



African voices on African issues: Highlights of Afrobarometer findings

Presentation to CISU Danmark – 23 September 2022
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What is Afrobarometer?



- Premier pan-African organization dedicated to tracking the experiences, evaluations, and perspectives of ordinary citizens on political, economic, and social developments, and injecting findings into policy processes at the national, continental, and global levels.
- 23 years of amplifying voices of ordinary Africans
- African-owned and -managed
- Rigorous methodology
- Pan-African coverage – represents 75%-80% of Africa's population
 - 219 surveys in 39 countries since 1999
 - 330,000+ interviews
 - Hundreds of briefings and publications, thousands of news reports
 - Time series back to 1999
- Public good – All data published on AB website
 - Free online data analysis tool

What motivated the creation of Afrobarometer



Problem

- Over the years, experts, political leaders, donors, media personnel, academics, and pundits have claimed knowledge and held opinions about Africans without direct or nuanced understanding of the experiences, values, preferences, and thinking of ordinary Africans.

Solution

- Research that provides reliable data about Africans views, values, and preferences, and gives them a voice in policy debates.

What does Afrobarometer do



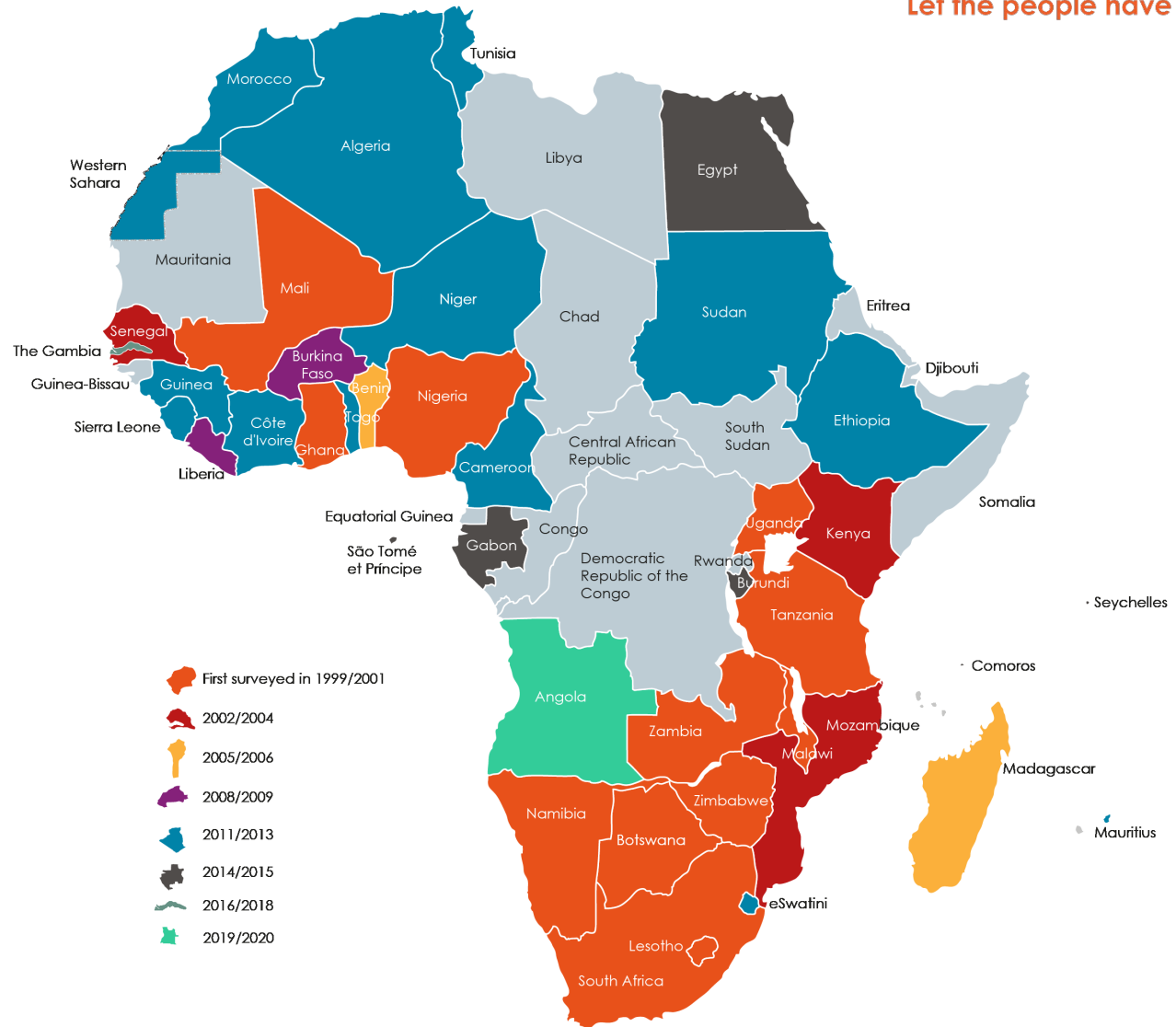
Core objectives:

- Produce scientifically reliable data and analysis on public attitudes in Africa
- Broadly disseminate and apply survey results to promote democratic governance and evidence-based policymaking
- Strengthen capacity for survey research, analysis, and communication

Leading source of reliable data on what Africans think, their experiences and political behaviors

Goal: To give the public a voice in policymaking.

Where Afrobarometer works



Tracking questions over time



- Economy
- Democracy
- Media
- Elections
- Government performance
- Leadership performance
- Trust
- Corruption
- Ethnicity and identity
- Social cohesion
- Poverty
- Political participation
- Infrastructure
- Tolerance/Inclusion

Special focus areas for Round 9



- Gender equality and gender-based violence
- COVID-19
- Policing
- Child welfare
- Pluralism
- Social services
- Climate change and environmental governance
- Open, responsive, and transparent government

Methodology



- **Nationally representative** sample of adult citizens
 - All respondents are **randomly** selected.
 - Sample is distributed across [regions/states/provinces] and urban/rural areas in **proportion** to their share in the national population.
 - Every adult citizen has an **equal chance** of being selected.
- **Face-to-face interviews** in the **language of the respondent's choice**.
- **Standard questionnaire** allows comparisons across countries and over time.
- **Sample sizes** of 1,200 to 2,400 adult citizens yield margins of sampling error of +/-2 to 3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

“Afrobarometer ... is the gold standard for independent opinion polls in Africa.” – Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations

What makes Afrobarometer unique?



- **Rigorous methodology** – Recognized as the gold standard for survey research in Africa
- **Pan-African country coverage** – represent 75-80% of Africa's population
- **Time series**
- **Public good** – All data is published on AB website and archived for use by all, along with methodology handbook
- **Academia + Activism**
- **Commitment to capacity building**
- **Commitment to sharing results, engaging with users and stakeholders**
- **African owned and managed**



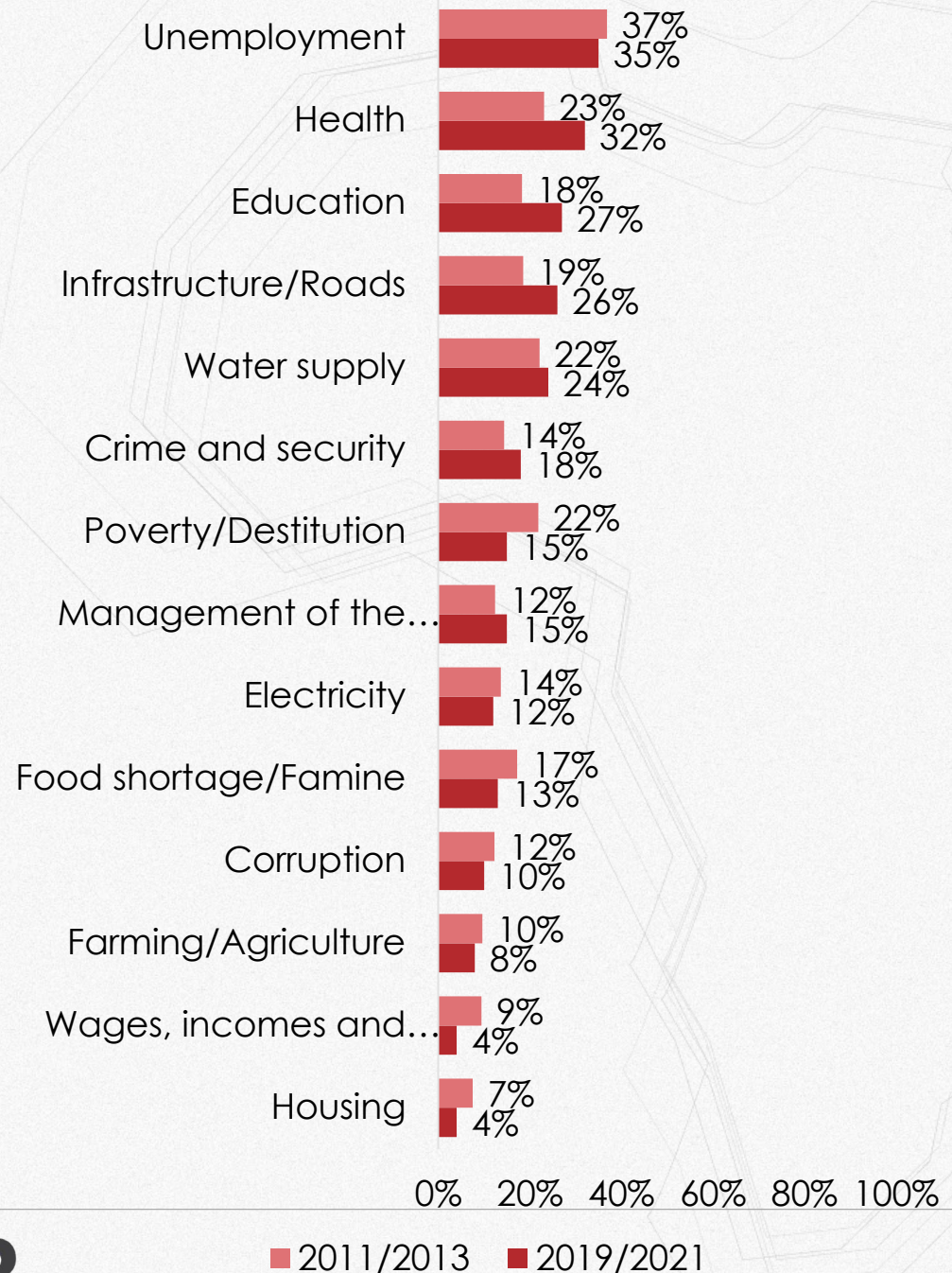
Citizens' policy priorities and general outlook

Most important problems

| 30 countries

| 2011-2021

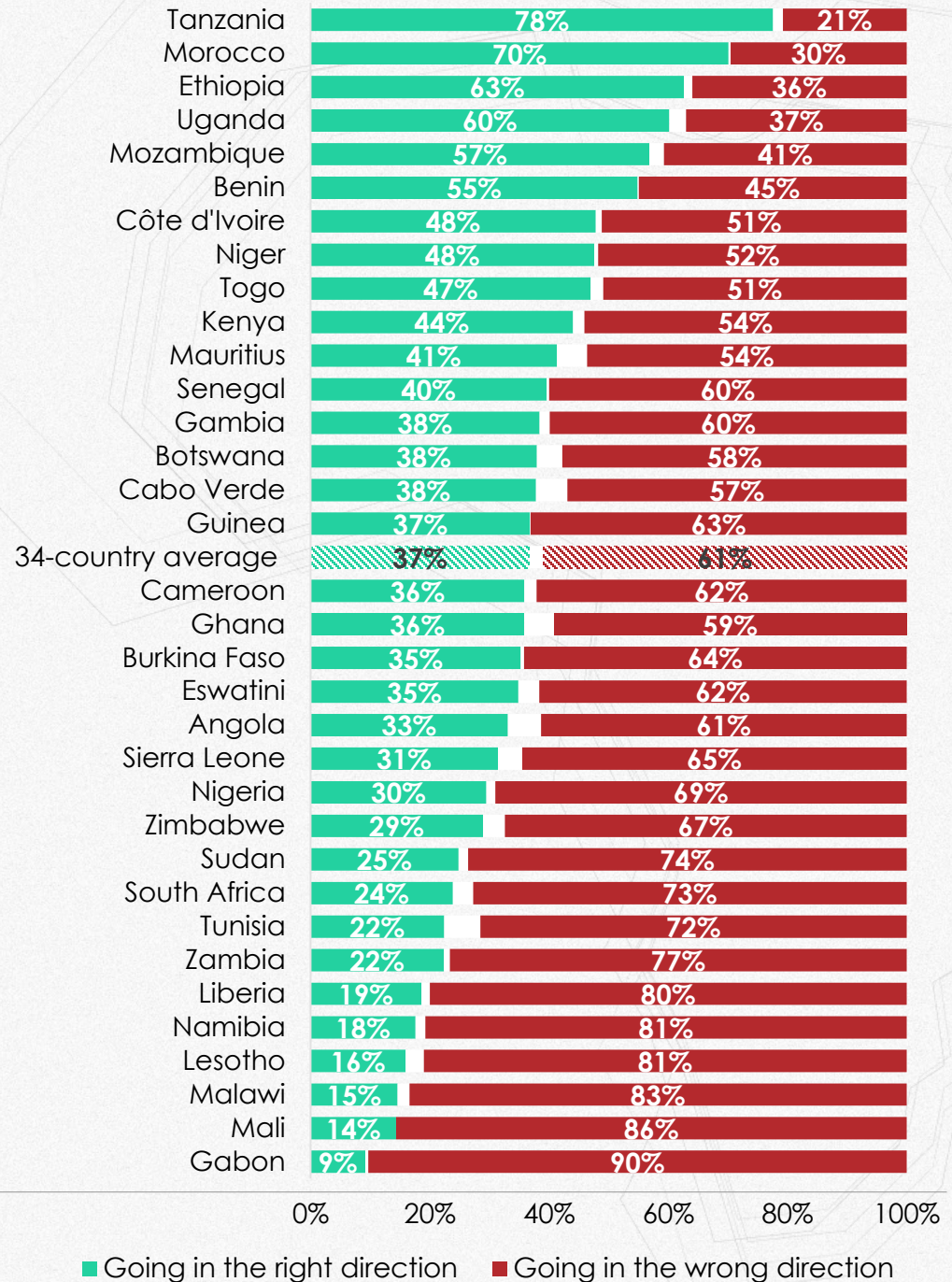
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? [Note: Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows the percentage of respondents who identified each issue as one of their three responses, so the total is more than 100 percent.]



Direction of the country

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked: *Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?*





Popular attitudes to democratic governance

Support for democracy

| 34 countries

| 2019/2021

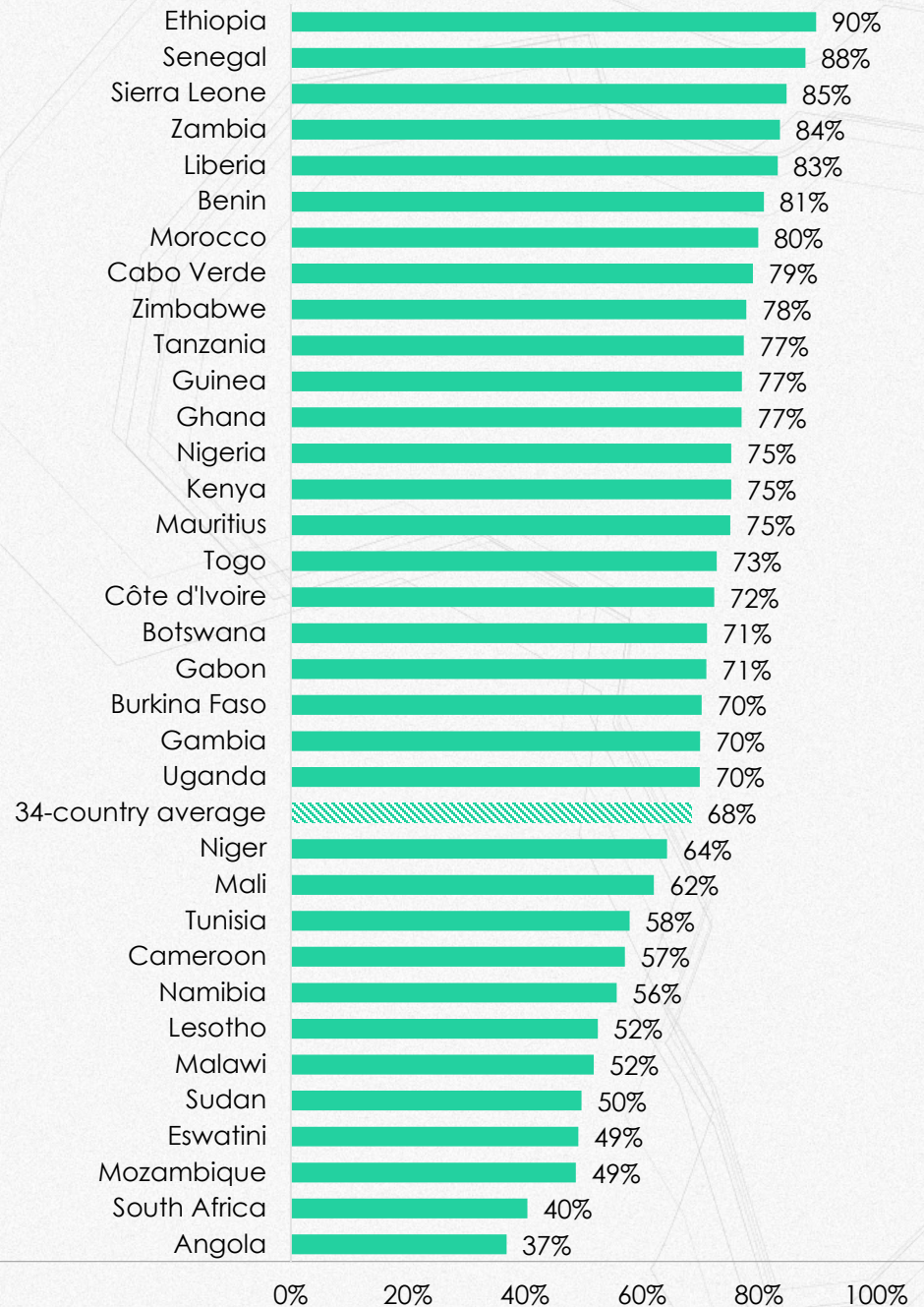
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?

Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

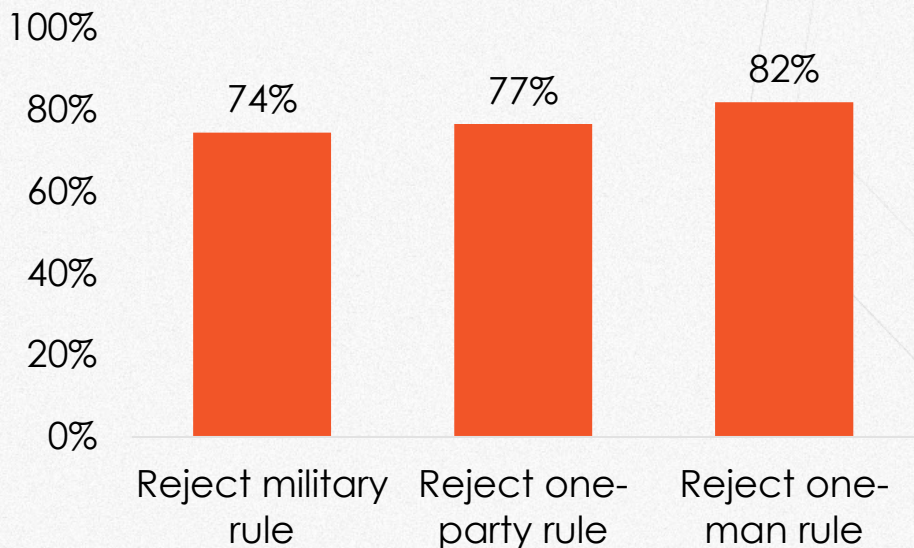
Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

(% who say democracy is preferable to any other kind of government)



Rejection of authoritarian alternatives

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021



Respondents were asked: *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?*

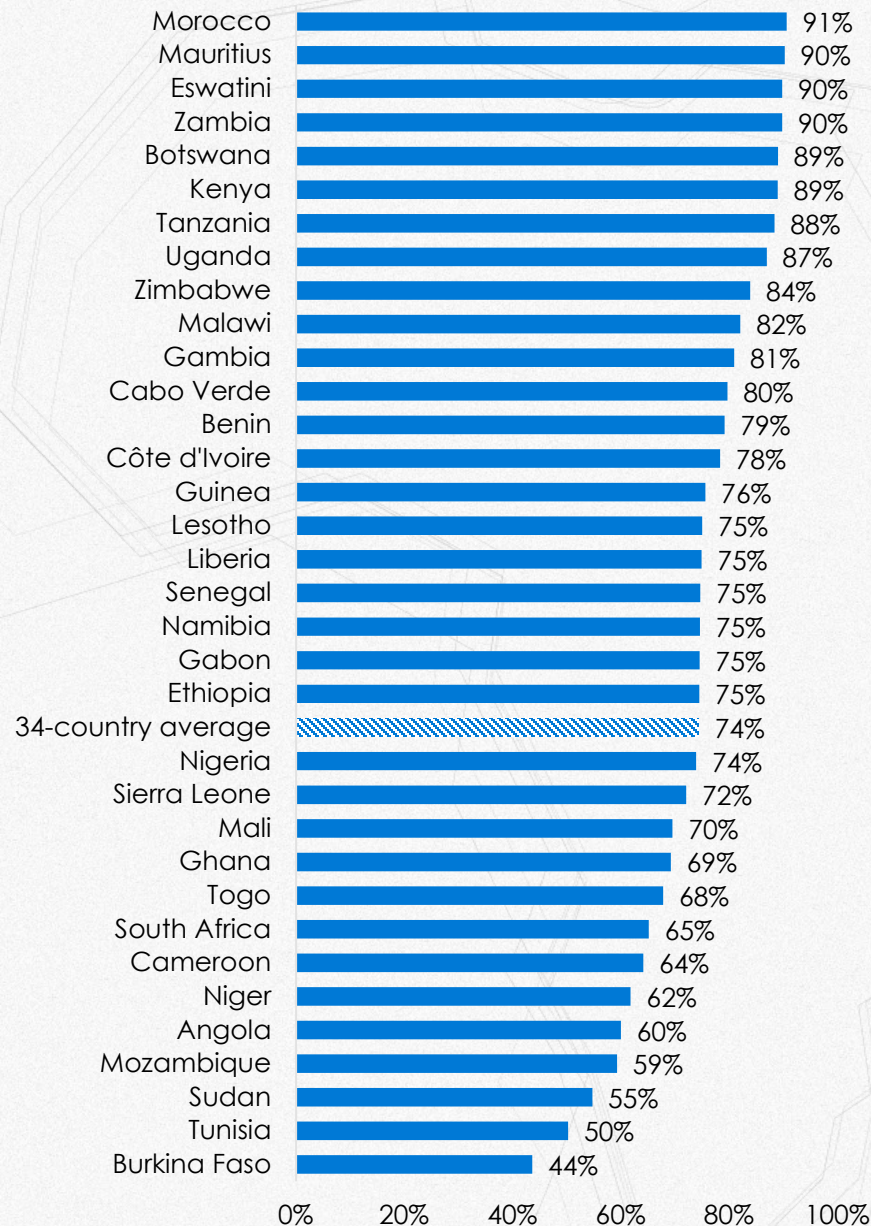
Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.

The army comes in to govern the country.

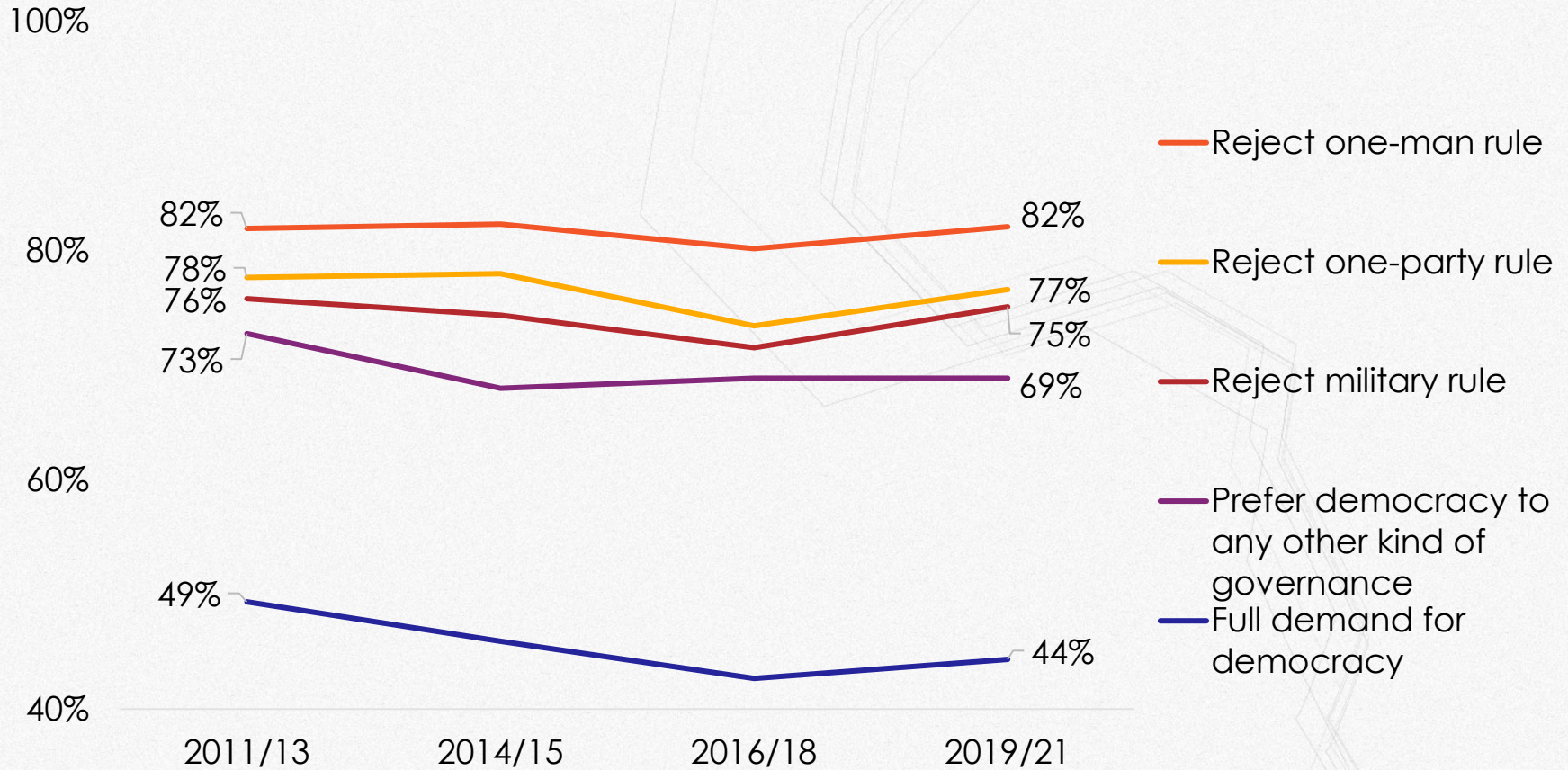
Elections and the National Legislature are abolished so that the President can decide everything.

(% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

Rejection of military rule



Preference for democracy and rejection of authoritarian alternatives | 30* countries | 2011-2021



% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove" of each of the authoritarian alternatives.

% who say democracy is preferable to any other kind of governance.

% who prefer democracy and disapprove of each of the authoritarian alternatives

*"Reject one-man rule" and "Full demand for democracy" include 29 countries, question not asked in Eswatini

Support for presidential term limits

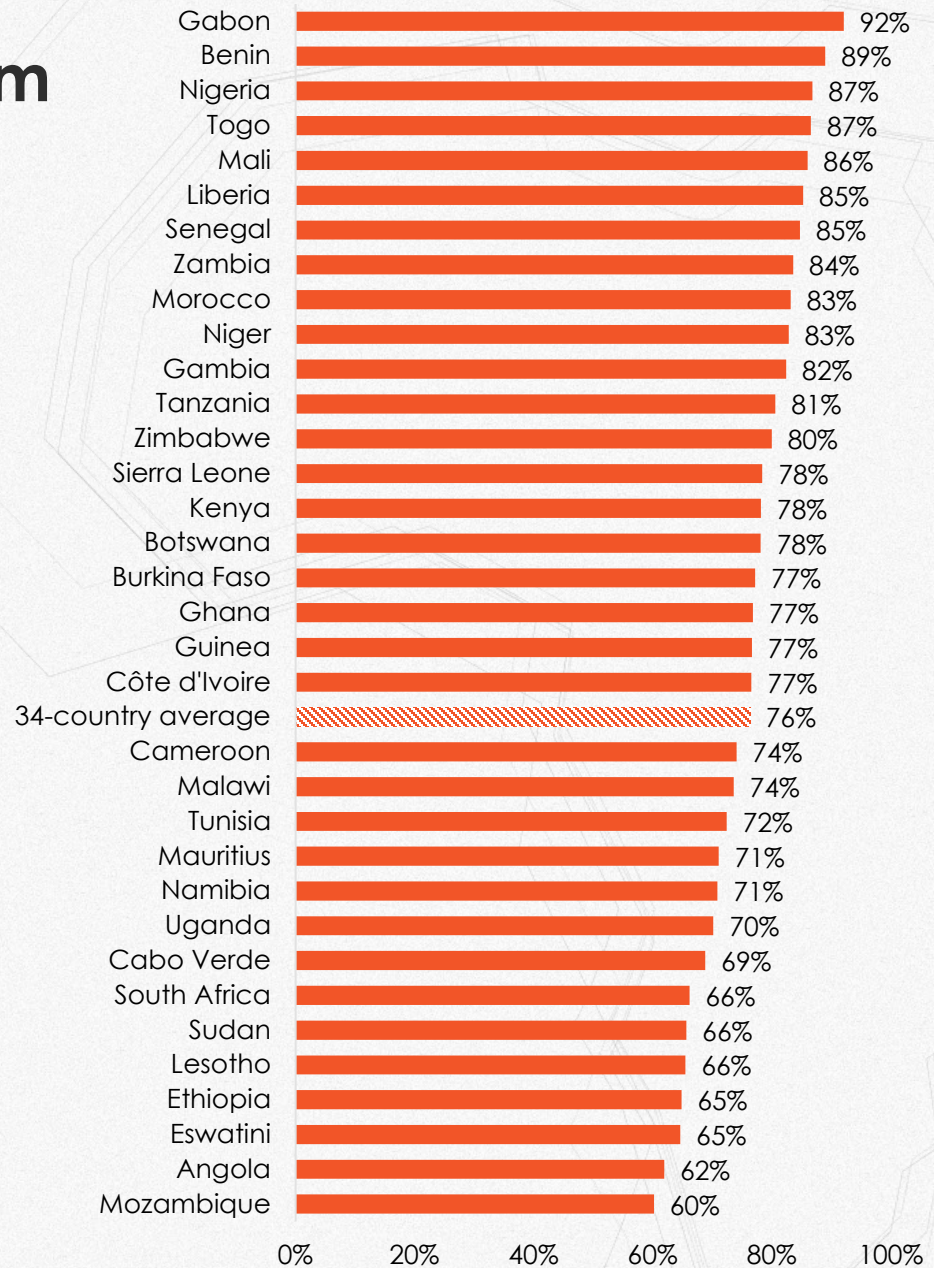
| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

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

Statement 1: The Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.

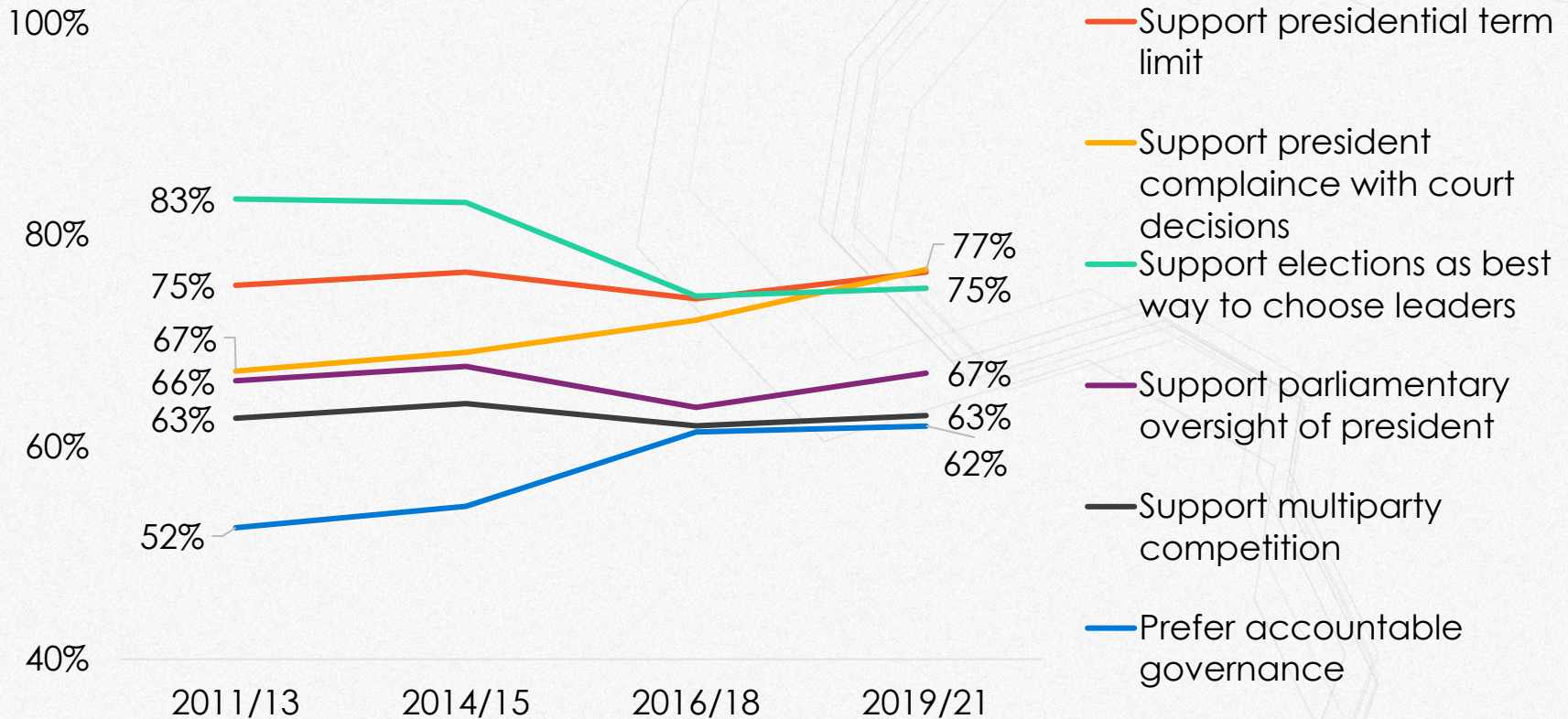
Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.

(% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with Statement 1)



Support for democratic norms

| 30* countries | 2011-2021



% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" that the Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.

% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with that the president must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong.

% who "agree" or "strongly agree" that we should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.

% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" that Parliament should ensure that the president explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends taxpayers' money.

% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" that many political parties are needed to make sure that [citizens] have real choices in who governs them.

% who "agree" or "strongly agree" that it is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.

*Compliance with court decisions includes 28 countries. Support elections to choose leaders and support parliamentary oversight include 29 countries.

Extent of and satisfaction with democracy

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked:

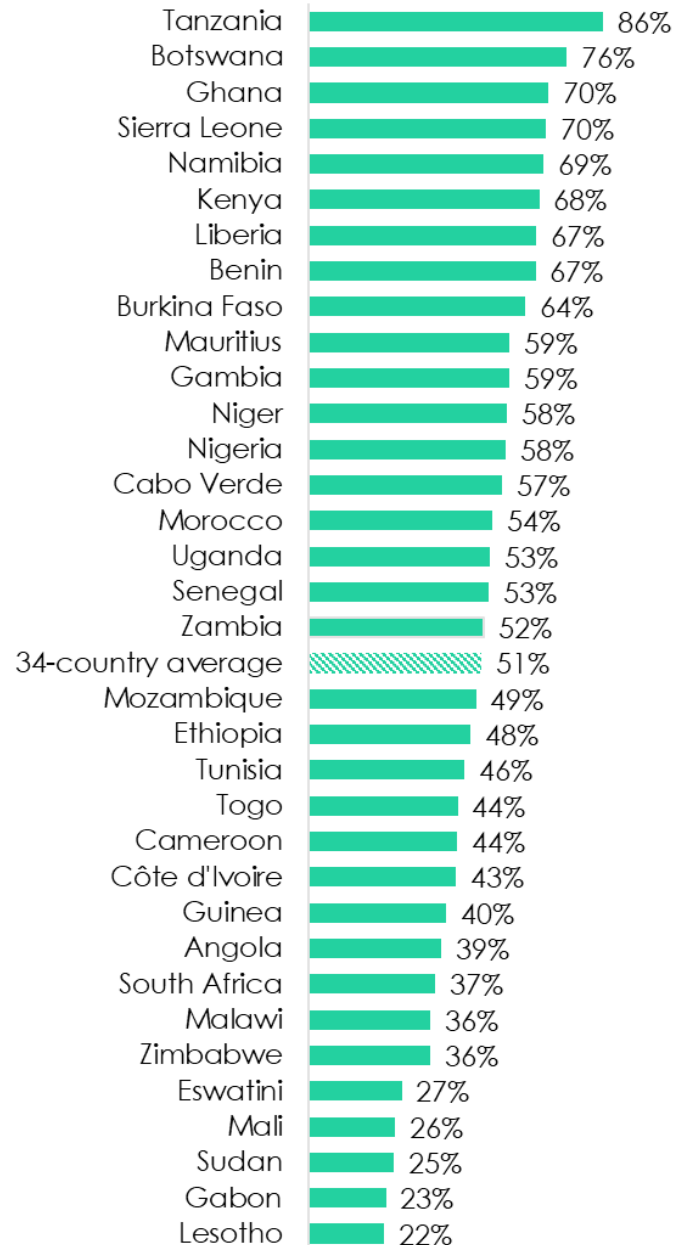
In your opinion, how much of a democracy is [country] today?

(% who say “a full democracy” or “a democracy but with minor problems”)

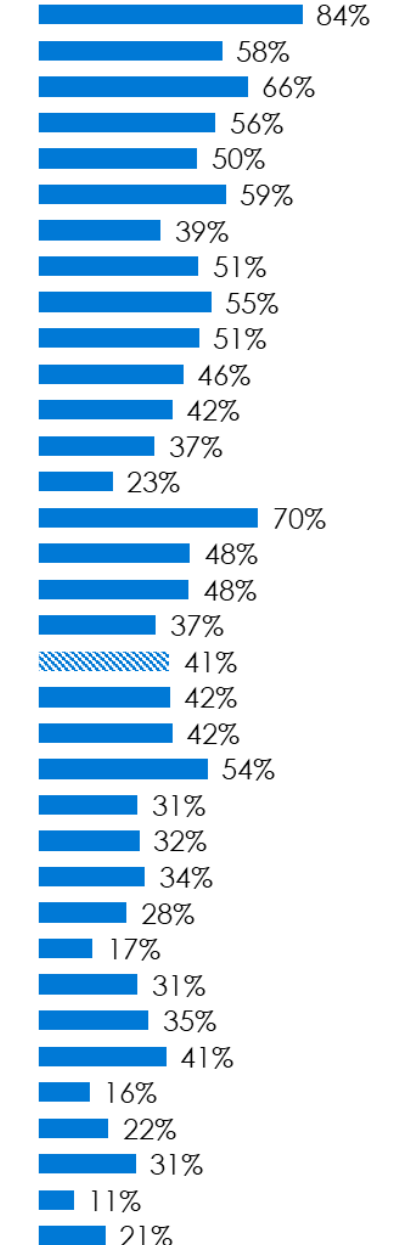
Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country] ?

(% who say “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied”)

Country is a democracy or democracy with minor problems

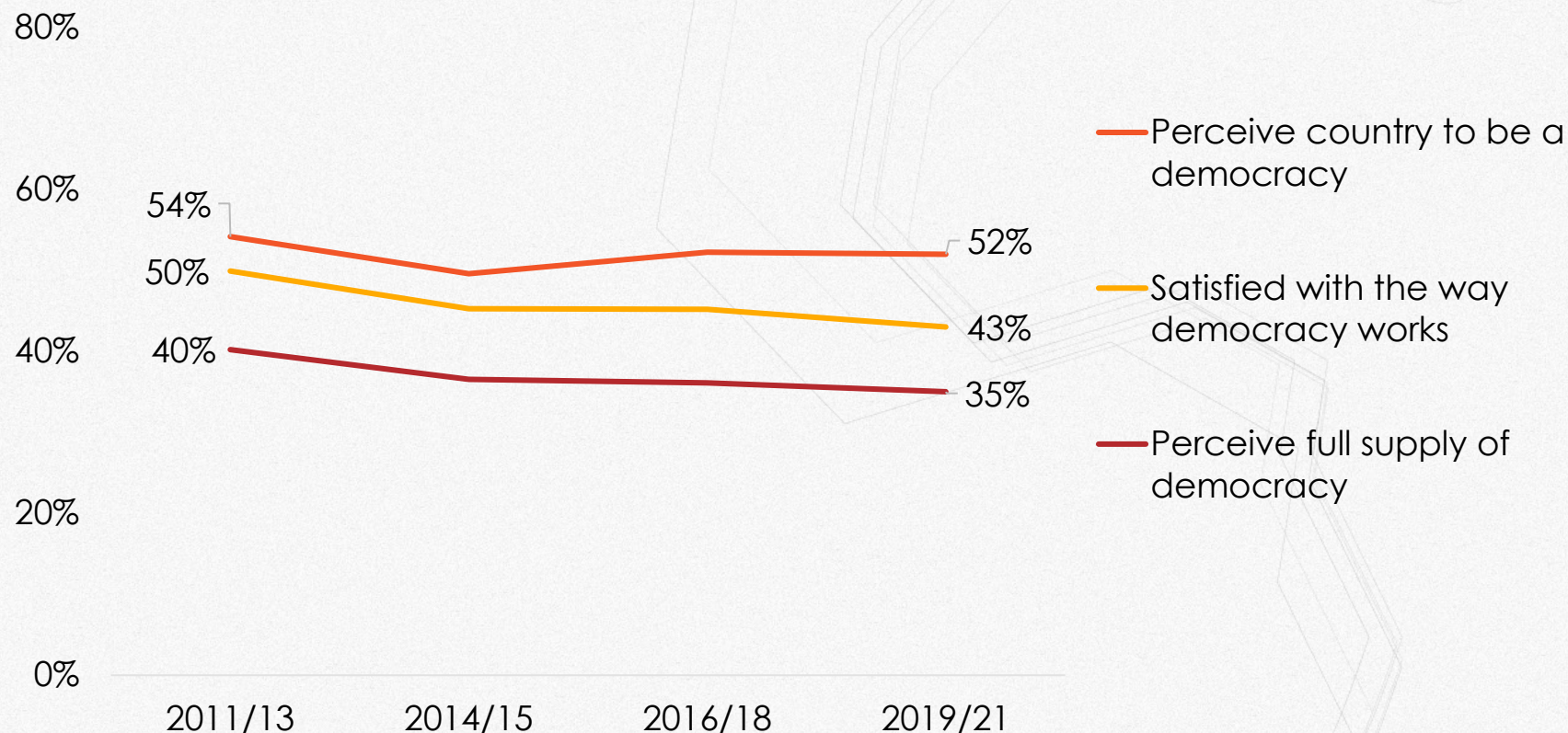


Satisfied with the way democracy works



Supply of democracy

| 30 countries | 2011-2021

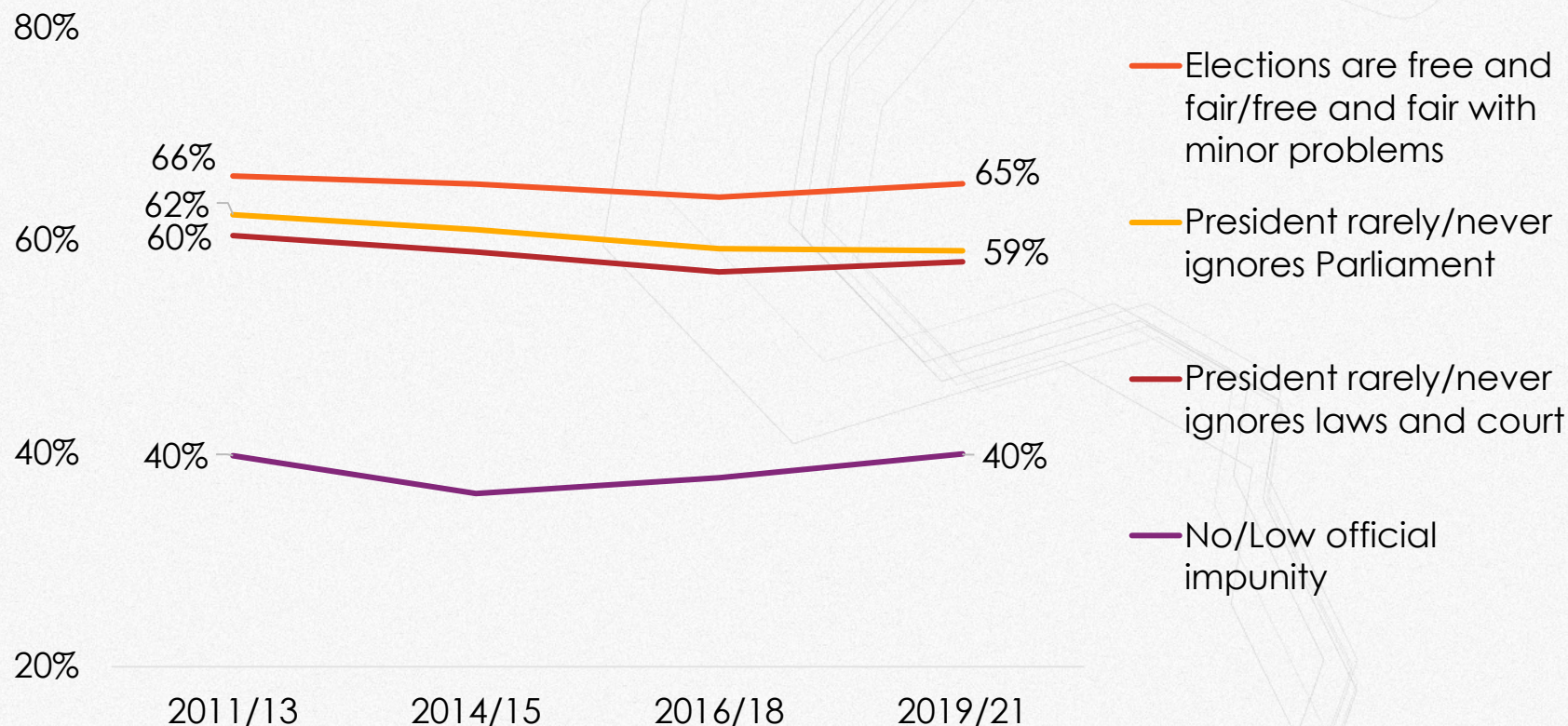


Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how much of a democracy is [country] today?
(% who say “a full democracy” or “a democracy but with minor problems”)

Respondents were asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?
(% who say “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied”)

Supply of democratic institutions

| 30* countries | 2011-2021



% who say the recent elections were “free and fair” or “free and fair with minor problems”

% who say the President “rarely” or “never ignores Parliament

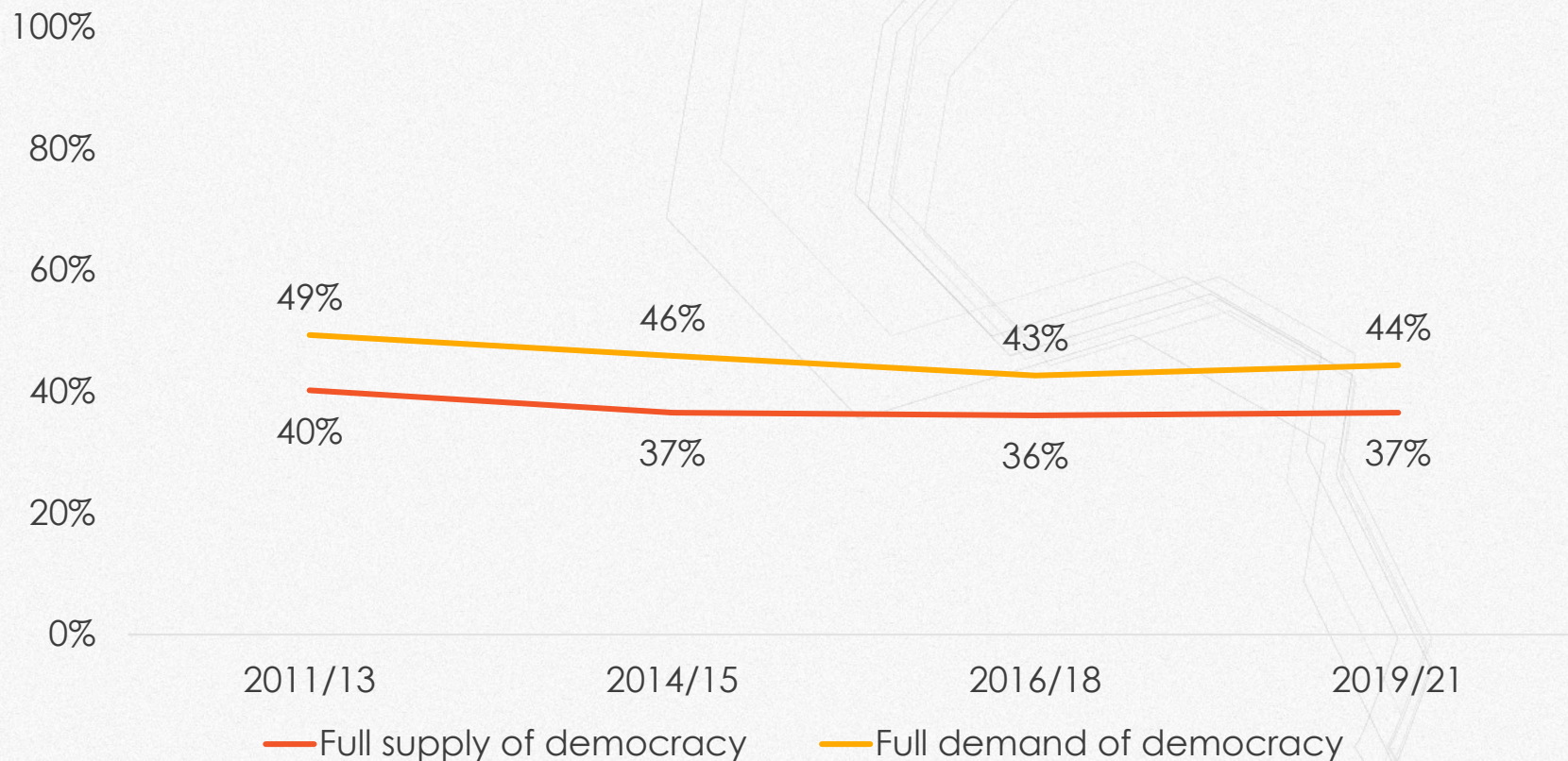
% who say the President “rarely” or “never” ignores the laws and court

% who say officials who commit crimes “rarely” or “never” go unpunished

*President rarely/never ignores parliament and laws and court includes 29 countries, not asked in Sudan

Demand and the supply deficit

| 29 countries | 2011-2021



% who prefer democracy and reject all authoritarian alternatives

% who describe their country as a "full democracy" or a "democracy with minor problems" and are "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way democracy works

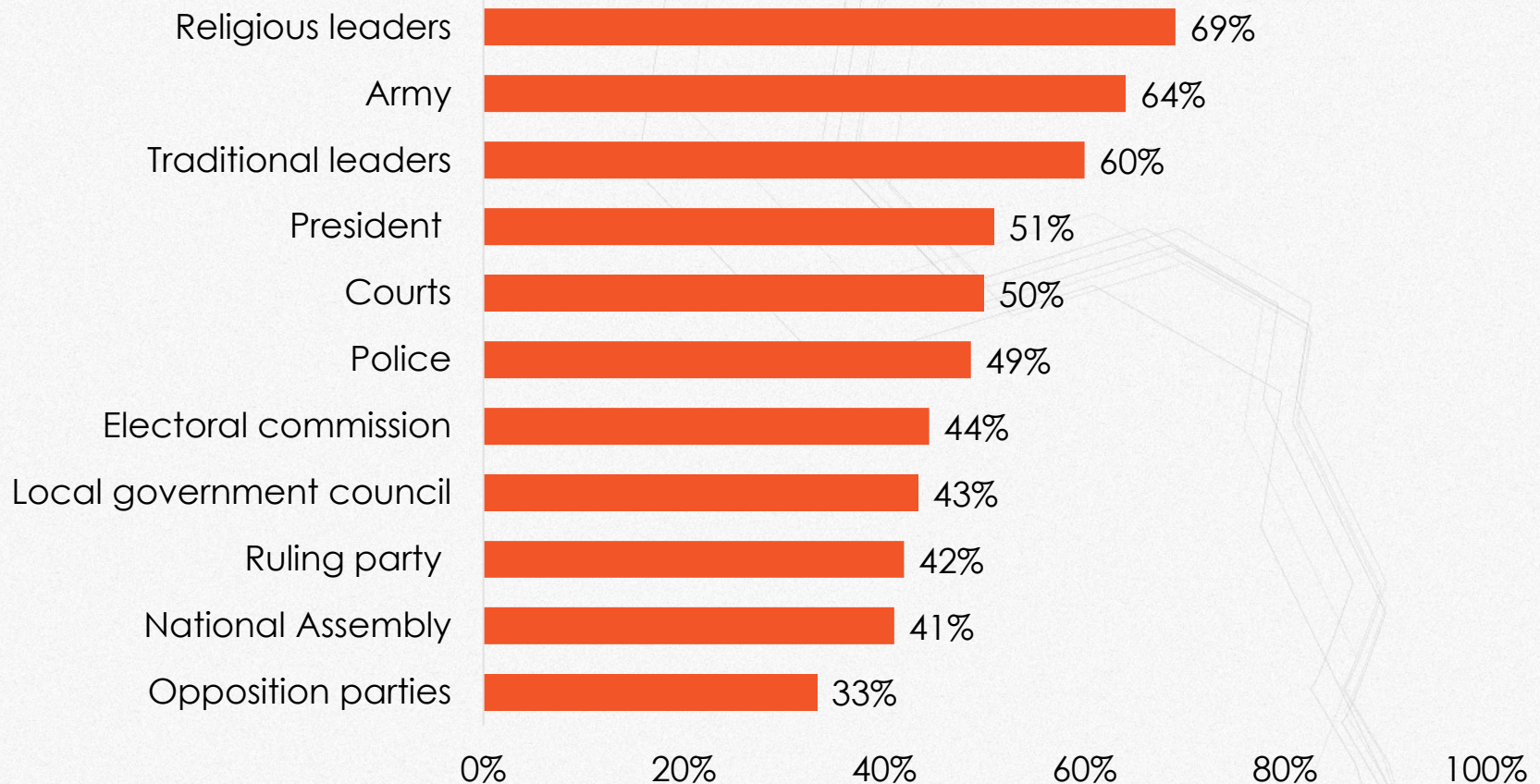
*29 countries, Eswatini excluded



Trust and corruption

Trust in institutions and leaders

| 34 countries | 2019/2021



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say they trust them "somewhat" or "a lot")

Trust in ruling party

| 33* countries

| 2019/2021

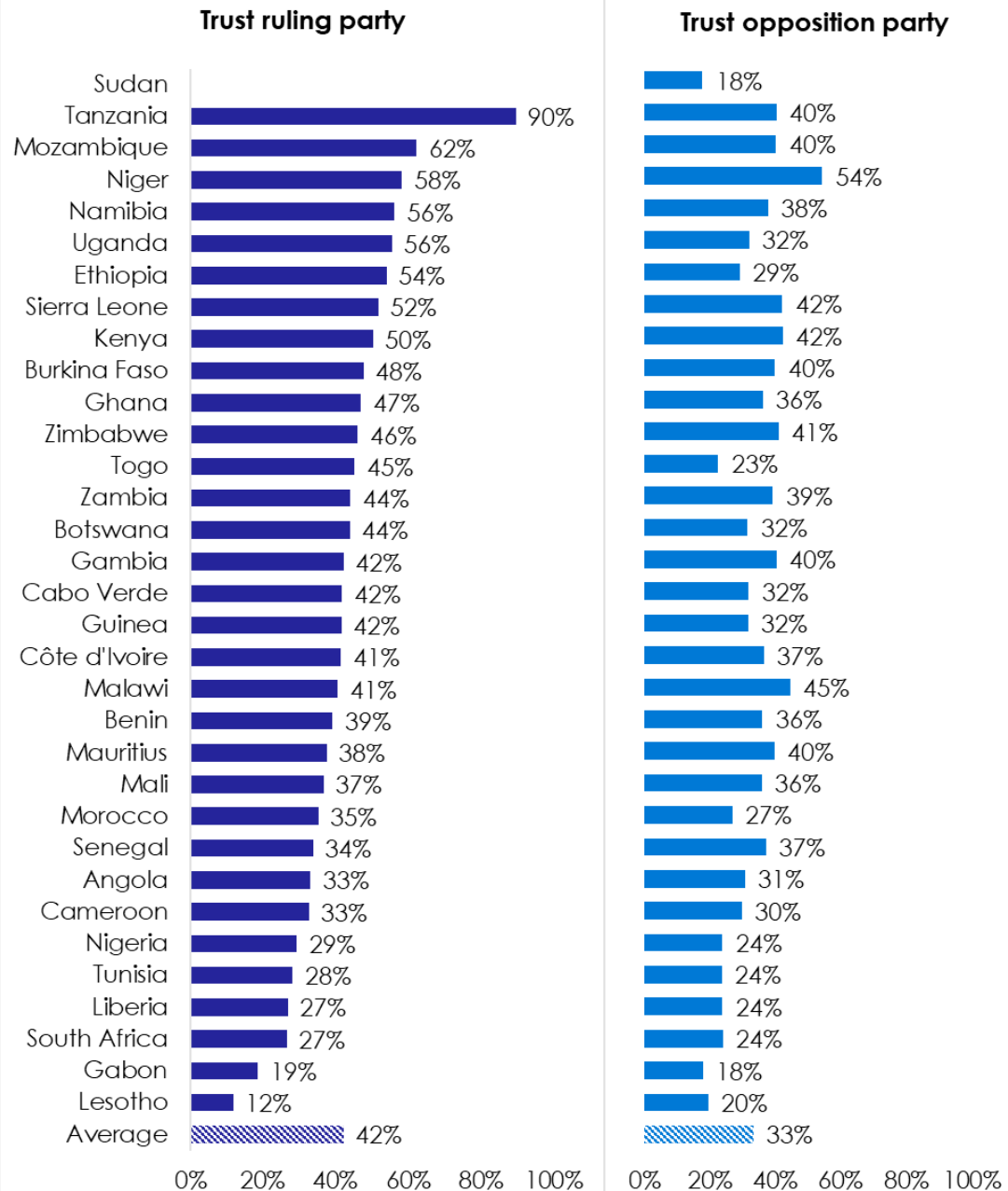
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say:

The ruling party?

Opposition political parties?

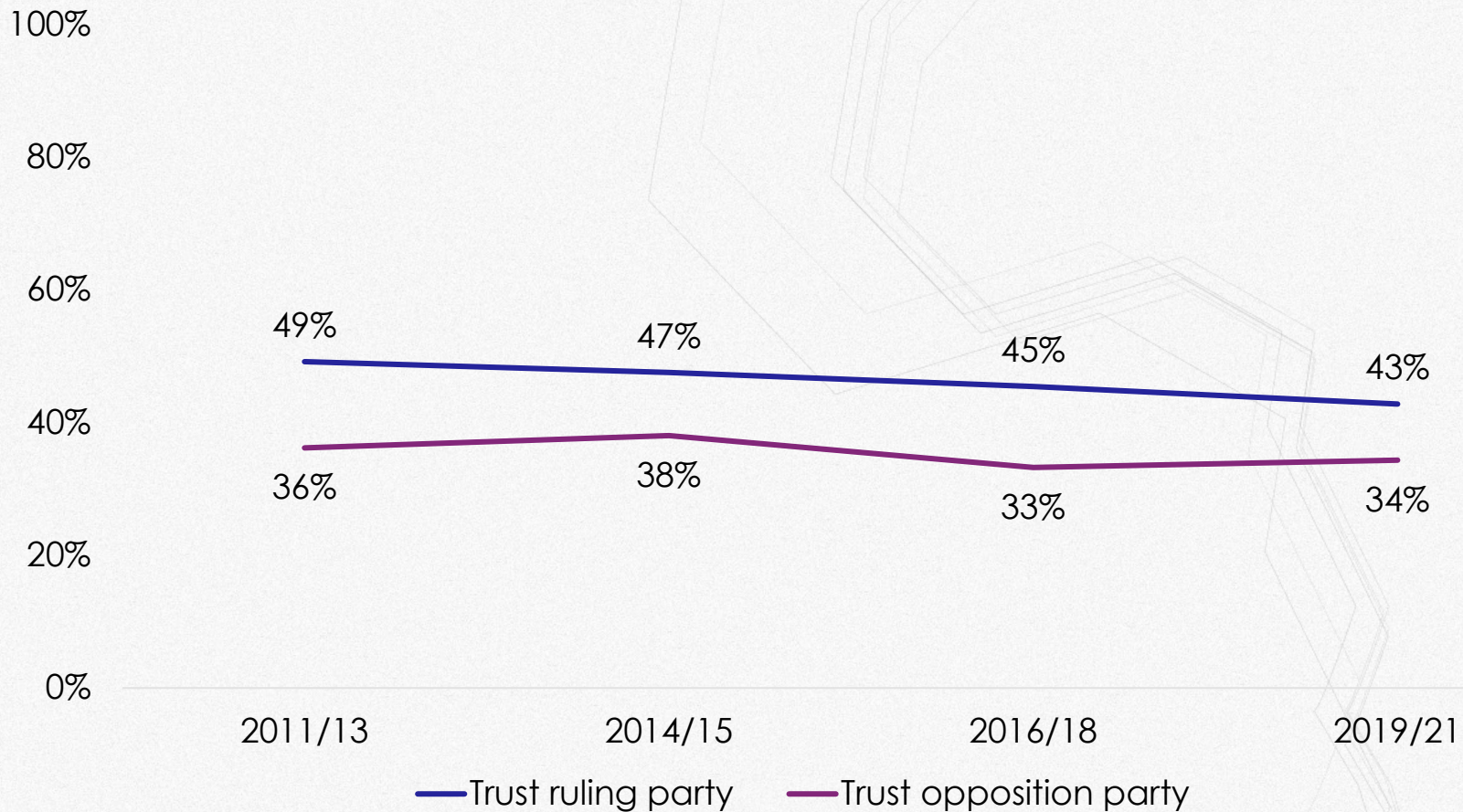
(% who say they trust them "somewhat" or "a lot")

- Question on ruling party not asked in Eswatini and Sudan
- * Question on opposition party was not asked in Eswatini



Trust in ruling and opposition parties

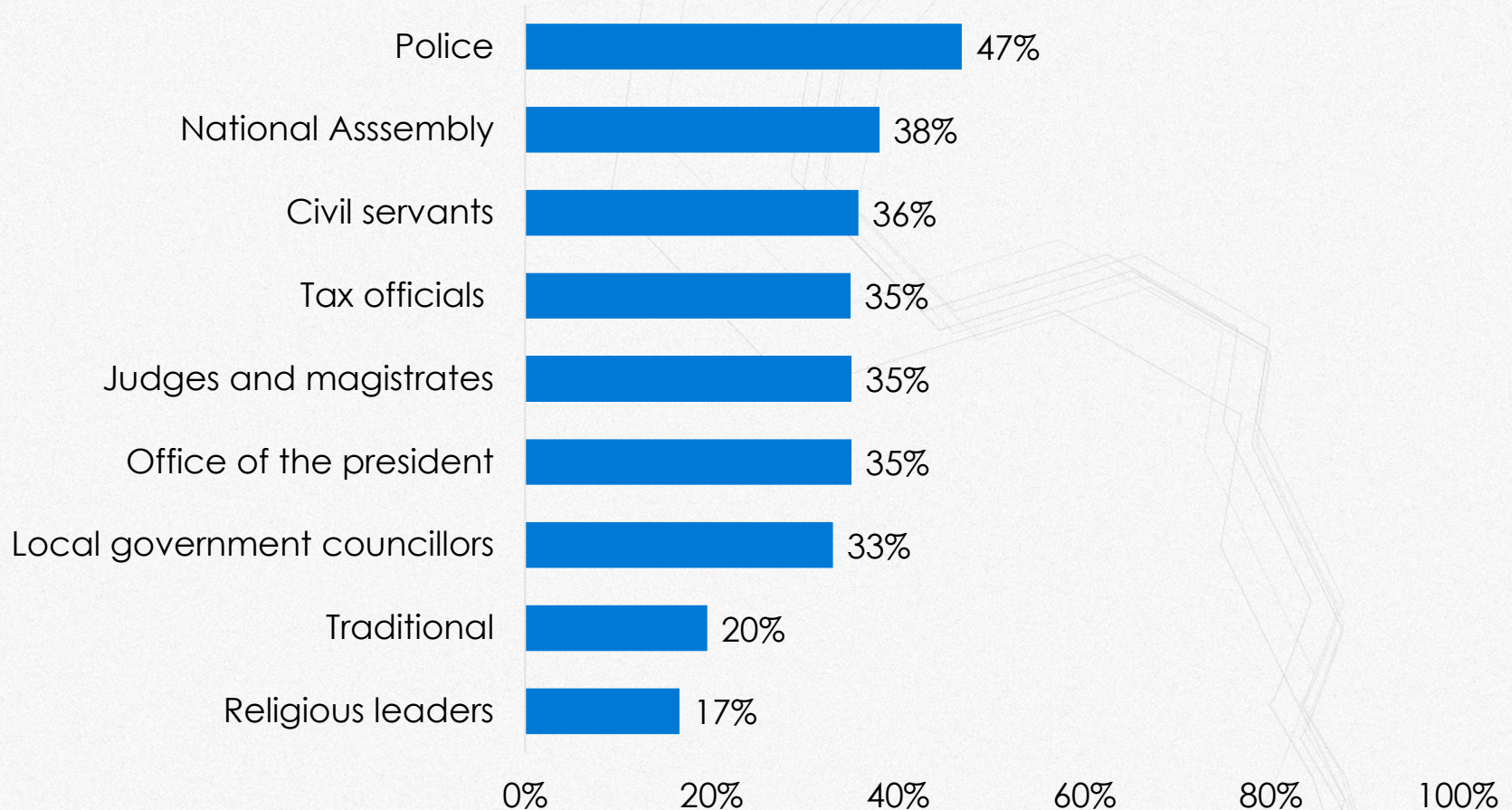
| 27 countries | 2011-2021



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say they trust them "somewhat" or "a lot")

Perceived institutional corruption

| 34 countries | 2019/2021



Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "most of them" or "all of them" are corrupt)

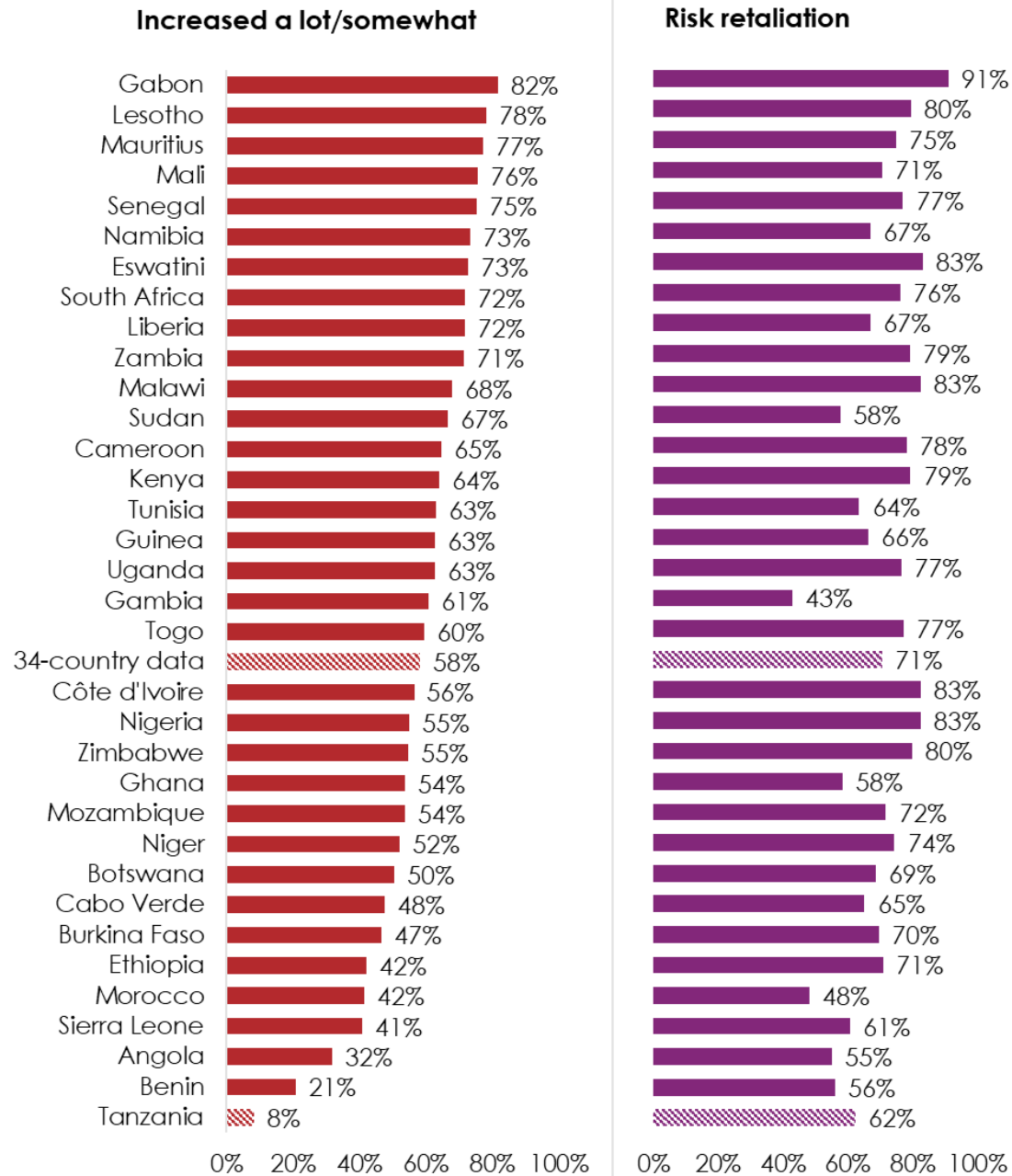
Views on corruption

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked:

In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

In this country, can ordinary people report incidents of corruption without fear, or do they risk retaliation or other negative consequences if they speak out?



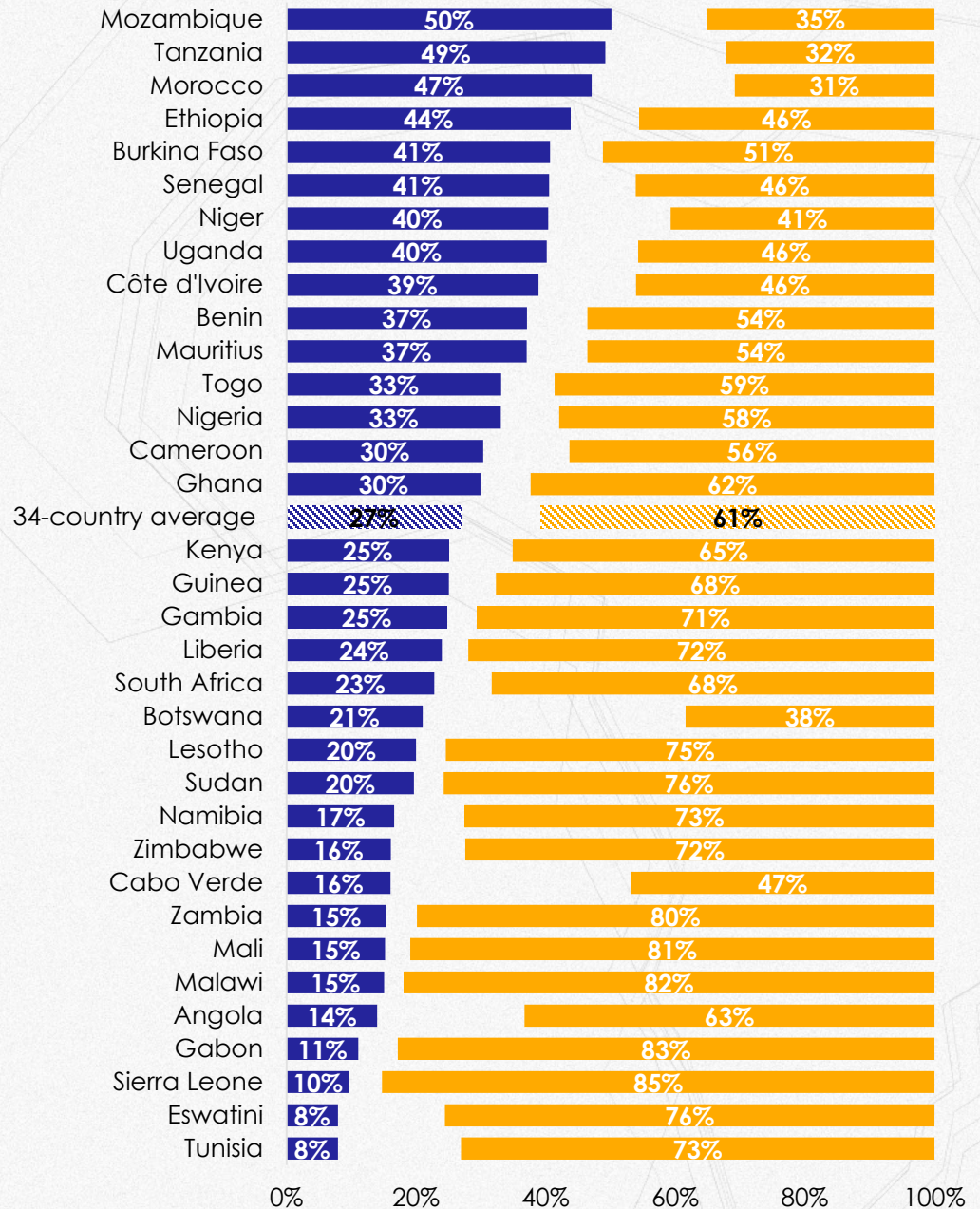


Economic conditions

Views on country's economic conditions

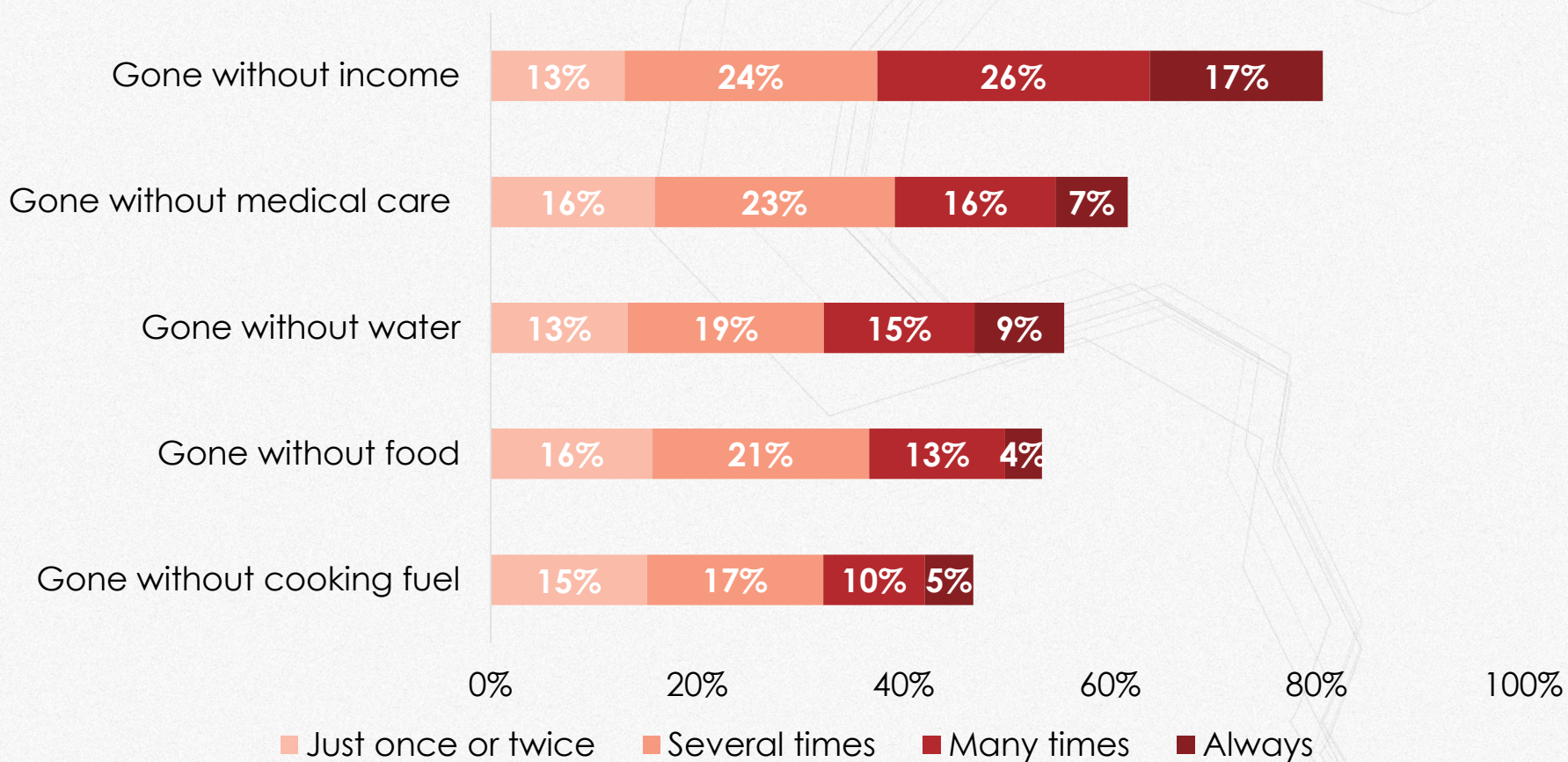
| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked: *In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?*



Going without basic necessities

| 34 countries | 2019/2021

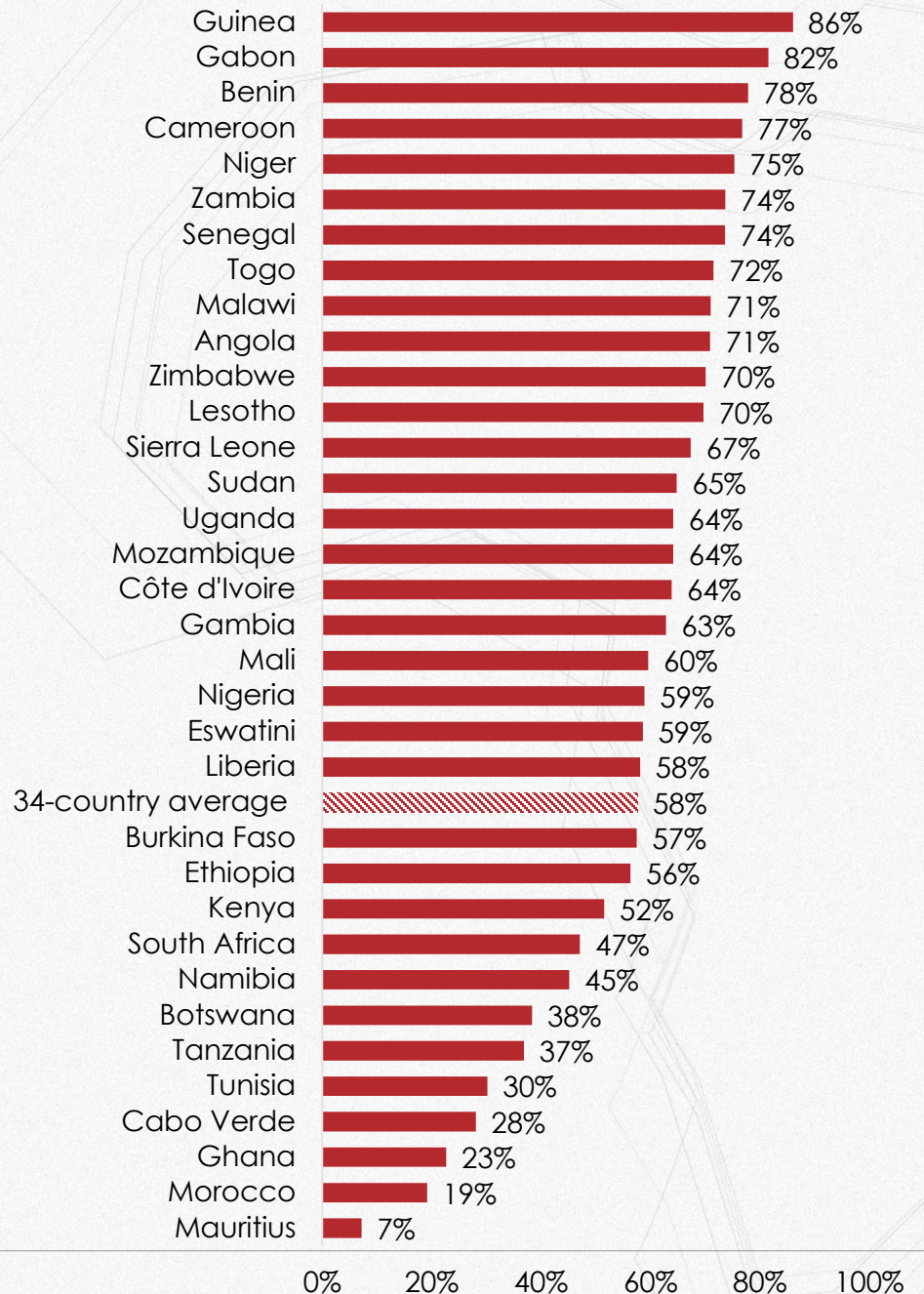


Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Moderate and high lived poverty

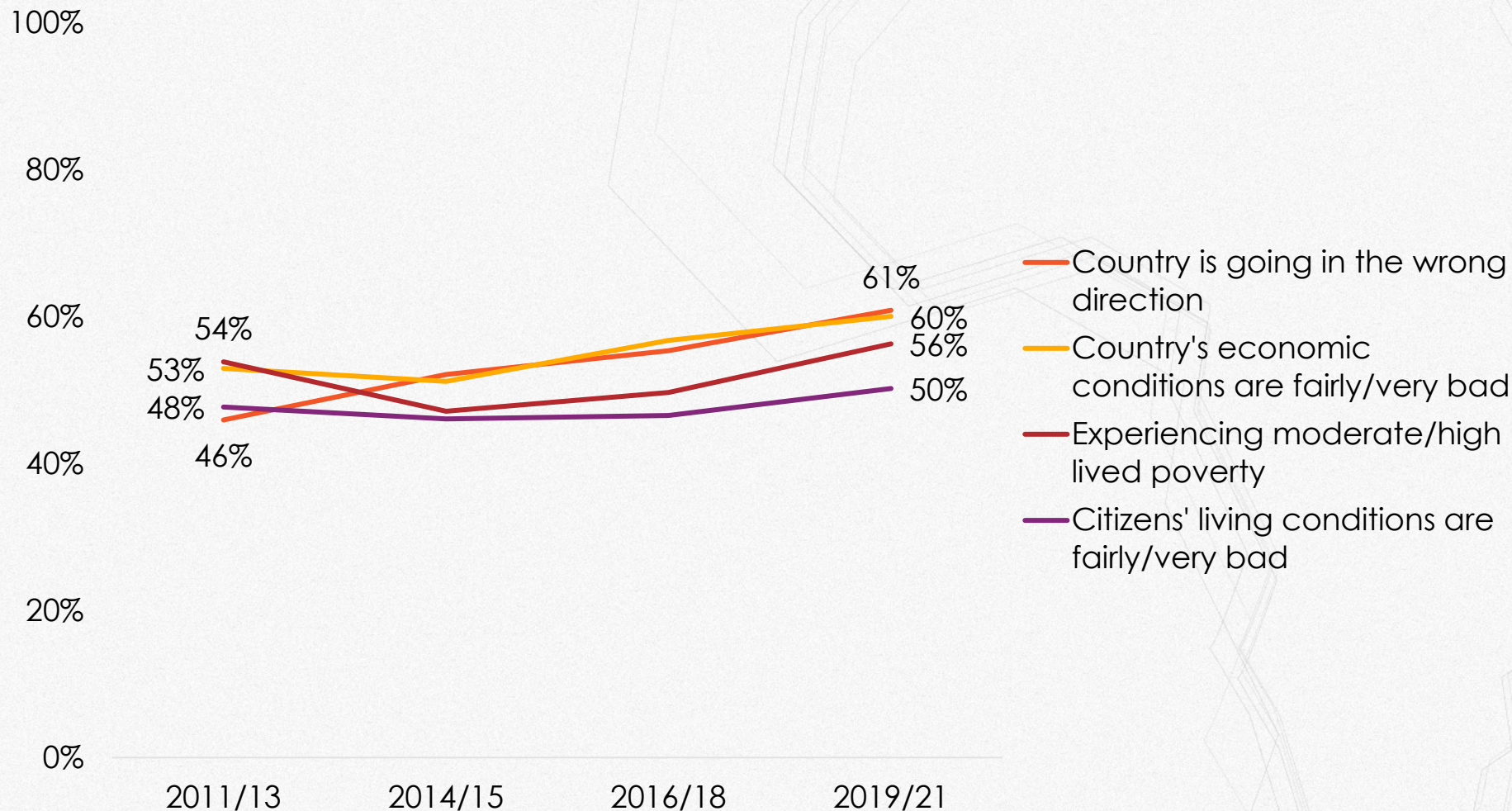
| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

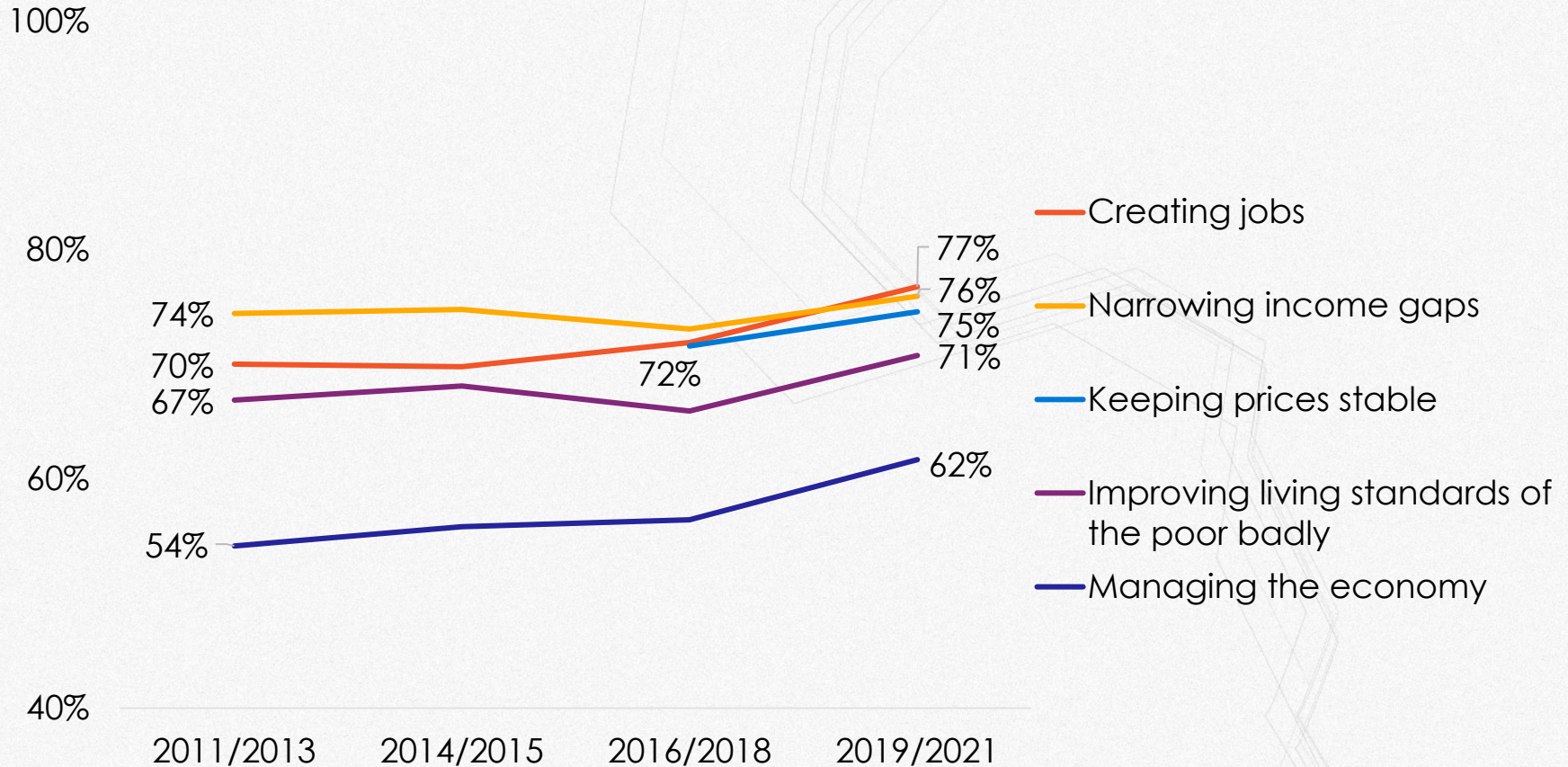


Negative economic conditions

| 30 countries | 2011-2021



Negative assessment of government economic performance | 30 countries | 2011-2021

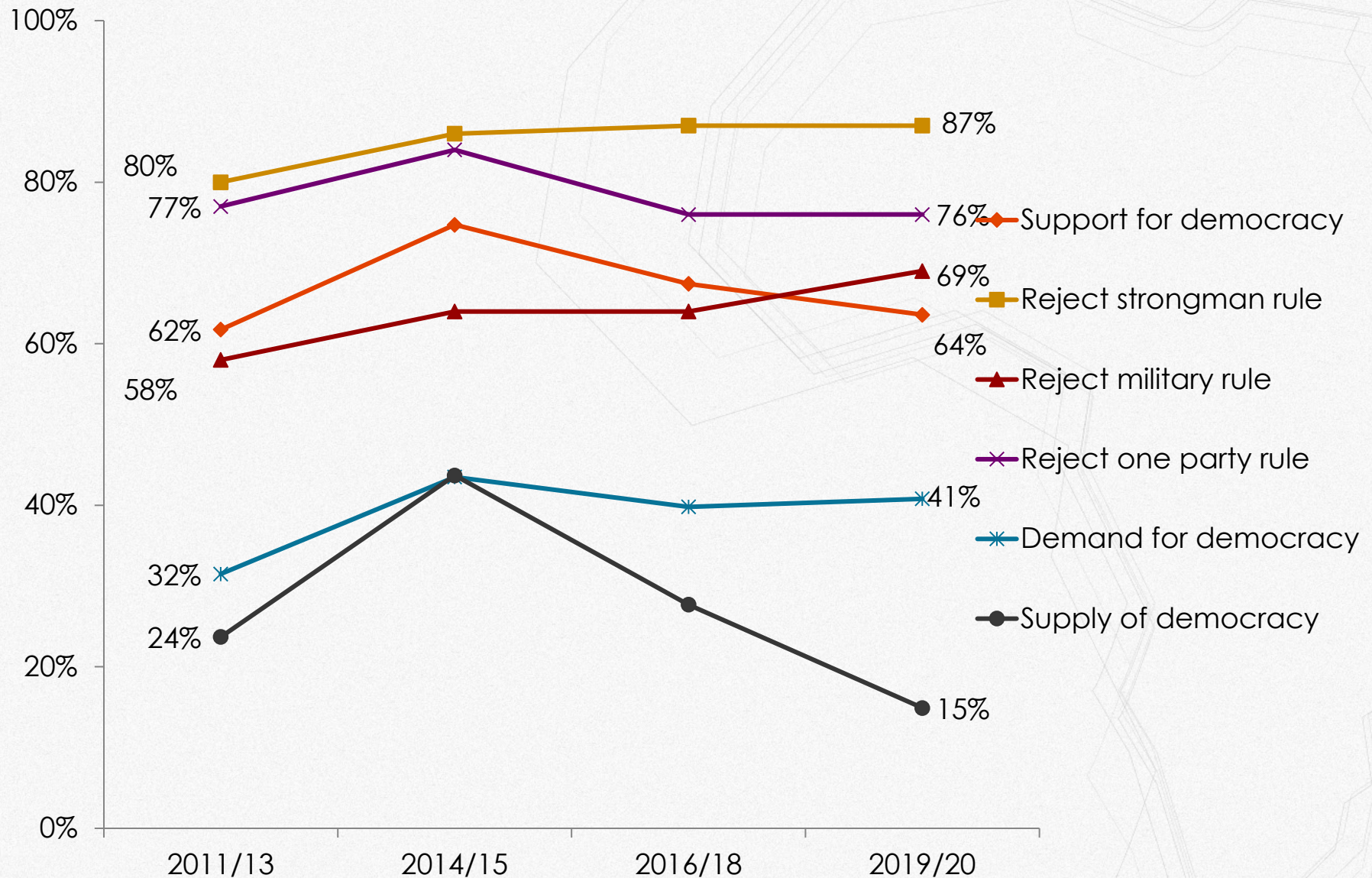


Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say?
(% who say "fairly badly" or "very fairly badly")

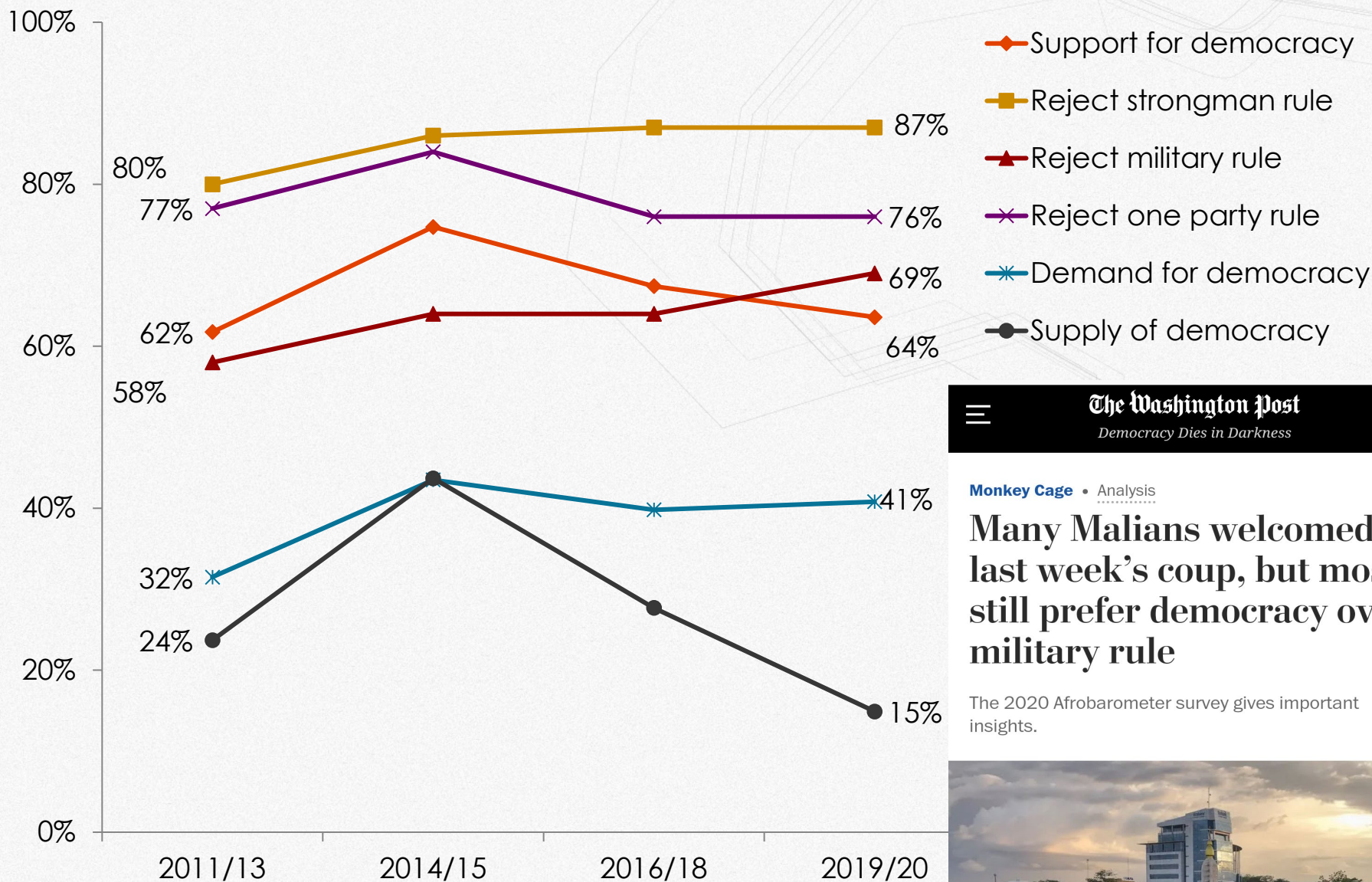


Country case studies

Steady demand, plummeting supply in Mali, 2011-2020



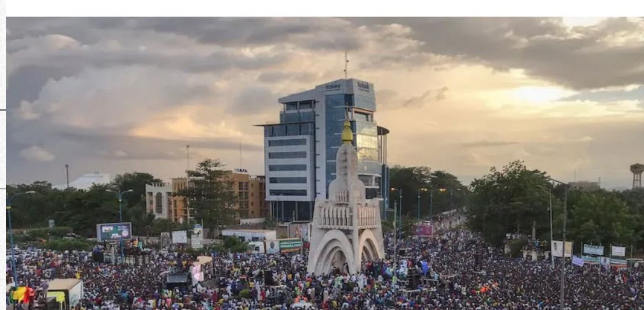
Steady demand, plummeting supply in Mali, 2011-2020




Democracy Dies in Darkness

Monkey Cage • Analysis
Many Malians welcomed last week's coup, but most still prefer democracy over military rule

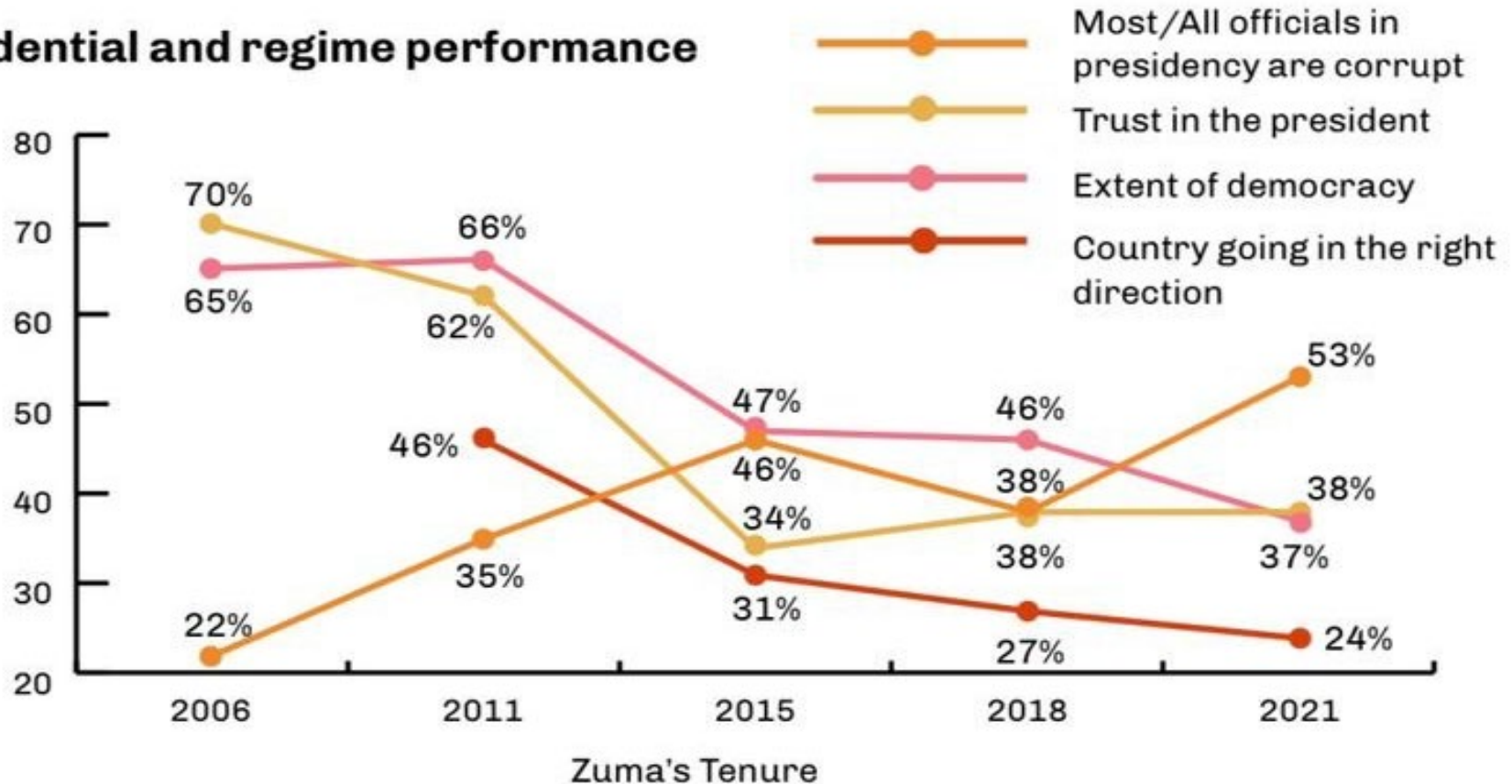
The 2020 Afrobarometer survey gives important insights.



Presidential and regime performance

| South Africa | 2006-2021

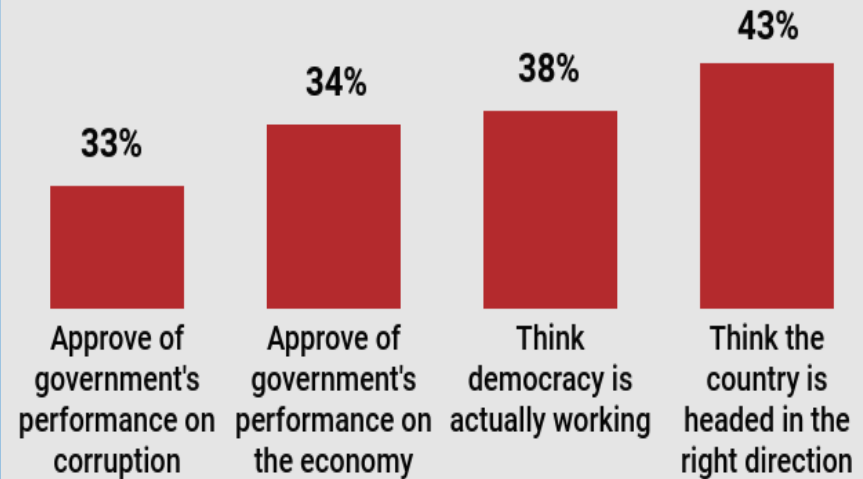
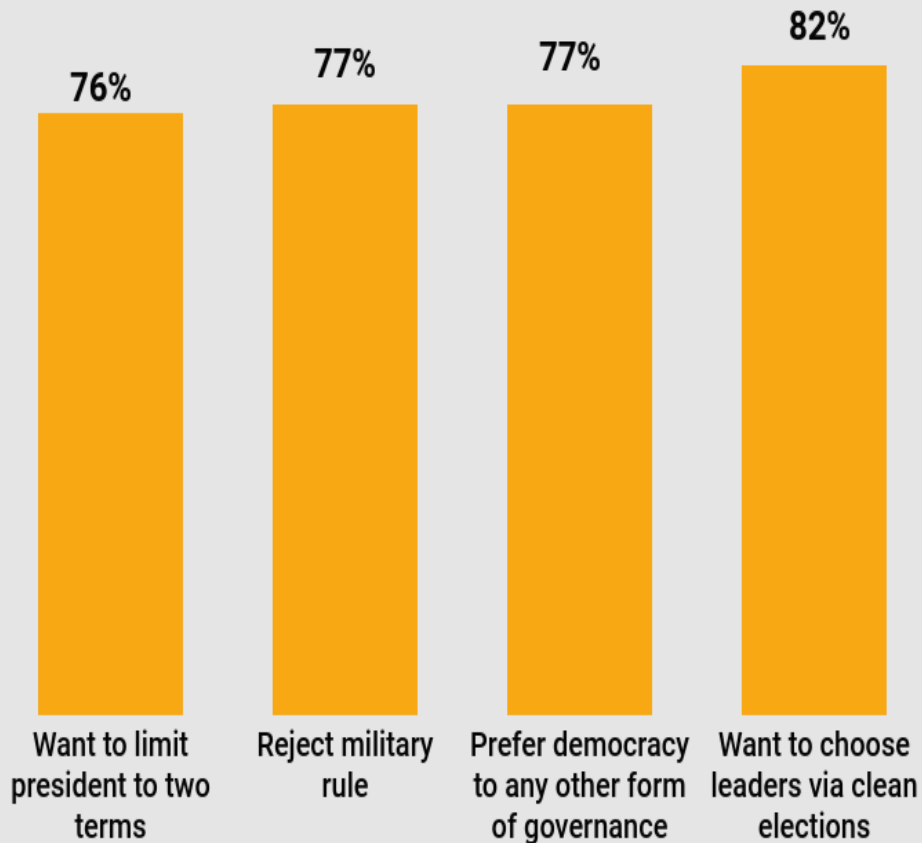
Presidential and regime performance



Source: Afrobarometer, a non-partisan African research network that conducts nationally representative surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life. Face-to-face interviews with 1,200-2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/-2 to 3 percentage points.

Democratic ideals vs. (dis)satisfaction with reality

| Guinea | 2019



Thank you



An African-led series of national public attitude surveys on democracy and governance in Africa

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If Africa had 100 citizens...

17 facts you didn't know about Africans – in 2 minutes.

[Click here to watch.](#)



About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in more than 35 countries in Africa.



Spotlight

Save Afrobarometer

Former high-level State Dept officials urge continued funding for "a major success story of democratic and developmental institution building..."

www.afrobarometer.org

[#VoicesAfrica](#) on Twitter and Facebook

Do your own data analysis – on any question, for any country and survey round.
It's easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.



Extras

Support for elections

| 34 countries

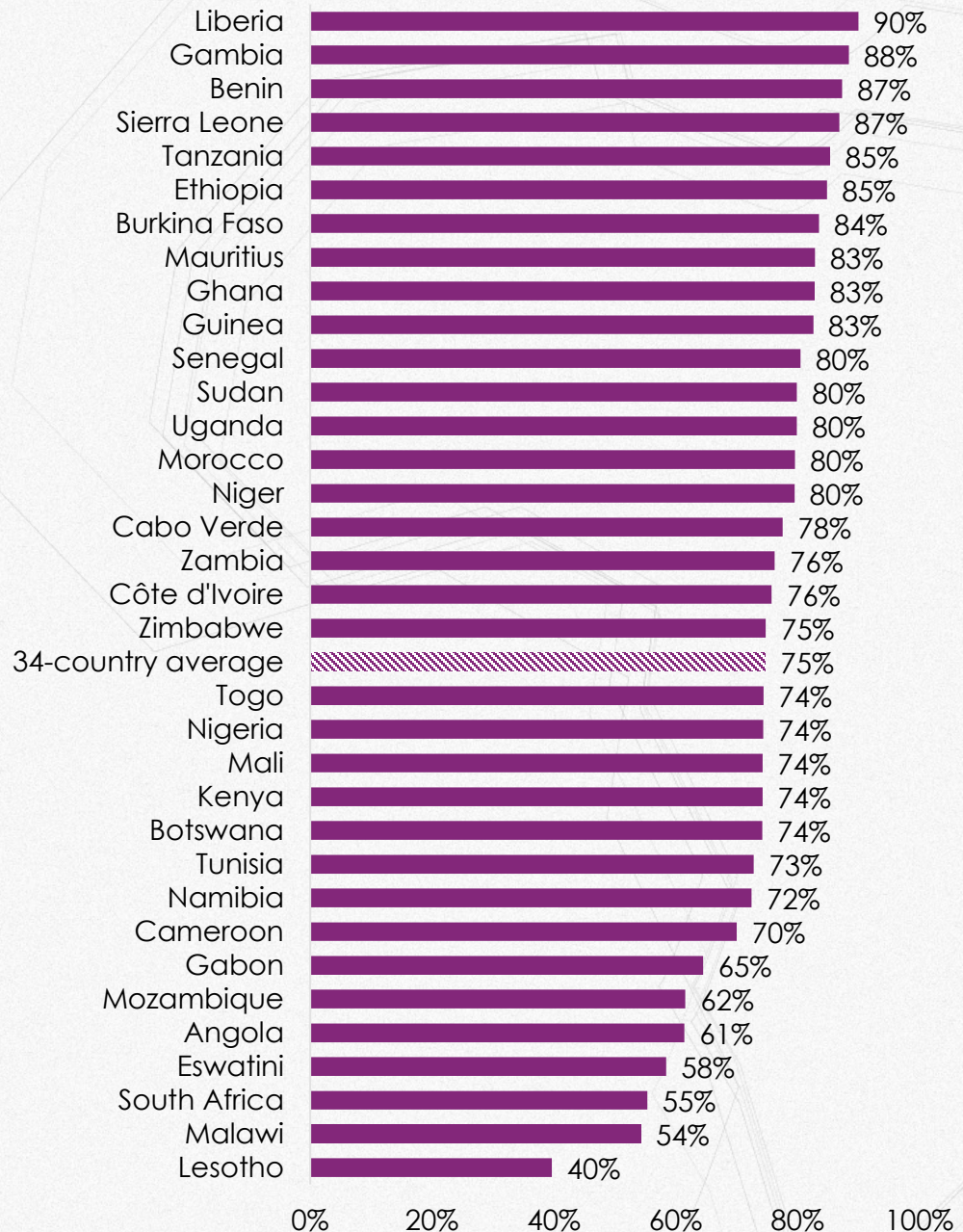
| 2019/2021

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

Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.

Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement 1)



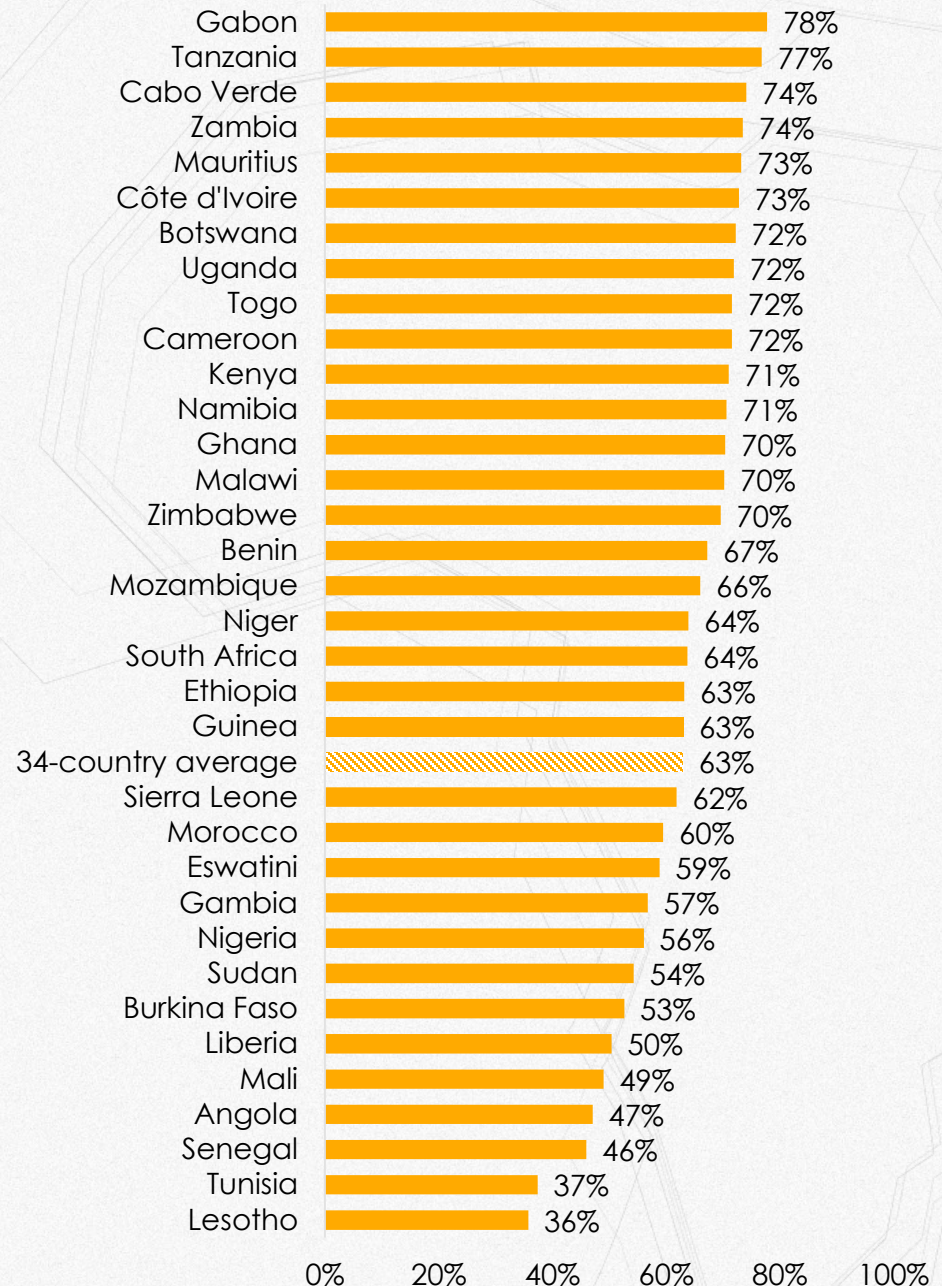
Support for multiparty competition

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

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

Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in [country].

Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that [citizens] have real choices in who governs them.
(% who “agree” or “agree strongly” with Statement 2)



Views on individuals' living conditions

| 34 countries
| 2019/2021

Respondents were asked: *In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions?*

