



Weakening of support for democratic elections? South Africans' views on elections and accountability



Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa Research Workshop, 21 September 2022 – Johannesburg, South Africa

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What is Afrobarometer?



- A pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on the experiences, evaluations, and aspirations of African citizens regarding democracy, governance, and quality of life.
- Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) covered 34 countries.
- Round 9 surveys are currently underway, expected to be completed by October this year in up to 40 countries.
- The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation is the Southern Africa core partner with responsibility for surveys and dissemination and national partners in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Malawi and Zambia managed from Nairobi.

What Afrobarometer does

Goal

- To give the public a voice in policy making.

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 policy making
- Strengthen capacity for survey research, analysis, and communication

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

→ AB is helping to decolonize the study of African societies and cultures

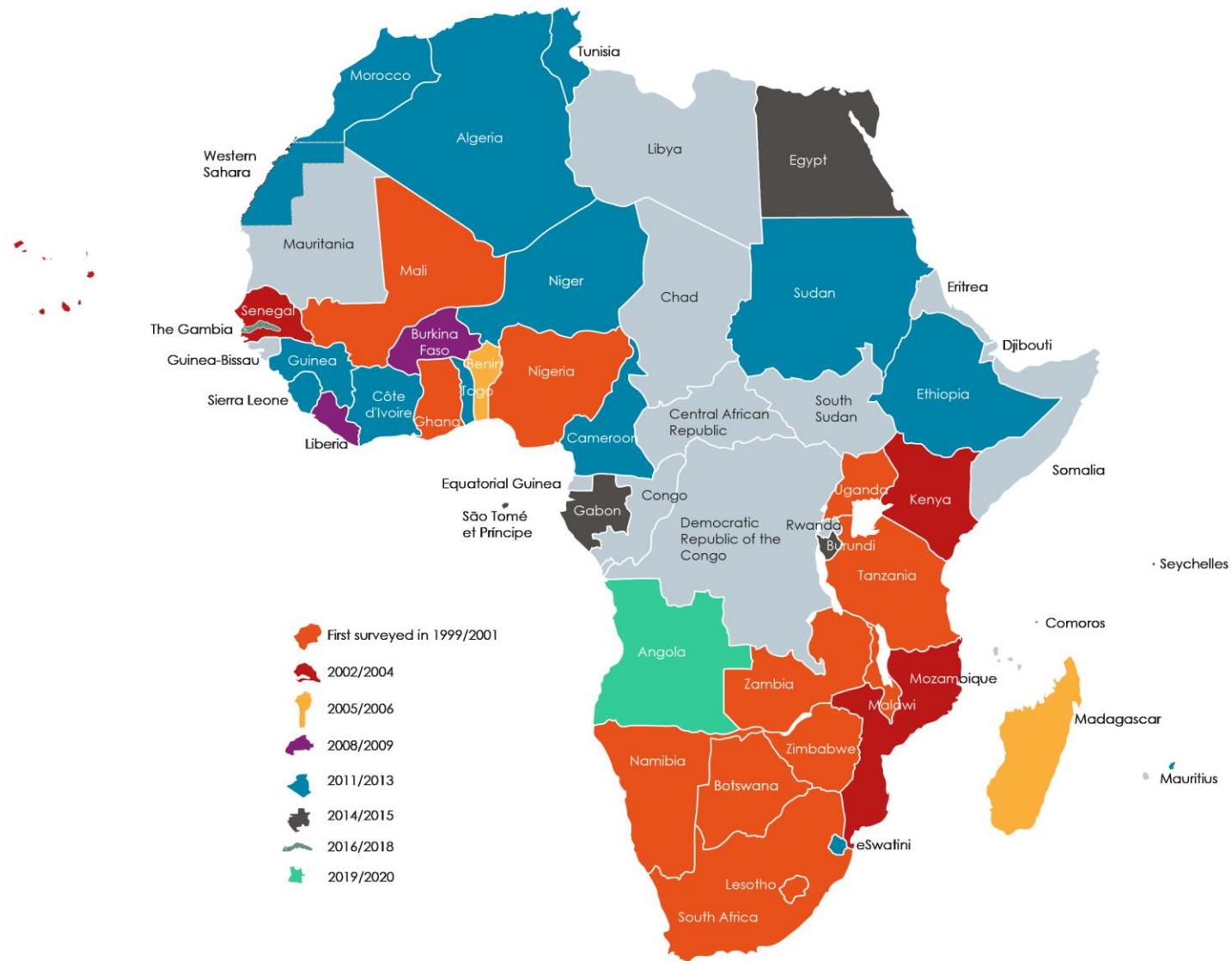


Methodology

- **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.



Where Afrobarometer works





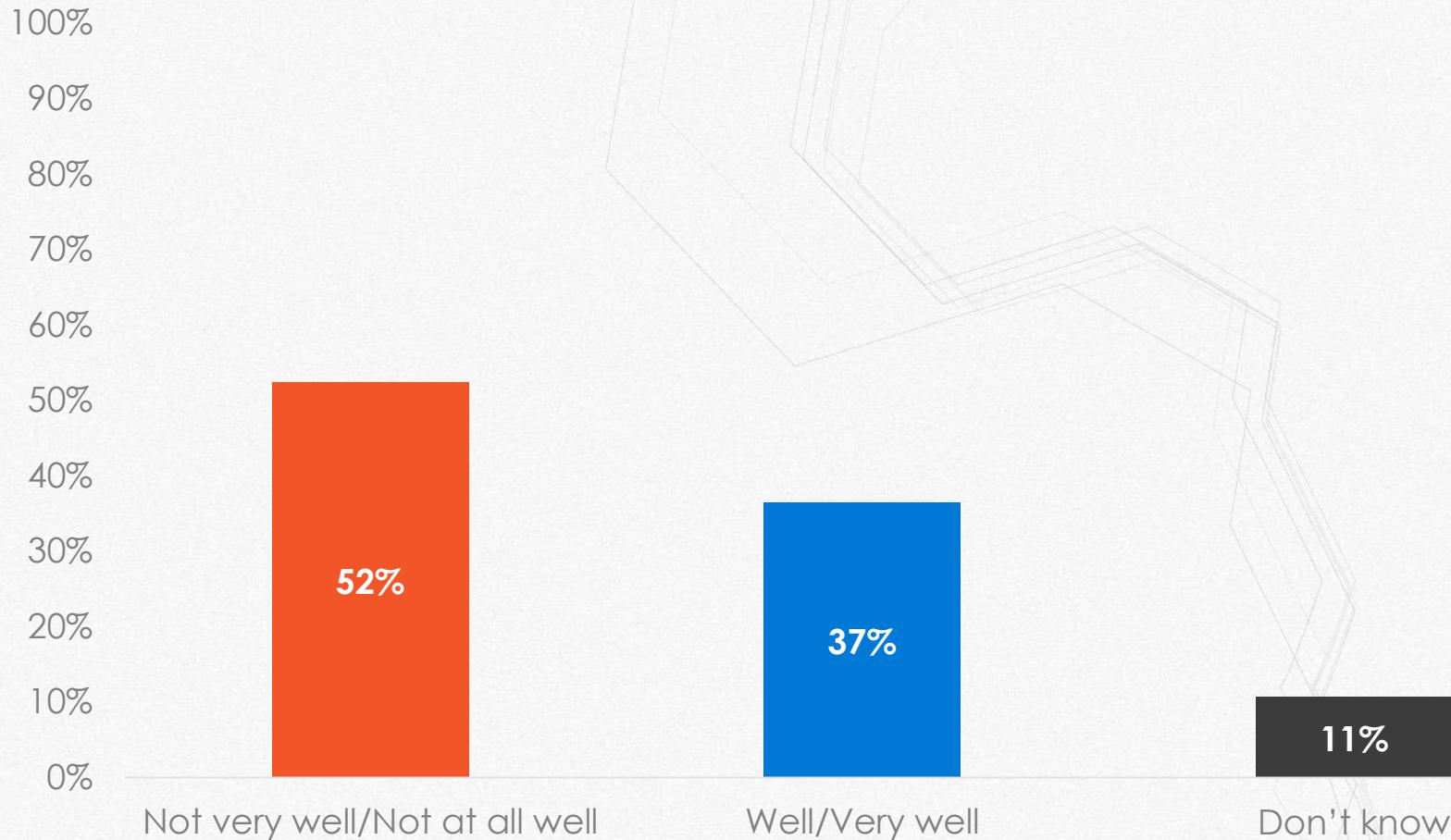
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Let the people have a say

Efficacy of elections

Efficacy of elections | South Africa

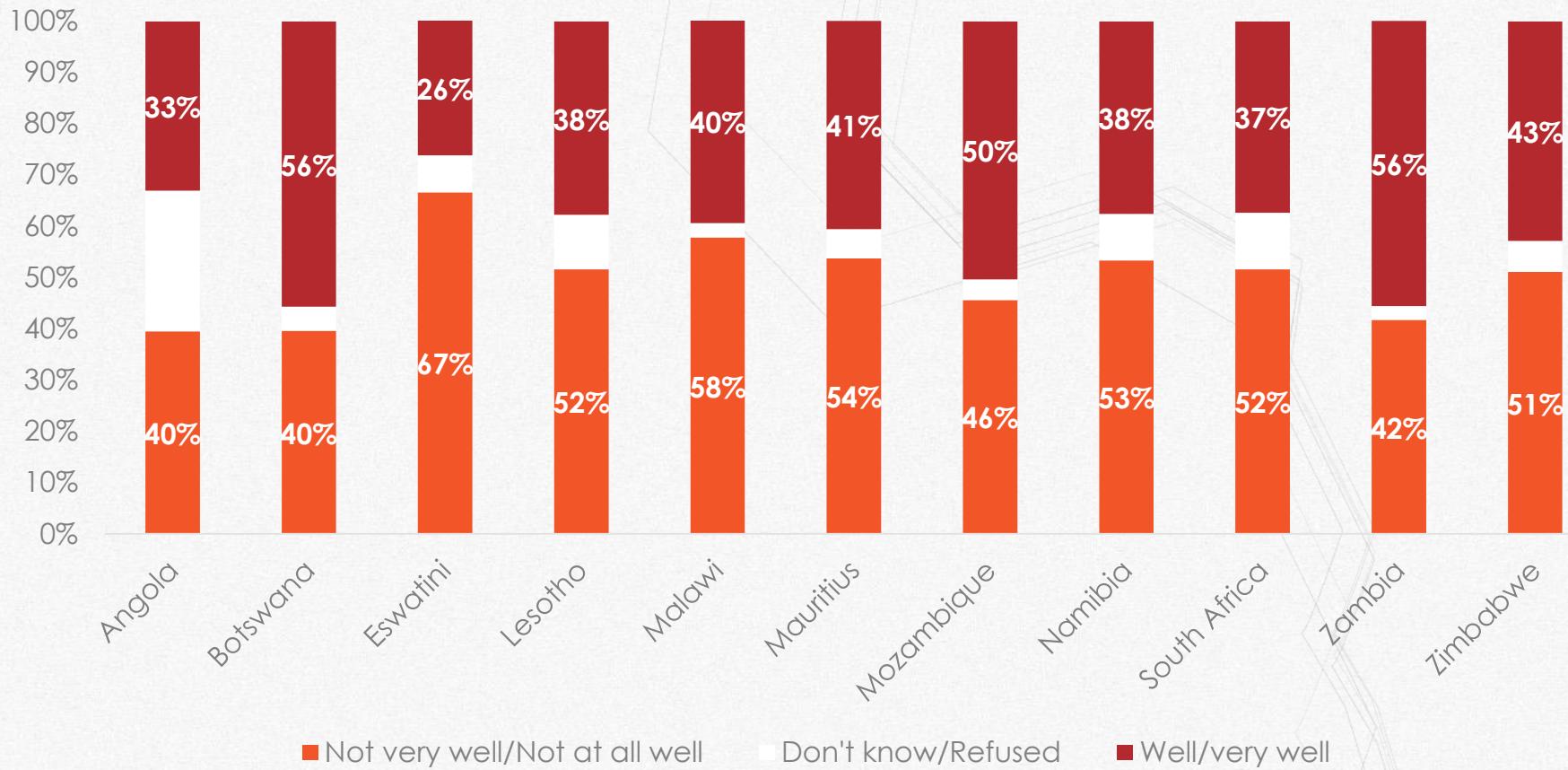
| 2021



Respondents were asked: Think about how elections work in practice in this country. How well do elections:

Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what voters want?

Efficacy of elections | Southern Africa | 2019/2021

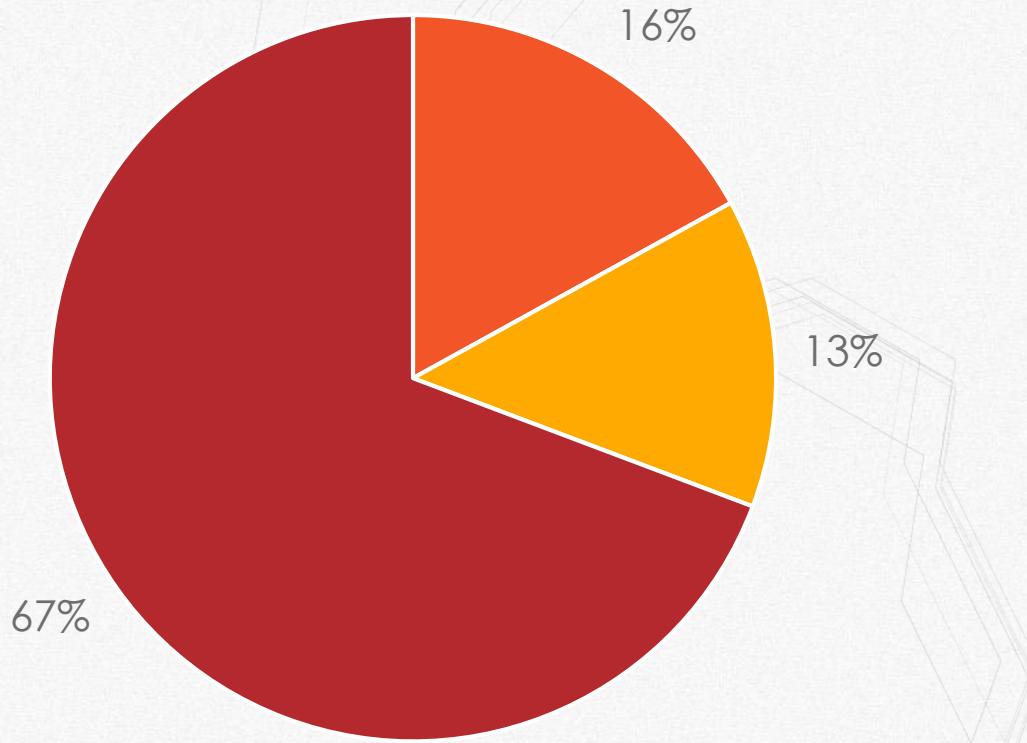


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Support for elections

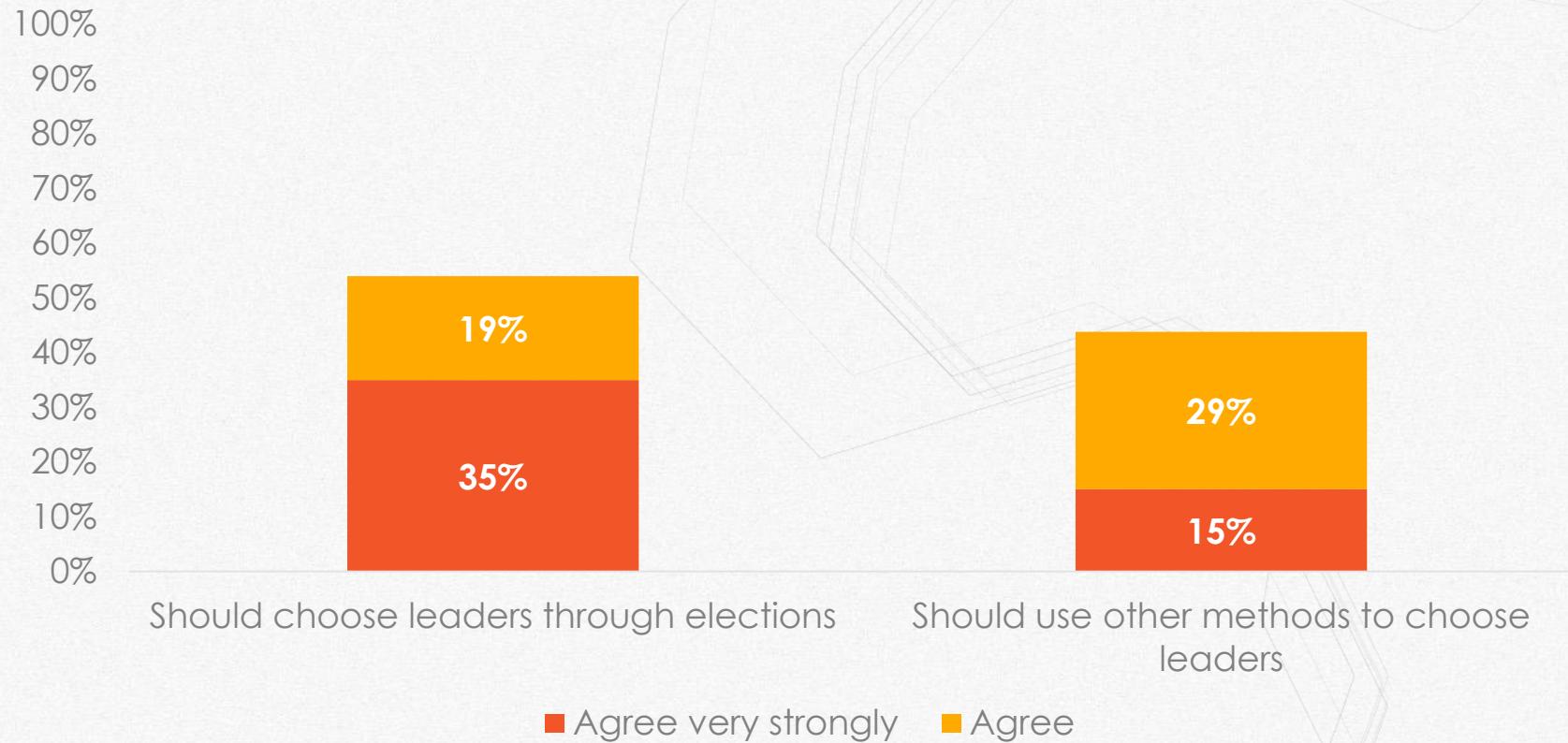
Freedom to choose whom to vote for | South Africa | 2021



■ Not at all free/Not very free ■ Somewhat free ■ Completely free

Respondents were asked: *In this country, how free are you to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured*

Support for elections | South Africa | 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.

Support for multiparty competition | South Africa | 2021

Many political parties needed

67%

Political parties create division

31%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

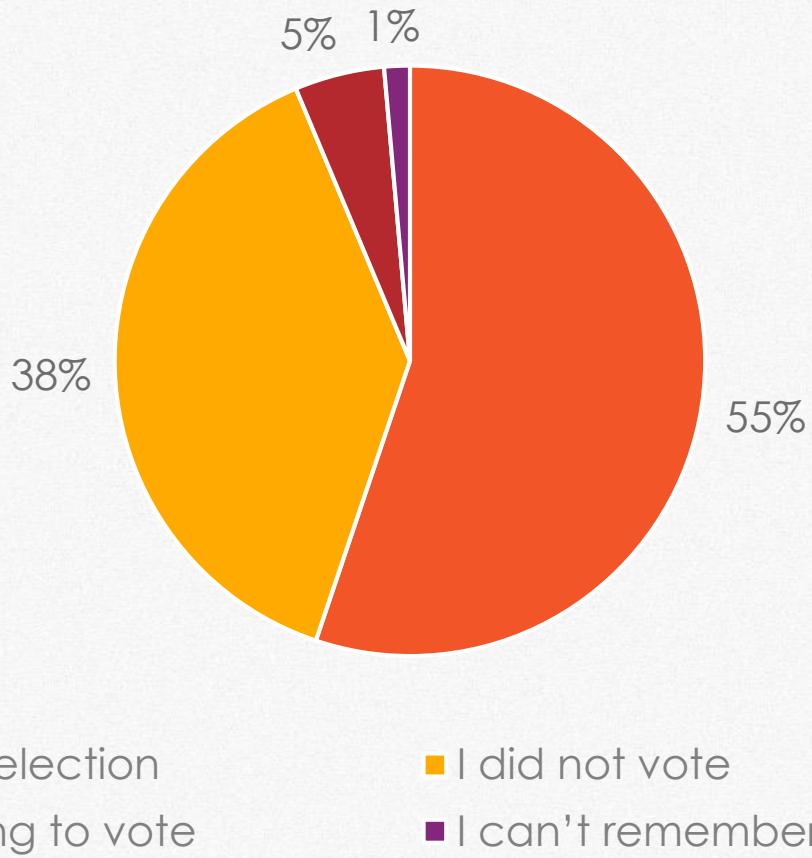
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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

Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that South Africans have real choices in who governs them.

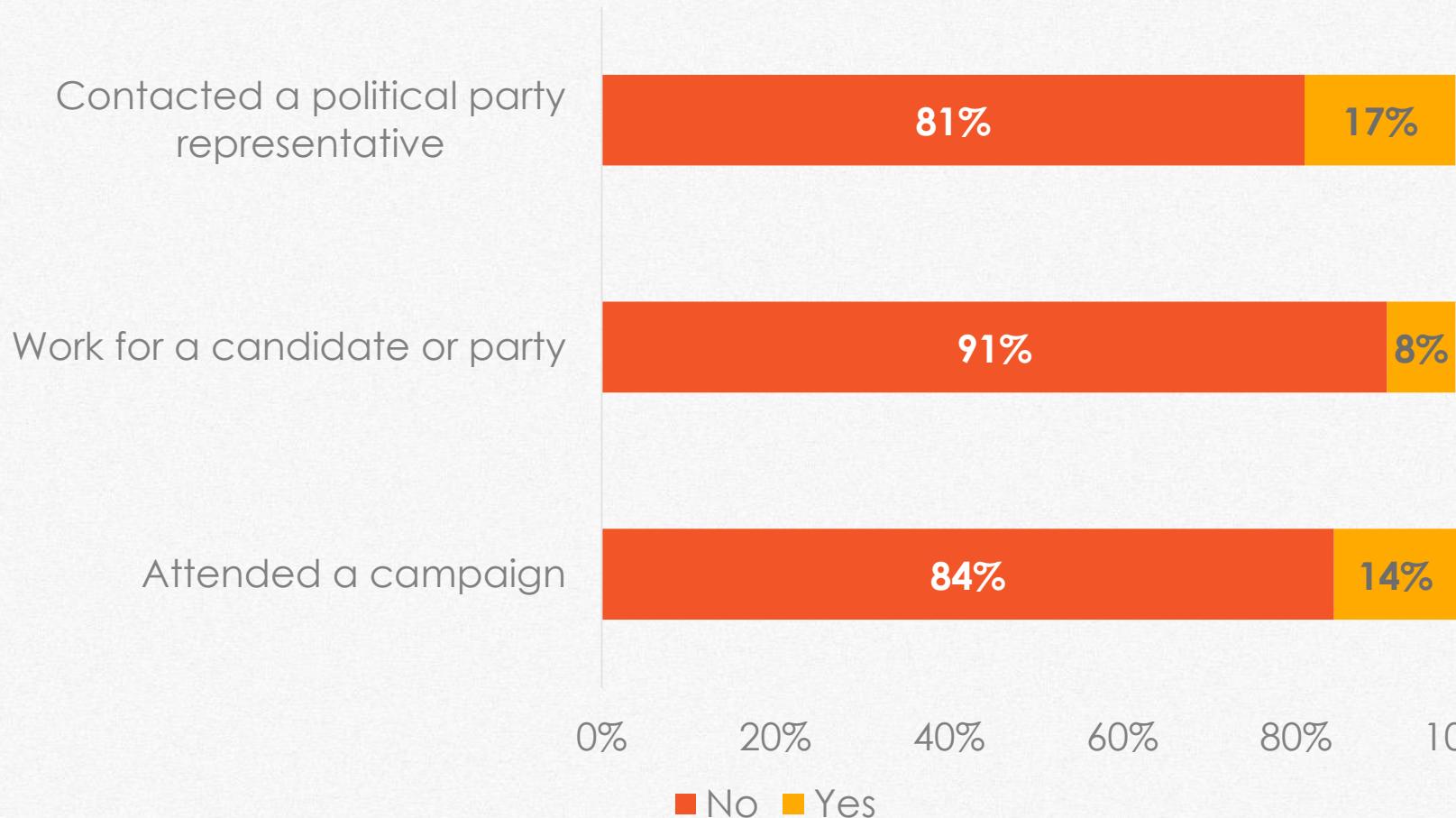
Participation in elections

Who voted? | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: In the last national election, held in 2019, did you vote, or not, or were you too young to vote? Or can't you remember whether you voted? (Note: Respondents who were too young to vote in the last national election are excluded)

Political engagement | South Africa | 2021

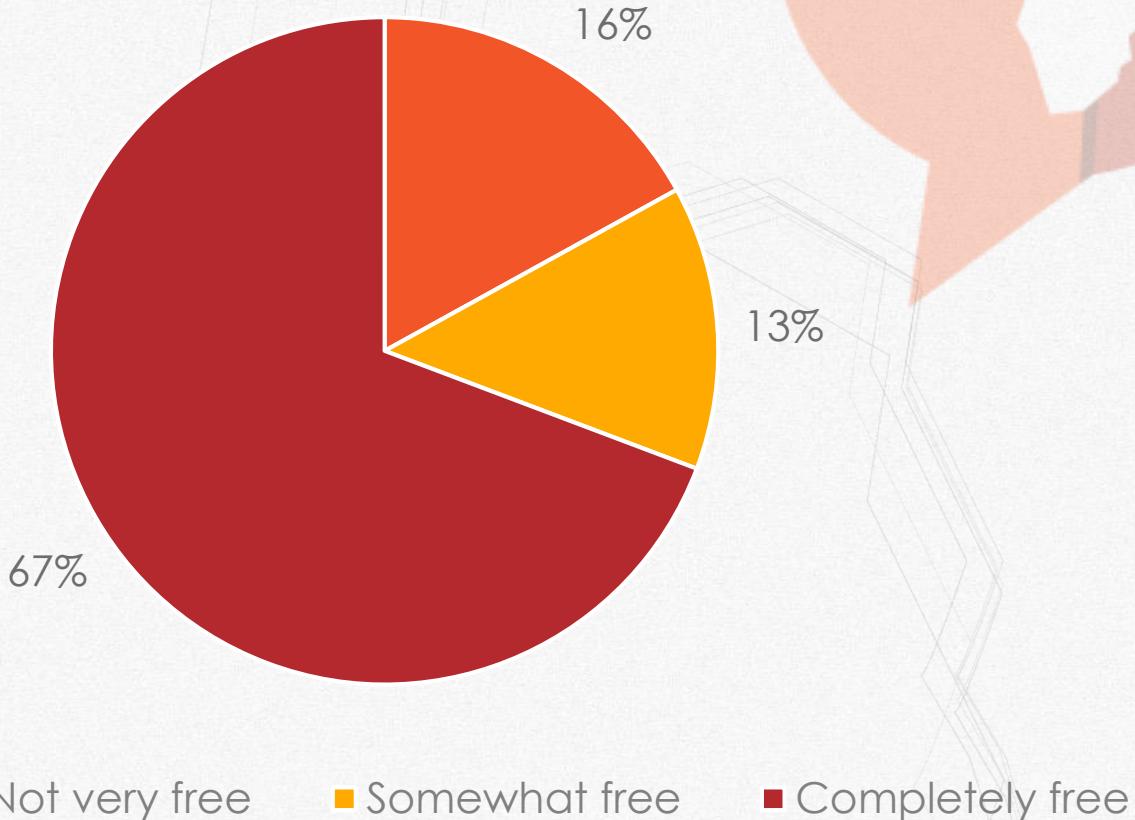


Respondents were asked: Thinking about the last national election. Did you attend a campaign rally? Did you work for a candidate or party? Did you contact a political party representative?

Quality and legitimacy of elections

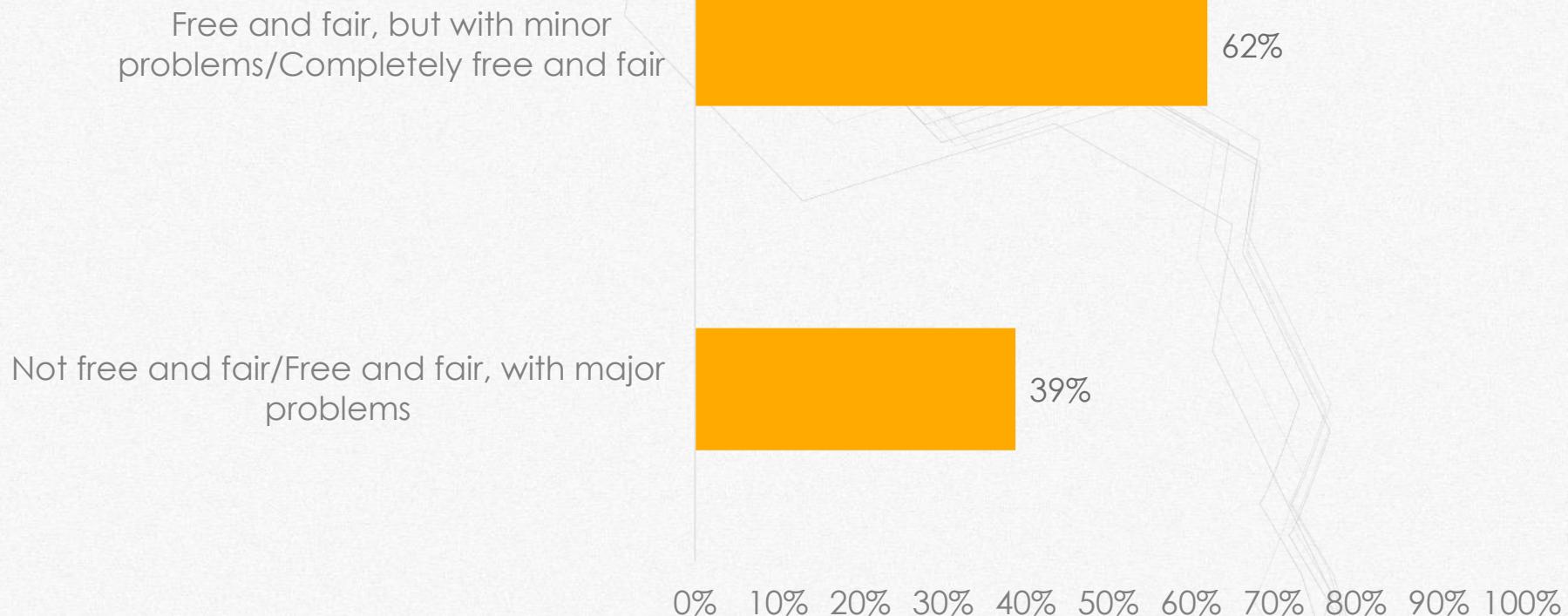
Free to vote without pressure |

South Africa | 2021



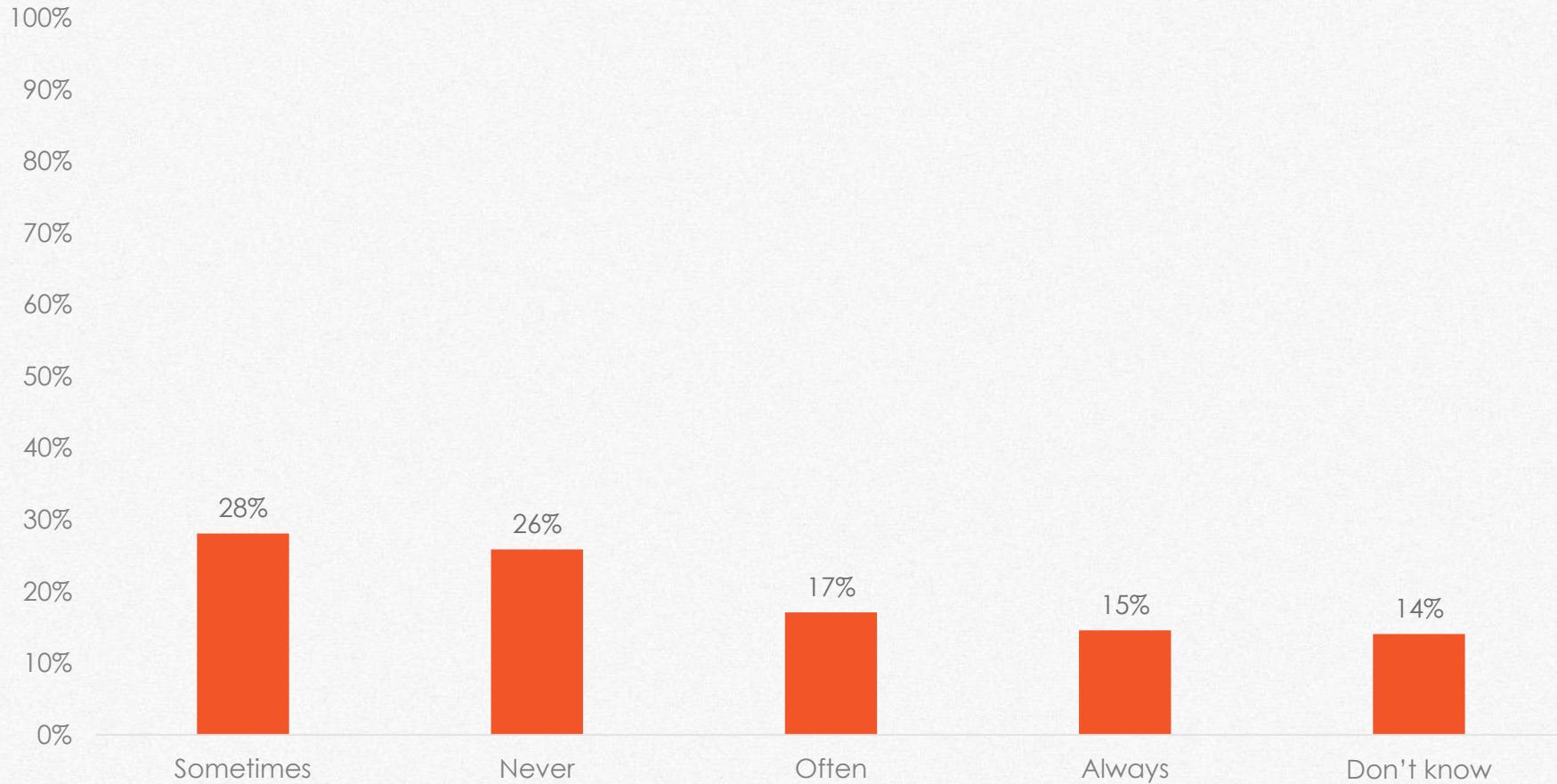
Respondents were asked: *In this country, how free are you to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?*

How free and fair was the most recent election?



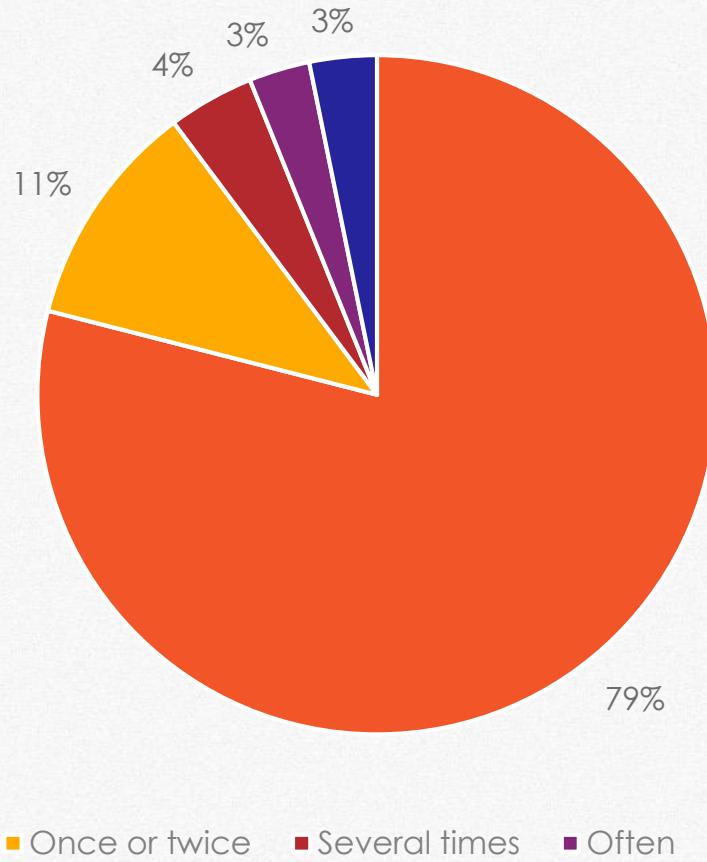
Respondents were asked: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in 2019?

Media coverage of candidates | South Africa | 2014-2021



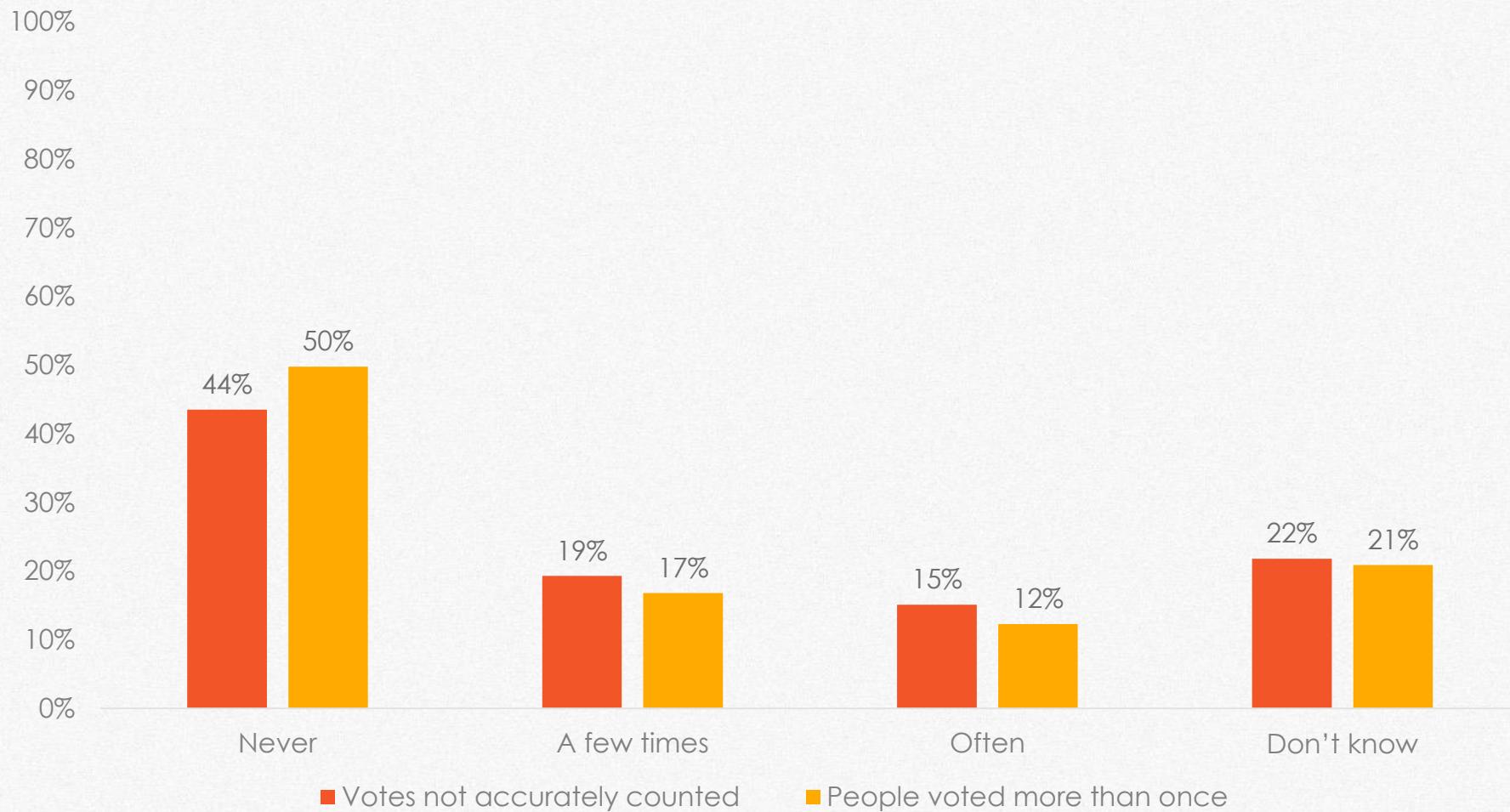
Respondents were asked: During the past election in 2019, how often did the media provide fair coverage of all candidates

Candidate or political party offered food, gifts or money for vote | South Africa | 2021



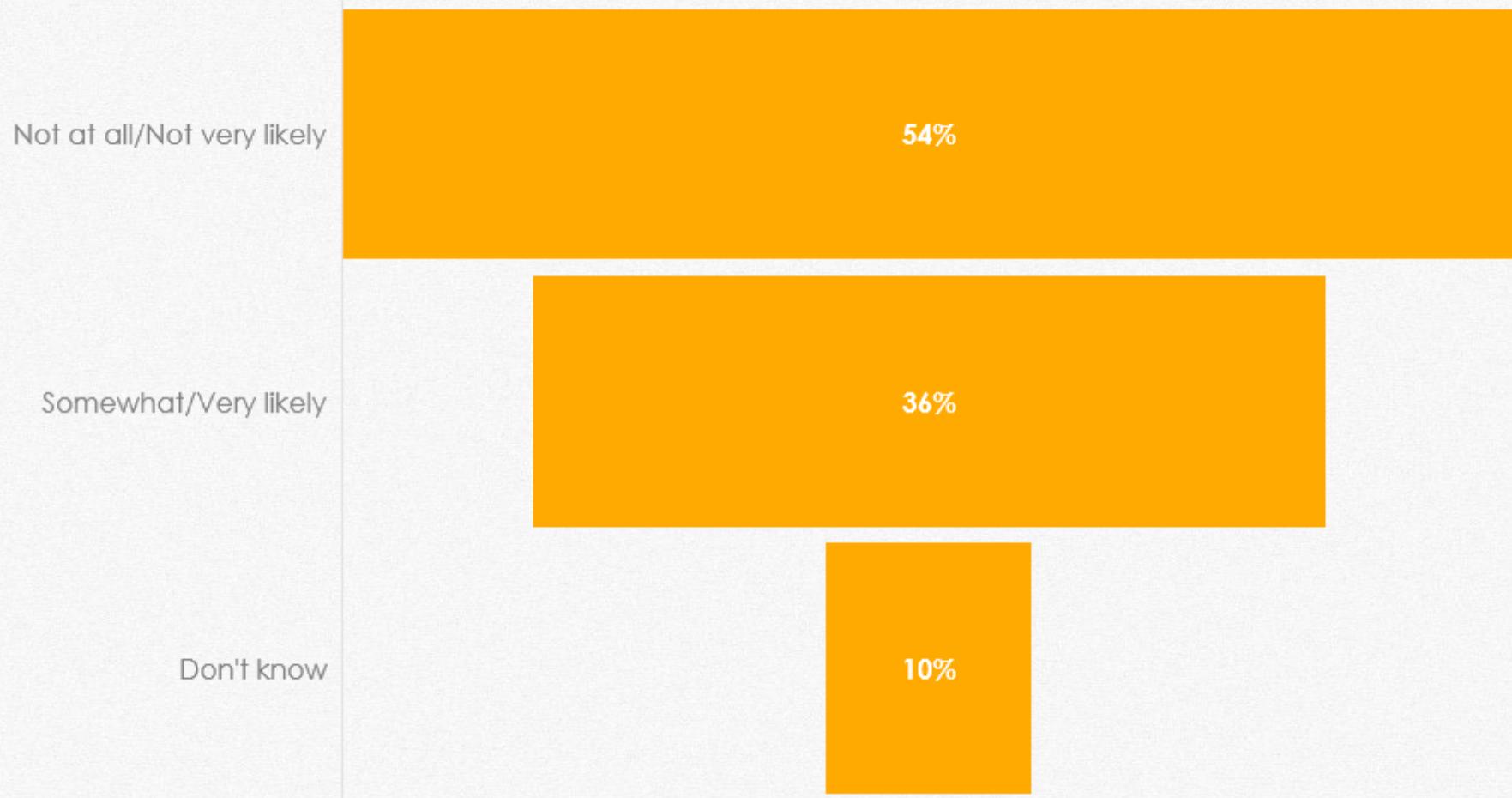
Respondents were asked: During the past election in 2019, how often, if ever, did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you something, like food, a gift, or money, in return for your vote?

Voting accuracy | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: During the past election in 2019, how often did each of the following things happen:
People's votes were not accurately counted or not fairly reflected in the results?
People voted more than once?

Vote is not secret | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: During the last national election in 2019, how likely do you think it is that powerful people can find out how you voted, even though, there is supposed to be a secret ballot in this country?

Personal fear of political intimidation | South Africa | 2021

100%

90%

80%

70%

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

10%

0%

Somewhat/A lot

A little bit/Not at all

Don't know

13%

83%

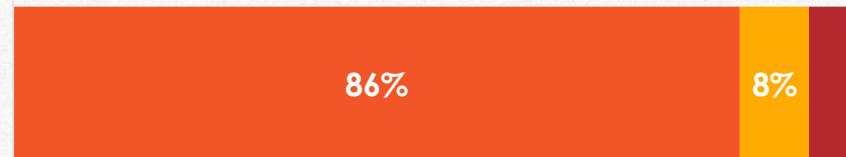
4%

Respondents were asked: During the last national election in 2019, how much did you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence?

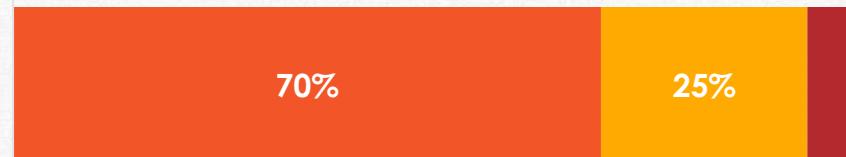
Voter manipulation and intimidation | South Africa

| 2021

Security forces or political party intimidated voters



Police or soldiers assisted people to cast ballots



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

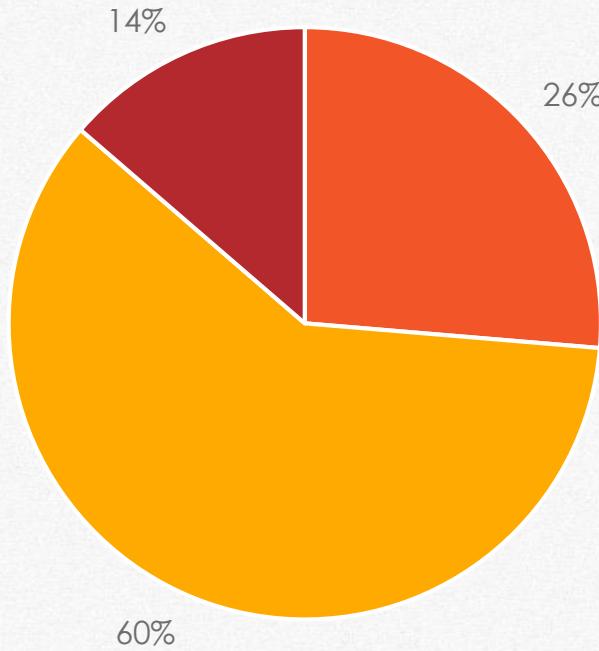
■ No ■ Yes ■ Don't know/Can't remember

Respondents were asked: During the last national election in 2019,

Did you witness police or soldiers, rather than election officials assisting some people to cast their ballot?

Did you witness anyone from the security forces or a political party trying to intimidate voters?

Accuracy of announced results of most recent election | South Africa | 2021

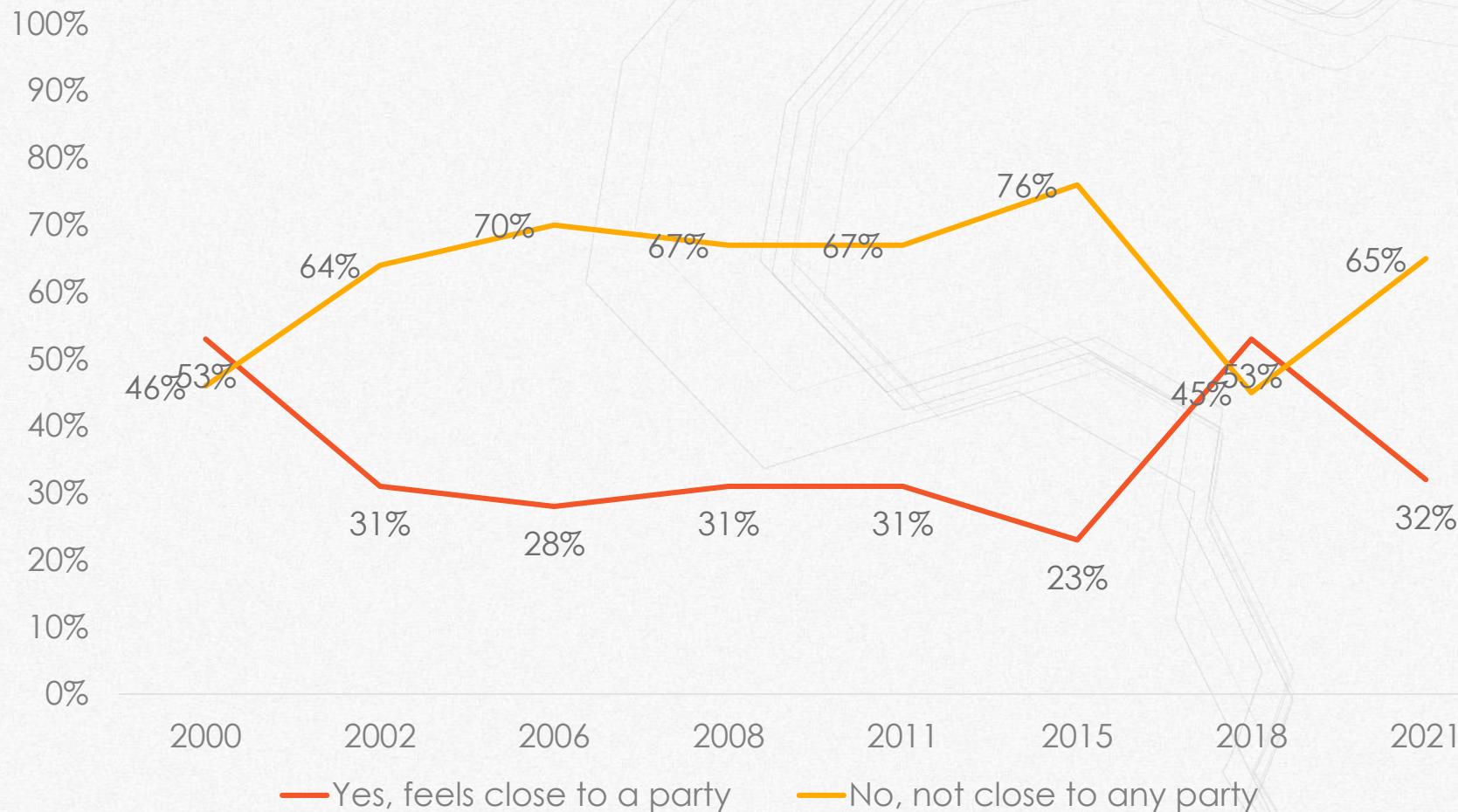


- Not accurate at all/Not very accurate, with major discrepancies
- Mostly accurate, but with some minor discrepancies/Completely accurate
- Don't know

Respondents were asked: With regard to the last national election in 2019, to what extent do you think the results announced by the Independent Electoral Commission accurately reflected the actual results as counted?

Partisanship, trust and giving up democratic elections

Levels of partisanship | South Africa | 2000-2021



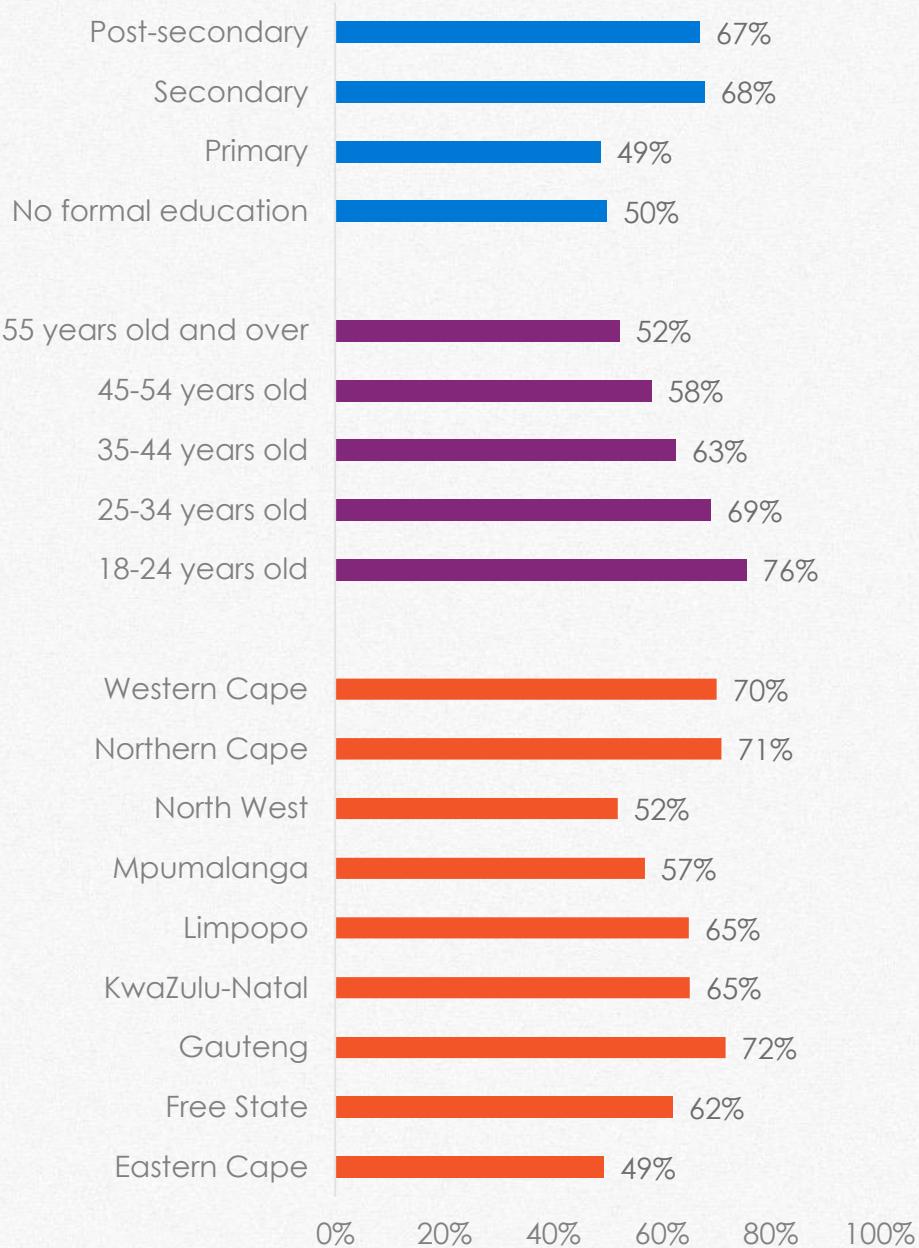
Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party?

Demographic characteristics of non-partisans

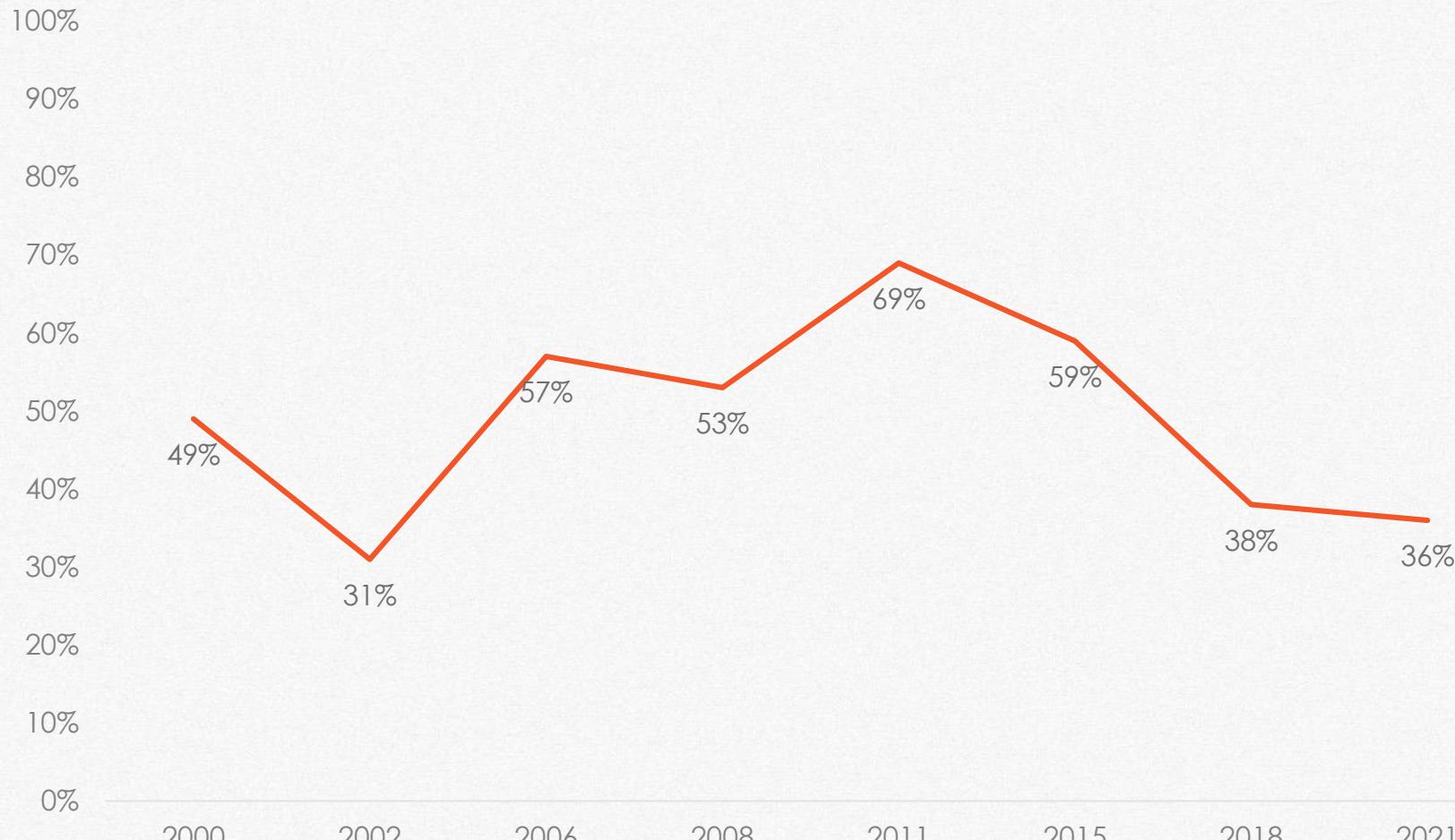
| South Africa |

2018-2021

Respondents were asked: Do you feel close to any particular political party? (% who say "no"). Figure shows proportion of "non-partisans" who fall into each socio-economic category).

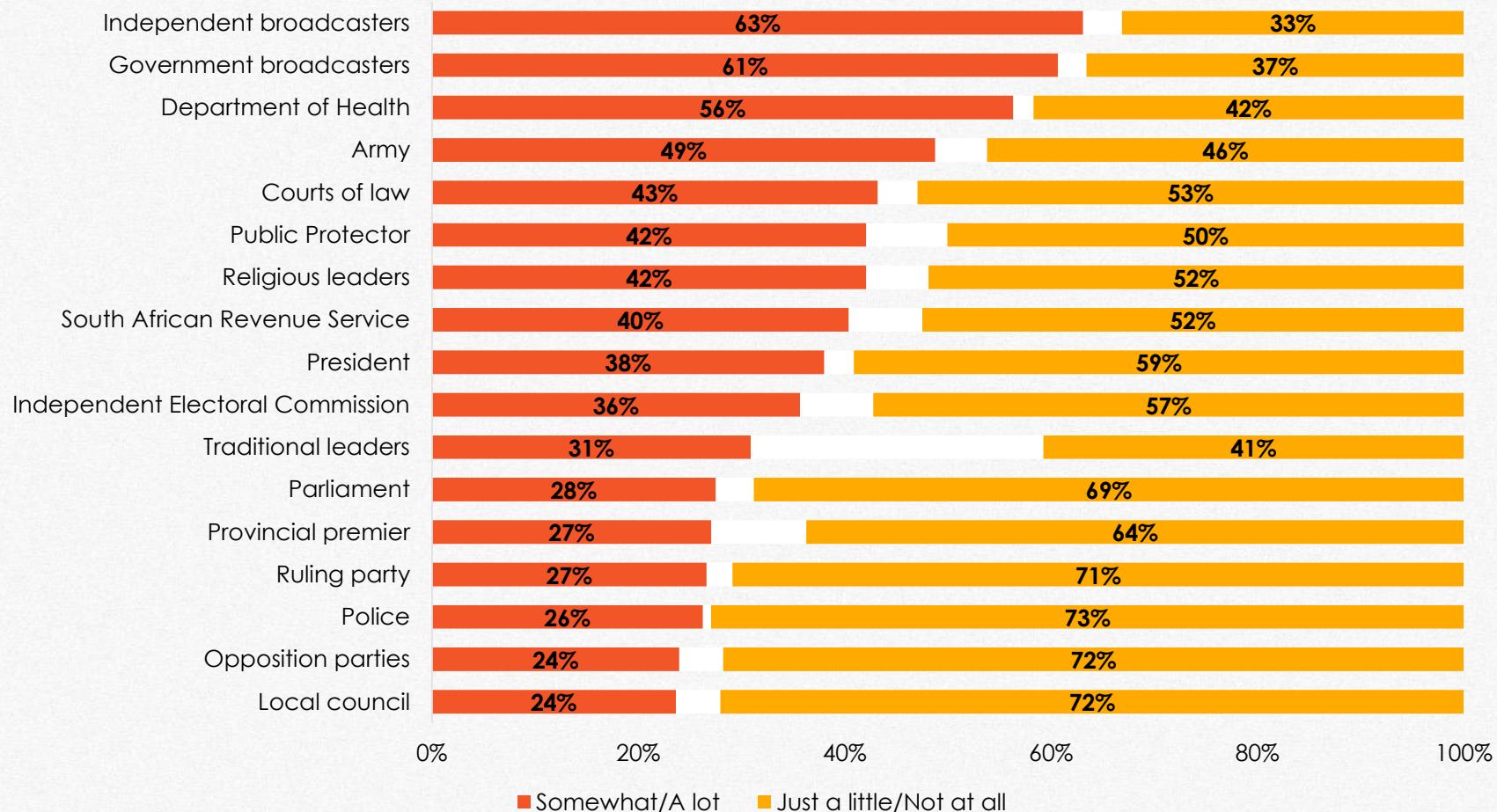


Trust in IEC | South Africa | 2021



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

Trust institutions | South Africa | 2021

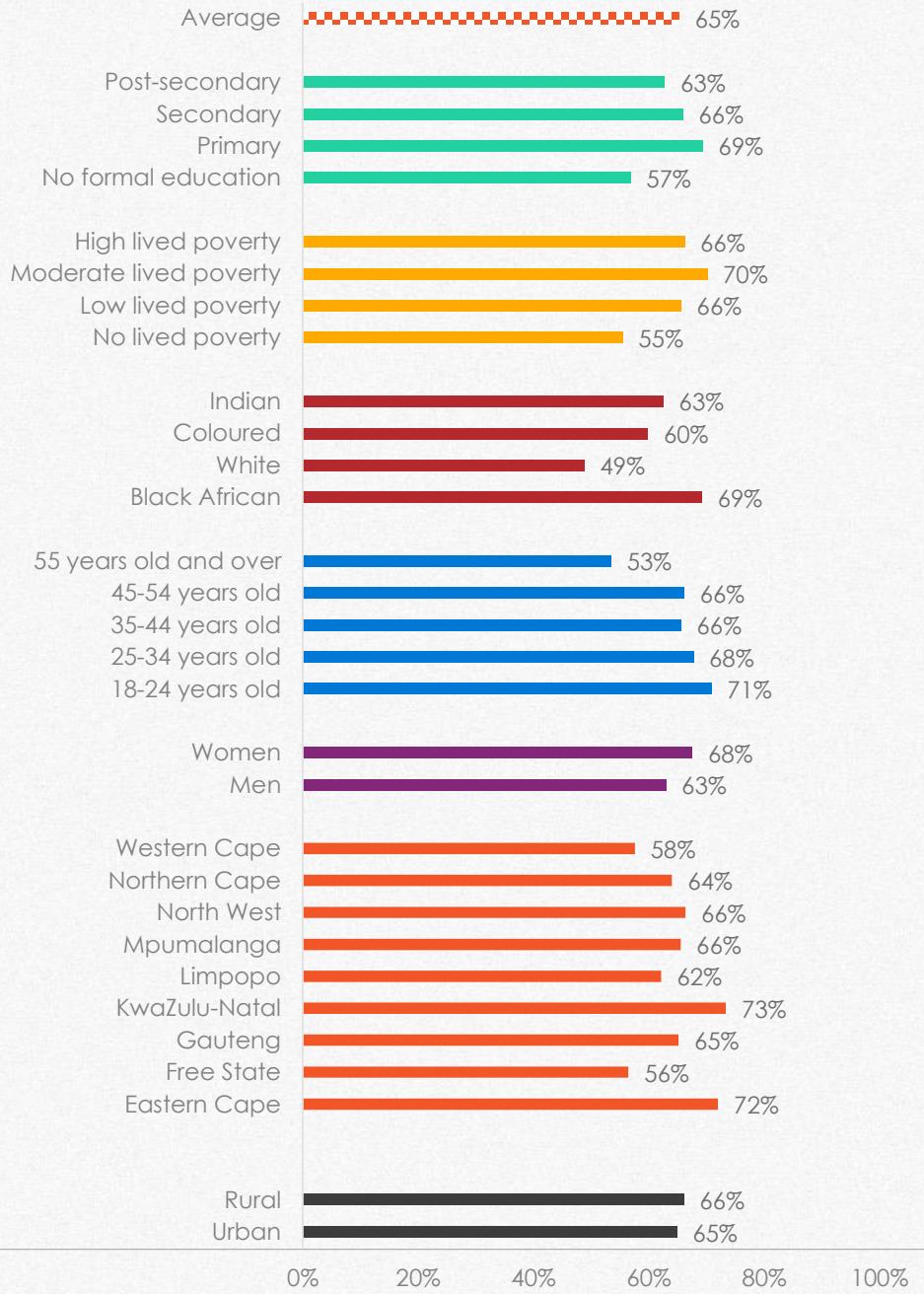


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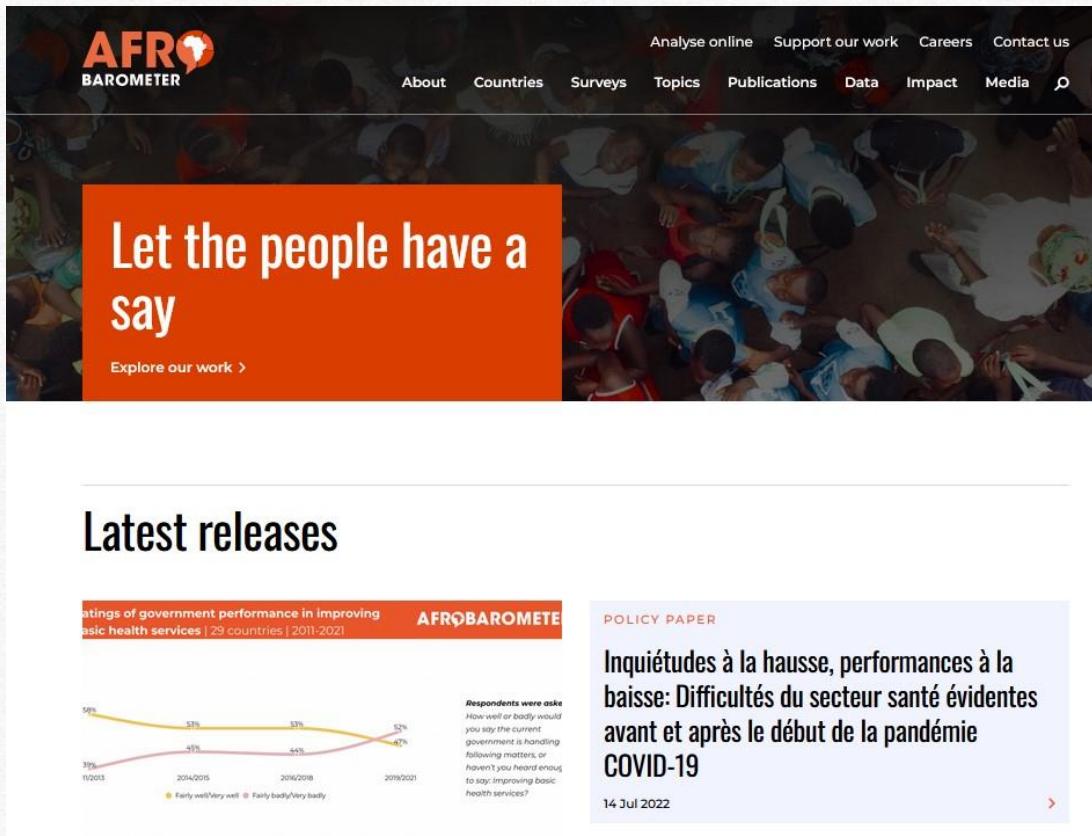
Willingness to give up elections

| South Africa | 2021

Respondents were asked: If a non-elected government or leader could impose law and order, and deliver houses and jobs, how willing or unwilling would you be to give up regular elections and live under such a government? (% who said "willing/very willing")



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Ratings of government performance in improving basic health services | 29 countries | 2011-2021

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39% 2011/2013

50% 2014/2015

53% 2016/2018

53% 2019/2021

47% 2011/2013

49% 2014/2015

44% 2016/2018

47% 2019/2021

Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Improving basic health services?

POLICY PAPER

Inquiétudes à la hausse, performances à la baisse: Difficultés du secteur santé évidentes avant et après le début de la pandémie COVID-19

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