

**GLOBAL  
PLURALISM  
MONITOR**

**GHANA**



## **Global Pluralism Monitor: Ghana**

by Global Centre for Pluralism

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## ABOUT THE SERIES

This report was developed using the Global Pluralism Monitor Assessment Framework. The Global Pluralism Monitor's country assessments are conducted by a team of experts on diversity issues who are either country nationals or have significant experience in the country.

The scores presented in this report should not be interpreted as part of a universal scale or ranking system that applies to all countries in the same way. Instead, scores should be understood as a context-specific indication of the country's progress toward (or away from) a pluralistic ideal. For example, a post-conflict society that still experiences violence – but comparatively less than at the height of conflict – might have a similar score to a society that has been peaceful but has recently experienced a surge in hate crimes. The Global Pluralism Monitor aims to assess countries on their own terms to reflect the highly contextual nature of pluralism: there is no single route to success that all societies must follow.

For more information on the Monitor and its methodology, visit our website at [pluralism.ca/monitor](http://pluralism.ca/monitor).

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# ABOUT THE GLOBAL PLURALISM MONITOR

## What is pluralism?

**Diversity in society is a universal fact; how societies respond to diversity is a choice. Pluralism is a positive response to diversity. Pluralism involves taking decisions and actions, as individuals and societies, which are grounded in respect for diversity.**

## MEASURING INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN DIVERSE SOCIETIES

Living and engaging with differences in society is a challenge all societies face. As inequality, marginalization and divisions rise, building peaceful and inclusive societies is ever more urgent.

Vulnerable groups, including religious and ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous groups, and women and girls, face ongoing political, economic and social exclusion. To foster more just, peaceful and prosperous societies, these exclusions must be addressed. To take meaningful action, policy makers and practitioners need a holistic understanding of these issues.

Launched by the Global Centre for Pluralism, the Global Pluralism Monitor is a measurement tool that assesses the state of pluralism in countries around the world. Across political, economic, social and cultural domains, the Monitor informs decision-making to address root causes of exclusion and improve the prospects for pluralism.

*Enhances existing efforts by governments, civil society and the private sector*

The Monitor enables:

- Gap analysis: to assess the state of pluralism in societies and identify areas in which intervention is needed to address exclusion;
- Trends analysis: to track a country's trajectory over time, either towards greater inclusion or exclusion;
- Intersectional analysis: to assess the treatment of women in societies, accounting for intra-group dynamics of inclusion and exclusion;
- Conflict prevention: to identify signs of exclusion and marginalization before crisis becomes imminent;
- Good practices: to identify initiatives that are having a positive impact that could be further developed, or serve as lessons for other contexts.

### *Approach rooted in both institutional and cultural responses to diversity*

The Centre's approach to pluralism focuses on institutions (hardware), cultural processes (software) and the complex interactions between the two. Institutional arrangements – such as constitutions, legislatures, courts, and systems of government – outline the legal and political spaces within which members of societies act. Cultural habits or mindsets shape our perceptions of *who belongs* and *who contributes*, and influence how we interact with one another every day.

The Monitor Assessment Framework is rooted in the interplay between institutional and cultural responses, and measures inclusions and exclusions across political, economic and social dimensions. Its 20 indicators cover the following:

1. Legal commitments in support of pluralism;
2. Practices by state institutions to realize commitments;
3. Leadership towards pluralism from societal actors;
4. State of group-based inequalities;
5. Intergroup relations and belonging

### *Informed by expertise and data*

A team of national experts on diversity and inclusion in the country uses the Monitor Assessment Framework to produce a country report, drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative data. The reports offer recommendations for policymakers and practitioners on how to advance pluralism, and offer a basis for dialogue with stakeholders across the society.

Each team of experts is encouraged to define the story *they* want to tell about pluralism. In this way, the reports are grounded in the local realities and designed to have the most potential impact on policy and practice.

The Monitor is guided by an international Technical Advisory Group of leading experts on indices and diversity issues.

# GLOBAL PLURALISM MONITOR ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

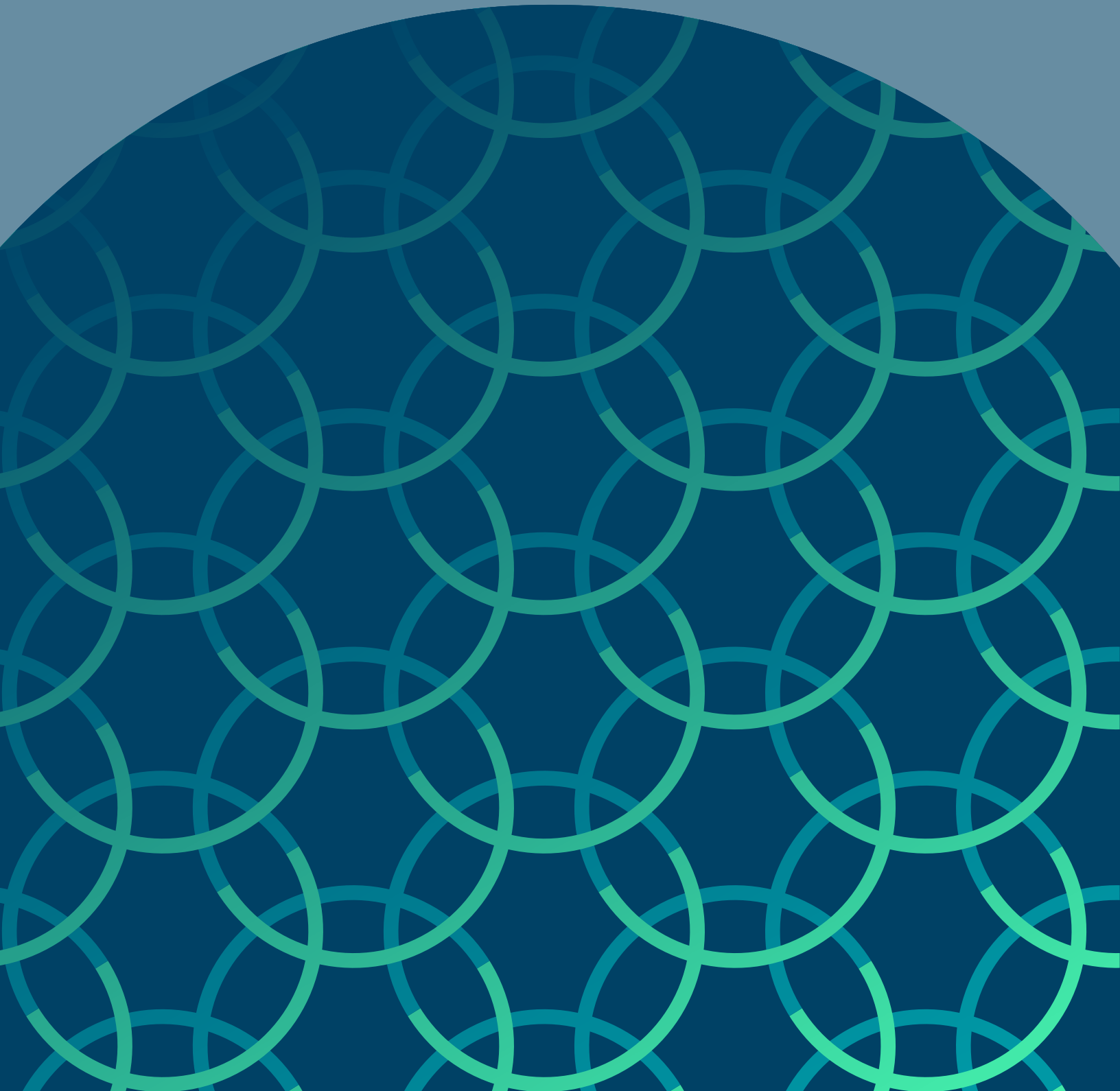
## COUNTRY PROFILE

COMMITMENTS	PRACTICES	LEADERSHIP	GROUP BASED INEQUALITIES	INTERGROUP RELATIONS + BELONGING
International Commitments	Policy implementation	Political Parties	Political	Intergroup Violence
National Commitments	Data Collection	News Media	Economic	Intergroup Trust
Inclusive Citizenship	Claims-Making and Contestation	Civil Society	Social	Trust in Institutions
		Private Sector	Cultural	Inclusion and Acceptance
			Access to Justice	Shared Ownership of Society

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Ghana presents a case of not only ethnolinguistic, religious, and migrant diversity but also that of a country reckoning with differences brought on by regional development and gender.**

## OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE: 6.5

Ghana has long been touted as a model of peace, stability and democracy in Africa. Parliamentary elections have remained consistent and legitimate since 1992, allowing for Ghana's heterogeneous society to build stable democratic institutions. However, a state's institutional capacity is only one facet of determining the state of pluralism in a given country. The *Global Pluralism Monitor: Ghana* report showcases how a country with ethnolinguistic, religious and migrant diversity reckons with differences brought on by regional development and gender. Rightfully, this report sheds light on the inter-sectional diversity types of ethnic group(s), the North-South regional divide and religion while maintaining a gender lens.

While Ghana scores high on most pluralism indicators across all groups, there are notable exceptions regarding intergroup relations and belonging. Exclusions based on gender across all dimensions are one of the most concerning trends emerging from this report, with an emphasis on political underrepresentation and socioeconomic inequality.

### LEGAL COMMITMENTS

Ghana has adopted and ratified multiple international and regional human rights treaties, spanning across women's and refugee's rights to social, political and cultural rights, among others. Significant progress in adopting these treaties into domestic law led to establishing the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, treaty implementation is challenged by the lack of political commitment and resources needed to maintain institutions that administer and protect human rights.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution recognizes and protects the right to no discrimination for all social and cultural groups. While per the Ghanaian Constitution, no individual is denied citizenship on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or religion, some groups are nonetheless excluded as nationality is obtained through descent. Notably, nomadic Fulani pastoralists are denied Ghanaian citizenship even if born in the country, creating a statelessness crisis that is further troubled by the legacy of their expulsion by the government between 1999 and 2000.

### PRACTICES AND LEADERSHIP

Ghana relies on statutory agencies to implement pluralistic policies, such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). This approach, however, has led to the uneven or nonexistent implementation of policies due to a lack of resources for these institutions. Ghanaians are unable to express their discontent as their right to freedom of assembly is protected by the Constitution and most Ghanaians have access to partake in protests and litigations as forms of claims-making. However, not many Ghanaians participate in

these processes as the partisan nature of politics tends to delegitimize and undermine any type of mobilization or contestation.

Despite these issues of political partisanship, political parties show a commitment to pluralism through their diverse membership. Political parties often aim to develop a national appeal that reflects the diversity of the nation, indicating a strong political landscape that acknowledges the benefits of respect for diversity. Likewise, civil society can be described as vibrant and independent, which often contributes to disaggregated data collection regarding social formations and inequalities across the country.

## GROUP-BASED INEQUALITIES, INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND BELONGING

The Monitor report underscores many socioeconomic and intergroup trust tensions across Ghana. Disparities in access to education and healthcare based on economic factors are heavily influenced by the Northern and Southern regional divide, with the North having significantly lower access to quality education than the South. The North is experiencing increasing levels of income poverty in comparison to the South, due to historic underinvestment in the North. Consequently, women in the North fare worse than their Southern counterparts, with an increased vulnerability for adolescent women who migrate to the South for economic opportunities.

As it concerns a shared sense of ownership of society, there appears to be broad acceptance of ethnic groups. However, politics remain inaccessible for women and those outside of the political elite, exacerbating feelings of exclusion. Ethnic acceptance into society is also undermined when considering the systemic exclusion, stigma and violence faced by Fulani pastoralists, who are often perceived as outsiders by Ghanaians. Additionally, because Fulani communities are overwhelmingly Muslim and predominantly located in the north, their exclusion from society may also impact the religious and regional divides underscored throughout the report.

## MONITOR TAKEAWAYS

Pluralism in Ghana is unique due its diversity between regions, ethnicity, religion and gender. Trends and gaps identified in the report bring to light the intersectional nature of these diversity types, and the need to support initiatives that address these issues. There remain gaps in access to the political sphere, the formal economy, protection of those working in the informal economy (a sector where diversity is the highest), education, and healthcare particularly in the North of the country and for women. Thus, initiatives and programs on women's rights and economic empowerment and consultations with ethnic groups in the North about their current economic status, and access to health care, are essential in strengthening pluralism in Ghana.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Monitor's recommendations reinforce what experts, activists and stakeholders have long called for in Ghana and provided several pathways to pluralism for the country.

- By prioritizing the implementation of national policies based on inclusiveness to achieve beneficial social and economic outcomes, a pluralistic ethos can be created and fostered in Ghana.
- Ensuring equitable developmental infrastructure for Northern regions may result in improved social and economic conditions for the peoples in the region.
- Through coordination between government departments and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, gender mainstreaming can be incorporated into all policies.
- Address data collection challenges in collecting data on government spending and budget allocation based on ethno-cultural background and district level.
- The adequate and proper funding of state institutions responsible for promoting civic values, pluralistic ethics and social justice (e.g., the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice) can help ensure that they can perform their duties.

# COUNTRY PROFILE

**The current constitutional dispensation in Ghana has created an environment that fosters pluralism by guaranteeing the rights of all groups to exist and fully express themselves. Discrimination is prohibited, while social sentiments are broadly in favour of support for pluralistic values.**

Ghana has been justifiably hailed as an oasis of peace and a role model for democratic governance in Africa. Despite a history of military coups, multi-party democracy has become increasingly consolidated. The evidence for this is that, over the past two decades, the country has experienced eight consecutive elections without slipping into nationwide violence or conflict. Following the attainment of political independence in 1957, successive governments barely survived beyond three years without being overthrown in a coup d'état. With the return to multi-party elections in 1992, however, there has been sustained consensus that electoral competition is the only legitimate means to seeking political power. Between 1992 and 2020, there have been eight presidential and parliamentary elections. Three of these resulted in the peaceful transfer of power between two dominant political parties, namely, the current ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the main opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Ghana is a highly heterogeneous country that is home to a diverse set of groups, including numerous ethno-linguistic groups, multiple religions, migrant groups as well as a stark North–South developmental divide. There are over 90 ethnic groups in the country, further grouped into larger ethno-linguistic groups, such as Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, Guan and Ga-Dangbe.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, Akans are the single most populous ethnic group, making up 45.7 percent of the population. This is followed by Mole-Dagbani (18.5 percent), Ewe (12.8 percent) and Ga-Dangme (7.1 percent). The relationships between these groups have been punctuated by hostilities and warfare in the past, but they also have a long history of harmonious relations.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Ghana has enjoyed a long period of harmonious religious co-existence. In the late precolonial and early colonial periods, there were isolated cases of clashes between Christian converts and adherents of traditional religions, but over time, these conflicts have tapered off.<sup>3</sup> However, there are increasingly isolated and rare instances of angry confrontations between charismatic Christians and Ga communities during the annual ban on drumming and noisemaking in Accra—Ghana's capital city. There are virtually no violent clashes between Christians and Muslims.

The current constitutional dispensation in Ghana has created an environment that fosters pluralism by guaranteeing the rights of all groups to exist and fully express themselves. Discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity, religion or race is prohibited, while social sentiments are broadly in favour of support for pluralistic values.<sup>4</sup> In reality, however, discriminatory practices are not uncommon, and members of various social groups encounter discrimination in their interaction with others. In particular, women are victims of practices that limit their access to property rights, such as land, and limited representation in political and economic life. Ethnic minorities, especially those hailing from the Northern part of the country, confront obstacles in their quest for political inclusion and access to infrastructure and other social amenities. Significant levels of socio-economic inequalities persist, especially along a North–South divide in which the regions comprising Northern Ghana have historically remained poorer since colonial times.

Ghana plays an active role on the international stage, especially on the African continent. Ghana was one of the founding members of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union (AU)), and the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, was a champion of African liberation and Pan-Africanism. In 2007, Ghana's president John Kufuor was elected AU chair in honour of the country's 50th Independence anniversary celebrations. In West Africa, the current chair of the regional body is Ghana's president, Nana Akufo-Addo.

There have been low-level intermittent disputes between Ghana and its neighbours over the issue of border closures during Ghana's general elections.<sup>5</sup> Following Ghana's discovery of oil, there was a maritime boundary dispute between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, which went to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for settlement. Over the years, Ghana has also been engaged in diplomatic spats with Nigeria over the treatment of Nigerians in Ghana and vice versa. In the 1970s, there was a mass expulsion of Nigerians in Ghana, a gesture that was reciprocated by Nigeria in the early 1980s.<sup>6</sup> In recent times, attempts by Ghanaian traders to prevent Nigerians from engaging in retail trade in markets across the country sometimes ignite diplomatic tensions between the two countries.<sup>7</sup>

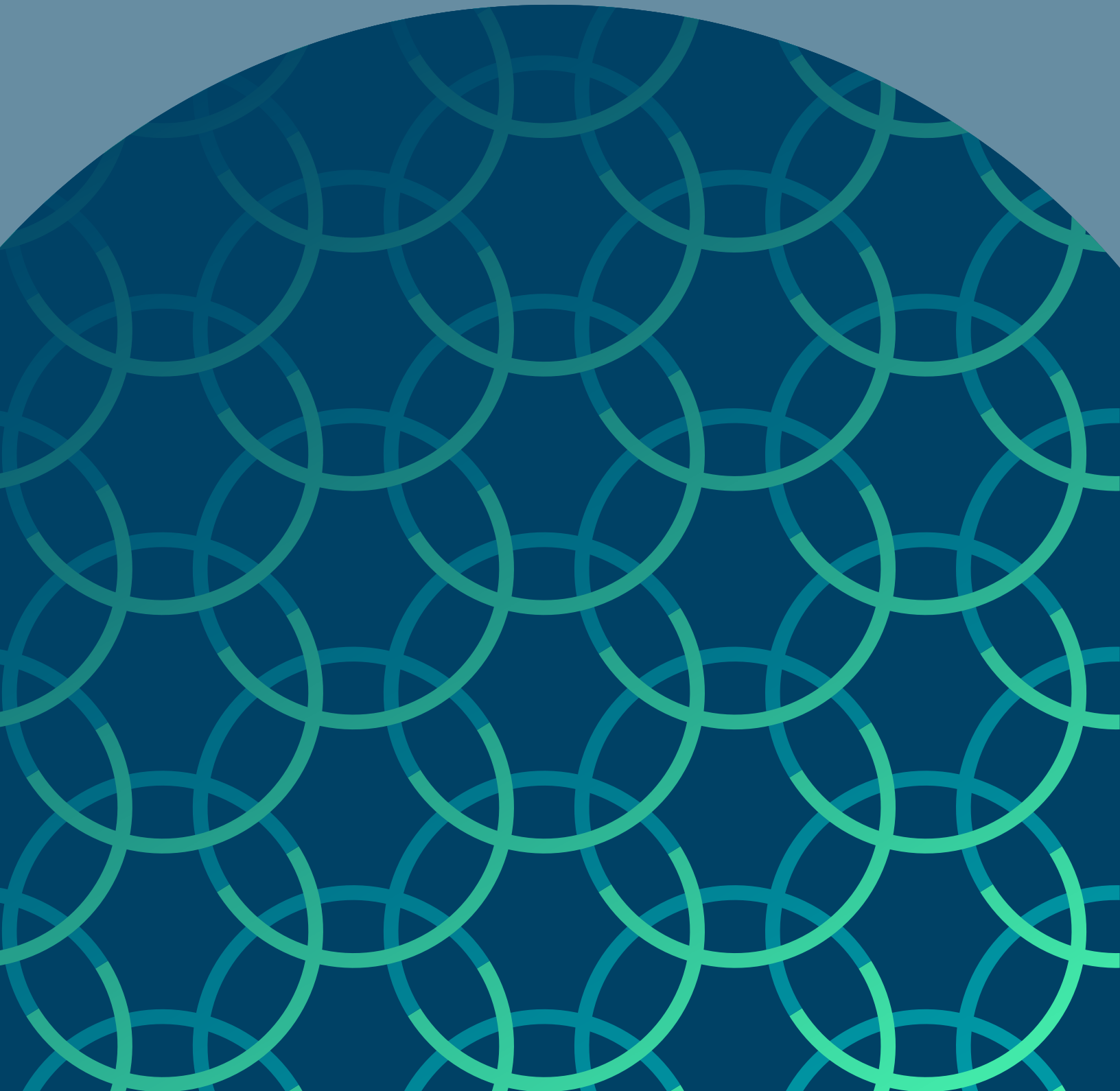
Ghana has very strong ties to the diaspora. Every year, it attracts thousands of African-American "pilgrims" in search of their ancestral roots. In 2019, Ghana launched a highly successful Year of Return to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slaves in Virginia. The event brought over a million visitors to Ghana. As part of the year-long activities, the president granted citizenship to 126 Africans in the diaspora who had arrived in the country to commemorate the Year of Return.<sup>8</sup>

This report assesses Ghana's commitment to fostering inclusivity and pluralism, focussing specifically on issues of ethnicity, religion, gender and the North-South divide.



Photo: Shutterstock / Gifty Amoatey

**PART I.  
COMMITMENTS**



# 1. INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

## AVERAGE SCORE: 9

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 9

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 9

RELIGION | SCORE: 9

Over the years, Ghana has adopted and ratified several international treaties that seek to promote pluralism. These include the following:

TREATY/CONVENTION	SIGNATORY STATUS
<b><i>International Treaties</i></b>	
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Ratified in February 1986
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide	Accessed in December 1958
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Ratified in September 2000
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Ratified in September 2000
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Ratified in September 1966
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Ratified in February 1990
Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees	Accessed in March 1963
Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees	Accessed in October 1968
Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	Ratified in September 2000
UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	Ratified in January 2016
<b><i>Regional Treaties</i></b>	
African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	Accessed in January 1989
Charter on African Cultural Renaissance	Signed on January 2009 but not yet ratified
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	Signed in August 1997, ratified in June 2005
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	Signed in June 1998, ratified in August 2004



**Many of these commitments have not been effectively implemented due mainly to limited political commitment in resourcing the key state institutions mandated for implementing the country's international legal commitments.**

Evidence from the UN Treaty Database indicates that Ghana has been engaging with international monitoring mechanisms by submitting state party reports on a number of treaties of relevance to the identity groups of interest to this assessment, including the following:

- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights;
- The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Additionally, Ghana has accepted the Inquiry procedures under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012).<sup>9</sup>

On the national front, a number of actions have been taken to “domesticate” many of these international commitments into the country’s institutional framework. For instance, institutional responses have been initiated to address the gender gap issues raised by CEDAW, including the establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP); the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service; Gender Desks in all the District Assemblies and in public and private companies. However, there is a severe lack of progress toward the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill, for which civil society advocates have been campaigning as far back as 2011.<sup>10</sup>

While this may appear impressive, it is worth noting that many of these commitments have not been effectively implemented due mainly to limited political commitment in resourcing the key state institutions mandated for implementing the country’s international legal commitments. For example, while a number of human rights institutions have long been established in Ghana (e.g., the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)), the effectiveness of these institutions has often been undermined by a combination of limited human and financial resources as well as undue political interference in their operations.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

### AVERAGE SCORE: 9

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 9

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 9

RELIGION | SCORE: 9

The 1992 Constitution officially recognizes the existence, integrity and dignity of all social and cultural groups within the country’s borders. Article 17(2) states that “a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion,



**The 1992 Constitution officially recognizes the existence, integrity and dignity of all social and cultural groups within the country's borders.**

creed or social or economic status.” Similarly, it is stated in Article 12(2) that “Every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender, shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual.”

The Constitution also guarantees the enjoyment of cultural rights and practices for all groups in the country. Under Article 26, not only are dehumanizing cultural practices prohibited, but also every person is entitled to enjoy, practice, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion.

Furthermore, Ghana commits itself to safeguarding a wide range of rights and freedoms, including the rights to life and personal liberty; respect for human dignity; protection from slavery and forced labour; as well as protection of privacy of home and other property, among several others (see Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution).

Every citizen also has the constitutional right to participate in governance. Article 41 of the 1992 Constitution permits every citizen who is 18 years of age or above and of sound mind to exercise his or her franchise. None of the election constitutional instruments in Ghana deprives people of their right to vote based on their background, religion, ethnicity or gender. The Constitution has built in additional safeguards specifically for minorities who may be excluded from political participation if additional provisions are not made for them. For example, under the Directive Principles of State Policy, the state is enjoined to “achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in the recruitment and appointment to public office” under Article 35(6)(b).

### 3. INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP AVERAGE SCORE: 8

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 8

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 8

RELIGION | SCORE: 8

Citizenship in Ghana is granted on the legal principle of *jus sanguinis*. An individual born in or outside Ghana automatically becomes a citizen if one of their parents or grandparents is a Ghanaian.<sup>12</sup> This applies to all persons who trace their ancestry to a Ghanaian irrespective of ethnicity/race, religion or region of origin. The Constitution also lays out a set of criteria and procedures by which a foreigner may acquire Ghanaian citizenship: by adoption by a Ghanaian at age 16 or less, by marriage to a Ghanaian or if found at age seven or less within the borders of the country.

Furthermore, the Citizenship Act, 2000 (Act 591) allows a foreigner to apply for naturalization as a Ghanaian citizen if he or she satisfies a set of criteria, including a minimum of 12-months continued residence in Ghana and an aggregate length of five years within a seven-year period, being of good character, having the ability to speak and understand an indigenous Ghanaian language and the ability to assimilate into the Ghanaian way of life. No group is denied Ghanaian citizenship on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

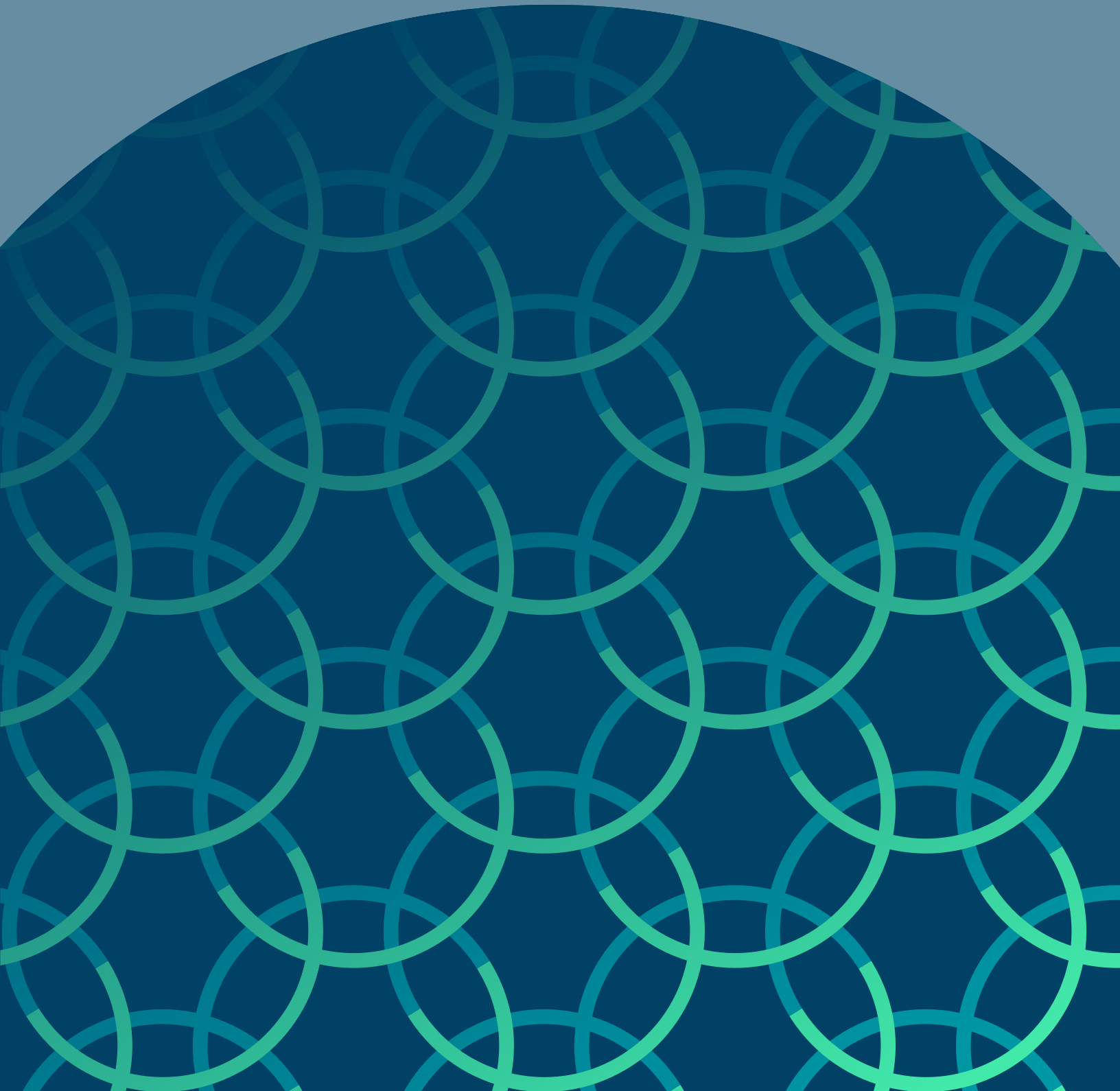
**Studies have shown that when thinking about what it means to be Ghanaian, ordinary people employ inclusive notions of belonging that embrace different ethnic groups in the country.**

Dual citizenship, which was previously prohibited, is currently permitted in Ghana following the amendment of Article 8 of the 1992 Constitution in 1996. However, dual citizens are not eligible to assume the following offices of state: Ambassador or Higher Commissioner; Secretary to the Cabinet; Chief of Defence Staff or any Service Chief; Inspector-General of Police; Commissioner, Customs, Excise and Preventive Service; Director of Immigration Service; and any office specified by an act of Parliament.

At the level of “everyday life,” citizenship is similarly conceived in inclusive terms. Studies have shown that when thinking about what it means to be Ghanaian, ordinary people employ inclusive notions of belonging that embrace different ethnic groups in the country. Indeed, many are even willing to informally extend Ghanaian citizenship to foreigners if they embrace Ghanaian “ways of life” and embody values which are defined as Ghanaian.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, there are no systematic obstacles to inclusive citizenship in the wider society. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that informal processes of social belonging are situational; that is to say, the social context or issue at stake shapes the particular identities that people may emphasize for themselves and for others. This is particularly the case during struggles for access to resources such as land and power, during which differences like lineage, language or even dialect, may be capitalized on to exclude those who would otherwise have been embraced as belonging to the local or national community.<sup>14</sup> This process has been observed in farming communities where dispossession associated with large-scale land commercialization has resulted in increasingly divisive contestations for access to natural resources.<sup>15</sup> As such, a variety of factors, including cultural, linguistic, political and material considerations come into play in the way that social belonging is informally defined at the level of “everyday life,” although at the national level, inclusive citizenship is legally guaranteed.

**PART II.  
PRACTICES**



## 4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### AVERAGE SCORE: 5

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 5

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 5

RELIGION | SCORE: 5

**While Ghana has some of the most progressive policies, laws and frameworks formulated to promote an equitable society, in general, implementation of these policies remains uneven either because of inadequate funding mandated institutions or a failure to politically prioritize their implementation.**

The legal mandate to implement Ghana's pluralism-related policies has been entrusted to the relevant statutory agencies. These include the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the National Identification Authority, the MoGCSP, the Electoral Commission (EC) and the National Commission on Culture, among others. The security agencies, including the police and the law courts provide residual support by ensuring that violations of pluralistic legal commitments are not violated and where violations take place, perpetrators are held accountable.

The performance of these statutory bodies varies widely, depending on various factors, including their (perceived) centrality to national stability, the willingness of political elites to support them, the personal influence of the heads of these agencies and support from multilateral agencies.<sup>16</sup> For instance, since the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution, which inaugurated the Fourth Republic, the EC has received consistent support from the national government and international partners, enabling it to institute progressive reforms that have vastly improved its ability in organizing presidential and parliamentary elections in ways that do not systematically disenfranchise targeted groups. As such, while the country continues to grapple with serious institutional and governance problems, on the narrow criterion of procedural integrity, Ghana's electoral democracy could be said to have made substantial progress towards consolidation.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the EC promotes inclusion and political participation by conducting free and fair elections in which all eligible Ghanaians are able to exercise their franchise irrespective of gender, ethnicity or religious inclinations.

To a slightly lesser extent, the CHRAJ is also able to see to the implementation of national legal and policy pluralistic commitments towards the protection of human rights and upholding of due process. The Commission publishes annual reports on the State of Human Rights in Ghana, drawing attention to various human rights violations by both state and non-state actors and institutions. It also contributes to creating an enabling environment for harmonious co-existence by offering alternative dispute resolution services in districts across the country. The Commission also houses an online reporting system but can only commence investigations when a formal complaint has been made or when cases have been referred to it.<sup>18</sup> However, the work of the Commission is affected by limited human and financial resources as well as concerns of political interference in the Commission's work.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most crucial state institutions with the responsibility of promoting pluralism in Ghana is the NCCE. Its mandate, among others, is to "formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people."<sup>20</sup> The Commission has offices in all the districts of Ghana and is therefore well positioned to live

up to its mandate. However, the Commission remains severely under resourced and has historically struggled to carry out its functions effectively. Indeed, the level of state neglect has been so bad that, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission could only afford to give its district officers GHC100 (US \$15–\$20) to undertake public sensitization. Other state institutions with the mandate of promoting multicultural education (e.g., the National Folklore Board and the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board) often rely on the benevolence of private citizens and foreign donors due to the lack of statutory support.<sup>21</sup>

In effect, while Ghana has some of the most progressive policies, laws and frameworks formulated to promote an equitable society, in general, implementation of these policies remains uneven either because of inadequate funding mandated institutions or a failure to politically prioritize their implementation. This is a problem across all the three diversity types. For example, with regards to gender, an Affirmative Action Bill that seeks to ensure the effective participation of women in politics and decision-making has not been passed within the lifespan of three parliaments, although advocacy for its passage has been ongoing since 2011. Indeed, Ghana's progress in promoting gender parity in political office remains disappointing. Only 40 women (representing 14.5 percent) were elected to the 275-member Parliament in the last parliamentary elections held in December 2020. In the most recent Global Gender Gap Report published in December 2019, Ghana was ranked 107 out of 152 countries for the gender index on political empowerment, with a score of merely 0.129, compared with 0.563 for Rwanda, 0.497 for South Africa, 0.427 for Ethiopia, 0.309 for Uganda and 0.238 for Zimbabwe.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. DATA COLLECTION

### AVERAGE SCORE: 6

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 6

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 6

RELIGION | SCORE: 6

**Data collection in the country is not comprehensive but no group is systematically excluded from nationwide data collection exercises.**

There are various data sources on socio-economic well-being and group-based inequalities, collected systematically and regularly throughout the country and publicly made available. Data collection in the country is not comprehensive but no group is systematically excluded from nationwide data collection exercises. The main statutory data gathering body is the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), which is also the reference point for other data collection agencies. Other statutory institutions like the Bank of Ghana, the National Development Planning Commission and NCCE also collect data. These state agencies often work with the support of, or in collaboration with, international partners such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Danish International Development Agency, the AU and UN Development Programme (UNDP), among others. Notable national data sources include the Population and Housing Census, which is collected every 10 years throughout the country; the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) (collected every 5–6 years); the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey; and the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. Ghana also has a robust Education Management

**There remain major data collection challenges in Ghana, especially with regard to the quality of the data collected and the extent to which disaggregated data is readily available. For example, it is almost impossible to obtain disaggregated data in some major sectors across different ethno-regional groups.**

Information System which gathers data on a wide range of education indicators, including data on school children with disabilities across the country.

Local and foreign civil society organizations (CSOs), private research institutions and think tanks, such as the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana); the Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana; ActionAid; SEND GHANA; and Oxfam also collect data on socio-economic well-being and inequality. CDD-Ghana oversees the Afrobarometer surveys, which is a pan-African dataset that currently collects nationally representative panel data on 37 countries in Africa. ISSER collaborates with two American universities to collect the Socio-economic Panel Survey that has so far conducted three waves of data collection.

These various data sources are nationally representative and provide information on salient groups and social formations (such as ethnicity, religion, migrants and geographical spread). They provide information on key inequality measures such as income/consumption per capita, educational attainments and housing and health indicators such as per capita health spending, and maternal and child mortality, among others. These data are usually disaggregated at individual, household and regional levels. Details on ethnicity, religion, gender and migration are typically available. This makes it easy for group-based inequalities to be analyzed.

GSS has not historically collected data on intersectional inequality. However, with support from its international partners, it is starting to mainstream gender in its data collection and dissemination processes. In 2018, GSS in collaboration with the MoGCSP published a *Five-Year Strategic Plan for Gender Statistics (2018-2022)* as part of its efforts to bridge the gaps identified in a 2017 national assessment of the state of gender statistics in the country. Data from research institutes and think tanks do not tend to directly collect data on intersectional inequality, and when research reports are disseminated, the findings are not usually presented using a gender lens unless the report is directly concerned with gender issues. However, most of these datasets contain enough variables to enable intersectional analysis.

There are no state-imposed restrictions on the collection of data in the country. The Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843) sets out the guidelines for collecting data for research and ensures that “personal data are adequately protected against access or use for unauthorised purposes.” The Ghana Open Data Initiative was started in 2012 by the Government of Ghana to facilitate access to official data. While the website is up, it does not yet have all the relevant data because the Initiative is still in the process of engaging government institutions to upload their data onto the website.

Nevertheless, there remain major data collection challenges in Ghana, especially with regard to the quality of the data collected and the extent to which disaggregated data is readily available. For example, both in terms of budgetary allocations and actual spending, it is almost impossible to obtain disaggregated data in some major sectors (notably health) across different ethno-regional groups. This makes it difficult to ascertain whether patterns of public spending are either reinforcing or redressing historical group-based inequalities. In addition, Ghana does not produce district-level data on major issues such as child marriages, and data to inform sexual and gender-based violence programming and advocacy is non-existent.

## 6. CLAIMS-MAKING AND CONTESTATION

### AVERAGE SCORE: 8

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 8

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 8

RELIGION | SCORE: 8

**Individuals or groups intending to protest only need to notify the police in writing at least five days prior to the intended protest to give the police enough time to provide security for the protest. However, the police have often used the excuse of inability to assign officers on the given day to deny requests for protests.**

Ghana's Constitution guarantees the freedom of assembly, which allows for interest groups to demonstrate and make demands in a peaceful and lawful manner. Generally, groups are able to make claims through litigation, negotiation or protest. The government does not have the legal right to hinder any organized group from undertaking a procession or engaging in protest. However, the government, through the police, has often sought to obstruct public protests by demanding a permit even though a 1994 Supreme Court ruling affirmed that "no police permit is needed for demonstrations, parades, rallies, and other peaceful assemblies."<sup>23</sup>

Individuals or groups intending to protest only need to notify the police in writing at least five days prior to the intended protest to give the police enough time to provide security for the protest. However, the police have often used the excuse of inability to assign officers on the given day to deny requests for protests. Groups affiliated with opposition political parties, or whose grievances are perceived to make the government unpopular, are more likely to experience this situation; there is no evidence that some identity groups are more likely to experience this than others. While the police have often prevented planned demonstrations by this means, some groups are able to successfully challenge the police until they are finally allowed to embark on their planned protest.<sup>24</sup>

Groups and individuals can also make claims or demands for more rights by seeking legal redress from the law courts. Using the legal approach, diverse groups including political parties, protest movements and advocacy groups made claims or pressed demands on the state. In May 2021, a youth-led movement called #FixTheCountry emerged on social media and has since been making wide-ranging demands, including demands for the government to ease economic hardships in the country, fix broken infrastructure and calls for sweeping institutional reforms. #FixTheCountry has used both the law courts and street demonstrations to press its demands.

Many similar protest movements have previously arisen in the past, including the Kume Preko movement in the 1990s that protested against the introduction of the value-added tax. In the early 2000s, the Committee for Joint Action (CJA) led widespread protests against the government of the NPP then in power; between 2010 and 2016, the Alliance for Accountable Governance (AFAG) and Occupy Ghana organized demonstrations against the NDC government. Some of these groups, like Kume Preko, CJA and AFAG, were organized and led by key members of either the NDC or NPP. Regardless of whether they are independent or politically affiliated, however, these pressure groups are generally perceived as legitimate in the wider society.<sup>25</sup> The grievances that all these protest movements have mobilized around have been cross-cutting in nature. The issues have included high cost of living, unemployment, poor infrastructure and the energy crisis, among others.



**Due to the deeply partisan nature of politics in Ghana, individuals and groups with opposing viewpoints are often labelled as having partisan motives, and it is common for governments to accuse or dismiss such groups as trying to make the government unpopular.**

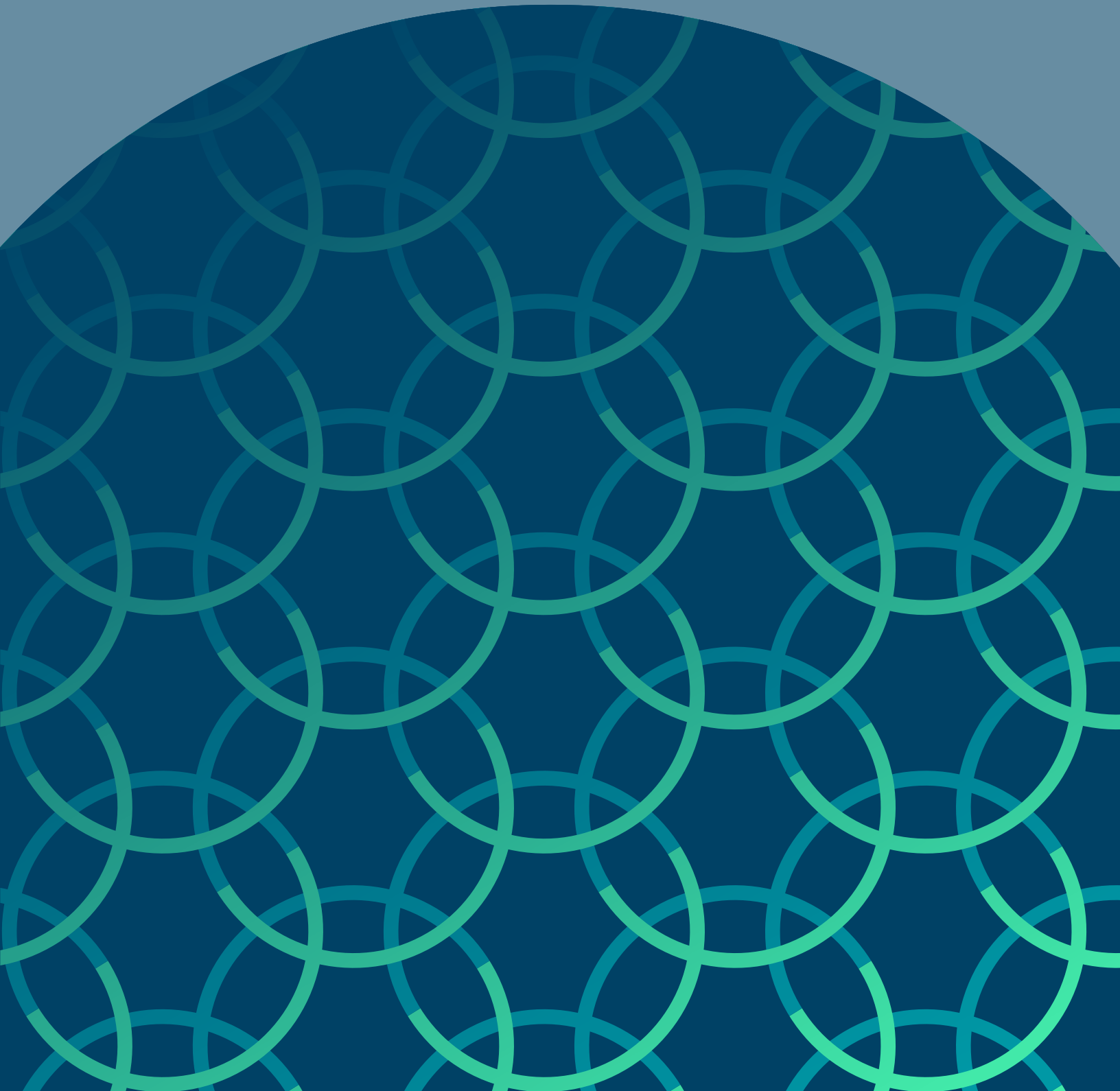
Women have been able to claim their rights through their ability to organize in networks and coalitions. For example, the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) leads rights claims on economic justice issues and land rights. The Women's Manifesto Coalition strives to ensure the implementation of the demands contained in the Women's Manifesto for Ghana, a non-partisan document that sets out critical areas of concern to women in Ghana and makes demands for addressing them.<sup>26</sup> There is also the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) which was formed to strengthen advocacy toward the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill into law. The Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) was passed in 2007, and the DVC seeks to ensure that the provisions of the law are implemented. As a result of the activism of the DVC, the DOVVSU was established in October 1998 as a specialized unit within the Ghana Police Service.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of claims-making and contestation are undermined by a number of factors in Ghana. First, there is broad consensus that despite the progressive consolidation of electoral democracy, the state of "active citizenship" in Ghana remains very low, especially with regard to the preparedness of citizens in engaging with state institutions and holding public officials accountable.<sup>27</sup> For example, despite the constitutional guarantees regarding citizens' rights to mobilize and demonstrate in the interest of community and national development, most Ghanaians are not ready to exercise the right to embark on demonstration or protest marches. In Round 7 of the Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2016–18, an overwhelming majority of respondents (92 percent) indicated that they never participated in protest marches in the past 12 months, and 67 percent indicated that they will never engage in this kind of collective action. Only 4 percent indicated that they did this about once or twice, while a mere 0.6 percent said that they have "often" participated in this type of activity.<sup>28</sup>

Second, due to the deeply partisan nature of politics in Ghana, individuals and groups with opposing viewpoints are often labelled as having partisan motives, and it is common for governments to accuse or dismiss such groups as trying to make the government unpopular. This leads to situations where relevant claims being made by particular groups are ignored. In this context, contestations and claims-making in regions or districts considered to be opposition electoral strongholds are easily ignored, limiting the possibility of expanding the reach of essential resources to particular ethno-regional groups depending on which political party is in power. For example, in the 2020 budget, the Volta Region, a stronghold of the opposition NDC, was omitted from the list of regions to benefit from road construction that year. After a public outcry over the omission, the finance minister later explained that the region's absence from the list was due to an error and not intentional.<sup>29</sup> In effect, power relations play a key role in determining whether or not particular claims by different groups of citizens are effectively acknowledged and responded to.



**PART III.  
LEADERSHIP FOR PLURALISM**



## 7. POLITICAL PARTIES

### AVERAGE SCORE: 7

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 7

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 7

RELIGION | SCORE: 7

**The NDC and NPP both have strong ethnic support bases. However, none of them can rely exclusively on their ethnic bases in order to win elections. As such, they are compelled to develop a national appeal.**

Political parties in Ghana have shown a commitment to pluralism by electing people from a variety of ethnicities, religions and genders into their leadership. For instance, both major political parties in Ghana (the NDC and the NPP) have their national executive members coming from major ethnic groups in the country. This is in part a reflection of the constitutional mandate for every political party to “have a national character, and membership shall not be based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional divisions” (Article 55(4)). Thus, while the two dominant parties both have strong ethnic-based support (NPP enjoys massive support in the Ashanti and Eastern Region, while the NDC enjoys massive support in the Volta Region), political organization necessarily includes all groups from the grassroots level to national leadership, although diversity is seen more at the grassroots level than at the national level.

In presidential elections, it is traditional for the major political parties to present tickets with broad ethnic representation. Historically, the presidential candidates have come from the South while the vice-presidential candidate comes from the North. However, in the 2012, 2016 and 2020 elections, the NDC ticket had President John Mahama, who hailed from the North, while his vice-presidential candidates came from the South. Since the 2000 elections, the presidential tickets usually attempt a religious balance, typically, by fielding a Christian presidential candidate and a Muslim vice-presidential candidate. Governing parties generally endeavour to make appointments ethnically diverse.

As noted above, the NDC and NPP both have strong ethnic support bases. However, none of them can rely exclusively on their ethnic bases in order to win elections. As such, they are compelled to develop a national appeal. Since 2000, any time an opposition party has won power, it has only done so by winning in a majority of the regions. In 2000, the NPP captured power by winning in 6 out of 10 regions; in 2008, the NDC returned to power by winning in 8 out of 10 regions; and in 2016, the NPP won power again by winning in 6 out of 10 regions. Thus, while ethnicity surely has some relevance in the country’s democratic politics, other factors such as parties’ programmatic platforms, campaign messaging and perceptions of the performance of the sitting government are more important in influencing voting patterns.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, all parties espouse respect for diversity as a core value and reflect this in their policy proposals and political campaign platforms. To a large extent, various governments and political elites have worked over the years to manage diversity and strengthen political inclusion in the country. There have been instances where political personalities have made ethnically divisive comments, but these have been swiftly followed by public backlash. Some, like the former Minister of Agriculture, William Quaitoo, have even been forced to resign as a result of making divisive ethnic statements.<sup>31</sup>

## 8. NEWS MEDIA

### OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE: 5

#### A. Representation | Score: 5

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 5

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 5

RELIGION | SCORE: 5

**Community and regional radio stations exist in many parts of the country and active engagement with the public especially on issues related to electoral politics is common on these platforms, making room for higher participation in civil and political conversation and greater scrutiny of local officials.**

Ghana has developed a vibrant media landscape, especially since the 2001 repeal of the Criminal Libel and Seditious Libel Law under which journalists who criticized the government were prosecuted and jailed. The majority of news outlets, both paper and electronic, are privately owned and controlled.<sup>32</sup> Local language media is available, and radio is the most prominent form of media engagement. Since the early 2000s, there has been an increase in commercial radio stations that broadcast primarily in the local languages.<sup>33</sup> In Accra, the capital city, the Akan language is the most dominant language on radio, although there are some stations, like Obonu FM, that cater to the native Ga-language speakers. Across the country, Akan is still the local language most frequently used on radio, but in specific regions, Ewe, Dagbani, Dagaare and Gurene are also used.<sup>34</sup>

As of the second quarter of 2020, there were 459 authorized FM broadcast stations that were operational in the country, out of which 96 were community radio stations.<sup>35</sup> Community and regional radio stations exist in many parts of the country and active engagement with the public especially on issues related to electoral politics is common on these platforms, making room for higher participation in civil and political conversation and greater scrutiny of local officials. The state television station, GTV, broadcasts conversations in all the major Indigenous languages that are taught in school.

For many minority groups, electronic media such as community radio stations are the main means by which they participate in the civil discourse. Many civil society groups also use electronic media to reach out to their target audiences. In recent times, widespread internet access in most urban areas and increasingly in many rural parts of the country makes access to information widely available. In 2021, internet penetration in Ghana stood at 50 percent.<sup>36</sup>

Media programming and coverage in the commercial and public radio stations do not fully reflect the country's diversity. Although Ghana has a robust media atmosphere, the level of partisan political polarization is such that some critical voices in society refrain from public discourse for fear of political victimization. For instance, many influential personalities have in recent times refrained from adding their voice to public debates out of fear of being tagged as affiliated to one of the two dominant parties, and some have even been vilified for expressing views perceived to be detrimental to the interests of one political party.<sup>37</sup> In a recent public lecture, Rev. Emmanuel Martey, a vocal clergy member, explained that many religious leaders are unable to speak out on public issues out of fear of abuse: "Many pastors cannot withstand insults and therefore keep quiet amidst corruption."<sup>38</sup> The media space is, thus, dominated by "the same group

**In general, media discussions of gender-related issues, such as violence against women or girls, do not connect them to the wider social context that enables such violence.**

of privileged voices... mostly men, often partisan, and from the educated and political class.”<sup>39</sup> Moreover, “women, persons living with disabilities, and people living outside the capital are excluded and their concerns are not prioritized.”<sup>40</sup>

However, no particular identity group is deliberately or disproportionately disadvantaged because of this pattern of coverage. This problem cuts across the three diversity types.

## **B. Prominence of Pluralistic Actors | Score: 5**

**ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 5**

**NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 5**

**RELIGION | SCORE: 5**

At the national level, elite media actors espouse the values of inclusivity and pluralism. Many leading journalists and media houses are vocal when issues affecting the rights of vulnerable groups in the country are at stake, especially issues affecting women. Female journalists tend to be more vocal about gender issues. However, women do not stay long enough in the profession to rise to managerial or executive positions. A study commissioned by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) found that less than 13 percent of female journalists have more than 13 years of experience in the profession. Additionally, female journalists face other obstacles that impede their success in the field, such as lower decision-making power.<sup>41</sup> For example, the study showed that the majority of women (74 percent) are generally found at the lower levels of the media organizational hierarchy, occupying positions such as senior and junior reporters. In contrast, only 5 percent were holding senior management positions, with even fewer (1 percent) being holders of positions as executive heads.<sup>42</sup>

In general, media discussions of gender-related issues, such as violence against women or girls, do not connect them to the wider social context that enables such violence.<sup>43</sup> To improve the status and performance of female journalists, organizations such as the MFWA and the Alliance for Women in Media Africa hold periodic training programs for women media practitioners.<sup>44</sup>

Media discussions tend to reproduce or reinforce prejudices against various social groups. In 2021, the MFWA recorded 95 incidents of stereotyping in the news media which “bordered on gender, ethnicity, social and political discriminations.”<sup>45</sup> For instance, stories involving Fulani herdsmen in daily newspapers tend to rely heavily on second-hand accounts and focus on criminality, while also emphasizing their status as “outsiders” or “settlers.”<sup>46</sup>

## 9. CIVIL SOCIETY

### AVERAGE SCORE: 8

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 8

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 8

RELIGION | SCORE: 8

**Over the years, civil society actors have played an active role in promoting social inclusion and pluralistic values. They have kept watch on governments and even political parties and religious groups in order to ensure that they abide by constitutional provisions.**

Ghana has a vibrant, pluralist and independent network of CSOs. The CSO space has witnessed impressive growth since the country's return to constitutional rule in 1992. Available statistics indicate that between 2000 and 2012, over 33,000 CSOs were registered in the country. Their activities span the whole gamut of sectors of relevance to national life, from service delivery, advocacy, watchdog roles, and governance and political participation.<sup>47</sup> Sectoral emphasis of specific CSOs in Ghana include governance (Institute for Democratic Governance, IMANI Center for Policy and Education, CDD-Ghana and the Institute of Economic Affairs), gender equity (Women in Law & Development in Africa, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), NETRIGHT, ABANTU for Development), civic advocacy (Coalition of Domestic Elections Observers), and unions and professional associations (Ghana Bar Association, Ghana Medical Association, Ghana Trades Union Congress, University Teachers Association of Ghana). Others are peaceful co-existence (Ghana Peace Council), religious associations (Christian Council of Ghana, Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services) and many other domains in society.

Over the years, civil society actors have played an active role in promoting social inclusion and pluralistic values. They have kept watch on governments and even political parties and religious groups in order to ensure that they abide by constitutional provisions, especially those that seek to strengthen unity, pluralism and inclusion, as well as peace and stability in the country.

Gender-related issues, such as the representation of women in politics and national life, violence against women, girl-child education, among others, have been actively championed by CSOs like NETRIGHT, ABANTU for Development and FIDA, among others. CSOs focussed on governance issues have also been vocal on issues of women's rights and political participation. Ghana's civil freedoms have been achieved largely due to the continued work of grassroots activists, traditional and faith-based associations and CSOs.<sup>48</sup> These groups, backed by research and policy-based think tanks, engage in activities towards encouraging civic education and democratic participation, provide means for expressing individual identities and act as government watchdogs. They have continued to work towards achieving pluralism and inclusivity in all spheres of Ghanaian society.

However, Ghanaian CSOs face significant sustainability challenges in terms of retention of high calibre staff, inability to source for sufficient funds for their operations and lack of core funding for organizational development purposes. Since Ghana's reclassification as a lower-middle-income country in 2010, many foreign donors have decreased their overall support to Ghana, creating sustainability challenges for civil society. With shrinking financial resources, CSOs have increasingly entered into competition for funds

in ways that have undermined prospects for networking and coalition building among them. As Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh noted, “Ghanaian civil society has a notoriously short attention span, marked by a tendency to hop from one issue to another, often driven the goal of securing external-donor funding.”<sup>49</sup>

## 10. PRIVATE SECTOR

### AVERAGE SCORE: 6

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 7

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 5

RELIGION | SCORE: 6

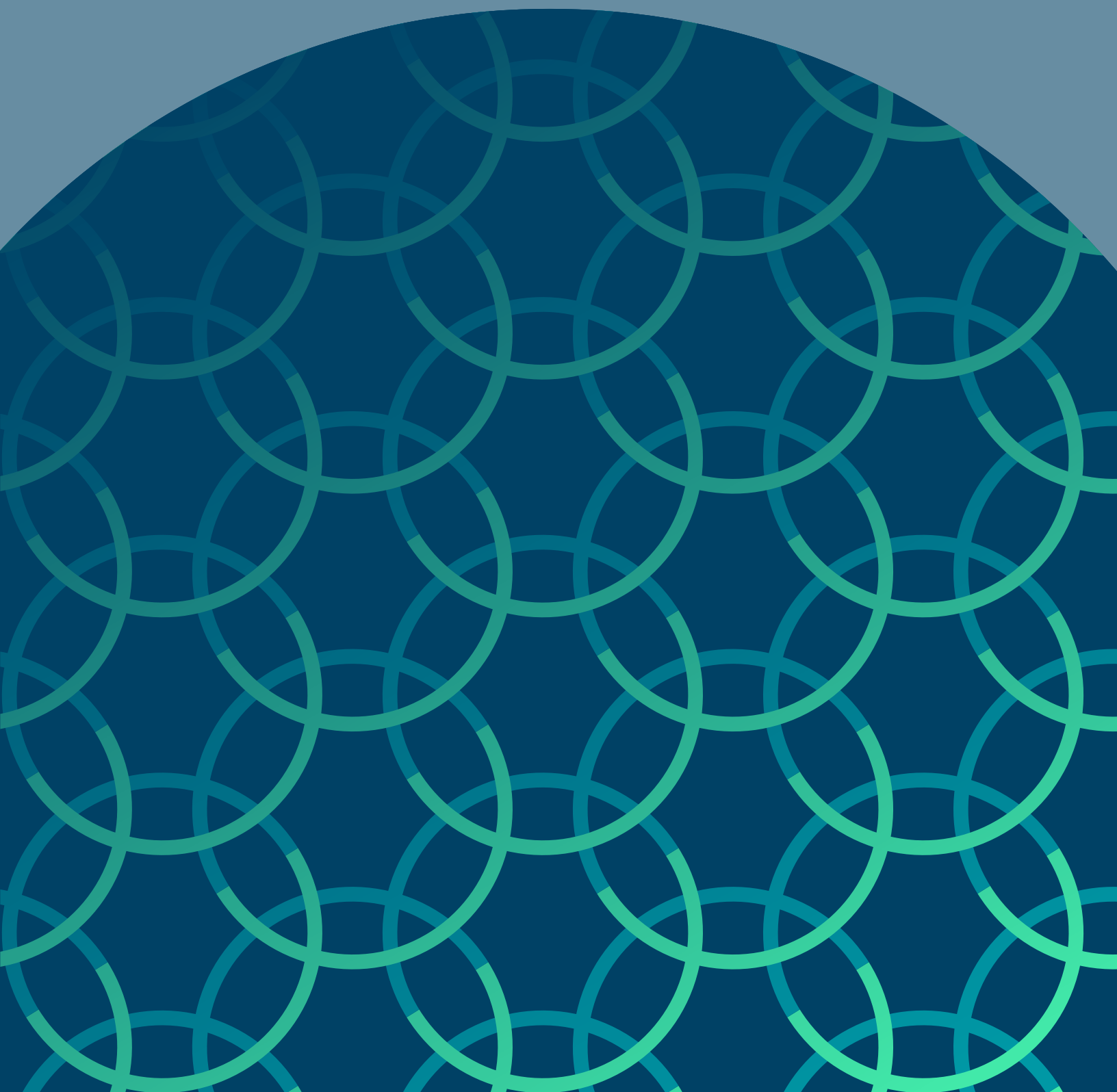
**The statistics show that there is a significant variation in leadership and ownership in the private sector particularly in terms of gender and geographical location. Available evidence shows huge deficits in terms of women’s representation in managerial or decision-making roles on boards in the country.**

The Integrated Business Establishment Survey (IBES) report prepared by the GSS in 2015 shows that in terms of ownership, the private sector constitutes 85.6 percent of businesses in Ghana while the remaining 14.4 percent is owned by the government. The private sector is largely made up of small-and medium-scale enterprises. Micro, small and medium enterprises constitute about 92 percent of all businesses in Ghana and operate in sectors that are highly characterized by informality and vulnerability. Like other developing countries, Ghana’s private sector is constrained by financial challenges and collusive forms of state–business relations, with the awards of contracts driven significantly by partisan and political considerations. With regards to the relationship between ownership and employment patterns, Ghanaian-owned enterprises employ about 9 out of every 10 the Ghanaian workforce, while foreign establishments engage 2.8 percent of the remaining workers. In terms of legal engagement, the sole proprietorship businesses account for 48.2 percent, while private limited companies engage 20 percent and the government sector employs 10.8 percent.

Geographically, private sector establishments are concentrated in the Southern part of Ghana. For instance, Greater Accra and Ashanti regions dominate in private sector establishments. The IBES report shows that out of the 638,234 establishments, over a quarter were located in the Greater Accra Region, while about 19 percent were located in the Ashanti Region.<sup>50</sup> By contrast, the entirety of Northern Ghana (then made up of three regions) had only 11 percent of business establishments.

Similarly, business establishments in Ghana show a clear gender-based pattern. Across all the administrative regions of the country, the statistics show that there is a significant variation in leadership and ownership in the private sector particularly in terms of gender and geographical location.<sup>51</sup> Available evidence shows huge deficits in terms of women’s representation in managerial or decision-making roles on boards in the country. A recent study titled *Gender Diversity in Ghanaian Boardrooms* found that 72 percent of boards in the country had female representation.<sup>52</sup> However, gender diversity on each board was low, ranging from 7 percent to 25 percent; and 24 percent of firms had an all-male board. Gender representation was higher on the boards of smaller and younger firms, while boards of firms in the financial industry showed the lowest levels of diversity on their boards.<sup>53</sup>

# PART IV. GROUP-BASED INEQUALITIES





# 11. POLITICAL

## AVERAGE SCORE: 6

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 6

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 5

RELIGION | SCORE: 6

**No political party openly espouses a platform that discriminates against any particular ethnic, religious or other identity-based groups. However, accepted practice seems to provide tacit endorsement to an extent of marginalization of various groups.**

Identitarian factors have influenced political affiliation and participation throughout Ghana's history, although their respective influences have differed based on social or historical context.<sup>54</sup> Prior to independence in 1957, a number of ethno-regional and religious political parties were formed in opposition to the Convention People's Party (CPP) led by the founding president, Kwame Nkrumah. The most notable among political parties were the National Liberation Movement (whose base was today's Ashanti, Bono, Ahafo and Bono East), the Northern People's Party (whose base was in the Northern Ghana region) and the Muslim Association Party (whose base was the urban immigrant quarters, popularly known as *zongos*).

These opposition parties rendered the CPP government highly vulnerable, and President Nkrumah adopted a number of measures aimed at containing them. In the months after independence, the government passed the Avoidance of Discrimination Act (ADA), which rendered all political parties built primarily on regional, ethnic or religious bases illegal. Under the ADA, all the existing opposition parties became illegal, prompting them to merge into a single party called the United Party.<sup>55</sup>

One of the most obvious continuities in Ghana's post-colonial political history has been the ban on ethno-regional political parties. Today, no political party openly espouses a platform that discriminates against any particular ethnic, religious or other identity-based groups. However, accepted practice seems to provide tacit endorsement to an extent of marginalization of various groups. Under today's political atmosphere, it is very unlikely for a non-Akan politician to lead the NPP, an offshoot of the United Party. It will also be very challenging to have an Asante, a subgroup of the Akan, to lead the NDC. These are worrying realities that hinder the representation of certain people in governance as result of their ethnic origins.

However, it must be noted that the NDC appears to be more inclusive in this regard than the NPP. In the 2012, 2016 and 2020 elections, the NDC flagbearer was John Mahama, a Gonja from Bole in the Savannah Region of Northern Ghana even though the NDC is perceived to be a largely Ewe party. The NPP, in contrast, has only fielded Asante and Akyem candidates, in keeping with its image as an Akan party. Nevertheless, politicians from the Northern part of the country are equally deprived of holding power in both parties.<sup>56</sup> Given their lack of substantial power within the governments of both NDC and NPP, political elites from the North have been less successful in bringing as much development to their regions as politicians from the Southern part of the country.<sup>57</sup>

Again, on the religious front, there have been serious issues facing some minority religious groups when it comes to representation and participation in governance. In



a country with a convincing Christian majority, representation, whether by election or appointment, always goes to disproportionately favour Christians, and to a lesser extent Muslims. In 2011, WikiLeaks revelations showed that a Member of Parliament for Ketu South who was also a deputy finance minister, Mr. Fiifi Kwetey, had said that a “Muslim can’t be president of Ghana.”<sup>58</sup> When he subsequently sought to excuse his utterances, he muddied the waters even further by widening the circle of groups he believed could not be presidents to include the entire Northern Ghana, owing to what he described as an NPP’s lack of “natural commitment to the course of our Northern and Muslim people.”<sup>59</sup> Ghana was 65 years in March 2022, yet the country is yet to produce its first non-Christian president, non-Christian Speaker of Parliament and non-Christian Chief Justice.

Similarly, as noted earlier, women’s representation remains low at the national and local levels, evident in their gross underrepresentation in Parliament and among Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs). Since 2012, Ghana has had an Affirmative Action Bill which seeks to ensure the equal representation and participation of both women and men in governance, public positions of power and in all decision-making bodies. However, it remains unclear as to when this bill will be passed into law and whether its passage will make a significant impact on the political representation of women.

## 12. ECONOMIC

### AVERAGE SCORE: 4

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 5

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 3

RELIGION | SCORE: 4

**The contrast is stark with the North–South divide intensifying in terms of income poverty. Not only do the three regions in the North have the highest rates of income poverty nationally, but they are currently *increasing*, according to the latest government figures.**

Since the mid-1980s, Ghana has made significant strides in economic growth and poverty reduction although this has generally been accompanied by rising inequalities, especially along the North–South divide. The World Bank noted that, “with strikingly high poverty and slow reduction in the North and the exact opposite in the South, Ghana is experiencing an accelerating geographically-based socio-economic gap.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the contrast is stark with the North–South divide intensifying in terms of income poverty. Not only do the three regions in the North have the highest rates of income poverty nationally, but they are currently *increasing*, according to the latest government figures. Compared to a national poverty rate of 23.4 percent, poverty in the Northern region increased from 50.4 to 55.7 percent between 2012/13 and 2016/17, in the Upper East from 44.4 to 54.8 percent and in the Upper West from 70.7 to 70.9 percent.<sup>61</sup> Women within the North suffer more from poverty and low human development due to their involvement in low-income activities and a lack of access to land and credit.<sup>62</sup>

One result of the decades of economic underinvestment in the North has been a historical pattern of North–South migration but with most poor Northern migrants unable to gain a foothold in the local Southern economy.<sup>63</sup> Of particular attention here are the young

**While all family or lineage members are guaranteed access to land for farming purposes, in practice men have greater and more secure access to land than women.**

girls who migrate to the South as head potters (*Kayayei*). The labour of these young girls is mostly exploited, with many of them often becoming adolescent mothers. As the World Bank noted, “Migrants from the North tend to migrate out of desperation and, given their lower education levels, migration often results in them doing high risk jobs or putting themselves in positions of vulnerability. The young girls who carry heavy loads on their heads in [Accra’s] markets, sleep on the streets and earn 2 Ghana Cedis a day ... are reminders of the risks that people from the North take in search of a better life.”<sup>64</sup>

More broadly, gender inequality is pervasive as women are poorer, lack access to economic assets and resources such as land, and constitute only 6 percent of the richest Ghanaians although women make up over half of the population.<sup>65</sup>

Incomes in Ghana are generally lower compared to other neighbouring countries in West Africa. The average minimum wage in Ghana as of 2020 is GH¢11.82 per day (US\$1.00). It is estimated that only 24 percent of urban wage earners earn about or above the average minimum wage.<sup>66</sup> Over 80 percent of the labour force is absorbed by the informal sector, where labour regulations are not regularly enforced, and wages are low. The most recent *Ghana Labour Force Report* shows that there are slightly more women than men (91.9 percent versus 87.9 percent) engaged in informal work.<sup>67</sup> Research also shows that there is disparity in earnings for men and women. Women earn about 70 percent of what men earn for the same work.<sup>68</sup>

The private sector has a bigger share of the formally employed in Ghana, absorbing over 80 percent of Ghanaian workers.<sup>69</sup> The public sector has been shrinking in its employment share since the introduction of the structural adjustment program. While education lowers the risk of exposure to unemployment, unemployment is high, and only about 2 percent of the 250,000 of Ghanaians who enter the Ghanaian labour market annually are absorbed in the formal sector.<sup>70</sup>

In Ghana, all natural resources are vested in the state. The host communities receive mineral royalties from the central government, but the rate is too meagre to support meaningful local economic development. Communities receive only 13 percent of mineral royalties, and the Ghana Chamber of Mines has been advocating for this to be increased to 30 percent.<sup>71</sup>

Land is vested in traditional authorities or in individual families, depending on local customary laws and practices. Access to land is determined by customary practices of inheritance or usufruct (the temporary right to use and benefit from someone else's property). While all family or lineage members are guaranteed access to land for farming purposes, in practice men have greater and more secure access to land than women. Additionally, women generally lack the ability to bequeath landed property to their daughters. Women and children are the most vulnerable when it comes to inheritance as they are often disadvantaged in property distribution.<sup>72</sup> In recent times, large-scale land sales have resulted in land scarcity, further limiting women's access to land.<sup>73</sup>

Financial inclusion has been increasing in recent times. Between 2010 and 2015, access to formal financial services in Ghana increased from 41 to 58 percent. This has been driven largely by the growth of informal financial services such as mobile money. In 2017, 39 percent of Ghanaians had a registered mobile money account.<sup>74</sup>

Overall, poverty and economic vulnerability is a general problem that cuts across the various identity categories, even though it is more pronounced among women and Ghanaian residents in the Northern part of the country.

## 13. SOCIAL

### AVERAGE SCORE: 4

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 4

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 3

RELIGION | SCORE: 4

**Coverage under the NHIS is open to all Ghanaians irrespective of gender, religious affiliation or geographical location in the country, although unequal spatial distribution of health facilities presents indirect obstacles to accessing this service.**

Access to education at the primary school levels in Ghana is high. The gross enrolment rate (GER) in primary schools reached 103.44 in 2021 and was as high as 108.34 in 2015.<sup>75</sup> Primary education is totally free and starts from kindergarten at age five. Investments in the sector including programs like school feeding programs and free uniform programs instituted by various governments encouraged enrolments and eliminated some of the barriers to accessing primary education. Enrolment at the secondary level is also at an all-time high with an enrolment ratio of 77.67. This can be attributed mainly to the free Senior High School policy which started in 2017. Basic education in Ghana is nine years (primary and junior high) with an additional three-year secondary education. As of 2020, there were 547,000 tertiary students in Ghana. Parity at these levels have improved considerably, partly due to policies targeted at removing barriers to education. At the tertiary level, the enrolment rate of female students in 2020 stood at 17.7 as against 19.6 for males.<sup>76</sup>

Access to health care has improved over the years in Ghana but important gaps remain. Currently, it is estimated that about 81 percent of the population had access to general primary health care, 61.4 percent to secondary-level health care and only 14.3 percent to tertiary health care.<sup>77</sup> Access to family planning and modern contraception is still low among women in Ghana with the uneducated, poor and rural women being the most affected.<sup>78</sup>

In 2003, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was introduced to move the country towards the goal of universal health coverage. The National Health Insurance Scheme covers over 95 of all ailment expenditures. Coverage under the NHIS is open to all Ghanaians irrespective of gender, religious affiliation or geographical location in the country, although unequal spatial distribution of health facilities presents indirect obstacles to accessing this service. To ensure equitable health care across various demographics, the aged, pregnant women, disabled and children are exempted from paying for membership registration or renewal fees.<sup>79</sup> However, the NHIS does not cover all costs. Patients still have to pay substantial costs and the quality of care under the NHIS is generally deemed to be poor.<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, there remain significant inequalities in both education and health, especially along the North–South and rural–urban divides. Health care facilities are mainly

concentrated in the urban areas which makes it difficult for rural dwellers to access health care. The GLSS7 report indicates that over 7 percent of people from the Western region, Northern region and Upper West region spent more than three hours to access the nearby health care facility as compared to those in Greater Accra where less than one percent spent more than three hours to access health care.<sup>81</sup>

More broadly, the UNDP recently pointed to a disturbing picture of disparities and inequalities between the North and South. The composite human development index—health, education and living standards—was 0.116 for the North compared with a national index of 0.576. The North, as a whole, had the poorest quality education provision nationally as measured by the number of educationally deprived districts and the educational performance of students. In health, access to facilities and to staff was far worse than elsewhere, with just 6 percent of specialist health professionals in the Northern Savannah zone, compared to 94 percent in the South, and 11 times fewer doctors per capita in Upper West than in Greater Accra Region.<sup>82</sup> Children’s health outcomes reflect high poverty levels and inadequate health services, with the poor nutritional status of Northern children “about double the national average,” greater stunting of children than elsewhere, and infant and under-five mortality rates much higher than the national average.<sup>83</sup>

## 14. CULTURAL

### AVERAGE SCORE: 7.5

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 8

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 8

RELIGION | SCORE: 7

**In almost all cultures across the country, customary practices and traditions such as widowhood rites, belief systems and inequitable rules regarding access to resources and political power undermines women’s agency.**

Ghana is a highly diverse country comprised of multiple ethno-linguistic groups, diverse cultures and religious affiliations. According to the GLSS7 survey report, there are about five major ethnic groups in Ghana with subgroups, all with different cultures practiced by its people.<sup>84</sup> A common cultural inequality that cuts across all ethnic groups is discrimination against women. In almost all cultures across the country, customary practices and traditions such as widowhood rites, belief systems and inequitable rules regarding access to resources and political power undermines women’s agency.<sup>85</sup> Women and girls are also subjected to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage and Trokosi, among others.<sup>86</sup>

Officially, all social groups and cultures are accorded dignity and respect. At the policy level, attempts have been made to establish a link between cultural diversity and development, including in such documents like the Cultural Policy of Ghana (2004), the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2010-2013) and the National Tourism Development Plan (2013-2027).<sup>87</sup> Additionally, the Cultural Policy of Ghana explicitly proclaims “the need to promote unity within [the country’s] cultural diversity.”<sup>88</sup>

At the micro level, Ghanaians tend to exhibit a relatively high level of tolerance for various social groups, including ethnic minorities. Recent studies conducted among university students in Ghana show that over 70 percent of students in each instance reported sentiments of tolerance for ethnic and racial diversity.<sup>89</sup>

Both at the level of official policy and in everyday life, overt ethnic intolerance is frowned upon. At the same time, there are also many instances of ethnic stereotyping and discrimination in the implementation of particular policies. For instance, most Fulani pastoralists, even those born in Ghana, are denied Ghanaian citizenship if none of their parents was born in Ghana before independence. In the various outbreaks of conflicts between the group and state security forces or communities, they are portrayed as outsiders; and in 1999–2000, the state undertook a national expulsion of Fulani herdsmen.<sup>90</sup>

Ghana has a strong tradition of inter-religious harmony, a situation which sharply contrasts with its West African neighbours. During national events, such as Independence Day celebrations, Christian, Islamic and traditional prayers (pouring of libations) are offered. However, adherents of African traditional religions are stereotyped as pagans, and during the presidency of John Atta Mills (2009–12), pouring of libation at national events was stopped.

## 15. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

### AVERAGE SCORE: 6

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 6

NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 6

RELIGION | SCORE: 6

**For a lot of poor people in the country, access to justice is an expensive and largely unattainable dream, and challenges with access to the law courts and legal assistance has been documented in the scholarly literature.**

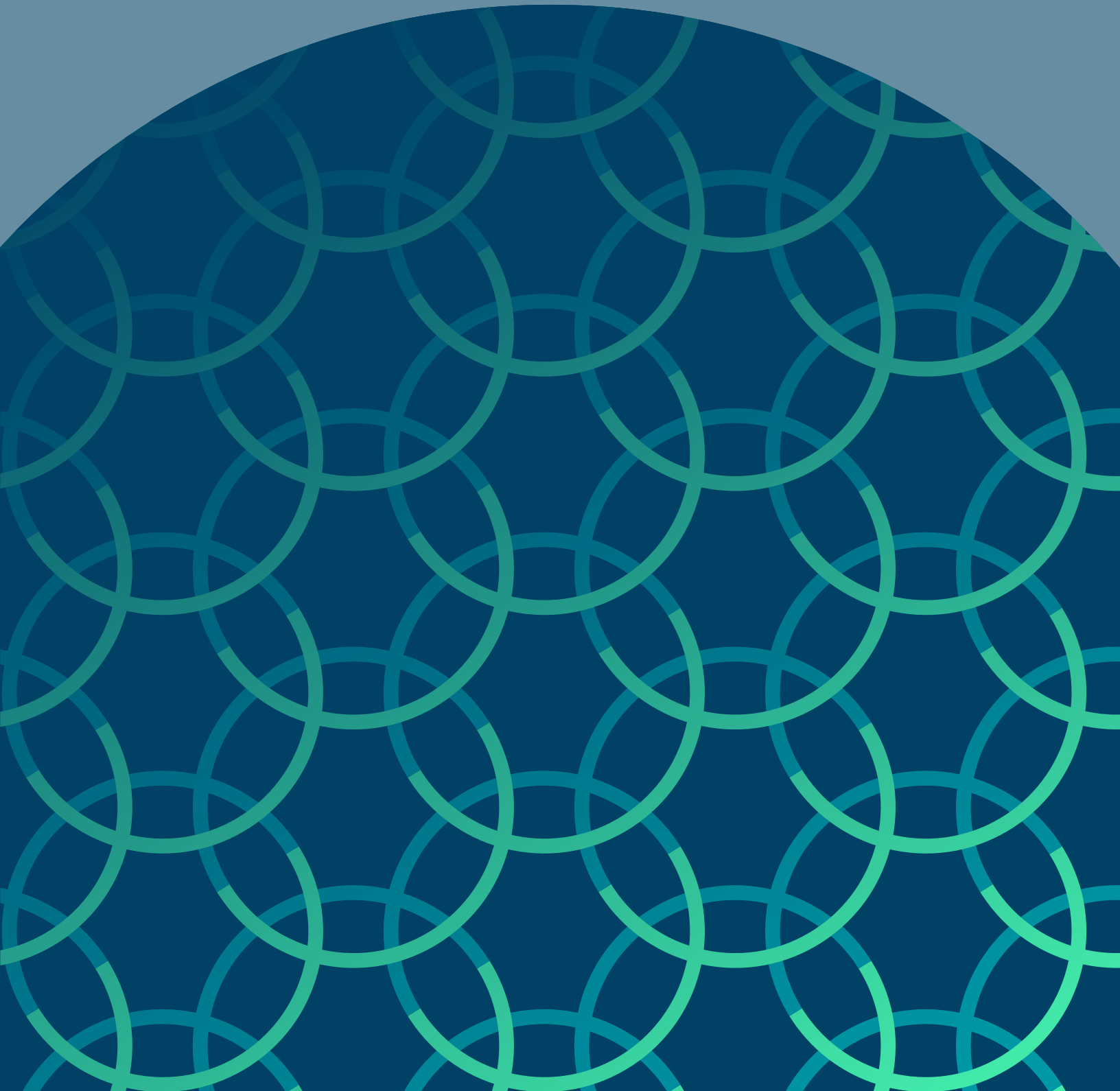
Ghana has laws and structures in place to ensure access to justice for all citizens and residents. The justice system in Ghana was ranked sixth in Africa in 2019 by the World Justice Project. The independence of the judiciary in Ghana is guaranteed and protected by the 1992 Constitution. Even though the president appoints the chief justice, the inspector general of police and the director of prisons, the executive is constitutionally barred from exercising control over the functioning of the judiciary.

This notwithstanding, the administration of justice in Ghana is plagued with a number of challenges that hinders access. For a lot of poor people in the country, access to justice is an expensive and largely unattainable dream, and challenges with access to the law courts and legal assistance has been documented in the scholarly literature.<sup>91</sup> Specifically, large filing fees and the high cost of legal representation are some of the persistent barriers to accessing justice among the poor. As a step towards reducing the cost of access to justice, the Ghana government recently established the Domestic Violence Fund (DVF) to help to address grievances of the less privileged. Yet, the DVF is severely underfunded. It was established with a seed fund of only GH¢50,000, and subsequent budgetary allocations have not been fully honoured.<sup>92</sup>

Another important challenge is the issue of delays in the criminal justice system, with some cases spanning a period of nearly three decades to conclude.<sup>93</sup> These delays are partly due to the lack of technological advancement in the service. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2010 (Act 798) was enacted by Parliament to help reduce the workload on the courts. Alternative Dispute Resolution is often less adversarial and cheaper for litigants. The CHRAJ also offers services on issues bordering on violation of human rights. Chiefs and community leaders still play a major role in dispensing justice and adjudicating cases in communities. They are often the first point of call-in dispute resolution for most rural residents. Funding for human rights organizations and legal aid is limited, and this has been regarded as one of the major challenges to ensuring access to justice for all.

While there is no documented case of differential treatment of any group, the poor often do not get fair treatment due to the lack of resources and assistance in the justice system. As noted by the Access to Justice Report, “the poor rarely appear in court except as defendants in civil suits and criminal prosecutions.”<sup>94</sup> The problem of cost is connected to the issue of judicial corruption. The most explosive coverage of judicial corruption occurred in a 2015 documentary titled, *Ghana in the Eyes of God – Epic of Injustice*. In the documentary, undercover investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, secretly filmed judges and magistrates demanding or taking bribes.<sup>95</sup> Judicial corruption places even more obstacles in the way of poor citizens seeking justice.

**PART V.  
INTERGROUP RELATIONS  
AND BELONGING**



# 16. INTERGROUP VIOLENCE

## AVERAGE SCORE: 7.5

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 7

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 8

RELIGION | SCORE: 8

**There are also frequent instances of violent clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farming communities. Their respective grievances are rooted in competing claims to natural resources and livelihoods.**

Despite the peaceful co-existence of many different groups in Ghana, there are pockets of violence that occasionally erupt in communities across the country. These violent confrontations are often caused either by ethnic, religious and cultural grievances. There are a number of ethnic-related violence littered across the country. Between 1981 and 1994, a number of conflicts involving the Konkombas and their neighbours (Dagombas, Nanumbas, Gonjas and Mamprusis), led to some of the deadliest ethnic conflicts recorded in Ghana.<sup>96</sup> Although there has been relative peace with the resolution to these conflicts, there are occasional flare-ups. The most recent of this happened in 2019 between the Konkombas and the Chokosis in Chereponi, Saboba District.<sup>97</sup> The ethnic conflicts often result from one group trying to assert power over the other and the other refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the other to wield power over them. The history of colonialism is another factor in these conflicts, as British officials under colonial rule forced the historically non-centralized Konkomba clans under the political jurisdiction of Dagombas.<sup>98</sup> Hence, occasionally the issues of legitimacy and respect for centralized autonomy leads to protracted conflicts between of the Konkombas and their neighbours with centralized systems of authority.

Another source of violence among ethnic groups in Ghana is confrontations between migrant and settler groups. A volatile situation exists in the Volta Region in Southern Ghana between the Nkonya, an indigenous group, and the Alavanyo, a group that traces its roots to settlers. Their recurring conflict has been fundamentally about access to land, which the Nkonya are trying to repossess from their settler neighbours, the Alavanyo.<sup>99</sup> There are also frequent instances of violent clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farming communities. Their respective grievances are rooted in competing claims to natural resources and livelihoods. The host/farming communities insist on protecting their farmlands from destruction by roaming cattle while the nomadic groups appeal to their rights to a livelihood by herding their cattle.<sup>100</sup> In the urban centres, conflicts occasionally erupt between Ghanaian traders and their foreign counterparts (mainly Nigerian and, in recent times, Chinese) when Ghanaian traders take it upon themselves to enforce a law prohibiting foreigners from engaging in retail trade (Section 27(1) of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, 2013 (Act 865)). The confrontations sometimes turn violent when the Ghanaian traders' association attempt to close down shops owned by foreigners.<sup>101</sup>

Chieftaincy disputes are the major sources of violence related to cultural grievances. Chiefs in Ghana wield a lot of power and influence. Some of the prominent chieftaincy disputes that have lasted decades and have led to violent clashes are the Dagbon Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo, the Buipe chieftaincy, and Akropong-Akwapem and Abiri conflicts.<sup>102</sup> These disputes are often related to challenges over succession among members of the royal families, sometimes fuelled by local and national political elites.



Some violence has in the past arisen from religious conflict. A recurring case of inter-religious violence in the Greater Accra Region is between some Christian charismatic churches and traditional leaders of the Ga State over the ban on drumming and noisemaking as Gas prepares for the annual Homowo Festival. The situation has often required the intervention of the state and prominent Christian leaders to restore calm, encouraging respect and tolerance on both sides.<sup>103</sup>

Having said these, it must be borne in mind that intra-group conflicts are more prevalent in Ghana than conflicts between different groups. Chieftaincy disputes, which tends to occur *among* members of the same ethnic group, is the single most important source of conflicts (45.2 percent) in the country, according to the GLSS7. By contrast, inter-ethnic conflicts account for 9.2 percent of all conflicts while religious conflict accounts for only 0.3 percent of all conflicts.<sup>104</sup>

## 17. INTERGROUP TRUST

### AVERAGE SCORE: 4

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 4

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 4

RELIGION | SCORE: 4

**In Accra, which is more cosmopolitan than other Ghanaian cities and offer more opportunities to interact with persons from diverse ethnic groups, a study by Langer reported that a third of his respondents were in inter-ethnic marriages.**

In general, Ghanaians seem to harbour a lot of mistrust. In the Afrobarometer Round 8 survey, an astounding proportion of respondents—almost 91 percent—agreed with the statement that one must be careful when dealing with others. Only 8.5 percent were of the view that most people could be trusted. However, the levels of distrust for specific groups of people were much lower, although the rates were still high. For instance, 46 percent of respondents expressed distrust for people from other ethnic groups while 36 percent said they did not trust people with different religious affiliations, although women were slightly more distrustful (48 percent and 35 percent respectively).

Recent studies show 19 percent of marriages in Ghana are inter-ethnic marriages; the average rate for Africa is 20 percent.<sup>105</sup> In Accra, which is more cosmopolitan than other Ghanaian cities and offer more opportunities to interact with persons from diverse ethnic groups, a study by Langer reported that a third of his respondents were in inter-ethnic marriages.<sup>106</sup>

There seems to be an equally widespread acceptance of interfaith marriages, especially among Christians. A 2009 Pew poll reported that 40 percent of Christians said they would be comfortable if their children married a Muslim while 24 percent of Muslims responded similarly. However, some sects are so stringent about preventing interfaith marriages that they even frown upon members outside their denominations. For instance, among adherents of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, there is “a generally held belief that it is not right for us to marry those ‘outside the faith.’”<sup>107</sup>

Data on level of comfort with having a boss from a different group is hard to come by. However, the level of comfort or tolerance towards other groups can be gleaned from people's level of comfort with having neighbours from other groups. Round 8 of the Afrobarometer survey shows a high degree of tolerance for diversity among Ghanaians. For instance, less than 10 percent of respondents expressed any type of dislike for people of different religions; 20 percent expressed indifference while almost 70 percent either liked or strongly liked the idea of having neighbours who professed different religions. Similarly, only about 7 percent of respondents disliked or strongly disliked having neighbours from different ethnic groups while almost 73 percent liked or strongly liked the idea. However, dislike for having neighbours who were immigrants was slightly higher. A quarter of respondents disliked or strongly disliked the idea.

## 18. TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

### AVERAGE SCORE: 4

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 4

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 4

RELIGION | SCORE: 4

**Even with the infrastructural challenges associated with the high enrolment numbers, Round 7 of the Afrobarometer showed that about 80 percent of Ghanaians were satisfied with government's handling of public education.**

The Ghanaian public tends to adopt a cautious or skeptical attitude towards public institutions. As a result, there exists the phenomenon of institutional pluralism wherein state institutions exist in parallel with informal or customary institutions. For instance, Ghana's health system involves the practice of both traditional and orthodox medicine. Various studies have shown the public's lack of confidence in the state-provided health care system. The practice of mixing orthodox and traditional medicines is widespread, while some people sidestep the hospitals altogether and rely exclusively on herbal remedies. While the high cost of health care is partly responsible for this pattern of health-seeking behaviour, analysts have also blamed it on the failure of the state to fully integrate traditional medicine into the formal health care system.<sup>108</sup>

In contrast to orthodox health care delivery, formal education enjoys more widespread public trust. Since the early 1990s, both NDC and NPP governments have pursued a commitment, enshrined in the 1992 Constitution, of making education progressively free. The Free Senior High School Policy, introduced in 2017 to remove all cost/fee barriers to access to senior high education, is the latest programmatic manifestation of this policy. The first year of its implementation saw the enrolment of about 80,000 more students who would have otherwise dropped out because they could not afford it. However, the expansion of access created a problem by putting pressure on the already inadequate infrastructure, leading to the introduction of a batch system (called the double-track system) that reduced in-class contact hours in order to accommodate the increased number of students.<sup>109</sup> Even with the infrastructural challenges associated with the high enrolment numbers, Round 7 of the Afrobarometer showed that about 80 percent of Ghanaians were satisfied with the government's handling of public education.

Trust in law enforcement is very low among Ghanaians. Only 40 percent of Afrobarometer Round 7 respondents indicated that they trusted the police a lot or somewhat. The lack of trust has been attributed to corruption and inefficiency in the police service.

By contrast, 57 percent of Afrobarometer respondents expressed trust in the judiciary. While this is somewhat higher than trust in the police, it is still worryingly low. The judiciary, like the police, labours under public resentment and heavy suspicion of corruption, a suspicion which was confirmed when investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas showed undercover footage of judges and magistrates taking bribes.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, the persistence of various forms of gender discrimination in Ghana means that marginalized women and girls are likely to have little trust in both formal and informal institutions. This distrust is evident in the reluctance of women to seek redress for sexual and gender-based violence within homes, places of worship or workplaces.<sup>111</sup>

## 19. INCLUSION AND ACCEPTANCE

### AVERAGE SCORE: 7

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 7

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 7

RELIGION | SCORE: 7

In general, there is a high sense of belonging and inclusion in Ghana. In Round 8 of the Afrobarometer survey, less than 10 percent of Ghanaian respondents indicated that they felt only ethnic or more ethnic than national in their personal identity. In contrast, over 55 percent did not see any contradictions at all between their ethnic and national identity, while about 35 percent felt a greater pull towards their national identification.

There is also a generalized sense of acceptance of diverse identity groups. Over 64 percent of the same round of Afrobarometer respondents agreed with the statement that communities are stronger when they are made up of people from diverse ethnic groups, religions, races and so on. Similarly, about 73 percent agreed that there is more that unites all Ghanaians than what divides them. Accordingly, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they enjoyed a free environment within which to fully express their ethnic identity. About 96 percent answered that they felt comfortable speaking their mother tongue in public, and 95 percent were equally comfortable wearing their traditional or cultural dress in public.

There does not seem to be a deliberate policy of targeting particular identity groups for mistreatment. About 70 percent of the respondents stated that their ethnic group has *never* been treated unfairly by the government, while less than 8 percent reported having experienced unfair treatment by the government often or always. Official mistreatment on the basis of religion is even rarer. Over 81 percent of the respondents said that their religious group has never been unfairly treated by the government, while only about 4 percent reported such cases of mistreatment on a regular basis.

Similarly, most respondents indicated that they have not had personal experiences of unfair treatment because of their group identity in their everyday interactions with other Ghanaians. About 79 percent reported *never* having been unfairly treated because of their ethnic identity, while almost 81 percent had also *never* been unfairly treated because of their religion. By contrast, the proportion of respondents who had *never* been unfairly treated because of their economic status is about 15 percentage points lower (64.1 percent).

## 20. SHARED OWNERSHIP OF SOCIETY

### AVERAGE SCORE: 4

ETHNIC GROUP(S) | SCORE: 5

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE | SCORE: 3

RELIGION | SCORE: 5

**In Ghana, citizens' feelings of belongingness or sense of shared ownership of society are undermined by the highly divisive and "winner-takes-all" character of politics, in which state resources are captured by political elites and their supporters.**

Although there are relatively high levels of feelings of inclusion and acceptance among Ghanaians, they also seem to exhibit a reserved attitude towards personal participation in social life. This can be seen in the pattern of responses to some questions in the Round 7 of the Afrobarometer survey. Only 21 percent of respondents reported being active members of a voluntary association or community group, while 35 percent reported being active members of religious groups. Men (22 percent) reported active membership of voluntary and community groups at slightly higher levels than women (19 percent), while women (39 percent) reported a higher rate of participation in religious groups than men (30 percent).

Moreover, only 38 percent of respondents stated that they attended community meetings on a regular basis (i.e., several times or often) in the previous year. Attendance rates was much higher for men (44 percent) than for women (32 percent). Even fewer respondents were active in strongly making claims in the public sphere. In the previous year, less than a quarter of respondents had regularly gotten together with others to raise issues. Again, men (33 percent) were over two times more likely to have regularly participated in raising issues than women (15 percent). National elections seem to be the only public civic act that respondents enthusiastically participated in. In the 2016 elections, 81 percent of respondents said they voted (83 percent for men, 79 percent for women).

In Ghana, citizens' feelings of belongingness or sense of shared ownership of society are undermined by the highly divisive and "winner-takes-all" character of politics, in which state resources are captured by political elites and their supporters. Despite the deepening of electoral democracy in Ghana, political clientelism is widely noted to have increased, with patron-client relationships playing a domineering role in shaping citizens' access to various public services.<sup>112</sup> Scholars have characterized Ghana's political environment as one of "competitive clientelism" whereby the two main political parties compete in the use of elections as a mechanism for the selective distribution of state resources and public sector jobs to their followers.<sup>113</sup>

The growing prominence of party “foot soldiers” within the two main parties has added a new dimension to the politics of patronage in ways that further undermine a sense of shared ownership of society. Foot soldiers are prepared to be recruited into vigilante squads as a means to obtain patronage, and political elites are prepared to pay them for their services because of their importance in winning elections.<sup>114</sup> Thus, since the 2000s, in particular, party foot soldiers have demanded openly to be rewarded by their respective parties for their activism, and politicians have generally accepted such demands as legitimate. Yet, this form of exchange threatens the very foundation of a sense of shared ownership of society, because the criteria for defining “deservingness” in the distribution of state resources is based not on citizenship rights but rather on support for political party operations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Interrogate the extent to which development actions have created and exacerbated inequalities and stifled inclusive socio-economic impacts and relationships. There is a need to prioritize the implementation of national policies based on inclusiveness in order to achieve beneficial social and economic outcomes and the creation of a pluralistic society in Ghana.
- Political parties should recognize the needs of and allocate resources to, the Northern and Central regions irrespective of the number of representatives from that region.
- Ensure equitable developmental infrastructure for the Northern regions to improve social and economic conditions for the people in the region.
- Recognize the rights of Fulani/Pastoral communities to access state services and explore pathways to citizenship.
- Parliament should prioritize the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill to promote women's equal participation and representation in politics and decision-making.
- Increase coordination between government departments with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to incorporate gender mainstreaming into all policies.
- Address data collection challenges in collecting data on government spending and budget allocation based on ethno-cultural background and district level.
- The National Media Commission and the National Communications Authority must rigorously enforce the applicable media regulations to deter violations of broadcasting ethics that infringe on the rights of identity groups in the country.
- State institutions responsible for promoting civic values, pluralistic ethics and social justice (e.g. NCCE and CHRAJ) must be well funded to be able to perform their duties.

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