

Advision Lesotho  
Maseru, Lesotho  
30 June 2020

## News release

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### **Basotho support abolishing elections in favour of rule by the King, survey shows**

Two-thirds of Basotho would support abolishing elections and Parliament in favour of rule by the King, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

The finding seems to confirm and extend a 2017 Afrobarometer survey finding that three-fourths (75%) of citizens wanted the King to "have more say on issues of national importance."

The King is also the most widely trusted leader or institution in Lesotho, trusted by about five times as many citizens as the prime minister.

These evaluations are recorded against a background of constant political instability, including government collapses resulting in three national elections in the space of five years and the destabilizing of governance institutions.

#### **Key findings:**

- Two-thirds (66%) of Basotho say elections and Parliament should be abolished so that the King can govern the country, including a majority (57%) who "strongly approve" of the idea (Figure 1).
- Rule by the King is particularly popular among the youngest respondents (71%), women (70%), and those who are not close to any political party (70%). Only among those with post-secondary education do fewer than half (49%) favour the idea (Figure 2).
- Rule by the King wins greater support than "democracy" (51%) and three authoritarian alternatives – one-party rule (55%), military rule (23%), and one-man rule by the prime minister (23%) (Figure 3).
- More than seven in 10 Basotho (71%) say they trust the King "somewhat" or "a lot," the highest trust rating among key leaders and institutions. No more than one in five respondents express trust for Parliament (20%), opposition parties (19%), then-Prime Minister Thomas Thabane (14%), and ruling coalition parties (12%) (Figure 4).

#### **Afrobarometer**

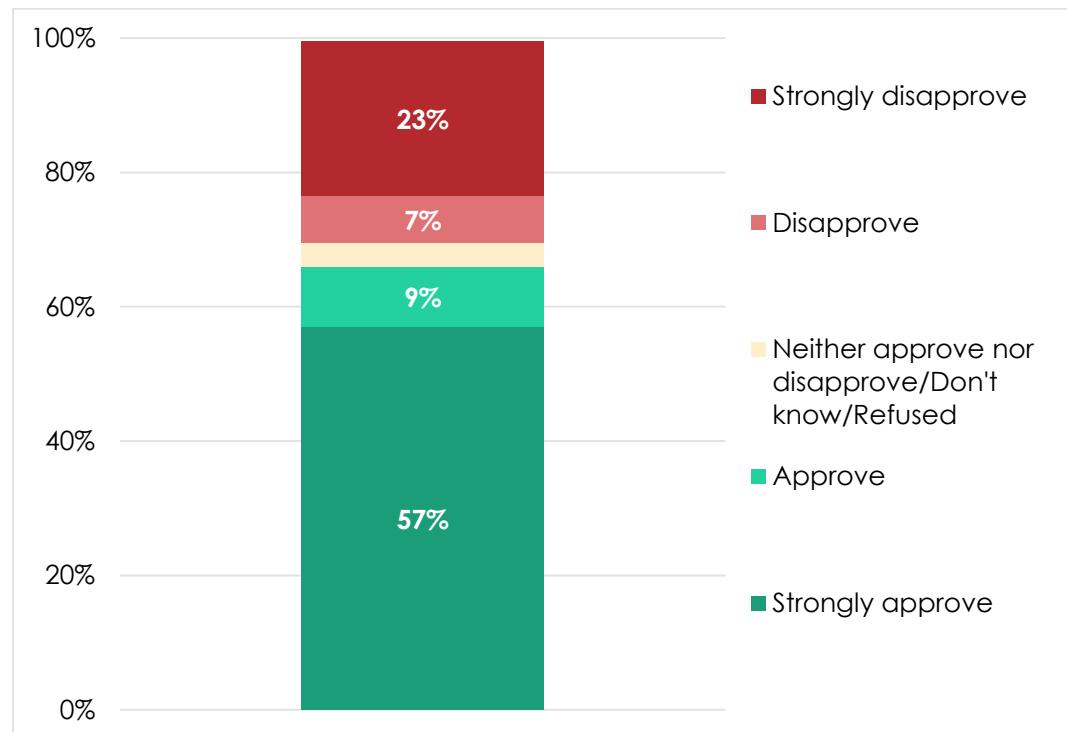
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advision Lesotho, interviewed 1,200 adult Basotho in February-March 2020. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error

of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

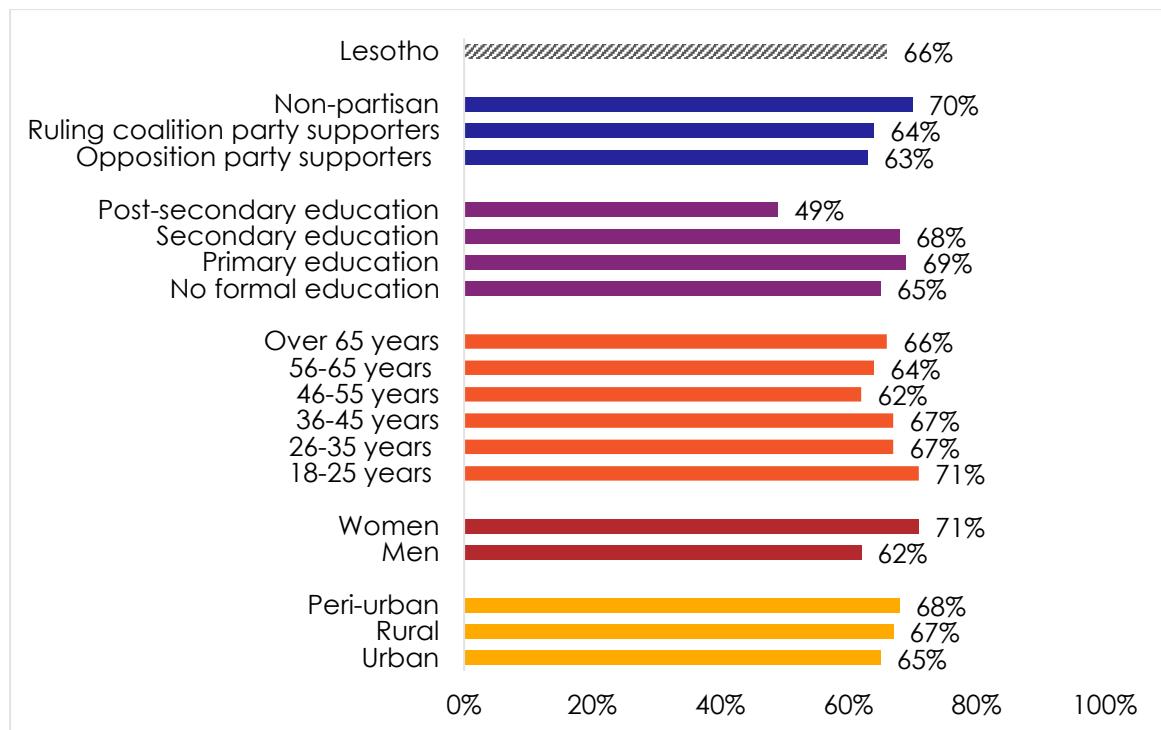
## Charts

**Figure 1: Abolish elections and Parliament and let the King govern? | Lesotho | 2020**



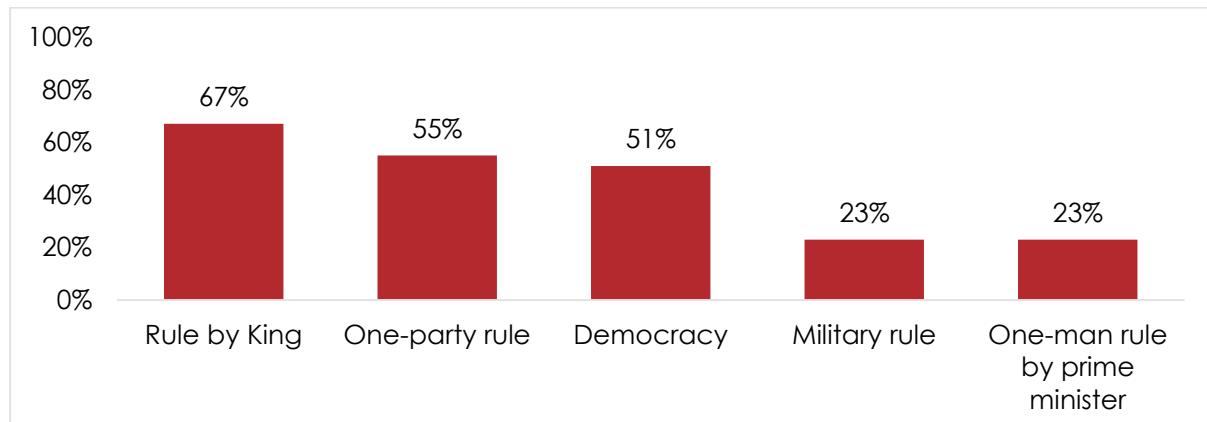
**Respondents were asked:** There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the King can govern the country?

**Figure 2: Support for letting the King govern | by socio-demographic group | Lesotho | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:** There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the King can govern the country? (% who "approve" or "strongly approve")

**Figure 3: Support for various political regimes | Lesotho | 2020**



**Respondents were asked:**

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

Only one 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 prime minister can decide everything?

Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the King can govern the country?

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

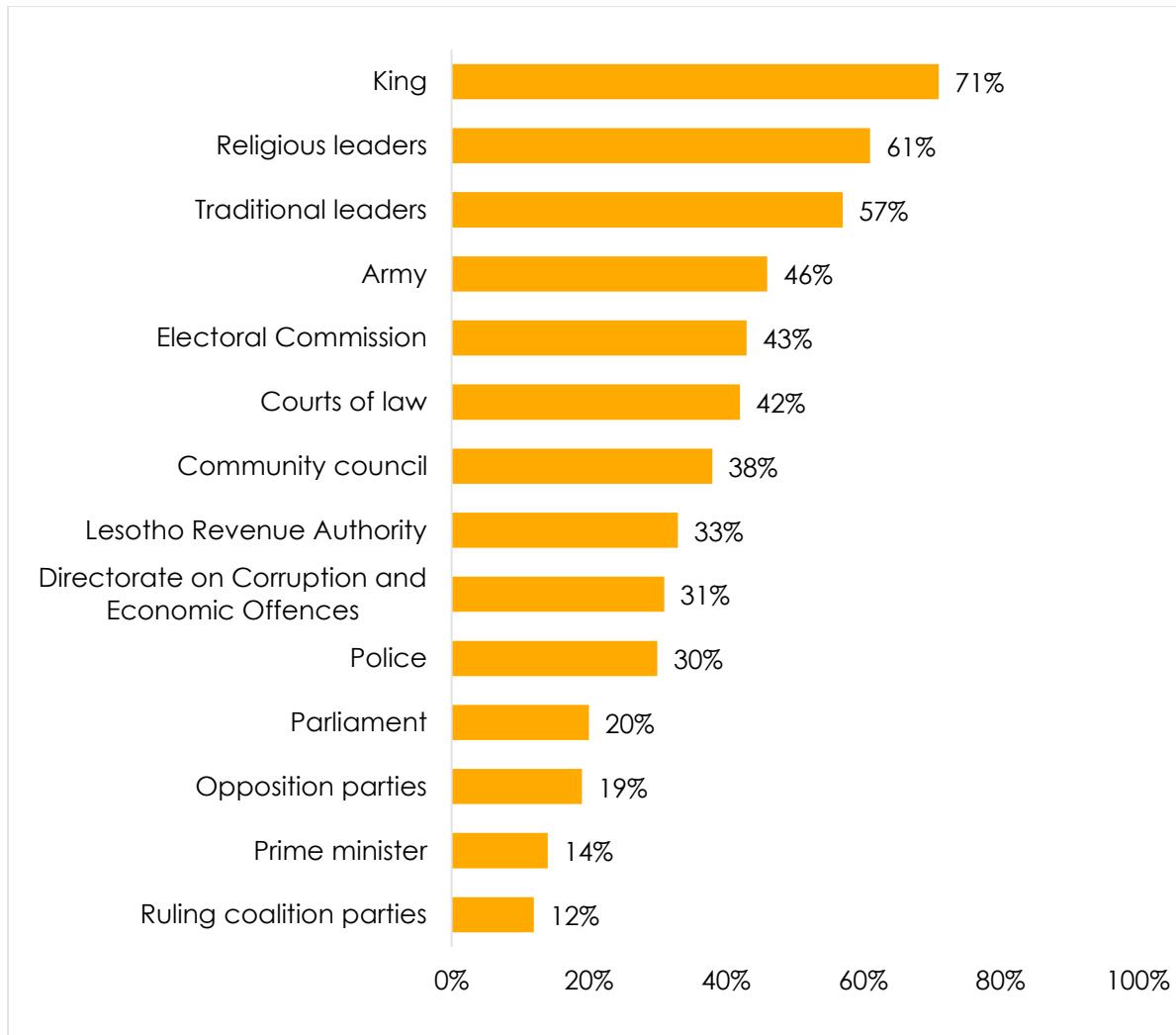
Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

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)

**Figure 4: Trust in leaders and institutions | Lesotho | 2020**



**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")

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