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News release

More than half of Ghanaians are not aware of the December 2019 referendum, new Afrobarometer study shows

More than half of Ghanaians say they are not aware of the upcoming December 2019 referendum on whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan, a new Afrobarometer survey indicates.

Men, the highly educated, and elderly citizens are more aware of the referendum than women, citizens with less schooling, and young adults. Although a slim majority of those who are aware of the referendum find the Electoral Commission's preparations for the referendum to be satisfactory, very few say there has been a lot of education about the voting exercise.

The survey also shows that a significant proportion of Ghanaians are either not likely to vote in the referendum or "don't know" whether or not they will vote.

The referendum seeks the opinion of Ghanaians as to whether local government elections should be open to partisan political competition. The Constitution requires a minimum 40% voter turnout for the referendum to be valid. But there is a risk of low voter turnout for this referendum, since it will be conducted together with local government elections, which historically attract less than 40% of registered voters. For the Electoral Commission, policy makers, and civil society, these findings point to a need for intensified education.

Key findings

- Fewer than half (42%) of Ghanaians are aware of the December 2019 referendum on whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan (Figure 1).
- Awareness increases with respondents' level of education, reaching 62% among those with post-secondary education, compared to 35%-42% among those with less schooling (Figure 2). Men (52%) are more likely to be aware of the referendum than women (32%). Awareness increases with age, ranging from 40% of youth to 47% of those over age 55.
- Among those who are aware of the election:
 - More than half (54%) say the Electoral Commission's preparations have been satisfactory (Figure 3).
 - Only 18% say there has been a lot of education about the referendum (Figure 4).

- Six in 10 Ghanaians (58%) say they are likely to vote in the December 2019 referendum (Figure 5). A significant minority are either not likely to vote (29%) or say they “don’t know.”

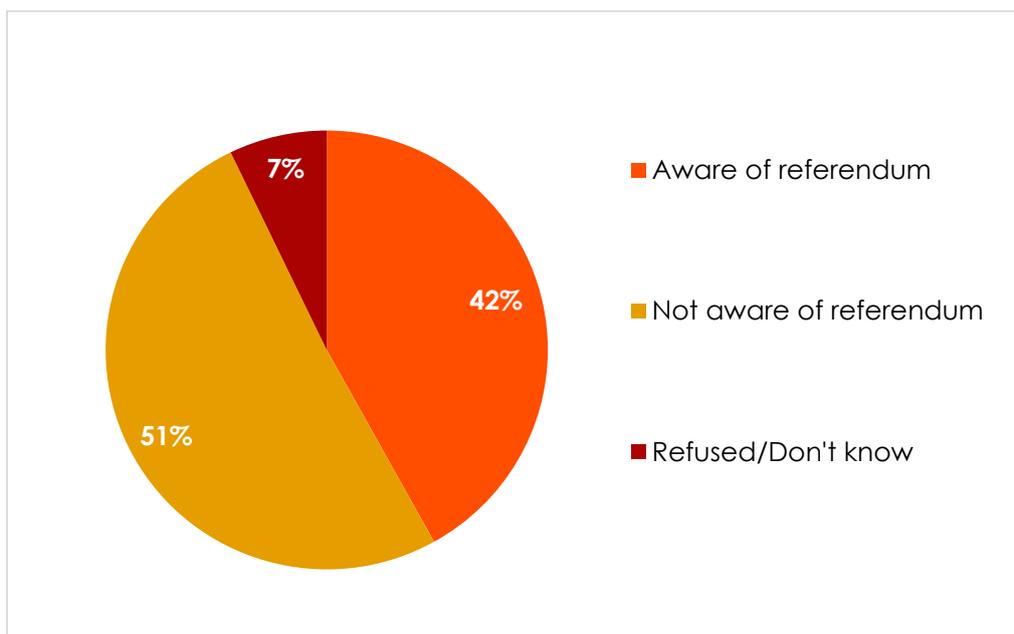
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer heads a pan-African, nonpartisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries. 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 16 September and 3 October 2019. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Ghana in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

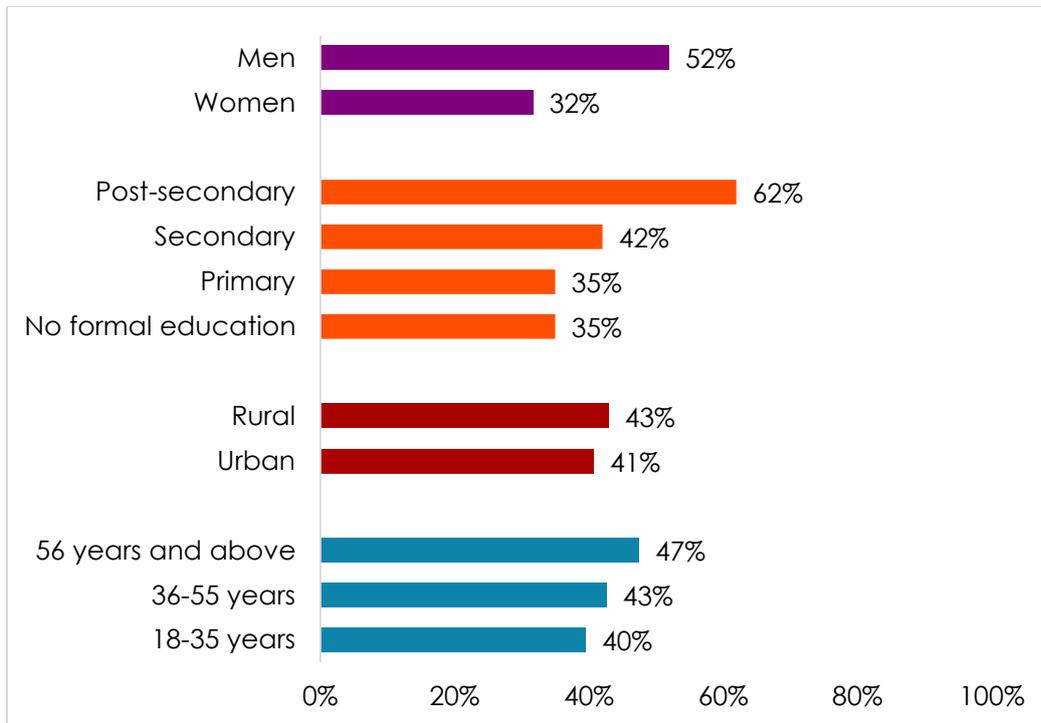
Charts

Figure 1: Awareness of the 2019 referendum | Ghana | 2019



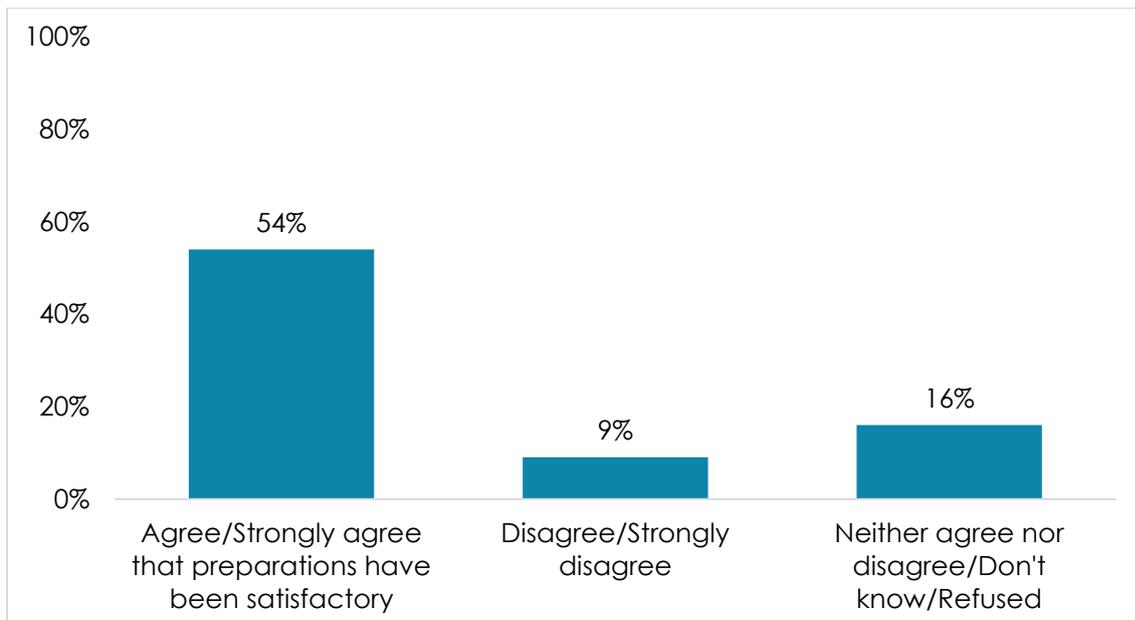
Respondents were asked: Are you aware of the December 2019 referendum to determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan?

Figure 2: Awareness of the 2019 referendum | by socio-demographic group
 | Ghana | 2019



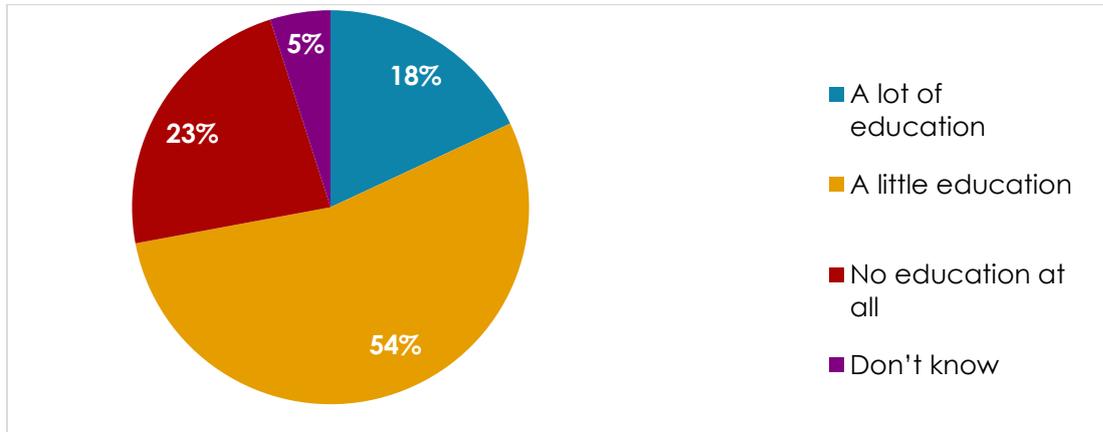
Respondents were asked: Are you aware of the December 2019 referendum to determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan? (% "yes")

Figure 3: Satisfaction with Electoral Commission's preparations for December 2019 referendum | Ghana | 2019



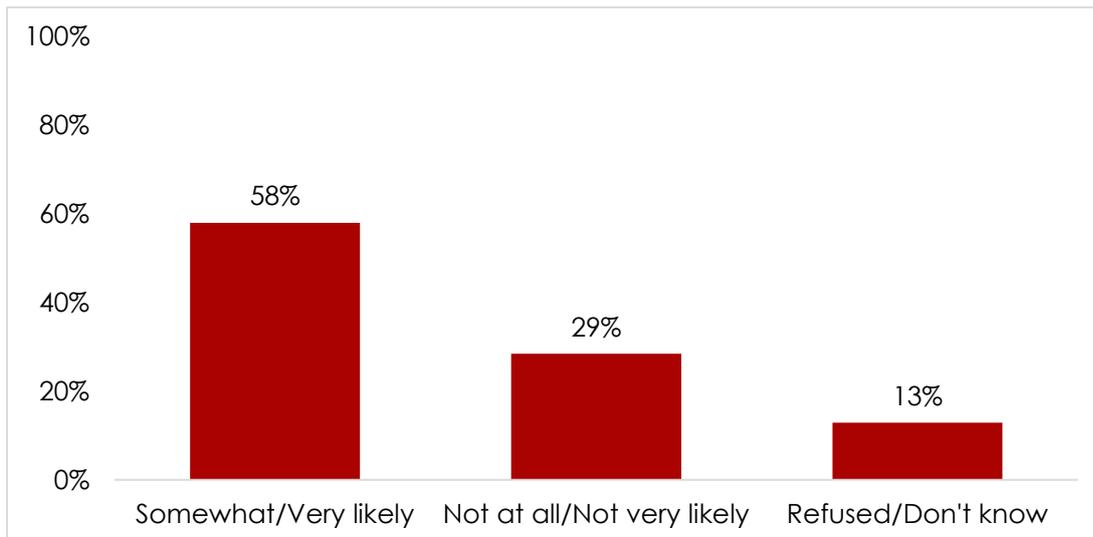
Respondents who said they are aware of the referendum were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: The Electoral Commission's preparations towards the December 2019 referendum to determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan have been satisfactory. (Note: Figures do not include citizens who are not aware of the referendum.)

Figure 4: Education on the December 2019 referendum | Ghana | 2019



Respondents who said they are aware of the referendum were asked: *Would you say there has been little, a lot, or no education at all on the December 2019 referendum that will determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan? (Note: Figures do not include citizens who are not aware of the referendum.)*

Figure 5: Will vote in December 2019 referendum | Ghana | 2019



Respondents were asked: *How likely or not is it that you will vote in the December 2019 referendum that will determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan?*

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