



# Demand for transparency, accountability drives call for electing local leaders in Ghana

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## Introduction

Decentralization occurs when resources, power, and tasks are delegated to local-level governance structures that are democratic and largely independent of central government (Manor, 1999). Decentralization can thus be an important vehicle for ensuring that sustainable development policies and programs are implemented at the local level and bring socio-economic relief to the grass roots.

This reasoning has led many African countries to embrace decentralization over the past three decades, often with country-specific expectations. In Egypt, for example, the government argued for deepening democracy and enhancing community partnerships in pursuing decentralization (Nazeef, 2004). Ethiopia sought to improve political representation and public services for different ethnic groups (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2004). In South Africa, decentralization became an essential component of the transition from apartheid to democracy, notwithstanding the fact that it was demanded by the predominantly white National Party for the parochial interest of having control in some jurisdictions after losing political power to the African National Congress (USAID, 2009).

In Ghana, decentralization is enshrined in the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution (Chapter 20), the 2016 Local Governance Act 936 (which replaced the 1993 Local Government Act 462), and the 2003 Local Government Service Act 656. The Constitution recognizes decentralization as one of the keys to realizing the ideals of democracy, including government accountability and responsiveness, and lays down the legal regime for its implementation.

Even so, the Constitution vests enormous political power in the president by assigning him the responsibility of appointing all mayors (metropolitan and municipal chief executives) and district chief executives – collectively known as MMDCEs – as well as one-third of local councillors who serve alongside the two-thirds elected to metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies (MMDAs).

In practice, this arrangement has allowed the ruling political party to foist political appointees on a supposed non-partisan structure, which according to the report on the Government of Ghana Decentralisation Policy Review (2007) has helped make many MMDCEs subservient and accountable to the appointing authority while weakening accountability to the citizens they are supposed to serve.

Despite many campaign pledges by political parties and candidates – especially when they are in the opposition – to make MMDCE positions elective, successive governments, once in power, have not shown the political will to give up this mechanism for dispensing political patronage.

Even when the 2010 Constitution Review Commission (CRC) recommended amending the Constitution to make MMDCE positions elective, the government issued a white paper aimed at maintaining presidential patronage by allowing him to nominate five MMDCE candidates who would then be vetted by the Public Services Commission for competence before three of them would be presented for popular election (Government of Ghana, 2012).

During and since his 2016 election campaign, President Nana Akufo-Addo has consistently promised to make MMDCE positions elective, even suggesting that the current set of MMDCEs will be the last batch of appointed chief executives (Ghana News, 2017; Business Ghana, 2016; Otec FM, 2018).

This paper uses data from the 2017 Afrobarometer survey in Ghana to explore three questions and discuss related policy considerations:

1. Are Ghanaians supportive of the call to make MMDCE positions elective?
2. What are factors that drive support for or opposition to elective MMDCEs?
3. If Ghanaians support the call for election of MMDCEs, do they recommend partisan or non-partisan elections?

## Afrobarometer survey

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 35 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys (2016/2018) are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Ghana, led by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), interviewed 2,400 adult Ghanaians between September 9 and 25, 2017. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Ghana in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2014.

## Key findings

- More than two-thirds (69%) of Ghanaians say MMDCEs should be elected by voters. This includes 55% who "agree very strongly" with this option. One-quarter (25%) support the current system of presidential appointment with local government council approval.
- In nine of Ghana's 10 regions, citizens who prefer elective MMDCEs are in the majority, ranging from 55% to 84%. Only in Upper West Region does a small majority (52%) favour appointment of MMDCEs.
- Support for elective MMDCEs does not vary substantially by respondents' political-party affiliation, age, gender, or urban-rural settlement location. However, better-educated citizens express much greater support than their less-educated counterparts.
- A slim majority (51%) of Ghanaians would want MMDCE elections to have a non-partisan framework similar to that for local councillor elections, while 41% would want such elections to be partisan in nature.
- But interestingly, among Ghanaians who prefer a non-partisan MMDCE election framework similar to the one used for local councillor elections, seven out of 10 (70%) believe that in practice, local councillor elections are not really non-partisan.
- A desire for MMDCEs who will be transparent and accountable to the grass roots is the major factor driving support for elected MMDCEs.

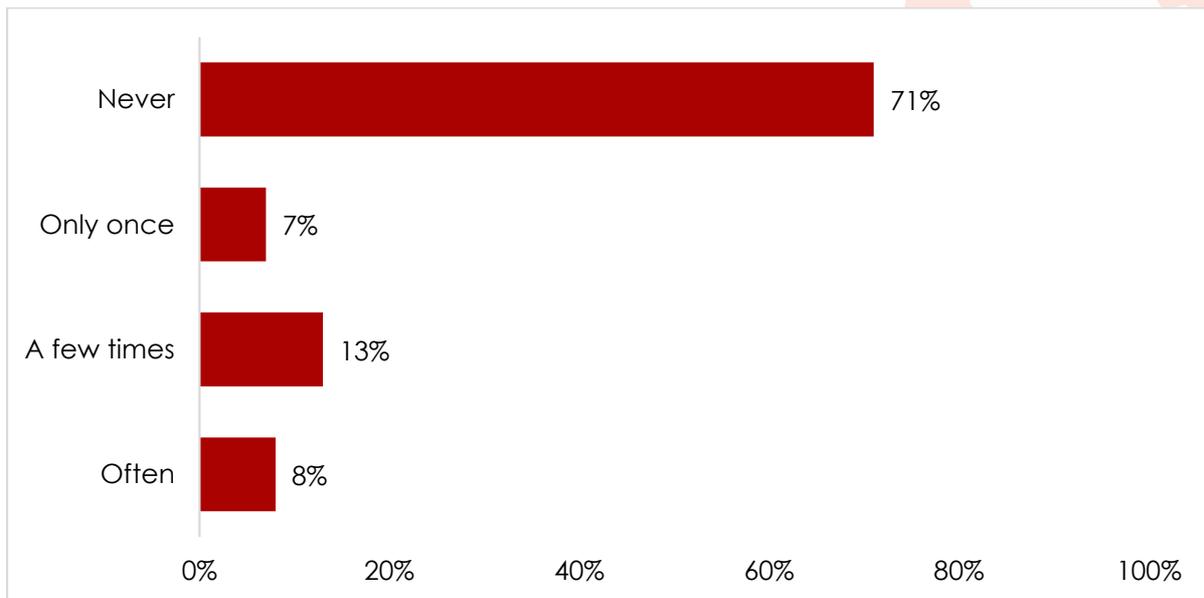
## General views on local government

To provide context to the question of whether MMDCEs should be elected rather than appointed, we first examine how Ghanaians relate to and perceive their local government and some of its key officials.

### *Interaction with elected local government councillors*

Ghanaians generally do not engage with their elected leaders at the local level. Seven in 10 citizens (71%) say they "never" contacted their elected local government councillors (i.e. assembly men or women) to discuss an important problem or share their opinions on issues during the year preceding the survey. Fewer than one-third (28%) say they contacted these elected officials "only once," "a few times," or "often" (Figure 1).

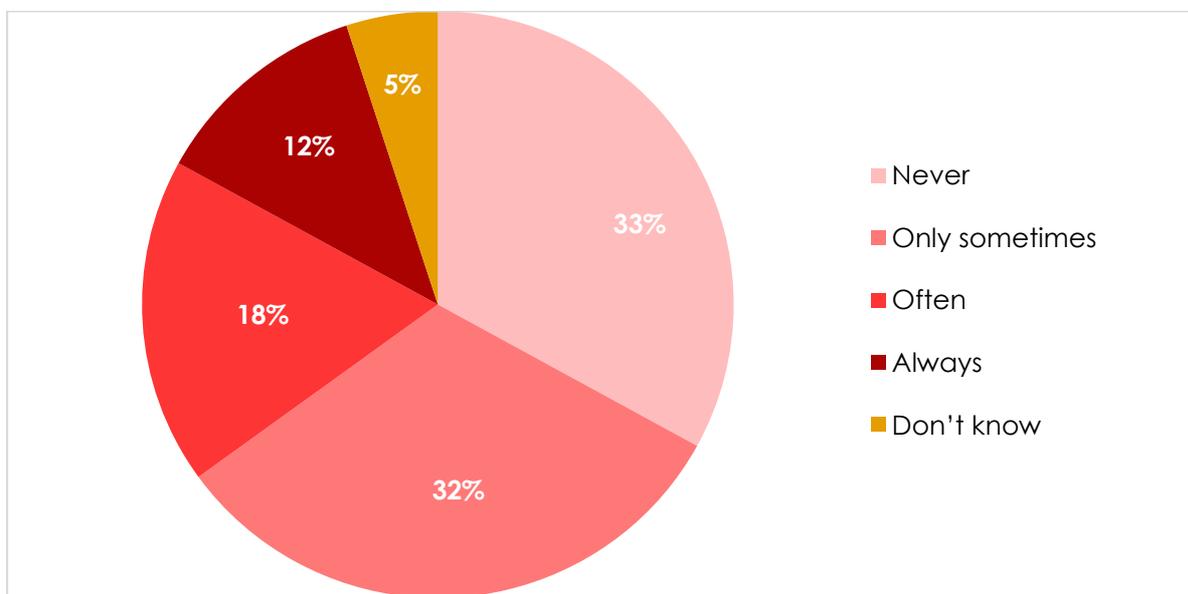
**Figure 1: Contacted local government representative** | Ghana | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views: An assembly man or woman?

One reason that most Ghanaians don't contact their local councillors may be that they don't think they'll be listened to. One-third (33%) of Ghanaians think their local government representatives "never" try their best to listen to what ordinary people have to say; another third (32%) think they do so "only sometimes" (Figure 2). Just 30% say their local government representatives "always" or "often" listen to ordinary citizens.

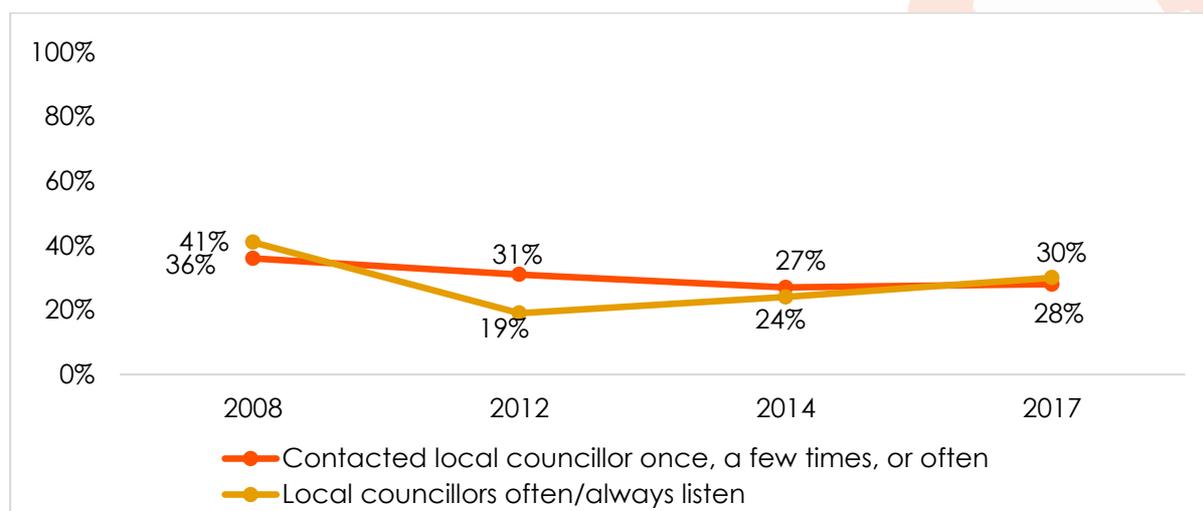
**Figure 2: How often local government councillors listen to citizens** | Ghana | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say: Assembly men or women?

Both citizens' contact with local government representatives and perceptions that councillors listen to ordinary citizens have declined over the past decade (Figure 3). But the proportion of citizens who say councillors try to listen has been regaining ground lost in a 12-percentage-point drop between 2008 and 2012.

**Figure 3: Interaction with local government councillors | Ghana | 2005-2017**



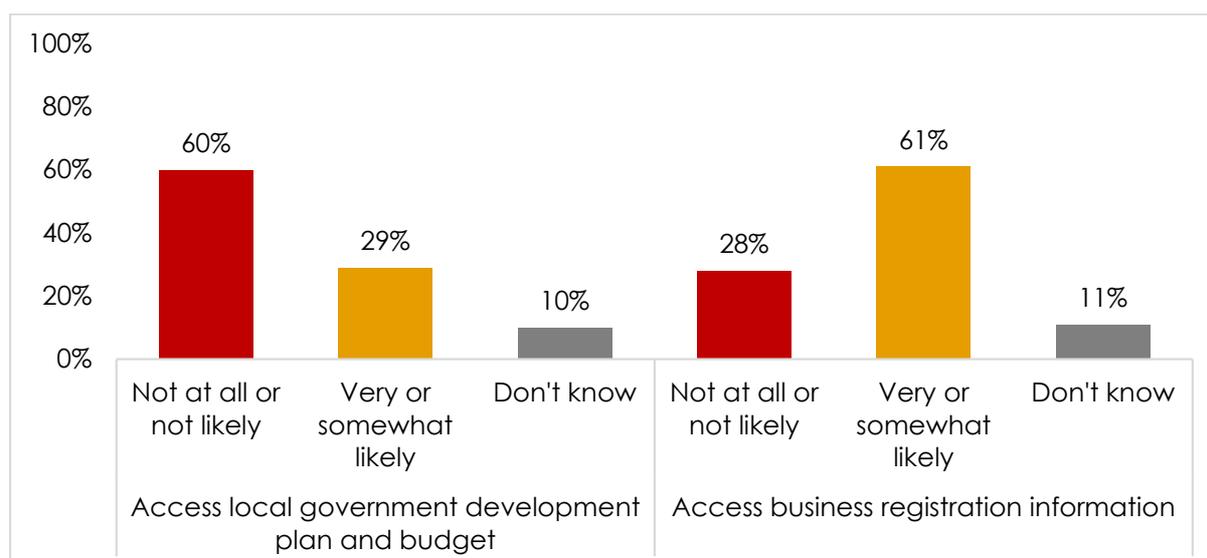
**Respondents were asked:**

- During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views: An assembly man or woman?
- How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say: Assembly men or women?

**Local government responsiveness to information requests**

Popular perceptions of how open local government bodies are to citizens' requests for information depend on what kind of information is sought. Six out of every 10 Ghanaians (60%) say it is "not likely" or "not at all likely" that they could obtain information about district development plans and budgets from their MMDA (Figure 4). On the other hand, about the same proportion (61%) believe it is "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that they could get information from their MMDA about how to register a new business – perhaps because districts are interested in securing local business taxes.

**Figure 4: Accessing information from local government | Ghana | 2017**

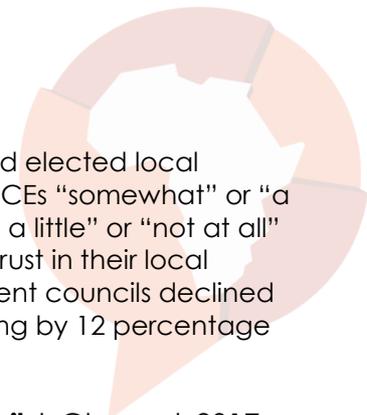


**Respondents were asked:** How likely is it that you could get the following information from government or other public institutions, or haven't you heard enough to say:

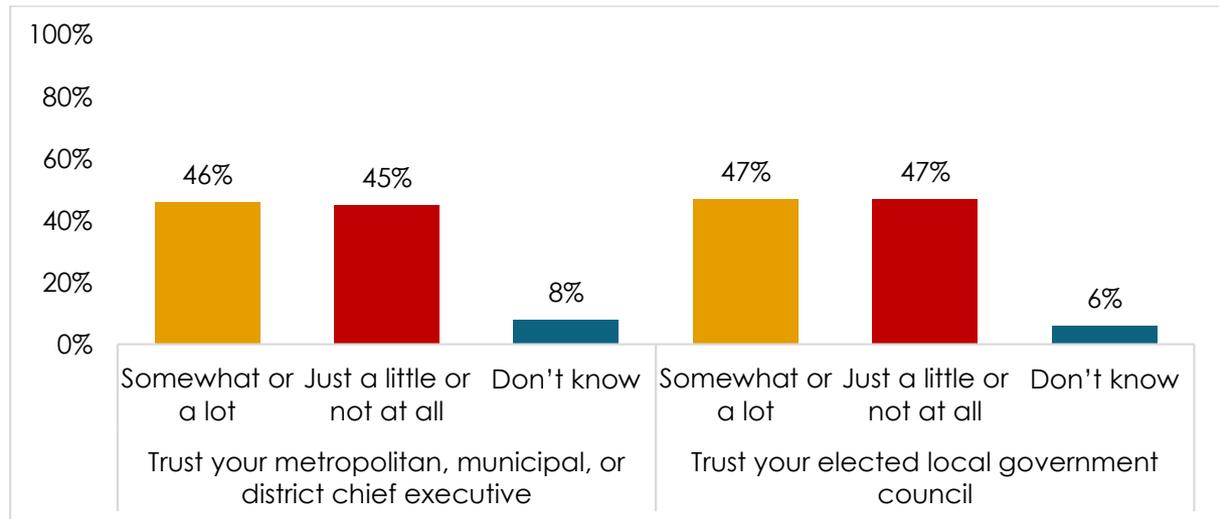
- If you went to the metropolitan, municipal, or district assembly to find out about the metropolitan, municipal, or district development plan and budgets?
- If you went to the metropolitan, municipal, or district assembly or registrar general's department to find out how to register a new business in your community?

### Trust in key local government officials

Ghanaians are evenly divided on how trustworthy their MMDCs and elected local government councils are. Almost half (46%) say they trust their MMDCs “somewhat” or “a lot,” while about the same proportion (45%) say they trust them “just a little” or “not at all” (Figure 5). The split is almost identical (47% each) when it comes to trust in their local government council. Over the years, popular trust in local government councils declined steadily between 2008 and 2014, from 54% to 35%, before rebounding by 12 percentage points over the past three years (see Appendix 1 Figure A.1).



**Figure 5: Trust in MMDCs and elected local government council | Ghana | 2017**

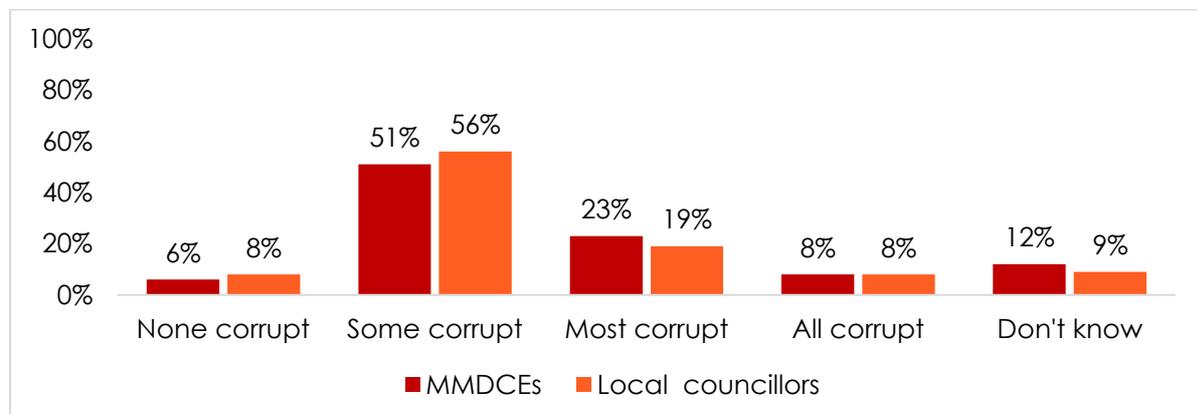


**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Your local government council? Your metropolitan, municipal, or district chief executive?

### Perceived corruption among key local government officials

One contributing factor to the substantial level of public mistrust may be Ghanaians' perceptions that many of their local government officials are corrupt. Eight in 10 citizens say that at least “some” MMDCs and local councillors are involved in corruption, including (31%) and (27%), respectively, who think that “most” or “all” are corrupt (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Perceived corruption by MMDCs and elected local government councillors | Ghana | 2017**



**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say:

- Assembly men and women?
- Your metropolitan, municipal, or district chief executive?



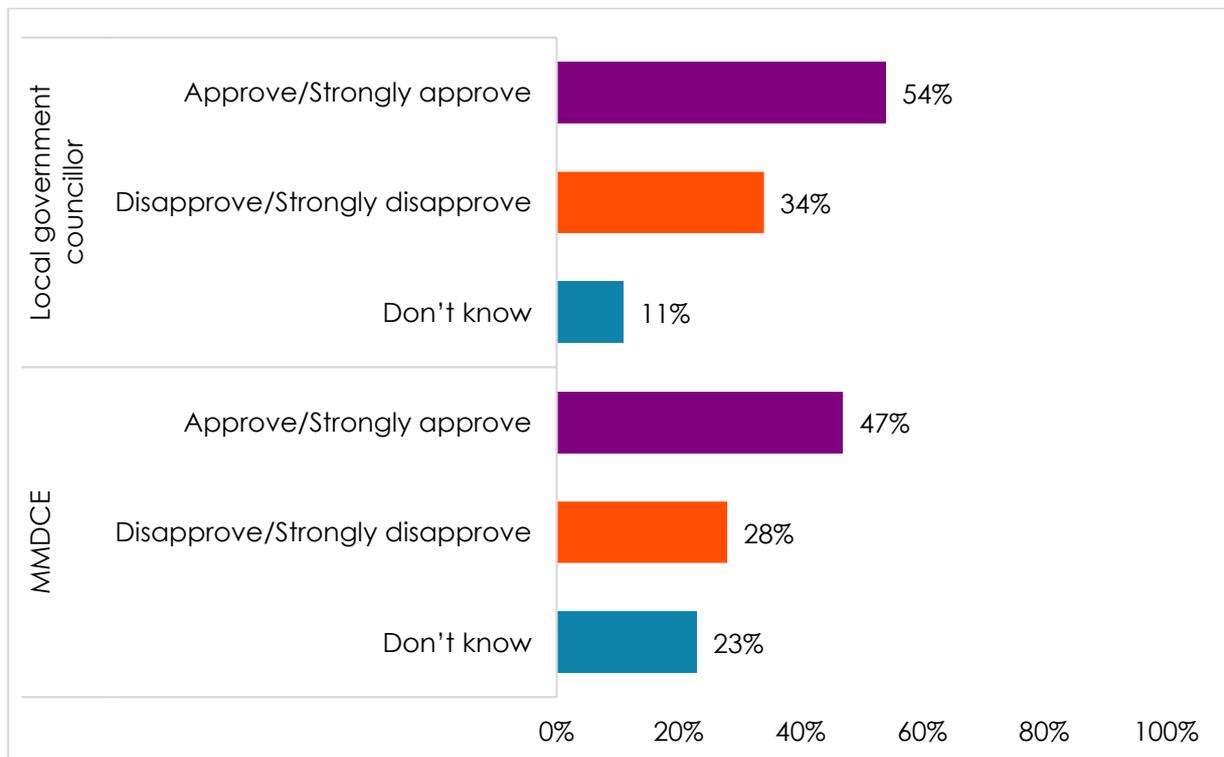
Over time, the perception that at least “some” local government councillors are involved in corruption increased by 15 percentage points between 2005 (67%) and 2017. For both local councillors and MMDCEs, the perceived level of corruption has declined slightly since 2012 (see Appendix 1 Figure A.2).

### Job performance of key local government officials

Ghanaians' assessment of how key local government officials have done their jobs over the past year is mixed, with about half of citizens saying they “approve” or “strongly approve” of the performance of their local government councillors (54%) and MMDCEs (47%) (Figure 7).

While MMDCEs have a somewhat lower approval rating than local councillors, they also have a lower disapproval rating and twice as many “don't know” responses. This may reflect their relative distance from the people compared to local councillors, who typically live with citizens in their communities. Performance ratings for both local councillors and MMDCEs have fluctuated over time, dipping in 2014 and rebounding to previous levels in 2017 (see Appendix 1 Figure A.3).

**Figure 7: Evaluation of job performance of key local government officials | Ghana | 2017**



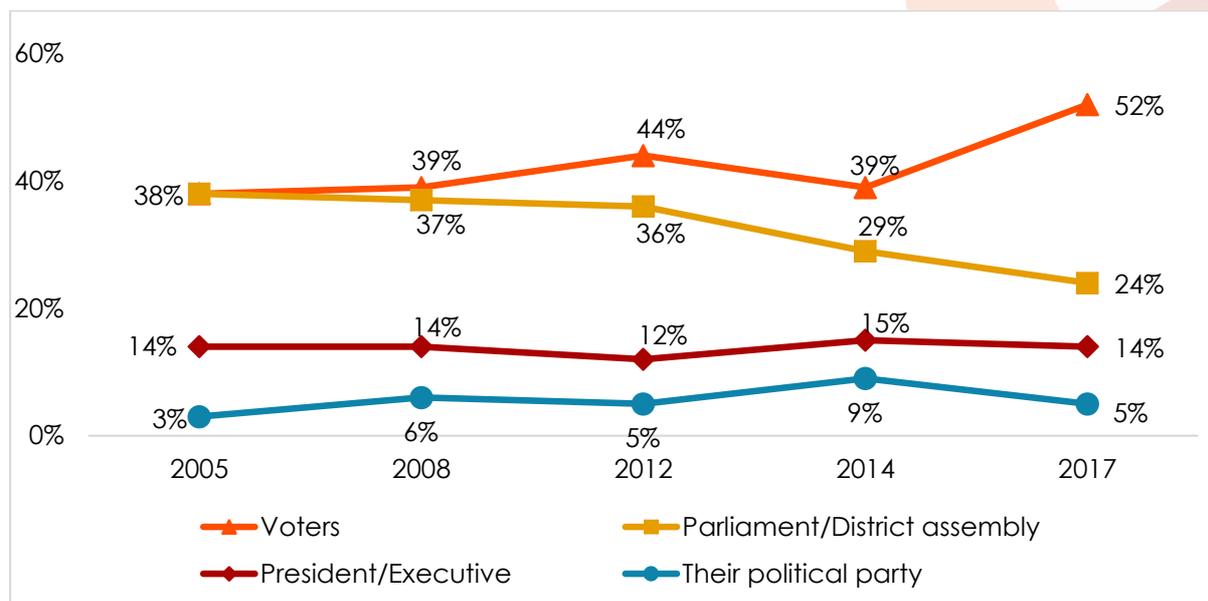
**Respondents were asked:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past year, or haven't you heard enough about them to say:

- Your assembly man or woman?
- Your metropolitan, municipal, or district chief executive?

### Ensuring that local government councillors do their job

Having elected local government councillors into office, a majority (52%) of Ghanaians believe that voters should be the ones who are “responsible for making sure that once elected, local government councillors do their jobs.” This view has gained in popularity, increasing from 38% in 2005 (Figure 8). One-quarter (24%) of respondents assign this responsibility to Parliament or the district assembly of which the councillors are members, though the proportion holding this opinion has dropped by 14 percentage points since 2005.

**Figure 8: Who should ensure that local government councillors do their jobs? | Ghana | 2005-2017**



**Respondents were asked:** Who should be responsible for making sure that, once elected, assembly men and women do their jobs?

### Election vs. appointment of MMDCs

Our brief look at Ghanaians' perceptions of local government seems to suggest that there is plenty of room for improvement on all these indicators. But would electing MMDCs, rather than having them appointed, produce such improvements?

Our findings do not show major differences between appointed MMDCs and elected local councillors when it comes to popular trust, perceived corruption, and job performance. On the other hand, one might plausibly argue (though we have no data on this) that MMDCs, being more removed from ordinary citizens, and most often answerable to the appointing authority rather than those they serve, might do even worse than local councillors when it comes to interaction with citizens and willingness to listen. Thus, when voters elect MMDCs, they would at least have the chance to assume the responsibility for making sure they do their jobs.

That would certainly be Ghanaians' expectation: In Afrobarometer's 2012 survey in Ghana, 82% of respondent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that an elected MMDC would be "more accountable and responsive to the needs of the people at the local level" (see Appendix 1 Table A.1). It would also be consistent with arguments by Marshall (1984) that direct election of mayors hinges on leaders being answerable to those who put them in office and by Pan (2005) that direct elections of local leaders made Indonesians hopeful of improvement in accountability and service delivery.

Studies on Ghana's local government system have generally favoured direct election of MMDCs, variously citing benefits for popular sovereignty, legitimacy, and political accountability (see Ayee, 2003; Gyampo, 2007; Debrah, 2009; Jonah, 2005; Coicaud, 2002; Heywood, 2002; and Marshall, 1984).

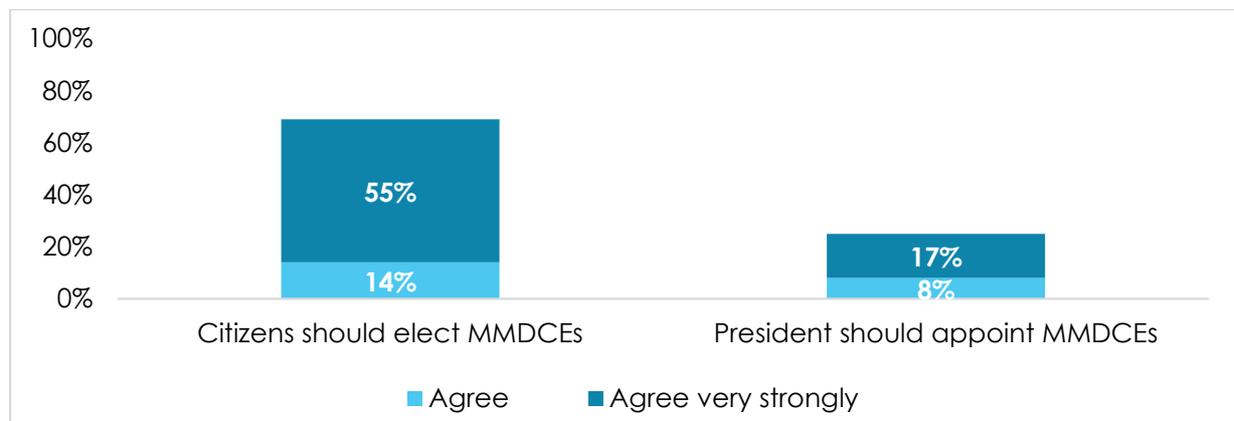
Opponents have cited a number of risks (discussed by Gyampo (2012) and Acheampong (2012)), including:

1. that competent persons may not seek election as MMDC because of the violent and acrimonious nature of Ghana's election campaigns;

2. that the authority and independence of directly elected MMDCEs would be quite vague because local government is dependent on central government funding;
3. that directly electing MMDCEs may lead to dissonance between national and local development agendas; and
4. that an elective MMDCE position may breed corruption as incumbents may always be looking for opportunities to recoup funds invested in election campaigns.

While the debate continues, ordinary Ghanaians have a fairly clear view of what they want: More than two-thirds (69%) say MMDCEs should be elected by voters in the local authority area, including an impressive 55% who say they “agree very strongly” with this option (Figure 9). Just one in four (25%) would prefer to maintain the status quo of MMDCEs appointed by the president with approval by members of the local government council.

**Figure 9: Election vs. appointment of MMDCEs | Ghana | 2017**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Statement 1: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be elected by voters in the local authority area.
- Statement 2: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be appointed by the president with approval by assembly members.

Strong support for making MMDCE positions elective is consistent with findings of previous Afrobarometer surveys as well as surveys by other entities. In 2008 and 2012, majorities (60% and 71%, respectively) of respondents told Afrobarometer that they favoured election of MMDCEs (see Appendix 1 Figure A.4).

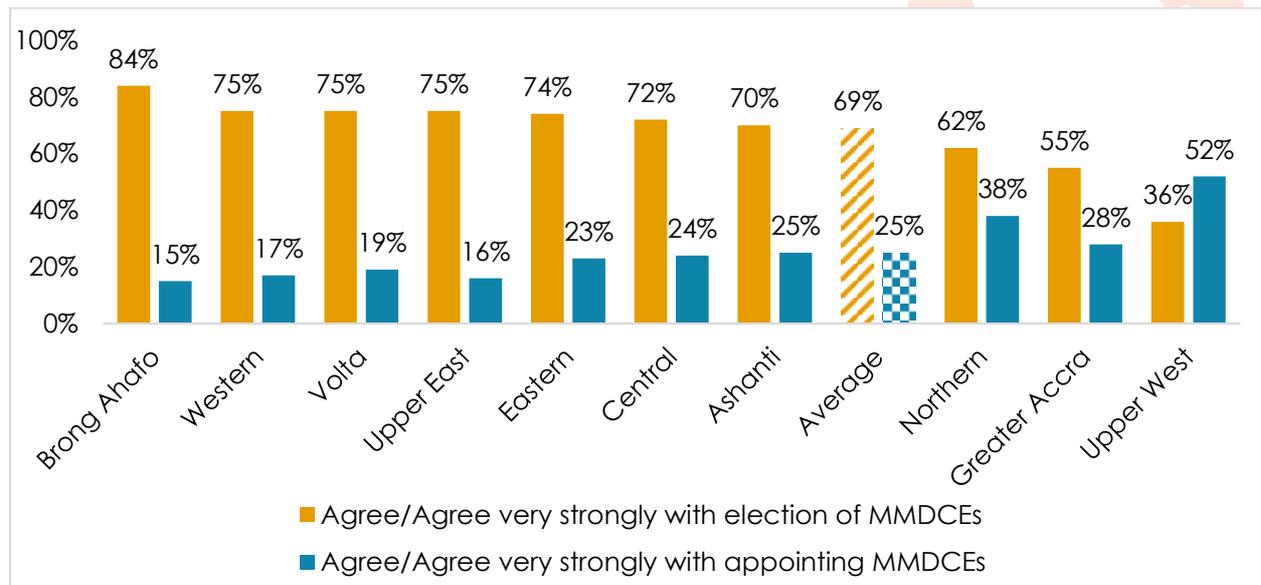
Similarly, consultancy surveys carried out by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) throughout the Western Region of the country in 2010 and 2015 on citizens' participation in local government showed majorities (65% and 74%, respectively) supporting election of MMDCEs. And a CDD-Ghana baseline survey on social accountability in 84 local government areas (i.e. districts) that was part of 2011-2013 project commissioned by the European Union found 79% of respondents in support of elective MMDCEs.

A preference for electing these officials is the majority position in nine of Ghana's 10 regions. The exception is the Upper West Region, where a slim majority (52%) favour the status quo (Figure 10). Further research may be needed to understand why residents in this particular region prefer appointed MMDCEs.

Support for electing MMDCEs does not vary significantly by respondents' political-party affiliation,<sup>1</sup> age, gender, or urban vs. rural settlement location, but is higher among better-educated citizens, ranging from 59% of those without formal schooling to 73% of those with post-secondary qualifications (Figure 11).

<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer determines political-party affiliation based on responses to the questions, “Do you feel close to any particular political party?” and, if yes, “Which party is that?”

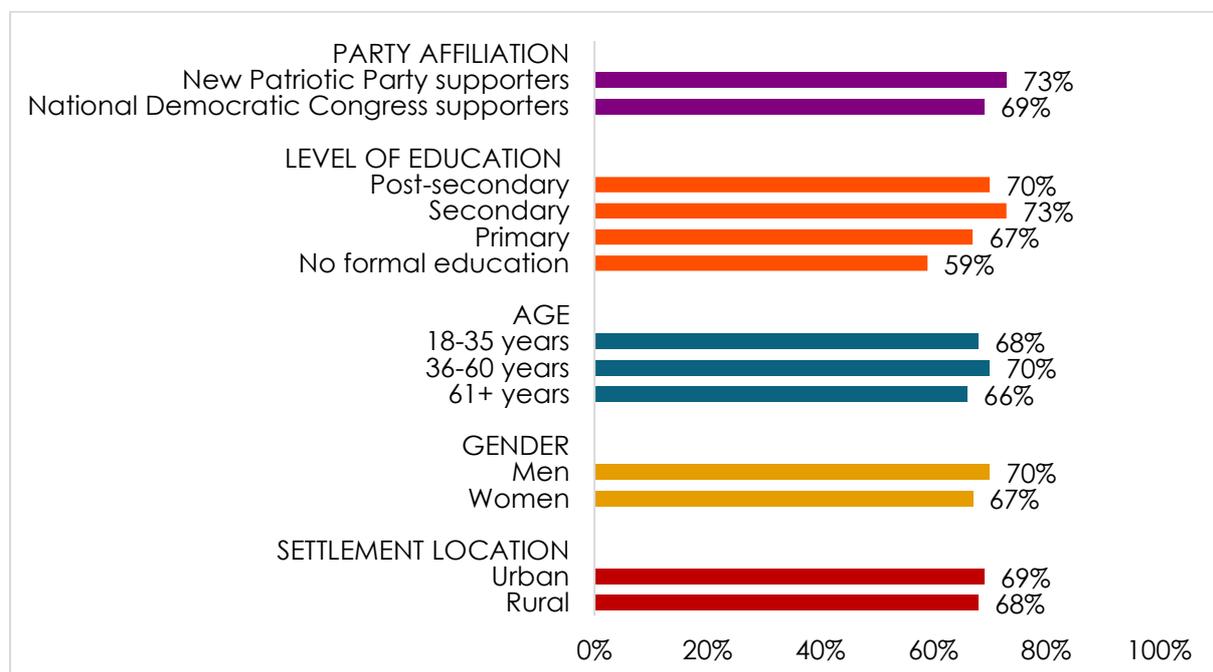
**Figure 10: Election vs. appointment of MMDCEs | by region | Ghana | 2017**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Statement 1: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be elected by voters in the local authority area.
- Statement 2: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be appointed by the president with approval by assembly members.

**Figure 11: Election vs. appointment of MMDCEs | by political-party affiliation, education, age, gender, and settlement location | Ghana | 2017**



(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" that MMDCEs should be elected)

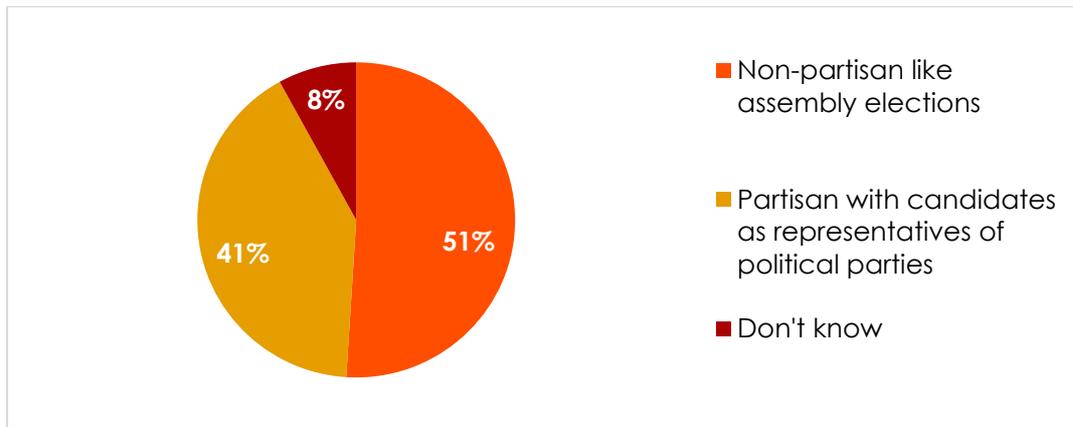
### Partisan vs. non-partisan MMDCE elections

Elections of local government councillors in Ghana are conducted on a non-partisan basis; the Electoral Commission creates common platforms for aspirants to sell their visions to the electorate. Afrobarometer asked respondents, "If citizens were to elect their [MMDCEs], which electoral procedures would you want the country to adopt?" and offered them a

choice between two response options: “MMDCEs should run as non-partisans in a manner similar to how assembly men and women are elected” or “MMDCEs should run as representatives of political parties.”

A slim majority (51%) of Ghanaians prefer that MMDCE elections be conducted in a non-partisan manner like those of local councillors. A sizeable minority (41%), however, want MMDCE elections to be organized along partisan lines, while 8% say they “don’t know” (Figure 12). Support for the non-partisan election procedure for MMDCEs is the majority preference in four regions – Greater Accra (60%), Upper East (55%), Central (54%), and Ashanti (51%) (Table 1). The Brong Ahafo Region is split 50:50. Only 30% of Upper West residents favour the non-partisan option. Support for the partisan option is strongest in the Northern Region (50%).

**Figure 12: Partisan vs. non-partisan election of MMDCEs | Ghana | 2017**



**Respondents were asked:** *If citizens were to elect their metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs, which electoral procedures would you want the country to adopt?*

**Table 1: Partisan vs. non-partisan election of MMDCEs | by region | Ghana | 2017**

	Non-partisan election of MMDCEs	Partisan election of MMDCEs
Greater Accra	60%	23%
Upper East	55%	30%
Central	54%	42%
Ashanti	51%	44%
Brong Ahafo	50%	50%
Northern	47%	50%
Western	46%	44%
Eastern	46%	48%
Volta	45%	46%
Upper West	30%	37%
<b>National average</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>41%</b>

**Respondents were asked:** *If citizens were to elect their metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs, which electoral procedures would you want the country to adopt?*

Interestingly, although a small majority say MMDCE candidates “should run as non-partisans in a manner similar to how assembly men and women are elected,” nearly two-thirds (66%) of respondents do not think that the election of assembly men and women are actually non-partisan as stipulated by law. In all regions except Volta (50%) and Brong Ahafo (49%), at least six in 10 respondents say local councillor elections are in fact partisan (Table 2). Indeed,

this finding confirms the open secret that political parties sponsor candidates to run in local council elections. These partisan infiltrations become evident when local councils meet to confirm the president's nominees for MMDCEs and select presiding members of the councils.



**Table 2: Are local government elections really non-partisan? | by region | Ghana | 2017**

	No, local councillor elections are not really non-partisan	Yes, local councillor elections are non-partisan	Refused/Don't know
Eastern	77%	19%	4%
Western	71%	23%	6%
Upper East	71%	24%	5%
Central	70%	14%	16%
Ashanti	70%	23%	7%
Greater Accra	69%	24%	8%
Upper West	61%	23%	16%
Northern	60%	40%	0%
Volta	50%	37%	13%
Brong Ahafo	49%	49%	3%
<b>National average</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>7%</b>

**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, do you think the district assembly election for assembly men and women is really non-partisan?*

In fact, even among respondents who say they prefer non-partisan MMDCE elections “in a manner similar to how assembly men and women are elected,” 70% say current assembly elections are not really non-partisan (see Appendix 1 Table A.2). Which conclusions do we draw from this finding? On the one hand, respondents who say they favour non-partisan MMDCE elections may simply be expressing their faith in a non-partisan local government election framework as stipulated by law – and perhaps hoping for a clean-up of the framework from partisan infiltrations. On the other hand, they may recommend the non-partisan system as enshrined in law knowing very well that in practice it will be partisan – a sort of tacit and covert support for partisan MMDCE elections. One thing is clear: There is a considerable lack of clarity regarding the partisan or non-partisan nature of local government elections.

### What fuels support for elective MMDCEs?

Given strong support, across almost all major socio-demographic groups, for electing MMDCEs, it may be of interest to examine which factors might be driving this support. From arguments in the literature cited above, we expect a number of attributes and attitudes quantified in Afrobarometer surveys to be related to the preference for elective MMDCEs. We group these attributes and attitudes under the following categories:

#### **Transparency and accountability**

- *Perceived unlikelihood that citizens can get information on district development plans/budgets from MMDAs*
- *Willingness to join others to demand action from government*
- *Support for regular, open, and honest elections as the best means of choosing leaders*
- *Belief that voters are responsible for ensuring that members of Parliament (MPs)/local government councillors do their jobs*

#### **Responsiveness**

- *Perception that MPs/local government councillors don't try to listen to ordinary people*

## Legitimacy

- Perceived corruption among MMDCEs/local government councillors
- Disapproval of the job performance of MMDCEs/local government councillors

We also expect a number of social demographics, such as respondents' level of education and gender, to moderate the observed preference for election of MMDCEs.

## Contingency analysis

Our analysis indicates a moderate level of association between support for election of MMDCEs and all of our selected attributes and demographic factors, as shown in the Cramer's V statistics in Table 3. The corresponding probability values (p-values) establish that except in the case of settlement location, the observed relationships are highly significant, meaning they are not due to chance.

**Table 3: Support for elective MMDCEs, by transparency and accountability, responsiveness, legitimacy, and demographic factors | Ghana | 2017**

		Preferred mode for selecting MMDCEs		Cramer's V	
		Appoint	Elect	Value	Sig.
<b>Transparency and accountability</b>					
Getting information on MMDA plans and budgets	<i>Likely</i>	30%	66%	0.139	0.000
	<i>Unlikely</i>	22%	72%		
Join others to demand action from government	<i>No, but would if</i>	24%	71%	0.140	0.000
	<i>Yes or would never</i>	25%	66%		
Mode of selecting leaders	<i>Other modes</i>	35%	60%	0.229	0.000
	<i>Election</i>	23%	71%		
Ensuring MPs do their jobs	<i>Others responsible</i>	24%	69%	0.149	0.000
	<i>Voters responsible</i>	27%	69%		
Ensuring local government councillors do their jobs	<i>Others responsible</i>	26%	67%	0.150	0.000
	<i>Voters responsible</i>	24%	71%		
<b>Responsiveness</b>					
MPs listen to ordinary people	<i>Often/always</i>	27%	69%	0.062	0.005
	<i>Never/only sometimes</i>	24%	69%		
Local govt councillors listen to ordinary people	<i>Often/always</i>	26%	70%	0.077	0.000
	<i>Never/only sometimes</i>	24%	69%		
<b>Legitimacy</b>					
Perception of corruption among MMDCEs	<i>Not corrupt</i>	25%	72%	0.159	0.000
	<i>Corrupt</i>	26%	69%		
Perception of corruption among local govt. councillors	<i>Not corrupt</i>	27%	70%	0.169	0.000
	<i>Corrupt</i>	25%	70%		
Job performance of MMDCEs	<i>Approve</i>	26%	70%	0.140	0.000
	<i>Disapprove</i>	27%	68%		
Job performance of local government councillors	<i>Approve</i>	26%	70%	0.105	0.000
	<i>Disapprove</i>	24%	69%		
<b>Respondent demographics</b>					
Level of education	<i>No or informal</i>	30%	59%	0.085	0.000
	<i>At least primary</i>	23%	71%		
Gender	<i>Female</i>	23%	67%	0.116	0.000
	<i>Male</i>	26%	70%		
Settlement location	<i>Urban</i>	24%	69%	0.043	0.219
	<i>Rural</i>	26%	68%		

## Regression analysis

Based on the observed association between support for elective MMDCEs and various attributes and attitudes, we construct two binary logistic regression models (the standard and region fixed effects models) to determine the direction and significance of the predictive impact of each of these attributes. The first model regresses support for elective MMDCEs (the dependent variable, coded 1=support election and 0=support appointment) on the accountability, responsiveness, and legitimacy variables whilst controlling for socio-demographic factors such as gender and settlement location.

We introduced dummies for region fixed effects to create the second model to control for variations in the outcome variable as a result of differences in support for elective MMDCEs across regions.<sup>2</sup>

As reflected in the odd ratios (Exp(B))<sup>3</sup> and significance levels of the standard model depicted in Table 4, the transparency and accountability variables are much more influential in predicting support for elective MMDCEs than the other variables. For instance, citizens who think it is unlikely that they could get information about district development plans and budgets from their MMDAs are 1.658 times (or 65.8%) more likely to favour election of MMDCEs than those who think they can probably obtain such information.

**Table 4: Factors affecting support for elective MMDCEs** | standard logistic regression model | Ghana | 2017

	Exp(B)	Standard error	Sig.
Constant	0.672	0.386	0.302
<b>Panel A: Transparency and accountability</b>			
Getting access to MMDA plans and budgets: Unlikely	<b>1.658</b>	0.151	<b>0.001</b>
Join others to demand action from govt: If had the chance	1.261	0.156	0.138
Support which mode of selection of leaders: Election	<b>1.919</b>	0.174	<b>0.000</b>
Whose responsibility - MPs do their jobs: Voters	<b>0.595</b>	0.193	<b>0.007</b>
Whose responsibility - local govt reps do their jobs: Voters	<b>1.446</b>	0.194	<b>0.057</b>
<b>Panel B: Elected officials' responsiveness</b>			
How often MPs listen: Never or only sometimes	<b>1.601</b>	0.234	<b>0.045</b>
How often local govt reps listen: Never or only sometimes	0.795	0.213	0.281
<b>Panel C: Legitimacy</b>			
MMDCEs corrupt: Some, most, or all of them	0.763	0.408	0.508
Local government reps corrupt: Some, most, or all of them	1.365	0.360	0.387
Approve/disapprove MMDCE job performance: Disapprove	1.155	0.182	0.428
Approve/disapprove local govt rep job performance: Disapprove	0.870	0.182	0.444
<b>Panel D: Demographics</b>			
Level of education: At least primary schooling	<b>1.439</b>	0.194	<b>0.061</b>
Gender: Male	0.904	0.147	0.492

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 for details on some key regression model performance statistics estimated for the two models, which showed that overall, both models performed well.

<sup>3</sup> An odds ratio (OR) is a measure of association between an exposure and an outcome. The OR represents the odds that an outcome (e.g. support for elective MMDCE positions) will occur given a particular exposure (e.g. the perception that citizens probably can't obtain information about district plans/budgets), compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure.

Similarly, Ghanaians who support elections in general and those who believe it is voters' responsibility to ensure that local government representatives do their jobs are 1.919 and 1.446 times (i.e. 91.9% and 44.6%), respectively, more likely to demand elective MMDCEs than their counterparts with contrary positions. The influences of these factors on the outcome variable (i.e. support for elective MMDCEs) are significant at the 99% and 90% confidence levels, respectively.

Quite unexpectedly, citizens who think voters have the responsibility to ensure that parliamentarians do their job are 59.5% less likely to support elective MMDCEs. This finding is highly significant ( $p\text{-value}=0.007$ ) and may suggest that citizens do not project their views about the conduct of national-level leaders onto their expectations of local-level leaders.

The findings in Table 4 did not change much with the introduction of the region fixed effects into the model; the transparency and accountability factors maintained their stronger influence on support for elective MMDCEs (Table 5).

**Table 5: Factors affecting support for elective MMDCEs** | region fixed effects logistic regression model | Ghana | 2017

	Exp(B)	Standard error	Sig. (p-value)
Constant	<b>0.319</b>	0.639	<b>0.074</b>
<b>Panel A: Transparency and accountability</b>			
Getting access to MMDA plans and budgets: Unlikely	<b>1.551</b>	0.158	<b>0.005</b>
Join others to demand action from govt: If had the chance	<b>1.330</b>	0.164	<b>0.083</b>
Support which mode of selection of leaders: Election	<b>1.544</b>	0.185	<b>0.019</b>
Whose responsibility - MPs do their jobs: Voters	<b>0.704</b>	0.196	<b>0.072</b>
Whose responsibility - local govt reps do their jobs: Voters	1.323	0.197	0.154
<b>Panel B: Elected officials' responsiveness</b>			
How often MPs listen: Never or only sometimes	<b>1.560</b>	0.241	<b>0.065</b>
How often local govt reps listen: Never or only sometimes	0.838	0.219	0.421
<b>Panel C: Legitimacy</b>			
MMDCEs corrupt: Some, most, or all of them	0.667	0.432	0.349
Local government reps corrupt: Some, most, or all of them	1.573	0.379	0.232
Approve/disapprove MMDCE job performance: Disapprove	1.299	0.189	0.168
Approve/disapprove local govt rep job performance: Disapprove	0.843	0.189	0.366
<b>Panel D: Demographics</b>			
Level of education: At least primary schooling	1.210	0.217	0.380
Gender: Male	0.870	0.151	0.356
<b>Panel E: Region fixed effects</b>			
Western	<b>5.963</b>	0.596	<b>0.003</b>
Central	<b>3.099</b>	0.572	<b>0.048</b>
Greater Accra	1.476	0.531	0.463
Volta	<b>4.228</b>	0.586	<b>0.014</b>
Eastern	<b>3.037</b>	0.544	<b>0.041</b>
Ashanti	<b>2.573</b>	0.532	<b>0.076</b>
Brong Ahafo	<b>5.958</b>	0.555	<b>0.001</b>
Northern	1.344	0.541	0.584
Upper East	<b>4.508</b>	0.684	<b>0.028</b>

The region fixed effects, taken together, were statistically significant (Wald statistic for region (overall)=46.894, p-value=0.000), implying that the observed differences in support for elective MMDCEs across regions are real and not due to chance.

Indeed, citizens living in Eastern, Central, Volta, Upper East, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Western are 3.037 to 5.963 times (or 204% to 496%) more likely to demand election of MMDCEs than those living in Upper West Region, the reference region.

The finding that transparency and accountability variables have a strong effect on support for elective MMDCEs aligns with citizens' expectations expressed in the Ghana 2012 Afrobarometer survey as well the arguments of other scholars (e.g. Marshall, 1984; Pan, 2005).

## Conclusions and policy considerations

Ghanaians' support for making MMDCE positions elective has been consistent across surveys and years as well as key socio-demographic groups, and aligns with the current political administration's agenda. Our analysis suggests that popular concerns about government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness help drive support for election of MMDCEs.

A number of policy considerations flow from our analysis:

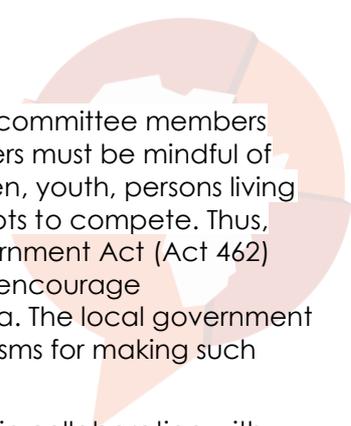
1. **Electing MMDCEs:** The president has strong public backing for fast-tracking the process of amending Article 243(1) of the Constitution to make MMDCE positions elective. This is in line with citizens' concerns about accountability and will help address the problem, identified by the government's Decentralisation Policy Review (2007), of chief executives who are accountable to their political masters but not to the people they serve. As Boateng (1996) stated, the will of the people is the dominant political factor in the modern democratic process, and free, fair, transparent, and periodic elections are a major vehicle through which the people can manifest their will and hold leaders, including local leaders, accountable.

In addition to election making MMDCEs accountable to the grass roots, it will help secure their tenure in office, since they cannot be dismissed except through impeachment – or at the next election.

Making MMDCE positions elective may also attract a new crop of politicians devoted to local-level development rather than national-level politics. Such grass-roots politicians will have to campaign on well-defined and coordinated programs that are aligned with the national development agenda and can be incorporated into the district medium-term development plan.

2. **Partisan vs. non-partisan elections:** The data, like reality, are far less clear on this point. While half of Ghanaians say they prefer non-partisan elections for MMDCEs "in a manner similar to how assembly men and women are elected," most of these same people also say that current elections of assembly men and women are in fact not non-partisan. Almost as many citizens, meanwhile, opt outright for partisan elections – similar to the position espoused by the president, who in his 2018 State of the Nation Address to Parliament (Otec FM, 2018) argued for amending the Constitution to pave the way for political-party involvement in all local government elections.

While our data offer no clear answer, the authors would side with the president and the citizens who either state their preference for partisan elections or tacitly endorse an election format that is in practice – if not in law – partisan. One benefit of going fully partisan would be aligning official/legal policy and actual practice. Another might be increasing the proportion of local government officials who are competent, locally respected representatives rather than political appointees foisted on a supposedly non-partisan local governance structure. To make things clear and consistent, the same election format should be considered for MMDCEs, all local councillors (including the one-third currently appointed by the president), and unit committee representatives.



However, if MMDCEs, local government councillors, and unit committee members are selected through partisan elections, policy decision-makers must be mindful of challenges that minority and marginalized groups (e.g. women, youth, persons living with disability, ethnic minorities, etc.) may face in their attempts to compete. Thus, the amendments to relevant sections of the 1993 Local Government Act (Act 462) and the 1994 District Assembly Elections Act (Act 473) should encourage representation for such groups in each local government area. The local government service should lead in fashioning the modalities and mechanisms for making such legislation functional.

3. **Sensitizing and educating citizens:** Local government bodies, in collaboration with civil society organizations, should educate and sensitize citizens to enlighten them on the responsibilities of elected local government officials (including MMDCEs) and citizens' own role in local governance. This will enable citizens to effectively demand accountability in everyday governance as well as at election time.

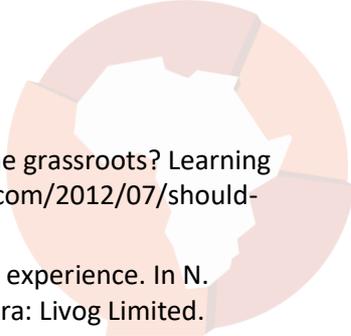
Such education/sensitization programs should also reorient electorates toward making demands for collective or community goods rather than personalized demands on elected local leaders to avoid a replication of what we continue to witness with respect to demands on parliamentarians.

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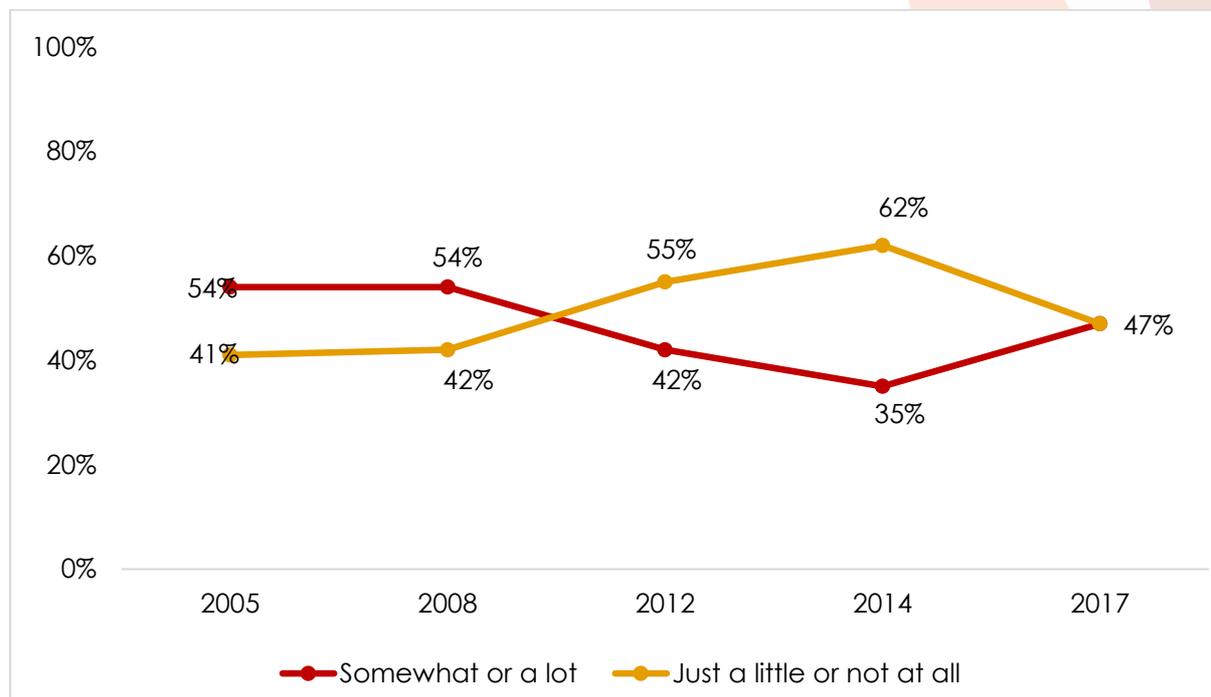
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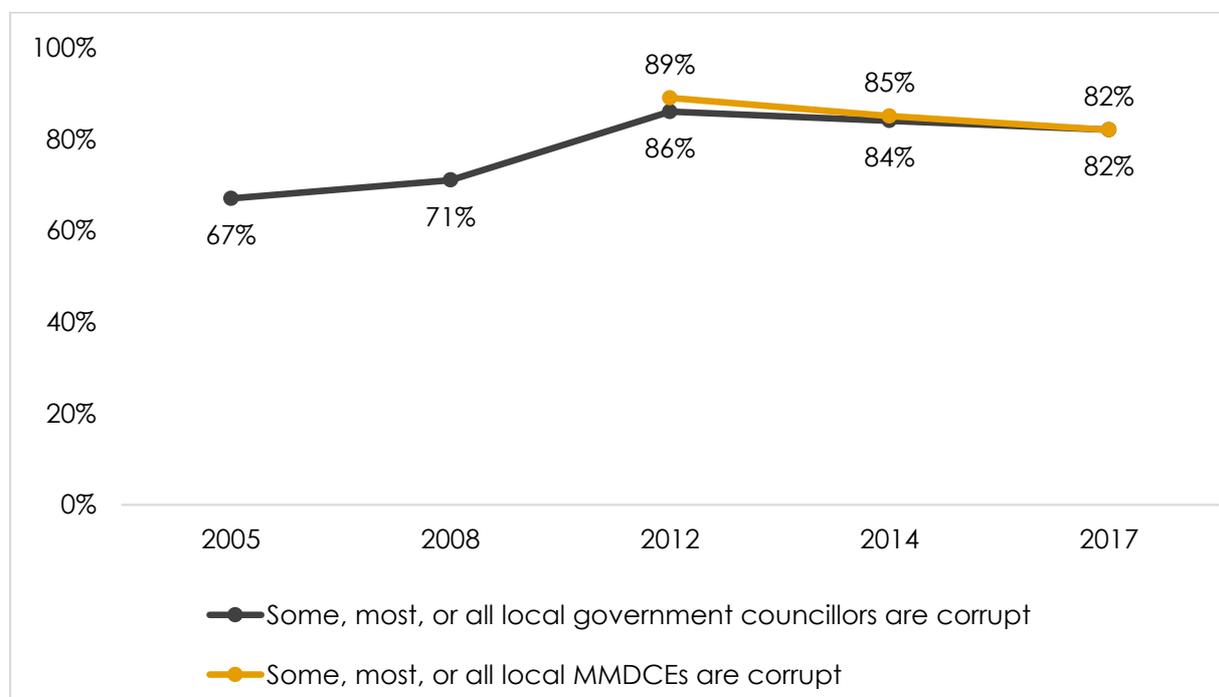
## Appendix 1

**Figure A.1: Trust in elected local government council | Ghana | 2005-2017**



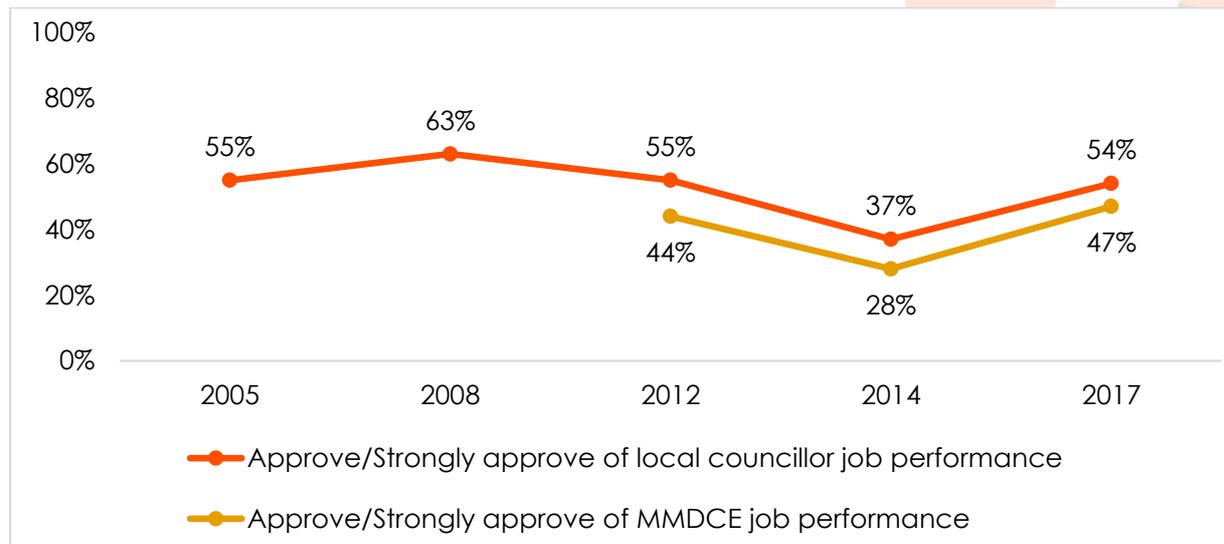
**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Your local government council?

**Figure A.2: Perceived corruption among MMDCEs and elected local government councillors | Ghana | 2017**



**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Assembly men and women? Your metropolitan, municipal, or district chief executive?

**Figure A.3: Evaluation of job performance of key local government officials | Ghana | 2005-2017**



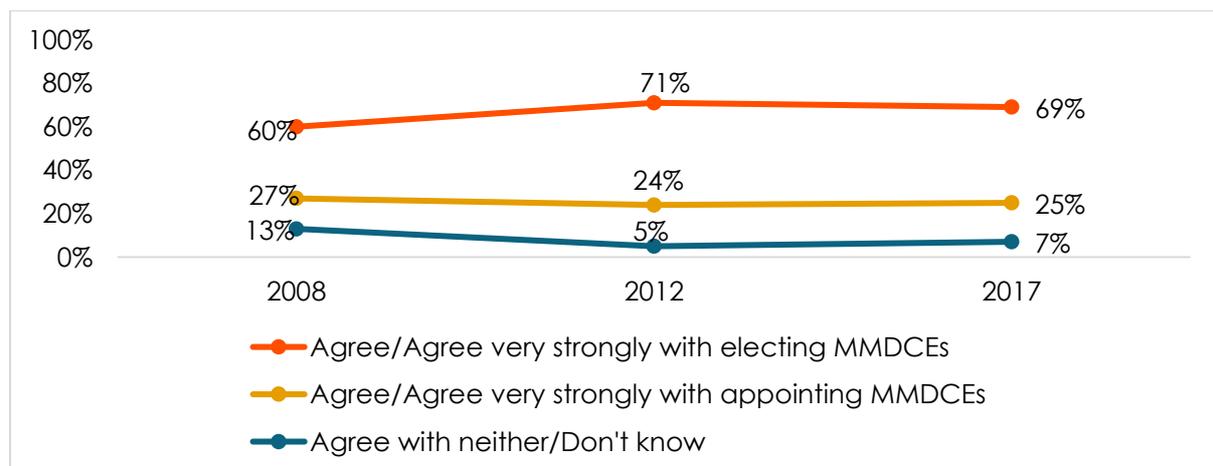
**Respondents were asked:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past year, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Your assembly man or woman? Your metropolitan, municipal, or district chief executive?

**Table A.1: Elected MMDCEs will be accountable and responsive at local level | Ghana | 2012**

Strongly agree or agree	82%
Strongly disagree or disagree	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	5%
Don't know	4%

**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: Elected metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives (MMDCEs) will be more accountable and responsive to the needs of the people at the local level.

**Figure A.4: Election vs. appointment of MMDCEs | Ghana | 2008-2017**



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be elected by voters in the local authority area.  
 Statement 2: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be appointed by the president with approval by assembly members.

**Table A.2: Local government election partisan or non-partisan, by preferred MMDCE election format | Ghana | 2017**

	District assembly elections really non-partisan?		Test statistic and significance	
	No	Yes	Cramer's V	p-value
Prefer non-partisan election like district assembly elections	70%	26%	0.274	<b>0.000</b>
Prefer partisan with MMDCEs as representatives of political parties	65%	29%		

**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

*Statement 1: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be elected by voters in the local authority area.*

*Statement 2: The metropolitan, municipal, and district chief executives or MMDCEs should be appointed by the president with approval by assembly members.*

## Appendix 2

### Overall performance of models

The -2 Log likelihood for the constant-only standard model is 1209.123, and that for the same model with all the predictors is 1155.740. Similarly, the estimate of the model with region fixed effects with only the constant produced a -2 Log likelihood of 1155.740. Adding the predictors lowered the -2 Log likelihood to 1106.144. The full model -2 log likelihoods are lower than the initial ones, meaning the inclusion of predictors improved the performance of the model. This is confirmed by the highly significant chi-square statistics (standard model:  $\chi^2 = 53.383$  with p-value = 0.000; model with region fixed effects:  $\chi^2 = 102.98$ , with p-value = 0.000).

The Nagelkerke R-square – a pseudo coefficient of determination as found in ordinary least squares (OLS) – is 0.072 for the standard model with all predictors and 0.136 for the model with region fixed effects. This means the predictors in these models together explained 7.2% and 13.6%, respectively, of the variations in support for election of MMDCEs. The Nagelkerke's R-square is an approximation of the OLS coefficient of determination and should not be overly emphasized.

Lastly, the insignificant Hosmer and Lemeshow test chi-square statistics for the two models (standard model  $HL\chi^2 = 13.592$  with p-value = 0.093; model with region fixed effects  $HL\chi^2 = 4.323$  with p-value = 0.827) show that the models fit the data well. Note that the Hosmer & Lemeshow test chi-square statistic is dependent on sample size and should not be interpreted in isolation.

# AFRO BAROMETER

LET THE PEOPLE HAVE A SAY



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