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## **ZIMBABWEANS' (MOSTLY) TOLERANT VIEWS ON CITIZENSHIP**

by Eldred V. Masunungure and Heather Koga

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### **Introduction**

Citizenship is about the right to belong to a state and enjoy its rights while also fulfilling obligations. Without citizenship, a person can neither vote nor be voted into public office. Such statelessness has, in many an African country, been at the heart of numerous post-colonial conflicts. From Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa to Uganda and Kenya in East Africa through to Zambia and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, the question of who is or is not a citizen is frequently a fiercely contested and unsettled issue. Often, the question of who is and is not a citizen has been politically driven, for example, to prevent a political rival from challenging the incumbent, or to abridge the right to vote of a whole group of perceived enemies of the regime in power. This is part of the repertoire of juridical exclusion and discrimination that is widespread throughout the continent.

This has also been the sad state of post-2000 Zimbabwe. The emergence of a robust opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, which was formed in September 1999, posed a real threat to the long-ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The contentious issue of citizenship, which had been largely dormant in the previous two decades, assumed a foremost position on the country's political agenda. It still occupies centre stage and has been one of the unresolved issues in the country's search for a new democratic constitution.

The immigrant population, especially those whose parents and ancestors had migrated to Zimbabwe in search of employment from countries like Malawi and Mozambique, and who were perceived to be largely pro-MDC supporters, became a target as the country prepared for both the 2000 parliamentary election and the crucial 2002 presidential election. The regime disparagingly referred to the migrant population as 'totemless aliens', and via citizenship legislation, it deliberately excluded these populations from voting and benefiting from other government programmes like land redistribution. The vast majority of the so-called 'totemless' people had grandparents and even great-grandparents born in Zimbabwe, and had no claim to citizenship in any other country; indeed they knew no other country.

There are many ways of gaining a country's citizenship, the most common being by birth, registration, naturalisation, descent, or adoption. To our knowledge, no systematic research has been conducted to find out what ordinary Zimbabweans think about this important matter which affects a large proportion of the country's population. The Afrobarometer survey, on which this bulletin is based, sought to fill this research gap.

### **Afrobarometer Surveys**

The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of public attitude surveys, covering up to 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013). It measures public attitudes on democracy and its alternatives, evaluations of the quality of governance and economic performance. In addition, the survey assesses the views of the electorate on critical political issues in the surveyed countries. The Afrobarometer's main goal is to produce scientifically reliable data on public opinion in Africa while strengthening institutional capacity for survey research, and research findings to inform policy and practice. The Afrobarometer also provides comparisons over time, as four rounds of surveys have been held from 1999 to 2008 and Round 5 is currently underway.

Afrobarometer surveys use a common survey instrument and methodology. The instrument asks a standard set of questions that permits systematic comparison in public attitudes across countries and

over time. The methodology was based on a national probability sample of 2400 adult Zimbabweans selected to represent all adult citizens of voting age, allowing for inferences with a margin of sampling error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. The sample was drawn randomly based on Probability Proportionate to Population Size (PPPS), thus taking account of population distributions, gender as well as rural-urban divides. The sampling process ensured that every adult Zimbabwean citizen had an equal and known chance of being selected in the sample. Fieldwork in Zimbabwe was conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), between 16 and 30 July 2012.

### **Zimbabwean Views on Citizenship in Comparative Perspective**

The Afrobarometer poses six citizenship scenarios and asks respondents if people in each situation “have a right to be a citizen of Zimbabwe” i.e. people who have “the right to get a Zimbabwean passport and to vote in Zimbabwean elections if they are at least 18 years old.” What do Zimbabweans think on this important matter?

On the whole, Zimbabweans are tolerant of all types of citizenship except that which confers dual citizenship. They especially embrace a person born in Zimbabwe with at least one Zimbabwean parent. Up to 85% say citizenship should be extended to such a person (Table 1), which compares very well with 88% of Ghanaians and 87% of Batswana who hold the same opinion. The figure is well ahead of neighbours Malawi and South Africa, where there is 77% support.

**Table 1: Views of Zimbabweans on Citizenship, 2012**

In your opinion, which of the following people have a right to be a citizen of Zimbabwe?	Yes	No	Don't Know
A. A person born in Zimbabwe with one Zimbabwean and one non-Zimbabwean parent?	85	13	2
B. A person born in Zimbabwe with two non-Zimbabwean parents?	64	35	1
C. The wife of a Zimbabwean man, even if she was born outside of Zimbabwe?	81	18	1
D. The husband of a Zimbabwean woman, even if he was born outside of Zimbabwe?	57	42	1
E. A person who came from another country, but who has lived and worked in Zimbabwe for many years, and wishes to make Zimbabwe his or her home?	68	28	4
F. A person who wishes to hold dual citizenship, that is, to be a citizen both of Zimbabwe and some other country?	22	71	6

Zimbabweans are equally enthusiastic about granting citizenship to the *wife* of a Zimbabwean man even if she was born outside the country. Up to eight in ten (81%) are supportive, compared to 87% who hold the same view in Botswana. In other African countries, the proportions are much lower, e.g. 62% in South Africa, 61% in Ghana, and only 56% in Malawi (Table 2).

**Table 2: Views on Citizenship of Citizens' Spouses in Five African Countries (% yes)**

Type of citizenship granted	Zimbabwe	South Africa	Botswana	Malawi	Ghana
To wife of citizen husband	81	62	87	56	61
To husband of citizen wife	57	48	53	47	54

However, without exception, Africans are less enthusiastic about granting citizenship to foreign husbands of citizen wives (Table 2). Zimbabweans themselves have lukewarm support for granting citizenship to the 'foreign' husband of a Zimbabwean woman: 57% support it, but over four in ten (42%) reject such an offer. Small majorities in Ghana (54%) and Botswana (53%) endorse citizenship for foreign husbands, but less than half in South Africa (48%) and Malawi (47%) are prepared to do so.

Afrobarometer Round 5 results in these five African countries also show that Africans are rather wary of extending rights of citizenship to a person with two non-citizen parents even if the person is born in the country. Zimbabwe is the most liberal in this regard with 64% endorsing citizenship, well ahead of their fellow Africans in South Africa (58%), Malawi (52%), Ghana (50%) and Botswana (45%), where less than half support citizenship in these circumstances.

Two thirds (68%) of Zimbabwean respondents are also happy granting citizenship to those who have lived and worked in Zimbabwe and seek to be citizens. This proportion is 10-percentage points lower than in Botswana (78%), but higher than in Malawi (64%) and Ghana (60%), while South Africa has the lowest level of support with only half (50%) of its respondents prepared to extend citizenship to this group of people. The aversion of South Africans may be related to the sense of being swamped by Africans from other countries (especially from Zimbabwe), an attitude that spasmodically explodes into xenophobic attacks on 'foreign' Africans.

The last in the series of questions concerned dual citizenship, which is in fact one of the most contentious issues in the on-going process of crafting a new constitution for Zimbabwe. Of the six citizenship scenarios, granting citizenship to a person who is already a citizen of another country is the only one rejected by Zimbabweans, and in fact it is opposed by a large majority (71%). This matter is particularly touchy because of the millions of Zimbabweans who left the country post-2000

and are now residing in their host countries, with many having acquired citizenship in those countries, and yet still aspiring to keep their Zimbabwean citizenship as well. Less than a quarter (22%) of Zimbabweans agrees that dual citizenship should be an option (Table 1).

But Zimbabweans are not alone in their aversion to dual citizenship. In Ghana, the most liberal among the five countries in this respect, less than a third (31%) support dual citizenship, while in South Africa, with reputedly the most democratic and liberal constitution in the world, only 22% are supportive. Support is even lower in Botswana (13%), and Malawi (11%) is at the bottom of the league.

### **Popular Views on Citizenship by Social and Demographic Profiles**

Having presented the popular views of a select group of African countries on the citizenship question, we now focus specifically on Zimbabwe, highlighting the social and demographic profiles of respondents vis-à-vis their attitudes regarding each citizenship type. Readers should note that as we disaggregate, some precision is lost, as smaller sub-groups have larger margins of error. The disaggregated analysis will focus mainly on areas where there are significant differences, such as between findings in rural and urban areas.

Before presenting the results, we should mention that the fieldwork for the survey actually started the week that the first official draft of the Parliamentary Constitution Select Committee (COPAC) was produced. Chapter 3 of the draft provides for citizenship by “birth, descent or registration” and says that: “All Zimbabwean citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship and are equally subject to the duties and obligations of citizenship”. It left the contentious question of dual citizenship to the legislature, which, through an Act of Parliament, may make provision for “the prohibition or permitting of dual citizenship in respect of citizens by descent or registration”. Are the views of COPAC consistent with those of the public?

### ***Right to be Zimbabwean: Born in Zimbabwe with one Non-Citizen Parent***

As already noted, Zimbabweans are enthusiastic about granting citizenship to those born in Zimbabwe even when one of the parents is non-Zimbabwean. There is a perfect convergence of views on this with 85% of both males and females agreeing to extending citizenship to such people. Urban and rural respondents are also almost equally divided (87% and 84%, respectively). However, although all ten provinces have large majorities in support, there is a significant regional variation, with the Midlands having the highest proportion (93%) who are happy to grant citizenship to this class of people, followed closely by Manicaland (92%) and Matabeleland South (91%) (Table 2). At the other end of the continuum is Matabeleland North, where only two thirds (66%) are receptive to granting such people the right to Zimbabwean citizenship, followed by Mashonaland West (79%) and its neighbour, Mashonaland East (82%). The survey finds no significant age or partisan differences on this matter.

**Table 3: Popular Views on Right to Zimbabwean Citizenship, by Province (% ‘Yes’)**

In your opinion, which of the following people have a right to be a citizen of Zimbabwe?	Hre	Byo	Mid	Mas	M/E	M/W	M/C	M/S	M/N	Man	Tot
<b>A.</b> A person born in Zimbabwe with one Zimbabwean and one non-Zimbabwean parent?	85	87	93	87	82	79	86	91	66	92	85
<b>B.</b> A person born in Zimbabwe with two non-Zimbabwean parents?	71	82	59	43	50	70	76	81	52	60	64
<b>C.</b> The wife of a Zimbabwean man, even if she was born outside of	78	99	95	74	77	68	90	83	63	88	81

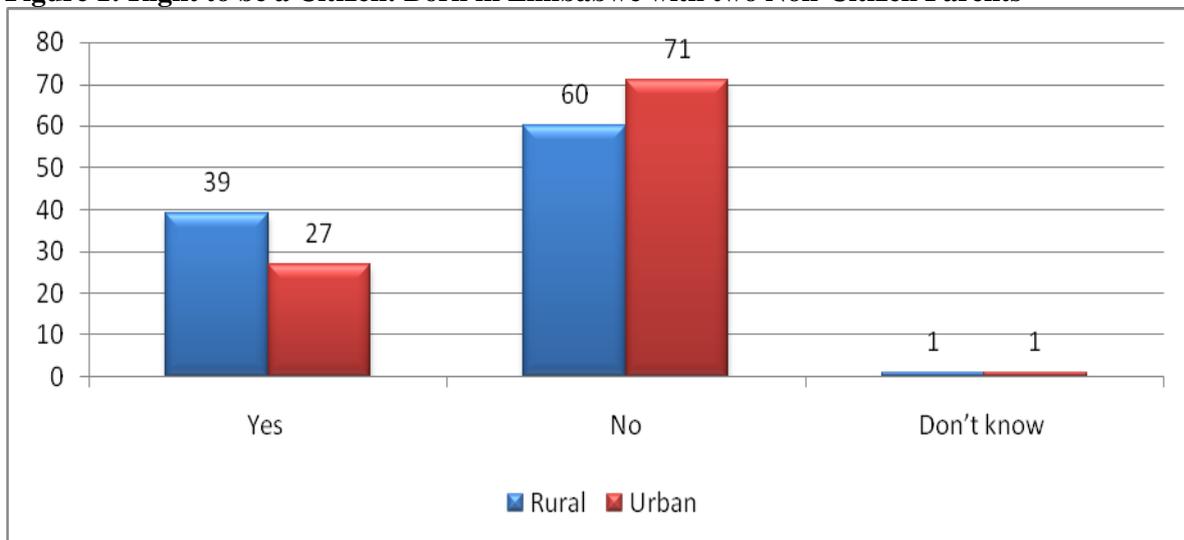
Zimbabwe?											
<b>D.</b> The husband of a Zimbabwean woman, even if he was born outside of Zimbabwe?	49	82	80	39	32	50	69	69	47	63	57
<b>E.</b> A person who came from another country, but who has lived and worked in Zimbabwe for many years, and wishes to make Zimbabwe his or her home?	74	74	74	55	63	55	74	67	66	80	68
<b>F.</b> A person who wishes to hold dual citizenship, that is, to be a citizen both of Zimbabwe and some other country?	17	32	25	13	27	20	15	45	27	16	22

**Key:** Hre= Harare, Byo=Bulawayo, Mid=Midlands, Mas=Masvingo, M/E=Mashonaland East, M/W=Mashonaland West, M/C=Mashonaland Central, M/S=Matabeleland South, M/N=Matabeleland North and Man= Manicaland

**Right to be a Zimbabwean: Born in Zimbabwe with Two Non-Citizen Parents**

We earlier reported that Zimbabweans are not as tolerant of extending citizenship to people born in the country but with both parents being non-Zimbabwean; only 64% supported this. There are no significant differences based on gender or age. However, the survey exposes an 11 percentage point difference across residence, with 71% of urbanites happy to grant citizenship, compared to 60% of rural folk (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Right to be a Citizen: Born in Zimbabwe with two Non-Citizen Parents**



There are also wide differences along partisan lines, with just above seven in ten (71%) MDC-T voters in support of extending citizenship, in contrast to less than six in ten (58%) among their ZANU-PF rivals. A provincial breakdown (Table 3, part B) produces a wide variation in public opinion, with majorities in Masvingo rejecting granting citizenship to this group of people (just 43% support). Mashonaland East is split in half on this matter, while Matabeleland North (52% support) is not far behind. The most tolerant province is Bulawayo, where 82% have no qualms about extending such citizenship, closely followed by Matabeleland South. It is not entirely clear why there is such a wide regional disparity but we speculate that habitat (rural/urban) and party affiliation have a bearing on this as rural dwellers and ZANU-PF partisans are more likely to be less tolerant of granting citizenship to Zimbabwe-born persons but with two non-Zimbabwean parents than urban folk who

support other parties. This appears to be the case in the Masvingo and Mashonaland East where ZANU-PF enjoys twice as much support as its MDC-T rival. Both provinces are predominantly rural, so is Matabeleland North which is also less tolerant on this matter.

**Right to be a Zimbabwe Citizen: Wife of Zimbabwean Man**

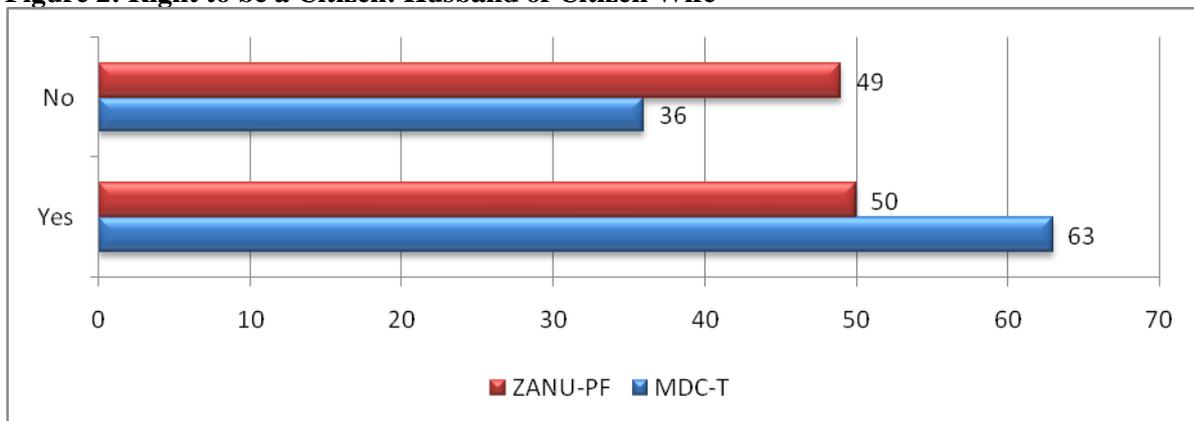
It has already been noted that Zimbabweans are keen to extend citizenship to the wife of a citizen, with 81% supportive. In Zimbabwean lingo, such a wife is like a muroora (daughter-in-law) to Zimbabwe and it is not clear whether the high percentage is influenced by cultural practices or the fact that the late First Lady of independent Zimbabwe, Sally Mugabe, was herself from Ghana. This explanation is improbable, if only because Mugabe’s home province, Mashonaland West, only shows lukewarm support for granting this type of citizenship: just over two thirds (68%) are in support, compared to almost all Bulawayo residents (99%) and 95% in Midlands. The lowest support for granting this type of citizenship is in Matabeleland North, where only 63% say ‘Yes’.

We again find that urban Zimbabweans are more supportive than their rural counterparts: 85% versus 79%. The survey shows no gender gap in responses, but an age gap appears with the 46-60 age group most prepared to extend such citizenship (86%), compared to 80% of the youth (18-30 years), 82% amongst the middle-aged (31-45 years), and 78% of their elders (61+ years old). A distinct partisan gap also appears: 86% of MDC-T stalwarts are amenable to granting citizenship, compared to just over three quarters (77%) of voters aligned with ZANU-PF.

**Right to be a Zimbabwe Citizen: Husband of Zimbabwean Woman**

As noted above, there is only lukewarm support for extending citizenship to the foreign husband of a citizen wife, that is, to a mukwasha (son-in-law): only 57% are agreeable. Thirteen percentage points separate the two major political parties (Figure 2), with 63% of MDC-T voters agreeable, a position shared by just half (50%) of their ZANU-PF rivals.

**Figure 2: Right to be a Citizen: Husband of Citizen Wife**



We also find a small but significant gender gap whereby slightly more women (59%) than men (56%) are ready to support such citizenship. The urban/rural divide also continues, with more urban residents (62%) than rural folk (55%) prepared to grant citizenship to husbands of citizen wives. In terms of age groups, the elders (53%) are the least keen to extend citizenship while the 31-45 middle-aged group (59%) age group is being the most receptive.

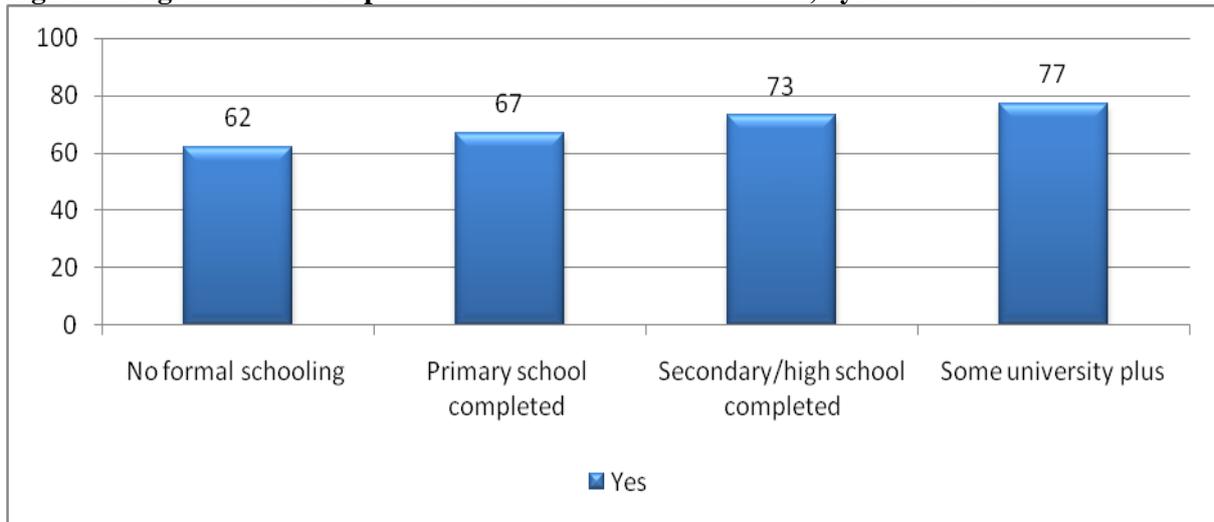
Public opinion is sharply divided along provincial lines though there is no discernible regional pattern. For instance, in half of the provinces 50% or less are supportive of granting citizenship to this group, with Mashonaland East (32%) being the least agreeable, followed by Masvingo (39%) and Matabeleland North (47%) (Table 3, part D). On the other hand, large majorities in Bulawayo (82%) and Midlands (80%) are enthusiastic about extending this type of citizenship. We offer the same explanation for this provincial variation as for 4.2 above.

**Right to be a Zimbabwe Citizen: Lived and Worked in Zimbabwe**

As noted, Zimbabweans are generally warm to the idea of granting citizenship to foreigners who have worked and lived in the country for many years and wish to make the country their home: 68% are supportive (Table 1). Moreover, majorities support this position in all ten provinces (Table 3). However, as with the other types of citizenship, there are provincial variations, with Manicaland (80%) at the top of the league of supporters, followed by Harare, Bulawayo, Midlands, and Mashonaland Central, all at 74% support. Anchored at the bottom of the provincial ladder are Masvingo and Mashonaland West, both at 55%.

A small but significant gender gap separates men (70%) and women (67%). But a bigger gap of 10 percentage points separates the urban from the rural respondents: 75% and 65% respectively.

**Figure 3: Right to Citizenship: Worked and Lived in Zimbabwe, by Education**



Level of education has a clear influence on public opinion on this matter. Support increases with education from 62% among those without formal education to 77% amongst university students and post-graduates (Figure 3). The survey also reveals that receptiveness to granting this citizenship type declines with age from 71% among the youth to 67% among the middle-aged and 65% among elders.

**The Right to Dual Citizenship**

The right to dual citizenship has few takers among Zimbabweans, and on this issue there is almost absolute consensus across most social and demographic groups. Overall, only 22% support the idea of a person being a citizen of Zimbabwe as well as that of some other country. This also is one of the areas of sharp contestation among the crafters of the new constitution, especially between the two MDC parties and ZANU-PF. The two MDC formations were generally in support of a constitutional provision that guarantees dual citizenship (largely with an eye on capturing the large Diaspora vote) as compared to ZANU-PF which was against such a move. As expected, we find that MDC-T voters are slightly more liberal on this issue, with more than a quarter (27%) agreeable to granting dual citizenship in contrast to less than a fifth (18%) among ZANU-PF partisans. But this low support among the MDC-T sympathisers further suggests that the affiliates are going against their party leaders.

Education, however, has unique salience on this issue. At lower levels of education, support for dual citizenship is very low (e.g., 26% among those without formal schooling, and 19% among primary school graduates) but rises to 33% for university students and post graduates.

Is there any provincial variation on this politically contentious issue? None of the provinces has a majority supporting dual citizenship, but there are still wide gaps among provinces (Table 3, part F).

We find that Masvingo is the least amenable, with only 13% of the respondents in support, followed closely by Mashonaland Central (15%), Manicaland (16%) and Harare (17%). The Matabeleland provinces are most amenable to extending dual citizenship with Matabeleland South (45%) at the top followed by Bulawayo (32%) and Matabeleland North at 27%. Mashonaland East, at 27%, is the province most favourable to dual citizenship outside Matabeleland.

In sum, while COPAC dithered on dual citizenship and passed the buck to the legislature, the public is unambiguous on the matter; they are against it.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion above shows both similarities and differences among a select group of African countries. The citizens of all five countries are most open to granting citizenship to a person born in the country with one non-citizen parent, but all are less tolerant when the person is born with two non-citizen parents. They are also much keener on extending the right to citizenship to a wife of a citizen husband than to a husband of a citizen wife. Four of the five (South Africa is the exception) are also generally happy to give citizenship to someone from another country who has worked and lived in the country for many years and wishes to be a citizen. Lastly, there is a continent-wide aversion to granting dual citizenship, with only small minorities supporting the idea.

Within Zimbabwe, the most significant differences are between provinces, with Bulawayo and Matabeleland South being more supportive of inclusive citizenship, and Masvingo, Mashonaland East and Matabeleland North generally more opposed to it. There are also sometimes substantial differences associated with party affiliation, but supporters of both parties are against dual citizenship by wide margins, in contrast to the proposals generated by COPAC. Will COPAC and other policy makers pay attention? The ball is in their court.

The **Afrobarometer** is produced collaboratively by social scientists from more than 30 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP) in Benin. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) serve as Support Units to the Network.

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