



Liberians' views on democracy, trust and corruption

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 7 survey in Liberia

At a glance



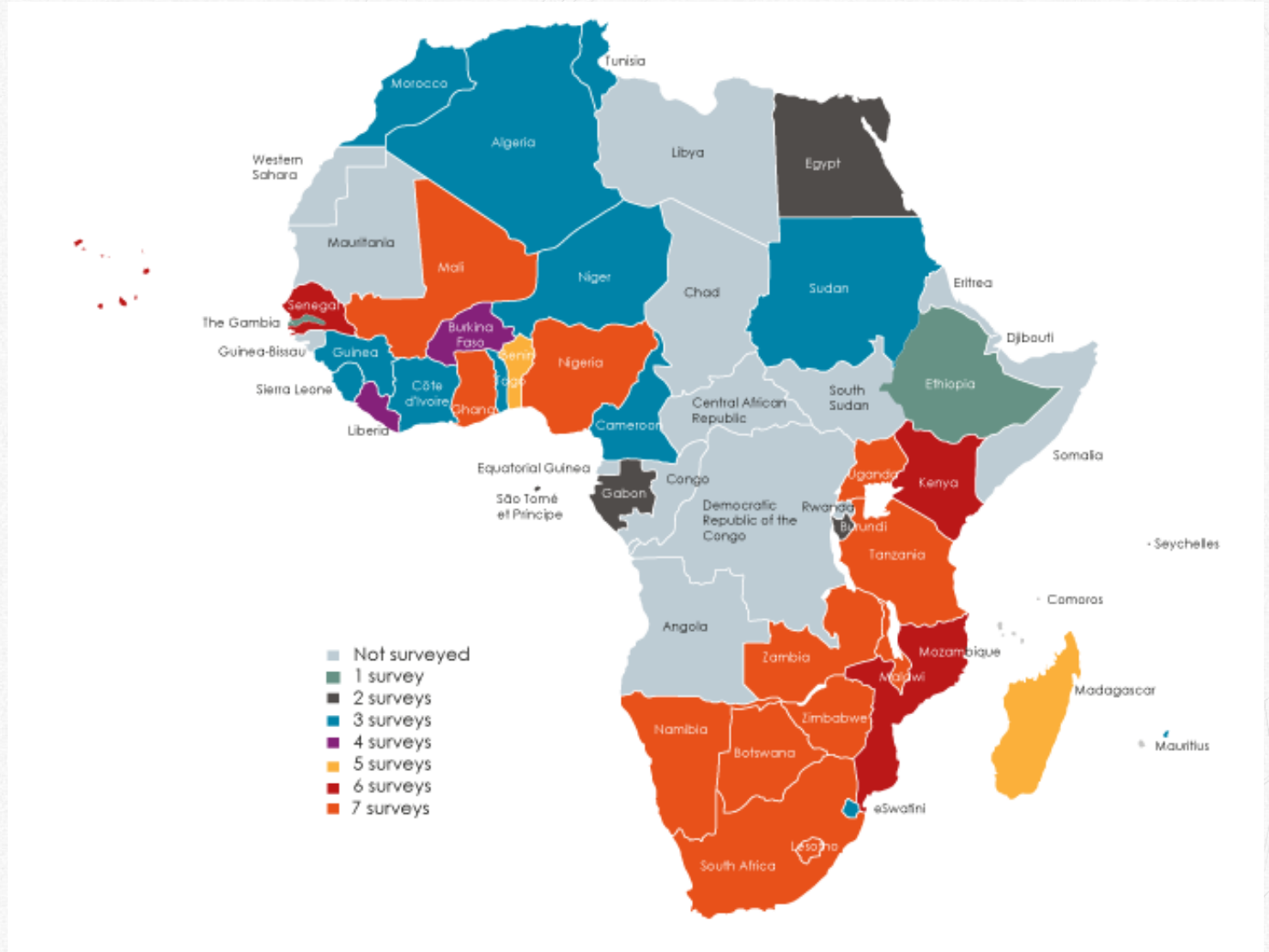
- **Demand for democracy:** A large majority of Liberians prefer democracy (70%) and reject alternatives to democratic rule – one-man rule (88%), one-party rule (77%), and military rule (73%).
- **Extent of democracy:** Six in 10 Liberians describe the country as “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems,” but the same proportion say they are “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with the way democracy works in the country.
- **Media freedom and freedom of association:** Two-thirds of Liberians say the government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies (66%) and should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society (67%).
- **Trust and corruption:** The police, National Electoral Commission, and National Assembly are perceived to be the most corrupt officials in Liberia.

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 have been completed in 2018.
- **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 Liberia, the Afrobarometer Round 7 survey was conducted by The Khana Group.

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 Liberia of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 7 in Liberia was conducted between 19 June and 16 July 2018.

Survey demographics

Gender	%
Men	50
Women	50
Residence	
Urban	47
Rural	53
Education	
No formal education	12
Primary	31
Secondary	44
Post-secondary	13
Religion	
Christian	87
Muslim	10
Other	3



Findings





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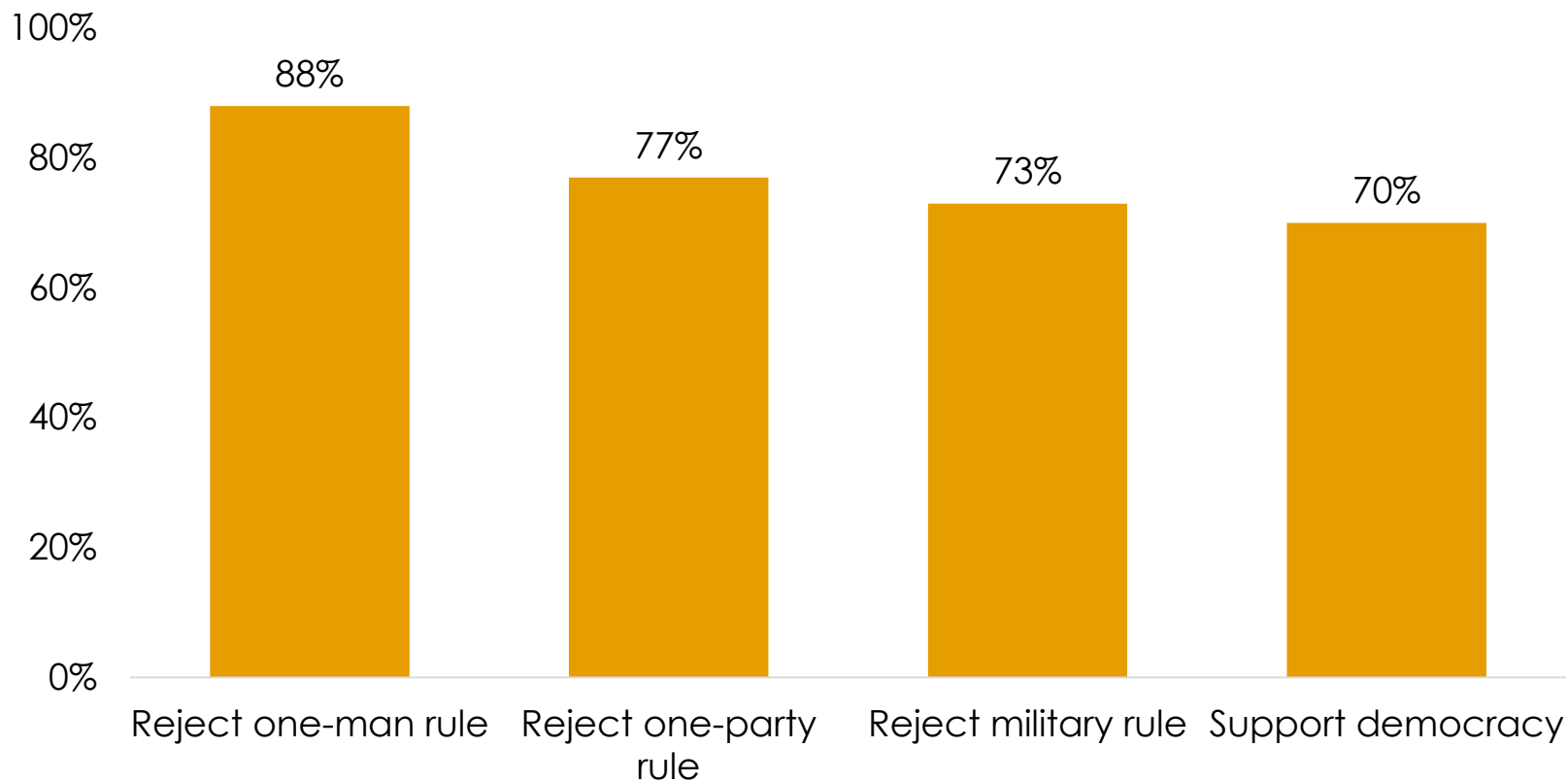
Demand for democracy

Key findings



- A large majority of Liberians prefer democracy (70%) and reject alternatives to democratic rule – one-man rule (88%), one-party rule (77%), and military rule (73%).
- Six in 10 Liberians (62%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that government should be accountable to the citizens.
- Eight in 10 Liberians (84%) want leaders elected through "regular, open, and honest elections." This proportion has dropped by 9 percentage points since 2012 (93%).
- Support for multiparty democracy has declined from 70% in 2012 to 58%.
- Three-fourths of Liberians (75%) endorse a constitutional limit of two terms for presidents.

Views on democracy | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? (% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

- Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
- The army comes in to govern the country.
- Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?

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

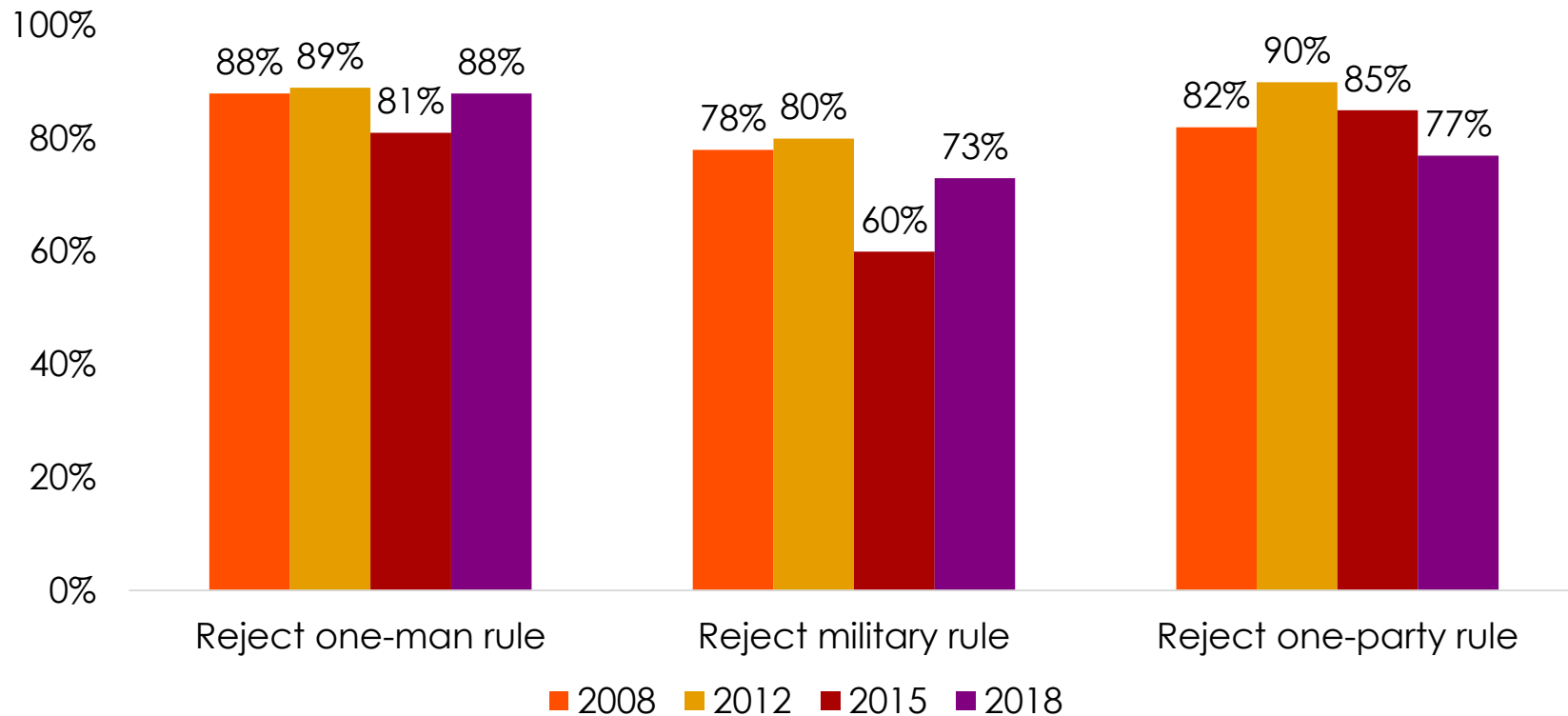
Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

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

(% who choose Statement 1)

Rejection of non-democratic regimes | Liberia

| 2008-2018

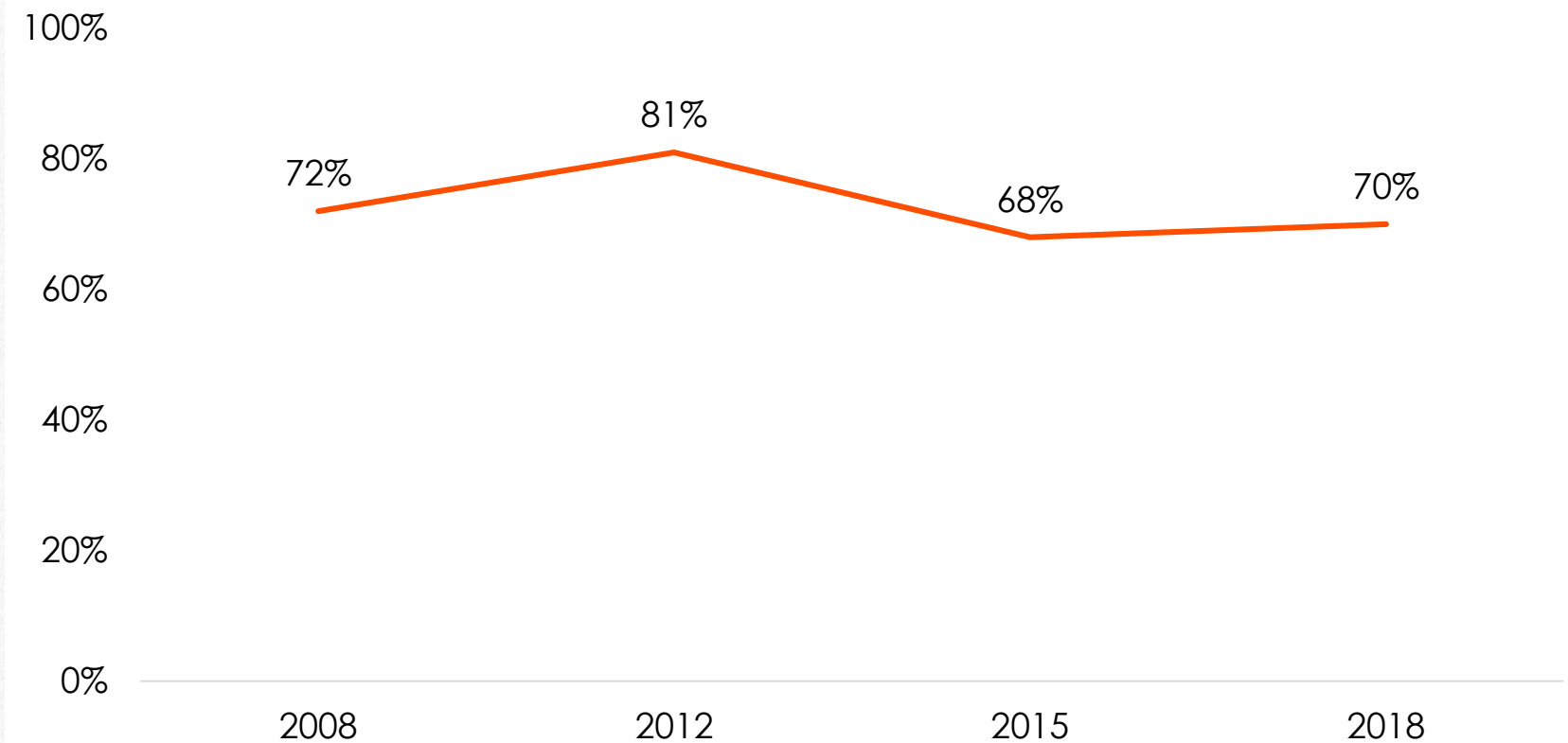


Respondents were asked: *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?*

- Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.
- The army comes in to govern the country.
- Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

% who "strongly disapprove" or "disapprove"

Support for democracy | Liberia | 2018



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

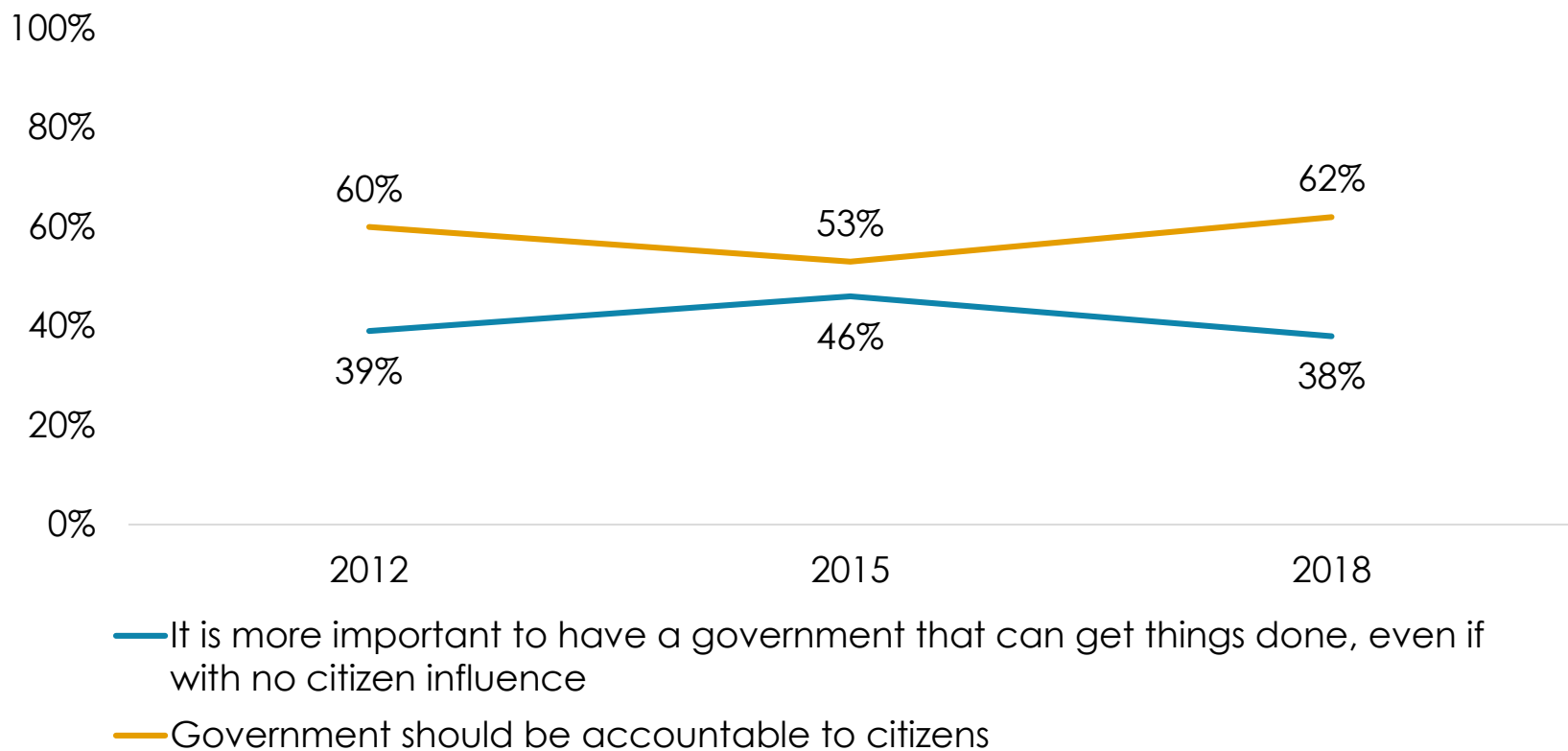
Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.

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

(% who choose Statement 1)

Holding government accountable | Liberia

| 2012-2018



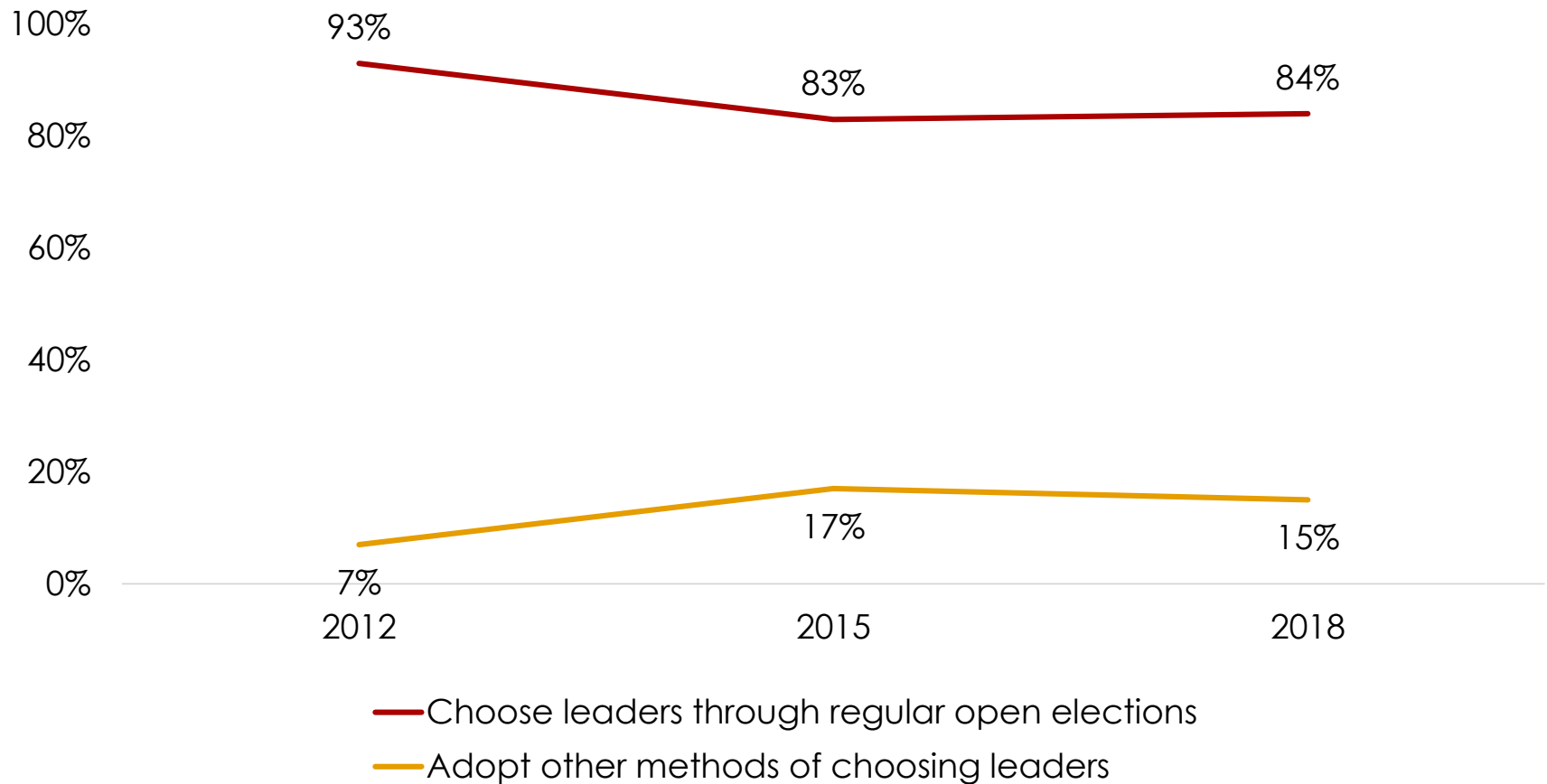
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own view?

Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.

Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.

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

Support for elections | Liberia | 2012-2018



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

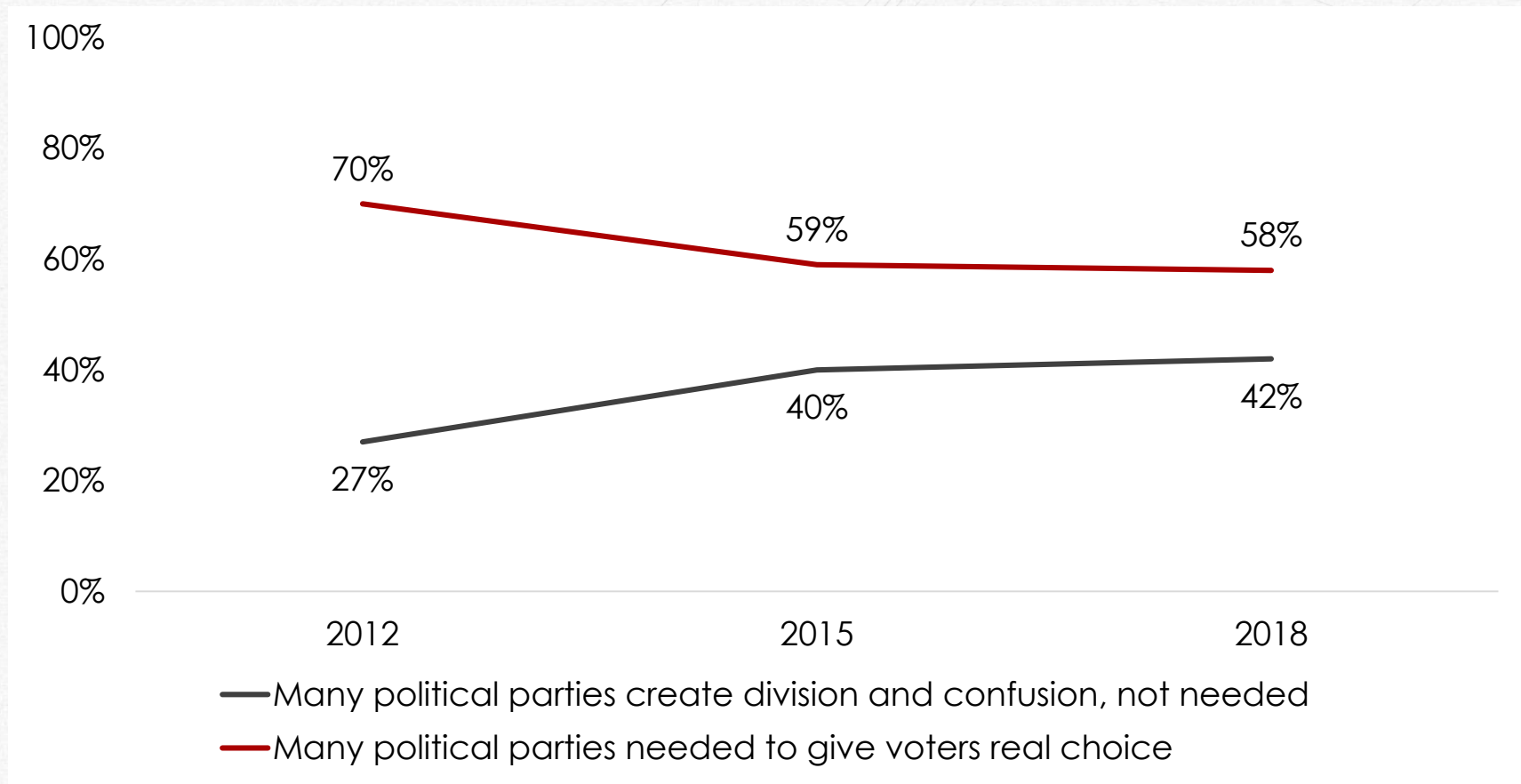
Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.

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 each statement)

Views on multiparty democracy | Liberia

| 2012-2018

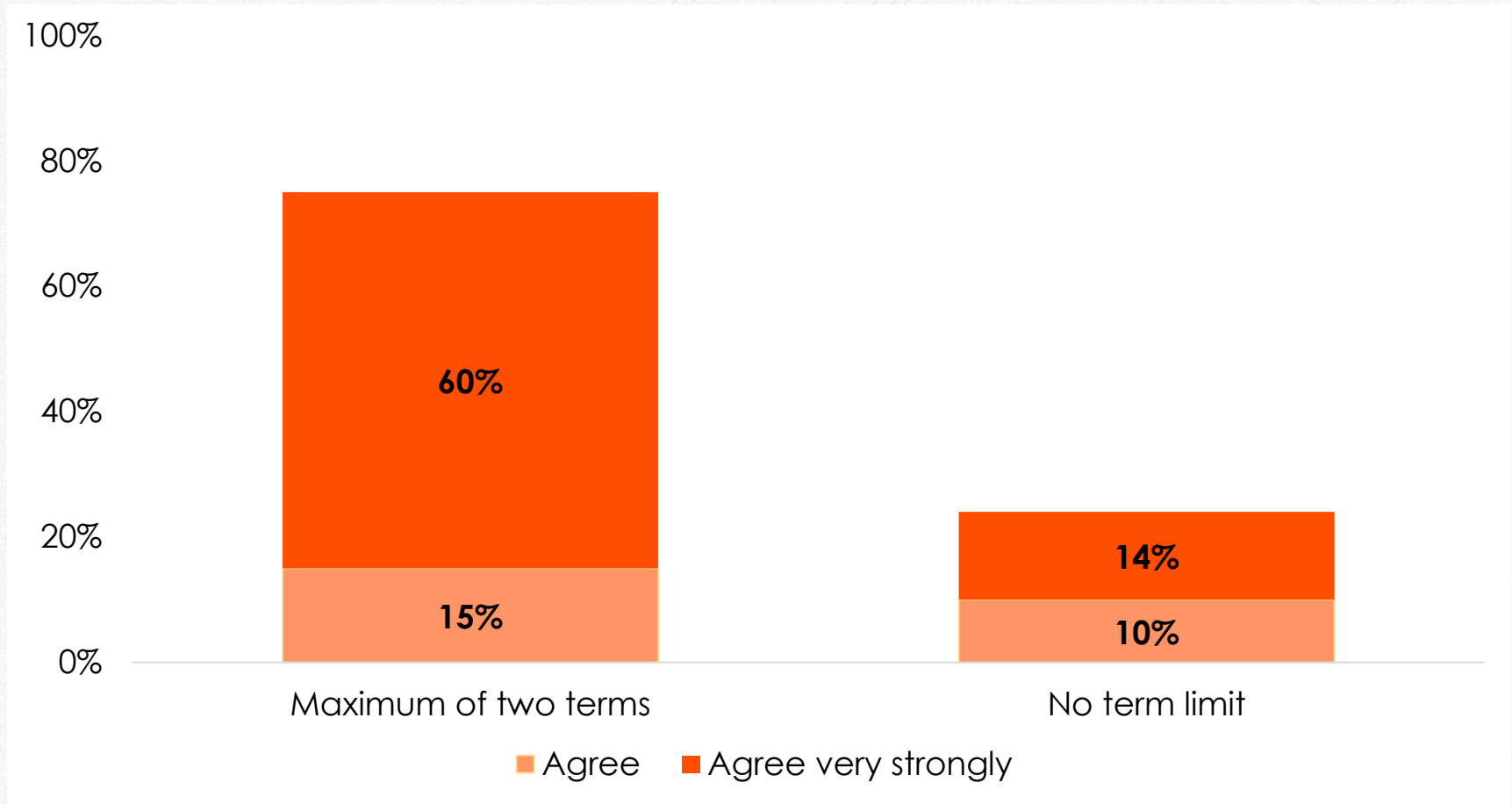


Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own view?

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

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

Presidency term limits | Liberia | 2012-2018



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

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

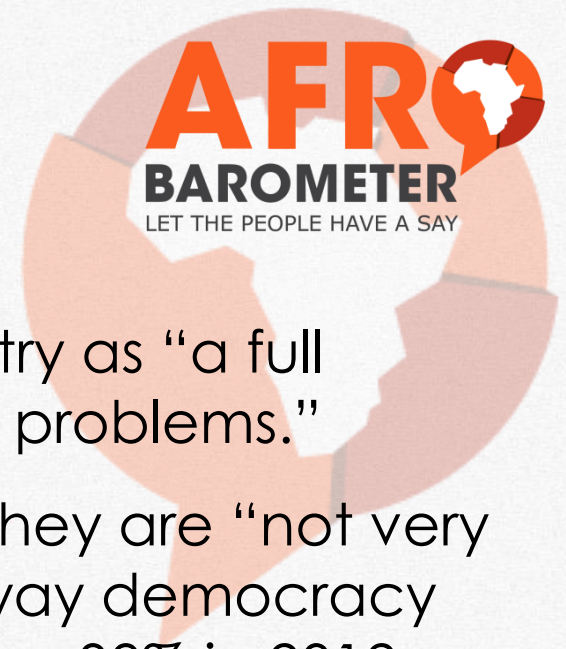
Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.



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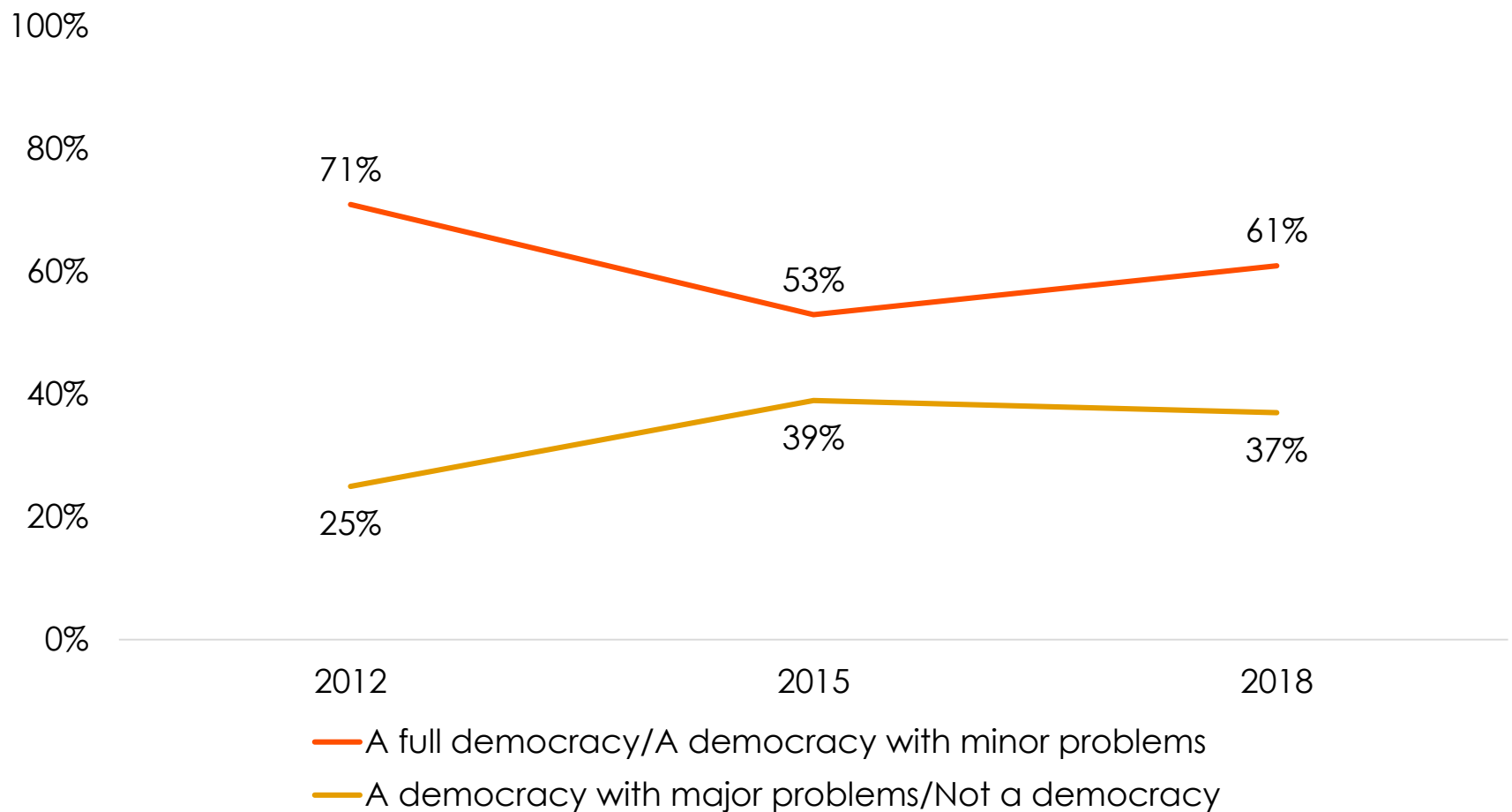
Supply of democracy

Key findings



- Six in 10 Liberians (61%) describe the country as “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems.”
- However, the same proportion (61%) say they are “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with the way democracy works in the country, a drastic increase from 38% in 2012.
- Only a quarter or less of citizens say local government councillors (23%), members of Parliament (14%), and senators (11%) “always” or “often” try their best to listen to what people have to say.

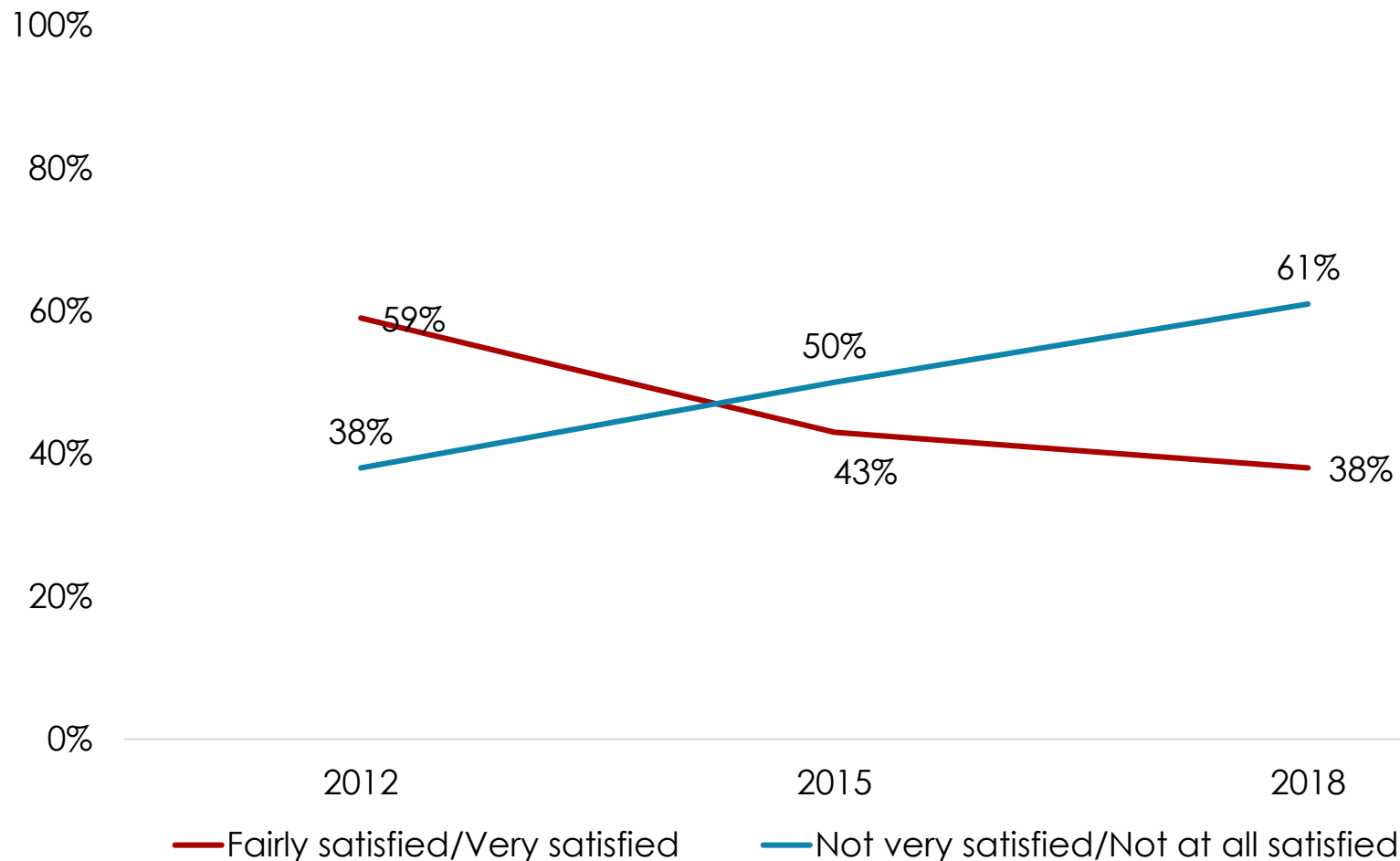
Extent of democracy | Liberia | 2012-2018



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

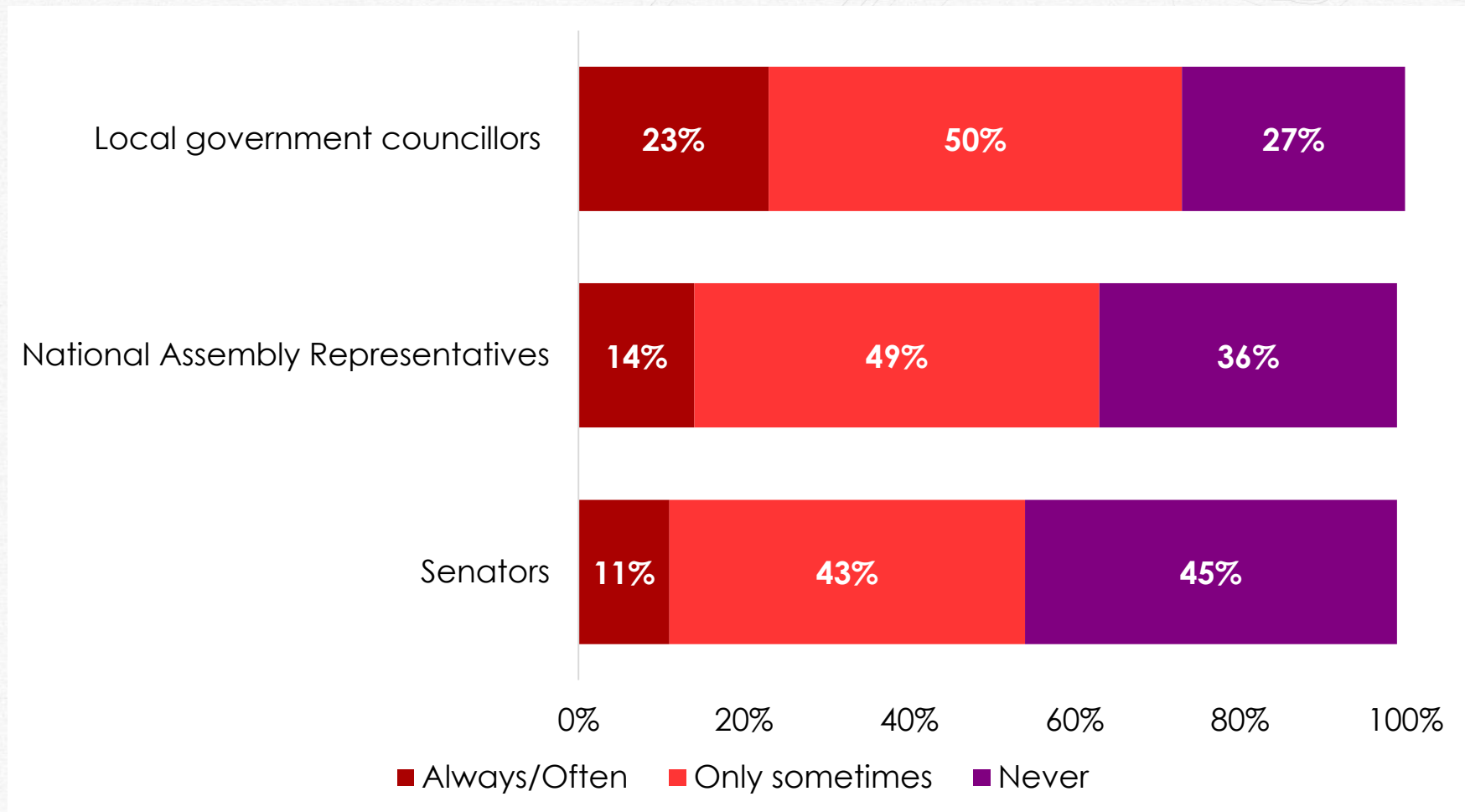
Satisfaction with democracy | Liberia

| 2012-2018



Respondents were asked: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Liberia?

Do leaders listen? | Liberia | 2018



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?



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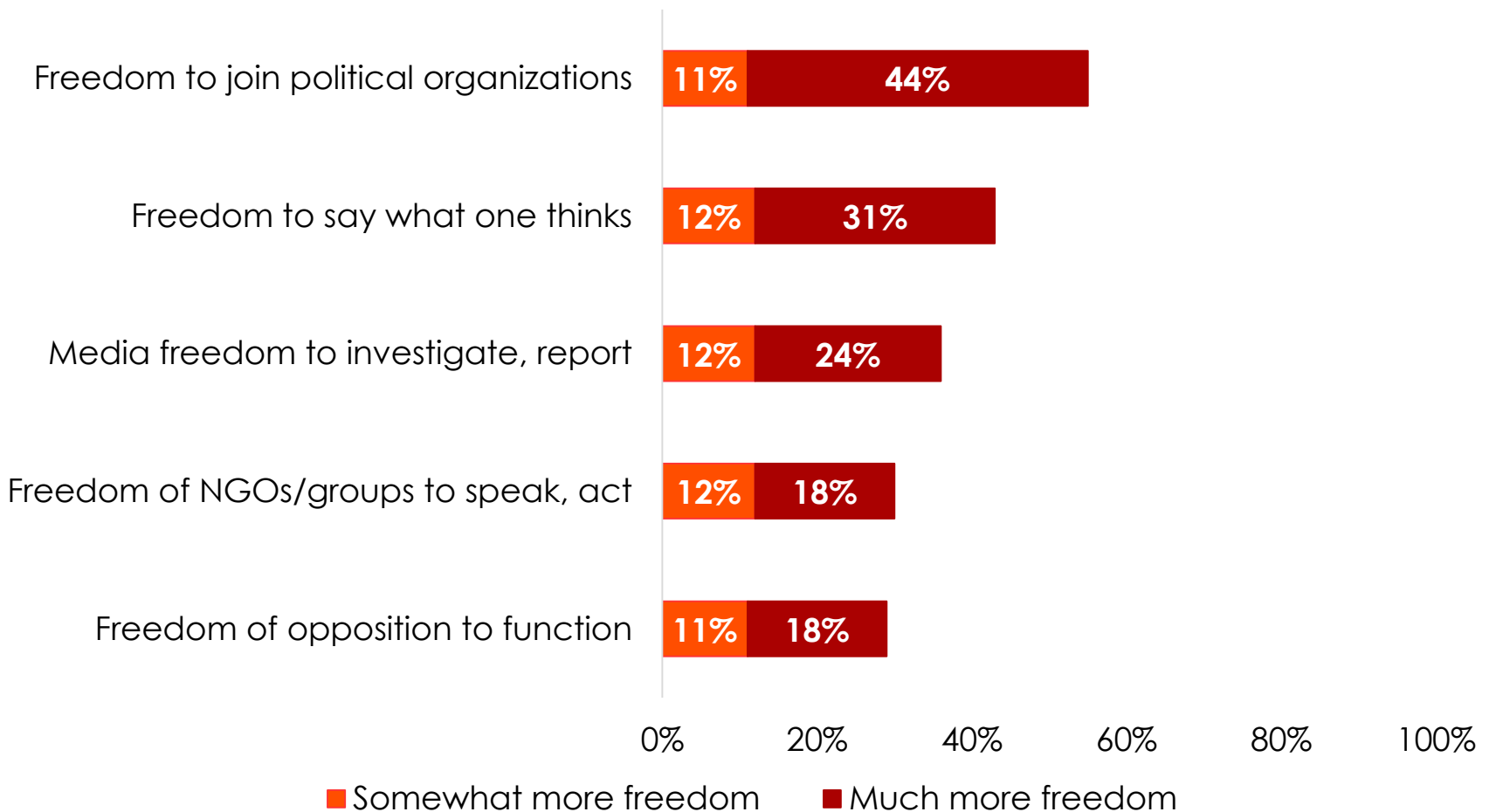
Freedoms

Key findings



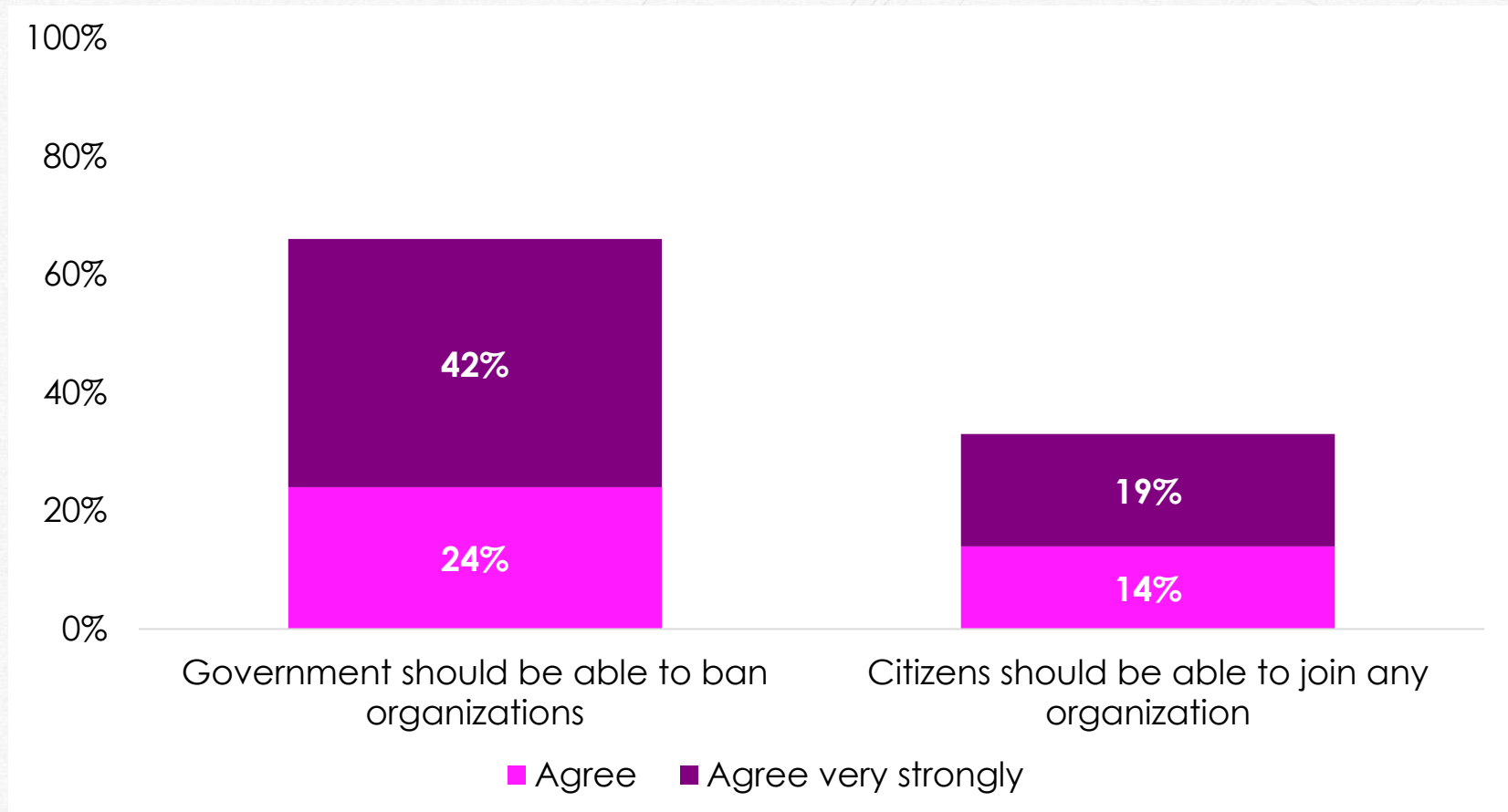
- A slim majority (55%) of Liberians say that compared to a few years ago, there is now “much more” or “somewhat more” freedom to join any political organization.
- About four in 10 say there is more
 - Freedom to say what one thinks (43%)
 - Media freedom to investigate, report, or criticize (36%)
- Three in 10 say there is more:
 - Freedom for independent groups or non-governmental organizations to speak or act (30%)
 - Freedom for opposition parties or candidates to function (29%)
- Two-thirds of Liberians (66%) say government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies.
- The same proportion (67%) say government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.

Freedoms, present vs. past | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if there is more or less freedom now for each of the following things compared to a few years ago, or are things about the same?

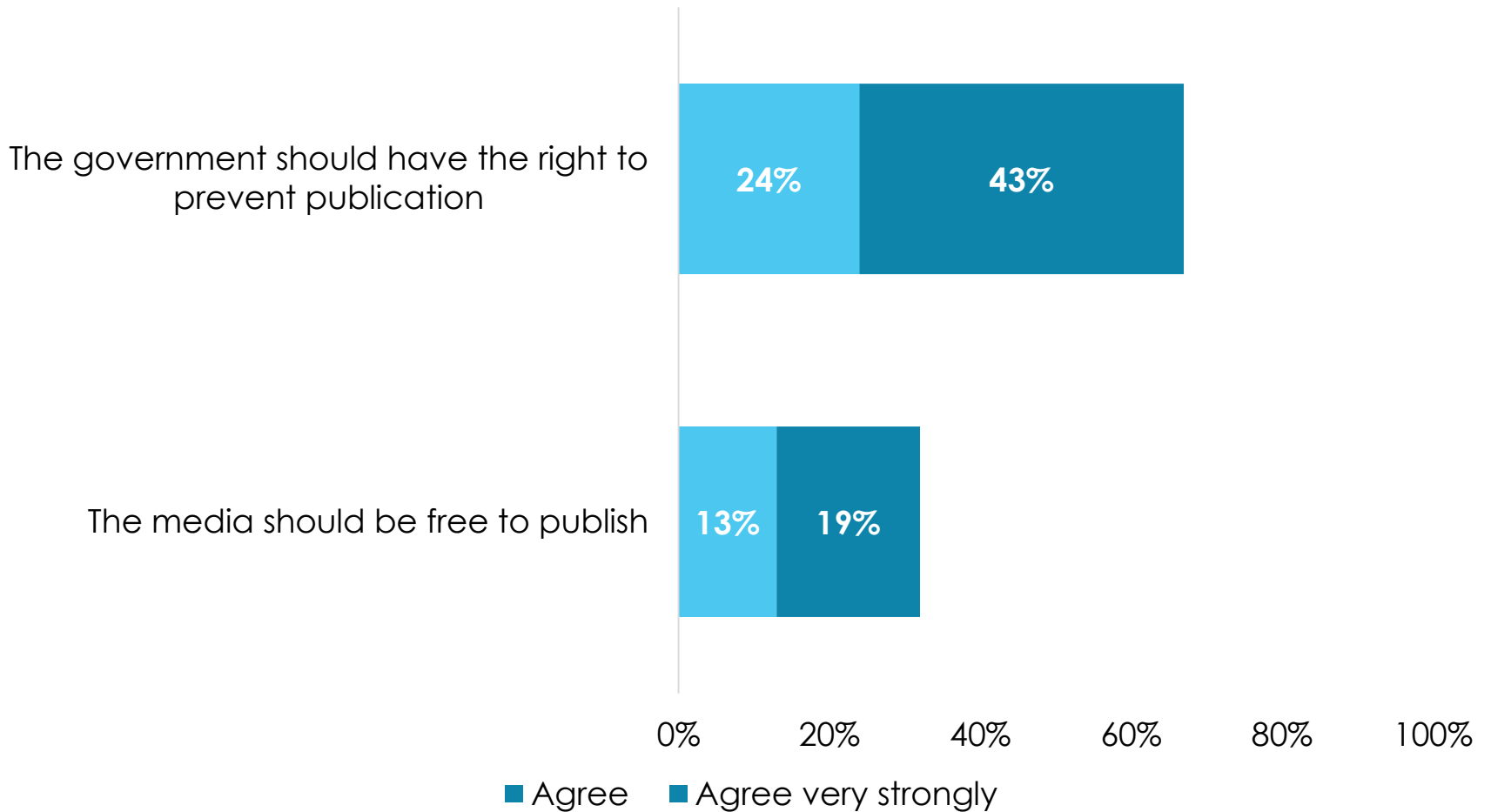
Freedom of association | Liberia | 2018



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

- Statement 1: The government should be able to ban any organization that goes against its policies.
- Statement 2: We should be able to join any organization, whether or not the government approves of it.

Media freedom | Liberia | 2018



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

- Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish any views and ideas without government control.
- Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it considers harmful to society.

Trust and perceived corruption

Key findings



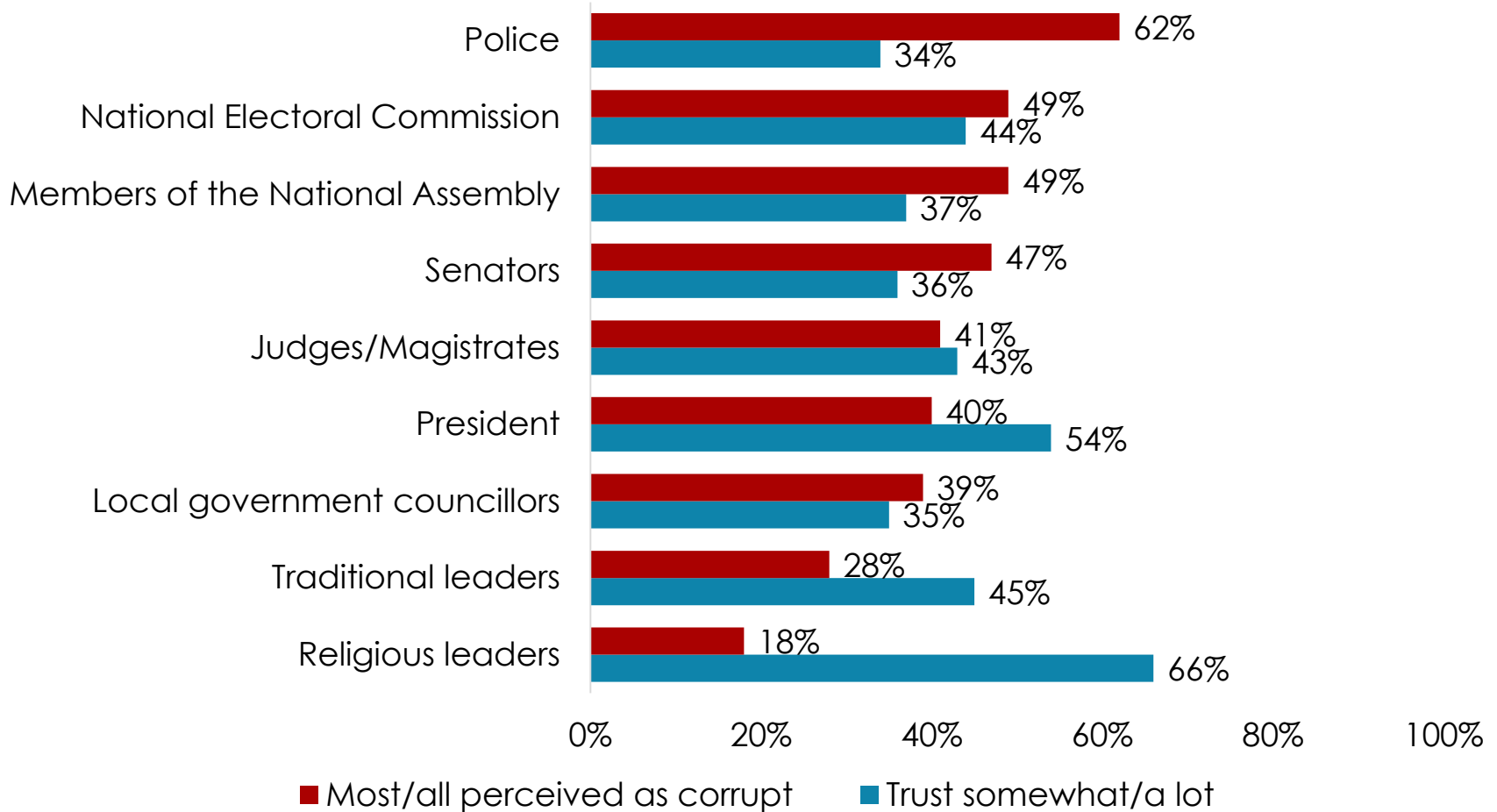
- The police, National Electoral Commission, and National Assembly are perceived to be the most corrupt officials in Liberia.
- Religious leaders, president, and traditional leaders are the most trusted.
- Almost half (47%) of Liberians say the level of corruption in the country has “increased somewhat” or “increased a lot” over the past year.
- Large majorities of Liberians say the rich are more likely than ordinary persons to get away with paying a bribe or using personal connections to avoid taxes (83%), avoid going to court (89%), and register land that’s not theirs (87%).

Key findings



- Among respondents who had contact with relevant public services during the previous year:
 - A majority (55%) paid a bribe at least once to get police assistance.
 - About half (48%) paid a bribe at least once for household services.
 - About four in 10 paid a bribe at least once to get medical care (43%), to get public school services (40%), and to avoid problems with the police (37%).
 - Two in 10 (22%) paid a bribe at least once to obtain identity documents.
- Although half of Liberians (52%) think that ordinary citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption, six in 10 (61%) say that people risk retaliation if they report incidents of corruption.
- Two-thirds (67%) say it is “not very likely” or “not at all likely” that authorities will take action if they report corrupt behaviour.

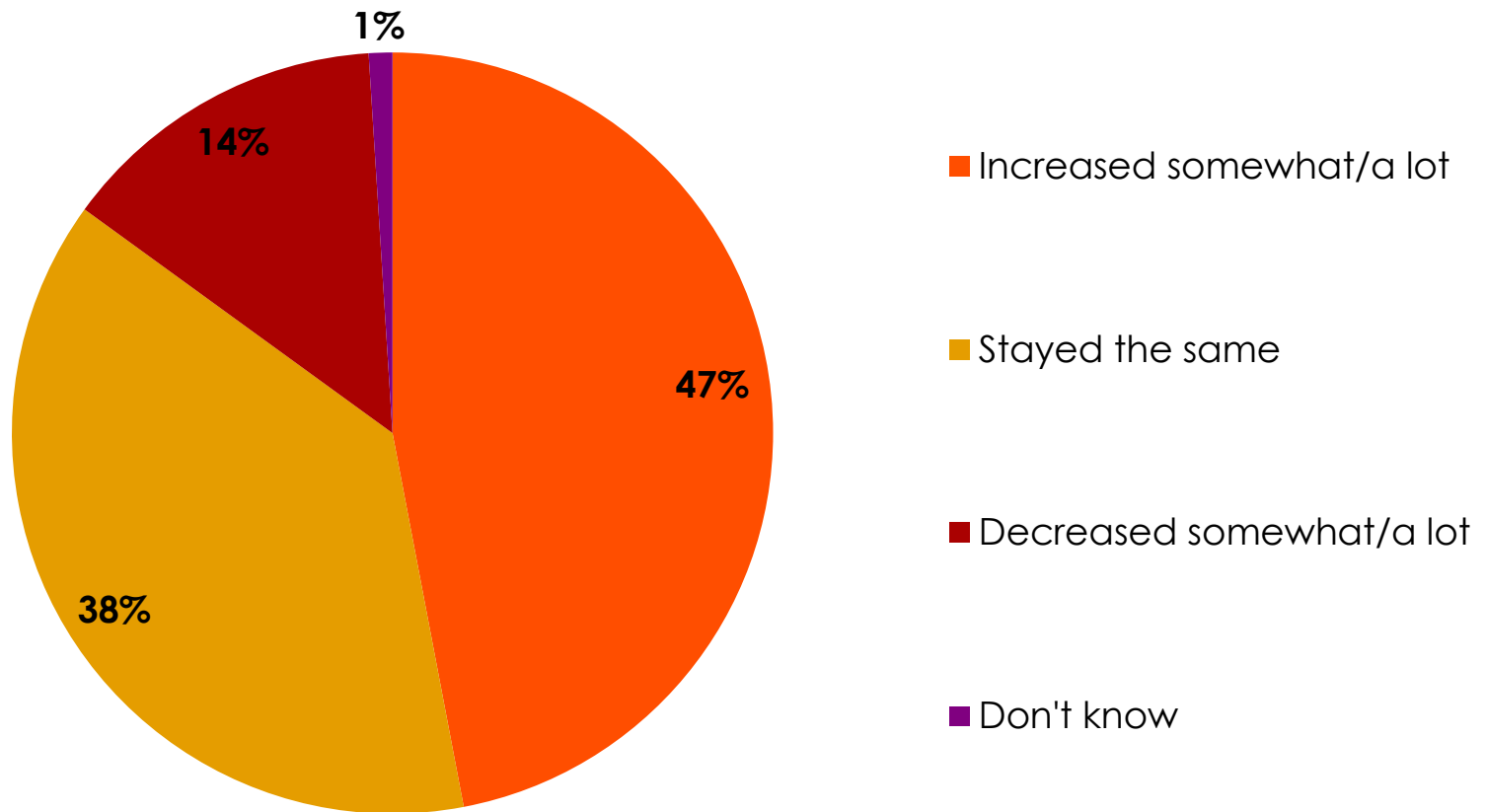
Trust and perceived corruption | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked:

- How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?
- How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

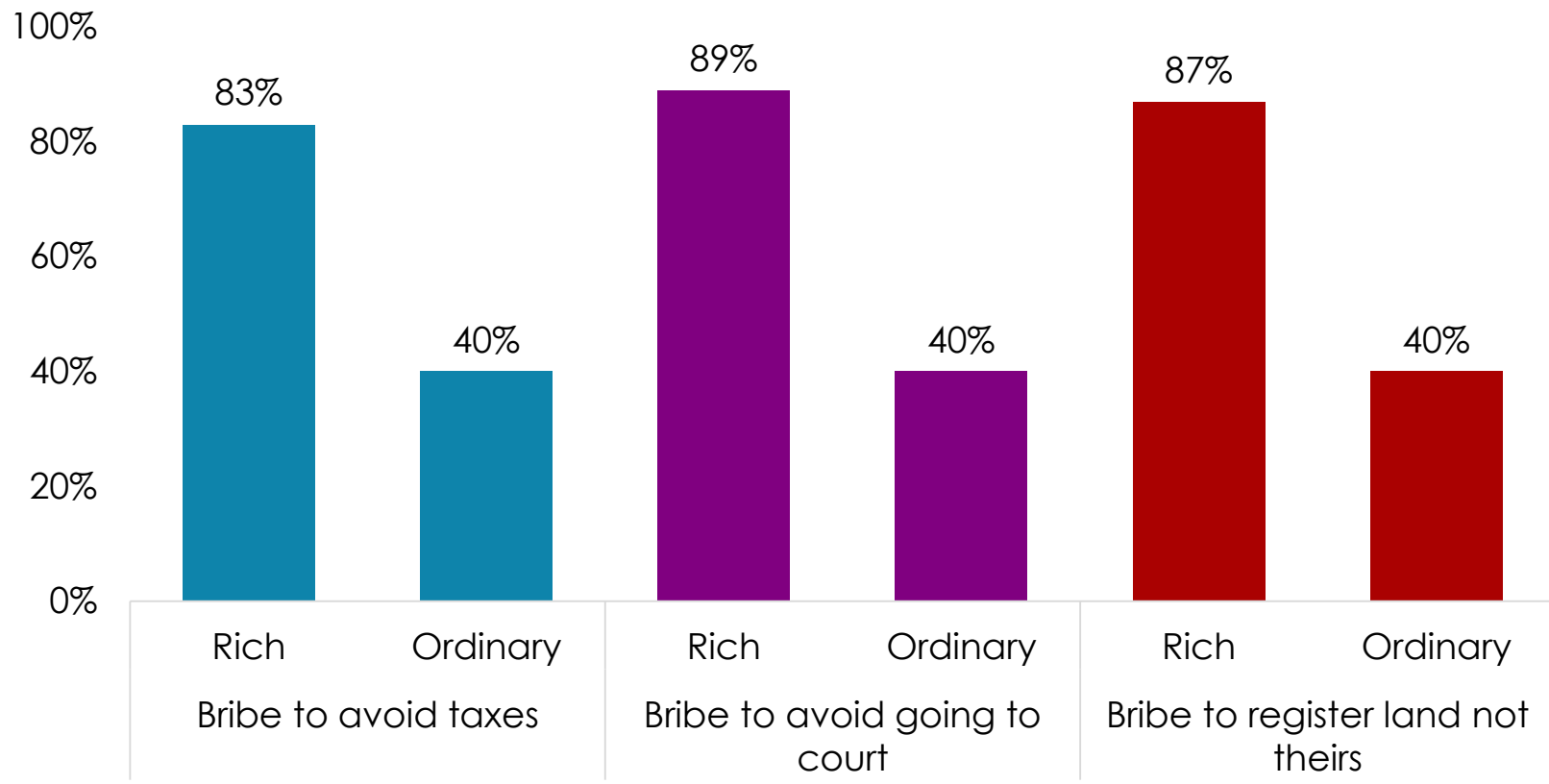
Level of corruption | Liberia | 2018



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

Bribery by the rich vs. ordinary people

| Liberia | 2018

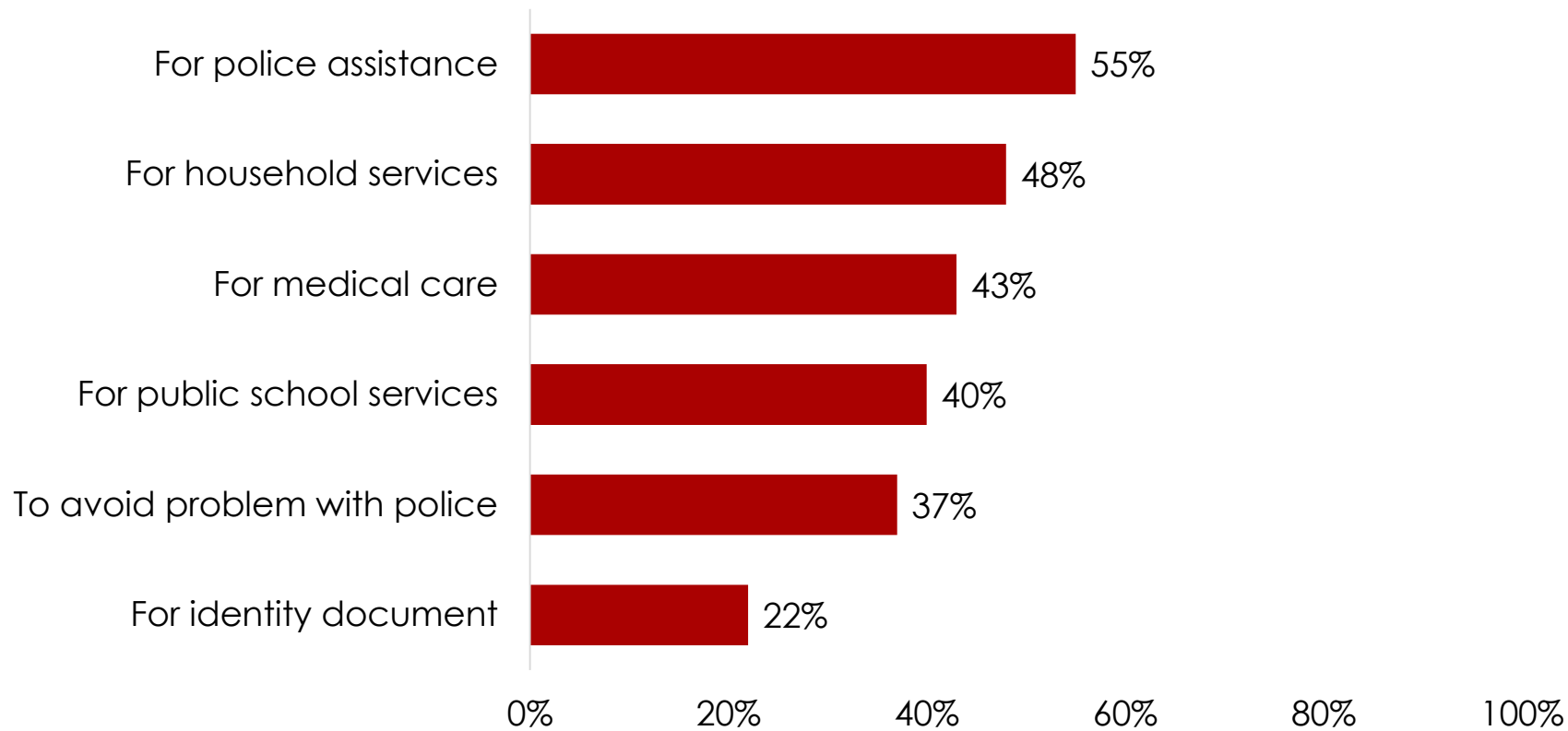


Respondents were asked: In this country, how likely do you think it is that an ordinary person/a rich person could pay a bribe or use personal connections to get away with:

- Avoiding paying taxes they owe to government?
- Avoiding going to court?
- Registering land that does not belong to them?

(% who say "somewhat likely" or "very likely")

Paid bribe to obtain services | Liberia | 2018



Respondents who said they had contact with selected public services during the previous year were asked: And how often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour:

- For a teacher or school official in order to get the services you needed from the schools?
- For a health worker or clinic or hospital staff in order to get the medical care you needed?
- For a government official in order to get the document you needed?
- For a government official in order to get the services you needed?
- For a police officer in order to get the assistance you needed?
- For a police officer in order to avoid a problem during one of these encounters?

(Note: Figure excludes respondents who said they had no contact with these public services during the previous year.)

Citizens' role in fighting corruption

| Liberia | 2018

Ordinary people risk retaliation when they report incidents of corruption

61%

Ordinary people can fight corruption

52%

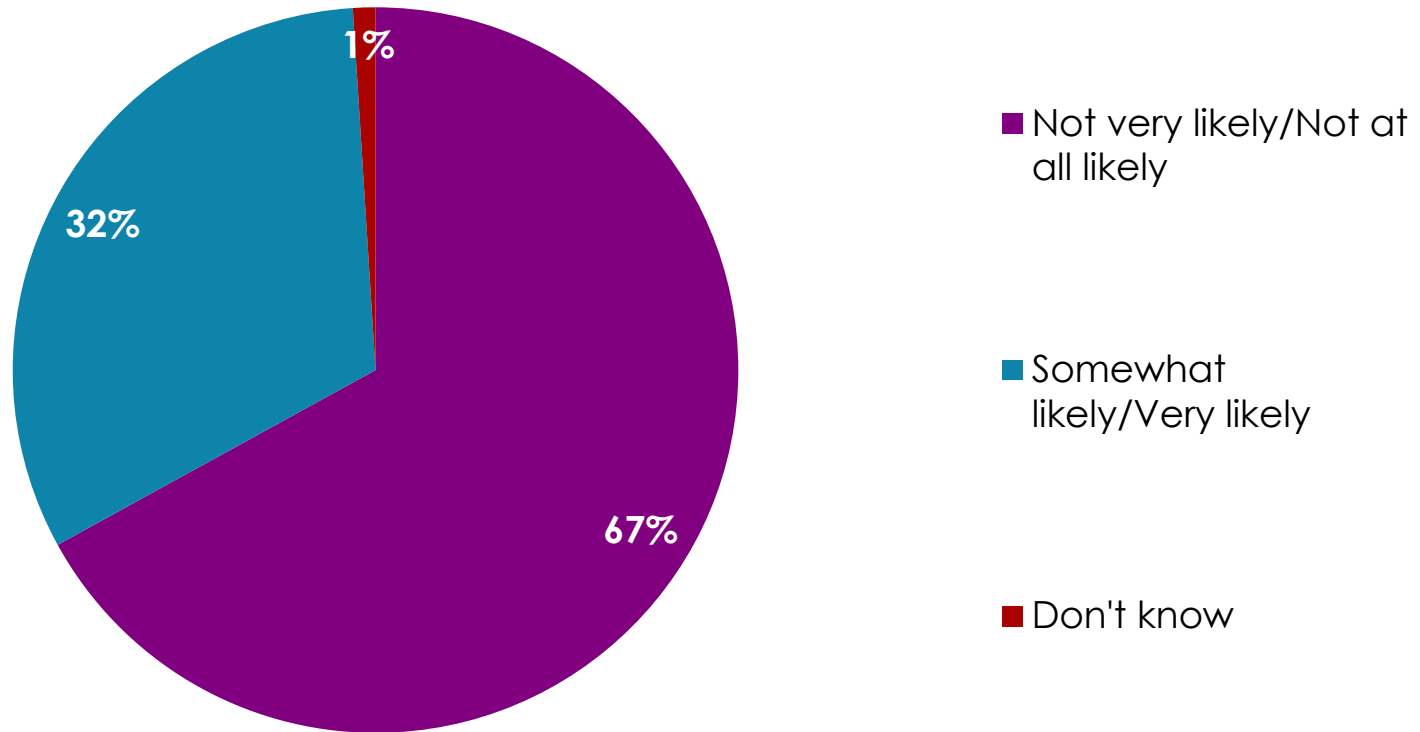
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Respondents were asked:

- Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption? (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

- 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? (% who say they risk negative consequences)

Will the authorities take action when corruption is reported? | Liberia | 2018



Respondents were asked: How likely is it that you could get someone to take action if you went to your local government council to report corrupt behaviour like misuse of funds or requests for bribes by government officers, police, or school or clinic staff?

Thank you

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