

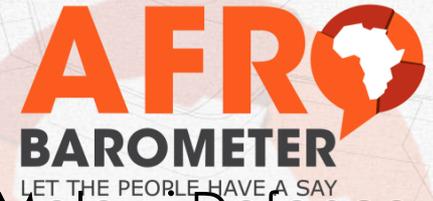


# State of the nation: Malawians' reflections on political governance

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 7 survey in Malawi

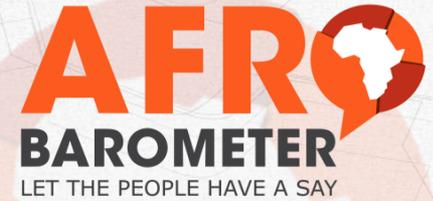


# At a glance



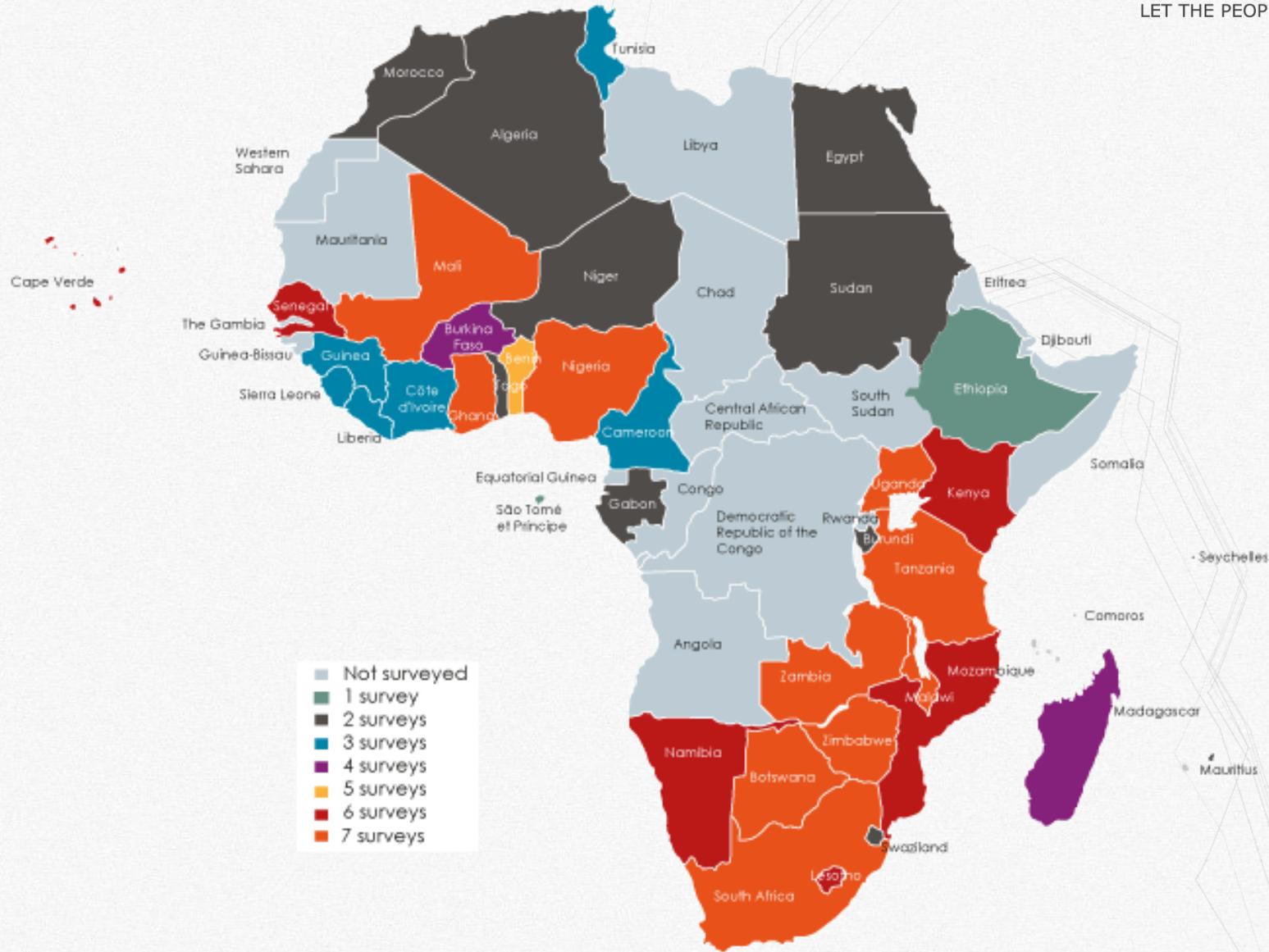
- **Trust:** Most Malawians trust religious leaders and the Malawi Defence Force, but only about one in three trust the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), the ruling party, or the president.
- **Democracy and freedoms:** A majority of Malawians say their country is “not a democracy” or “a democracy with major problems.”
- **Government performance:** Only one-third of respondents say they approve of the job performance of their MP, councilor, president, and mayor. More than half say the government is performing badly on 13 of 16 policy issues that the survey asked about.
- **Party politics:** If presidential elections were held during the time of the survey, 32% of Malawians say they would vote for the MCP candidate, 27% for the DPP, 11% for the UDF, and 7% for the PP.
- **Overall direction of the country:** An overwhelming majority of Malawians, regardless of party affiliation, say the country is “going in the wrong direction.”

# What is Afrobarometer?

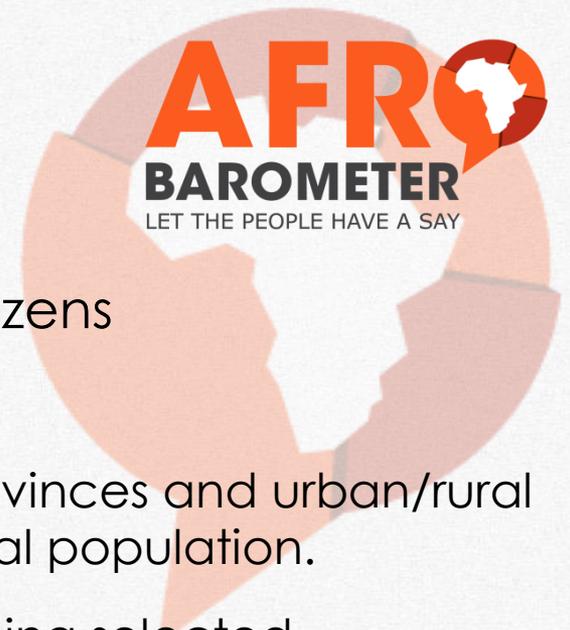


- A pan-African, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Started in 12 African countries in 1999, expanded to 36 countries in Round 6 (2014/2015). Round 7 surveys are being conducted in 2016/2017.
- **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 Malawi, the Afrobarometer Round 7 survey was conducted by the Centre for Social Research at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi.

# Where Afrobarometer works



# 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 Malawi of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 7 in Malawi was conducted between 26 December 2016 and 6 January 2017.

# Survey demographics

Gender		%
	Men	50
	Women	50
Residence		
	Urban	16
	Rural	81
	Peri-urban	3
Education		
	No formal education	13
	Primary	58
	Secondary	24
	Post-secondary	4
Religion		
	Christian	72
	Muslim	12
	Other	16



# Findings



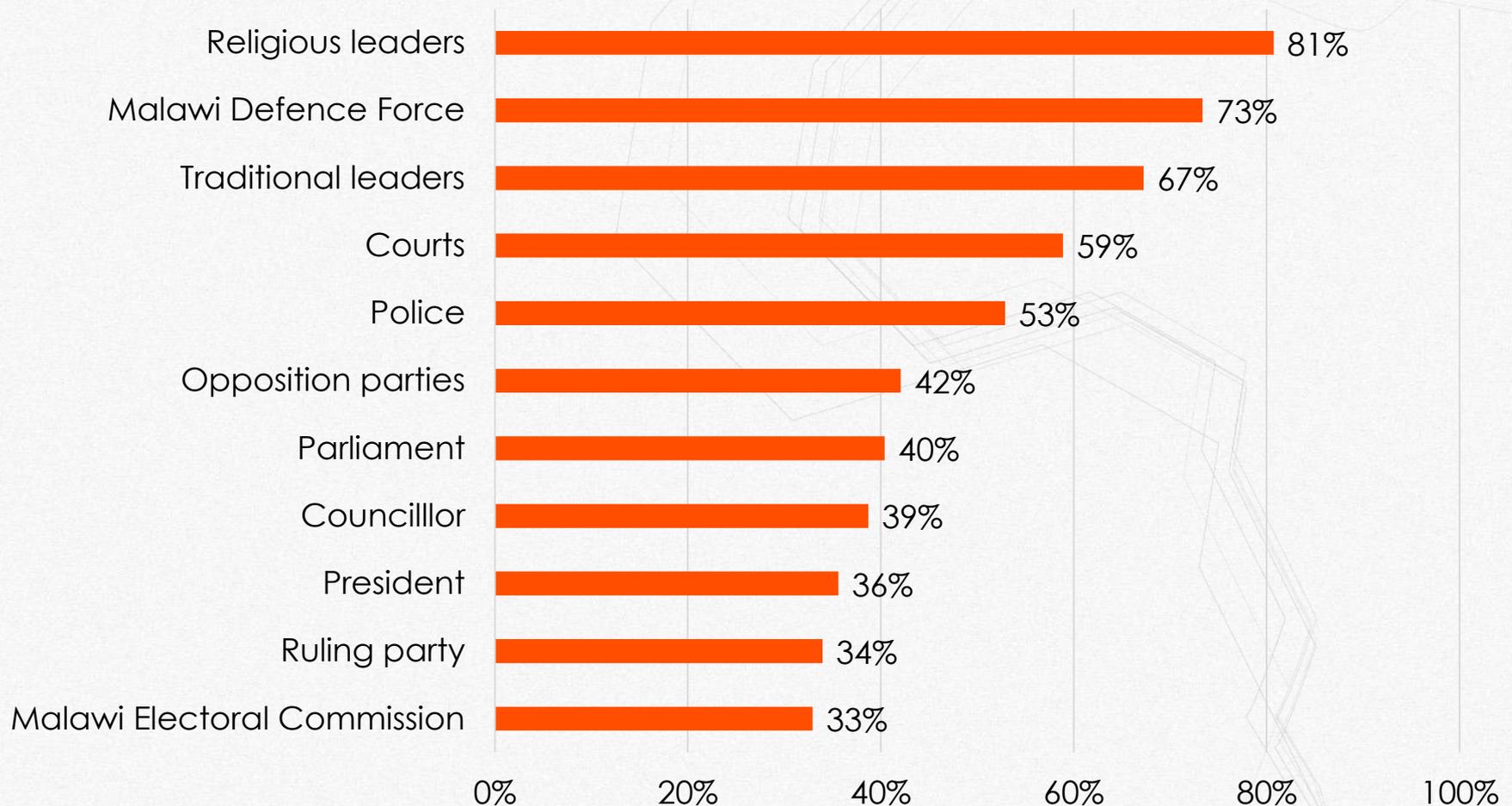
# Popular trust in officials

# Key findings



- Only about one-third of Malawians say they trust the president (36%), the ruling party (34%), and the Malawi Electoral Commission (33%) “somewhat” or “a lot.” But popular trust levels are high for religious leaders (81%), the Malawi Defence Force (73%), and traditional leaders (67%).
- Compared to 2014, popular trust in most of these leaders has declined – most dramatically trust in the MEC.

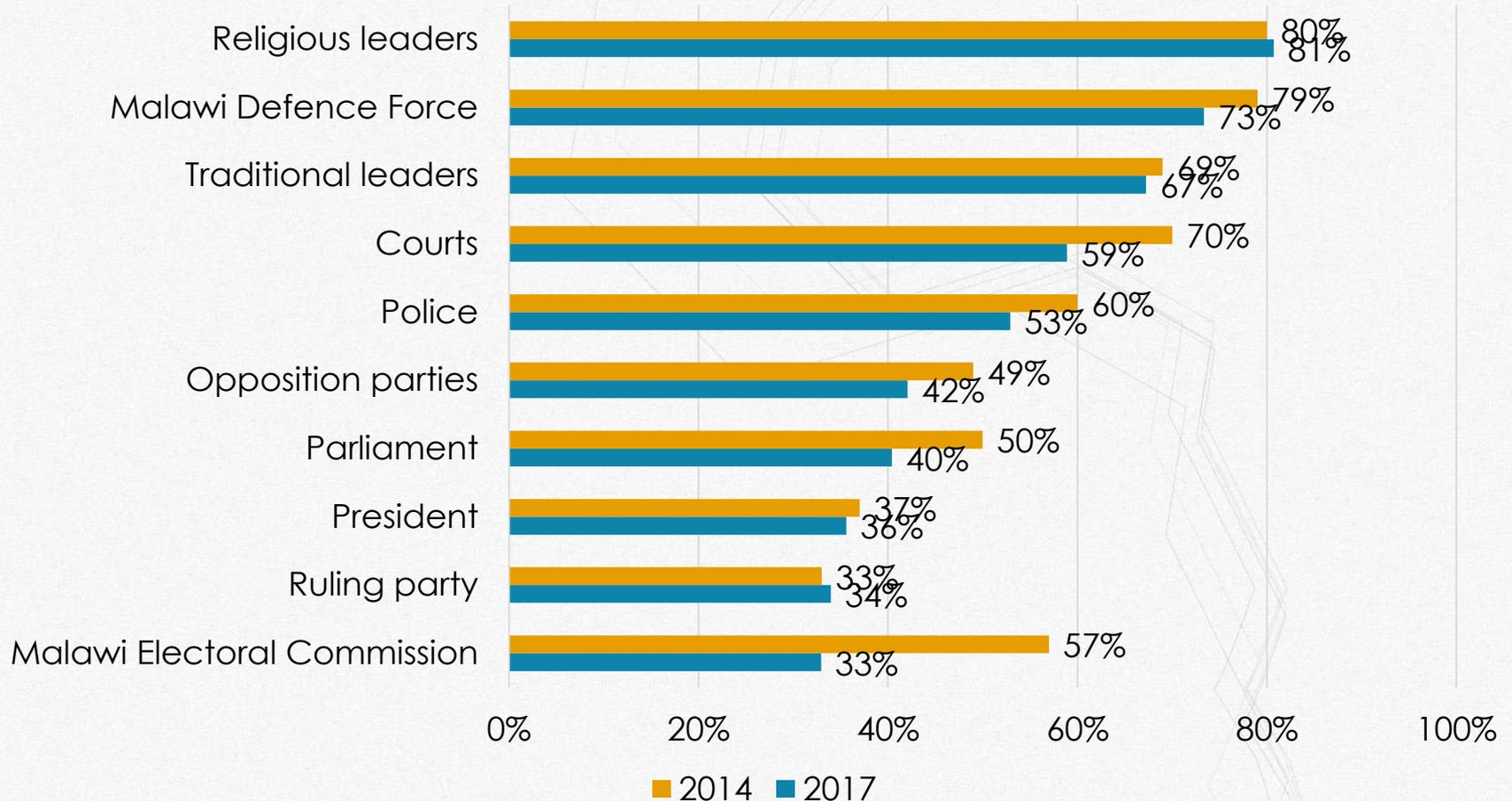
# Trust in public officials/institutions | Malawi | 2017



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

# Trust in public officials/institutions | Malawi

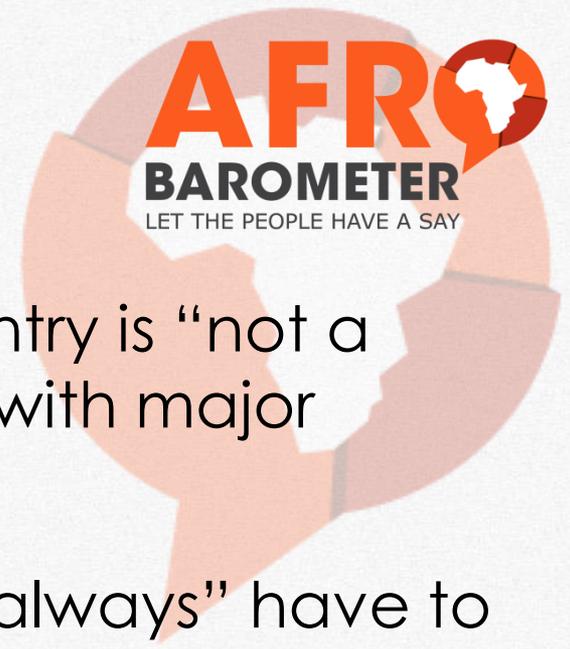
## | 2014-2017



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

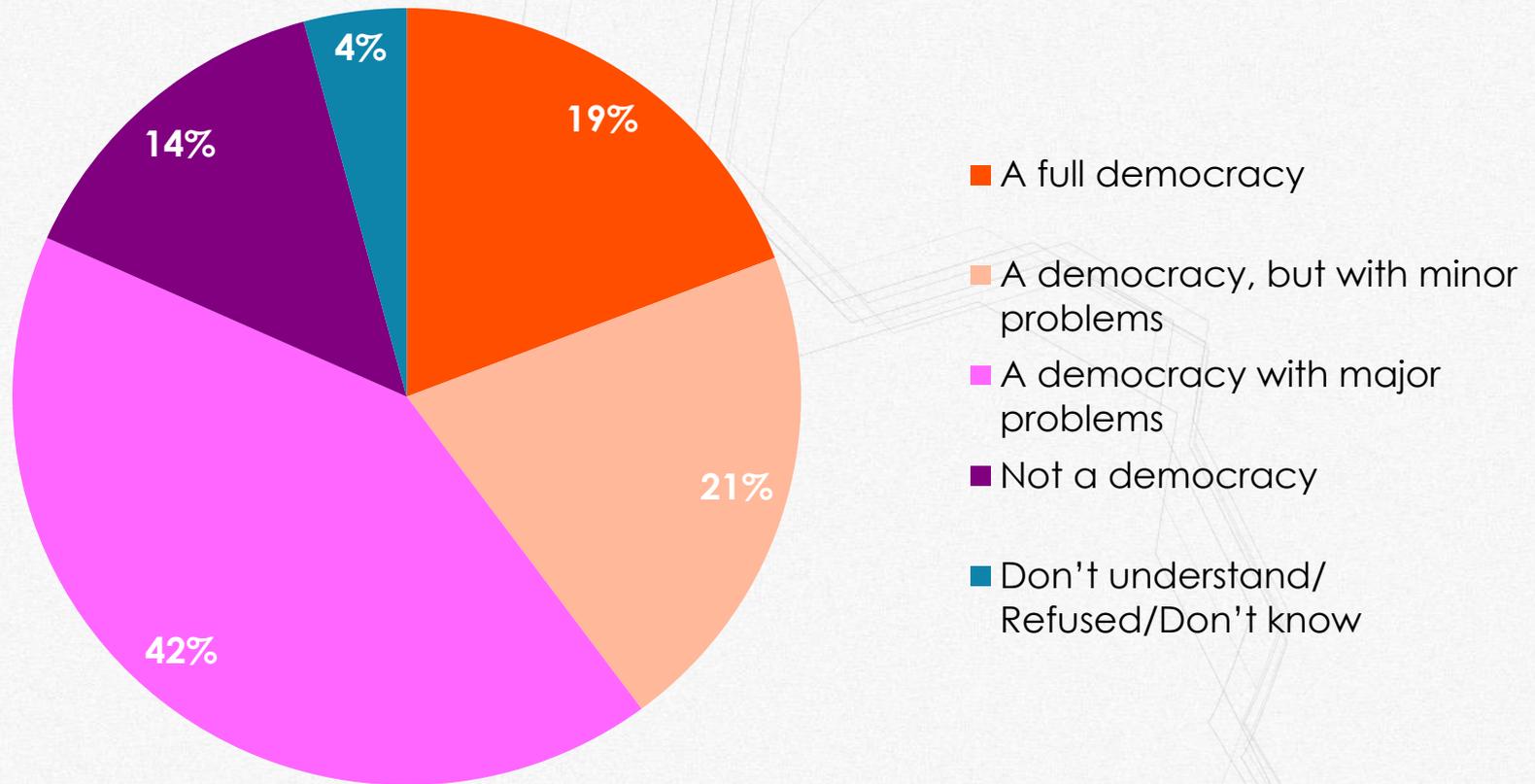
# State of democracy and freedoms

# Key findings



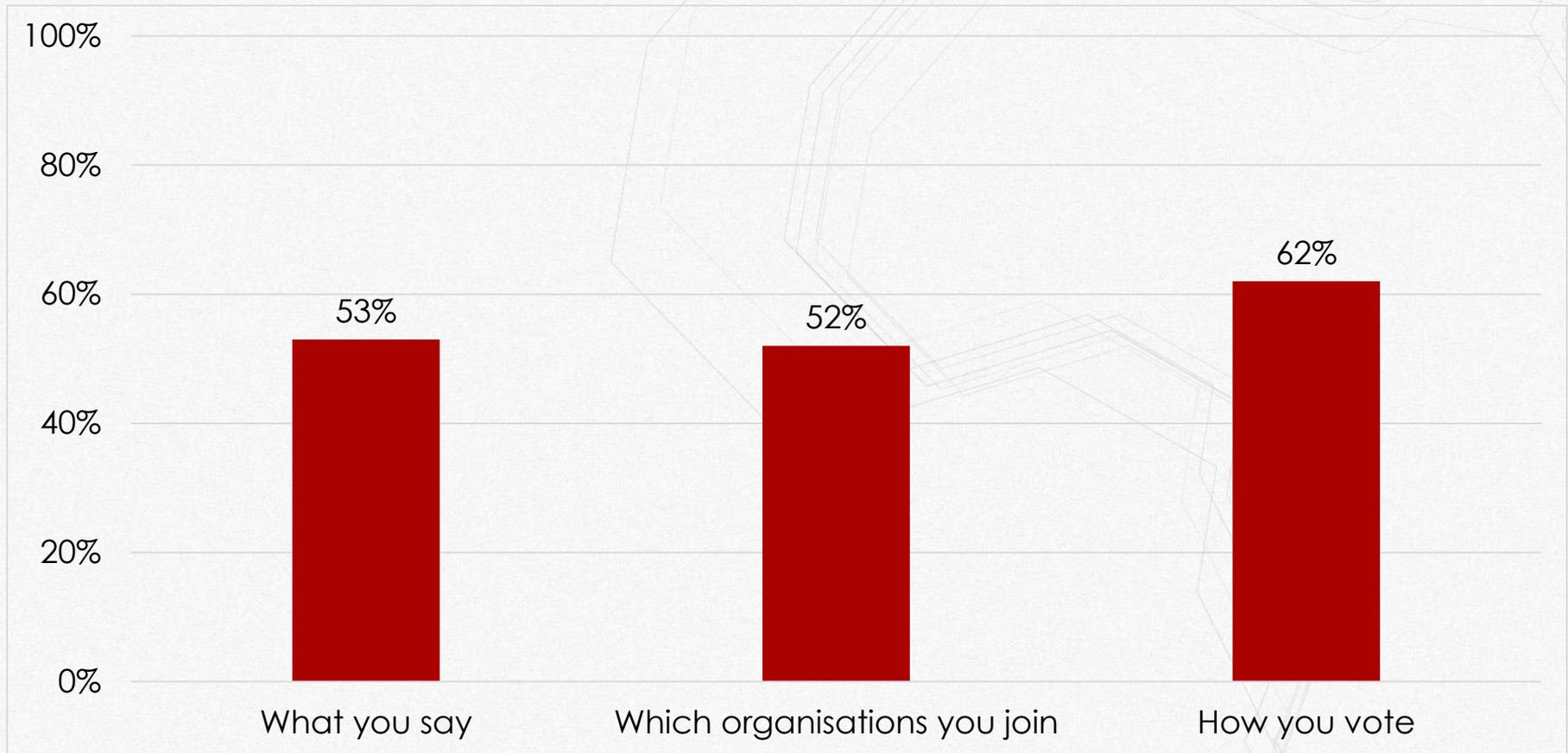
- A majority of Malawians say their country is “not a democracy” (14%) or “a democracy with major problems” (42%).
- A majority say Malawians “often” or “always” have to be careful about what they say about politics (52%), which political organisations they join (53%), and how they vote (62%).
- While 61% of Malawians say they are free to criticise their traditional leaders, only about one in four say the same about the Malawi Defence Force (24%) and the president (27%).

# How democratic is Malawi? | Malawi | 2017



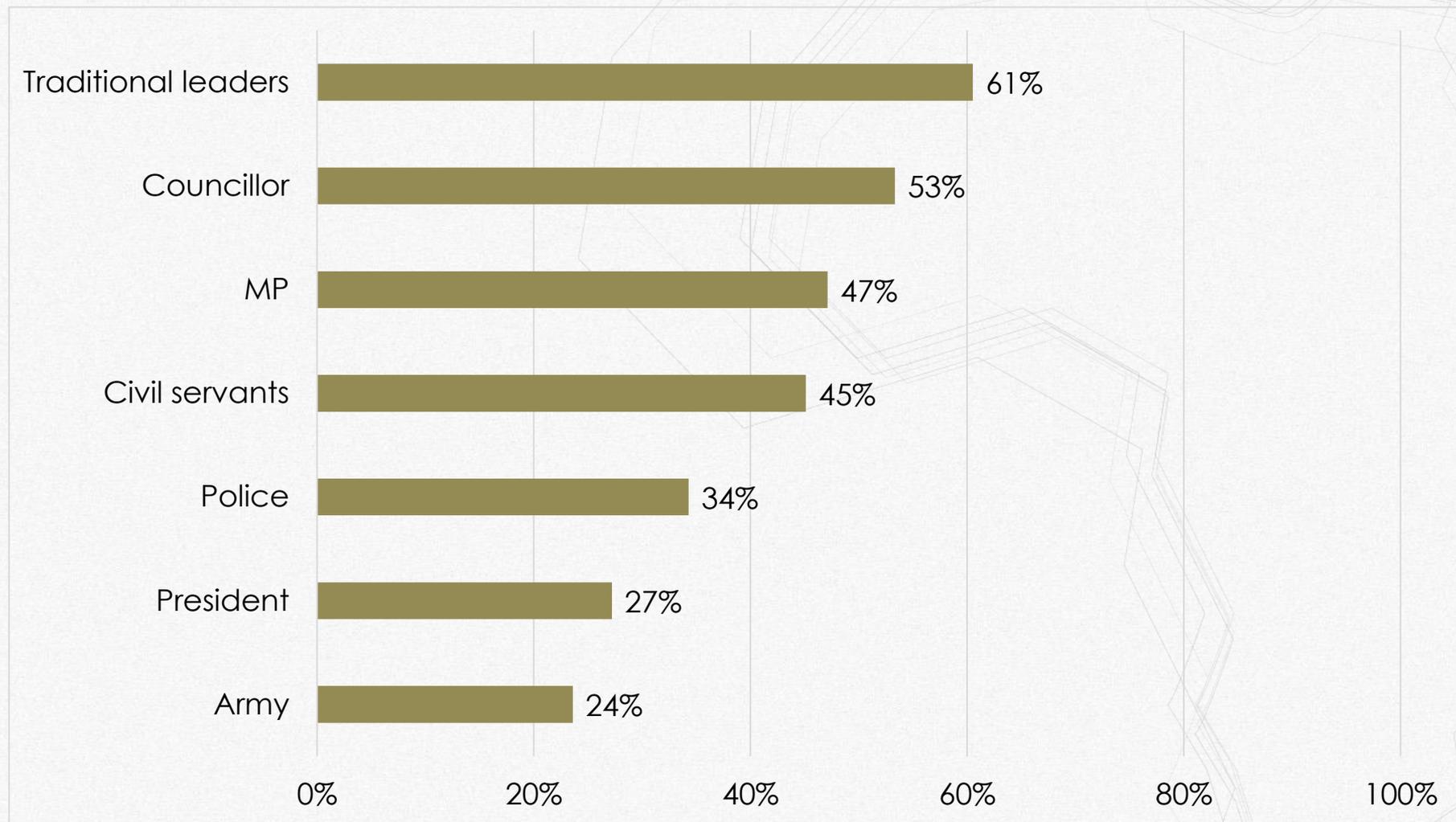
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Malawi today?*

# People have to be careful | Malawi | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how often, in this country: Do people have to be careful of what they say about politics? Do people have to be careful about which political organisations they join? Do people have to be careful about how they vote in an election?  
(% who say "often" or "always")

# Freedom to criticise officials | Malawi | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** In this country, how free do you feel to criticise the following? (% who say "somewhat free" or "completely free")

# Government performance

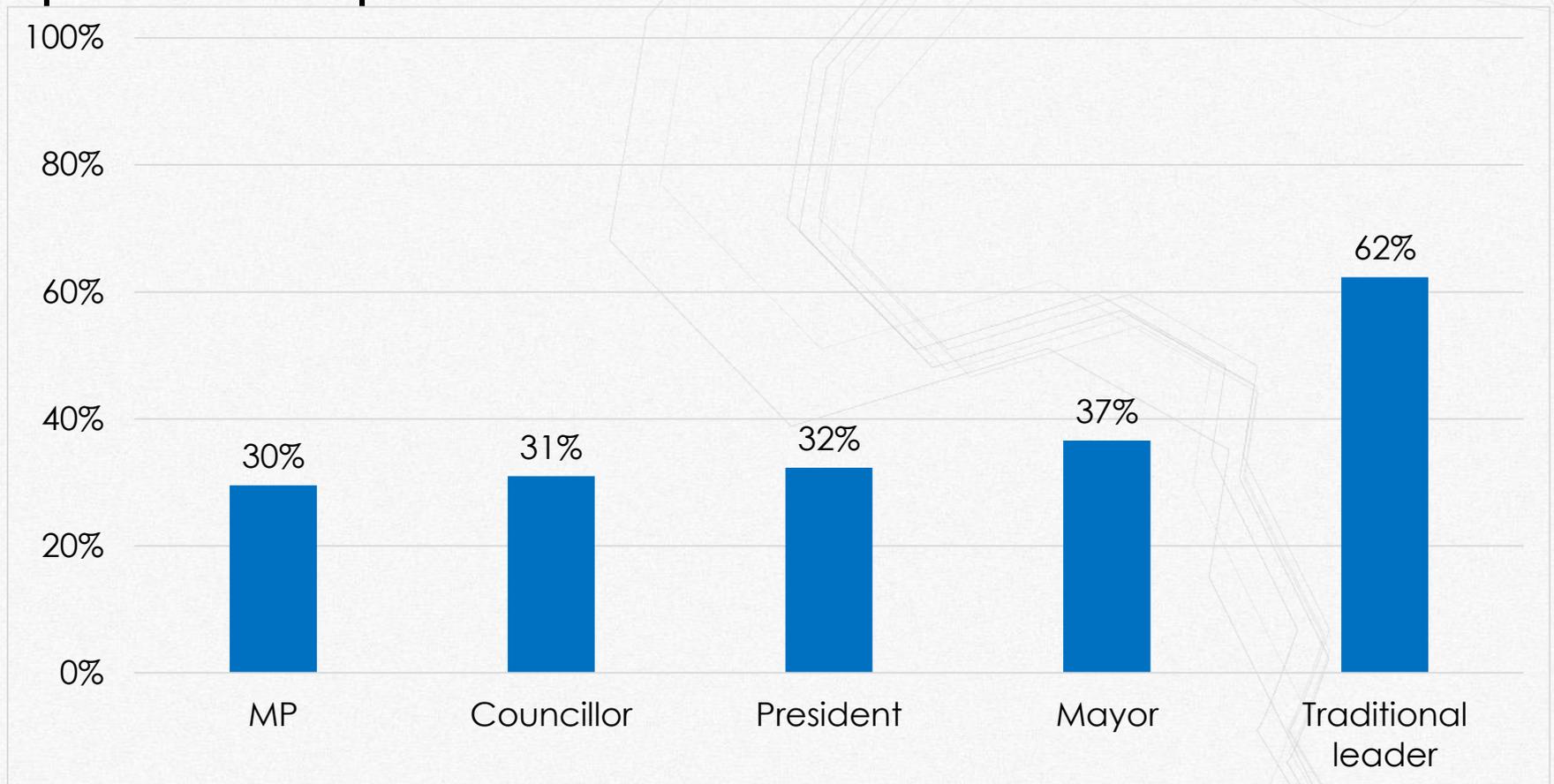
# Key findings



- Only about one-third of Malawians approve of the way their MPs (30%), councillors (31%), president (32%), and mayors (37%) have performed their jobs.
- More than half of Malawians think the government is performing “fairly badly” or “very badly” on 13 of 16 policy issues that the survey asked about.
- A majority of respondents rate government performance positively on promoting women’s rights and opportunities (57%) and maintaining roads and bridges (51%). The lowest scores are on keeping prices stable (9% fairly/very well), narrowing gaps between rich and poor (13%), and providing reliable electricity (13%).

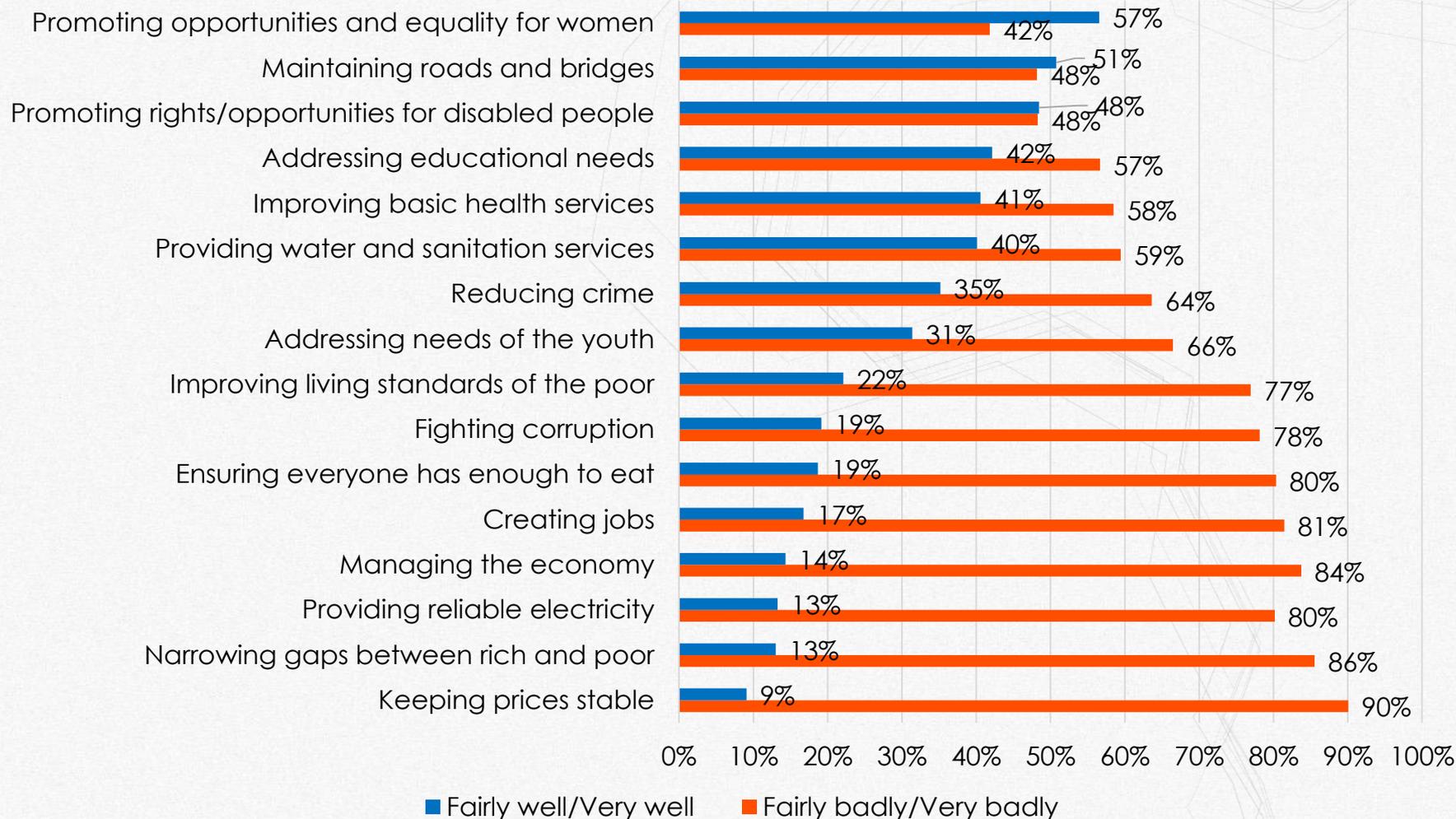
# Approval of public officials' performance

## | Malawi | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** *Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who "approve" or "strongly approve")\_*

# Government handling of national issues | Malawi | 2017



**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?

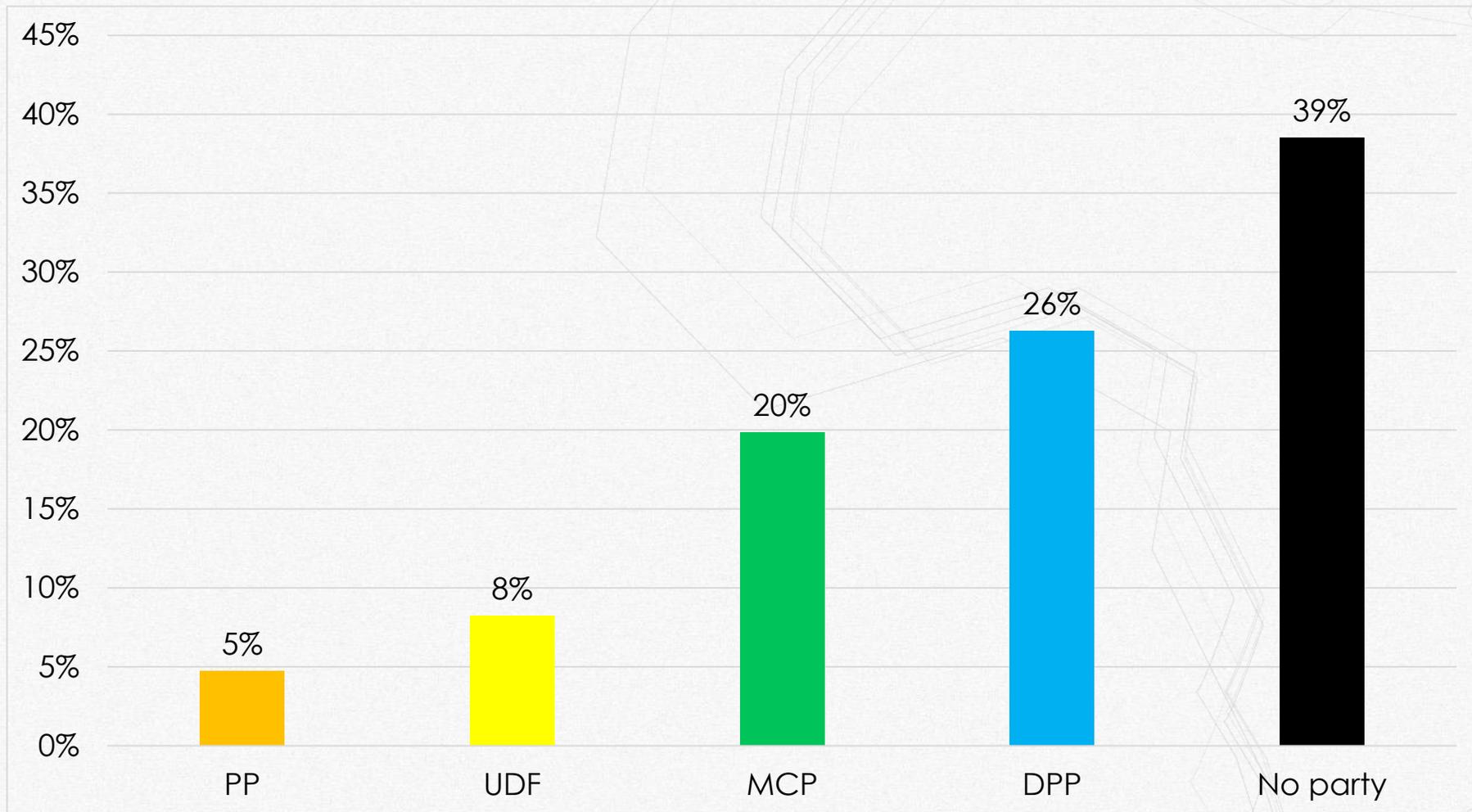
# Party politics: Affiliation and voting intention

# Key findings



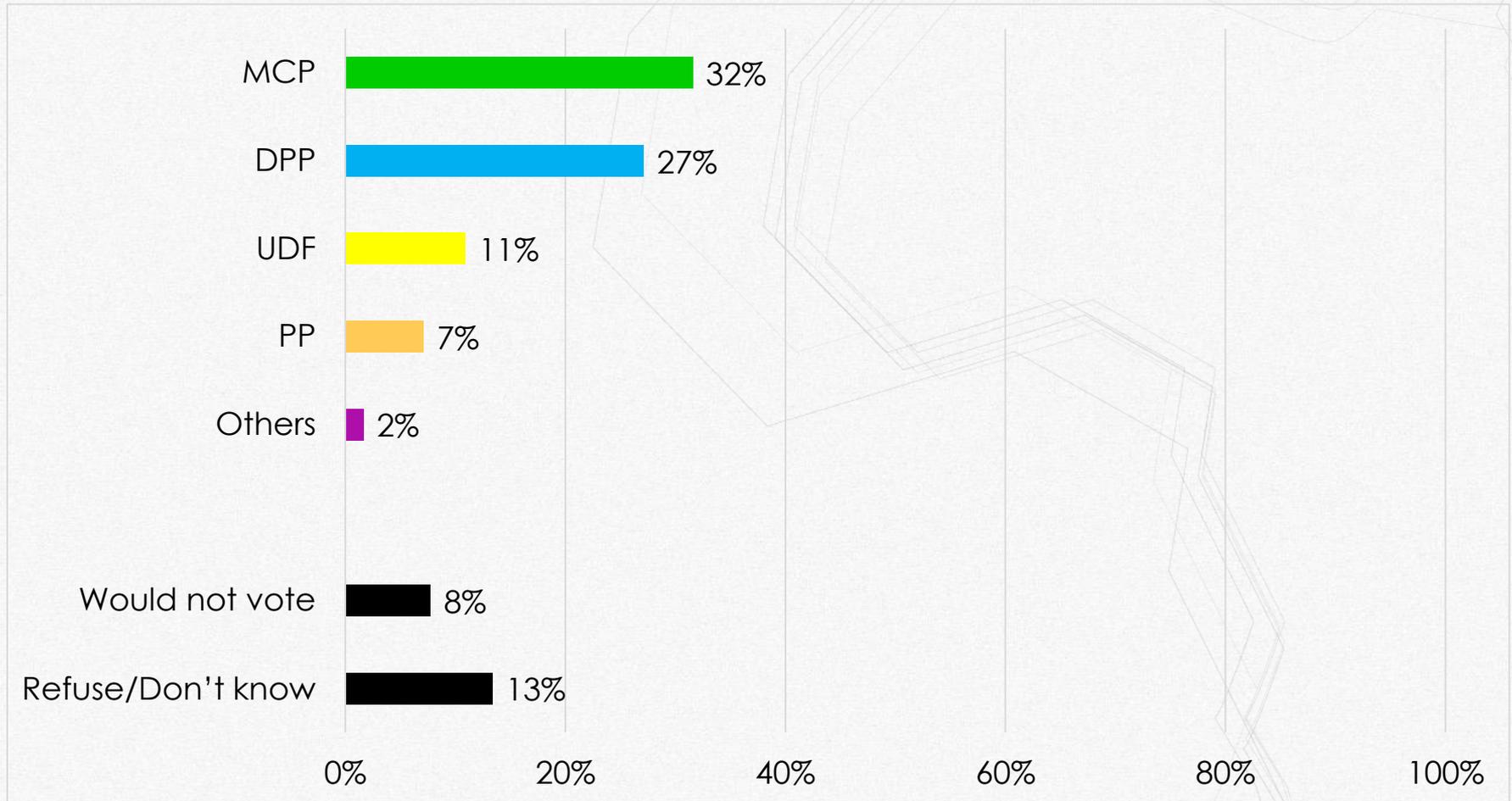
- About six in 10 Malawians say they feel close to a political party.
- About one in four respondents (26%) say they feel close to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), while one in five (20%) align with the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The other popular parties are the United Democratic Front (UDF) (8%) and the People's Party (PP) (5%).
- When asked which party's candidate they would vote for if presidential elections were held at the time of the survey, 32% picked the MCP, vs. 27% for the DPP, 11% for the UDF, and 7% for the PP. A significant proportion said they would not vote (8%) or they didn't know or refused to answer (13%).

# Popular support of political parties | Malawi | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** Do you feel close to any particular political party? [If yes:] Which party is that?

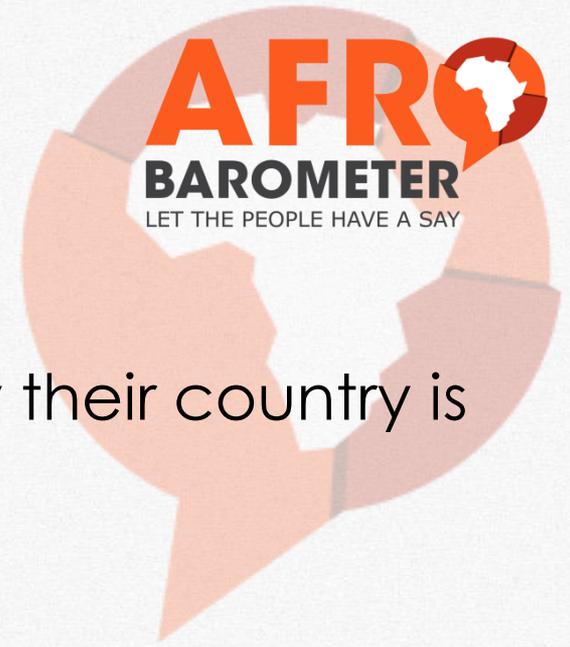
# Voting intentions | Malawi | 2017



**Respondents were asked:** *If presidential elections were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you vote for?*

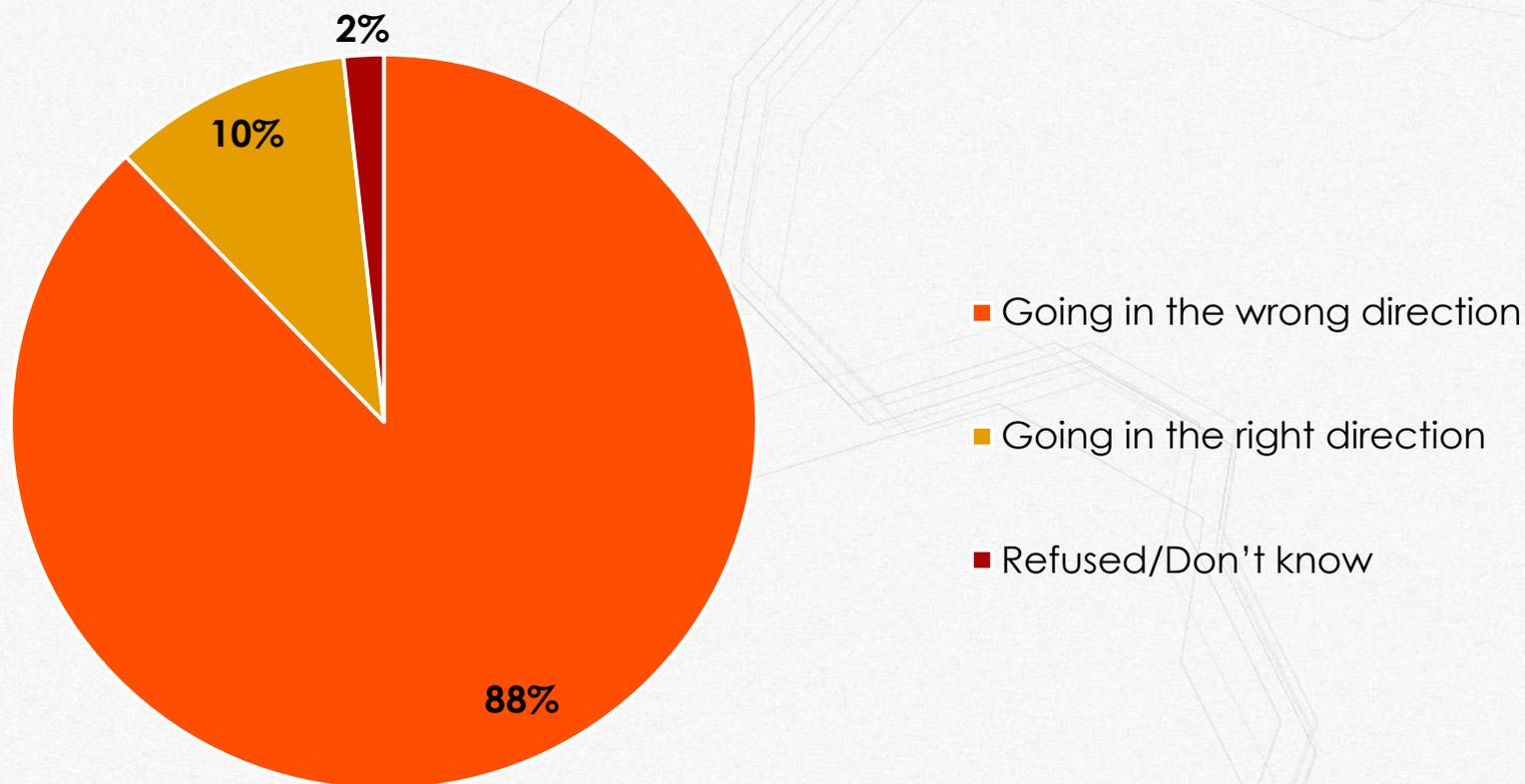
# Overall direction of the country

# Key findings



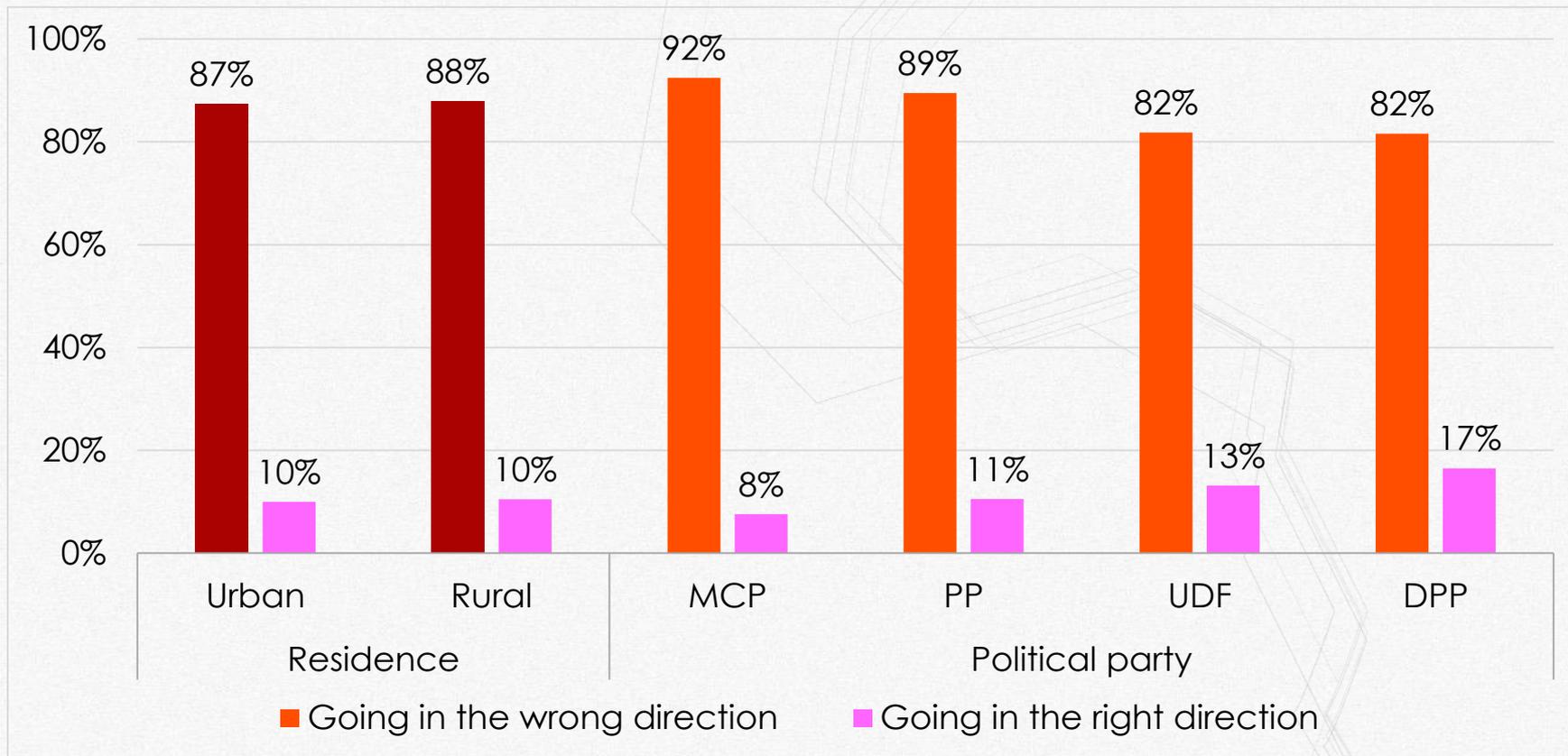
- Almost nine in 10 Malawians (88%) say their country is “going in the wrong direction.”
- This view is shared by large majorities in both urban and rural areas as well as across all major political parties.

# Direction of the country | Malawi | 2017



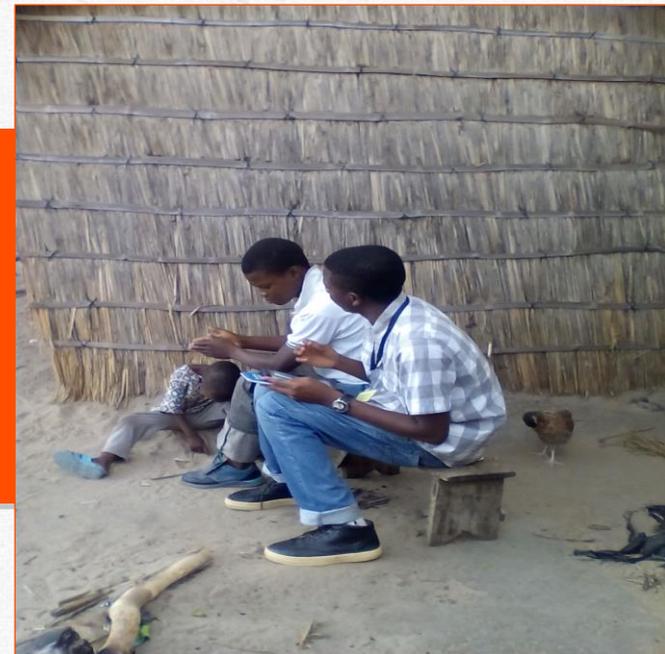
**Respondents were asked:** Some people might think the country is going in the wrong direction. Others may feel it is going in the right direction. So let me ask YOU about the overall direction of the country: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?

# Direction of the country | by urban-rural residence and political party affiliation | Malawi | 2017

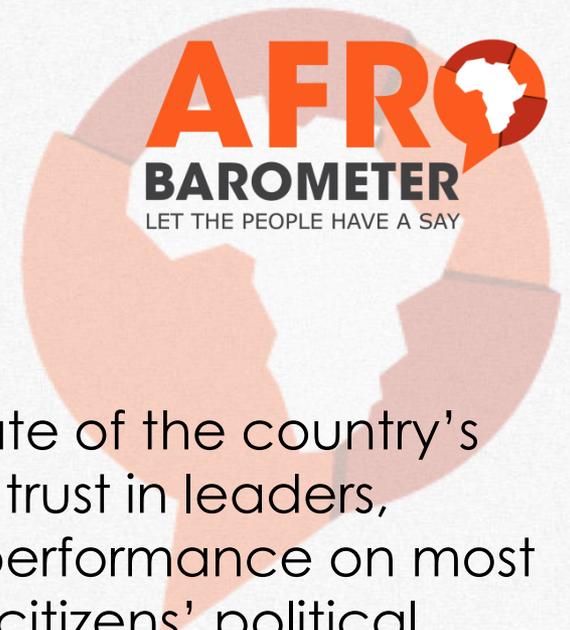


**Respondents were asked:** Some people might think the country is going in the wrong direction. Others may feel it is going in the right direction. So let me ask YOU about the overall direction of the country: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?

# Conclusions



# A country off the rail?



- Malawians are largely negative about the state of the country's political governance, expressing low popular trust in leaders, widespread disapproval of government job performance on most national issues, and perceived restrictions on citizens' political freedoms.
- Close to 90% of Malawians say the country is “going in the wrong direction.”



**Thank you**

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