

Highlights of findings on democracy in West Africa

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WADEMOS Annual Conference

Anyway Chingwete
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Afrobarometer

At a glance

Support for democracy

- On average across 15 West African countries, support for democracy remains robust.
- Growing majorities call for government accountability and the rule of law, and support for other democratic norms has held steady over the past decade.
- But across 13 West African countries surveyed consistently over the past decade, support for democracy has declined and opposition to military rule has weakened.
- West Africans are less likely to reject military rule (58%) than the rest of the African citizens (66%).
- More than half of West Africans (56% across 15 countries) are willing to accept a military takeover if elected leaders “abuse power for their own ends.”



Supply of democracy

- Fewer than half (48%) of West Africans think their countries are mostly or completely democratic, and only 39% say they are satisfied with the way democracy works in their countries.

What is Afrobarometer

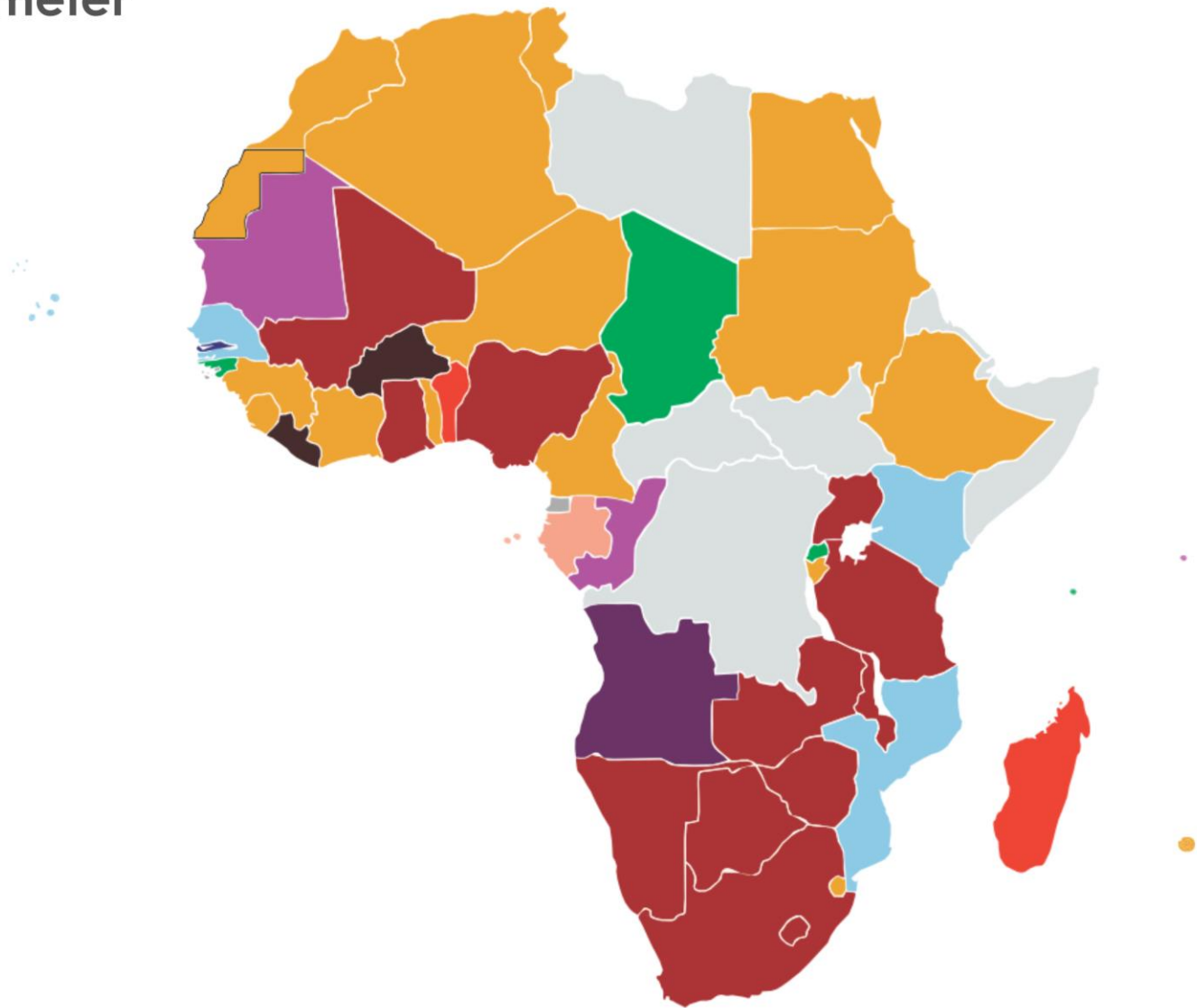
- Pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life.
- Goal: To give African publics a voice in policy and decision making.
- Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999.
- Round 10 surveys were launched in January 2024 and are expected to run to mid 2025.



Where Afrobarometer works

First survey in

- Round 1 (1999/2001)
- Round 2 (2002/2003)
- Round 3 (2005/2006)
- Round 4 (2008/2009)
- Round 5 (2011/2013)
- Round 6 (2014/2015)
- Round 7 (2016/2018)
- Round 8 (2019/2021)
- Round 9 (2021/2023)
- Round 10 (2024/2025)
- Not yet surveyed



Methodology

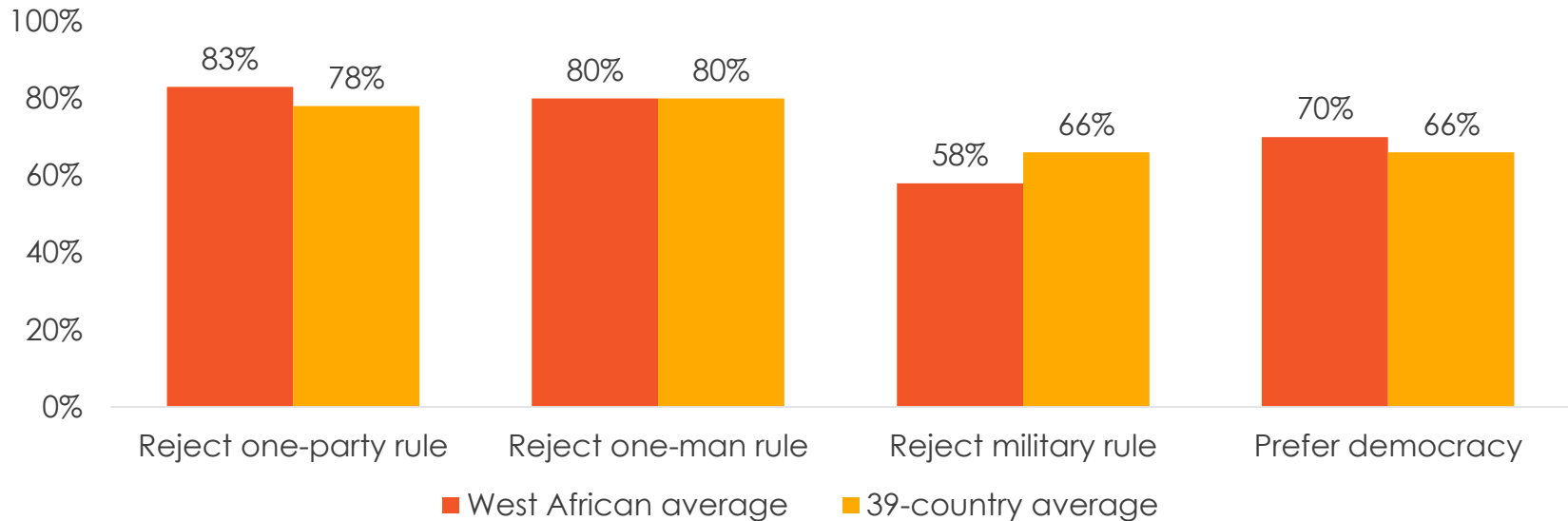
- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens (aged 18+)
- Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice
- Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.
- Sample sizes of 1,200 or 2,400 yield country-level results with margins of sampling error of +/-2 or 3 percentage points.



Democracy in Africa: Trends in popular support and satisfaction



Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule | West Africa vs Africa | 2021/2023



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 say democracy is preferable)

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 "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

Prefer democracy to any other alternative

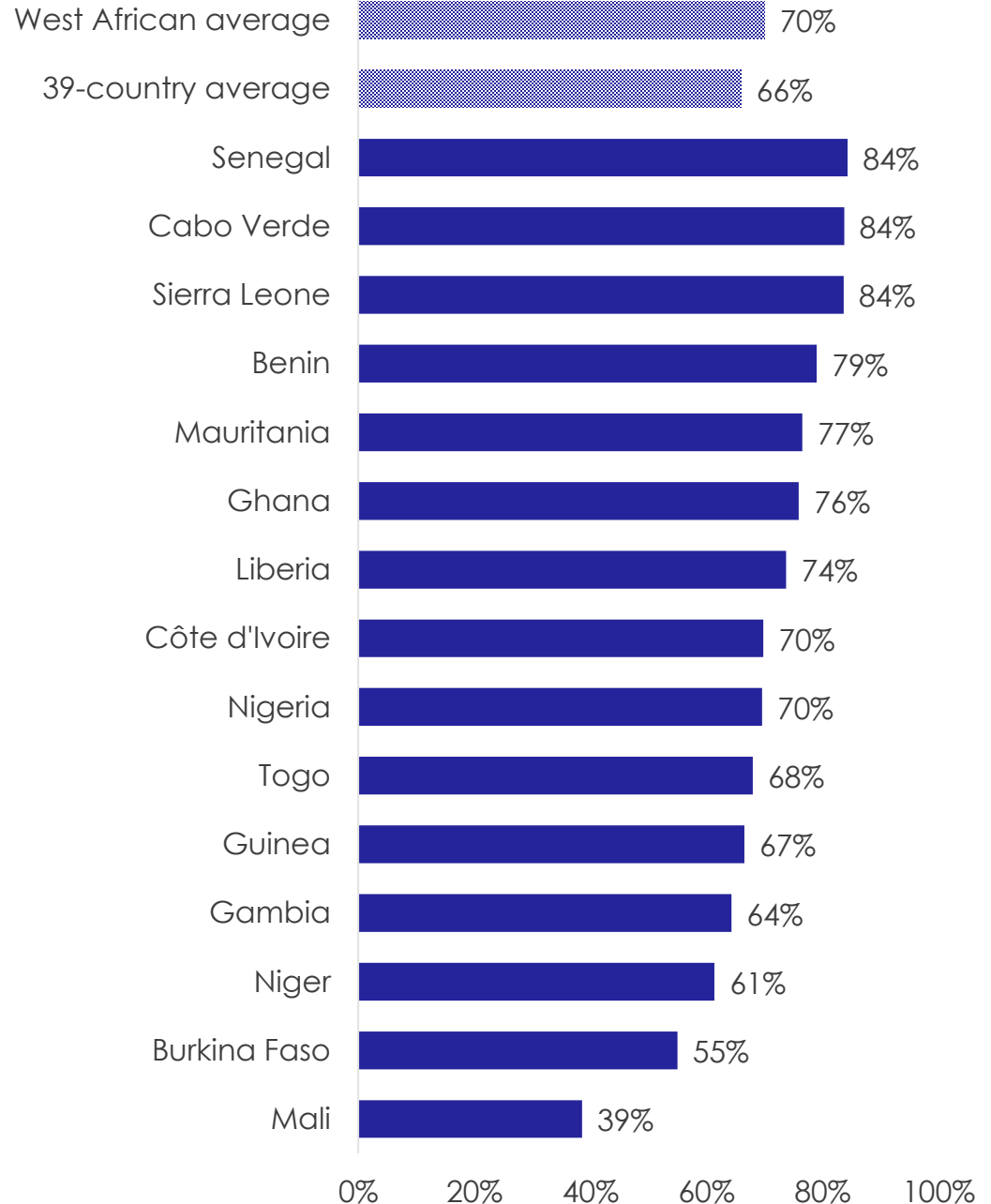
| 15 West African countries

| 2021/2023

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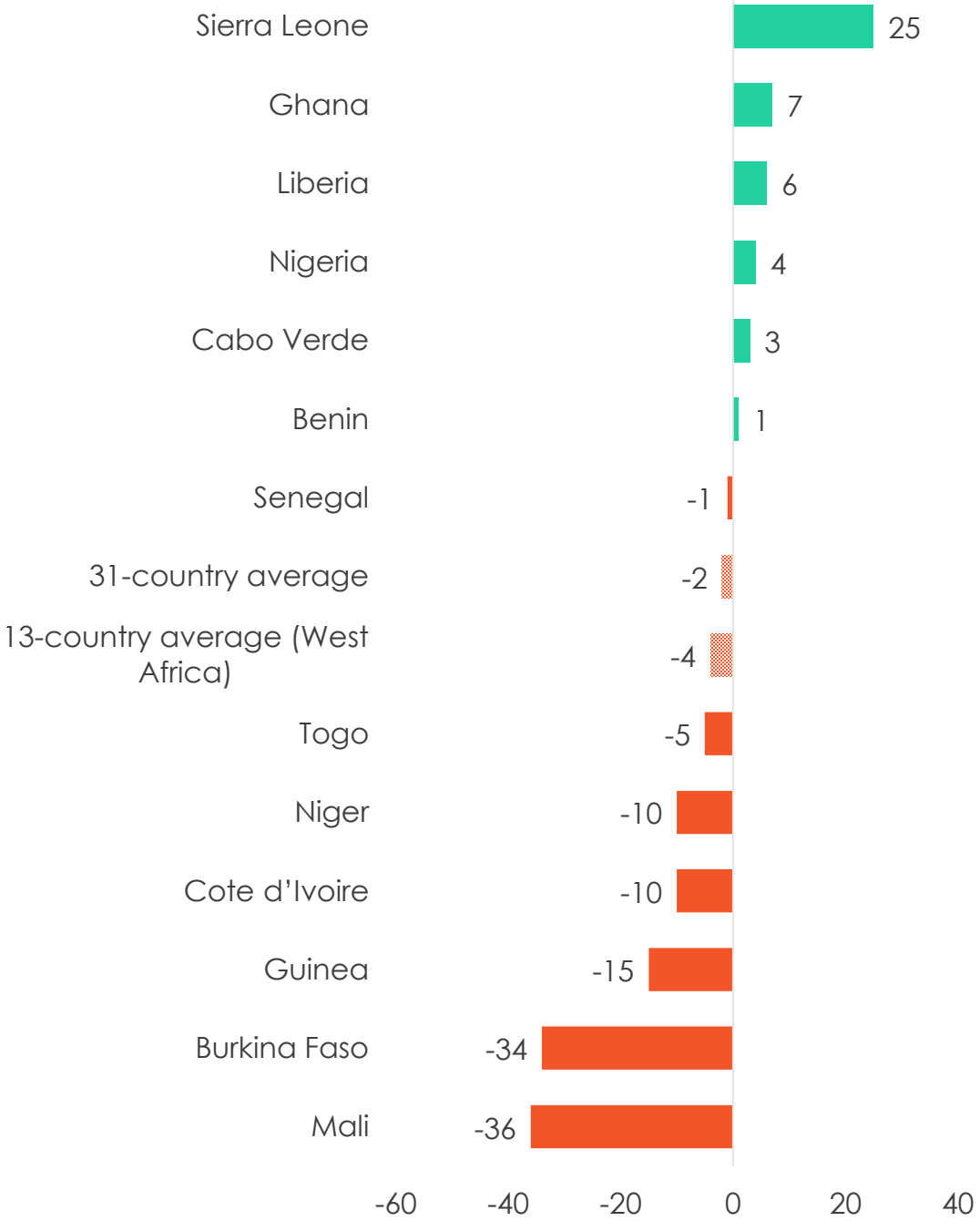
Changes in preference for democracy

| 13 West African countries

| 2014-2023



Figure shows changes (in percentage points) of the proportion between 2014/2015 and 2021/2023 who say democracy "is preferable to any other kind of government".



Reject one-party rule

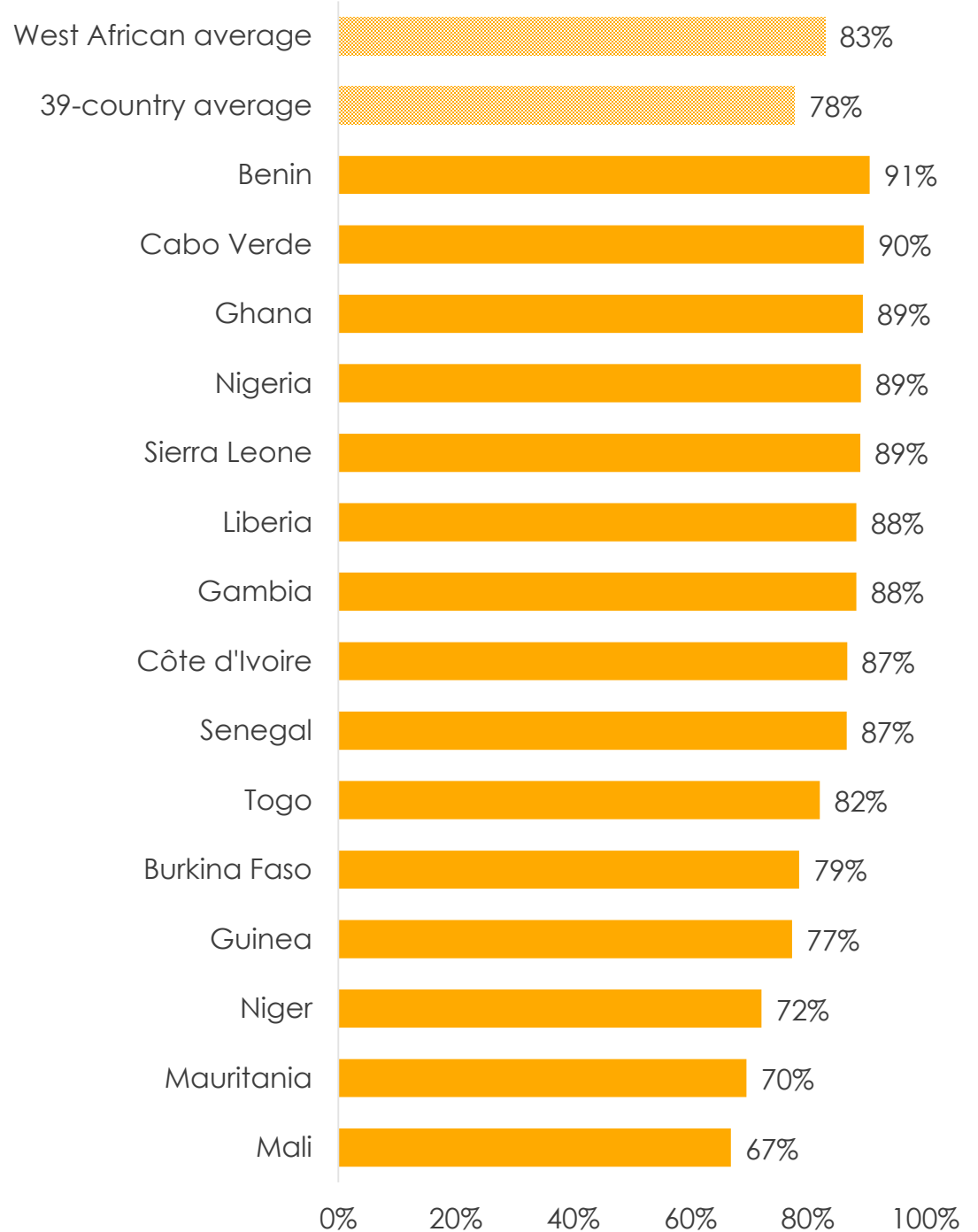
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(% who “disapprove” or “strongly disapprove”)



Reject one-man rule

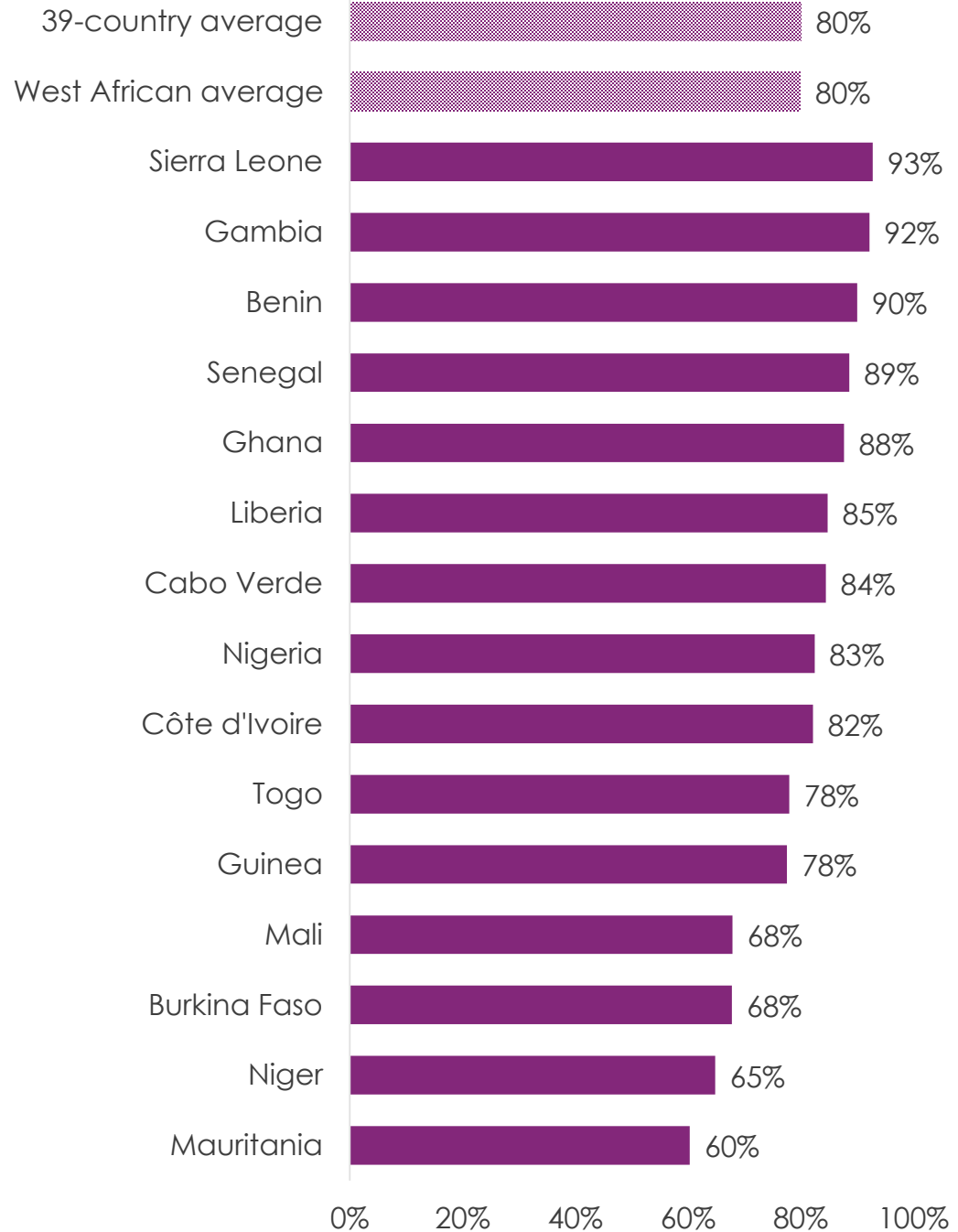
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Reject military rule

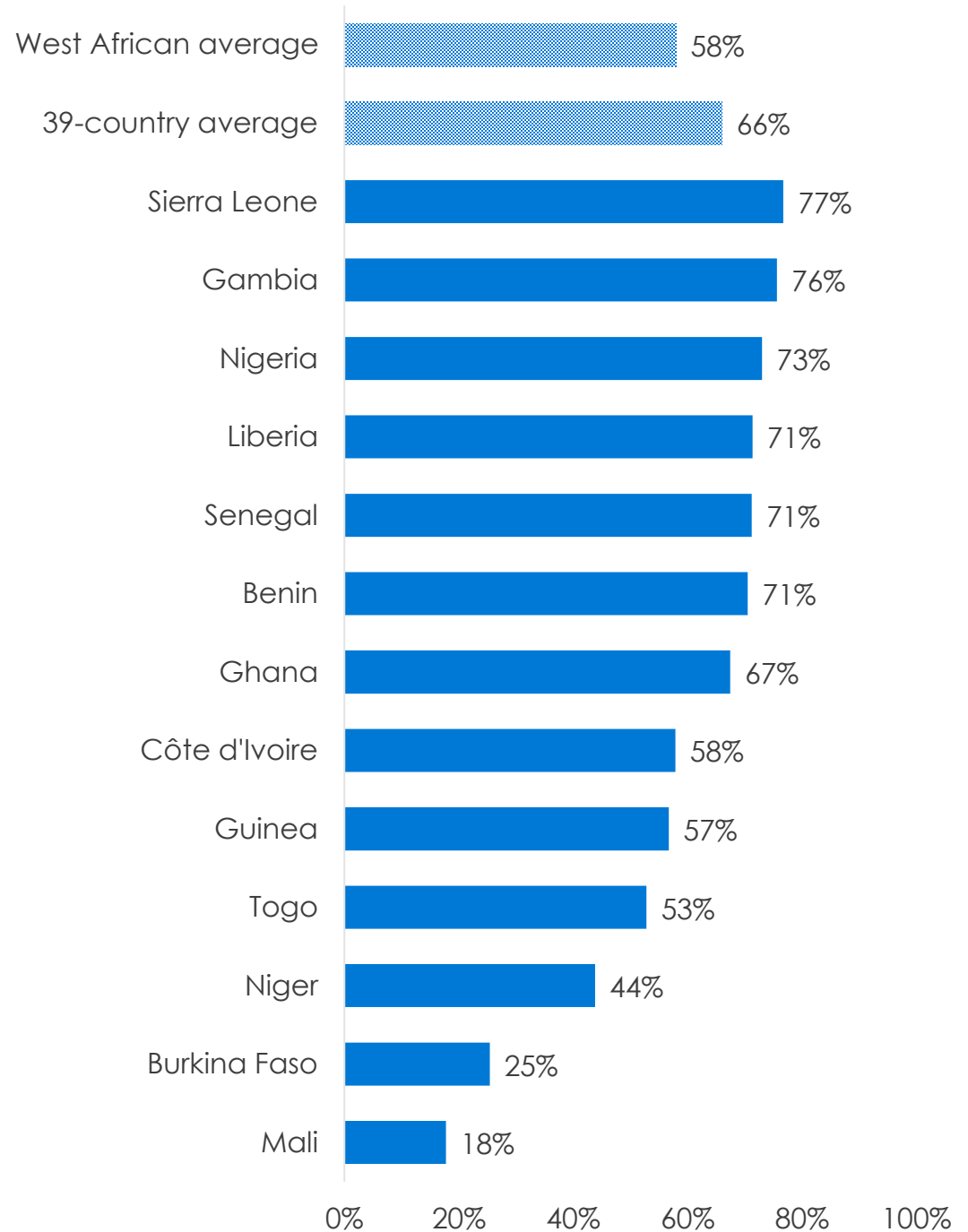
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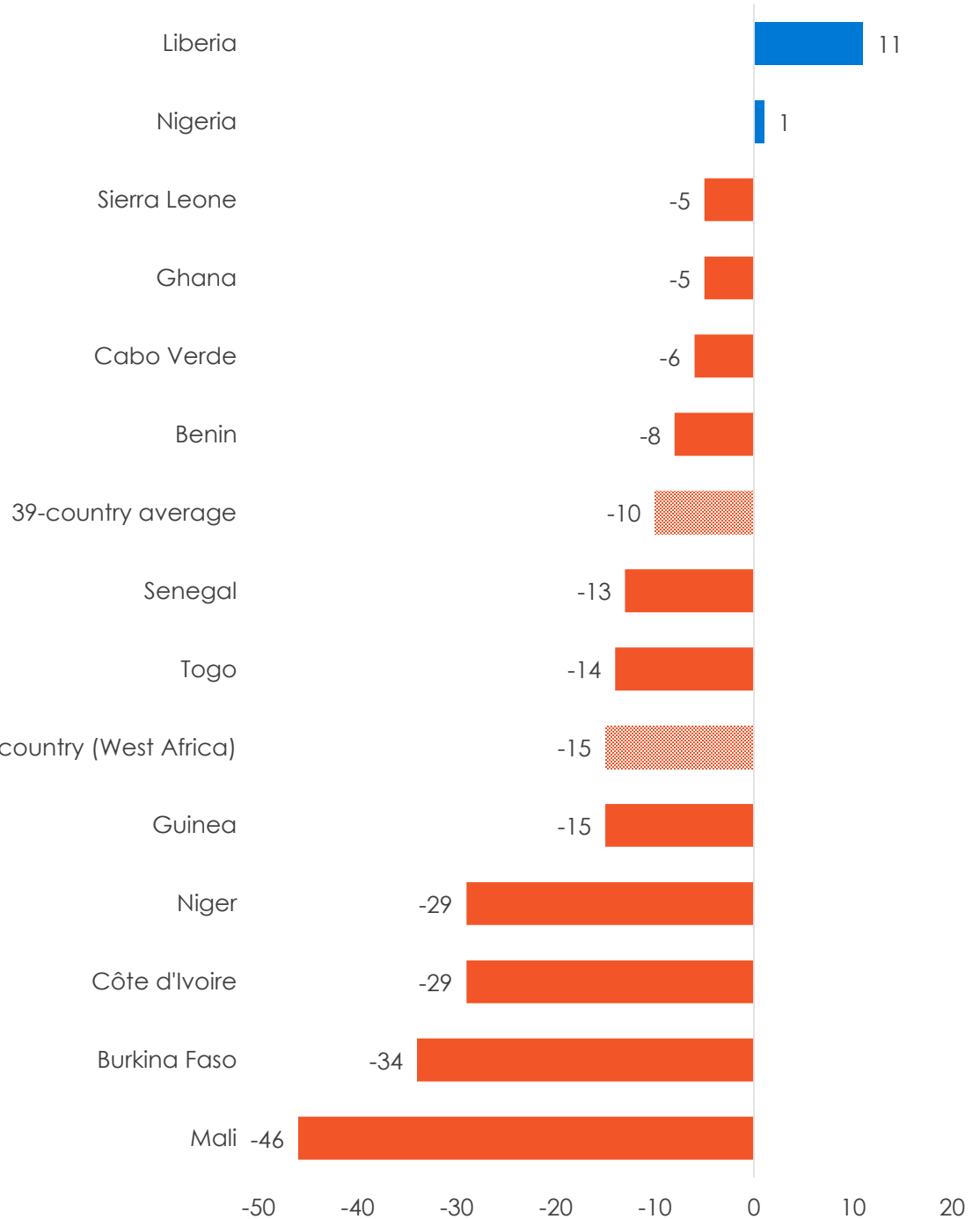
(% who “disapprove” or “strongly disapprove”)



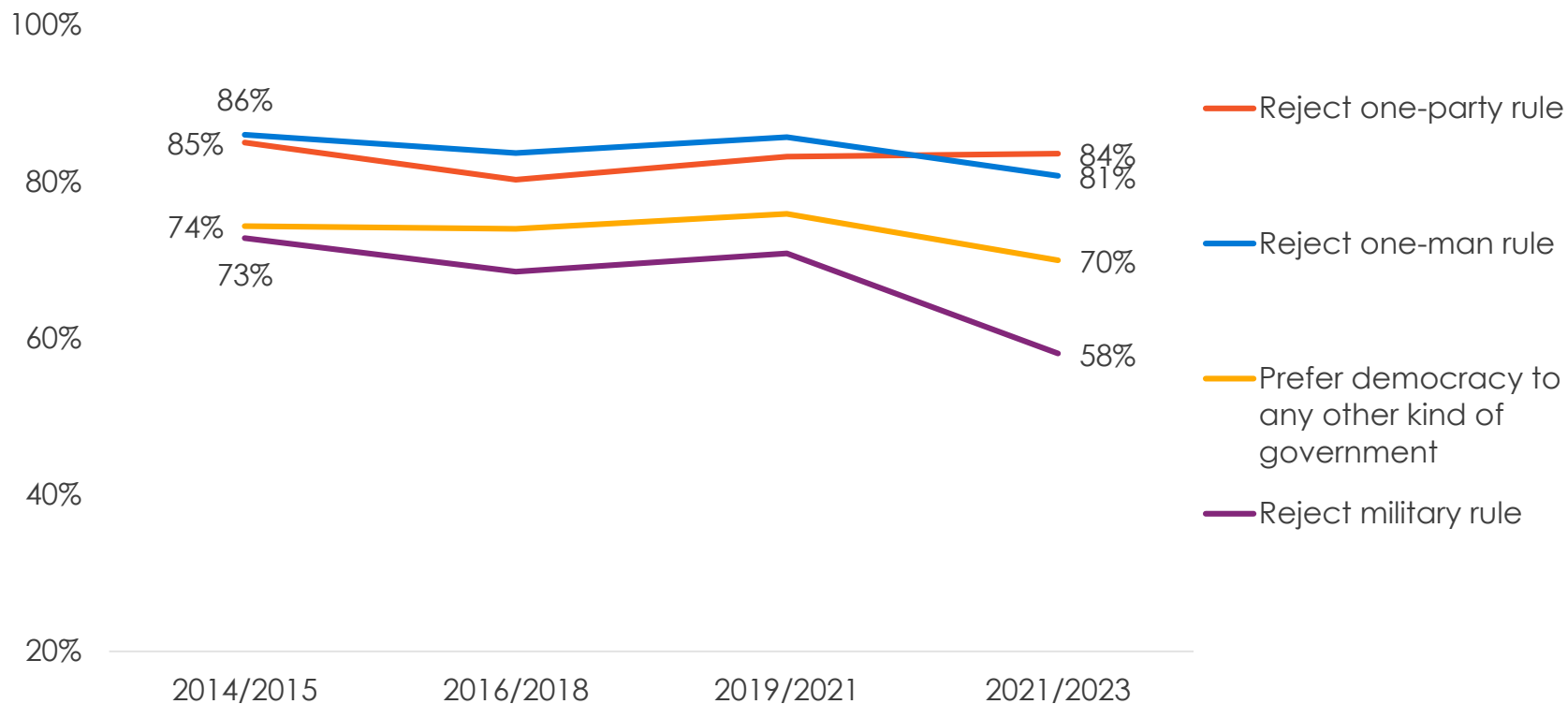
Changes in rejection of military rule (percentage points)

| 13 West African countries
| 2014-2023

Figure shows changes (in percentage points) of the proportion between 2011/2013 and 2021/2023 who “disapprove” or “strongly disapprove” of the idea that “the army comes in to govern the country.”



Trends in support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule | 13 African countries | 2014-2023



Support for multiparty competition

| 15 West African countries

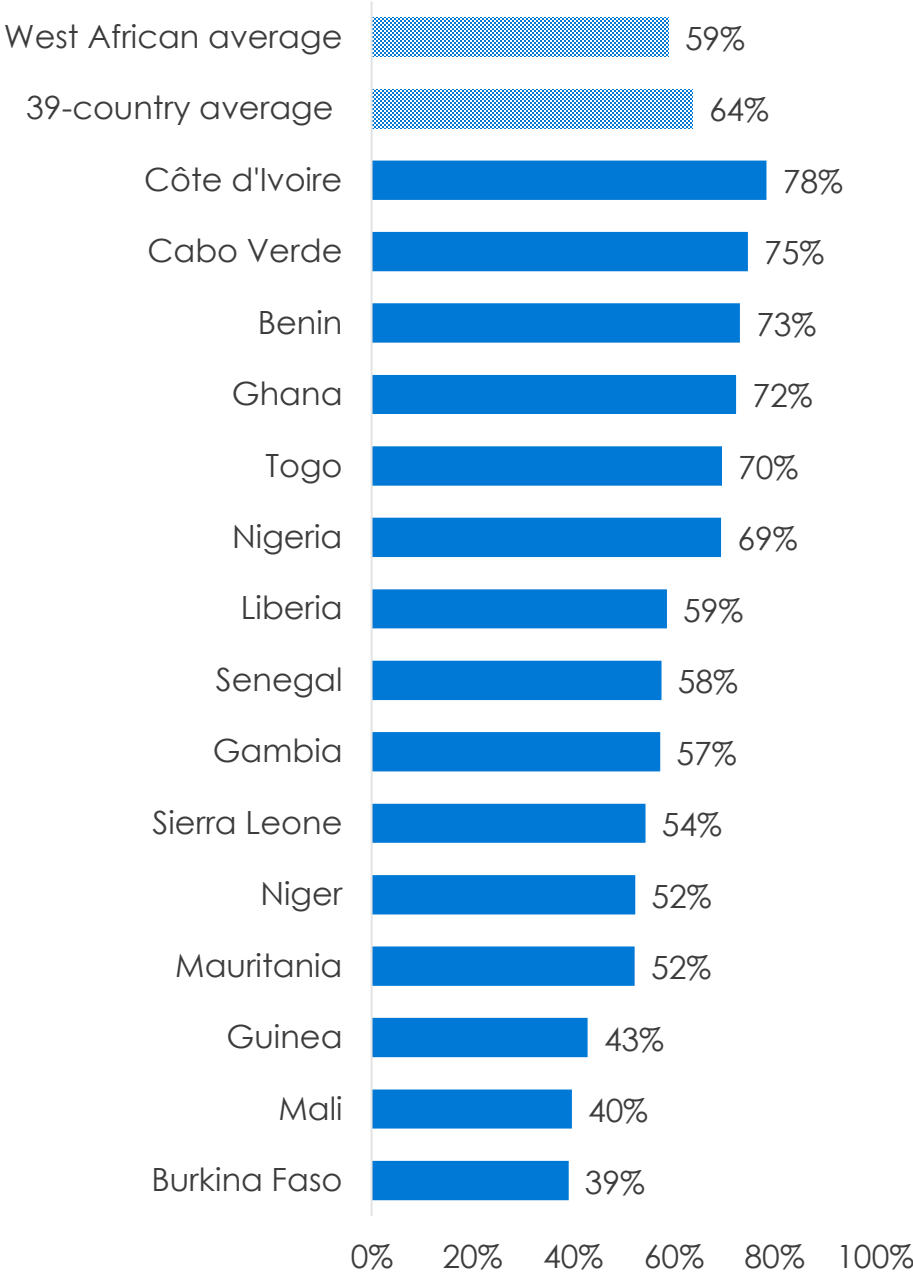
| 2021/2023

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 [country].

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

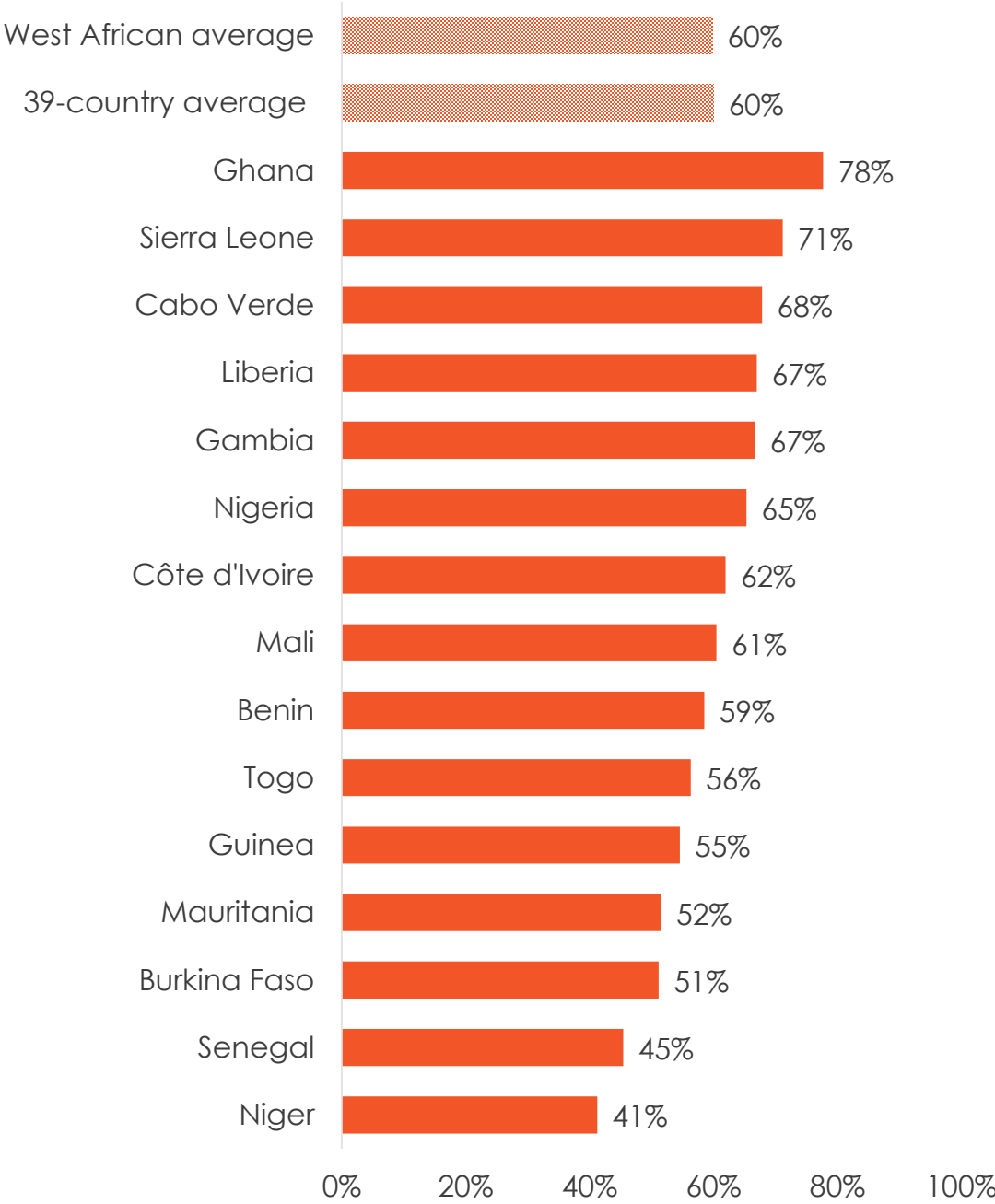


Support for accountable governance | 15 West African countries | 2021/2023

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

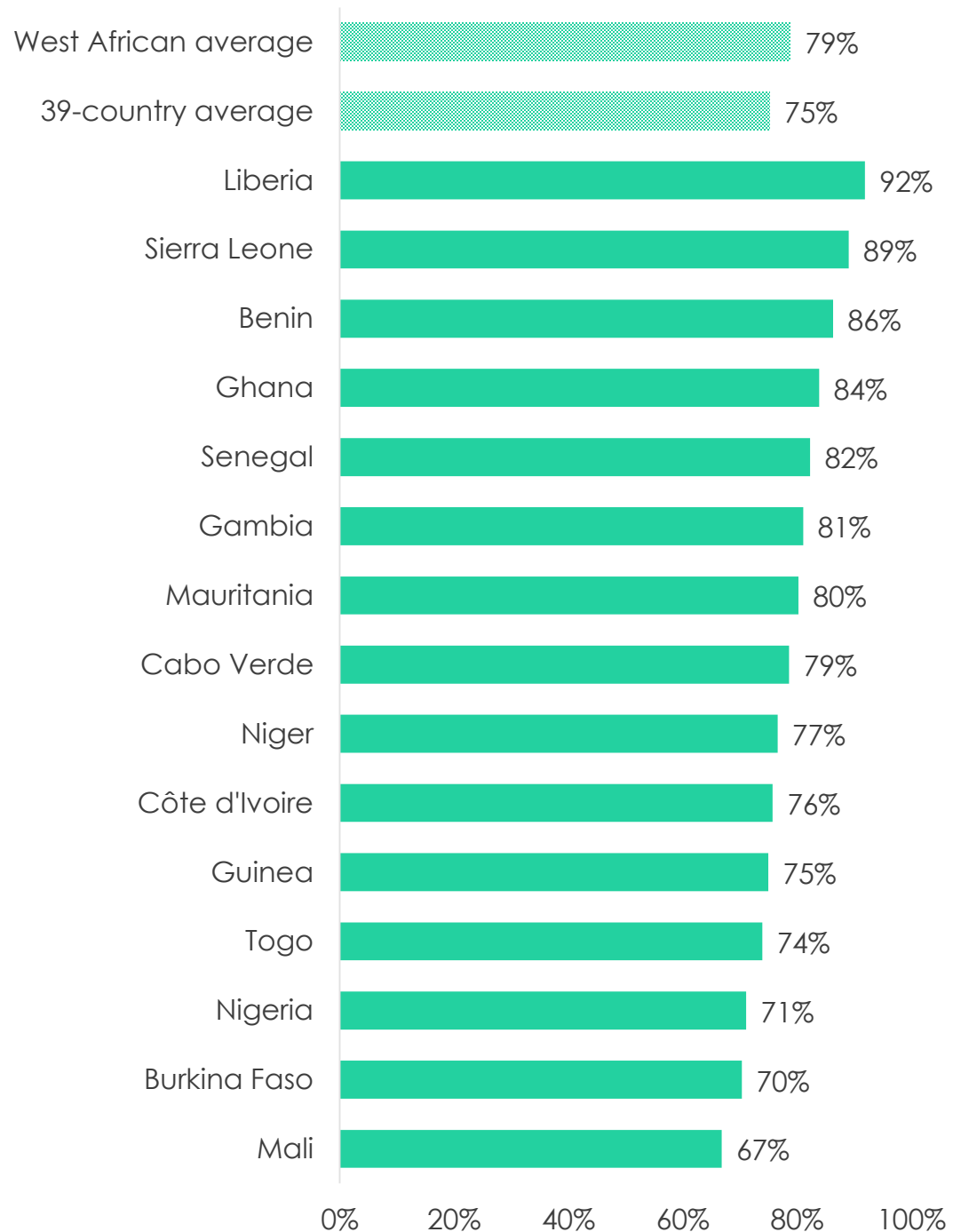
Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does.

Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold the government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly. (% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with statement 2)



Support for elections | 15 West African countries | 2021/2023

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 "strongly agree" that leaders should be chosen through elections)

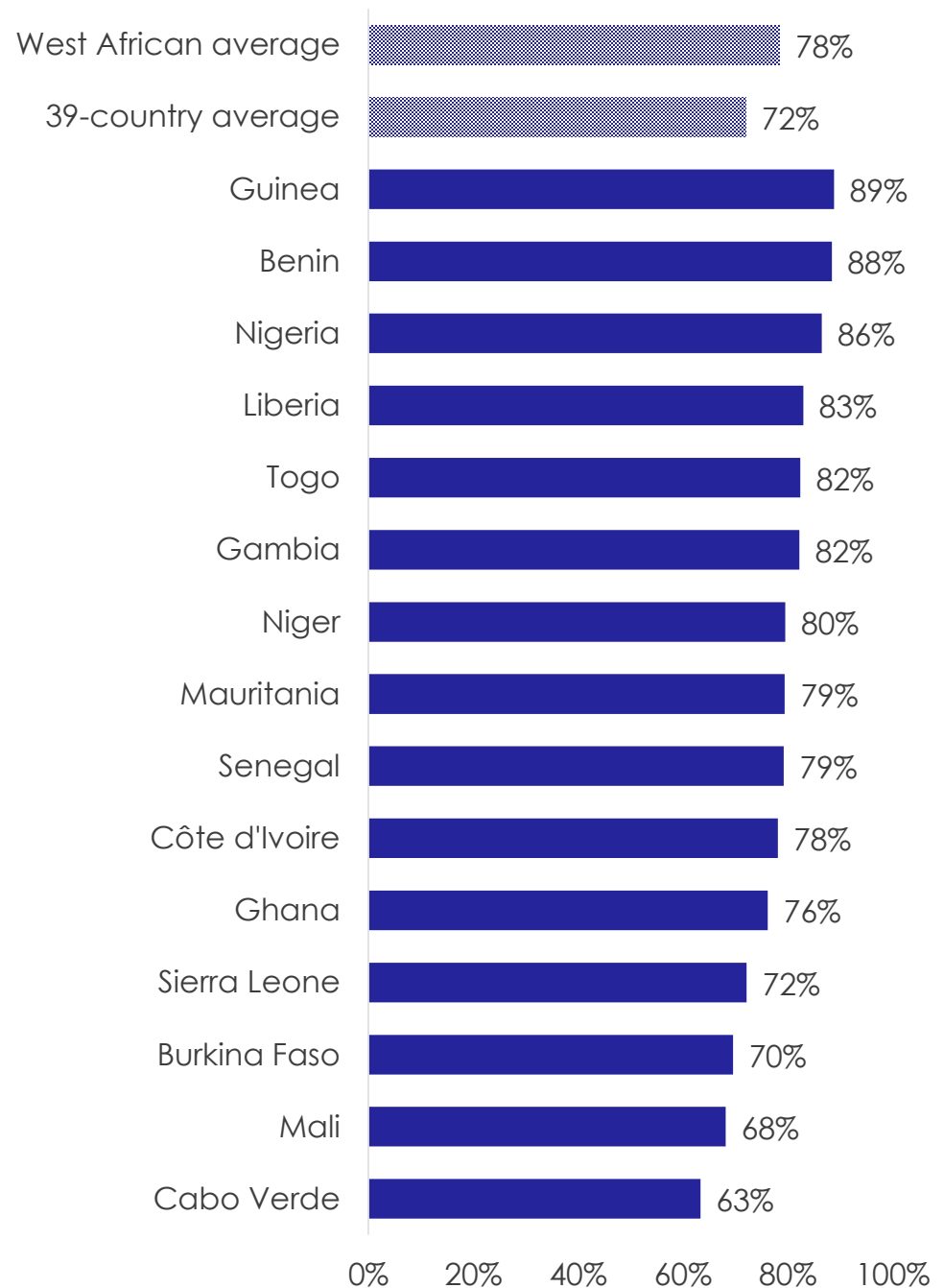


Support for presidential term limit | 15 West African countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked:

Which of these statements is closest to your own opinion?
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 “strongly agree” with Statement 1)



The military can intervene in politics if elected leaders abuse power

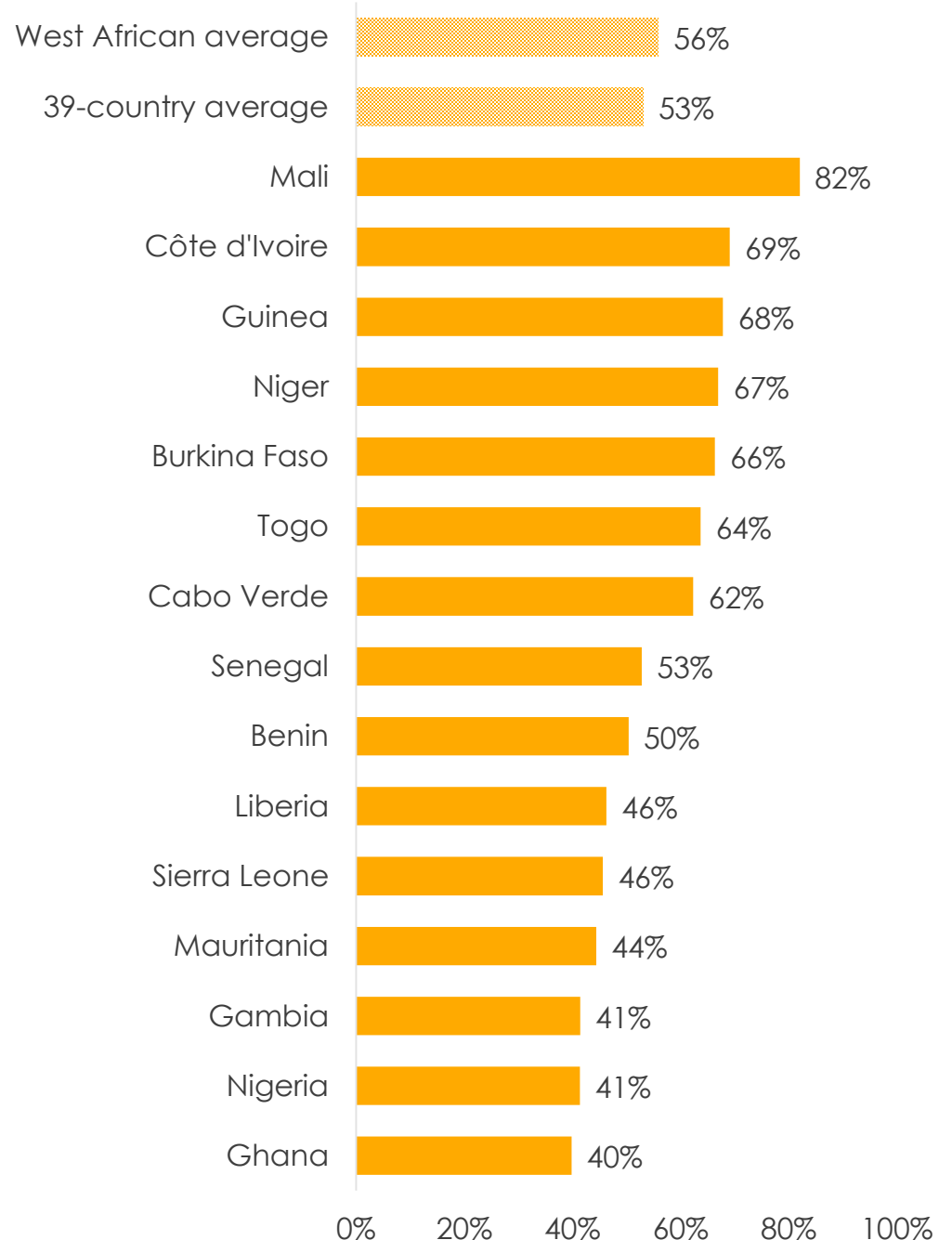
| 15 West African countries
| 2021/2023

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

Statement 1: [Country]'s armed forces should never intervene in the country's political process.

Statement 2: It is legitimate for the armed forces to take control of government when elected leaders abuse power for their own ends.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement 2)



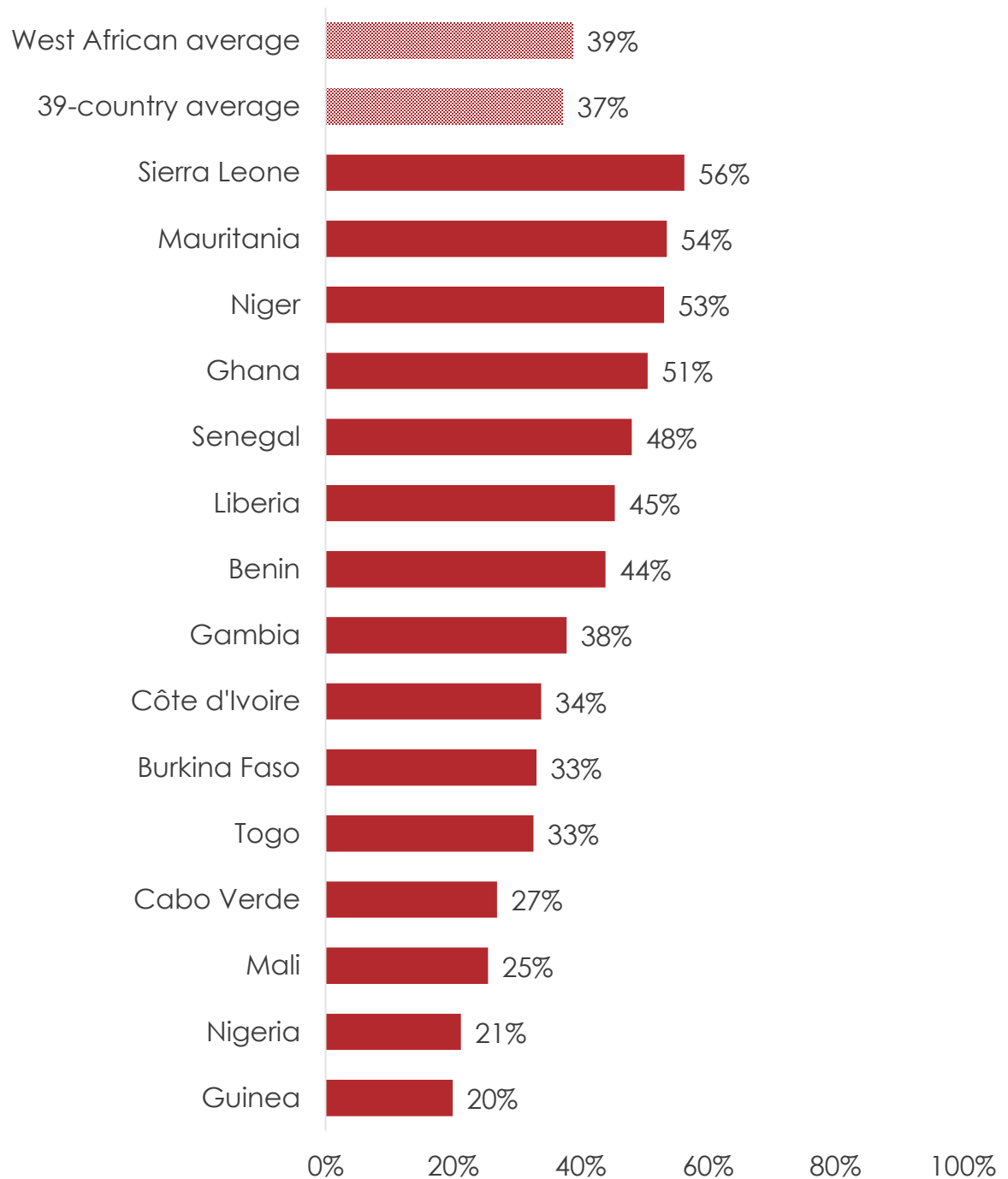
Satisfaction with democracy

| 15 West African countries

| 2021/2023

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

(% who say “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied”)

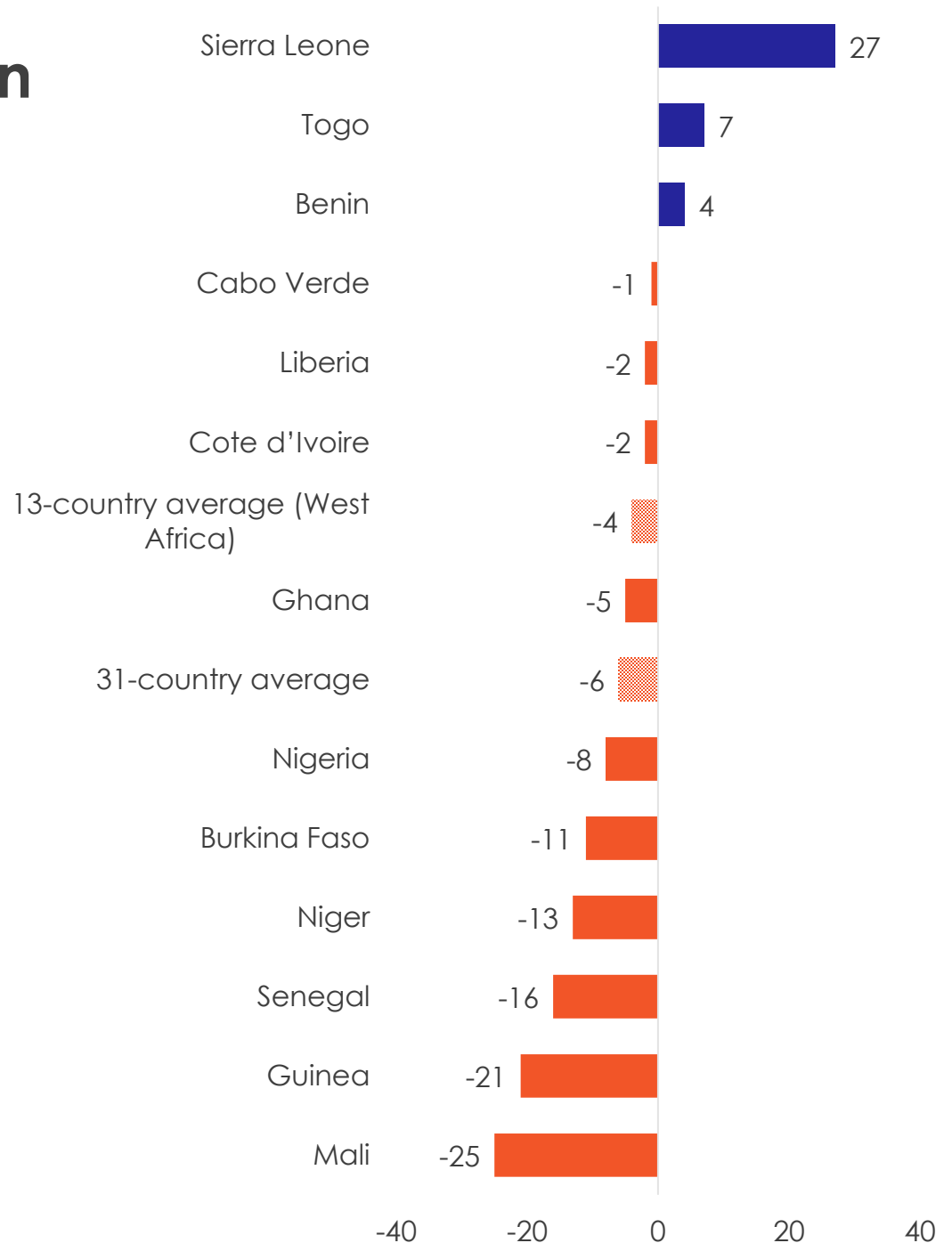


Changes in satisfaction with democracy (percentage points)

| 13 West African countries

| 2014-2023

Figure shows changes (in percentage points) of the proportion between 2014/2015 and 2021/2023 who say they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy is working in their country.

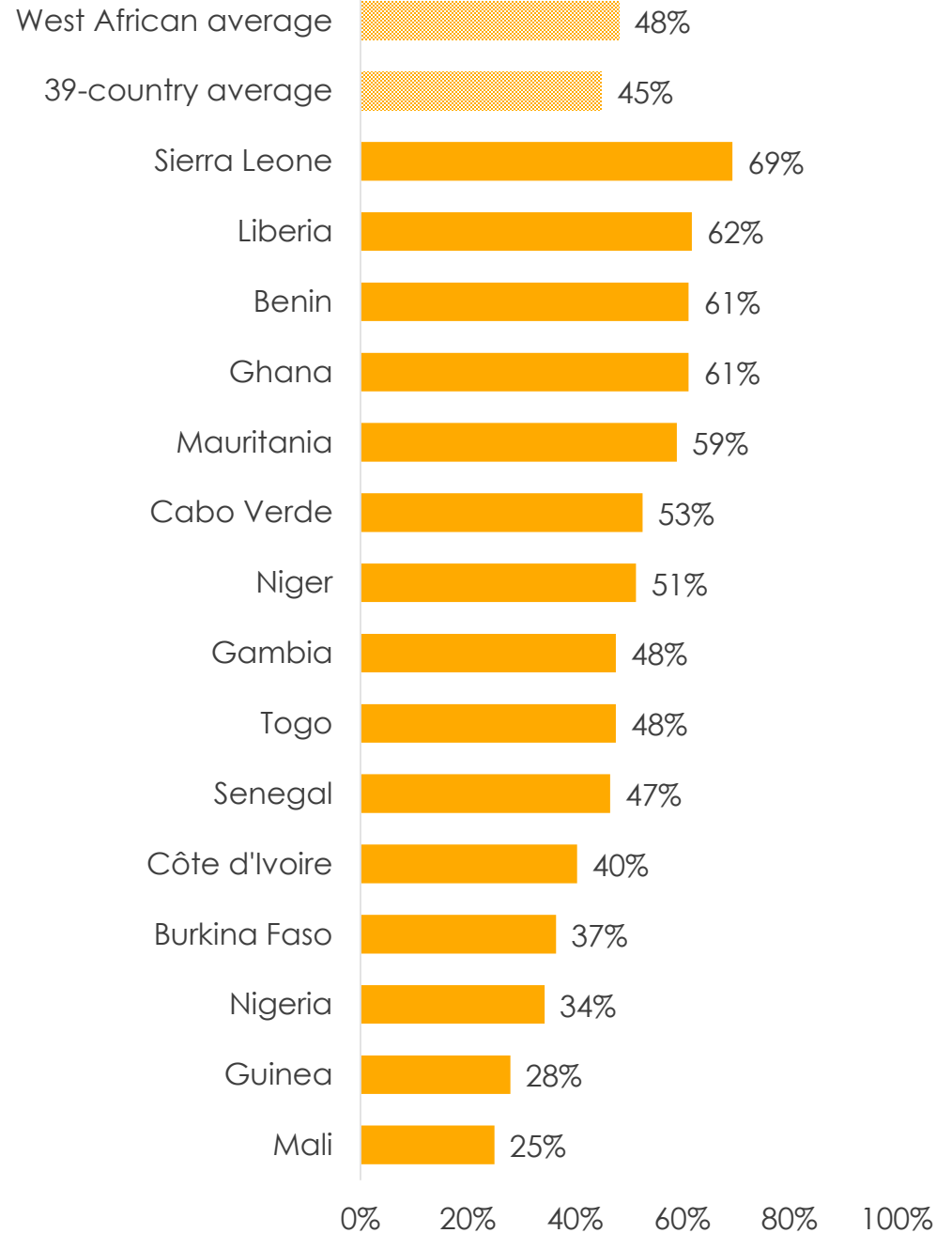


Perceive country to be a democracy

| 15 West African countries

| 2021/2023

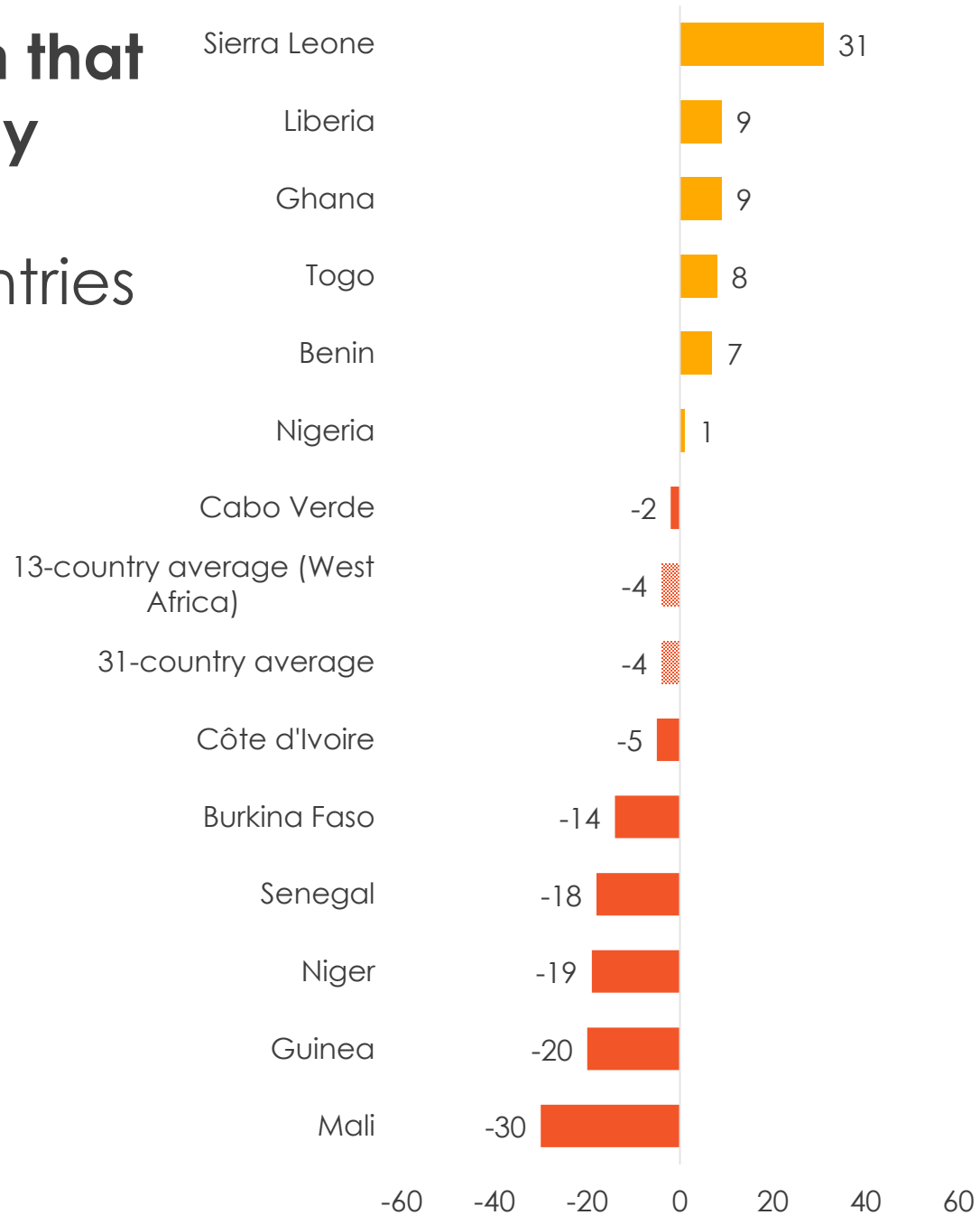
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is [country] today? (% who say “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems)*



Changes in perception that country is a democracy (percentage points)

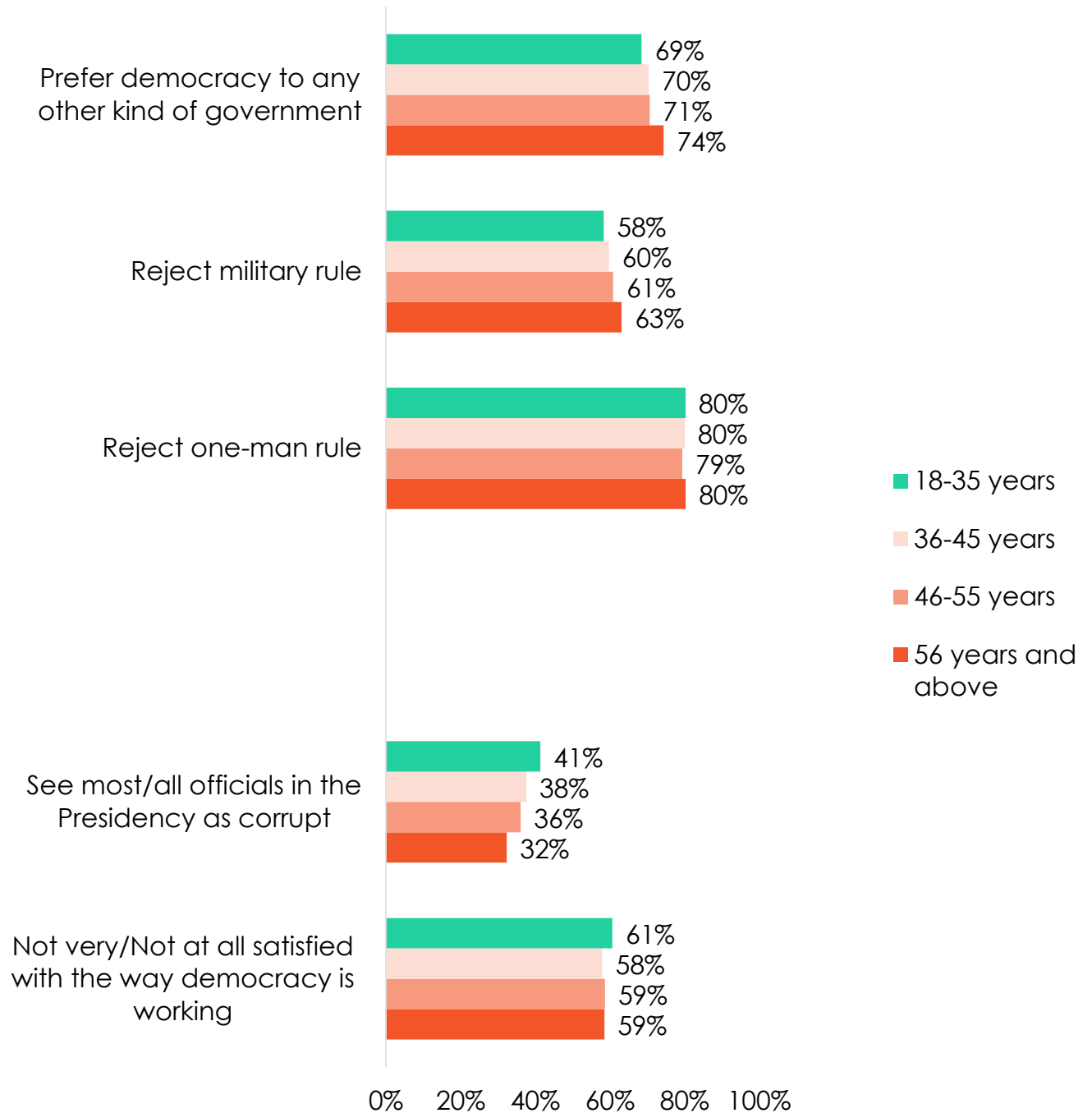
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Views on democracy and governance

| by age group
| 15 countries
| 2021/2023



Democracy country scorecards



Democracy in Ghana | The people's perspective | 2024



Demand for democracy

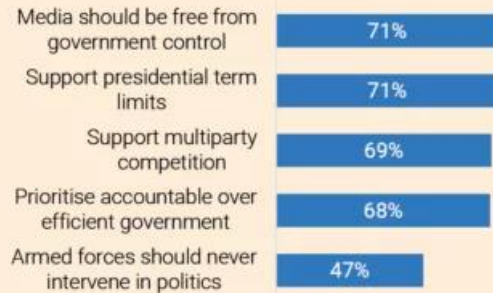
Support democracy, reject authoritarian alternatives



2012 2014 2017 2019 2022 2024

- Reject one-party rule
- Reject one-man rule
- Prefer democracy to any other kind of government
- Reject military rule

Views on democratic norms and practices



Supply of democracy

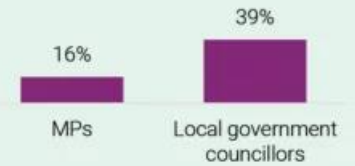
Extent of and satisfaction with democracy



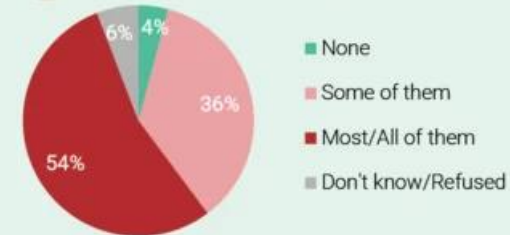
2012 2014 2017 2019 2022 2024

- Country is a democracy (full or with minor problems)
- Fairly/Very satisfied with how democracy is working

Elected officials often/always listen to citizens

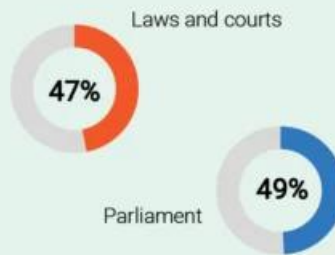


Corruption in the Presidency



Rule of law

President rarely/never ignores ...



Political freedoms (somewhat/completely free)



In Round 10, national partner Ghana Center for Democratic Development interviewed 2,400 adult Ghanaians in August 2024. Results have a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. More at www.afrobarometer.org.



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Democracy in Gambia | The people's perspective | 2024



Demand for democracy

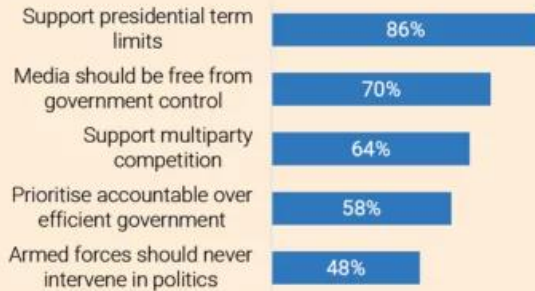
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2018 2021 2022 2024

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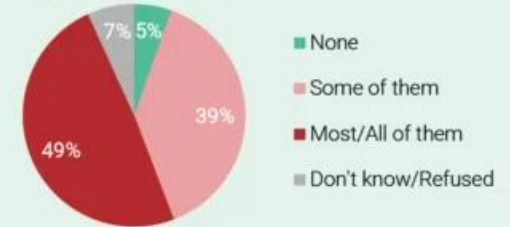
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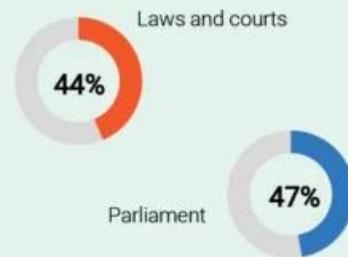


Corruption in the Presidency



Rule of law

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Political freedoms (somewhat/completely free)



In Round 10, national partner Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies (CepRass) interviewed 1,200 adult Gambians in April-May 2024. Results have a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. More at www.afrobarometer.org.



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La démocratie au Bénin | Le point de vue du peuple | 2024



Demande de démocratie

Soutien à la démocratie, rejet des alternatives autocratiques



2011 2014 2017 2020 2022 2024

- Rejetent la dictature
- Rejetent le régime de parti unique
- Préfèrent la démocratie à tout autre système
- Rejetent le régime militaire

Opinions sur les normes et pratiques démocratiques



Offre de démocratie

Niveau et satisfaction avec la démocratie

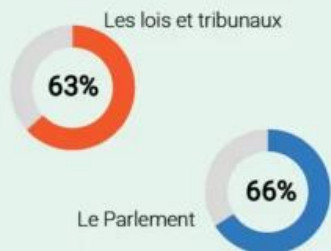


2011 2014 2017 2020 2022 2024

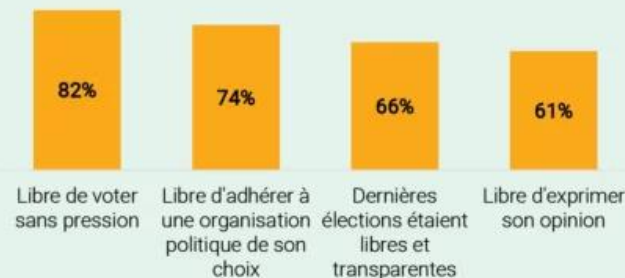
- Pays est une démocratie (pleine ou avec problèmes mineurs)
- Assez/Très satisfaits avec le fonctionnement de la démocratie

Etat de droit

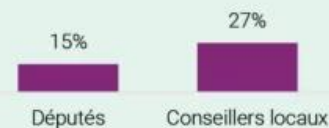
Le président ignore rarement/jamais ...



Libertés politiques (assez/entièrement libre)



Les élus écoutent souvent/toujours les citoyens



Corruption à la Présidence



Lors du Round 10, le partenaire national Innovante Recherche en Economie et Gouvernance a interrogé 1.200 adultes béninois en janvier-février 2024. Les résultats ont des marges d'erreur de +/-3 points de pourcentage à un niveau de confiance de 95%. Plus d'informations sur www.afrobarometer.org.



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Exigência da democracia

Apoio da democracia, rejeição das alternativas autoritárias



2011 2014 2017 2019 2022 2024

- Rejeição do governo de partido único
- Rejeição do governo de um líder forte
- Prefere a democracia do que outra forma de governo
- Rejeição de governo militar

Visão sobre as normas e práticas da democracia



Oferta da democracia

Extensão e satisfação com a democracia



2011 2014 2017 2019 2022 2024

- O país é uma democracia (completa ou com pequenos problemas)
- Razoavelmente/Muito satisfeito com a forma como a democracia funciona

Os funcionários eleitos ouvem frequentemente/sempre os cidadãos



Corrupção no Gabinete do Primeiro Ministro



Estado de direito

O presidente raramente/nunca ignora ...



Liberdades políticas (um pouco/completamente livre)



Na 10ª Ronda do Afrobarometer, o parceiro nacional Afrosondagem entrevistou 1.200 Caboverdianos adultos em Julho-Agosto de 2024. Os resultados têm uma margem de erro de +/-3 pontos percentuais a um nível de confiança de 95%. Veja mais em www.afrobarometer.org.



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Demande de démocratie

Soutien à la démocratie, rejet des alternatives autocratiques



2013 2014 2017 2019 2021 2024

- Rejetent le régime de parti unique
- Rejetent la dictature
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Opinions sur les normes et pratiques démocratiques



Offre de démocratie

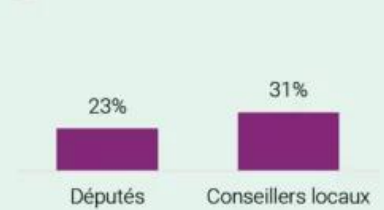
Niveau et satisfaction avec la démocratie



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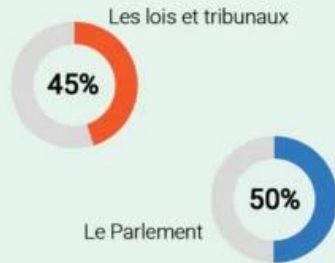


Corruption à la Présidence



Etat de droit

Le président ignore rarement/jamais ...



Libertés politiques (assez/entièrement libre)



Lors du Round 10, le partenaire national Zechlab a interrogé 1.200 adultes ivoiriens en janvier 2024. Les résultats ont des marges d'erreur de +/-3 points de pourcentage à un niveau de confiance de 95%. Plus d'informations sur www.afrobarometer.org.



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Democracy in Africa



Demande de démocratie

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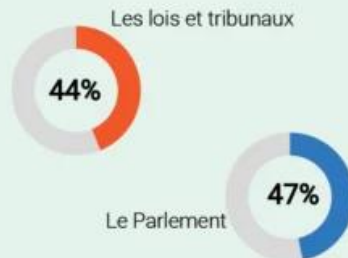


Corruption à la Présidence



Etat de droit

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Libertés politiques (assez/entièrement libre)



Lors du Round 10, le partenaire national Stat View International a interrogé 1.200 adultes guinéens en mai-juin 2024. Les résultats ont des marges d'erreur de +/-3 points de pourcentage à un niveau de confiance de 95%. Plus d'informations sur www.afrobarometer.org.

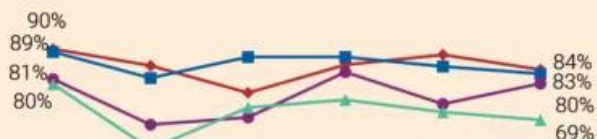


Democracy in Liberia | The people's perspective | 2024



Demand for democracy

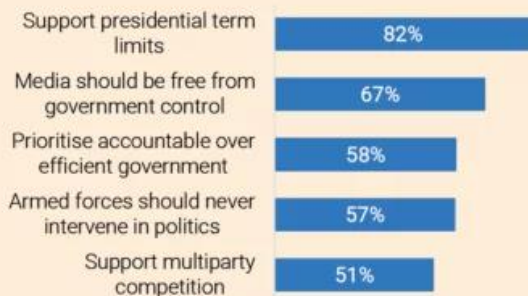
Support democracy, reject authoritarian alternatives



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Views on democratic norms and practices



Supply of democracy

Extent of and satisfaction with democracy



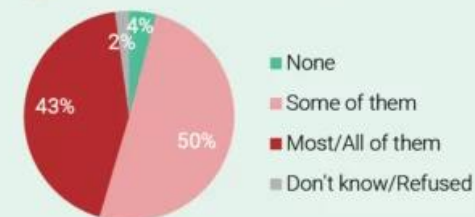
2012 2015 2018 2020 2022 2024

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- Fairly/Very satisfied with how democracy is working

Elected officials often/always listen to citizens

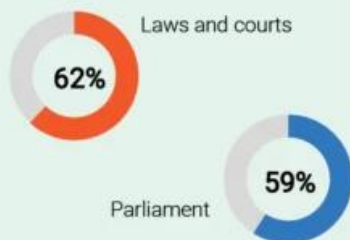


Corruption in the Presidency



Rule of law

President rarely/never ignores ...



Political freedoms (somewhat/completely free)



In Round 10, national partner Center for Democratic Governance interviewed 1,200 adult Liberians in July-August 2024. Results have a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. More at www.afrobarometer.org.



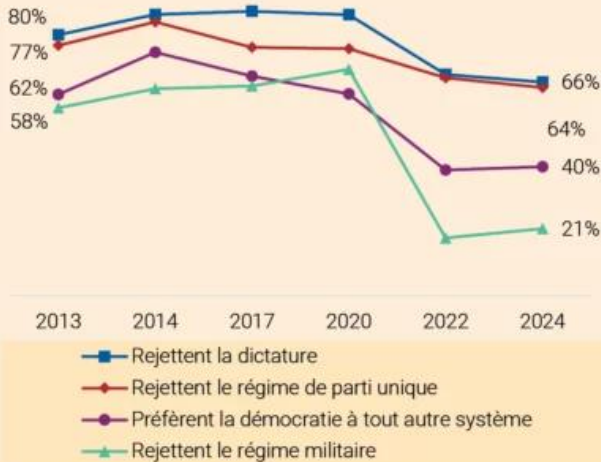
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Demande de démocratie

Soutien à la démocratie, rejet des alternatives autocratiques



Opinions sur les normes et pratiques démocratiques

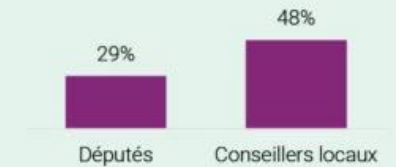


Offre de démocratie

Niveau et satisfaction avec la démocratie



Les élus écoutent souvent/toujours les citoyens

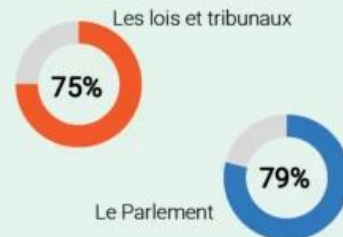


Corruption à la Présidence



Etat de droit

Le président ignore rarement/jamais ...



Libertés politiques (assez/entièrement libre)



Lors du Round 10, le partenaire national Groupe de Recherche en Economie Appliquée et Théorique (GREAT) a interrogé 1.200 adultes maliens en octobre-novembre 2024. Les résultats ont des marges d'erreur de +/-3 points de pourcentage à un niveau de confiance de 95%. Plus d'informations sur www.afrobarometer.org.



Conclusion

- As with the rest of Africans, most West Africans continue to voice strong support for democratic governance;
- But popular satisfaction with democracy, has witnessed a steady decline over the past decade;
- Perceived supply of democracy continues to lag behind citizens' aspirations (demand);
- Need for governments to deliver democratic and accountable governance to match demand.

Thank you

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round.

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analysis](http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis).

