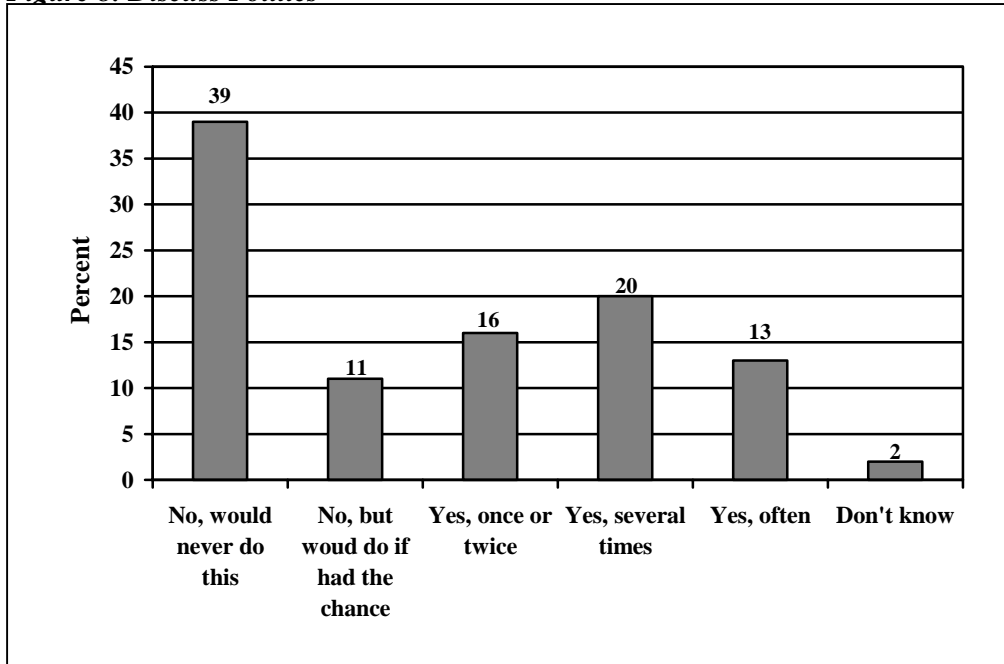
Superficially therefore, it would appear that on the whole Ghanaians are very interested in public affairs. However, it emerges that this apparently widespread interest in politics is not always translated into anything more active.

**Figure 7: Interest in Public Affairs**



Whereas it would be reasonable to expect people to discuss frequently a subject of such keen interest to so many of them, Ghanaians, surprisingly, are split almost evenly when asked whether they are in the habit of discussing political issues. A cumulative total of 49 percent of respondents say they discuss politics at least occasionally, but only one person in eight (13 percent) admit to doing so often. Fully half of all respondents (50 percent) say either that they would never discuss politics (39 percent), or that they do not, although they would do if they had the chance (11 percent).

**Figure 8: Discuss Politics**



## Political Participation

A general impression of weak political participation (outside of voting in elections) emerges from the sample group's responses to questions about direct participation in non-faith-based community action. A majority (56 percent) of Ghanaians say they attend community meetings at least occasionally, and another 20 percent say they would do so if they had the chance (Table 3). However, one-fifth of all respondents (22 percent) say they would never attend a community meeting.

**Table 3**

| <b>Attend a community meeting</b>  | <b>Percent</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| No, would never do this            | 22             |
| No, but would do if had the chance | 20             |
| Yes, once or twice                 | 16             |
| Yes, several times                 | 27             |
| Yes, often                         | 13             |
| Don't know                         | 1              |

More than one-third (37 percent) say they would never get together with others to raise an issue of public concern, as against only one-quarter (26 percent) who claim to have participated in such collective action more than just once or twice. More than four-fifths (92 percent) say they would never attend a demonstration or take part in a protest march. Very few Ghanaians (6 percent) say they feel strongly enough about politics to consider resorting to violence in pursuit of a political cause (Table 4). Survey findings therefore confirm that Ghanaians are for the most part peaceful participants in the political process.

**Table 4**

| <b>Used force or violence for political cause</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| No, would never do this                           | 92             |
| No, but would do if had the chance                | 3              |
| Yes, once or twice                                | 2              |
| Yes, several times                                | 1              |
| Yes, often  | 1              |
| Don't know  | 2              |

A similar measure of reticence among Ghanaians about active participation in politics was observed in the 1999 survey. It was conjectured then that this might be a residual effect of the "culture of silence" that characterized the 11-year period of unconstitutional government preceding the restoration of constitutional rule in 1992. However, the context of the 2002 survey was a constitutional system that had lasted about as long as the regime that it replaced, leaving open the possibility that political apathy is far more entrenched in Ghana than was earlier assumed.

The official voter turnout during the December 2000 presidential and parliamentary election was 62 percent. However, taking into account the best estimate of the extent of known inaccuracies in the voters' register, the actual turnout was more likely between 76 and 81 percent, which is significantly higher than many established democracies.

The survey sought to measure the extent of popular participation in politics during periods between elections. Respondents were asked how often they had communicated their views to, or sought assistances from, various political figures. Very large majorities, averaging 86 percent, report no *contact at all* during the previous 12 months with their Assemblyman or MP, or with officials of a government ministry or a

political party. Ghanaians are far more likely to have consulted a religious leader (41 percent), a traditional authority (28 percent) or some other influential person (24 percent). Ghanaians could therefore be said to be keen participants in the electoral process, but to be significantly less active in the wider political process.

### Political Affiliation

Active involvement in the organization of political parties is one of the most direct forms of participation in the political process. In the Afrobarometer survey, respondents were invited to say if they are members or supporters of an existing political party. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of all respondents admit to a party affiliation. Allegiance to political parties appears to be strong, with half (52 percent) of the sample professing more than a casual commitment to the party of their choice. Almost one-third (33 percent) of the sample group, though, claim not to feel close to any political party. Although this is not an unusually high proportion of floating voters, answers to the subsequent question provide good cause to doubt this figure.

**Table 5**

| <b>Close to political party</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| No, not close to any party      | 33             |
| NPP                             | 44             |
| NDC                             | 15             |
| CPP                             | 1              |
| GCPP                            | 0              |
| UGM                             | 0              |
| PNC                             | 2              |
| NRP                             | 0              |
| Other                           | 0              |
| Refused to answer               | 4              |
| Don't know                      | 1              |

The 62 percent of the sample who say they *do* feel close to a recognized political party and are willing to reveal their party sympathies (4 percent of all respondents refused to answer this question), identify with the parties that contested the December 2000 election in the same order and, with one notable exception, in roughly the same proportions as they did in the election: NPP (44 percent), NDC (15 percent), People's National Convention (2 percent), Convention People's Party (1 percent), National Reform Party (0.2 percent), Great Consolidated People's Party (0.2 percent), and United Ghana Movement (0.1 percent). The notable exception is in the case of the NDC, which, while preferred (in exact correspondence with the election results) by the second highest number of respondents, is chosen by only 15 percent of the sample compared to its 43 percent share of the actual vote in December 2000. Taking into account the perception by more than half (57 percent) of all respondents that the survey is being carried out for "the government,"<sup>12</sup> it could be inferred that a majority of those survey respondents who voted for the NDC in December 2000 are reluctant to confess that fact to the interviewer. This renders unsafe the finding that as many as one-third of the electorate are politically uncommitted. It could be deduced further that Ghanaians still lack complete confidence in their freedom to hold views contrary to those of people in power.

There is a strong correlation between respondents' party affiliation and their region of origin. The reservoir of support for the NPP is deepest in the Ashanti and Eastern Regions: 57 percent of respondents

<sup>12</sup> The last question asked of respondents is "Who do you think sent us to do this interview?"

in each region say they feel closest to the governing party. These measures of the solid support for the NPP in the strongholds of its so-called Danquah-Busia<sup>13</sup> political tradition are followed closely by the corresponding figure of 55 percent from the Brong-Ahafo Region. Support for the largest minority party, the NDC, is broader, but reached its peak in the Volta and Upper East Regions, at 39 percent and 34 percent respectively. Predictably, it is in these two regions that the NPP is *least* popular, attracting the affinity of just 11 percent and 27 percent of respondents, respectively.

Despite the fact that the outcome of the December 2000 election owed much to a swing in the NPP's favour of the Greater Accra vote, in this survey just 28 percent of respondents in the ethnically heterogeneous capital region profess support for the NPP. This is the third lowest regional measure of support for the governing party. In fact, the tendency to identify with "*no particular party*" is most prevalent in the capital, with 47 percent of respondents in the Greater Accra Region claiming to be uncommitted to any of the political parties. It is conceivable that in the intensely competitive political climate and densely populated urban setting of the capital city, NDC supporters feel particularly inhibited about confiding their political leanings to a stranger. However, the data do not bear out this theory, as 51 percent of interviews in the Greater Accra Region were conducted with no third party present.

The proportions of uncommitted voters in Greater Accra and other regions have potential significance for the next general election due at the end of 2004, considering especially the earlier observation that respondents in this round of the Afrobarometer survey almost certainly understate the level of their support for the NDC. This understatement is most evident in the figures for the Upper West Region, where NDC candidates won 7 out of the 8 parliamentary seats in December 2000, and yet in September 2002 a mere 10 percent of Afrobarometer respondents in this region express support for the NDC. Also at play is the Volta Region, where 41 percent of respondents say they are unattached. It is unlikely that the same social factors affecting Accra would have influenced respondents in Volta to an equal degree. However, Afrobarometer interviewers reported that the highest incidence of interviewees checking their answers with other people (22 percent), and the second highest incidence of interviewees' answers being influenced by other people (also 22 percent), occurred in the Volta Region. Whatever the cause, there remains a significant unexplained discrepancy between the relative strength of support for the NDC as measured by the results of the last election and as reflected in Afrobarometer survey results.

Aside from the allegiance to the PNC registered by 21 percent and 16 percent of respondents in the Upper West and Upper East Regions,<sup>14</sup> none of the other minority parties drew the support of more than 3 percent of any regional constituency. This corroborates the evidence of the last general election, which appeared to show that Ghana's 4<sup>th</sup> Republic had evolved already into a settled two-party system, allowing little room for the emergence of other truly national political parties.

---

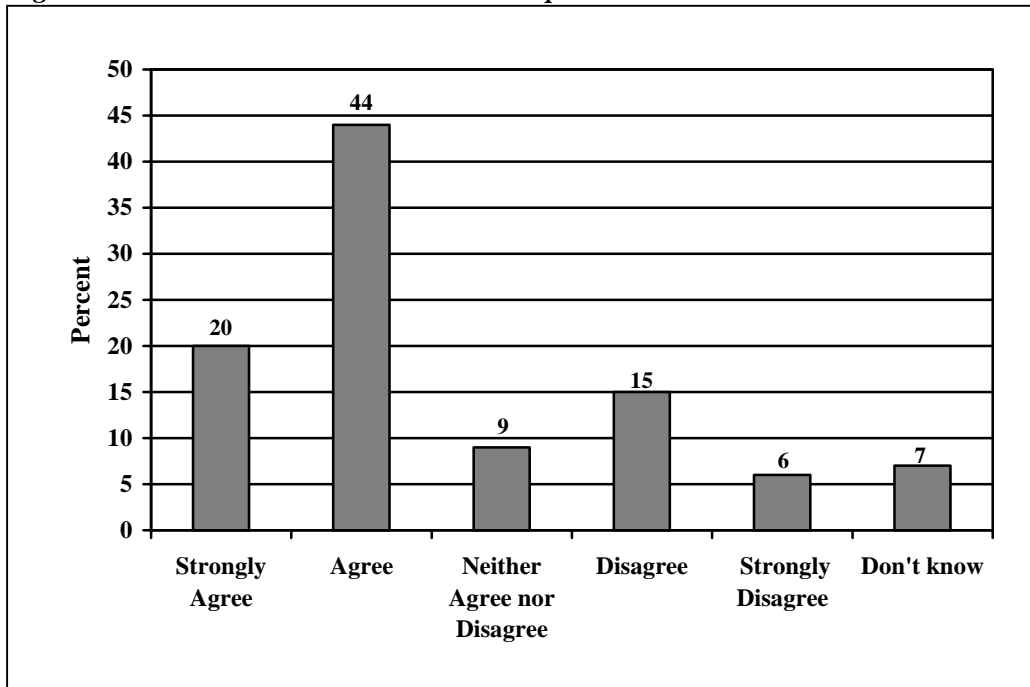
<sup>13</sup> Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah was one of the founders of the liberal United Gold Coast Convention, of which the NPP is the latest reincarnation. Dr. Kofi Busia was the first leader of that political tradition to serve as Prime Minister of Ghana (1969-1972). Danquah was a native of Kyebi in the Eastern Region. Busia was born in Wenchi, which is now in the Brong-Ahafo Region, but was part of Ashanti until 1959.

<sup>14</sup> The leader of the People's National Convention, Dr. Edward Mahama, is a native of the Upper West Region. For a discussion of the ethnic pattern of voting in the December 2000 elections, see Paul Nugent, "Winners, losers, and also rans: money, moral authority and voting patterns in the Ghana 2000 elections" *African Affairs*, vol. 100, 400 (2001) pp. 405-28; E. Gyimah-Boadi "A peaceful turnover in Ghana" *op. cit.*; Joseph R. A. Ayee, ed. *Deepening Democracy in Ghana: Politics of the 2000 elections, volumes 1&2* (Accra: Freedom Publications, 2001).

## Political Knowledge

In order to make a meaningful contribution to democracy, citizens must be well informed about the political system of which they are a part. Disappointingly, a near two-thirds majority (64 percent) of respondents in the survey say they find matters of politics and government too complicated to understand (Figure 9). Only one person in five (21 percent) claims to understand political issues, compared with one in three (37 percent) in 1999. This finding in Afrobarometer Round 2 indicates a civic education – and possibly a civic competence – deficit in Ghana that poses a problem for Ghanaian democratic development.<sup>15</sup> This deficit affects women disproportionately: barely one-third (36 percent) of those respondents who say they have no difficulty understanding politics are women.

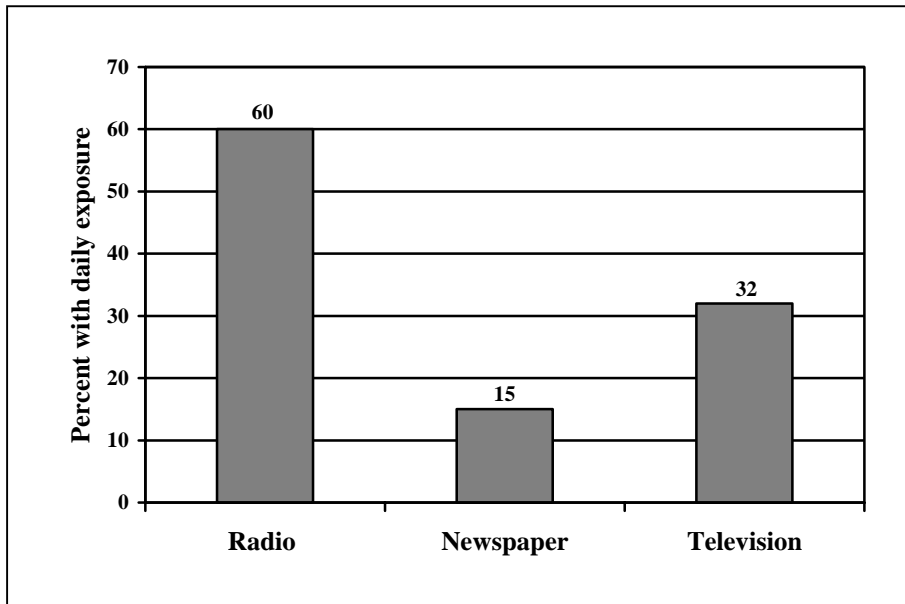
**Figure 9: Politics and Government Too Complicated**



The findings also indicate that regardless of what official statistics would have us believe about the rate of literacy, Ghanaian society remains basically illiterate in the sense that Ghanaians resort instinctively to aural and visual, rather than written, methods of acquiring and disseminating information generally, and news about politics especially (Figure 10). This is borne out strongly by responses to questions about the consumption of the output of news media.

<sup>15</sup> See Robert Dahl, "The Problem of Civic Competence," *Journal of Democracy* vol.3, no. 4 (October 1992) pp. 45-59.

**Figure 10: Source of Daily News**



Asked about the sources of their daily news, three-fifths (60 percent) of respondents say they listen to the radio news every day. The corresponding figure in 1999 was 41 percent. Less than one-third (32 percent) watch television news, and less than one-sixth (15 percent) obtain their news from the newspapers, with the same regularity. The preference of respondents for audio-visual media over printed matter is highlighted even more clearly by the fact that three-fifths (60 percent) of respondents say they *never* get their news from a newspaper, versus fewer than half (44 percent) who say they *never* rely on television for their news, and only about one-sixth (14 percent) who *never* obtain news from the radio. This is true despite the fact that the widest-circulation national daily newspaper, the Daily Graphic, reaches at least as large a share of the population as the most extensive electronic media network, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation’s national television and radio service. Radio appears to be even more dominant as a medium for the dissemination and acquisition of political information than was revealed in the 1999 survey. But there is also a disconnected core of 19 percent of respondents who only get news from television or the radio no more than a few times a month, if at all.

Once again a gender disparity is apparent. The degree of disconnection of Ghanaian women from sources of political information can be gauged from the fact that women account for 66 percent of those respondents who obtain news from the radio (and 53 percent of those who watch the news on television) once a month or less. Women are half as likely as men to rely on daily newspapers for their information. Just 10 percent of women read the dailies regularly, versus 20 percent of men. While more than half (52 percent) of all men admit *never* reading newspapers on a daily basis, the corresponding proportion of women is more than two-thirds (68 percent).

Not surprisingly, the least well educated Ghanaians are also the least likely to get their news from the newspapers. Of those respondents who say they seldom get their news this way (a few times a month or less), 97 percent had not continued their education beyond secondary school.

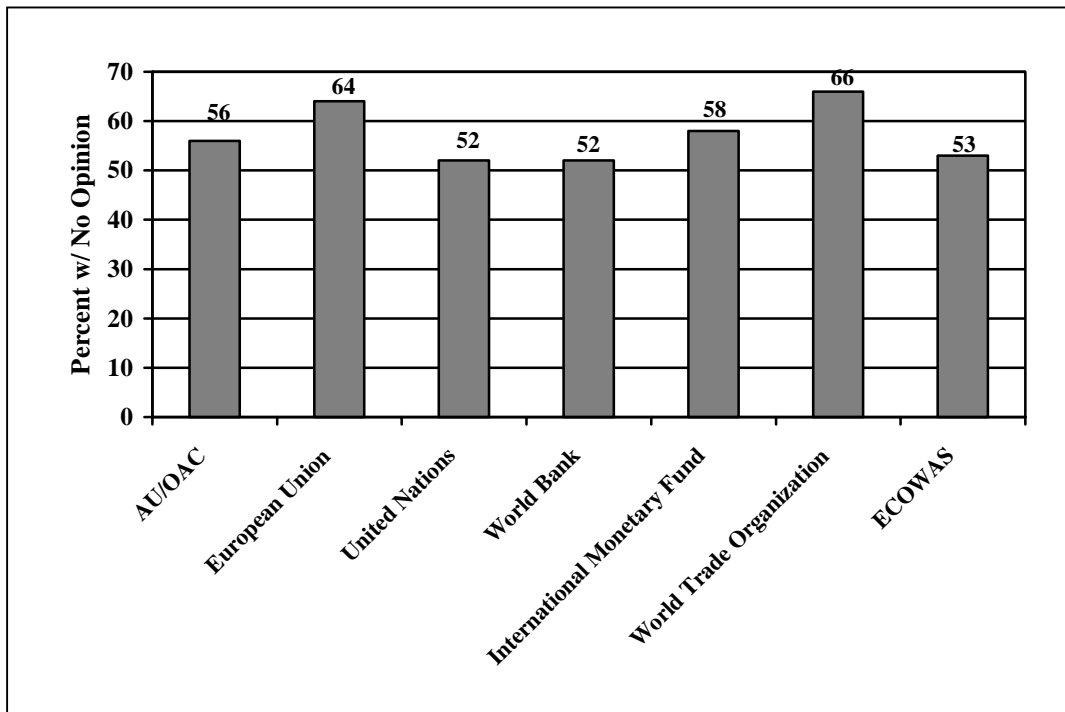
The proportion of the sample group who say they *never* get their news from the newspapers is slightly higher than it was in 1999 (58 percent), even though the number and the aggregate frequency of newspaper publications (in titles per day) have both increased in the intervening years. This may be due in part to the fact that the opening up of the electronic media to non-state participants that began in 1996



has dramatically expanded the range of radio-listening choices open to Ghanaians, especially those living in the major urban areas. Whereas at the beginning of the 1990s, there was just one state-owned broadcasting company (GBC) serving the entire country, a decade later there are 21 broadcast frequencies allocated for the Accra metropolitan area alone, of which 18 were in use at the time of the survey. Additionally, some broadcasts of foreign origin are re-broadcast locally. Ghanaians are therefore receiving their political knowledge and opinions from a wider variety of sources than ever before. It could therefore be argued that Ghanaians are following the lead of other countries where citizens chose the news sources that reflect (and possibly reinforce) their regional, ethnic or linguistic affiliations, and/or their existing political biases. However, it is clear that all the efforts being made by official and unofficial agencies to raise the level of public awareness and understanding of political issues have been hugely unsuccessful. An enormous job of civic education remains to be done, without which democracy in Ghana will continue to rest on weak foundations.

The Ghanaian population is also overwhelmingly ignorant of the existence and functions of a range of international organizations (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Lack of Knowledge of International Organizations**



When asked about the effectiveness of the African Union (Organization of African Unity), 56 percent declare that they do not know enough about it to make a judgement, while 64 percent are unfamiliar with the European Union. In the same manner, 66 percent of respondents cannot offer an opinion on the World Trade Organisation, 52 percent plead ignorance when invited to judge the effectiveness of the UN, 52 percent do the same when asked about the World Bank, and 58 percent demur when asked about the effectiveness of the IMF. Even with regard to ECOWAS, the leading regional organization, just over half of all respondents do not know enough to judge the organization's effectiveness.

The general lack of awareness of these key international organizations indicates that the population are, by extension, not fully aware of the dynamics of external forces that impact government policy. This is a worrying prospect because it indicates that Ghanaians are not likely to fully appreciate the constraints on

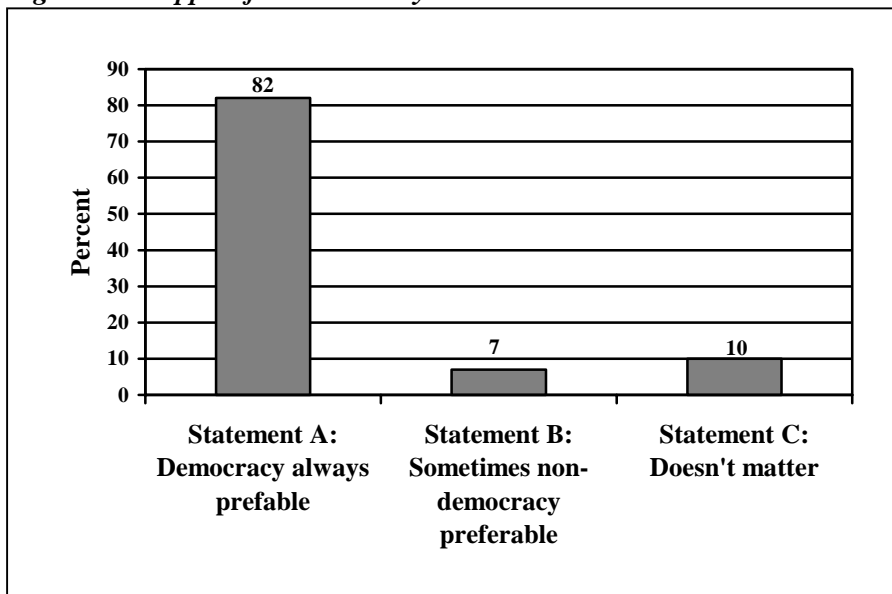
the government’s response to economic crises that are exerted by the international environment. This general ignorance necessitates an educational campaign to sensitize the population to the impact these organisations have on Ghana.

### Support For Democratic Institutions and Processes

In order to measure the strength of support for democracy, democratic institutions and processes in Ghana, one of the fundamental questions of the Afrobarometer survey asks respondents to choose between three propositions: that democracy is always preferable to any other system of government; that a non-democratic government might be preferable in some circumstances; or that the system of government does not matter.

Findings from the Ghana Round 2 study indicate strong support for democracy among Ghanaians (Figure 12). An overwhelming number of respondents (82 percent) agree that democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government. Only 7 percent say they think that an undemocratic alternative might be preferable in certain circumstances, and another 10 percent take the view that it does not matter one way or the other. This may suggest an increase in support for democracy among Ghanaians, as 70 percent expressed a preference for democracy in 1999. However, differences in question wording between Round 1 and Round 2 mean that these figures are not precisely comparable.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 12: Support for Democracy**



Responses to questions testing attitudes to key aspects of the democratic process and institutions confirm strong support for democracy among Ghanaians (Table 6). Afrobarometer questions that test respondents’ attitudes toward a selection of alternatives to a civilian-led multiparty electoral system record consistently

<sup>16</sup> In Round 1, “don’t know” was not offered as a response option, so the figures presented here for Round 2 are calculated excluding “don’t know” responses to make them more comparable. However, there was also a key difference in how the question was posed between Round 1 and Round 2. In Round 1, the term “democracy” was translated into its closest approximate indigenous local equivalent, which was a compound phrase that translates back into English roughly as “speak and let me speak.” In Round 2, the word “democracy” was used in English without translation. Lack of familiarity with this term may have led to the very high number of “don’t know” responses recorded (37 percent).

large majorities *against*: military rule (83 percent); autocracy (82 percent); a single-party system (79 percent); and the native system of government by a hereditary succession of chiefs or kings (69 percent). Within this cluster of results, respondents express the least nostalgia for military government, with nearly two-thirds (64 percent) disapproving *very strongly* of a recurrence of the country's experiences during the late 1960s and most of the 1970s and 1980s. This is one of the most categorical findings in the entire 2002 Ghana survey. Among the alternatives rejected, the idea of reverting to the system of chieftaincy (or monarchy) that was practised for centuries, in various forms, in all the original states that merged in 1957 to form Ghana, generates the least resistance. In fact, about one-sixth (17 percent) of the sample group approve of this idea.

**Table 6**

| <b>Rejection of Other Forms of Government</b> | <b>percent disapprove</b> |
|---|---------------------------|
| Military rule                                 | 83                        |
| One-man autocratic rule                       | 82                        |
| One-party rule                                | 79                        |
| Rule by chiefs or elders                      | 69                        |

Given that most of Ghana's problems remain unresolved nearly 10 years after the restoration of multiparty democracy, survey participants were asked how willing they would be to trade in the current constitutional order for a potentially more efficacious alternative *of any description*. However, more than three-quarters (79 percent) of all respondents agree with the suggestion that the current multiparty electoral system should be given more time, versus just one-seventh (15 percent) who are willing to contemplate another round of political reforms.

Support for democracy is also confirmed by the broad-based acceptance among Ghanaians of key democratic institutions. Five examples are presented below.

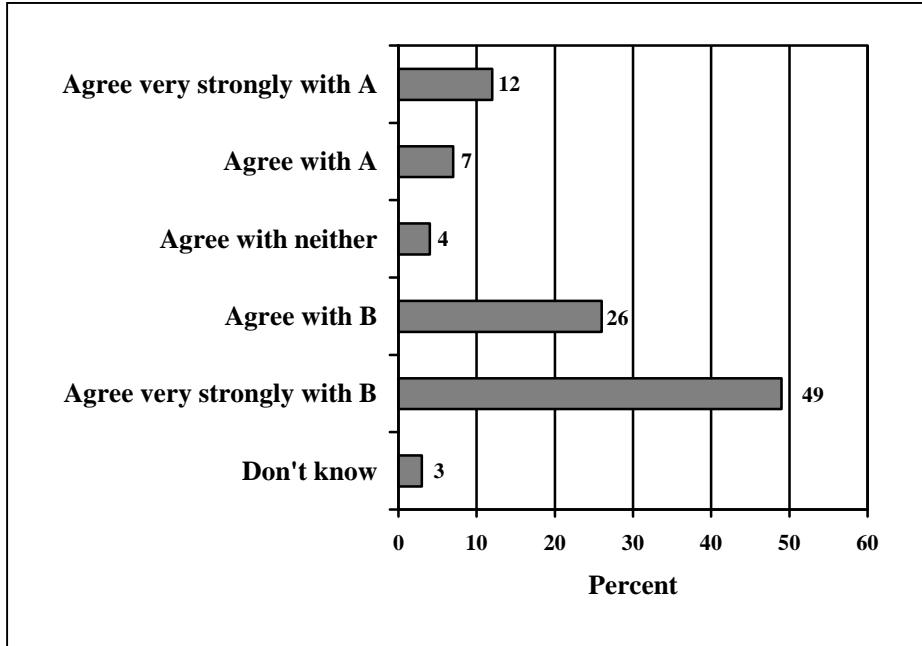
First, an overwhelming majority of Ghanaians believe that the country's leaders should be chosen by means of regular, open and honest elections, *even if these elections may sometimes produce bad results*. Nearly nine-tenths (87 percent) of the sample group agree with this suggestion, including a decisive 61 percent who agree strongly.

Second, presidential term limits are a potentially contentious issue everywhere, and especially in Africa, where the process of political evolution has had to balance objectives that conflict in ways that are almost unique to the continent. On the one hand, there is the need to find a remedy for the phenomenon of leaders becoming fossilized in office, which a number of African countries experienced in the first phase of their post-independence history. On the other hand, it is no less important for African countries to avoid a revolving door system that renders far-sighted development planning practically impossible, and denies leaders the time to complete the inherently generational task of transforming embryonic states into mature nations.

At the time of the 1999 round of the Afrobarometer survey, the issue of term limits was very much at the fore of the Ghanaian public's consciousness, as some supporters of the outgoing President Rawlings had been canvassing the idea that the constitution should be amended to allow him to seek a third consecutive four-year term of office. However, no questions on this issue were asked in Round 1. In the 2002 survey, respondents' attitudes to term limits were explicitly tested. The finding is very clear: three-quarters (75 percent) of the sample group are in favour of the proposition that the President "*must obey the constitution by serving no more than two terms,*" including nearly half (49 percent) who favour this

position very strongly (Figure 13). Only about one-fifth (19 percent) believe that “the President should be able to serve as many terms in office as he wishes.”<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 13: Term Limits**  
(A: No term limits vs. B: Two terms only)



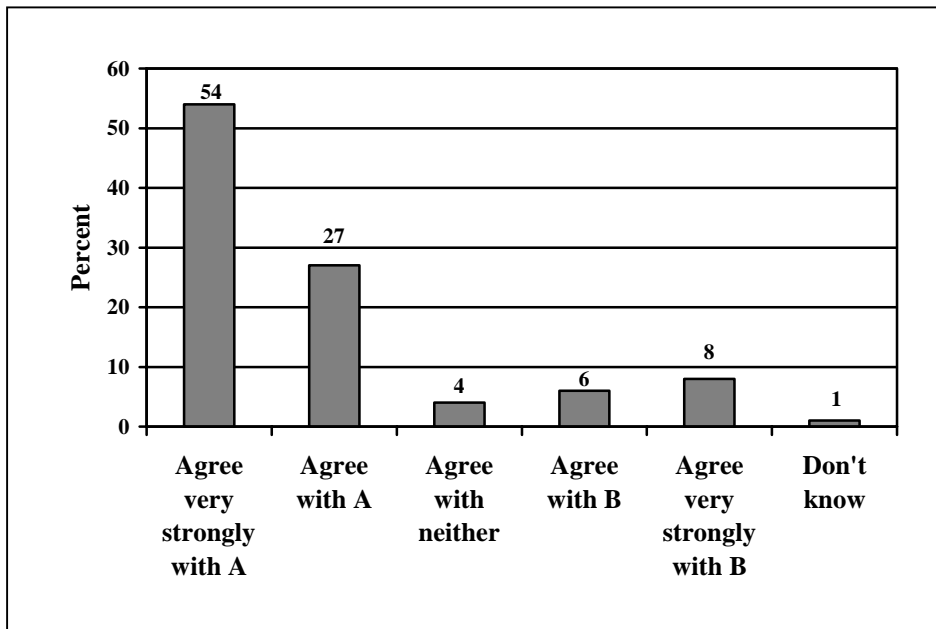
Third, there is a well-established school of thought that the peculiar circumstances of many modern African states, with their multiplicity of original nationalities, make political parties undesirable because they exacerbate innate tendencies towards disunity. This argument is cited to justify the advocacy of a non-partisan electoral model, such as the “Movement system” in operation in Uganda.

The survey reveals that the assumption behind this line of reasoning is shared by a majority of Ghanaians: 54 percent of respondents think that there is a tendency towards conflict between groups in society, and 53 percent feel that competition between political parties is often the source of this conflict. Indeed, behind land and chieftaincy, but ahead of ethnicity, religion, industrial relations and social deprivation, politics is cited by respondents as one of the most frequent causes of *violent* conflict in Ghana. However, when the survey inquired of respondents whether they favour an alternative to the multiparty model, a majority (56 percent) insist that *even if political parties create division and confusion*, they are nonetheless needed for choice, and they are therefore unwilling to give them up. Still, a large minority (38 percent) feel that the absence of political parties would not necessarily deny voters real choice as to who should govern them, or make the calculation that choice is less important than avoiding the confusion caused by parties. The juxtaposition of these results reveals a slightly schizophrenic attitude to political parties. It appears that Ghanaians are ready to acknowledge the serious social divisions created or made worse by rivalry between political parties since the days before the birth of the nation. Yet they seem simultaneously to regard parties as institutions whose value is perhaps as much cultural as political, transcending the role they play within the political system. This allows some Ghanaians to rationalize their attachment to a system that has been at the root of much of the country’s political instability.

<sup>17</sup> The 1992 4<sup>th</sup> Republican Constitution of Ghana stipulates term limits for no public officer except the President.

Fourth, the survey finds that Ghanaians are very strongly committed to the idea that their system of representative democracy should be founded on an unqualified franchise (Figure 14). Four-fifths (81 percent) of respondents think that all citizens, *including those who do not understand fully all the issues at stake in an election*, should enjoy the right to vote. This figure includes 54 percent who feel very strongly about this principle. Only about one respondent in seven (14 percent) holds the view that the right to choose leaders should be reserved for those with sufficient knowledge of the issues.

**Figure 14: Who Votes**  
(A: All vote vs. B: Only educated vote)



When it comes to the question of which social stratum is best suited to wield power, the survey detects much less deference among Ghanaians towards their “social superiors” than is often assumed. Participants in the survey were asked whether they prefer to be led by wealthy people because they can help provide for the needs of the community, or to be led by “ordinary people” because they can better empathize with the needs of the electorate. Two-thirds (66 percent) express a preference for the latter group. This suggests attachment to the principle of equal entitlement to the opportunity for political leadership, an attitude that could equally be interpreted as a rejection of paternalism.

Fifth, participants were asked in which branch of government they think ultimate legislative power should be vested. More than half (59 percent) of all respondents agree with the suggestion that the power to make laws should be entrusted to Members of Parliament. Scarcely one-sixth (17 percent) of the sample group prefer to allow their elected President to exercise this power *without regard to Parliament*. Significantly, nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of the total are unsure, or think that law-making powers should be delegated to neither Parliament nor the President.

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents think the primary purpose of democracy is to give citizens a voice, as opposed to fewer than one-third (29 percent) who think democracy is only worth having if it addresses everyone’s basic economic needs. Thus, Ghanaians attach a largely liberal, as opposed to utilitarian, meaning to democracy.

Similarly, questions on gender expose a generally liberal attitude toward gender issues among Ghanaians. A large majority of respondents (76 percent) feel that women should not be subject to a different set of traditional laws but should instead enjoy equal rights under the law. Respondents are opposed in similar numbers to the idea that a married man has the right to beat his wife, with 78 percent of respondents of the view that men have no right to exercise such violence. However, a significant minority (20 percent) believe that men should be allowed to beat their wives.

On the question of women's representation in politics, Ghanaians are almost evenly split on the question of whether half of all candidates should be women by law (46 percent), or whether political parties should choose their own representatives without such restrictions (48 percent).

The population could scarcely have been more evenly divided on the question of whether the process of making community decisions should require the achievement of a consensus, or whether differences of opinion should be accepted as inevitable. Forty-eight percent agree with the proposition that it is necessary for members of the community to negotiate until consensus is reached, while 48 percent are of the view that universal agreement can never be reached on all issues and presumably therefore that the will of the majority should prevail. Support for democratic consensus building is just as strong as that for majoritarianism.

### **Extent of and Satisfaction with Democracy**

Having determined how Ghanaians think democratic principles ought ideally to be expressed, the Afrobarometer then sought to find out how closely respondents believe their current political system resembles that ideal in practice.

First, the Round 2 survey sought to gauge the extent of democracy in Ghana today (Figure 15). A clear majority of Ghanaians (76 percent) perceive of Ghana's political system as a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems. Only an almost negligible 3 percent are of the definite opinion that Ghana is *not* a democracy, but nearly one in four (21 percent) feel that Ghana's democracy faces major problems. In 1999, 70 percent of respondents rated the country's political system as largely or completely democratic. Again, a comparison between the findings of Rounds 1 and 2 indicates an increase in popular perceptions of the Ghanaian political system as a democracy.<sup>18</sup>

There are, however, significant regional differences in the popular perception of the extent of democracy in Ghana. The Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions are the only two of Ghana's ten administrative regions in which the majority of respondents - 55 percent and 52 percent respectively - think that Ghana's political system is fully democratic. The corresponding figure in the Volta Region is 7 percent. In fact, 51 percent of all respondents who are completely convinced of the authenticity of Ghana's democracy are found in these two regions alone. This contrasts sharply with the Greater Accra Region, where 85 percent of respondents feel that Ghana's democracy is defective in some way, including 31 percent who think that the defects are serious.

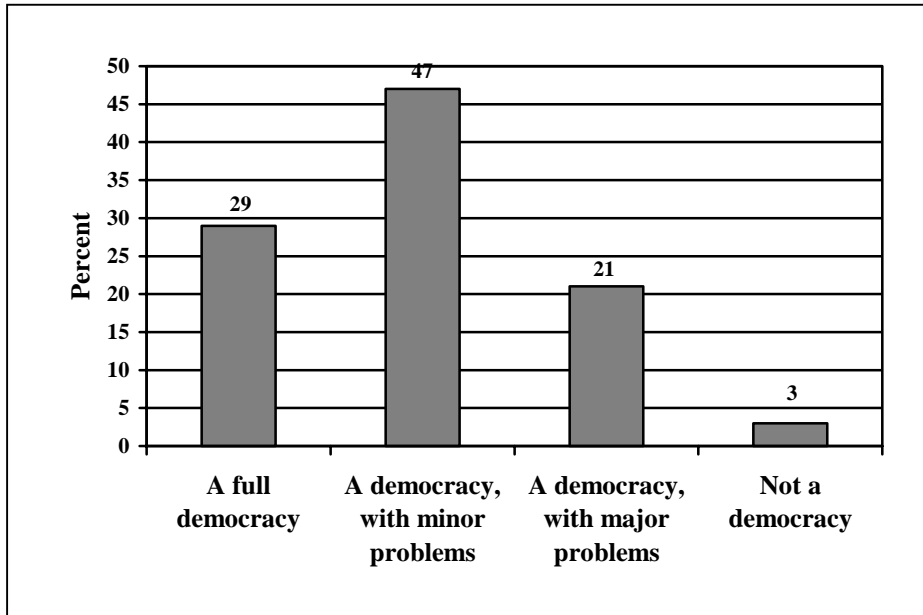
Party loyalty also appears to be a factor that helps determine respondents' views of how democratic Ghana is. Fifty-five percent of all respondents who think that Ghana is fully democratic also belong to the constituency of supporters of the governing NPP (who make up 44 percent of the sample). The inverse,

---

<sup>18</sup> Note that the caveats regarding exclusion of "don't know" responses and question wording and translation discussed in footnote 16 apply to all results reported with respect to the extent of democracy as well, including comparisons between Round 1 and Round 2. The proportion of excluded don't know responses on this question was 40 percent.

however, is not borne out by the survey data. Surprisingly, a proportionate share (42 percent) of the small minority of respondents who think that Ghana is “not a democracy” also profess sympathy with the NPP.

**Figure 15: How Democratic**



The Afrobarometer also posed a series of questions to judge whether respondents are satisfied with the way democracy works in practice. Again excluding “don’t know” responses (36 percent; see footnote 16) 72 percent of all respondents declare themselves satisfied with democracy in Ghana, compared to 54 percent in 1999. Respondents living in the Upper West and Volta Regions appear to be the least content with the practice of democracy, recording satisfaction by the smallest majorities of 50 percent and 58 percent, respectively. Once again, political party affiliation is a marker for the degree of satisfaction with the state of democracy in Ghana. The 44 percent of respondents who are members of the governing NPP’s support base account for nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of those who say they are “very satisfied” with Ghana’s democracy. This contrasts with the one-third (33 percent) of the sample who describe themselves as non-aligned voters; they make up just one-quarter (26 percent) of those who are most satisfied with democracy.

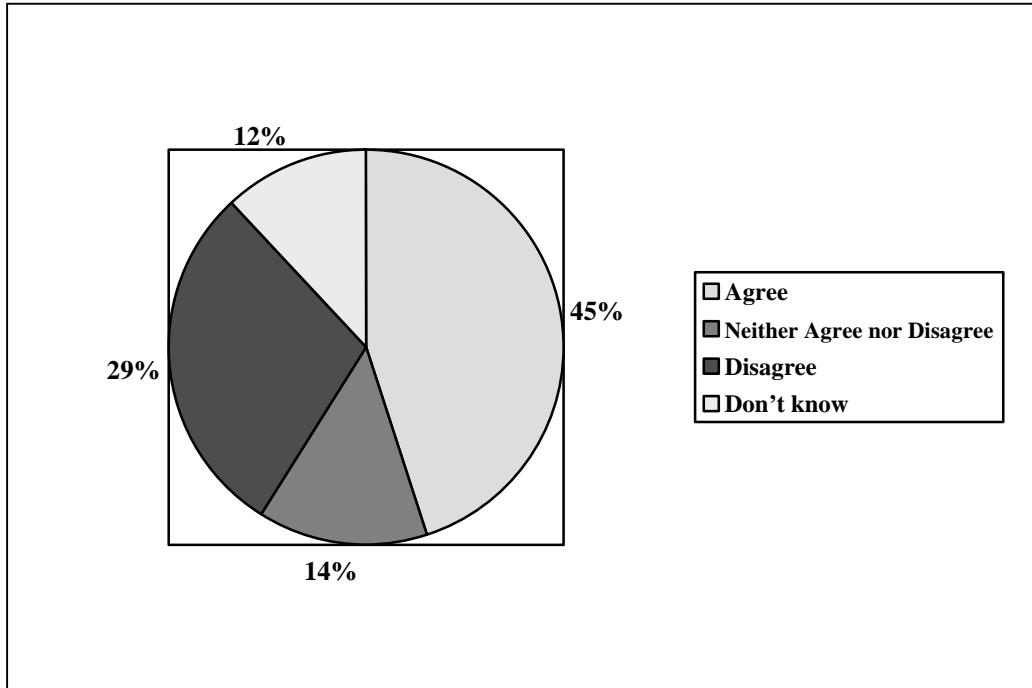
When asked to judge how much more or less free they feel under the present administration compared to the previous one, clear majorities report an increase in the freedom to speak their mind (69 percent), to join the political party of their choice (68 percent), and to vote for whomever they want without feeling pressured (67 percent). A similar majority (69 percent) also feels less afraid of being arrested unjustly. This confirms the general sense that, especially since the recent unprecedented transfer of power from an NDC government to an NPP government, there is a gathering wind of political freedom, less fear of persecution generally, and a discernible trend away from timidity in the expression of political opinions and open participation in political activity. These findings indicate that Ghanaians are largely and increasingly satisfied with the way democracy works in practice.

**Influence Over Politics**

When asked how much influence they think they have over the course of political events, the sample group’s responses are scattered (Figure 16). Nearly half (45 percent) say that, as far as politics are

concerned, their friends and neighbours do not listen to them. The corresponding figure in the 1999 survey was 42 percent. Fewer than one-third of the total (29 percent) feel their political opinions are valued by their friends and neighbours - barely half as many as in 1999 (58 percent). This finding appears to indicate that Ghanaians experienced a dramatic increase in their sense of powerlessness to shape the political opinions of those around them.

**Figure 16: Others Don't Listen to You**

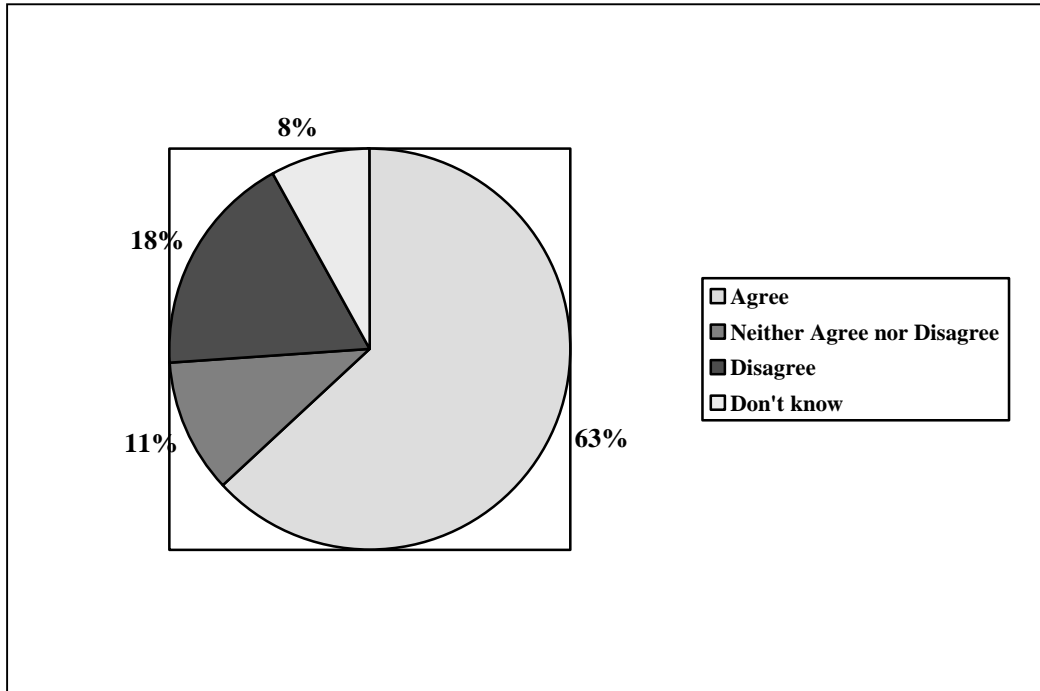


Yet, the survey reveals that Ghanaians do not feel a commensurate reduction in their capacity to bring their concerns to the attention of their elected representatives. Almost two-thirds of the sample group (63 percent) believe that they can work with others to make their elected representatives listen to their concerns, and nearly as many (58 percent) say they feel their elected leaders listen at least some of the time to what people like themselves have to say. Only about one in six (17 percent) of all respondents express a lack of confidence in their ability to air their views through the democratic process. Yet more than one in three (34 percent) say they think their elected leaders *never* listen to them.

In 1999, respondents were less confident of their ability to convey their concerns to elected representatives. The sample group is split down the middle - one half of all respondents (49 percent) are confident that they could make their representatives listen to their problems, while the other half (51 percent) are not. A comparison of the responses between the two surveys appears to indicate that, as elections in Ghana become more competitive, candidates for elective office and office-holders are learning to be more responsive to the concerns of constituents in order to earn and retain their support. This increase in accountability may have helped close the “representation gap” that emerged from the 1999 Afrobarometer survey, when 57 percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with their MP’s performance.



**Figure 17: Can Make Elected Representatives Listen**

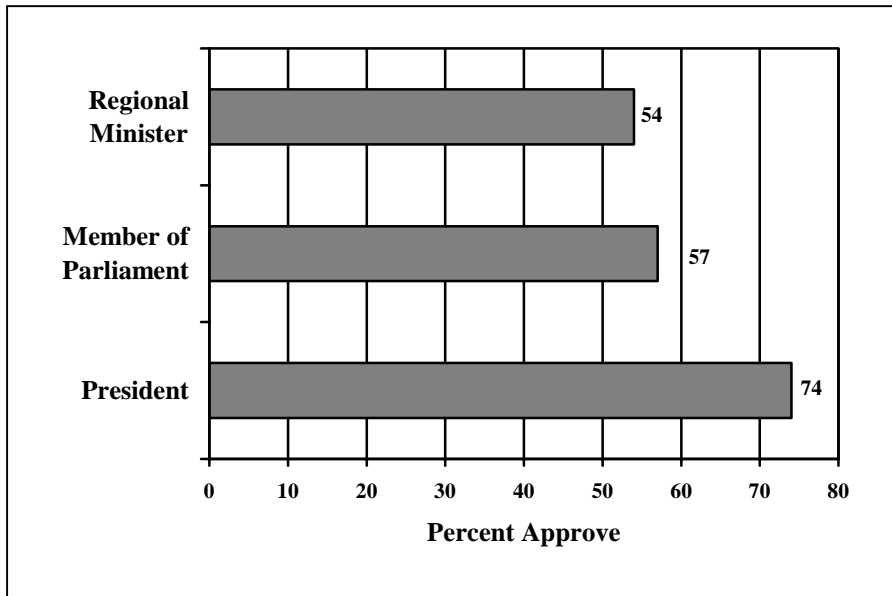


Survey participants were also invited to rate their satisfaction with the performance of key political office-holders and various institutions of democracy (Figure 18).

Three-quarters (74 percent) of respondents are satisfied with the President’s performance. This impressive approval rating may indicate a measure of goodwill towards a new leader who is still enjoying a post-electoral “honeymoon.” But it may also illustrate a growing level of respect for, and the increased accountability of, public officers generally.

Within the broad overall approval of the President’s performance, there are some noteworthy regional variations. Predictably, the strongest endorsement of President Kufuor’s brief stewardship comes from his own ethnic group and from supporters of his political party. Respondents in the Ashanti Region and NPP supporters are both exceedingly generous in their praise for the President, giving him approval ratings of 91 and 90 percent, respectively. Indeed, more than half (51 percent) of all respondents who admit to being sympathetic to the NPP *strongly approve* of the President’s performance. Interestingly, the President won a similarly ringing endorsement from the (albeit very small number of) respondents - less than 1 percent of the sample - who claim to be closest to the traditional ideological adversary of the NPP, the Convention People’s Party (CPP). Exactly half of all CPP supporters strongly approve of the job the President has done so far. The absolute approval ratings of the President’s performance given by respondents in the Western, Eastern and Brong-Ahafo Regions - 89 percent, 86 percent and 85 percent respectively - are not far behind those recorded in Ashanti. Ahead even of respondents in Ashanti, residents of the Brong-Ahafo Region are most over-represented among those who rate the President’s performance most highly. The Brong-Ahafo Region’s 9 percent of the sample account for 18 percent of those who “*strongly approve*” of his job performance, while the 19 percent of respondents in the Ashanti Region provide a further 29 percent.

**Figure 18: Satisfaction with Elected Representatives**



At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Volta Region, the bastion of the National Democratic Congress, registers the lowest presidential approval rating at 41 percent, with 47 percent expressing disapproval, making this the only region where negative ratings outweigh positive ones. Although Volta stands out as the only region in which a only minority of respondents approve of the President’s efforts, the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions are also comparatively grudging in their endorsement of the President, awarding him scores of 52 percent, 54 percent and 56 percent respectively. The *deepest* active disapproval of, and the greatest indifference to, the President’s performance are observed in the Northern Region, where 9 percent of the total population yield 27 percent of all interviewees who say they *strongly disapprove* of the President’s performance and 25 percent of all those who decline to grade the President’s performance. The self-declared political neutrals (33 percent of the sample) are disproportionately inclined to abstain from this question, featuring most prominently among those who say they “*haven’t heard enough*” to be able to rate the President’s performance (43 percent of that subset). Nevertheless, the President can take comfort from the fact that his efforts are appreciated overall even by these “floating voters,” 71 percent of whom think he is doing a good job. Men are more enthusiastic in their approval of the President’s performance: 60 percent of those who “*strongly approve*” of his performance are men, whereas 70 percent of those who say they “*don’t know*” enough to offer an opinion are women.

A majority (57 percent) of respondents approve of the performance of their directly elected Member of Parliament. This is an inversion of the corresponding statistic from the 1999 survey, when an identical proportion were *dissatisfied* with their MPs’ performance. There is a fair degree of satisfaction too with the performance of un-elected government appointees: 54 percent are satisfied with the performance of both their Regional Minister and their District Chief Executive (DCE).

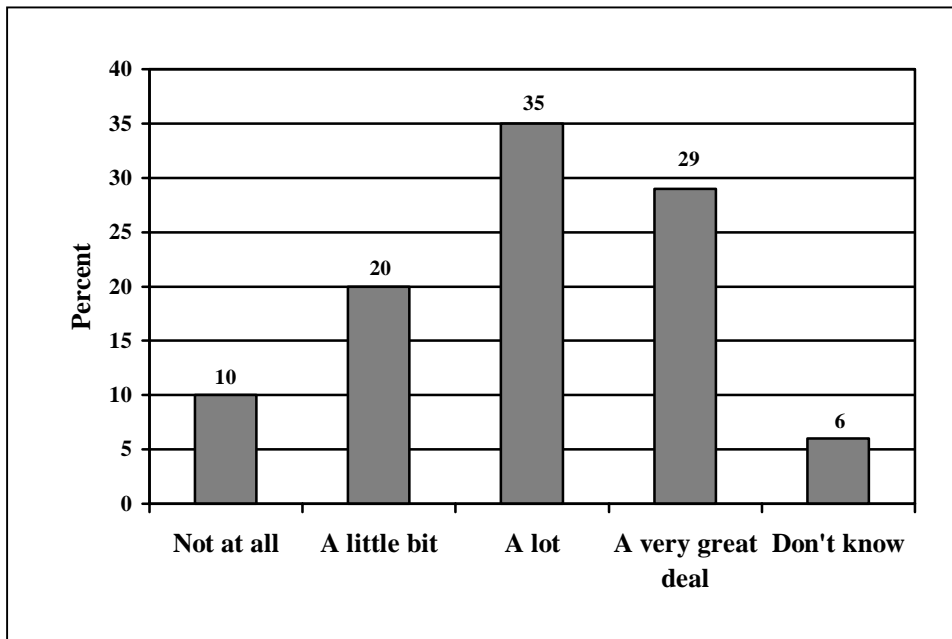
The overall import of these findings would appear to be that Ghana *has* reaped an “alternation of power bonus” in the form of expanded political freedom and increased political influence, although Ghanaians have not yet necessarily formed the habit of exercising this new-found freedom and power.

## Political Trust

Having determined that Ghanaians are inclined to leave the exercise of power to others, the survey asked how much of the time respondents think their elected leaders try their best to look after the interests of the people. Sixty-two percent of the sample thinks that at least some of the time their leaders are doing their best on behalf of the people, against 31 percent who have no faith at all in the sincerity of elected leaders.

Respondents were also invited to rate the trustworthiness of the President, the government, and a list of political, cultural, legal, media, national security and commercial institutions. Two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents express more than a little trust in the President: 35 percent say they trust him “a lot,” while 29 percent say they trust him a “very great deal” (Figure 19). This is the highest of all the trust ratings recorded in this section of the survey, including that for the governing party, the NPP (51 percent). Eighty-four percent of supporters of the President’s own party think he can be trusted. On the other hand, a majority (53 percent) of supporters of the NDC say they trust the President no more than “a little bit.”

**Figure 19: Trust the President**



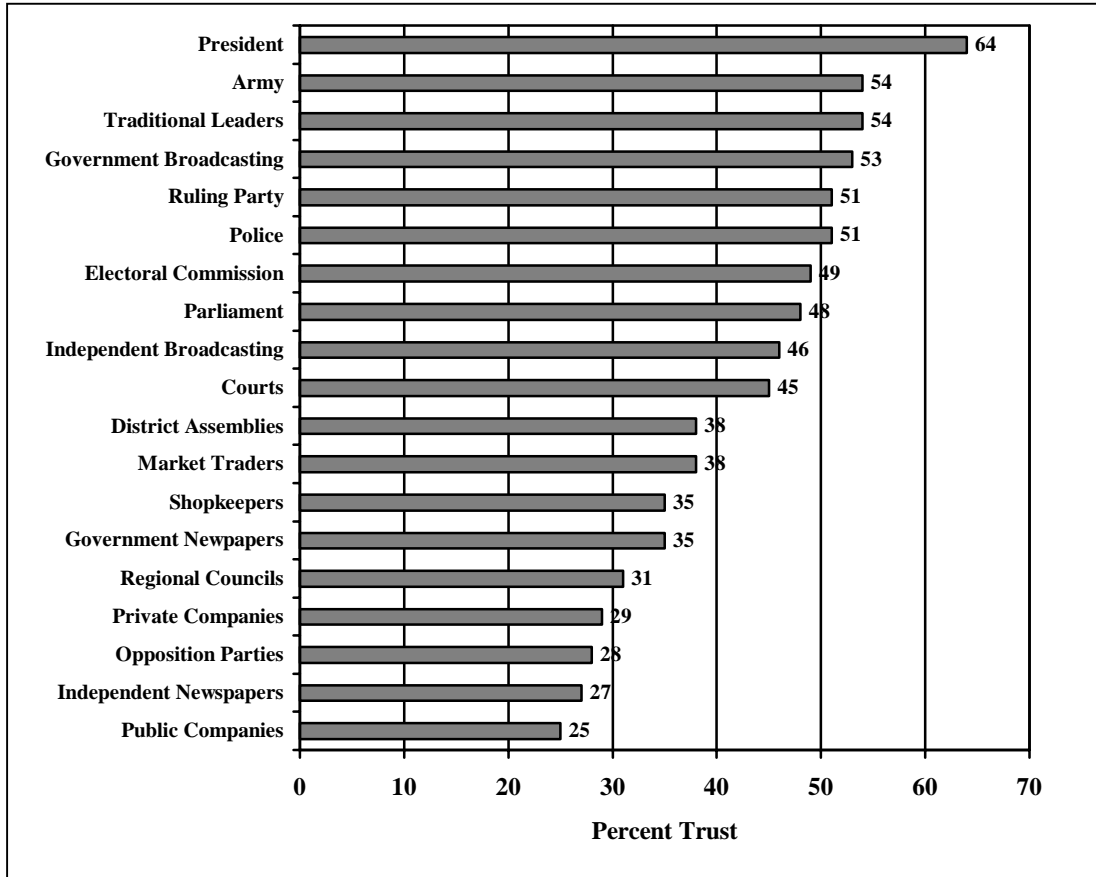
Respondents in the Brong-Ahafo Region report the highest levels of trust in the President, with an overwhelming 91 percent saying they trust him “a lot” or “a very great deal.” This surpasses even the trust rating the President receives from interviewees in his home region, Ashanti, where the corresponding rating is 79 percent. Respondents in the Volta Region are most suspicious of their President: just 21 percent express faith in him. They are followed by interviewees in the Upper East and Upper West Regions, where 32 and 35 percent, respectively, say they trust the President more than “a little bit.”

Women are noticeably more inclined to distrust the President than are men, accounting for 56 percent of those who say they “do not trust the President at all.” Conversely, 56 percent of those who say they trust the President “a very great deal” are men. In keeping with a consistent trend, a large majority (73 percent) of those who don’t know or haven’t heard enough to judge his credibility are women.

There are significant findings in relation to some of the other 18 institutions listed as well (Figure 20). Among the most trusted are the Ghana Army (54 percent) and the police (51 percent), although the police

are rated as completely untrustworthy by a comparatively high 17 percent. The army's trust rating is somewhat surprising given the public opposition to military government so strongly expressed elsewhere in the survey. Also receiving a comparatively high rating are traditional leaders (54 percent).

*Figure 20: Trust in Individuals and Institutions*



Contrary to the assumptions of many media commentators, the state-owned electronic media service, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, features among the most highly trusted institutions, considered trustworthy by 53 percent of the sample, compared to 46 percent for independent broadcasters. It is noteworthy that the lowest incidences of active distrust on the part of respondents are registered with respect to both the state- and privately-owned broadcast media institutions. Clearly therefore, the Ghanaian electronic media could be said to enjoy a presumption of veracity, which emphasises the influence they collectively have on the shaping of public opinion, especially on political issues.

The trust ratings for print media are most noteworthy for the number of respondents who say they are not familiar enough with the content of the newspapers to be able to judge their trustworthiness. More than one-third (34 percent and 37 percent respectively) of the sample group abstain when asked how much they trust the state-owned and privately owned papers. This echoes loudly the predilection of Ghanaians for audio-visual over literary sources of information, and the narrower market reach of newspapers, whose circulation is concentrated in the urban areas.

The institutions considered least trustworthy by Ghanaians are public corporations (25 percent trust), opposition political parties (28 percent), large private companies (29 percent), shopkeepers (35 percent), market traders (38 percent) and district assemblies (38 percent). The regional breakdown of trust ratings

for opposition political parties contains an especially counter-intuitive observation, because the *lowest* levels of trust in the opposition are seen in Volta Region. Just 17 percent of respondents in that part of Ghana say they trust these parties, which include the NDC, which 39 percent of Volta residents claim to support. More than half (54 percent) of all interviewees in the Volta Region say they trust the opposition just “*a little bit*,” and another 22 percent refuse to rate them. Thus the inhabitants of the Volta Region distinguish themselves by displaying the least faith in politicians of both the majority and the opposition.

Almost as surprising is the region in which the greatest expression of trust in the opposition parties is recorded, Brong-Ahafo, where 35 percent of respondents say they trust them. The *deepest* distrust in the opposition, however, comes from a more predictable quarter: 70 percent of respondents in the Ashanti Region say they do not trust the opposition parties more than “*a little bit*,” including 41 percent who do not trust them at all. Between the sexes, males are considerably more likely to trust the opposition political parties: 62 percent of all respondents who say they trust the opposition “*a very great deal*” are men.

We also asked respondents to compare the current government with the previous one. Fifty-two percent consider the current government to be more trustworthy, versus 18 percent who say it is less so. With regard to corruption, 47 percent think it is less corrupt, compared to 21 who think the problem has gotten worse. Similarly, 47 percent of respondents sense increased effectiveness on the part of the new government in its delivery of services, while more than one-quarter (28 percent) detects no change, and 18 percent think service delivery has deteriorated.

## **PART THREE: ATTITUDES TO THE RULE OF LAW**

### **Official And Unofficial Corruption**

Citizens are most likely to be law-abiding when they believe that their political leaders and authority figures are honest. Regrettably, the Afrobarometer survey discovers a broad public perception that corruption in Ghana is widespread, especially among officers of the law itself. One of the survey’s most disheartening findings is that many Ghanaians think that bribery among public officials is quite commonplace (Figure 21).

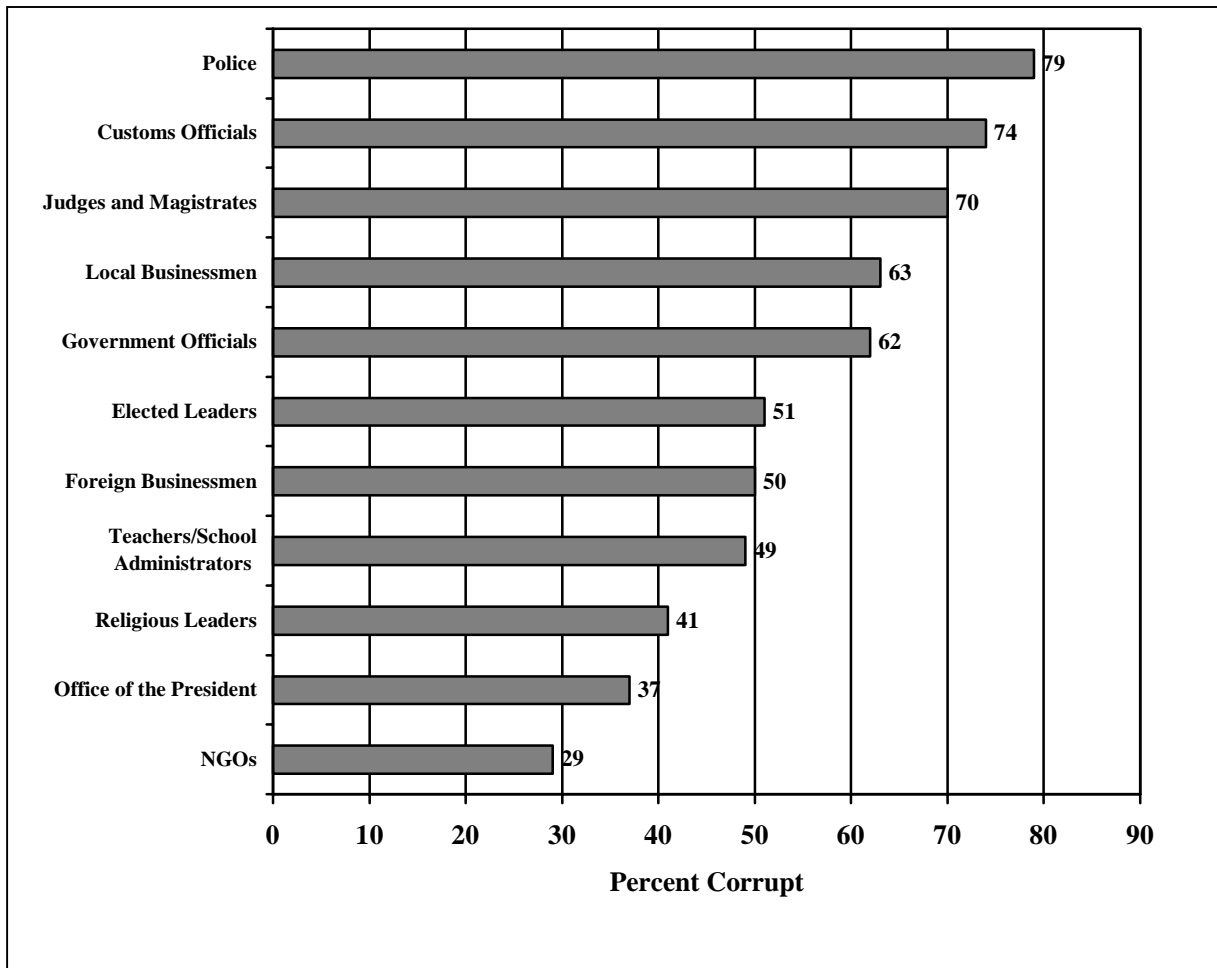
Specifically, Ghanaians are most suspicious of officers of the Ghana Police Service, with 79 percent of respondents judging *at least some* police personnel to be corrupt. Indeed, more than half (53 percent) are of the view that *most* policemen are corrupt. Customs officials run a close but unenviable second to the police, with 74 percent of all survey participants saying they believe at least some, and nearly half (48 percent) perceiving most or all, border guards to be corrupt.

When asked about “government officials” in general, 62 percent feel that at least *some* government officials are corrupt, with 23 percent believing that *most or all* are. Other identifiable classes of public officials also have a poor image in the eyes of the Ghanaian public. More than two-thirds (70 percent) of respondents think that at least some judges and magistrates are corrupt, and 49 percent think the same of teachers and school administrators. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who think that *no* teachers or school administrators are corrupt is one of the highest for all categories at 38 percent.

There is obvious reluctance on the part of some respondents to comment on their perceptions of corruption among some categories of authority figures. This seems to have contributed to a relatively high rate of abstention when interviewees were asked about corruption in the Office of the President (24 percent decline to offer an opinion), and among elected leaders (22 percent abstain) and government officials (21 percent). The highest rate of abstention though, is observed with regard to perceptions of

corruption on the part of NGO leaders (39 percent). This figure most likely reflects a genuine lack of information.

**Figure 21: Perceived Levels of Corruption**



More than half (51 percent) of respondents think there is some corruption going on among elected leaders (i.e., MPs). The Office of the President is considered to be the least corrupt of all the official categories tested, with just 37 percent of respondents saying they think at least some of the President’s staff are corrupt. On balance though, this figure actually emphasizes the severity of the problem, as it is only against a background of abysmally low expectations that any comfort can be drawn from a finding that more than one-third of Ghanaians believe there is corruption at the very heart of government.

The public impression appears to be that most officials of the state, especially those working for the principal law enforcement agencies, are concerned primarily with illegal self-enrichment. The fact that the Ghanaian populace perceives the very agents of law enforcement to be so thoroughly corruptible does not augur well for the drive for good governance. At the same time, as mentioned above, almost half of all respondents judge corruption to be less prevalent than before, and 63 percent of all respondents say they think the current administration is doing fairly well at battling corruption in government. However, while this rating appears impressive, it is no better than the average rating for the government’s handling of a range of issues.

Nor is the perception of endemic corruption confined to the public sector. Some classes of people in the private sector are also perceived to be fairly corrupt, albeit generally less so than public officials. Many respondents think that at least some Ghanaian businessmen (63 percent) and some foreign businessmen (50 percent) are corrupt.

Official corruption often takes the form of a demand for, or acceptance of an offer of, a cash bribe or a favour in exchange for a service that ought to be provided by a civil servant to a public service client without the payment of that extra consideration. Opportunities for this form of “petty” corruption stem from a variety of sources, but frequently government officials placed in “gatekeeper” situations will create artificial bottlenecks in the delivery of public services in order to draw offers of bribes. The Afrobarometer survey tried to locate some of these bottlenecks by asking respondents how much difficulty they had experienced, or expected to experience, in obtaining a variety of services. According to the responses, the greatest difficulty is with obtaining household services (typically electricity and water supplies and telephone service or fault repair), which is described as difficult or very difficult by 49 percent of respondents. There is also significant difficulty with obtaining money (salaries, allowances, reimbursements, scholarships and entitlements) from state institutions (40 percent), identity documents (passports, birth certificates and driver’s licenses) (36 percent), and help from the police (36 percent). The degree of difficulty reported by respondents in obtaining entitlements from the state, police assistance, identity documents, and household services is particularly noteworthy since another one-third to one-half of respondents simply report that they have never tried to obtain these services. In other words, the numbers reporting that obtaining each of these services is easy is quite small, ranging from 5 to 26 percent.

Obtaining a voter’s registration card presents the fewest problems, with just 10 percent reporting any difficulty. Only 20 percent had difficulty obtaining a primary school placement. Even so, it can be seen that opportunities for corruption, and the motivation to engage in corruption, are rife in Ghana.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, only a minority of respondents admit to paying bribes to any of these public officials. Thirteen percent of respondents say they paid a bribe to obtain a licence or permit during the previous year. However, this represents the limit of the sample group’s willingness to confess to complicity in official corruption. Needless to say, unless the sample group’s perception of the scale of corruption among government officials is wildly exaggerated, these officials would have to be engaging in their corrupt practices with a substantially larger number of Ghanaians than this last statistic would indicate.

Given the breadth and depth of perceptions of corruption, it is surprising that a good many Ghanaians think, perhaps mistakenly, that there is a fairly high rate of actual observance and/or enforcement of the law. Very large majorities of respondents feel there is a high probability that the law would be enforced in cases of serious crime (92 percent), tax evasion (88 percent), and the illegal use of services (82 percent). Respondents are evenly split about whether the government’s ability to enforce the law has improved, and just over one-third report some difficulty in obtaining help from the police when in need. Interestingly, perceptions of corruption in the judiciary seemed to have fallen since the last survey. In sharp contrast to the 1999 survey, when 60 percent of respondents felt a fair measure of trust in the courts, the corresponding measure in 2002 is 78 percent, and 65 percent of respondents are fairly satisfied with the government’s efforts to combat crime.

### **Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Respondents in the Round 2 survey were asked how often they think violent conflict occurs at various levels within Ghanaian society. Almost four out of every five (79 percent) Ghanaians say that violence in their own households occurs rarely or never. Only 4 percent report that domestic violence is a common

phenomenon within their families. However, while 63 percent also think that conflict occurs at most rarely *within their wider community*, that still leaves more than one in three (34 percent) who are of the view that violent conflict is prevalent in their own communities. When asked for their perception of the frequency of violent conflicts *between different groups in the country*, a clear majority (54 percent) say that it occurs “*sometimes*,” “*often*,” or “*always*.” The population’s awareness of violent conflict generally, and ethnic violence in particular, would almost certainly have been heightened by the assassination, just six months prior to the survey, of the King of the Dagombas, the Ya Na, and about 30 members of his court. At the time of the Afrobarometer survey, a state of emergency was in effect in Yendi, the Dagomba capital, and a presidential commission of inquiry into the incident was in session.<sup>19</sup>

When asked what they think are the three most common causes of violent conflict, respondents’ answers are clustered around a handful of stimuli typical of Ghanaian society. The cause cited first by the largest number of respondents (19 percent) is “*poor communication or misunderstanding*”. This is followed by “*boundary or land disputes*” (16 percent), “*traditional leadership disputes*” (13 percent), and “*political issues, party rivalry, disputes over political leadership and political exclusion*” (10 percent). The same broad issues of land, inheritance and succession and politics, in that order, featured most prominently among the causes cited second by interviewees.

Respondents were then asked to list up to three agents, institutions and processes to which they would turn for help in resolving a violent conflict. Traditional leaders and the native courts are mentioned by a total of 30 percent of respondents as the preferred avenue for conflict resolution. The same proportion of the sample chooses the “*armed forces or police*” as their first resort, followed distantly by “*family, friends and neighbours*” at 9 percent. A further 8 percent of respondents say those involved in the conflict should first attempt to resolve disputes themselves, while 6 percent of the sample specify the “*local administration*,” which presumably means local government officials such as the District Chief Executive. Again, traditional authorities and their courts are the most popular second resort mentioned by nearly one-third (33 percent) of all respondents. The armed forces or police draw 17 percent of second mentions, and the DCE 11 percent. The only previously unmentioned conflict resolution channel to emerge among the second choices is “*a religious organization or leader*,” which is cited by 7 percent of respondents. “Other government agencies” capture 8 percent of third responses.

Given the degree of difficulty, reported elsewhere in this survey, that Ghanaians experience in securing assistance from the police, and the remoteness from the general public of the security services,<sup>20</sup> it could be assumed that the prominence of the police and military among respondents’ choices of agents for resolving conflict is less a reflection of public confidence in these agents than an indictment of the alternatives. Evidence of this is the striking absence of the legal system from the upper ranks of popular choices of avenues for resolving conflict. Just 2 percent of respondents cite the courts as their first recourse, while 8 percent mention them only as a second choice. Even as a last resort, litigation is selected by a mere 10 percent of respondents.

---

<sup>19</sup> The late Ya Na, Yakubu Andani II, is the traditional leader of the Dagomba (or Dagbon) people, the largest ethnic group in Northern Ghana. He was killed on 27 March 2002 in an eruption of a long-running dispute between rival claimants to the Dagomba skin (or royal throne). The state of emergency in Yendi was still in force at the time of the publication of this report in March 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Seventy percent of the time interviewers reported seeing no sign of a police station or police personnel in the vicinity of the interviewee’s dwelling place. A military presence is even less evident to interviewers, with no evidence of military personnel or barracks reported 93 percent of the time.



## **Identity and national unity**

When asked what identity group apart from their identity as Ghanaians respondents feel most comfortable with, 37 percent say they identify most strongly with their language, ethnic or tribal group, 32 percent with their religious group, and 19 percent with their occupational grouping.

In order to probe how these self-identifications affect individual choice, respondents were asked whether they would prefer to vote for someone from their own area, or whether they would chose a candidate from their party even if they might be from a different area. Nearly half (49 percent) prefer a local candidate, while 40 percent prefer to vote for a party representative regardless of where he comes from. Considering these results side by side, the survey indicates that though feelings of ethnic solidarity and regionalism may be quite strong, most Ghanaians are not completely constrained by these labels. These results both confirm and question the belief that ethnolinguistic relationships govern people's decisions when faced with political or economic choices.

These results are particularly interesting since half of all respondents judge that their identity group is not treated fairly. Moreover, respondents are fairly varied in their views about the relative economic condition of their identity group. One-third (32 percent) feel that they are better off than other groups, another one-third (30 percent) feel that their economic situation is about the same as others, and still another third (30 percent) feel that they are worse off economically when compared to other identity groups.

Respondents are far less varied in their perceptions about whether their identity group is treated relatively fairly. Half (51 percent) of respondents believe that their group is never treated fairly, and 21 percent think their group is treated fairly only some of the time. On the positive side, 15 percent of respondents believe that their group is often or always treated fairly.

Despite these misgivings, almost all respondents believe that the country should remain united (93 percent) as opposed to breaking apart into different smaller entities (6 percent).

## **CONCLUSION: IS GHANA ENJOYING A POWER ALTERNATION BONUS?**

The Afrobarometer Round 2 survey in Ghana presents a picture of a great deal of dissatisfaction with economic conditions. It also reveals that poverty remains persistent, and that there is continuing ambivalence over key aspects of neo-liberal economic reforms. Indeed, it shows that Ghanaians are not fully persuaded of the attractions of the unregulated market place.

At the same time, it confirms that Ghanaians remain fully committed to democratic principles. Most significantly, support for democratic politics remains high, and there is growing satisfaction with the way democracy actually works in the country. Nearly all Ghanaians believe that Ghana is in fact a democracy.

Indeed, survey findings indicate a significant rise in national economic and political optimism. Without much rational basis, negative perceptions of the overall state of the economy have dropped from 66 percent in 1999 to 59 percent in 2002. But 61 percent of Ghanaians in the 2002 Afrobarometer survey are hopeful that their living conditions will improve in 12 months, compared to 52 percent who held such expectations in 1999.

Significantly, the public is ready to give high marks to the NPP administration, even for things it could not have done much to change in 20 months. Two-thirds of respondents approve of its handling of the economy, versus 36 percent who felt this way about the NDC in 1999. In addition, 57 percent approve of

the NPPs' handling of inflation in 2002, while in 1999 two-thirds (66 percent) rated the government's performance in this area negatively.

Thus, a somewhat giddy national mood appears to be fostering public patience with economic reforms. There has been a sharp drop in the percentage of Ghanaians who advocate the abandonment of neo-liberal economic reform policies – from 63 percent in 1999 to 16 percent in 2002 – even though the popular perception that these programs have hurt many and benefited only a few has remained unchanged between 1999 and 2002 (57 percent in 1999, compared to 59 percent in 2002). A truly stunning change from 1999 is that the proportion of the adult population who are “willing to endure hardships now”(i.e., the factor of economic patience) has doubled from 36 to 72 percent.

On the basis of the above findings, we conclude that Ghana's prospects for democracy and development are good, even if it appears to be experiencing a crisis of expectations that may be difficult to satisfy. Most significantly, the country appears to be enjoying something of a “power alternation bonus.” That is, it appears that the election of new leaders is engendering better prospects for democratic consolidation. Political patience has increased slightly in 2002, with 79 percent of Ghanaians expressing a willingness to be patient with the current system of government as it deals with inherited problems, compared to 74 percent in Round 1. It appears that fresh political legitimacy is giving a reformist administration some room to pursue a necessary but perhaps difficult economic agenda. Such an auspicious reading of Ghana's political future is consistent with Adam Przeworski's thesis that intrinsic support for democracy and avoidance of economic disaster are conducive to democratic consolidation.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> See Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, “Modernization: Theory and Facts” *World Politics*, 49, no. 2 (1997) pp. 155-83; also Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) pp. 64-116.

## **APPENDIX A: SAMPLING PROTOCOL**

### **1. Sampling Frame and Sampling Units**

The sample universe for the Afrobarometer Round 2 survey included all citizens of voting age (i.e., citizens who were aged 18 years or more), living in individual households within the confines of the boundaries of Ghana. The institutional population (such as people in hospitals, prisons, hotels and similar establishments), foreign nationals, and people below 18 years of age were excluded from the frame. Also excluded were areas determined to be inaccessible or not relevant to the study, such as areas experiencing armed conflict and forest or game reserves.

The sample design was a stratified, clustered, multi-stage, area probability sample. The sample areas had important properties such as well-defined boundaries identified on maps, and relatively small sizes that facilitated the management of interviewer workloads within each sample area and reduced the effects of intra-class correlation within a sample area on the variance of the survey estimates. The updated sampling frame of enumerator areas (Eas) that was used for the 2000 Ghana Population and Housing Census constituted the sampling frame for the Afrobarometer Round 2 survey.

The census EAs, each of which contains an average of 150-200 households, were defined as the primary sampling units (PSUs), since they are the smallest well-defined geographical units for which population and household data are available. The EAs are also identifiable on maps. Households within the EAs constituted the secondary sampling units (SSUs), while the ultimate sampling units consisted of the individual household respondents.

This sampling frame is captured as a database file and ordered as a hierarchical list with the requisite geographic codes for the various domains of estimation down to the EA level. It also had the corresponding population and household information, which facilitated automated sample selection.

### **2. Stratification**

The stratification of the frame for the Afrobarometer Round 2 survey was based on two factors: administrative region and type of locality of residence. The first level of stratification corresponded to the ten administrative regions of Ghana. Within each region, the EAs were further stratified into urban and rural zones.

The sampling was then conducted separately within each stratum. Stratification ensured that the sample was well distributed among the relevant sub-groups (i.e., region, urban/rural). Since sampling was carried out separately within each stratum, it was possible to ensure that there were sufficient sampling units in each sub-group to allow meaningful analysis. It also reduced sampling error, since the sampling error depended on the variance within and not between strata. The geographic ordering of the EAs within each stratum, which was developed during the pre-census cartographic work, also provided further implicit stratification.

### **3. Sample Size and Allocation**

The number and allocation of sample EAs for the survey depended not only on the type of estimates to be obtained and the corresponding precision required, but also on resource and operational constraints.

In determining the sample size for the Ghana Afrobarometer Round 2 survey, sampling errors and non-sampling errors are taken into account. Increasing the size has the desired effect of reducing the sampling

error. Non-sampling errors, on the other hand, tend to increase with the size of the sample, since it becomes more difficult to control the quality of a larger field operation. For purposes of quality assurance, there is a need for the sample size to be operationally manageable for all survey activities.

A sample size of 1200 households allowed inferences to be made about the adult population at the national level with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percent, with a confidence interval of 95 percent.

#### 4. Sample Selection Procedures

The Ghana Afrobarometer Round 2 survey was based on a three-stage, stratified, random, nationally representative design. At the first stage of sampling, 150 EAs (PSUs) were selected randomly using the probability proportional to population size (PPPS) method (Tables A1 and A2). Determination of the sampling rates by size strata used proportional allocation based on each region's share of the national population. The PSUs were allocated proportionally to urban and rural localities of residence within each regional stratum. Two additional EAs were selected randomly for each regional stratum as possible replacements for non-response.

**Table A1: Distribution of the Population by Region Based on the 2000 Population and Housing Census (PHC)**

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Population</b> | <b>Proportion</b> |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ashanti       | 3,612,950         | 19.1              |
| Brong-Ahafo   | 1,815,408         | 9.6               |
| Central       | 1,593,823         | 8.4               |
| Eastern       | 2,106,696         | 11.1              |
| Greater Accra | 2,905,726         | 15.4              |
| Northern      | 1,820,806         | 9.6               |
| Upper East    | 920,086           | 4.9               |
| Upper West    | 576,583           | 3.1               |
| Volta         | 1,635,421         | 8.6               |
| Western       | 1,924,577         | 10.2              |
| <b>All</b>    | <b>18,912,079</b> | <b>100.0</b>      |

*Source: 2000 Population and Housing Census, Ghana Statistical Service*

The selection of EAs (PSUs) was accomplished by carrying out the sampling operation independently within each stratum using computer software.

At the second stage, 8 households were selected randomly, with a random start and interval, for each EA, to produce a total of 1200 households nationwide. The list of all the households for each selected EA, compiled during the Ghana 2000 Population and Housing Census, was available at the Ghana Statistical Service for this exercise.

**Table A2: Ghana Afrobarometer Round 2  
Sample Allocation and Number of EAs**

| Region        | Selected Number of EAs |              |              | Selected Number of Households (Total) |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
|               | <i>Urban</i>           | <i>Rural</i> | <i>Total</i> |                                       |
| Ashanti       | 15                     | 14           | 29           | 232                                   |
| Brong-Ahafo   | 5                      | 9            | 14           | 112                                   |
| Central       | 5                      | 8            | 13           | 104                                   |
| Eastern       | 6                      | 11           | 17           | 136                                   |
| Greater Accra | 20                     | 3            | 23           | 184                                   |
| Northern      | 4                      | 10           | 14           | 112                                   |
| Upper East    | 2                      | 5            | 7            | 56                                    |
| Upper West    | 2                      | 3            | 5            | 40                                    |
| Volta         | 3                      | 10           | 13           | 104                                   |
| Western       | 5                      | 10           | 15           | 120                                   |
| <b>All</b>    | <b>67</b>              | <b>83</b>    | <b>150</b>   | <b>1200</b>                           |

The third stage involved the random selection by the interviewer in the field of individual respondents in the selected households.

To ensure that women were not under-represented, Afrobarometer Round 2 set a gender quota of an equal number of men and women in the overall sample. To achieve this quota, the sex of respondents was alternated for each interview. Having determined from the previous interview whether a man or woman would be interviewed, the interviewer then compiled the list of first names of all household members of that particular sex who were aged 18 years or older. Members who were not at home but would return by the evening are also listed. Each name corresponded with a number ID on the list. The interviewer selected the household respondent randomly by asking a household member to choose a numbered card from a blind deck. Only the person whose number was selected was interviewed for that household. Where the selected respondent refused or was unavailable to be interviewed, the entire household was replaced. It may be noted that for Afrobarometer Round 2, only households were substituted and not respondents.