



# Democracy, elections and the December 2019 referendum

Inaugural release of Ghana Afrobarometer Round 8 (2019) survey findings  
12 November 2019  
Alisa Hotel



# At a glance

- **Aspirations for democratic governance:** Close to nine in 10 Ghanaians (86%) “agree” or “agree very strongly” that elected officials should listen to their constituents’ views and do what they demand.
- **Satisfaction with democracy:** Two-thirds (66%) of Ghanaians are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy works in the country, a 14-percentage-point decline compared to 2017.
- **December 2019 referendum:** More than half of Ghanaians are not aware of the upcoming 17 December 2019 referendum.
- **Views on election administration:** Six in 10 (61%) say the limited voter-registration exercise was “fairly well” or “very well” organized by the Electoral Commission.

# What is Afrobarometer?



- A pan-African, non-partisan, non-profit research network that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Started in 12 African countries in 1999. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries.
- **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In Ghana, Afrobarometer Round 8 survey was conducted by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)



# 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 size in Ghana of 2,400 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 8 in Ghana was conducted between 16 September and 3 October 2019.

# Survey demographics

Gender	%
Men	50
Women	50
Residence	
Urban	52
Rural	48
Education	
No formal education	18
Primary	22
Secondary	46
Post-secondary	14
Religion	
Christian	74
Muslim	18
Other	8



# Aspirations for democratic governance

# Key findings

- Large majorities of Ghanaians support democracy and reject authoritarian alternatives.
- Popular support for accountable governance has increased steadily from 58% in 2012 to 78%.
- Close to nine in 10 Ghanaians (86%) “agree” or “agree very strongly” that elected officials should listen to their constituents’ views and do what they demand.
- Eight in 10 (81%) “agree” or “agree very strongly” that experts are needed to help make the most important decisions for the country.
- Three-quarters (76%) of citizens say it is important for whichever party wins an election to make compromises between the preferences and needs of different groups.

# Measuring demand for democracy

## ■ Support for democracy

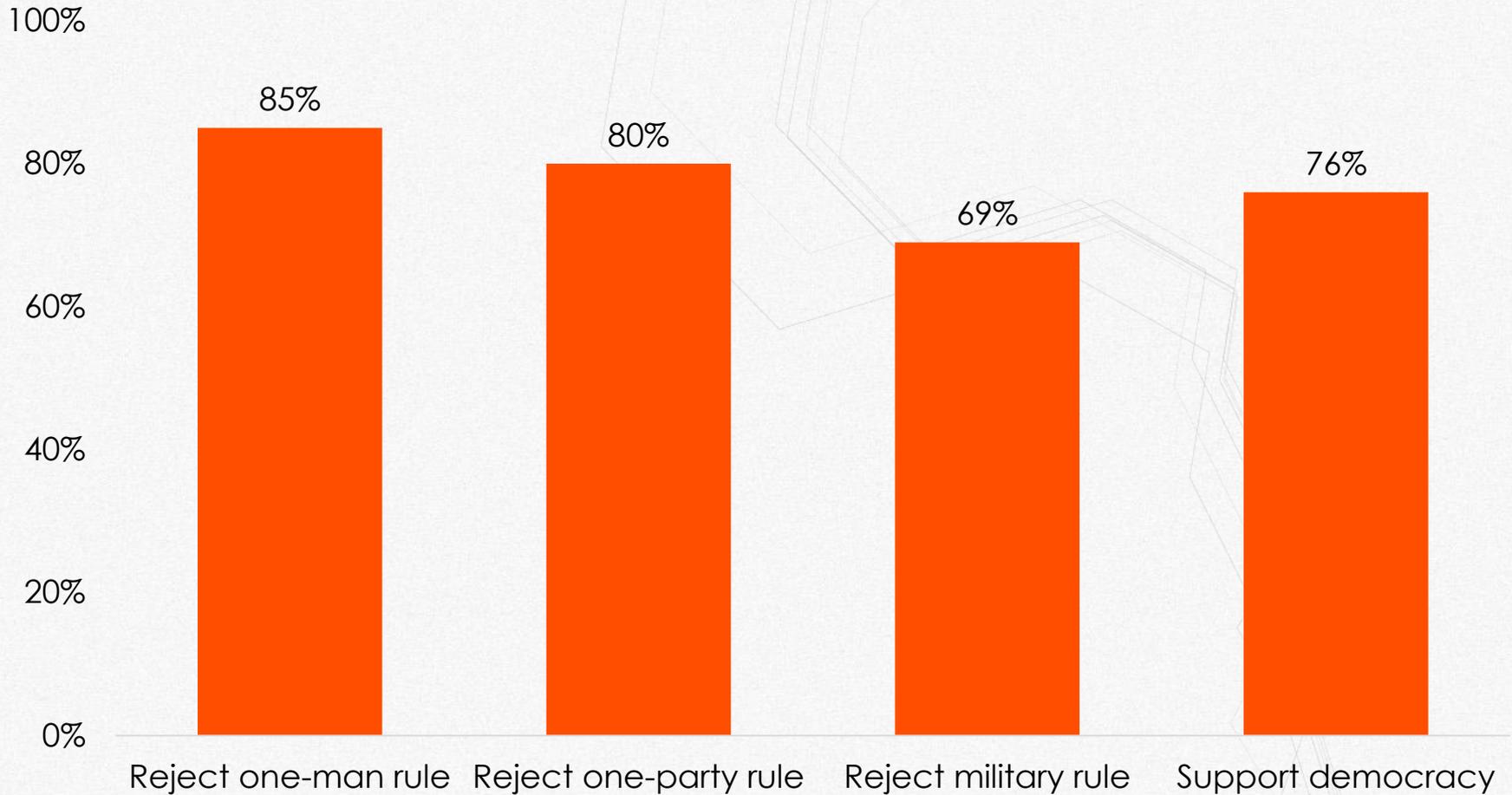
- Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?
  1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.
  2. In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.
  3. For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.

## ■ Rejection of authoritarian alternatives

- There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?
  1. Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
  2. The army comes in to govern the country.
  3. Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

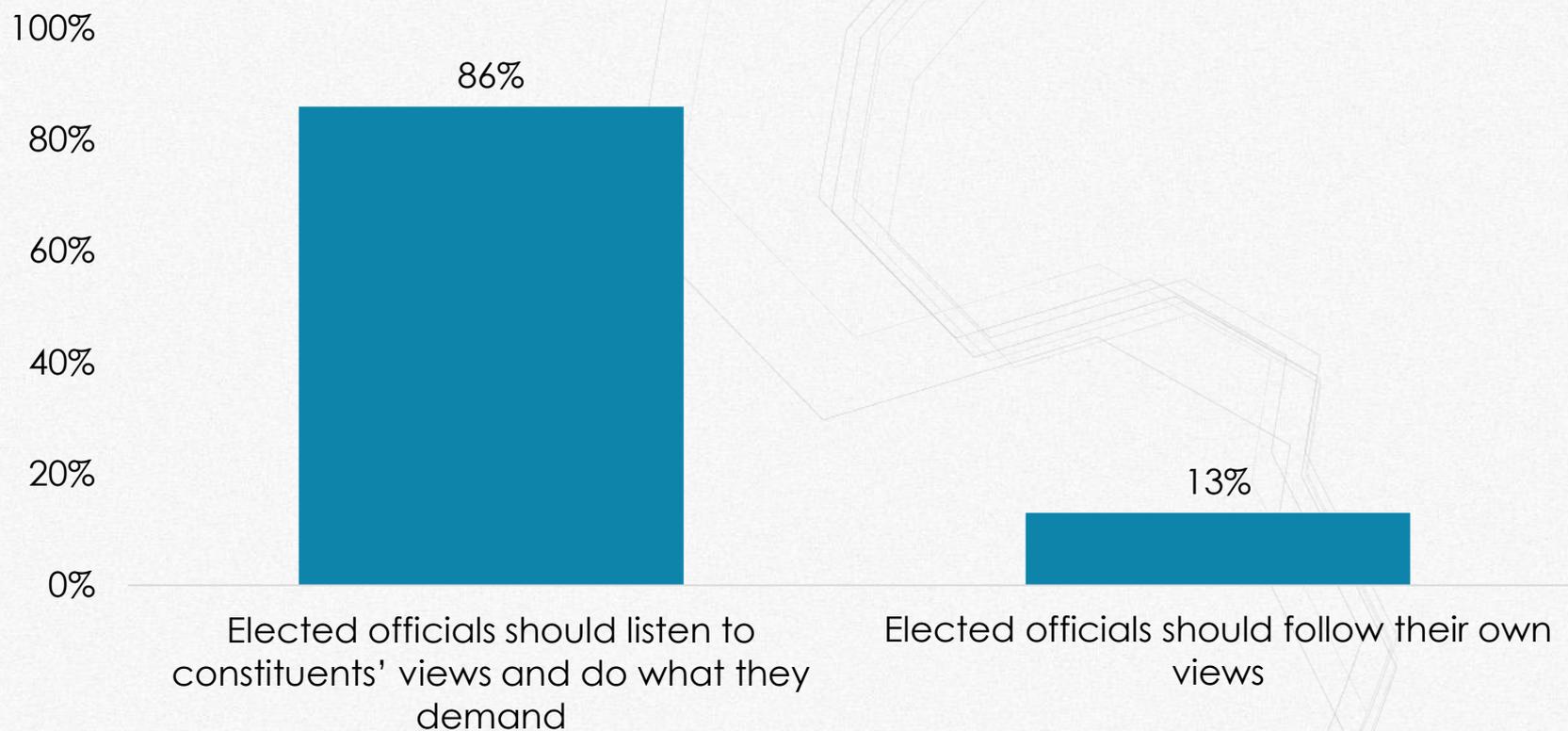
# Key demand-side indicators of democracy

## | Ghana | 2019



# Demand for representation by elected officials

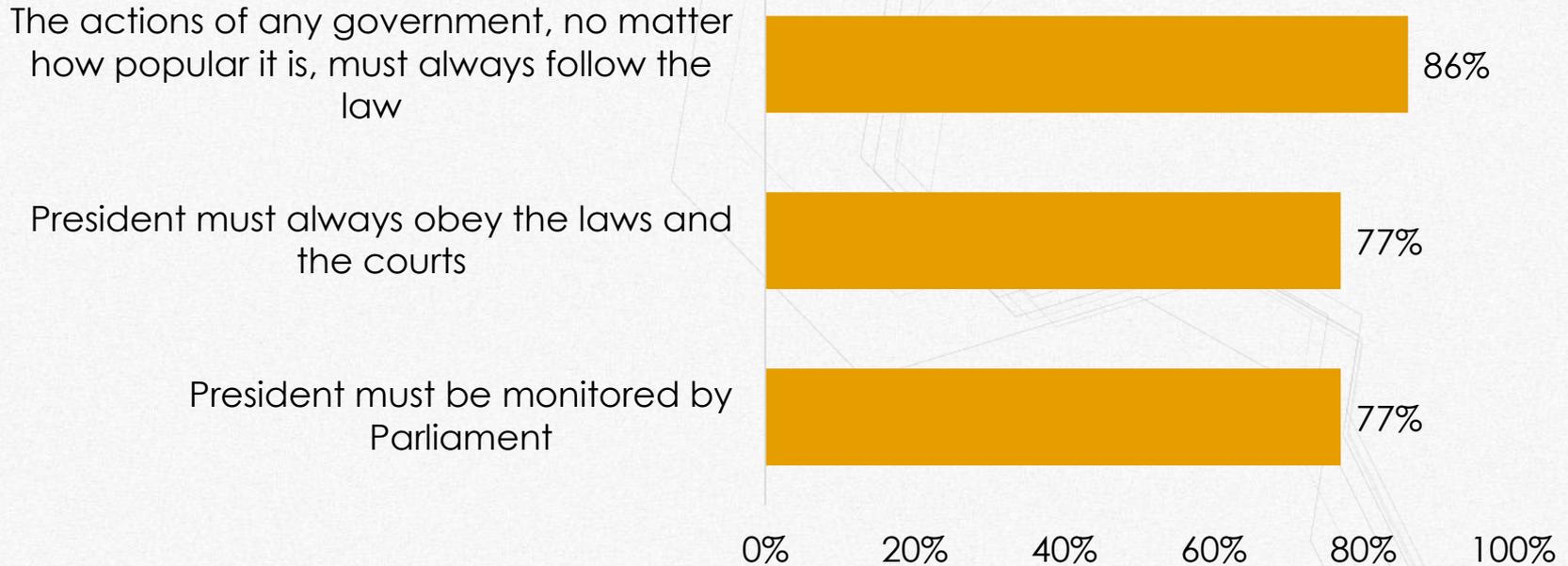
## | Ghana | 2019



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

Statement 1: Our elected officials should listen to constituents' views and do what they demand..  
Statement 2: Our elected leaders should follow their own ideas in deciding what is best for the country. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

# Demand for legislative oversight over government | Ghana | 2019



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

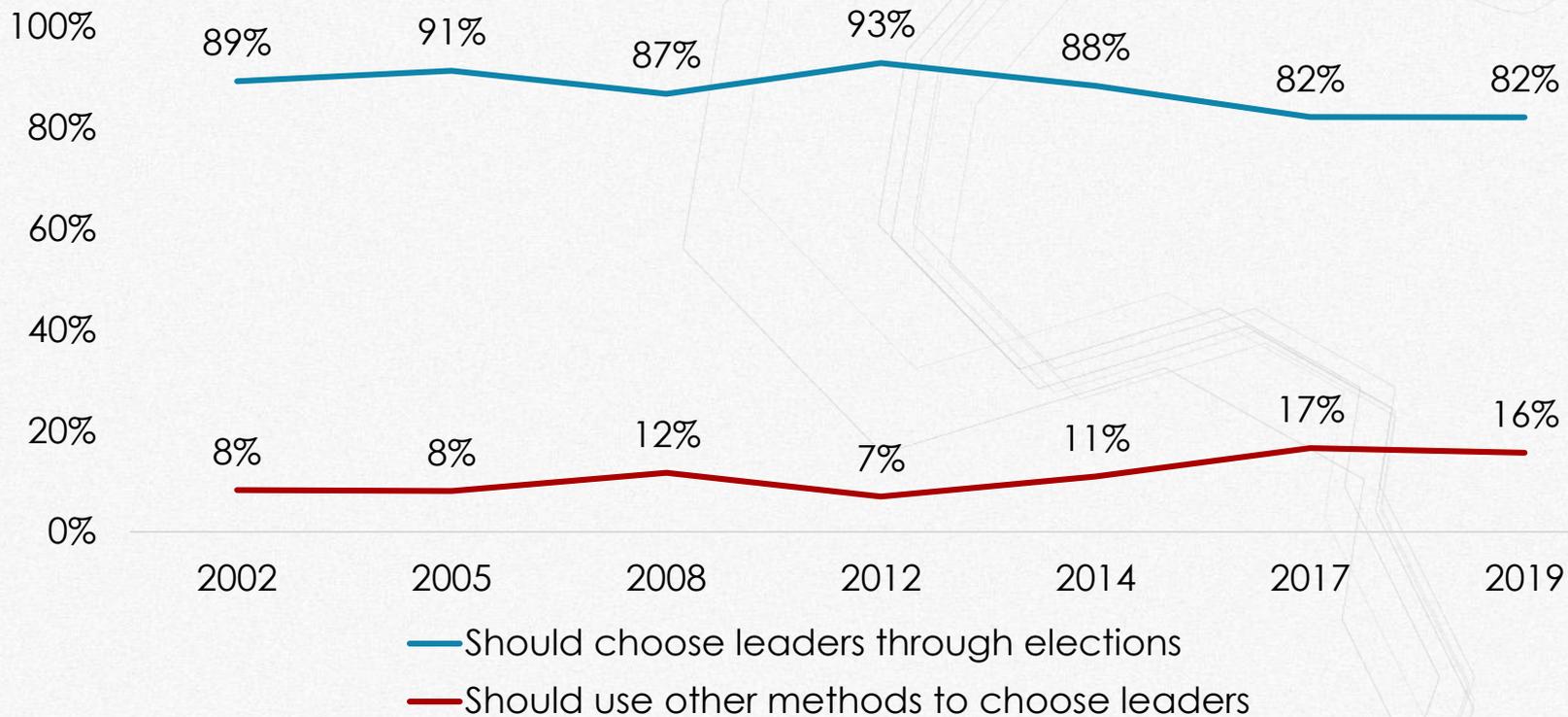
Statement 1: Parliament should ensure that the president explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends taxpayers' money. Statement 2: The president should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with Statement 1)

Statement 1: Since the president was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong. Statement 2: The president must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with Statement 2)

Statement 1: A government that enjoys the support of the people should be free to do whatever the people want, even if it is outside the law. Statement 2: The actions of any government, no matter how popular it is, must always follow the law. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with Statement 2)

# Popular support for elections

| Ghana | 2002-2019



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

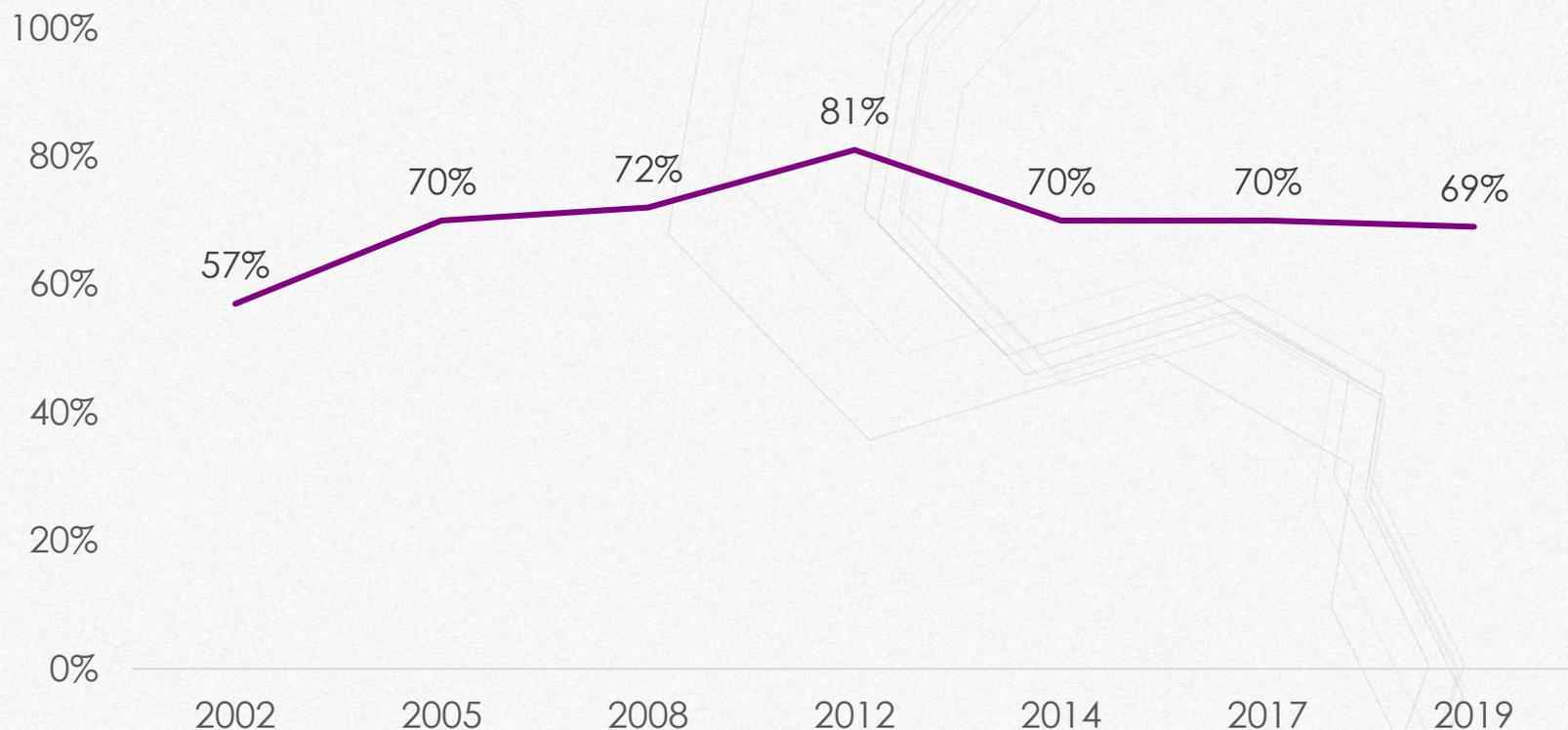
Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.

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

(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

# Support for multiparty competition

| Ghana | 2002-2019



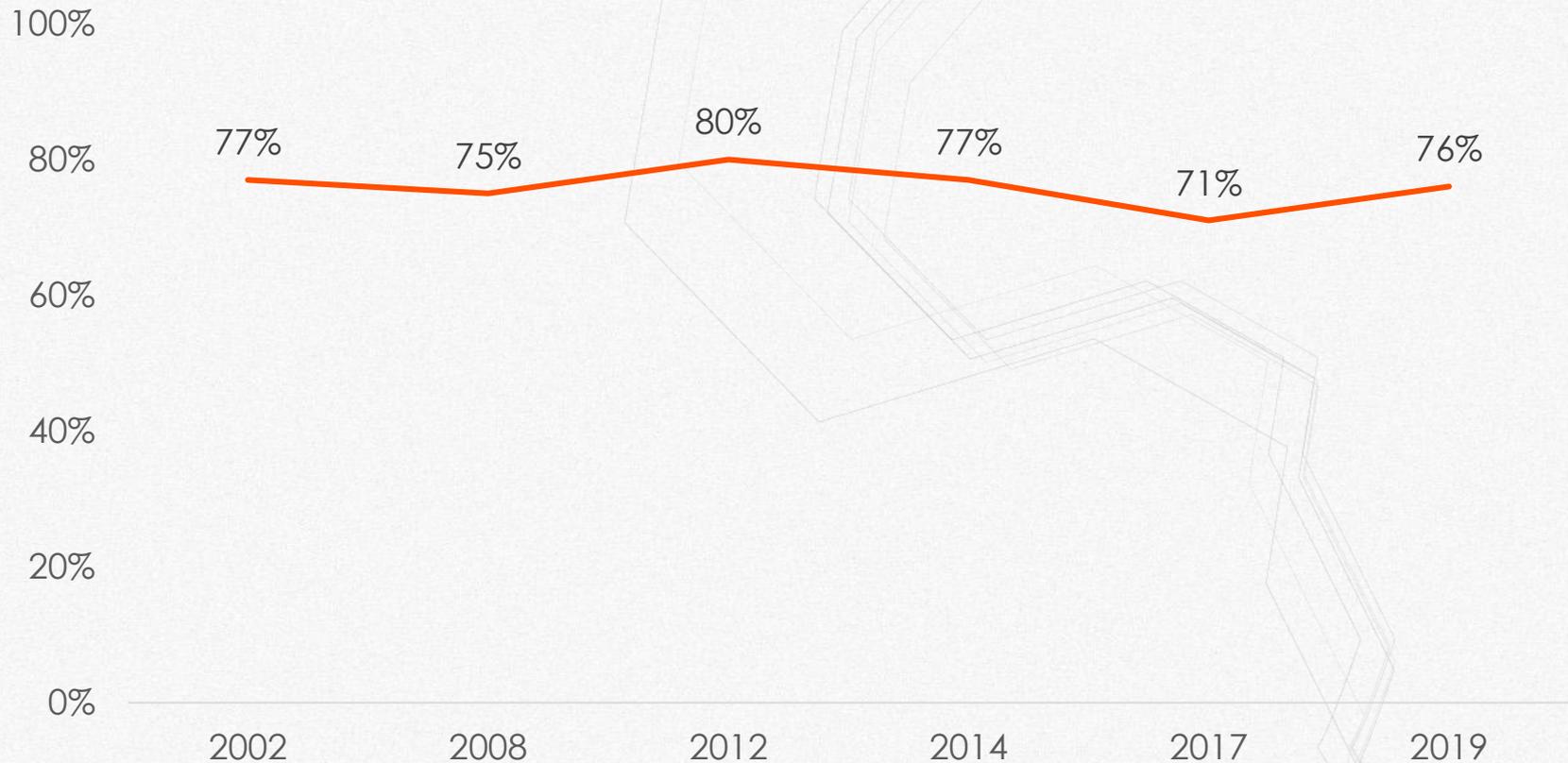
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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

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

# Support for presidential term limit

| Ghana | 2002-2019

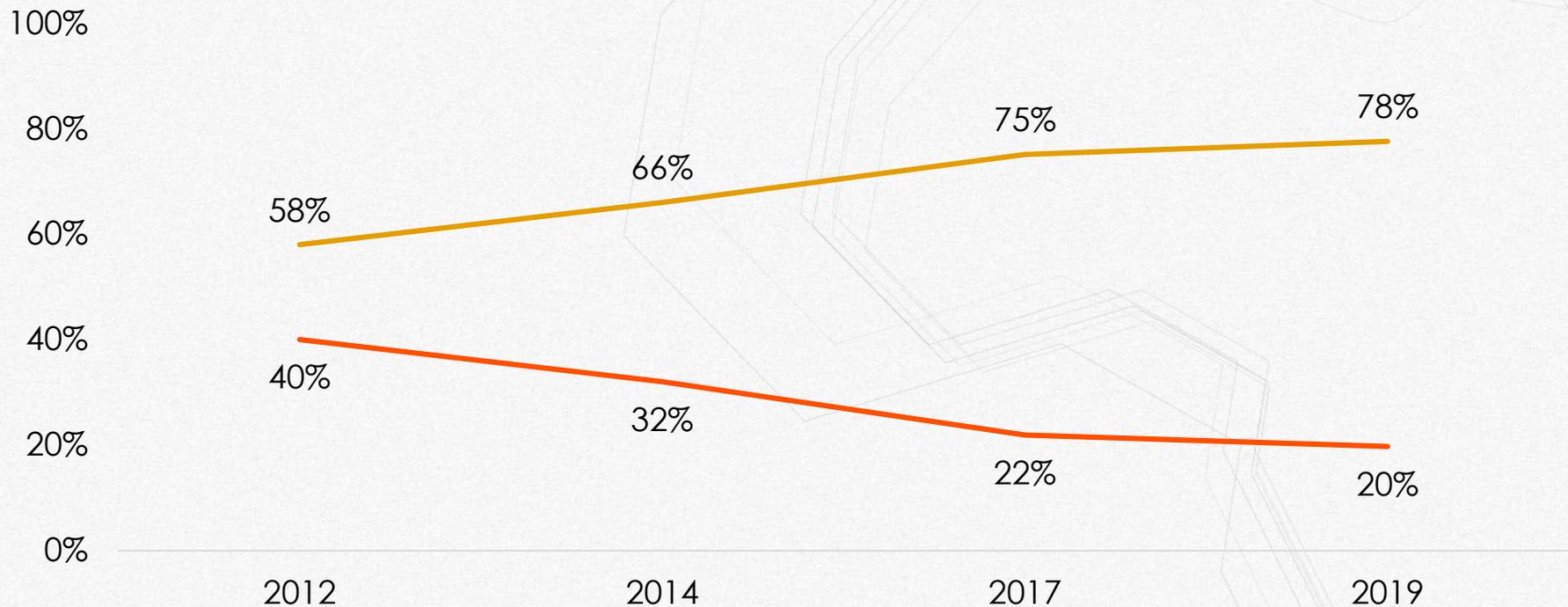


**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

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)

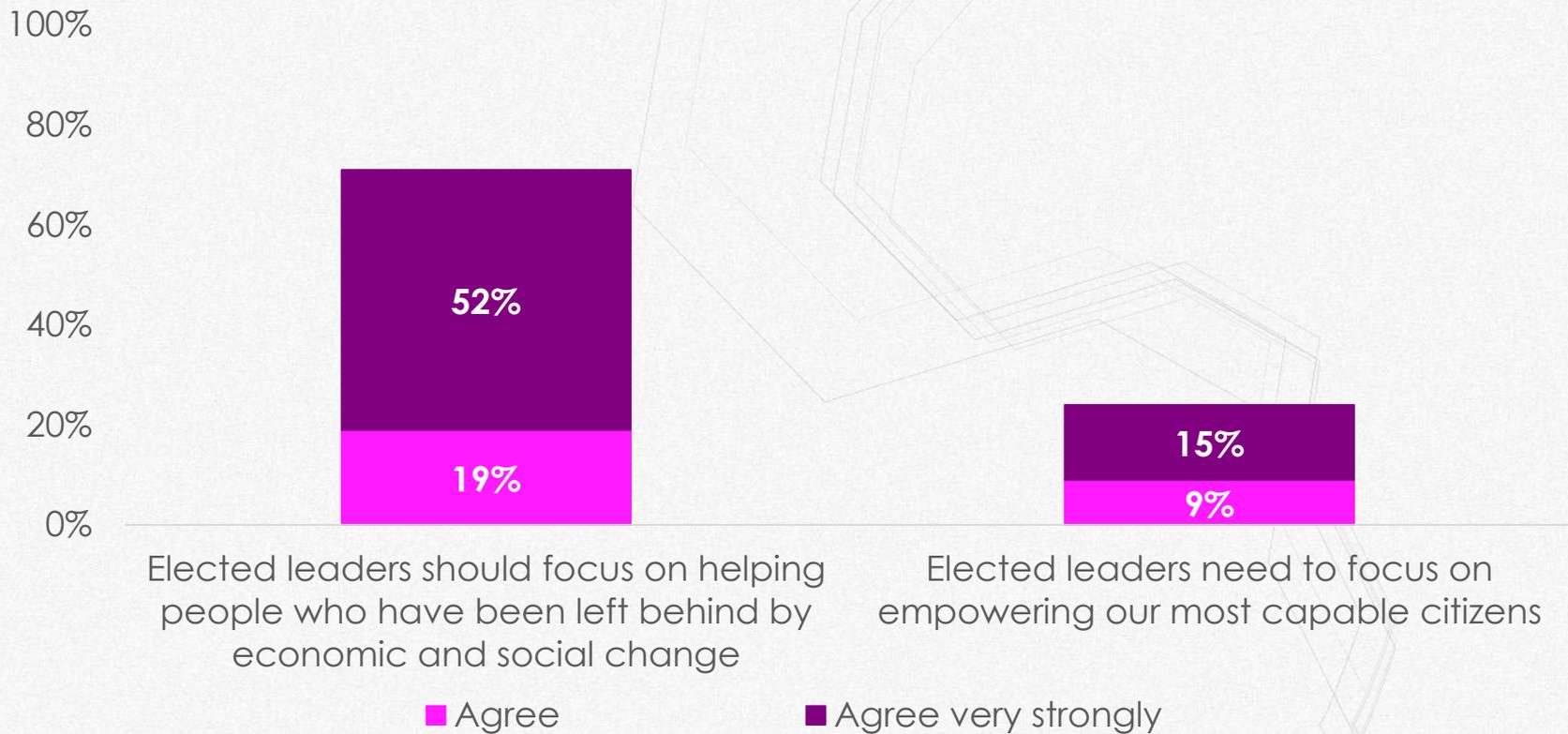
# Accountable governance vs. efficient governance | Ghana | 2012-2019



- It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.
- It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.

**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with each statement)

# Leaders to empower the most capable citizens vs. helping the people left behind? | Ghana | 2019



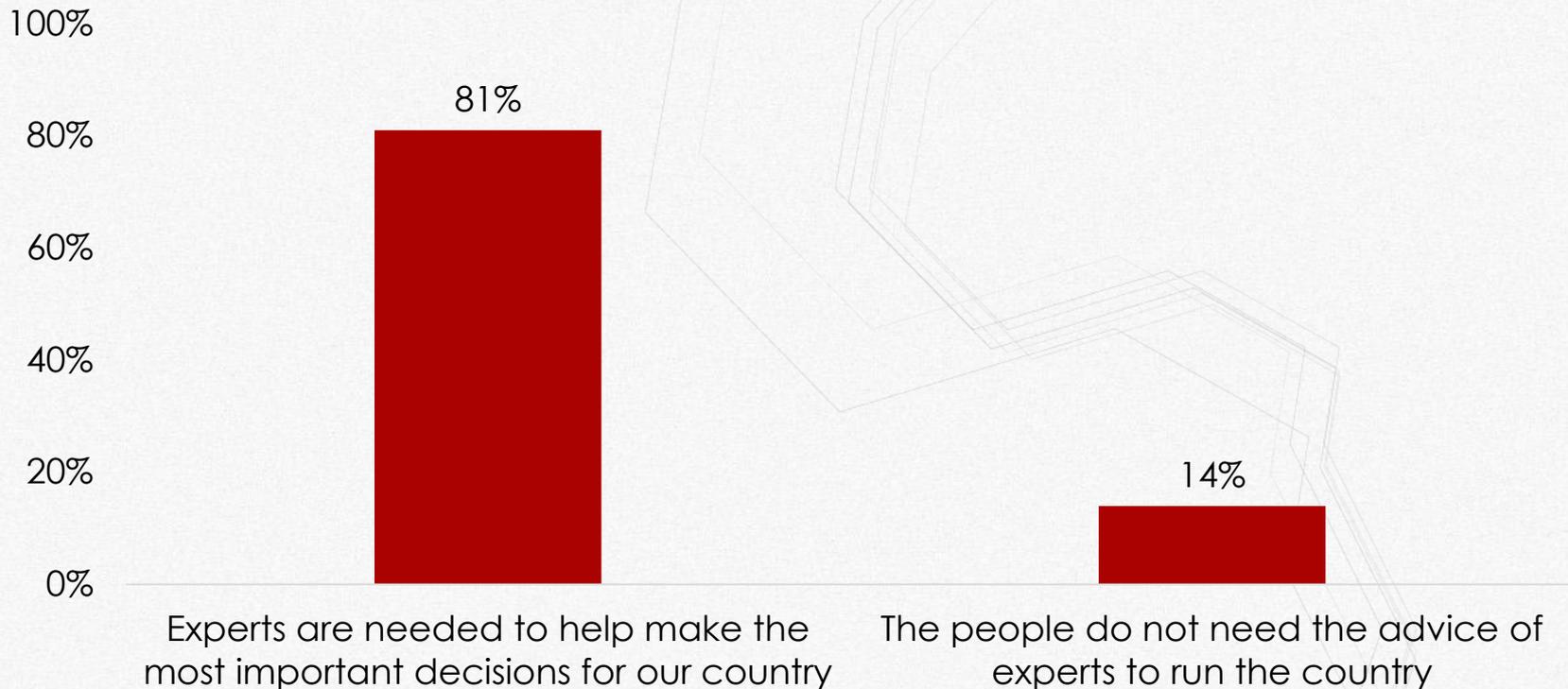
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Our elected leaders need to focus on empowering our most capable citizens.

Statement 2: Our elected leaders should focus on helping people who have been left behind by economic and social change.

# Experts needed to make important decisions?

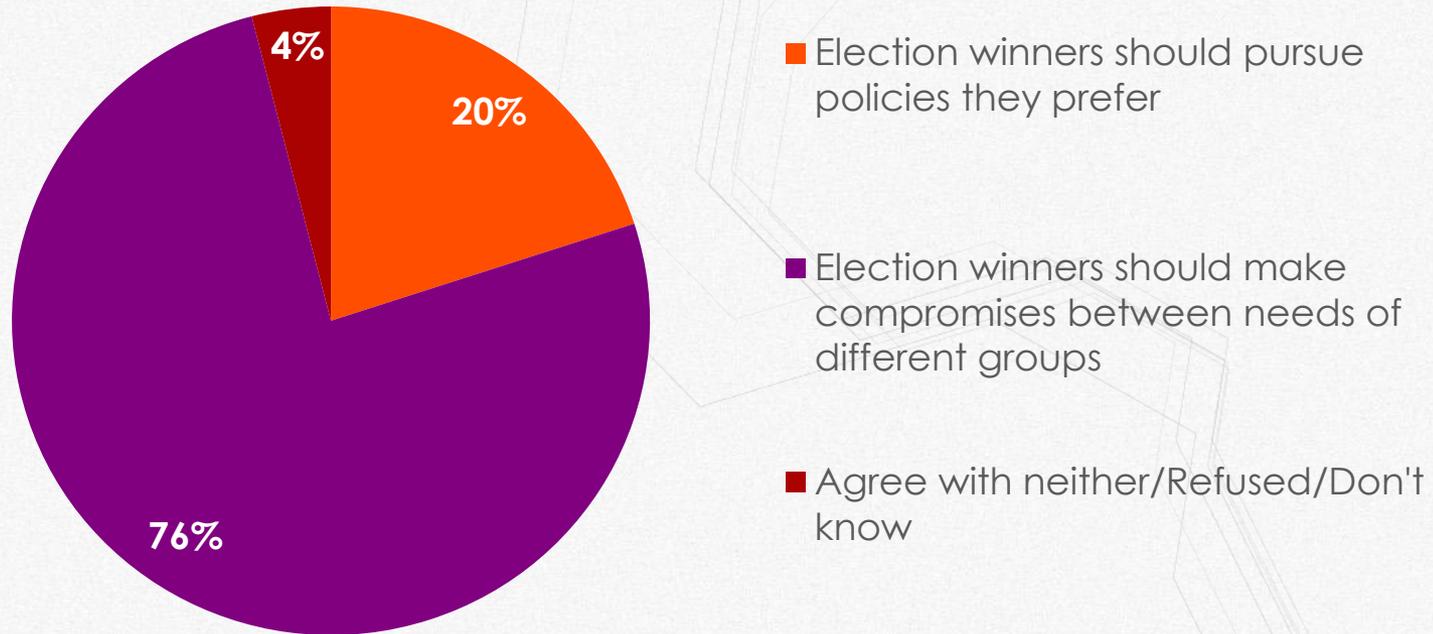
| Ghana | 2019



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

Statement 1: Experts with specialized education or skills are needed to help make the most important decisions for our country. Statement 2: The people and their elected representatives know what is best; they do not need the advice of experts to run the country. (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with each statement)

# Should election winners pursue their preferred policies or compromise with others? | Ghana | 2019



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

*Statement 1: Whichever party or group wins elections should be able to pursue the policies they prefer, without needing to compromise with others.*

*Statement 2: In a democracy, it is important to make compromises between the preferences and needs of different groups.*

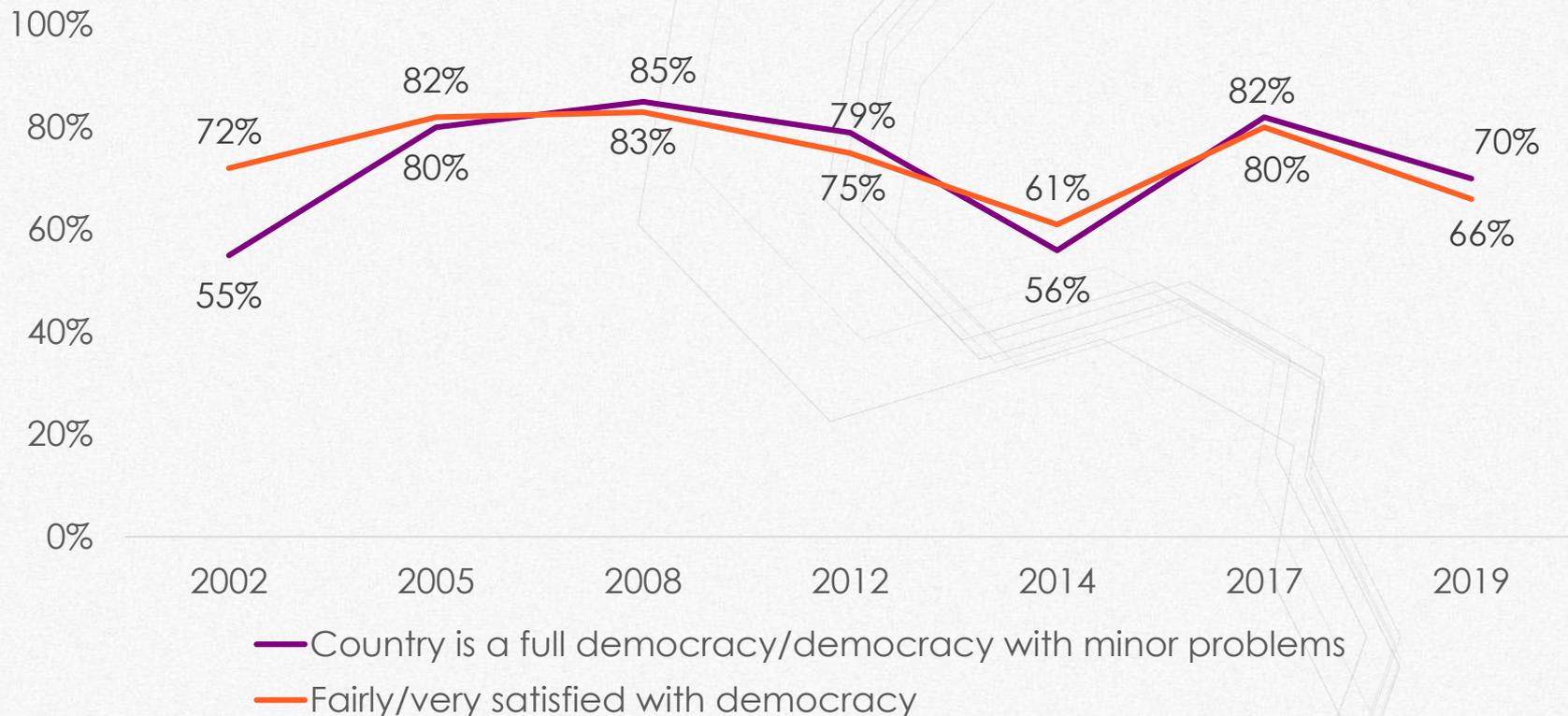
# Perceived supply of democratic governance

# Key findings

- Two-thirds (66%) of Ghanaians are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy works in the country, a 14-percentage-point decline compared to 2017.
- Likewise, the proportion of citizens who describe the country as a “full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems” has decreased by 12 percentage points since 2017.
- A majority (57%) say competition among parties often or always leads to violent conflict.
- Only about one in five say the president often or always ignores the court or Parliament.
- Large majorities say members of Parliament and local government councillors “never” or “only sometimes” listen to what ordinary people have to say.

# Extent of and satisfaction with democracy

| Ghana | 2002-2019

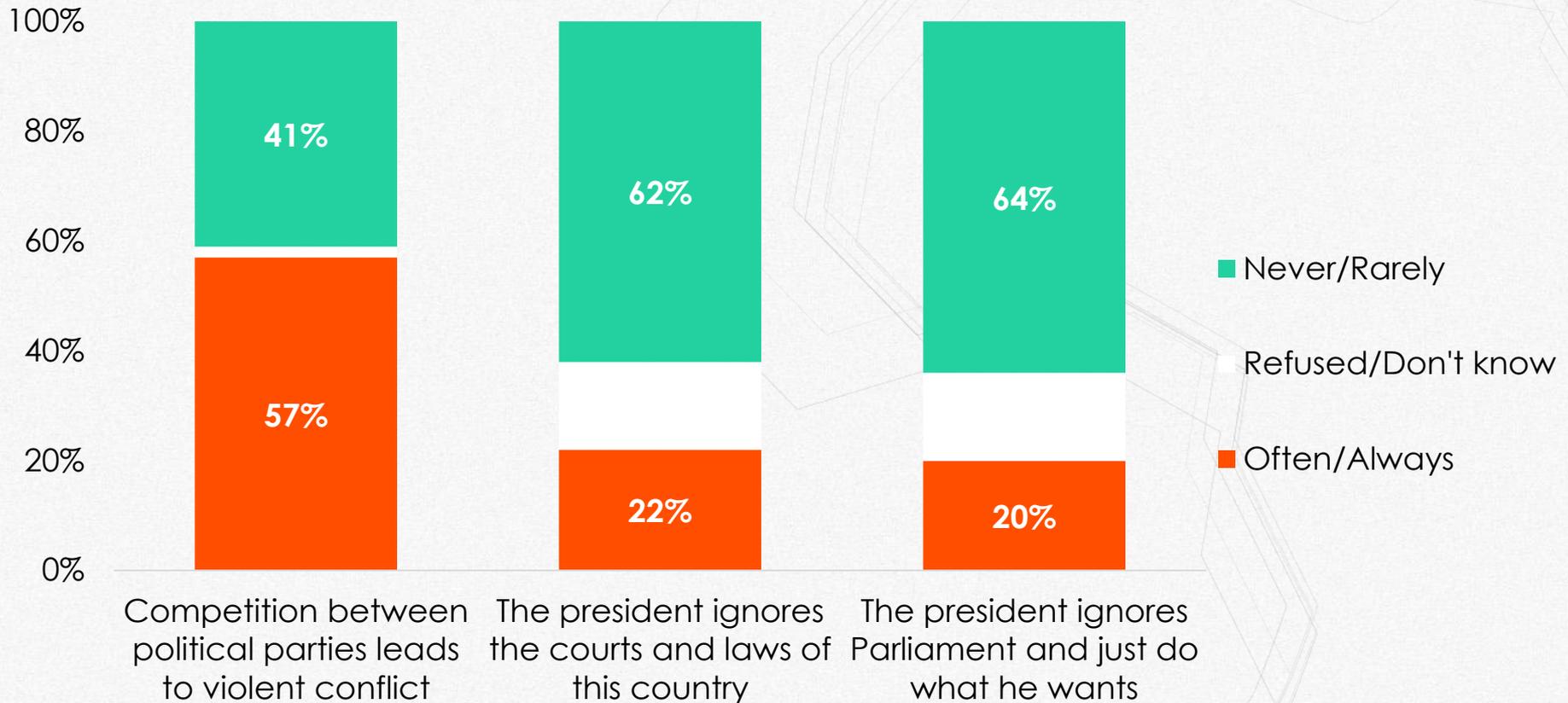


## Respondents were asked:

- In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Ghana today? (% who say "full democracy" or "democracy with minor problems")

- Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Ghana? (% who say "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied")

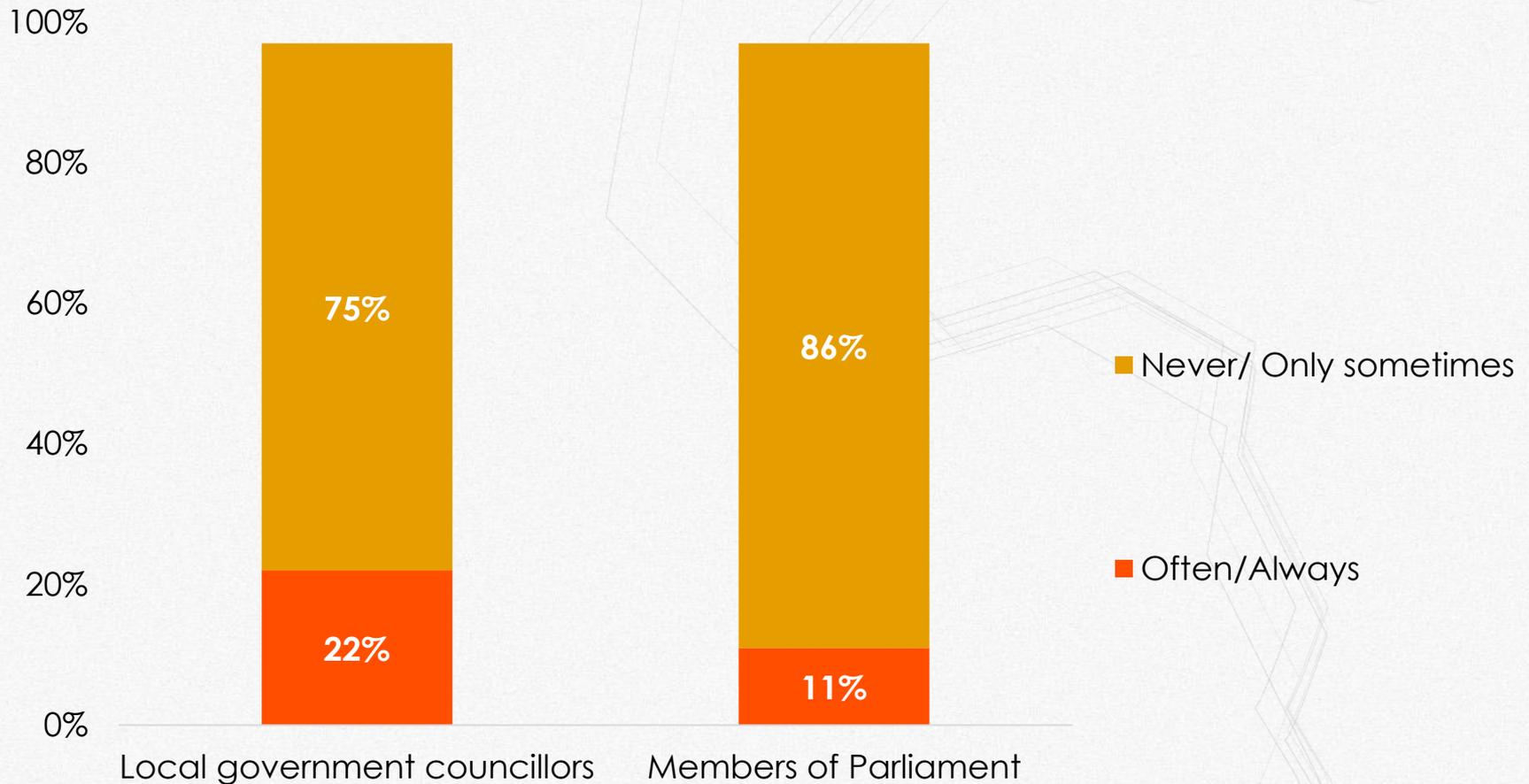
# Supply of democracy | Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often, in this country:

- Does competition between political parties lead to violent conflict?
- Does the president ignore the courts and laws of this country?
- Does the president ignore Parliament and just do what he wants?

# Do leaders listen? | Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say?

# Awareness of and preparations for December 2019 referendum

# Key findings

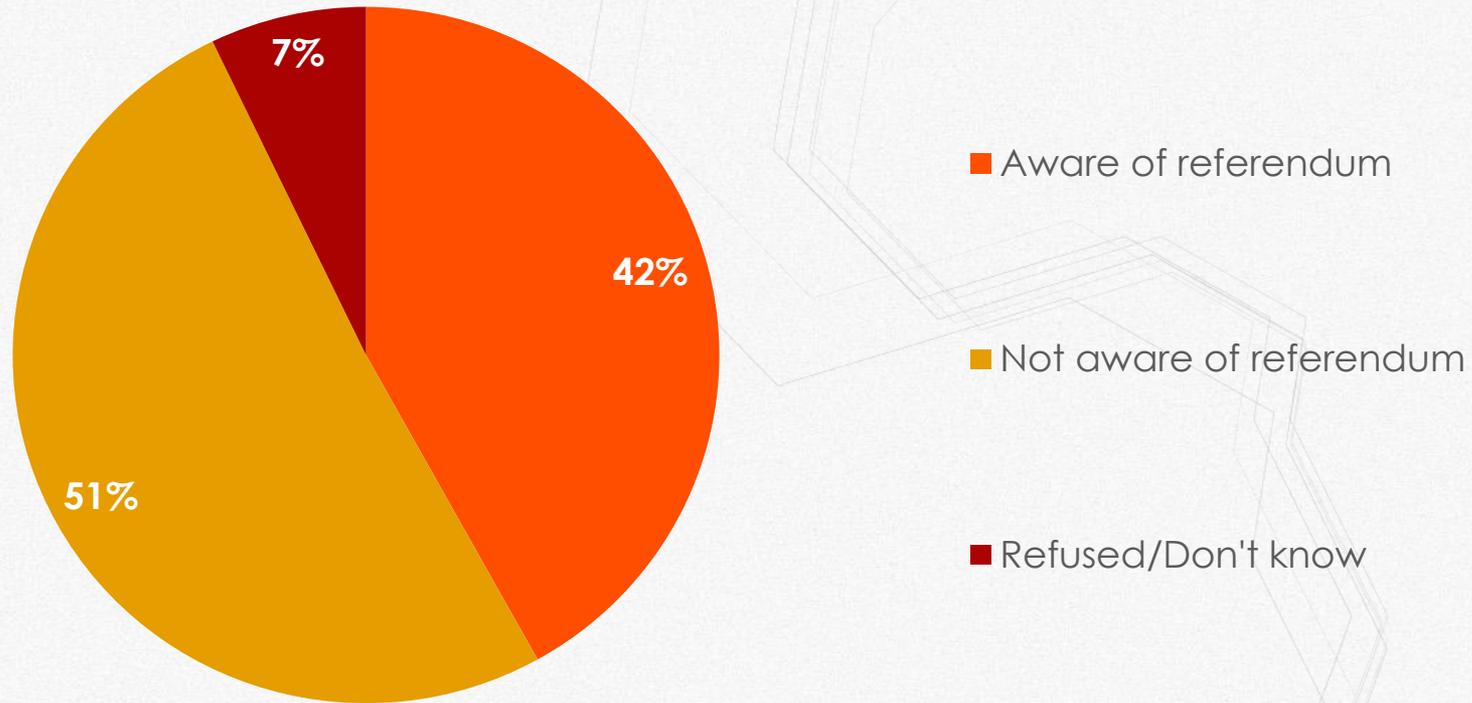
- Fewer than half (42%) of Ghanaians are aware of the December 2019 referendum on whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan.
- Awareness increases with respondents' level of education, reaching 62% among those with post-secondary education, compared to 35%-42%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

# Key findings

- Six in 10 Ghanaians (58%) say they are likely to vote in the December 2019 referendum.
  - A significant minority are either not likely to vote (29%) or are say they “don’t know.”
- Men and rural residents (65% each) are significantly more likely to say they will vote than women and urban residents (52% each).

# Awareness of the 2019 referendum

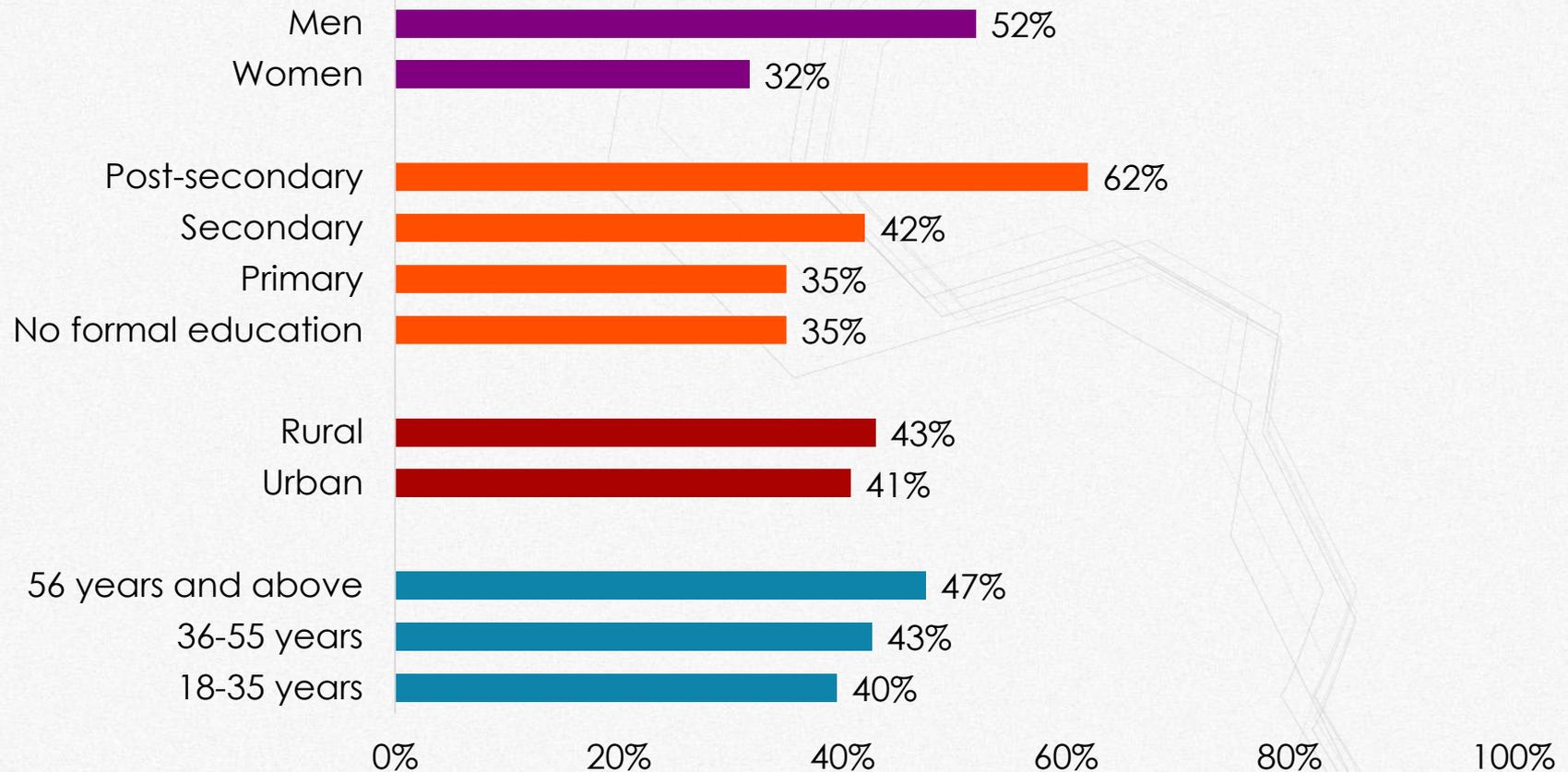
| Ghana | 2019



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

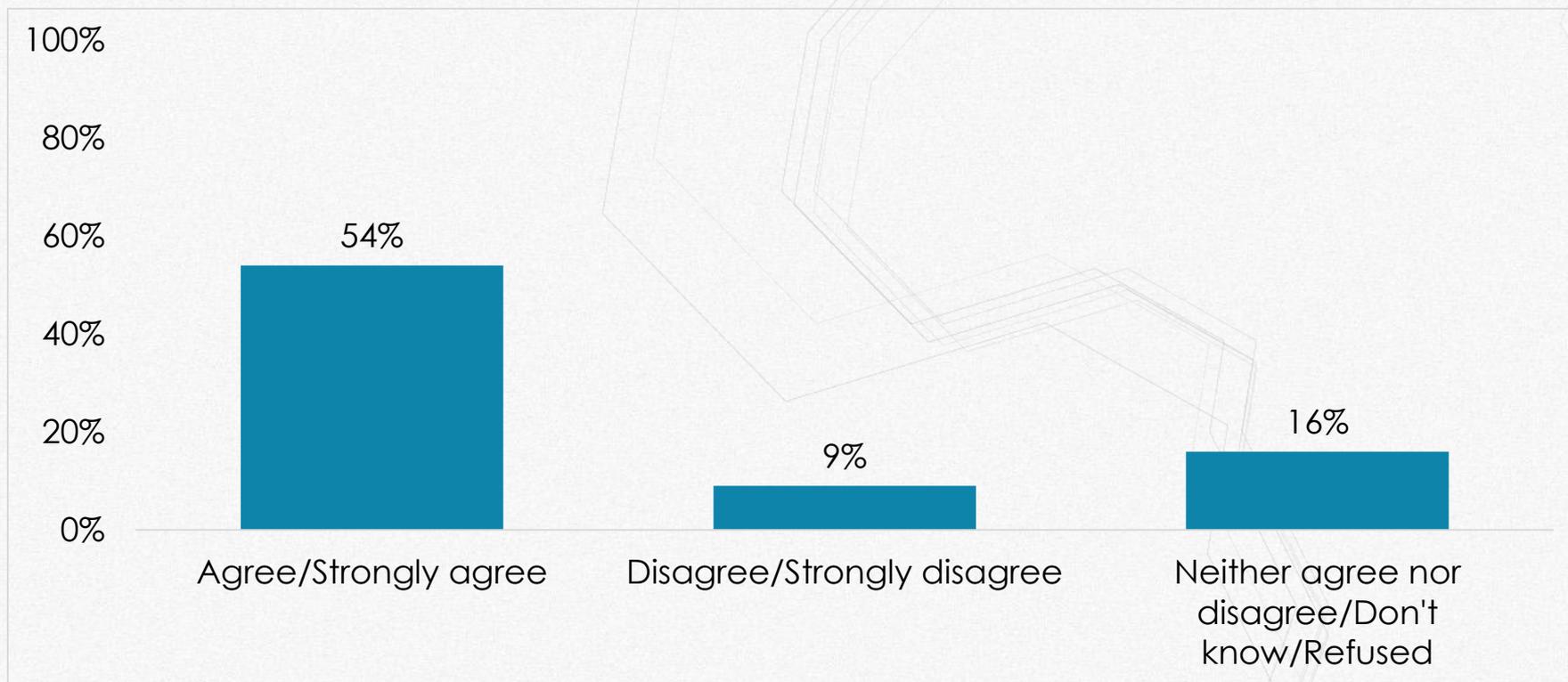
# Awareness of the 2019 referendum

| by socio-demographic group | Ghana | 2019



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

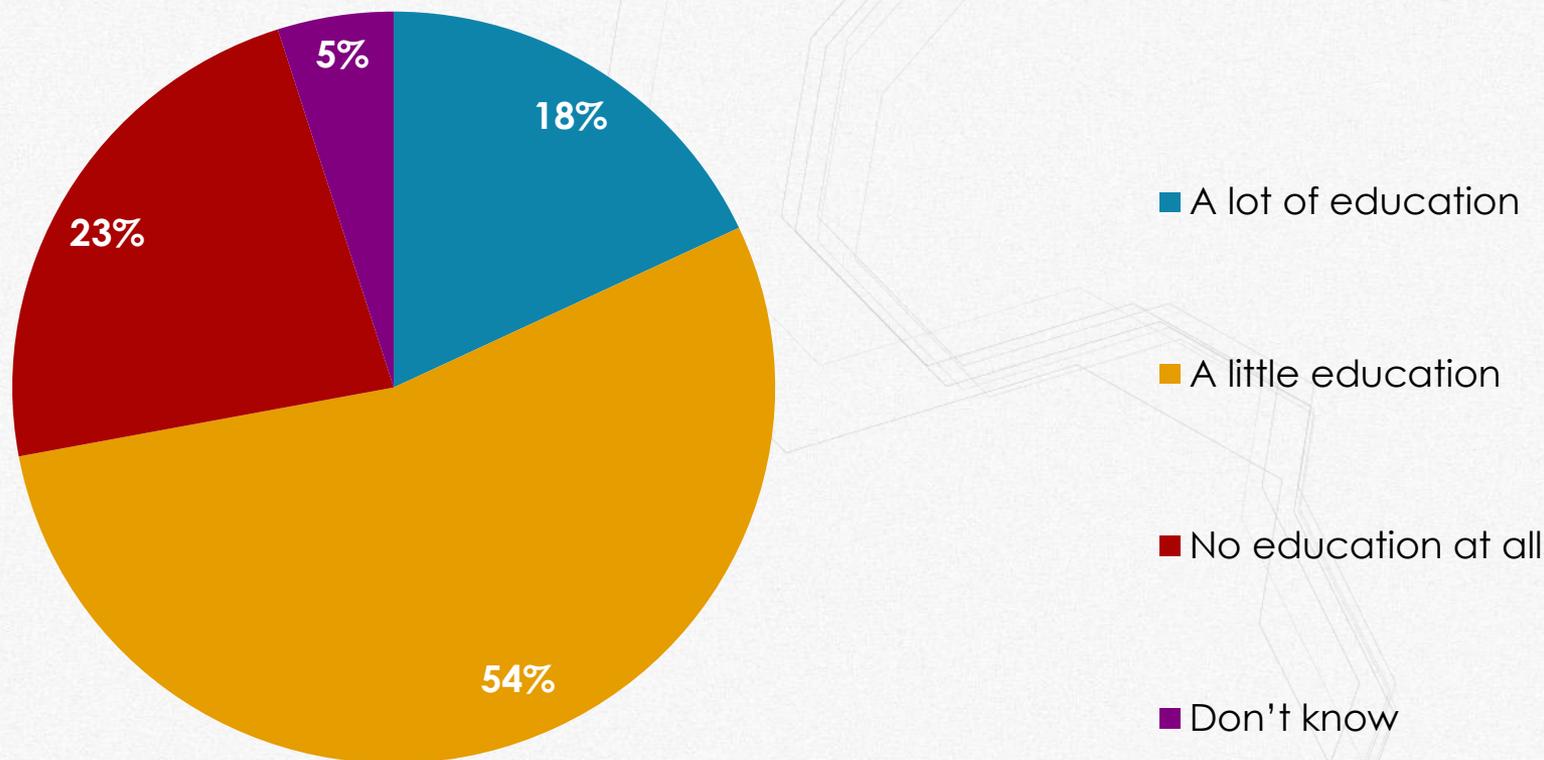
# Electoral Commission's preparations for December 2019 referendum has been satisfactory | Ghana | 2019



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

# Education on the December 2019 referendum

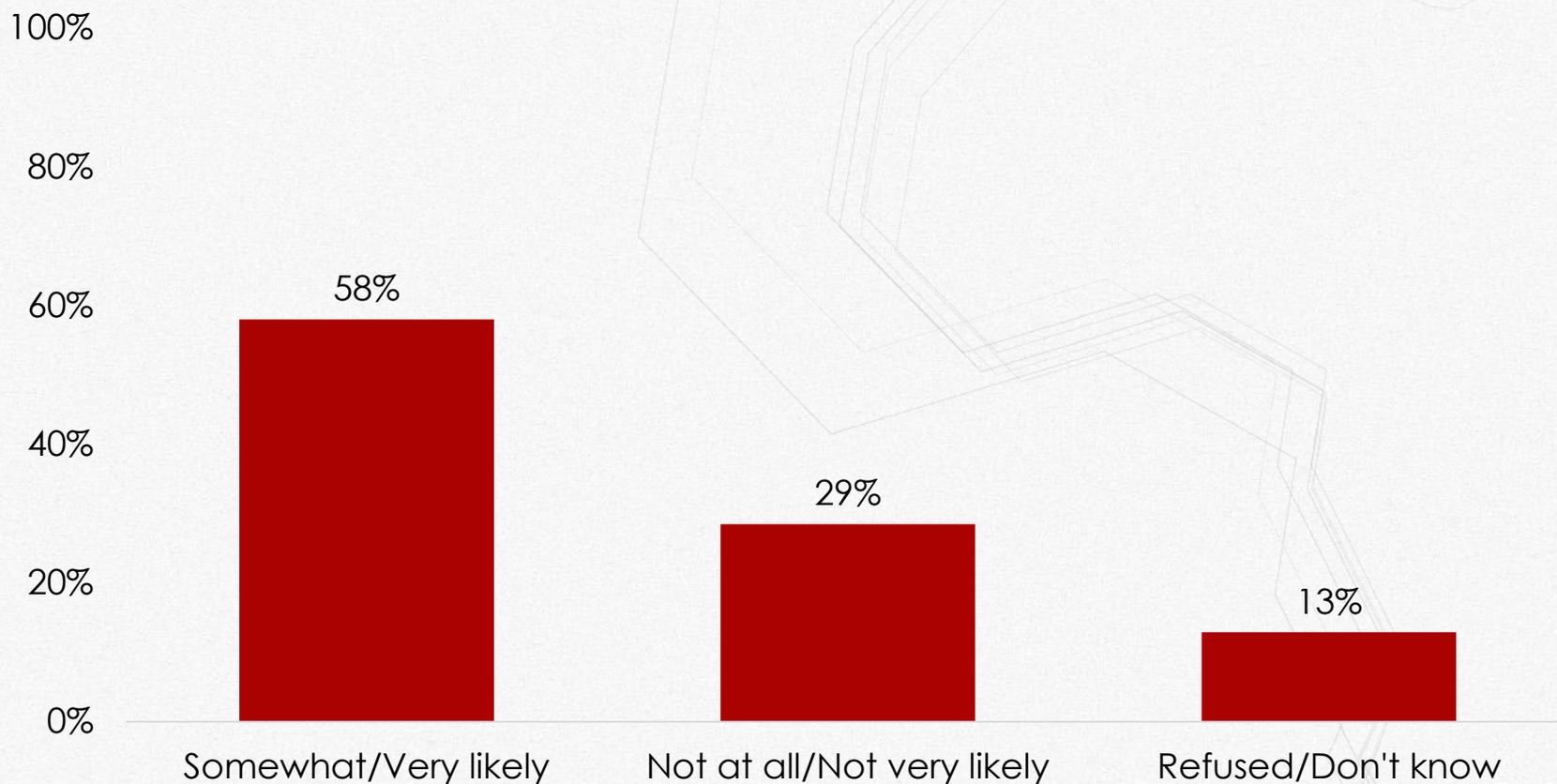
| Ghana | 2019



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

# Will vote in December 2019 referendum

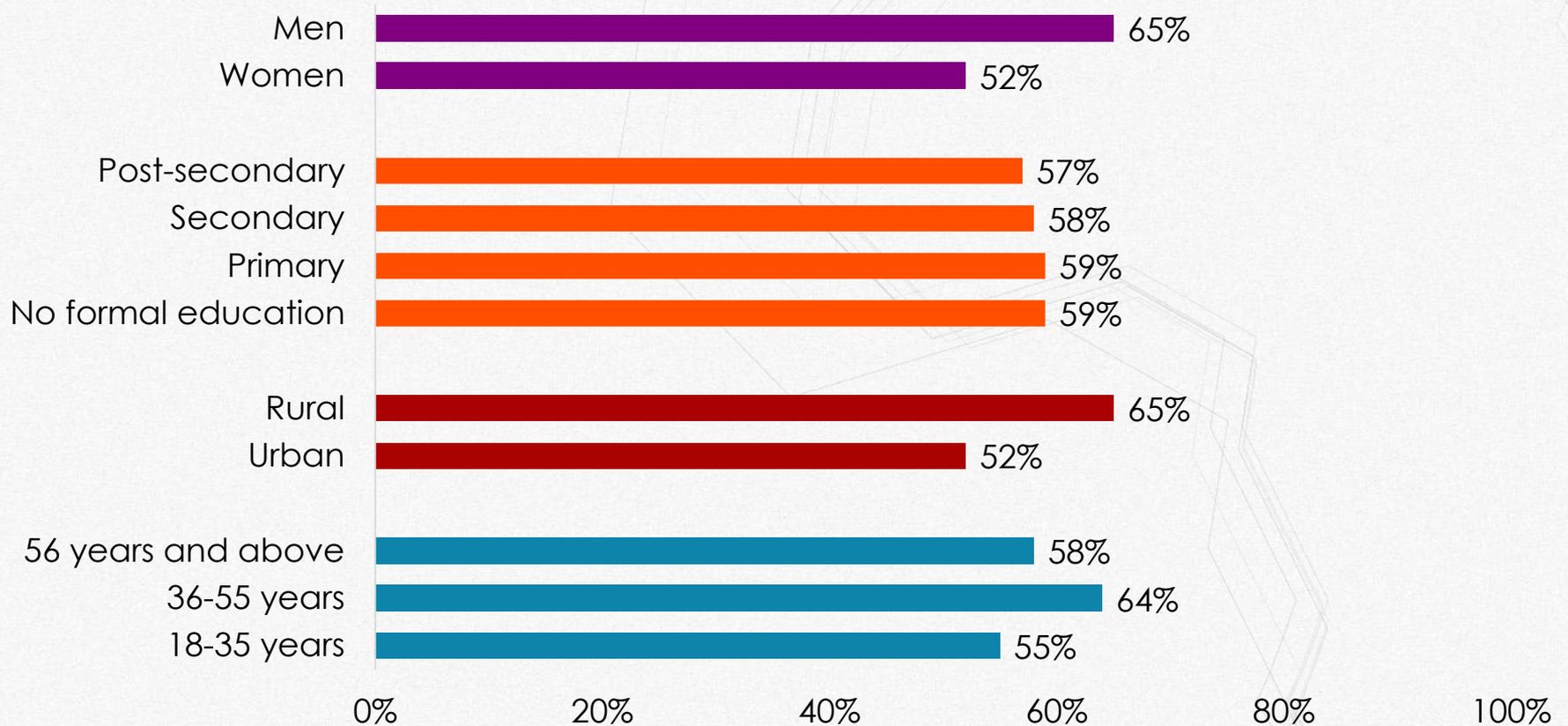
| Ghana | 2019



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

# Who is likely to vote in December 2019 referendum?

| by socio-demographic group | Ghana | 2019



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

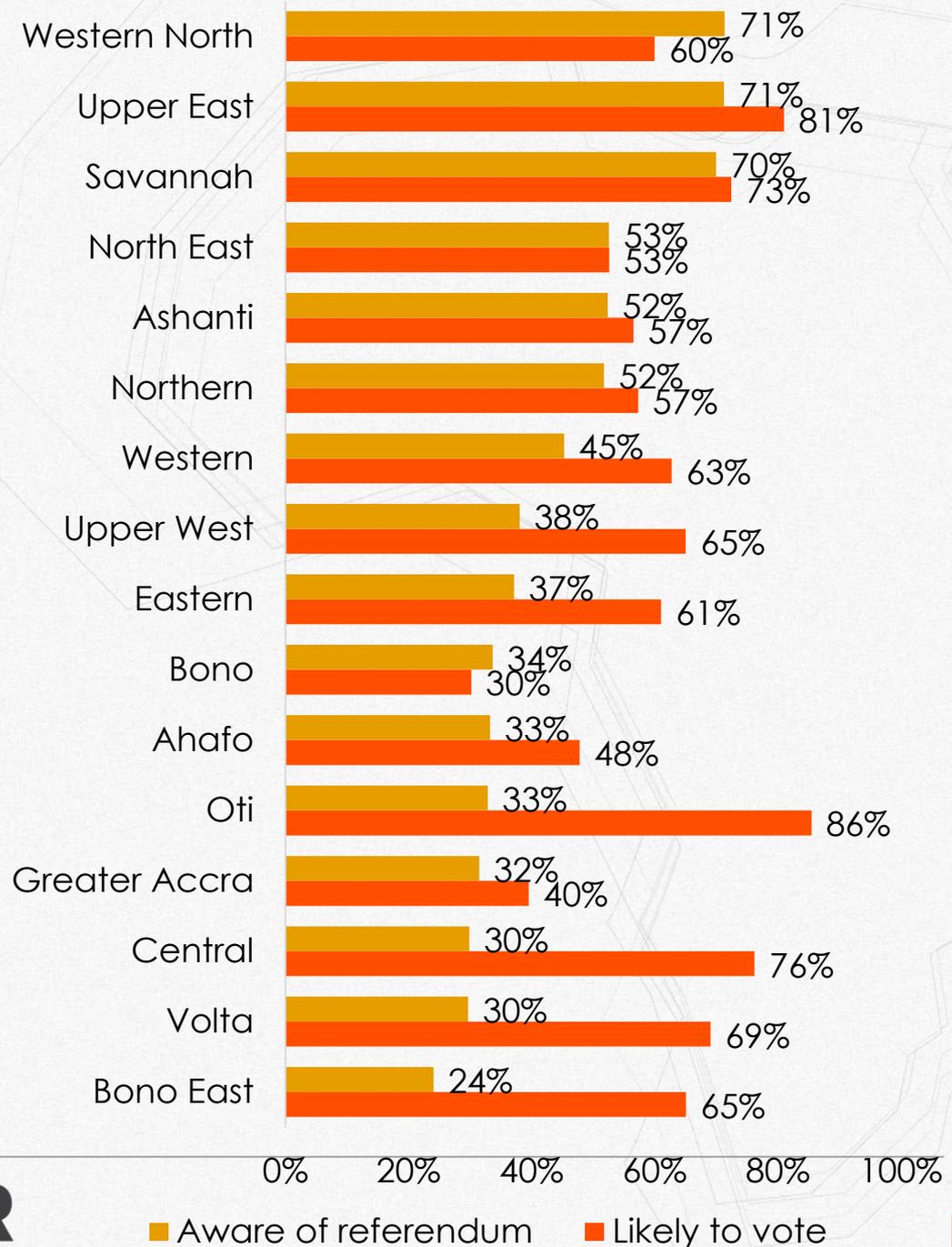
# Awareness and likelihood of voting in December 2019 referendum

| by region | Ghana  
| 2019

## Respondents were asked:

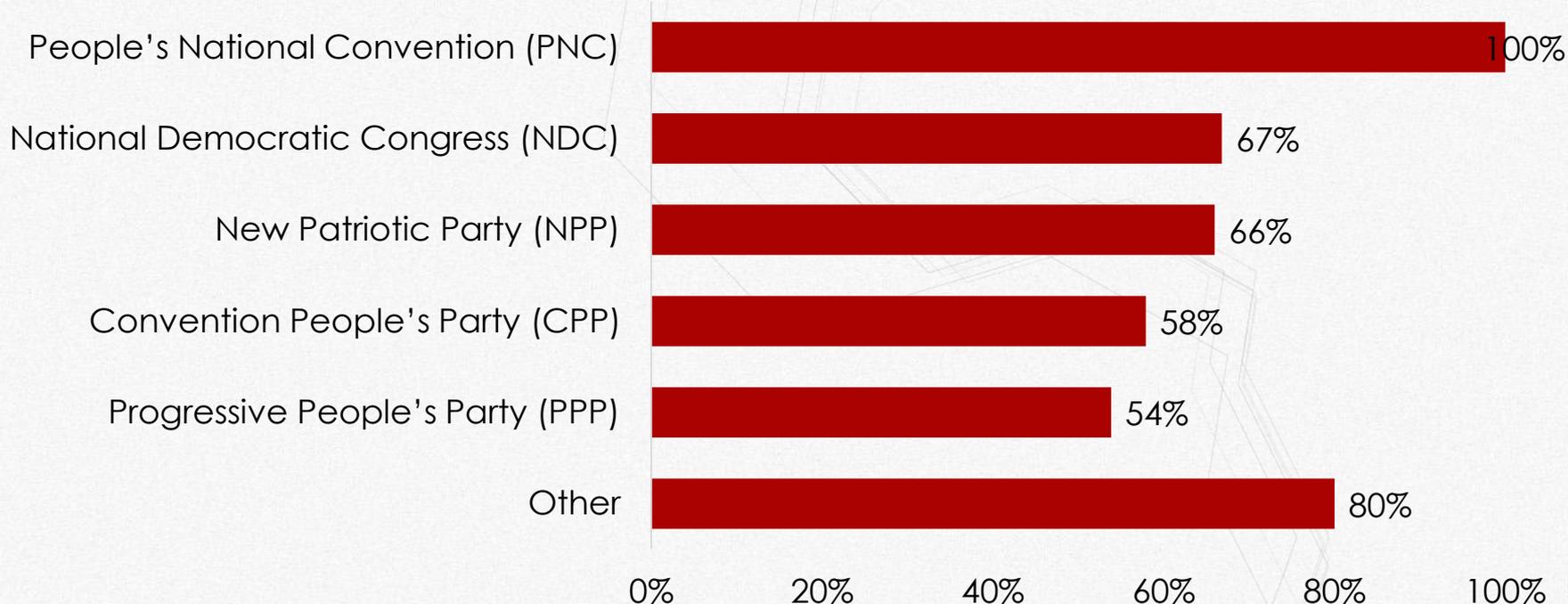
Are you aware of the December 2019 referendum to determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan? (% "yes")

How likely or not is it that you will vote in the December 2019 referendum that will determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan? (% who say they are "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to vote)



# Likelihood of voting in December 2019 referendum

## | by party affiliation | Ghana | 2019



### Respondents were asked:

- How likely or not is it that you will vote in the December 2019 referendum that will determine whether local government elections should be made partisan or remain non-partisan? (% who say they are "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to vote)

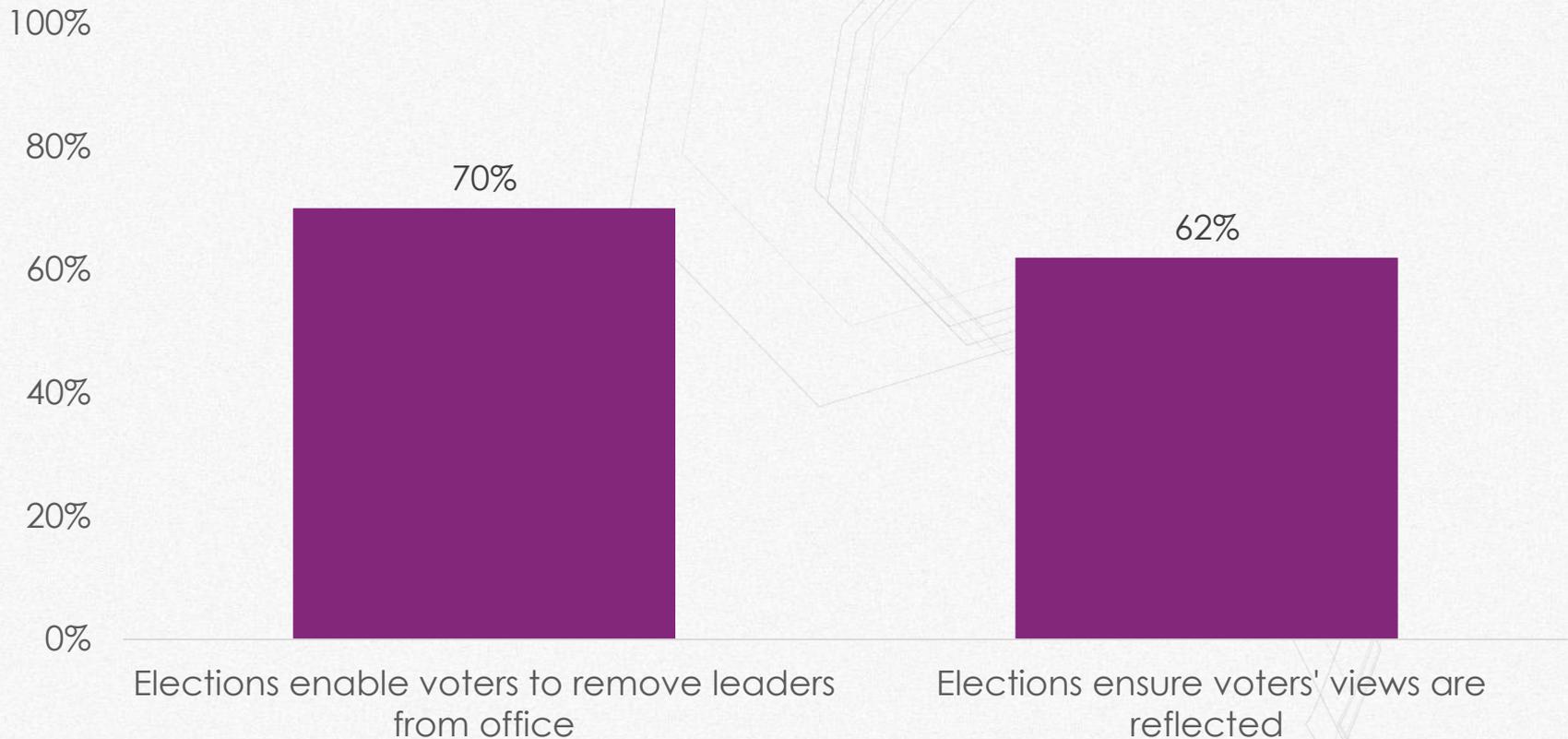
- Do you feel close to any particular political party? [If "yes":] Which party is that?

# Views on election administration

# Key findings

- A slim majority (55%) of Ghanaians say the Electoral Commission is fair to all political parties.
- Six in 10 (61%) say the limited voter-registration exercise was “fairly well” or “very well” organized by the Electoral Commission.
- Three-quarters (77%) say it is not likely that powerful people can find out who one voted for.
- Regarding the 2016 elections, eight in 10 Ghanaians (80%) say the results announced by the Electoral Commission accurately reflected the actual results as counted.
  - Seven in 10 (69%) say the media provided fair coverage of all parties.
  - About one in 10 say police or soldiers assisted people to cast their votes (14%); candidates offered food, money, or gifts for votes (11%); and security forces and political parties intimidated voters (7%).

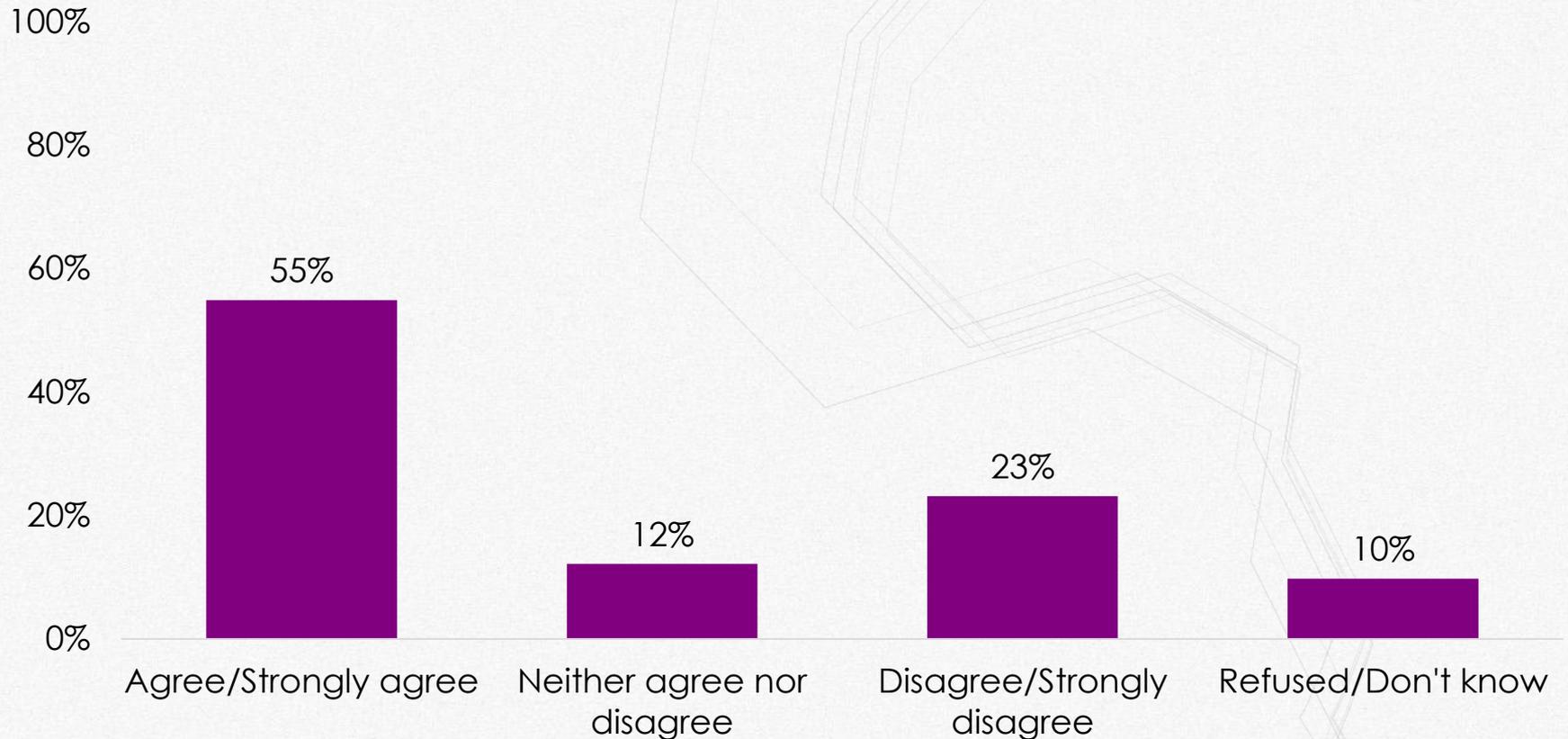
# Efficacy of Ghana's elections | Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** Think about how elections work in practice in this country. How well do elections: Ensure that representatives to Parliament reflect the views of voters? Enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want? (% who say “well” or “very well”)

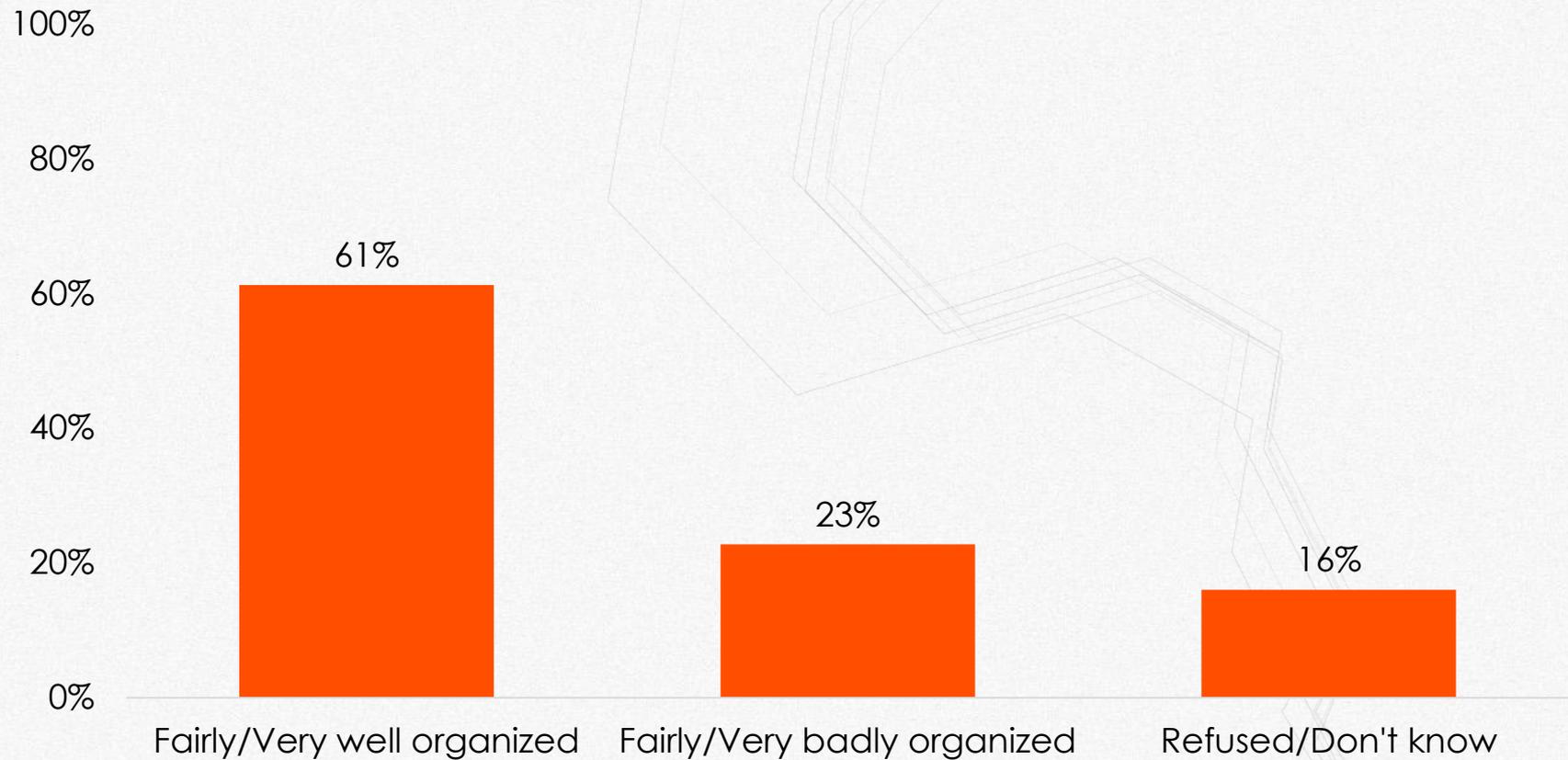
# Electoral Commission fair to all political parties

## | Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: *The Electoral Commission has always remained fair to all political parties, even with changes in leadership.*

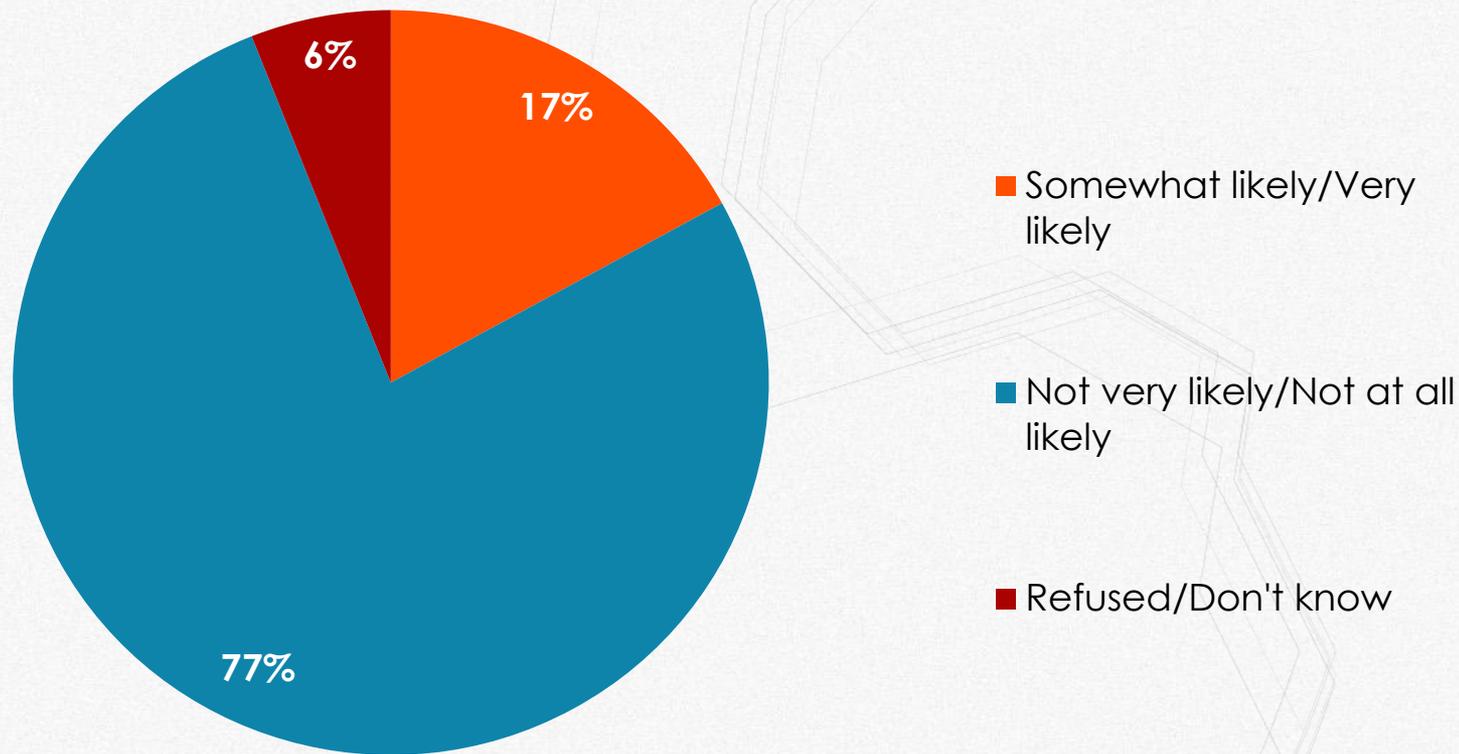
# Views on Electoral Commission's organization of the limited voter-registration exercise | Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** *The Electoral Commission recently carried out a limited voter-registration exercise. In your opinion, would you say the exercise was well or badly organized, or have you not heard enough to say?*

# Powerful people likely to find out how one voted

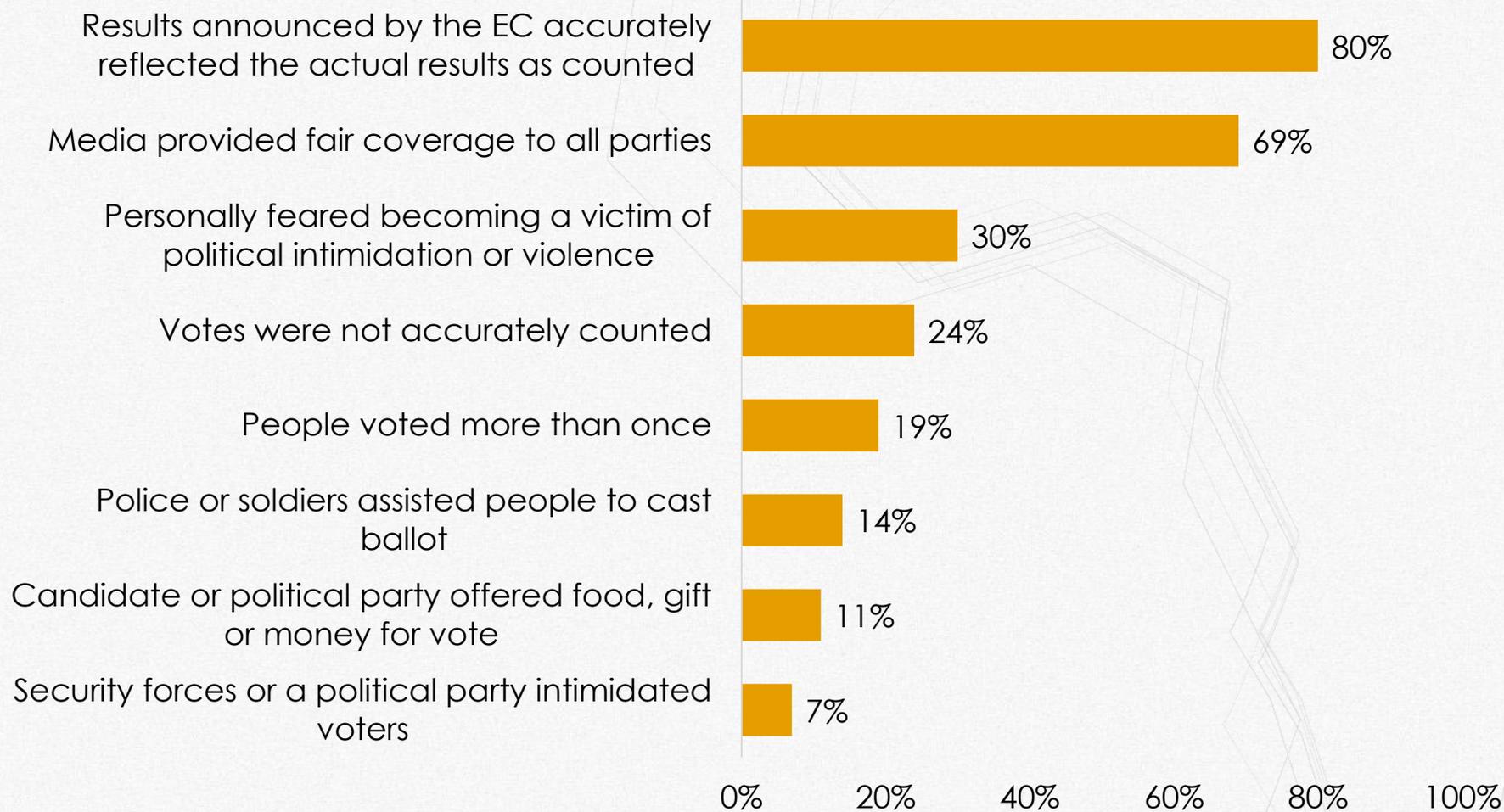
| Ghana | 2019



**Respondents were asked:** 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?

# Citizens' opinion on 2016 elections

| Ghana | 2019



### **Respondents were asked:**

- During the last national election campaign in 2016, how often did the media provide fair coverage of all candidates? (% who say “sometimes,” “always” or “often”)
- During the last national election in 2016, 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? (% who say “often,” “several times,” or “once or twice”)
- In the last national election in 2016, how often did each of the following things happen?
  - People’s votes were not accurately counted or not fairly reflected in the results? (% who say “often” or “sometimes”)
  - People voted more than once? (% who say “often” or “sometimes”)
- During the last national election campaign in 2016, how much did you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence? (% who say “a lot,” “somewhat,” or “a little bit”)
- During the last national election in 2016, did you witness:
  - Police or soldiers, rather than election officials, assisting some people to cast their ballot?
  - Anyone from the security forces or a political party trying to intimidate voters?
- With regard to the last national election in 2016, to what extent do you think the results announced by the Electoral Commission accurately reflected the actual results as counted? (% who say “completely accurate” or “mostly accurate, but with some minor discrepancies”)



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