Lord Ashcroft Polls

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AFRICA AND THE WORLD:

Challenges for the continent's centre-right

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC October 2025



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Methodological note	З
Outlook and attitudes	4
Domestic issues	1
Africa and the world	. 14
Seven kinds of voter	24
About Lord Ashcroft	26

INTRODUCTION BY LORD ASHCROFT

This project, which I presented at the invitation of the Democracy Union of Africa in Nairobi in October 2025, is the first large-scale polling exercise I have conducted on the continent. We have polled more than 12,000 people in ten countries which between them represent more than half of Africa's total population: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

Our surveys were conducted online, with all the obvious caveats that implies where internet access is incomplete or inconsistent. This being the case, this is probably best thought of as a study of the online population of these countries, which on average is likely to be more urban and with more years of education. Nevertheless, I think we have uncovered some important findings on what we might call leading opinion, and some of the issues that politicians will have to grapple with now and in the future, not just in these ten countries but in Africa more widely — especially when it comes navigating Africa's strategic position in a multipolar world.

These issues include voters' domestic priorities, their values and outlook, what they regard as the barriers to development in their respective countries, and who they see as their key international partners and preferred strategic allies.

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC

October 2025

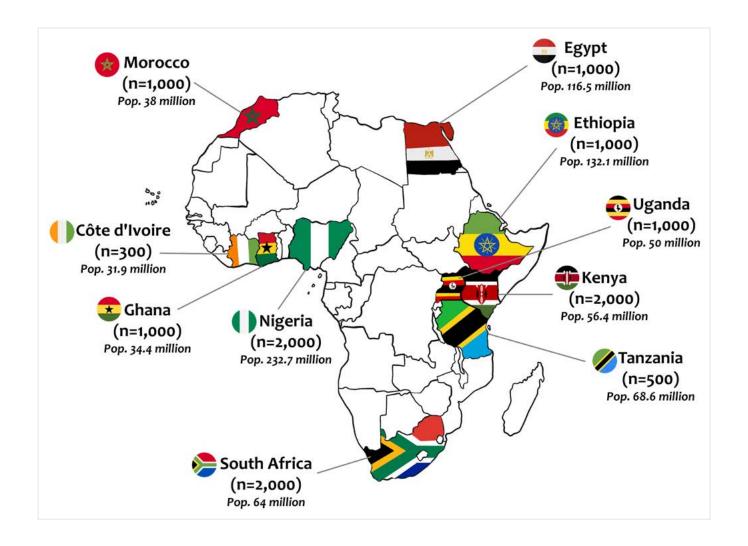
METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

12,233 adults were interviewed online in the following 10 countries between 11 and 31 July 2025:

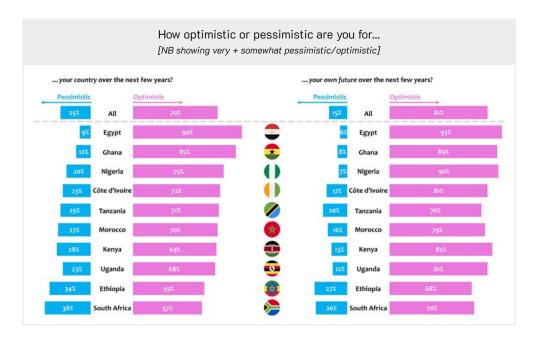
 Côte d'Ivoire 	302
Egypt	1001
– Ethiopia	1001
– Ghana	1017
– Kenya	2002
Morocco	1003
– Nigeria	2404
 South Africa 	2001
– Tanzania	501
– Uganda	1001

Data were weighted by age and gender in all countries. They were also weighted by religion in Nigeria and by ethnicity in South Africa. While every effort was made to ensure representative samples, it should be noted that internet access is incomplete or inconsistent in some of the areas polled.

Data tables are available at LordAshcroftPolls.com



OUTLOOK AND ATTITUDES



We found voters to be **overwhelmingly optimistic** about the next few years, both for their country and – especially – for their own future. Those in Egypt, Ghana and Nigeria were the most optimistic on both counts. While respondents in Ethiopia (59%) and South Africa (57%) were the least optimistic for their countries, around 7 in 10 still said they were optimistic for their own futures. The biggest discrepancies between national and personal optimism were in South Africa, Uganda (both 13 points), Nigeria (15 points) and Kenya (16 points).

Men and women were equally likely to say they were optimistic about the future for both themselves and their country. Net optimism fell slightly by age, from +48 among 18-24s to +30 among those aged 55 and over when asked about the country, and from +73 to +42 when asked about their own prospects. More than half of respondents up to the age of 44 said they were "very optimistic" about their own future.



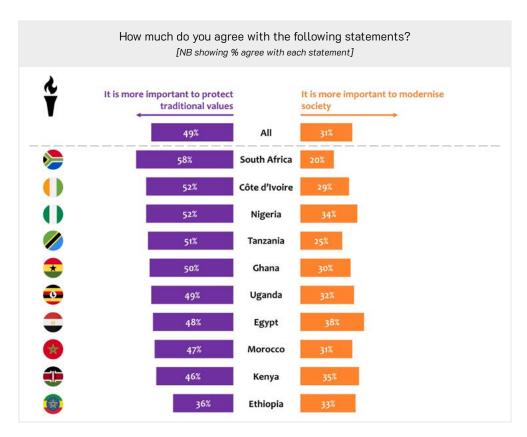
Majorities in most states said they believed that with hard work it was **possible for a person to be successful** in their country no matter what their background. Those in Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda were the most likely to agree with this statement, with those in Morocco, South Africa, Kenya and Egypt the most likely to feel that people from some backgrounds would never have a real chance to succeed no matter how hard they worked (though only just over 1 in 3 in these countries said this).

Overall, men were slightly more likely to think it was possible to be successful whatever your background (56%) than women (49%), and there was no significant difference by age group.



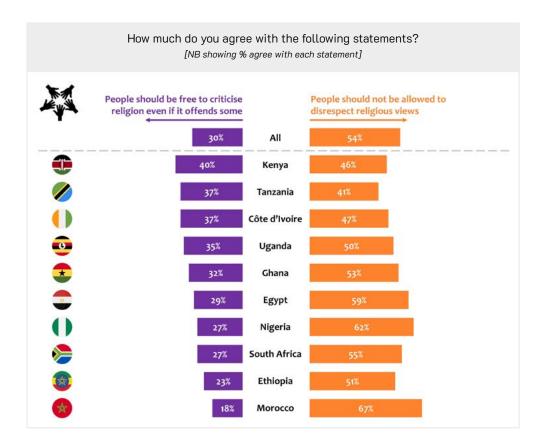
Respondents in all but one country (Egypt) tended to disagree that to stand among the advanced economies of the world their country would have to become more like them. Instead, majorities in most countries — especially South Africa, Ghana and Kenya — believed they could **stand among the advanced economies of the world** without giving up what made their country unique.

On average, younger respondents thought their country could stand among advanced economies without giving up what made their country unique by bigger margins than older ones (24 points among 18-24s, 27 points among 25-44s, 12 points among those aged 55+).



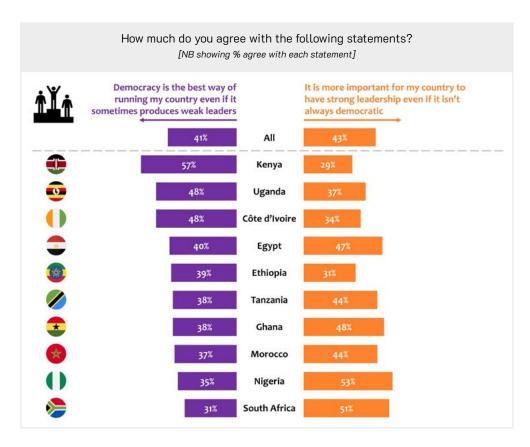
Similarly, respondents in all countries surveyed were more likely to consider it important to **protect traditional values** than to modernise society. Voters chose this option by the biggest margins in South Africa (38 points), Tanzania (26 points) and Côte d'Ivoire (23 points).

All age groups said it was more important to protect traditional values, though the oldest (55+) and youngest (18-24) did so by the smallest margins (15 and 16 points respectively).



By an even bigger margin, respondents were more likely than not to agree that people should not be allowed to **disrespect religious views**. This was particularly the case in Egypt, Nigeria and Morocco (where two thirds expressed this opinion). Margins were much smaller in Kenya and Tanzania, where some 4 in 10 said that people should feel free to criticise religion even some are offended.

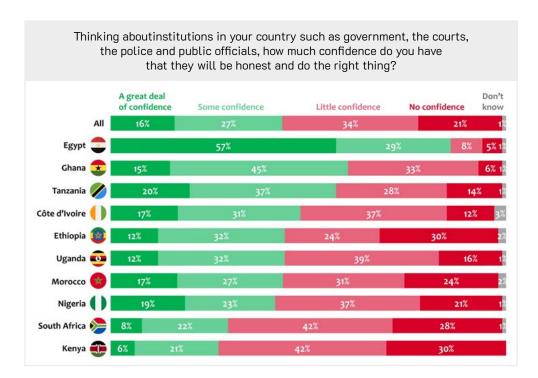
On average, younger people in our survey (rising to 62% of those aged 18-24) were notably more likely than older participants (45% of those aged 55+) to say that people should not be allowed to disrespect religious views. Overall, 62% of Muslims took this view, compared to 51% of Christians.



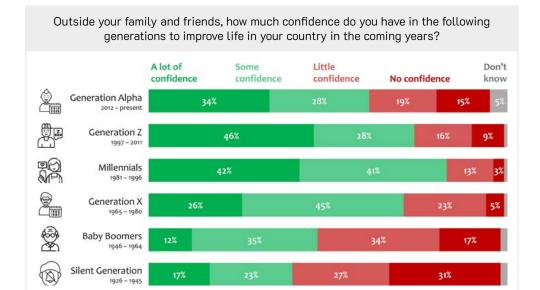
Respondents as a whole were closely divided as to whether **democracy is the best way** of running the country even if it sometimes produces weak leaders (41%) or if it is more important to have strong leadership even if it isn't always democratic (43%). Kenya was the only country in which a majority (57%) said democracy was always best, and was one of only four in which voters were more likely than not to take this view. Majorities in South Africa and Nigeria, and just under half in Ghana and Egypt, favoured strong leadership even if it was not democratic.

Those aged 18-24 and 25-34 prioritised strong leadership over democracy by 4 and 7 points respectively; those aged 35-44 and 45-54 favoured democracy by 1 and 2 points; and those aged 55+ were evenly divided.

While men prioritised democracy by a 2-point margin, women favoured strong leadership by 6 points.



Confidence in public institutions varied considerably between countries. Majorities in Egypt, Ghana and Tanzania said they had some or a great deal of confidence in things like the government, courts, police and public officials. This fell to around 3 in 10 in South Africa and Kenya, where just 6% said they had a great deal of confidence in public institutions. There was no significant variation in attitude between age groups.

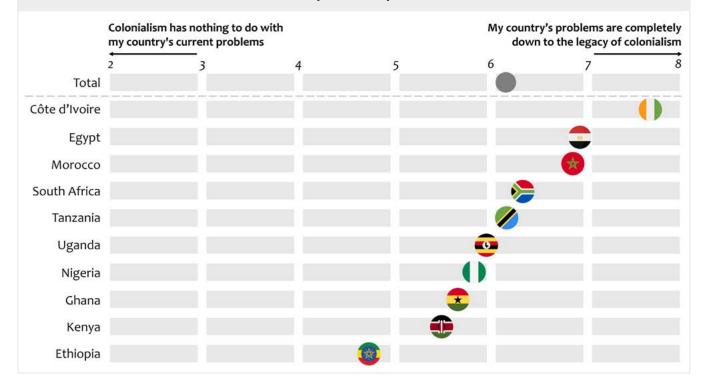


Asked whether they had **confidence in different generations** to improve life in their country in the coming years, respondents put the most trust in millennials, with 83% saying they had some or a lot of confidence in this generation. Their younger counterparts, Generation Z, inspired more confidence than the older cohort, Generation X.

Those aged 55 and over also had more confidence in Millennials than in any other generation. Those aged 18-24 had more confidence in their own generation (Gen Z) than in any other.

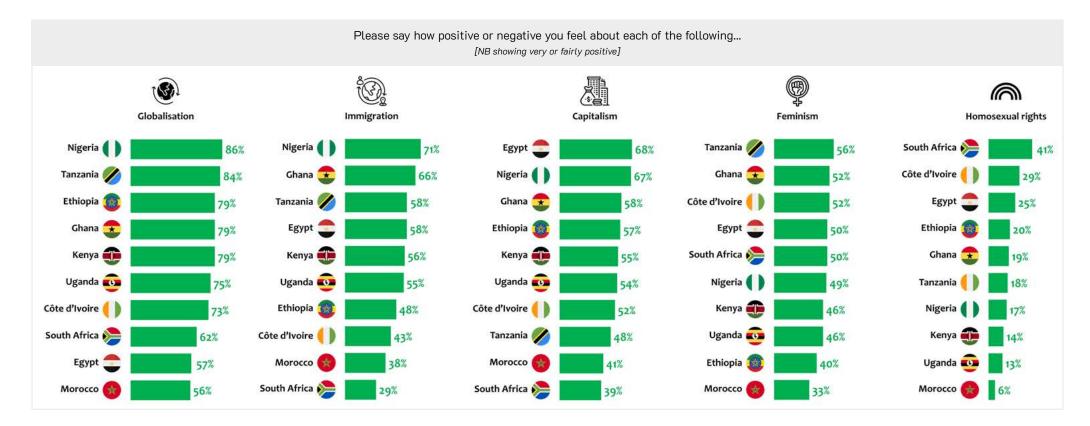
How far do you think the history of Western colonial powers in Africa is responsible for the challenges your country faces today, where O means colonialism has nothing to do with your country's current problems and 10 means they are completely down to the legacy of colonialism?

[NB mean scores]



We asked respondents about the extent to which they thought the history of western colonialism was responsible for the challenges their own country faced today. Those in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria were the least inclined to put their country's problems down to the legacy of colonialism, giving scores of less than 6 on a 0-10 scale. Respondents in Côte d'Ivoire ascribed the heaviest current influence to the legacy of colonialism, followed by Egypt and Morocco.

In general, older respondents put their country's challenges down to the legacy of colonialism to a greater degree than their younger counterparts. The mean score for the influence of colonialism was 5.86 among 18-24s and 6.58 among those aged 55 and over.



We found considerable variations in support between when it came to social attitudes on various issues. Though majorities in all surveys said they had a positive view of **globalisation**, this ranged from just over half in Morocco and Egypt to more than 8 in 10 in Nigeria and Tanzania.

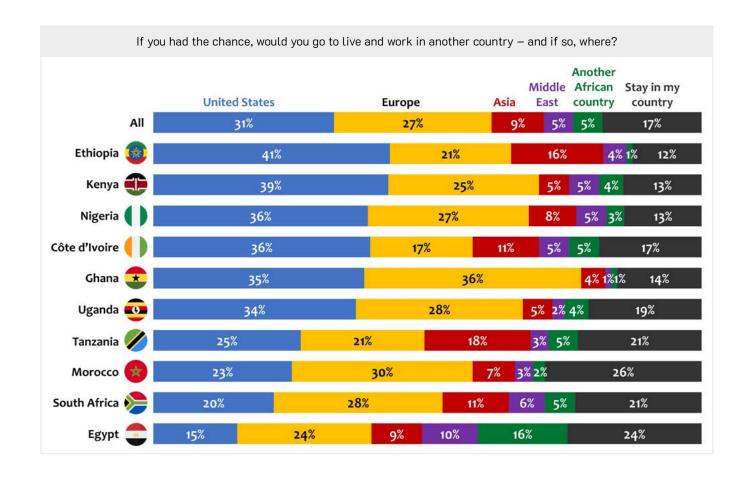
Majorities in 6 of the 10 countries took a positive view of **immigration**, with Nigeria and Ghana leading the way. However, this fell to 38% in Morocco and just 29% in South Africa.

More than two thirds in Egypt and Nigeria approved of **capitalism**, as did smaller majorities in all countries except Morocco and South Africa, where only 39% took a positive view.

Only in Tanzania, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire did more than half take a positive view of **feminism**. Most populations were quite closely divided, with support falling to 40% in Ethiopia and 33% in Morocco.

South Africans were the only respondents more likely than not to take a positive view of **gay rights.** Those in Morocco, Nigeria and Kenya were the most likely to say they had a negative view.

There was no significant variation in attitudes by age group, including on gay rights – on which 18-24s were in fact slightly more likely to have a negative view (55%) than those in the oldest group (50% of those aged 55 or over).



Clear majorities in all 10 countries said they would **live and work in another country** if they had the chance. The United States was the most popular potential destination overall, especially for respondents in Ethiopia and Kenya. Those in Ghana, Morocco and South Africa were more likely to say they would choose Europe, while Egyptians were the most likely of all respondents to say they would head for another country in Africa.

Those in Morocco (26%) and Egypt (24%) were the most likely to say they would rather stay in their own country than go abroad.

The proportion saying they would live and work abroad if they had the chance declined with age, from an average of 87% of 18-24s to 70% of those aged 55 and over.

DOMESTIC ISSUES

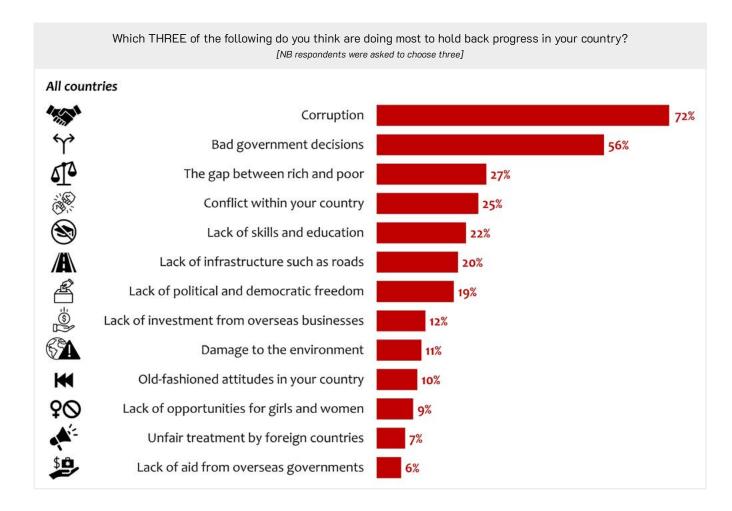
Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing your country at the moment? **INB** showing top 101 All countries Corruption 50% Employment and jobs 36% Inflation and prices 25% Crime 18% Government borrowing / 15% debt Healthcare 15% Education 12% 12% Taxes

Inequality between rich and poor

Democratic rights / free speech

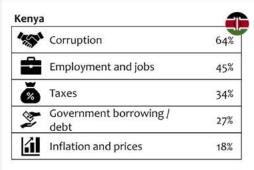
We asked respondents to choose the three most important issues facing their country.

An average of 50% of respondents per country named corruption, making it the top issue by a significant margin. Employment and jobs was the next biggest issue across the whole sample, followed by inflation and prices. Crime was in fourth place overall.



Corruption was the most chosen issue in 6 of our 10 countries, and was second or third in the countries in which it did not top the table (Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Egypt). Outside the biggest issues across the board, taxes were named in the top three issues in Kenya, terrorism in Nigeria, government debt in Uganda, democratic rights and free speech in Tanzania, internal conflict in Ethiopia, and education in Egypt and Morocco.

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing your country at the moment? [NB showing top 10]

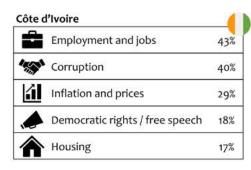


Nigeria	4
Corruption	60%
Inflation and prices	36%
Terrorism	32%
Employment and jobs	29%
ී Crime	20%

Web com		
1850	Corruption	60%
2	Employment and jobs	35%
*	Government borrowing / debt	23%
%	Taxes	20%
①	Healthcare	19%

1889 1	Corruption	59%
2	Employment and jobs	52%
ල්	Crime	51%
4	Inflation and prices	19%
食	Services like water and electricity	17%

1881	Corruption	49%
	Employment and jobs	45%
4	Inflation and prices	24%
E	Government borrowing / debt	20%
(Healthcare	15%

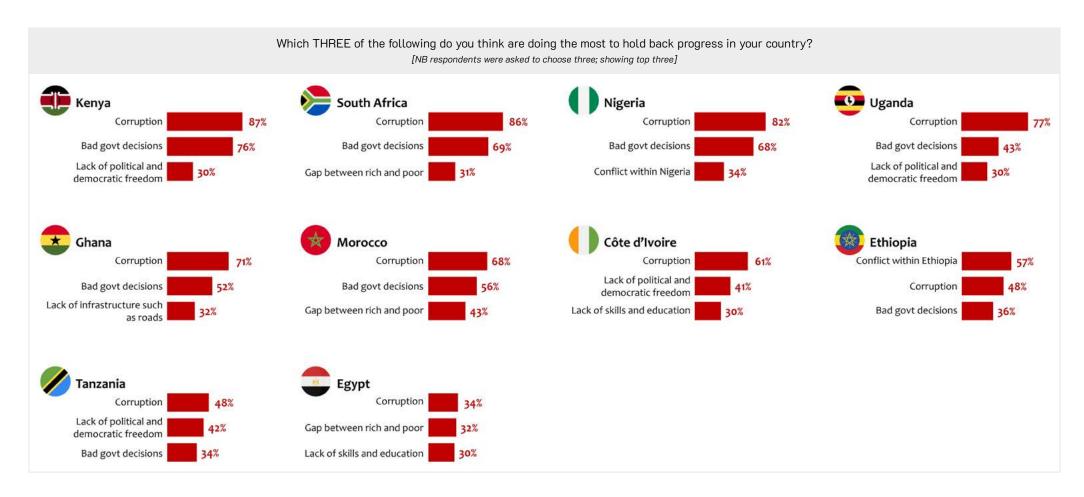


	Employment and jobs	39%
1551	Corruption	28%
	Democratic rights / free speech	27%
*	Government borrowing / debt	25%
	Education	13%

CHE CHE	Internal conflict in Ethiopia	38%
1	Inflation and prices	35%
155°	Corruption	29%
å	Employment and jobs	24%
ıı	Inequality between rich and poor	11%

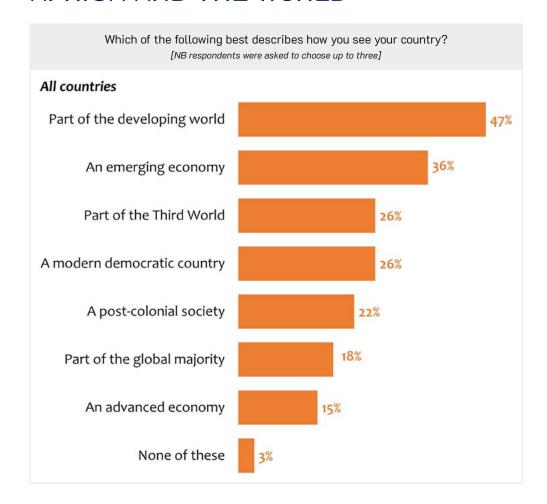
Egypt		
4	Inflation and prices	29%
1	Education	23%
155 1	Corruption	19%
①	Healthcare	16%
	Climate change and the environment	15%

1887°	Corruption	37%
•	Education	37%
4	Inflation and prices	36%
①	Healthcare	35%
å	Employment and jobs	20%



In a separate question, corruption was chosen as the factor doing the most to hold back progress in every country except Ethiopia, where it was second behind internal conflict. Bad government decisions were the next biggest culprit in 6 out of our 10 countries – the exceptions, other than Ethiopia, being Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire (lack of political and democratic freedom) and Egypt (the gap between rich and poor).

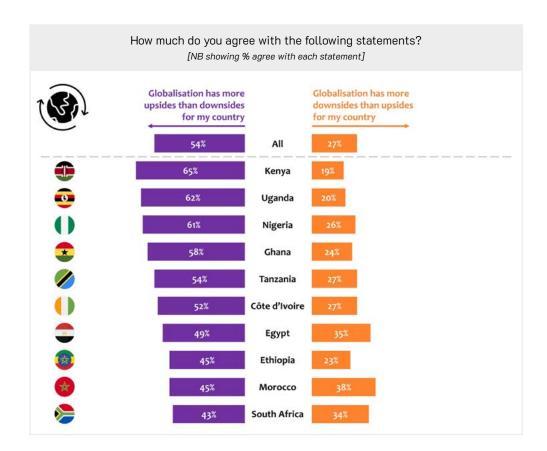
AFRICA AND THE WORLD



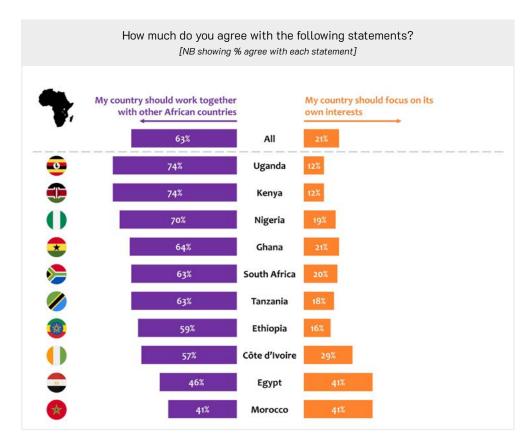
Asked how they saw their country, the most frequently chosen description overall was "part of the developing world", chosen by just under half of respondents across our survey. The two exceptions were Morocco, where people were more likely to see the country as "an emerging economy", and Egypt, where the most popular description was "a modern democratic country" (the second most frequently chosen description in South Africa and the third in Ghana), followed by "an advanced economy" (making Egyptians the most likely to choose this description for their country). On average, only just over a quarter (26%) of respondents in each country described their home as "part of the Third World", though people in Uganda and Morocco were slightly more likely to choose phrase. People in Côte d'Ivoire were the most likely to choose the phrase "post-colonial society" (30%).

Older participants (33% of those aged 55+) were more likely on average than younger ones (21% of 18-24s) to describe their country as part of the Third World. They were also notably more likely to choose "post-colonial society" (29% compared to 19%).

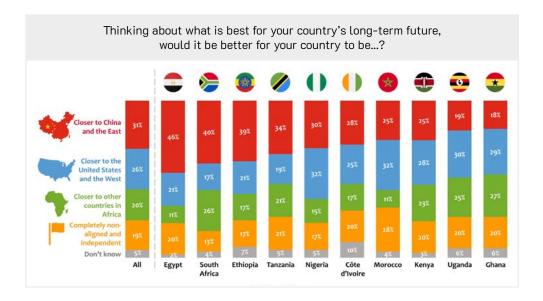
Which of the following best describes how you see your country? [NB respondents were asked to choose up to three, showing top three] **Kenya** Nigeria Ghana South Africa Part of the Part of the Part of the Part of the 52% 51% 50% developing world developing world developing world developing world A modern democratic An emerging economy An emerging economy 34% An emerging economy country A modern democratic Part of the Third World An emerging economy Part of the Third World 26% country Ethiopia Tanzania Côte d'Ivoire Uganda Part of the Part of the Part of the Part of the 49% 48% 48% 46% developing world developing world developing world developing world An emerging economy An emerging economy An emerging economy An emerging economy 45% Part of the Third World Part of the Third World Part of the Third World A post-colonial society Morocco Egypt A modern democratic An emerging economy 45% 42% country Part of the Third World An advanced economy Part of the An emerging economy 30% 36% developing world



On average, just over half of respondents in each of our states agreed that **globalisation** had more upsides than downsides for their country, though with considerable variations. More than 6 in 10 took this view in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, while fewer than half did so in Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco and South Africa. Morocco was the most sceptical, with 38% saying they thought globalisation had more downsides than upsides.

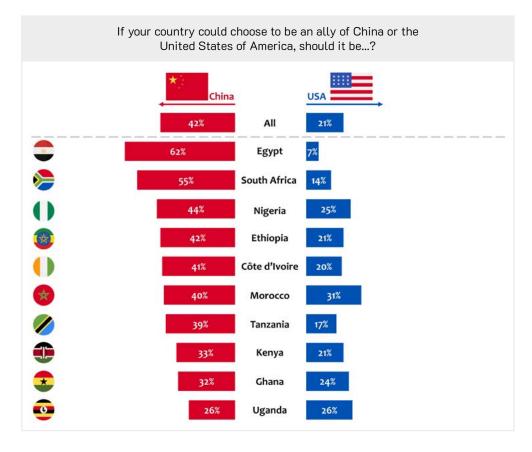


There was also a wide range of agreement as to whether respondents wanted to work together with other African countries. Again, Ugandans and Kenyans were the most likely to agree, closely followed by Nigerians – more than 7 in 10 agreed with the proposition in each case. Respondents in Egypt and Morocco were much more doubtful, with opinion closely divided between working with other African countries and focusing on their own interests.

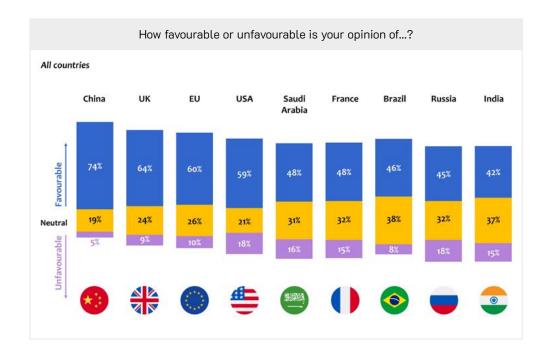


We also asked how people would most like their country to be **aligned in global terms:** closer to China and the East, the US and the West, other countries in Africa, or non-aligned and independent. Those in Egypt, South Africa and Ethiopia were the most likely to prefer alignment with China and the East, while those in Ghana, Uganda and Morocco said (by smaller margins) that they would prefer to be closer to the US and the West. South Africans, Kenyans, Ugandans and Ghanaians were the most likely to choose other countries in Africa.

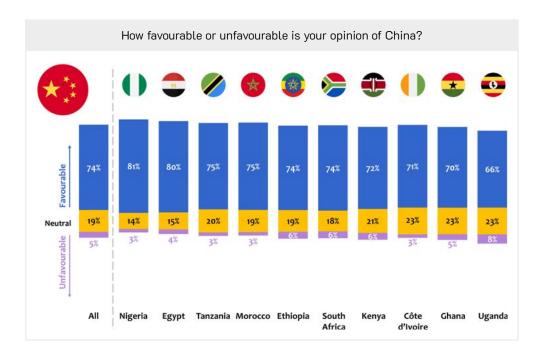
Overall, an average of just under 1 in 5 said they would rather be completely independent and non-aligned, with Moroccans (28%) the most likely to take this view.



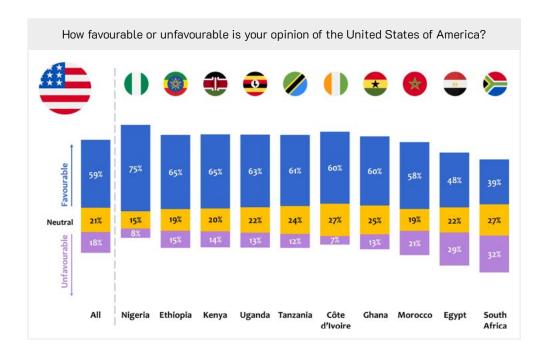
Offered a straight **choice between China and the US**, respondents in every country apart from Uganda (which was equally divided) were more likely to say they would rather ally completely or mostly with China. The biggest margins were in Egypt (55 points) and South Africa (41 points). More than 4 in 10 respondents in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda said they would prefer to remain neutral.



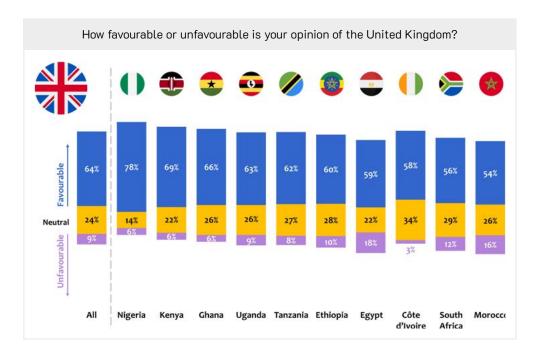
On average, nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents in our 10 surveys said they had a very or somewhat favourable opinion of China, making it the **most popular country** of those we asked about. The UK was second, with an average of 64% saying they had a positive view, followed by the EU (60%) and the US (59%). Respondents were more likely than not to have a favourable opinion of Russia.



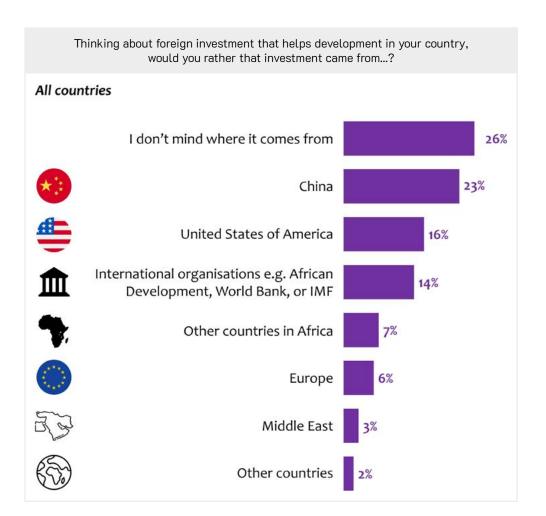
Opinion towards China was heavily positive in each country surveyed. At least three quarters of respondents had a positive view in Morocco, Tanzania, Egypt and Nigeria, rising to some 8 in 10 in the latter two. Favourability towards China was lowest in Uganda, but was still positive by a 43-point margin. There was no significant difference in attitude by age.



Opinion towards the United States varied more widely. Three quarters of Nigerians had a favourable view of the US, as did some two thirds of Ethiopians, Kenyans and Ugandans. However, fewer than half had a positive view in Egypt, and fewer than 4 in 10 did so in South Africa. Again, there was no significant variation by age group.

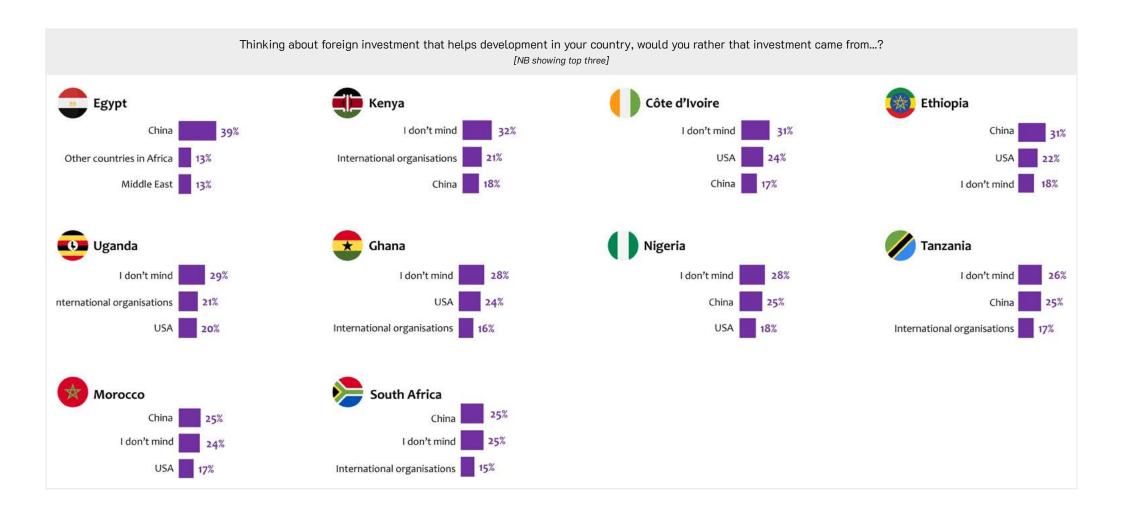


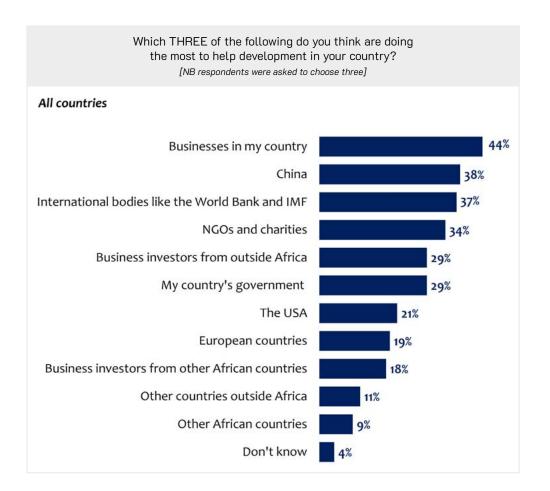
Majorities in all countries surveyed had a positive **view of the United Kingdom,** ranging from just over half in Morocco and South Africa to nearly 7 in 10 in Kenya and nearly 8 in 10 in Nigeria.



Asked where they would prefer as the source of foreign investment, the most popular response was "I don't mind where it comes from as long as it makes life better for people in my country". Just over a quarter of respondents said this on average, with those in Kenya (32%) and Côte d'Ivoire (31%) the most likely to do so.

Otherwise, respondents were more likely to name China as their preferred source of investment than the US, especially in Egypt and Morocco.





Asked which of a number of domestic, African and international sources were currently doing the most to help development in their country, local businesses topped the list overall (and in 4 of the 10 states), named by an average of 44% across the survey. China was second overall, topping the list in South Africa and Ethiopia and coming second in Morocco and third in Egypt. International bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were close behind, and headed the table in Uganda, Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania. Non-governmental organisations, business investors from outside Africa and the respondent's country's government were all thought to be doing more to help development than the US or European countries.

Older voters were more likely than younger participants to name China, the US and European countries. Younger participants were more likely than their older counterparts to mention NGOs and charities.

Which THREE of the following do you think are doing the most to help development in your country? [NB respondents were asked to choose three; showing top three] Uganda Egypt Nigeria South Africa Businesses in Businesses in 47% International bodies 49% 48% China 47% Egypt Nigeria The Egyptian **Businesses in South** 44% NGOs and charities 43% NGOs and charities 45% 44% government Africa Business investors from International bodies 38% 37% China 40% Businesses in Uganda 38% outside Africa **E** Kenya ★ Ghana Côte d'Ivoire Tanzania Businesses in International International International 46% 46% 45% 44% Côte d'Ivoire bodies bodies bodies The Ghanaian Businesses in Businesses in Kenya 45% International bodies 39% 38% government Tanzania The government of Côte 31% NGOs and charities Businesses in Ghana 36% 44% 44% NGOs and charities d'Ivoire Ethiopia Morocco Businesses in China 44% 43% Morocco International bodies 41% China 34%

39%

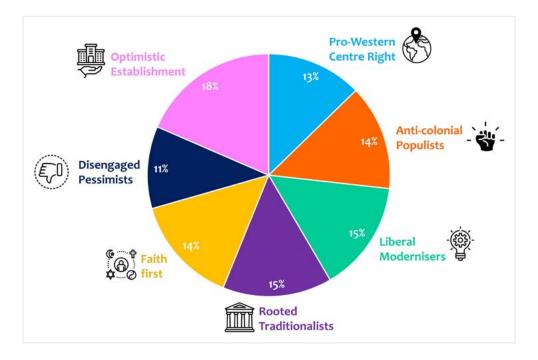
Businesses in Ethiopia

European countries

34%

SEVEN KINDS OF VOTER

Our analysis of the poll findings enables us to break the total 12,000 sample into seven distinct groups, represented in different proportions in each of the 10 countries we surveyed, each with a particular combination of opinions and attitudes.



PRO-WESTERN CENTRE-RIGHT (13%)

This segment has a very strong preference for alignment with the US and the West, and the highest levels of belief that democracy is the best form of government. They believe the US is doing the most to help development in their own country, and have favourable views of western-led institutions like the IMF. They are more likely than most to believe that colonialism is not responsible for their country's current problems, and are the most likely to believe that their country should be more like the world's more advanced economies. They are also the most willing to live and work abroad, with a strong preference for emigration to the US. They have very positive views of capitalism and globalisation but tend to be lukewarm about feminism. They tend to show strong support for the New Patriotic Party in Ghana, the People's Democratic Party in Nigeria, Chadema in Tanzania, and the Democratic Alliance in South Africa.

ANTI-COLONIAL POPULISTS (14%)

This group is the most likely to agree that their country's problems are down to the legacy of colonialism, and to see their country as part of the Third World or as a post-colonial society. Its members tend to have very negative views of the west and positive views of China, with associated preferences for international alignment. They have low levels of confidence in their country's institutions, agree strongly that people from some backgrounds will never be able to succeed however hard they work, and are the most likely to consider bad government decisions and the gap between rich and poor as among the biggest barriers to progress. They are also fairly socially conservative, with the highest support for harsher sentencing and negative views of feminism and gay rights. They show significant levels of support for the Labour Party in Nigeria and the Economic Freedom Fighters in South Africa, but in other countries this segment is the most likely to say that no party commands their support.

LIBERAL MODERNISERS (15%)

Liberal Modernisers are the most likely to agree that it is more important to modernise society than to maintain traditional values, and to believe that lack of opportunities for women and girls, old-fashioned attitudes and lack of freedom are the biggest impediments to progress. They have very positive views of feminism and gay rights, and are the most likely to think that women's rights and education are major issues. They are the most likely to see their country as part of the global majority, and disagree that strong leadership is more important than democratic rule. They lean towards the African National Congress in South Africa and the Republican People's Party in Egypt; in Nigeria the segment splits between supporting the Labour Party and the All Progressives Congress.

ROOTED TRADITIONALISTS (15%)

Members of this segment want to protect traditional values, is the most likely to believe that their country's problems have nothing to do with colonialism, and show the strongest agreement that anyone can succeed with hard work. They are also the most likely to say they would not consider emigrating, and believe their governments and domestic businesses are dong the most to help development. At the same time, they would prefer to align with China and the East, and have the most negative view of gay rights. They give strong support to the United Democratic Alliance in Kenya and Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania, but in other countries are among the most likely to say they do not support any party.

FAITH FIRST (14%)

This segment is the most likely to consider a shared faith the most important connection between people and that their family and their religion influence their views. Its members show strong agreement that people should not be allowed to disrespect religion, and that their country can stand among the world's leading economies without giving up what makes it unique. They are the strongest supporters of rehabilitation over punishment, and have very negative views of gay rights. Notably, there is no skew towards any particular faith. They tend to show lower support for most parties, especially left-wing economic populists, but lean towards the African Christian Democratic Party in South Africa.

DISENGAGED PESSIMISTS (11%)

This segment has the lowest level of trust in institutions and is most likely to consider corruption, government debt, democratic rights and free speech as major issues. They skew towards pessimism both for their own and their country's future. They have the strongest preference for neutrality in terms of international alignment, and are the most likely to say they don't mind where investment comes from. They are the most likely to see sharing similar values as the strongest connection between people. The group also has lower levels of support for established parties.

OPTIMISTIC ESTABLISHMENT (18%)

Members of this group have very high levels of trust in institutions and are the most likely to see their country as an advanced economy and a modern democratic state. They are also very optimistic about their country's future and their own, and are the most likely to agree that life will be better for future generations. They tend to lean towards supporting incumbent governments.

ABOUT LORD ASHCROFT

LORD ASHCROFT KCMG PC is an international businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. He is a former treasurer and deputy chairman of the UK Conservative Party. He is also honorary chairman and a former treasurer of the International Democracy Union. He is founder and chairman of the board of trustees of Crimestoppers, vice-patron of the Intelligence Corps Museum, chairman of the trustees of Ashcroft Technology Academy, a senior fellow of the International Strategic Studies Association, former chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University and a former trustee of Imperial War Museums.

HIS POLITICAL BOOKS INCLUDE:

- Smell the Coffee: A Wake-Up Call for the Conservative Party
- Call Me Dave: The Unauthorised Biography of David Cameron
- Hopes and Fears: Trump, Clinton, the Voters and the Future
- Well, You Did Ask: Why the UK
 Voted to Leave the EU
- The Lost Majority: The 2017 Election, the Conservative Party, the Voters and the Future
- Jacob's Ladder: The Unauthorised Biography of Jacob Rees-Mogg
- Diagnosis of Defeat: Labour's Turn to Smell the Coffee

- Going for Broke: The Rise of Rishi Sunak
- Reunited Nation? American Politics Beyond the 2020 Election
- Red Knight: The Unauthorised Biography of Sir Keir Starmer
- First Lady: Intrigue at the Court of Carrie and Boris Johnson
- All To Play For: The Advance Of Rishi Sunak
- Red Queen? The Unauthorised Biography of Angela Rayner
- Red Flag: The Uneasy Advance of Sir Keir Starmer

HIS OTHER BOOKS INCLUDE:

- Victoria Cross Heroes, Volumes I and II
- Special Forces Heroes
- George Cross Heroes
- Special Ops Heroes
- Heroes of the Skies
- White Flag? An Examination of the UK's Defence Capability
- Unfair Game: An Exposé of South Africa's Captive-Bred Lion Industry
- Life Support: The State of the NHS in an Age of Pandemics
- In the Shadows: The Extraordinary Men and Women of the Intelligence Corps

