



# Opinions on democracy and accountability ahead of the 2015 elections

Findings from the Round 6 Afrobarometer survey in Nigeria



# What is Afrobarometer?



- An African-led, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Started in 12 countries in 1999, expanded to more than 30 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013).
- **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policy making by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organisations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- National partners in each country conduct the survey. In Nigeria, the Afrobarometer Round 6 survey was conducted by Practical Sampling International (PSI) in collaboration with the CLEEN Foundation.



# Where Afrobarometer works



# Methodology



- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  - All respondents are randomly selected.
  - Sample is distributed across regions and urban-rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
    - Sample covered 33 of Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
    - It was not possible to conduct interviews in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe due to unrest in the region, so substitutions of sampling units were made from neighbouring states in the same zone.
    - Each zone is represented in the sample in proportion to its share of 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.



# Methodology (cont.)



- Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.
- Sample size of 2,400 yields a margin of error of  $\pm 2\%$  at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 6 in Nigeria was conducted between 5 and 27 December 2014. (For 80 cases, supplementary interviews were conducted on 18 and 19 January 2015.)

# Key findings

- Two-thirds (65%) of Nigerians favour democracy as the best form of government, but one in five (21%) say non-democratic forms can sometimes be preferable. This support for democracy is a decline from 69% in 2012.
- While a majority reject non-democratic alternatives, 15% approve of military rule, 11% support one-party rule, and 9% approve of one-man rule.
- Nigerians show relatively weak support for checks and balances as a means of ensuring that public officials perform their functions appropriately, and most respondents do not see voters and their ballots as playing leading roles in ensuring accountability.
- Ahead of the elections, key political office holders receive low approval ratings on their performance, and public perceptions are characterized by low levels of trust and high levels of perceived corruption.

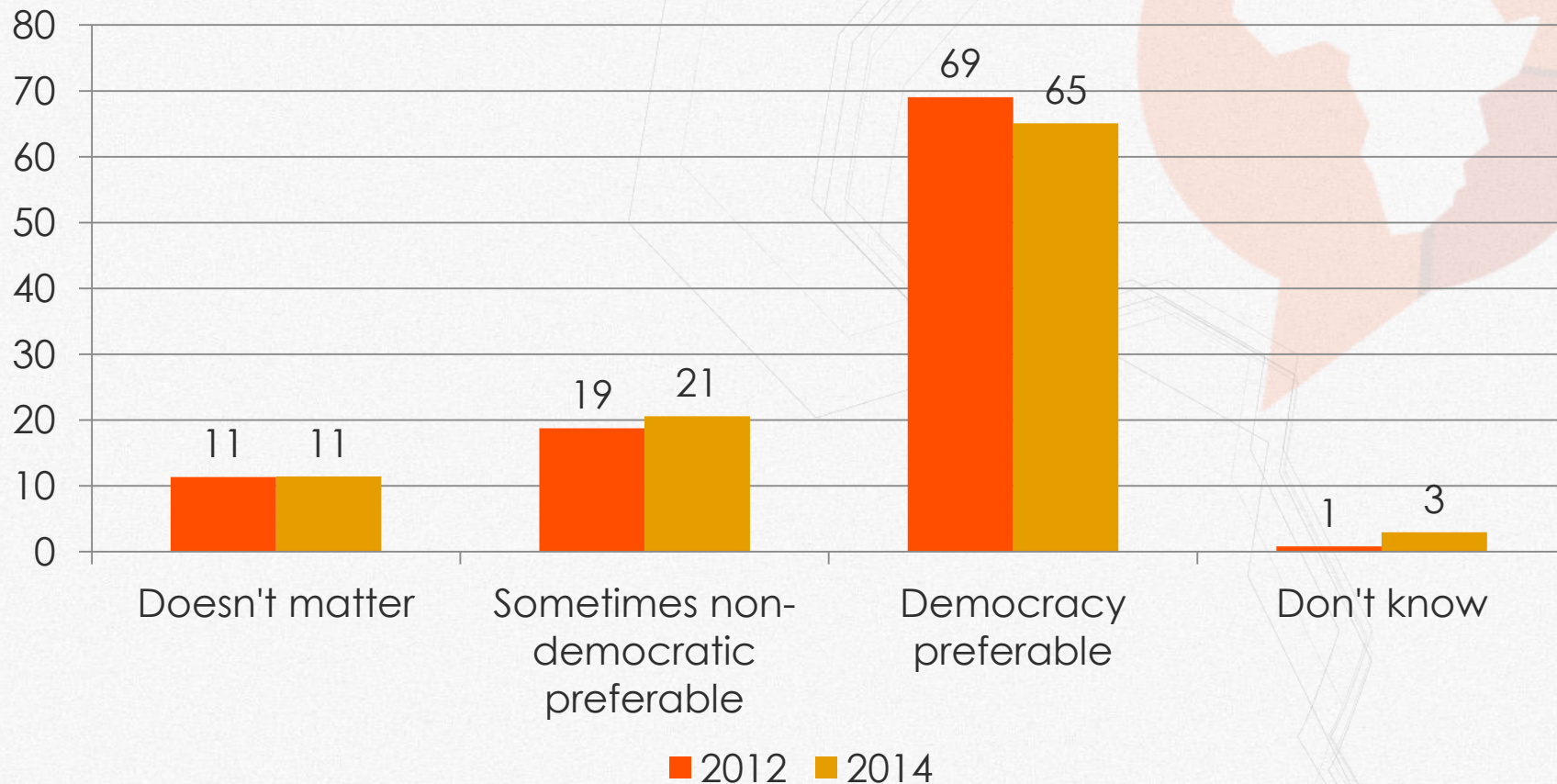






# Support for democracy

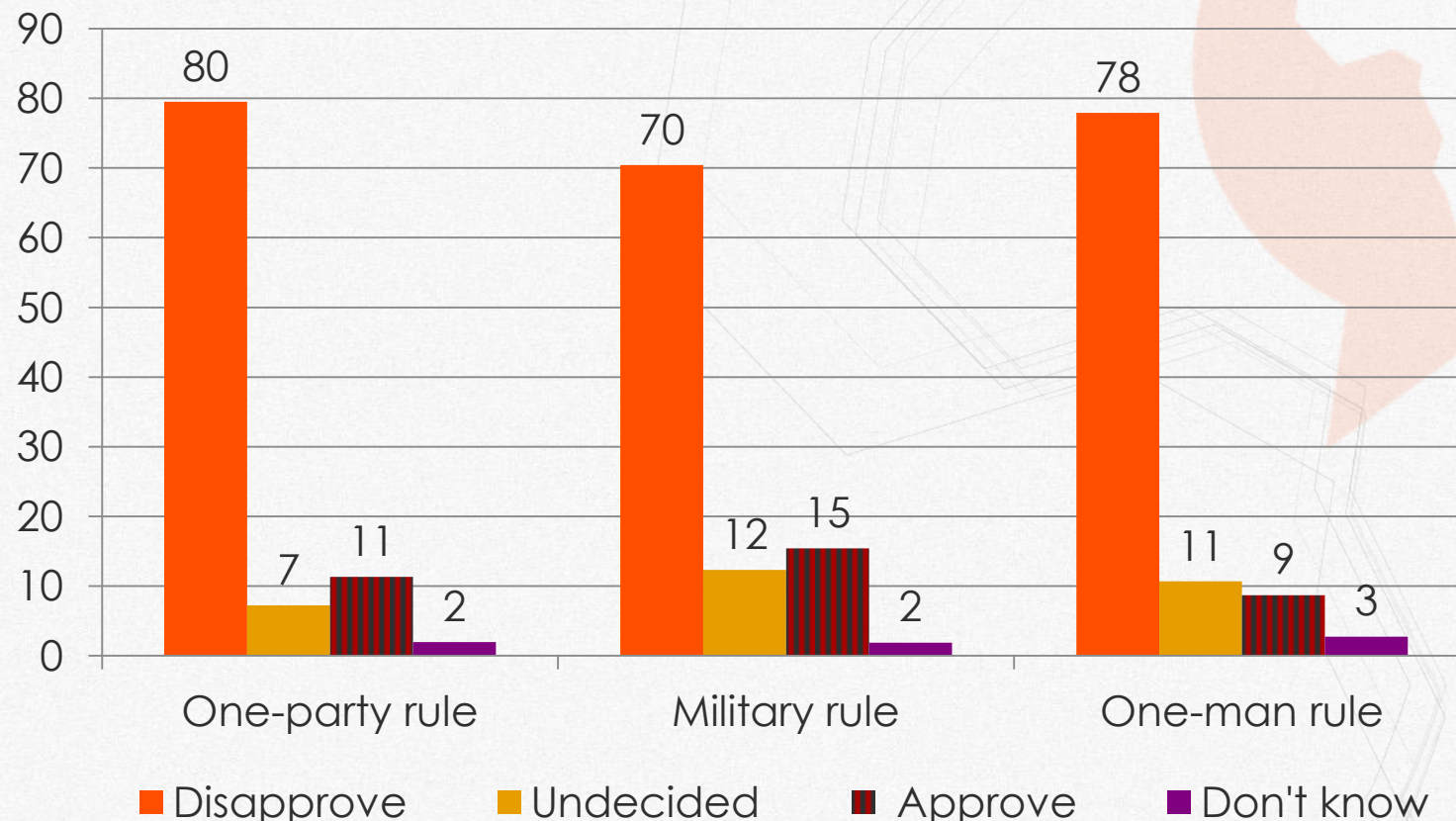
## Preferred form of government | 2012 - 2014



**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.



# Support for alternative forms of government | 2014



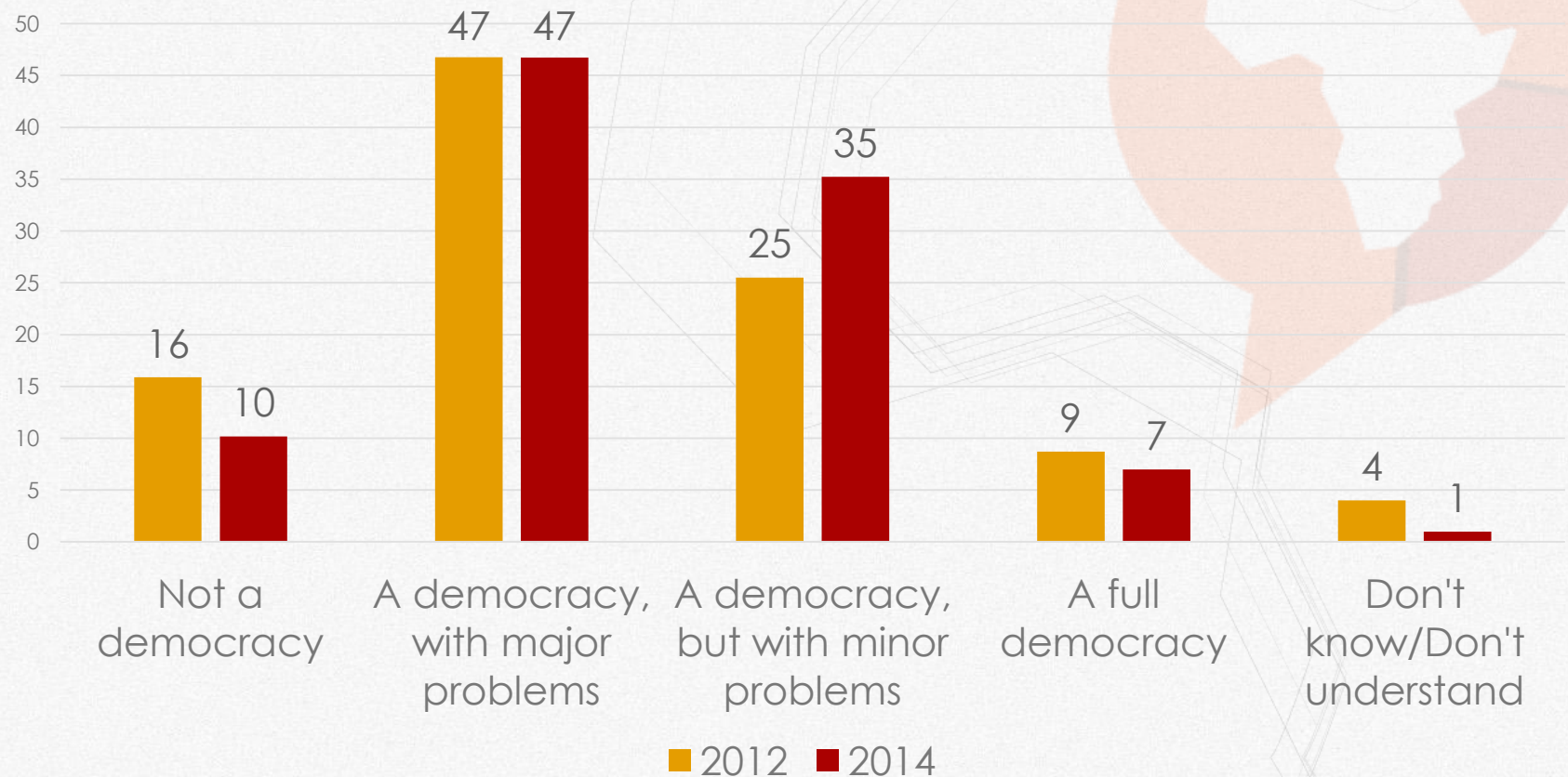
**Respondents were asked:** *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: (%) A: Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office? B: The army comes in to govern the country? C: Elections and the National Assembly are abolished so that the president can decide everything?*



# The quality of democracy in Nigeria

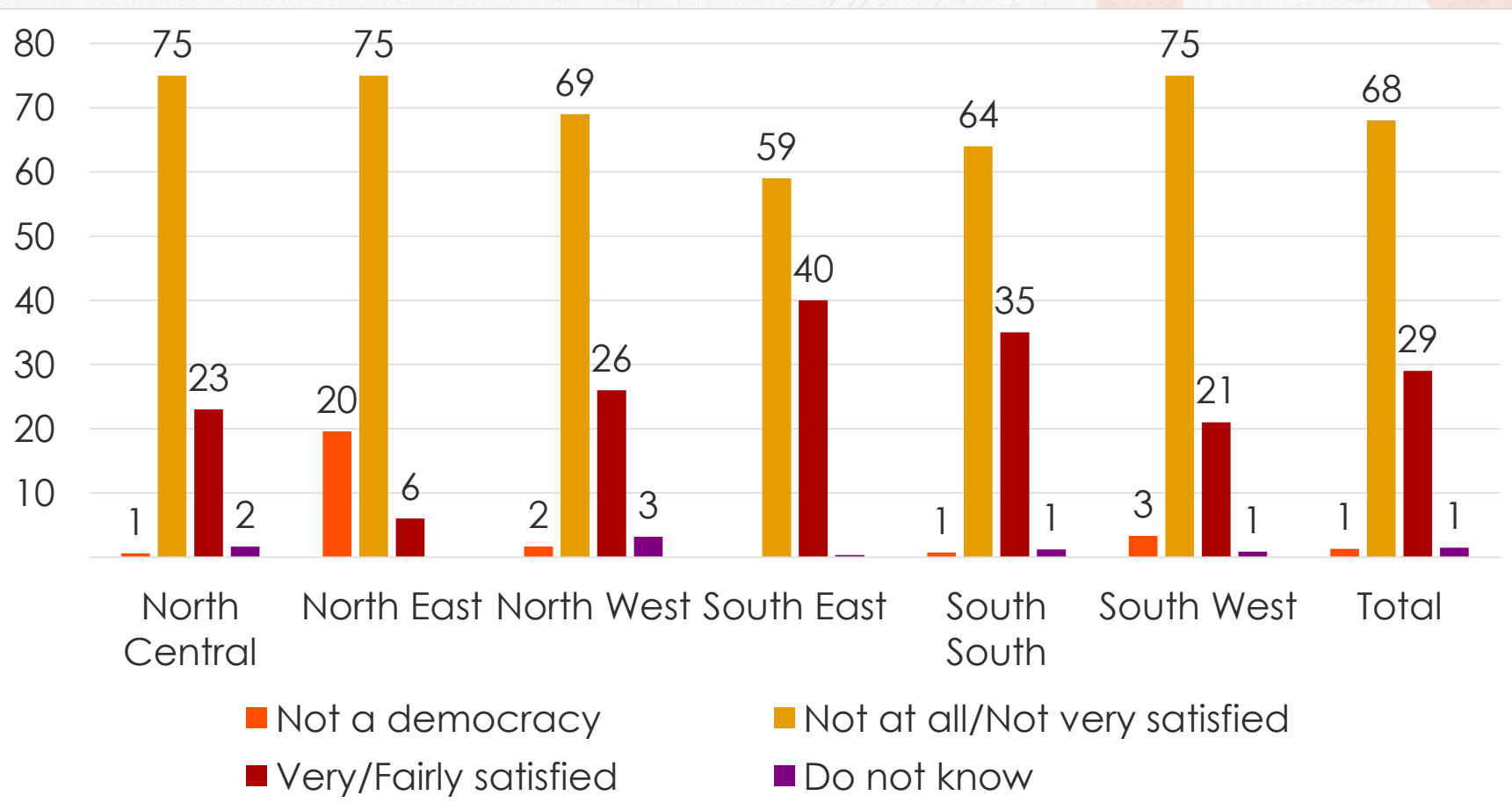


## Extent of democracy in Nigeria | 2012-2014



**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Nigeria today? (%)*

## Satisfaction with democracy | by region | 2014



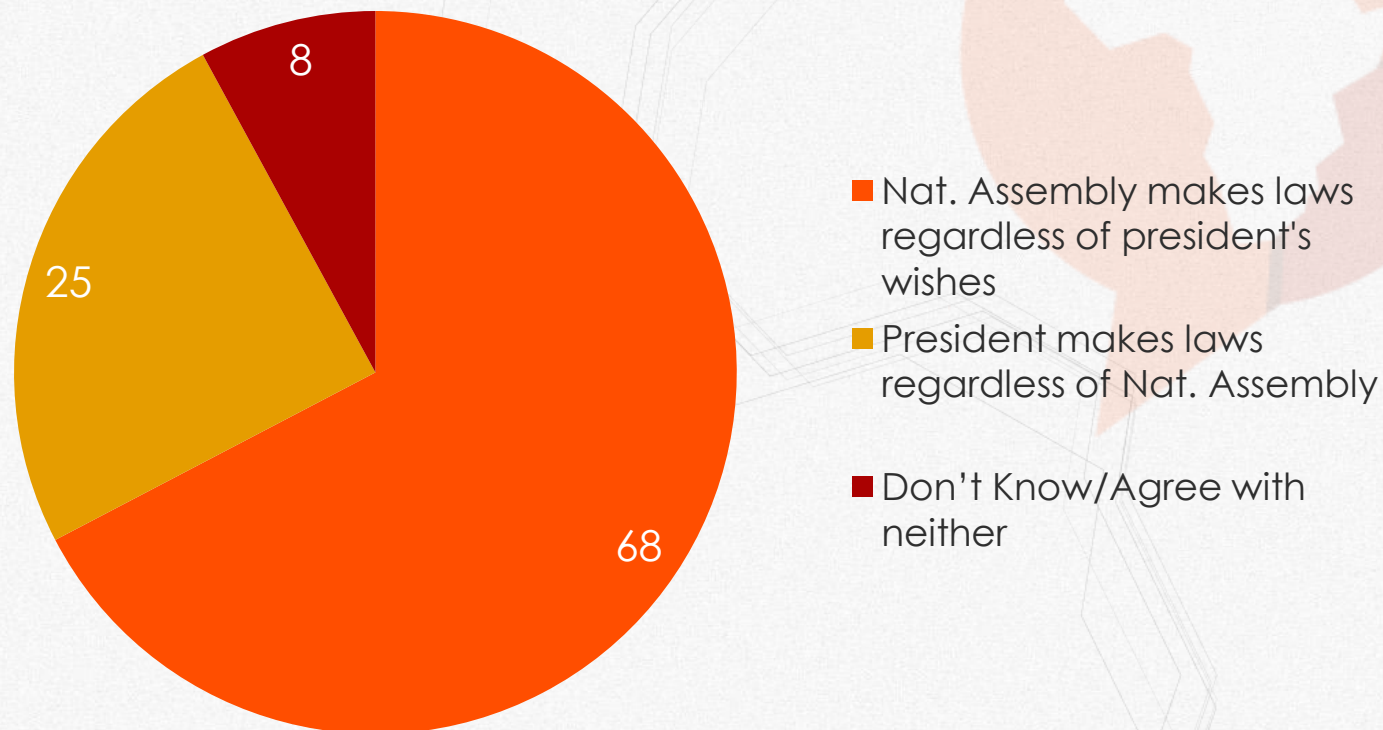
**Respondents were asked:** Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Nigeria? (%)





# The practice of democracy: Checks and accountability

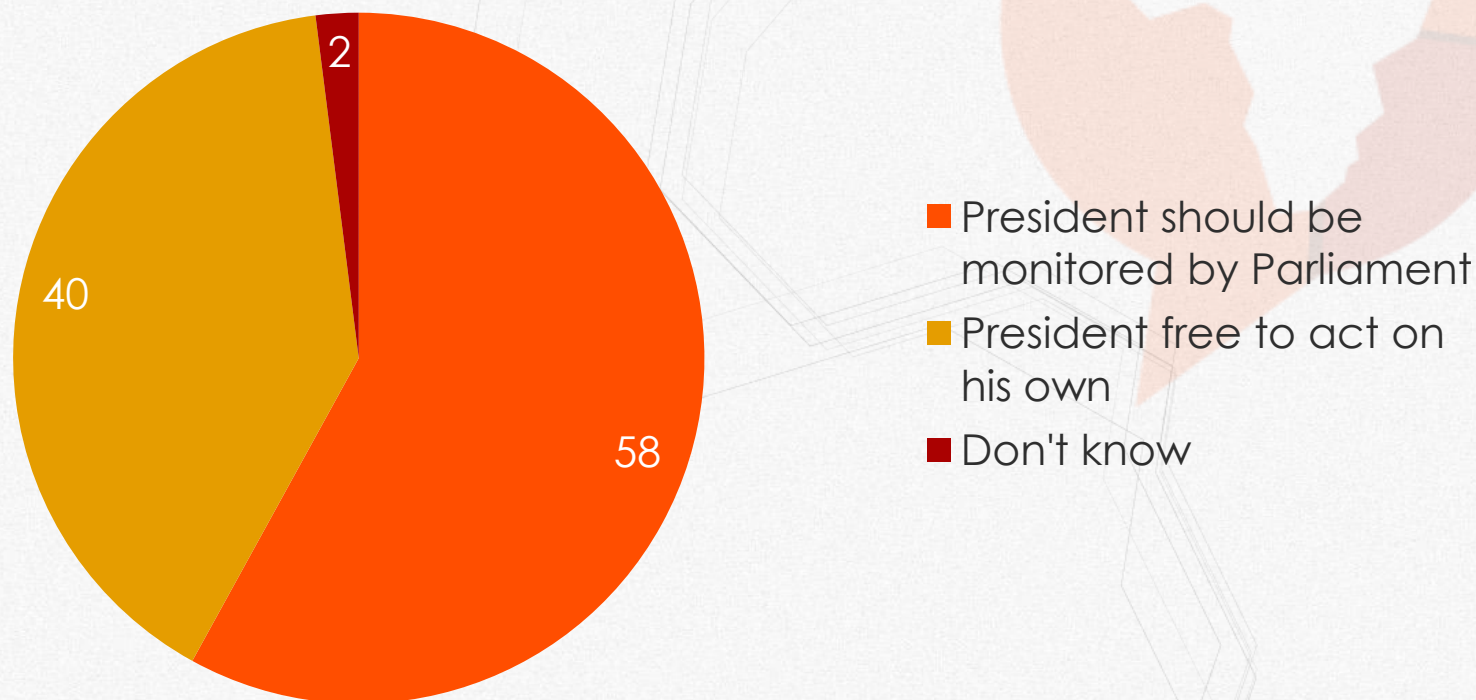
## Who should make laws? | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. (%) Statement 1: Members of the National Assembly represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the president does not agree. Statement 2: Since the president represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what the National Assembly thinks.

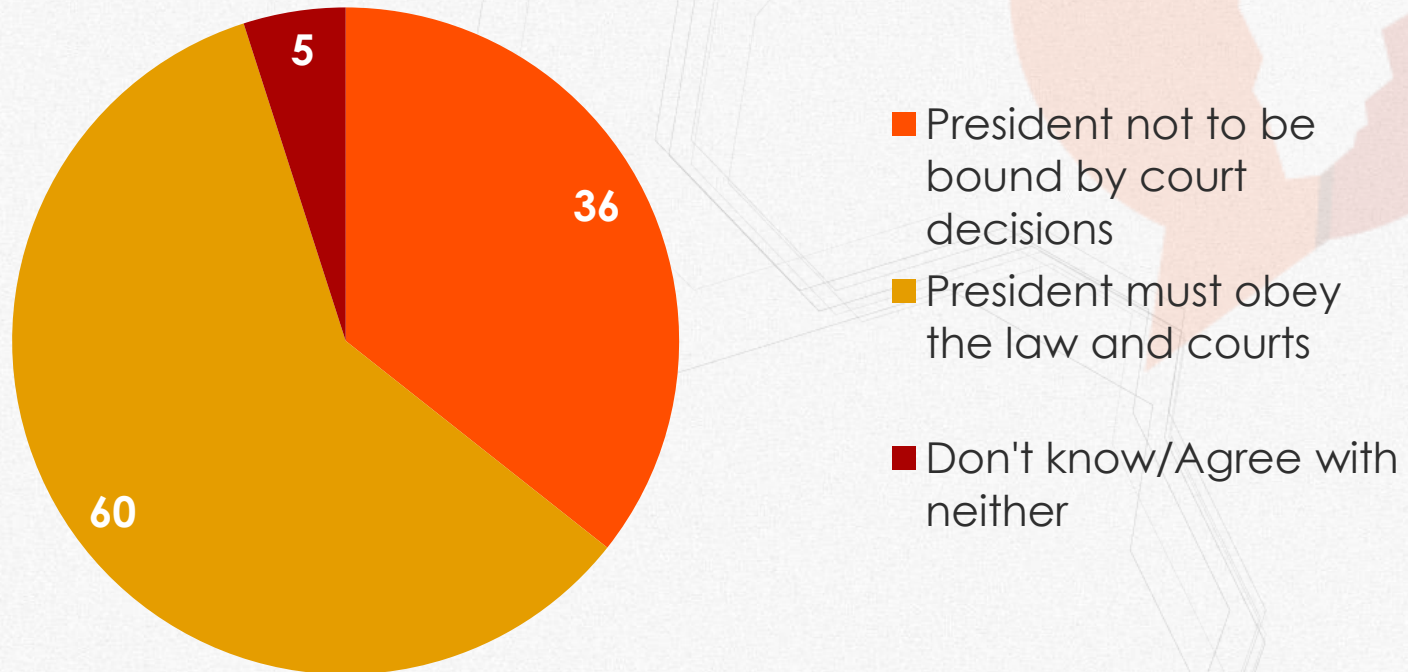


## Support for legislative oversight | 2012-2014



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. (%) Statement 1: The National Assembly 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

## President not bound by court decisions | 2014



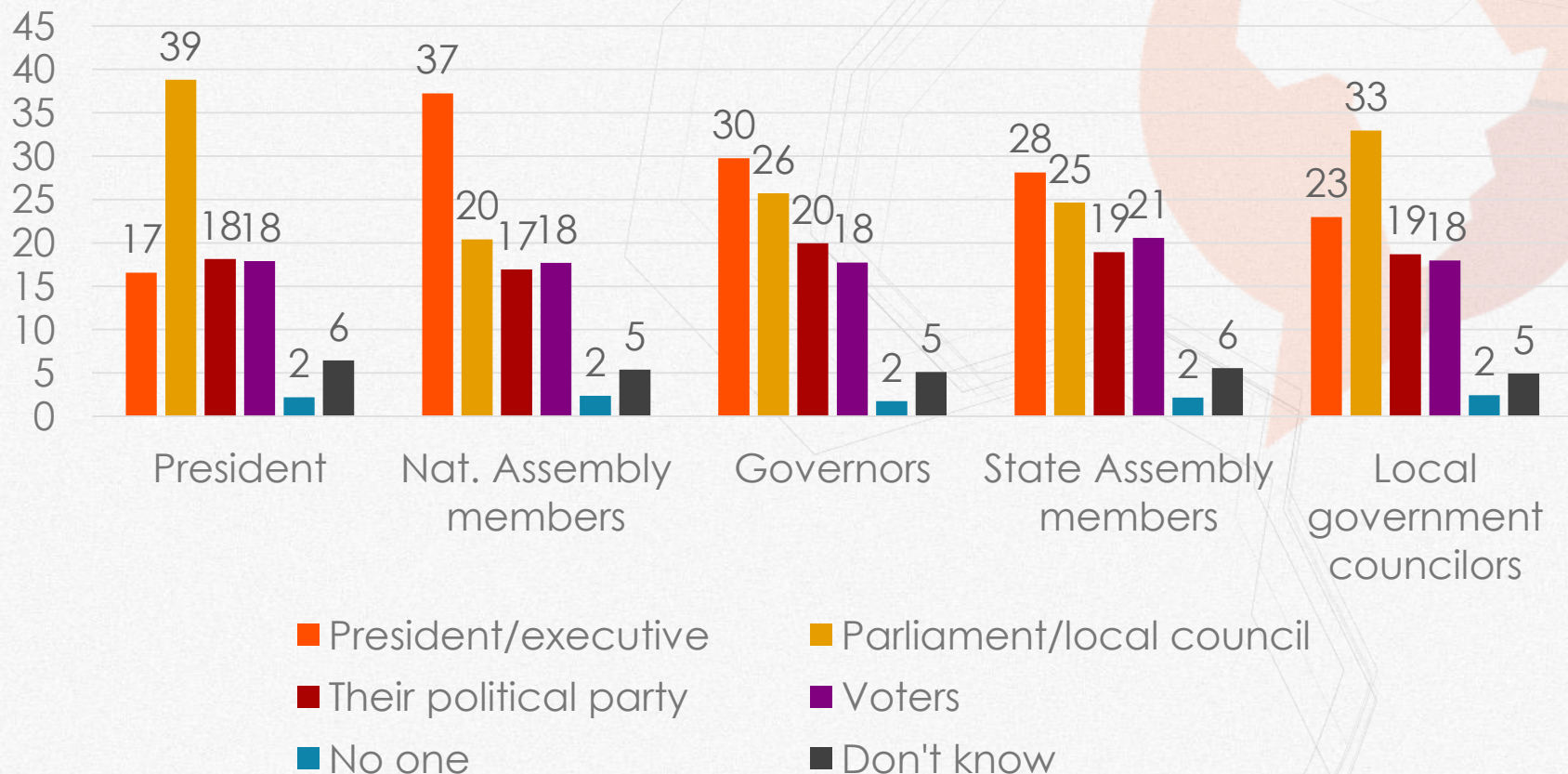
**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. (%)

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.



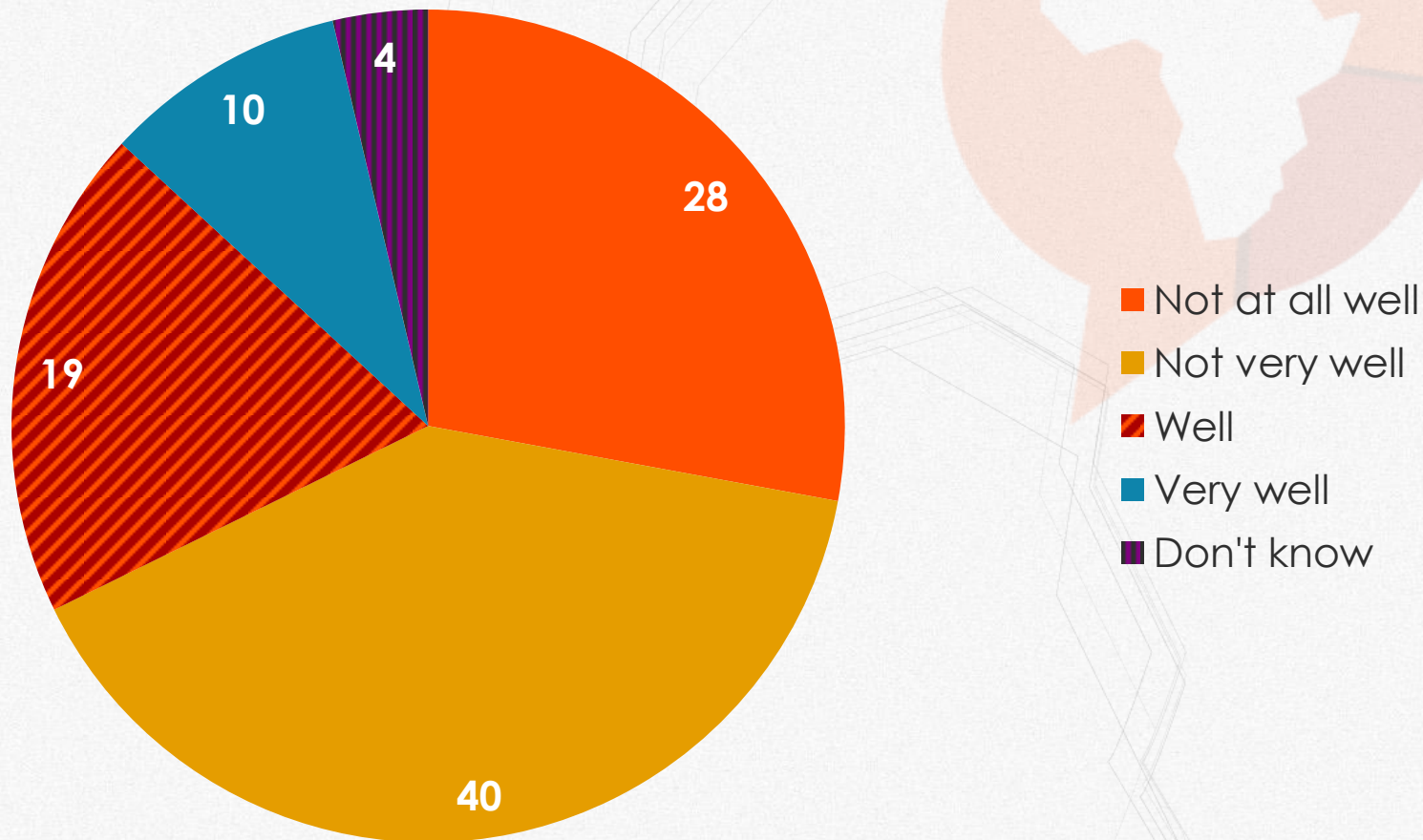
# Who holds elected officials accountable | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** Who should be responsible for: (%)

- A. Making sure that, once elected, Members of the National Assembly do their jobs?
- B. Making sure that, once elected, local government councilors do their jobs?
- C. Making sure that, once elected, the president does his job?
- D. Making sure that once elected, State Governors do their jobs
- E. Making sure that once elected, State Assembly members do their job

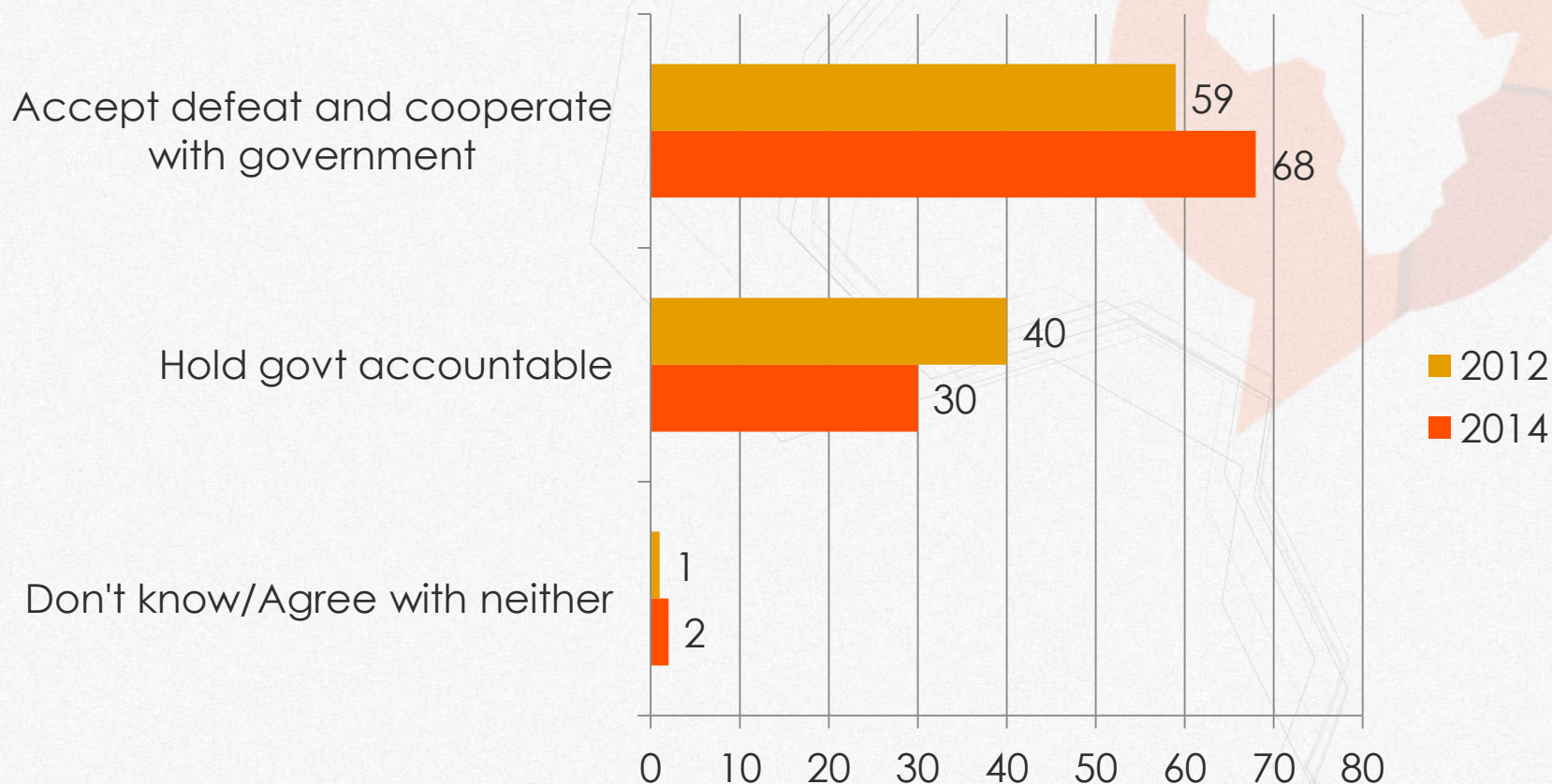
## Election efficacy for removing officials who don't perform | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** How well do elections enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want? (%)

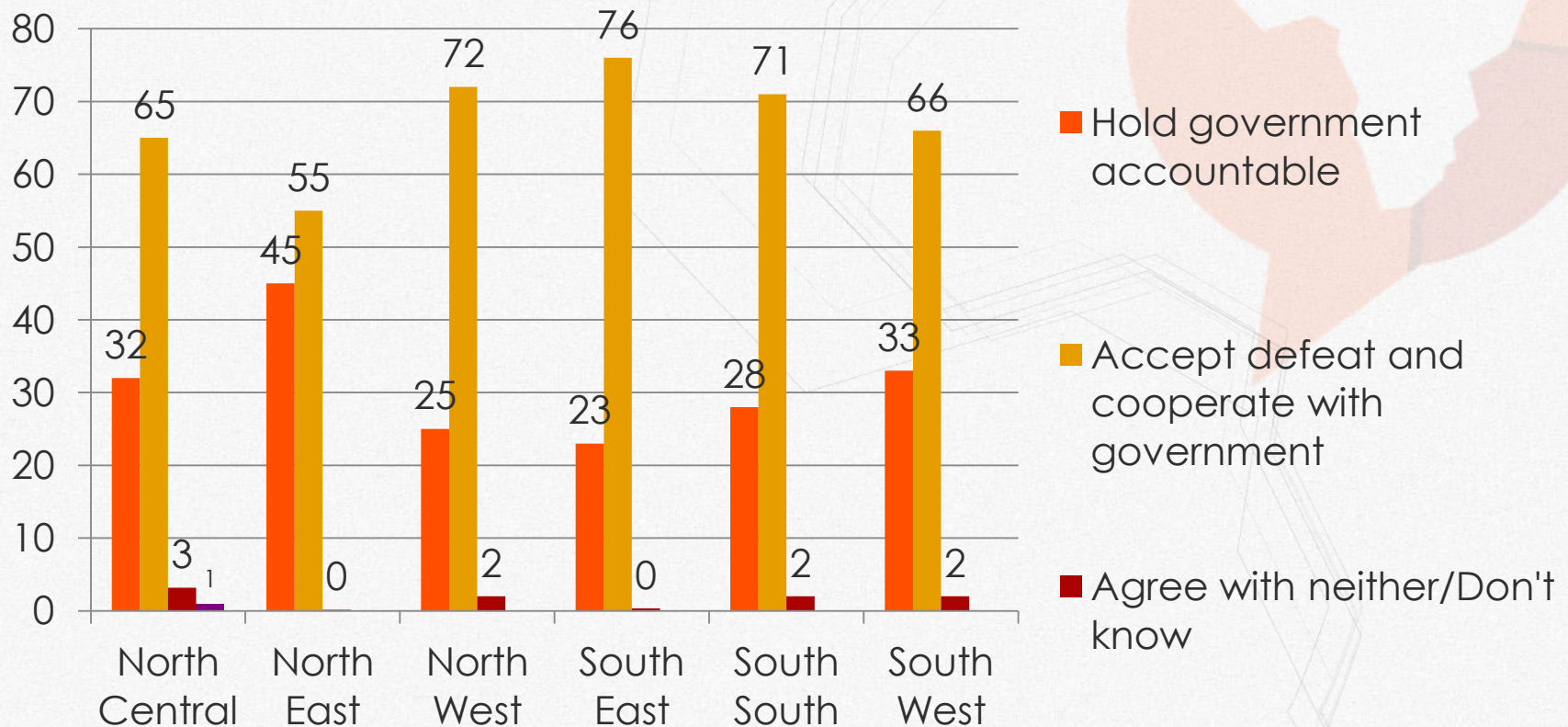


## Role of opposition parties after elections | 2012-2014



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: After losing an election, opposition parties should monitor and criticize the government in order to hold it accountable. Statement 2: Once an election is over, opposition parties and politicians should accept defeat and cooperate with government to help it develop the country.

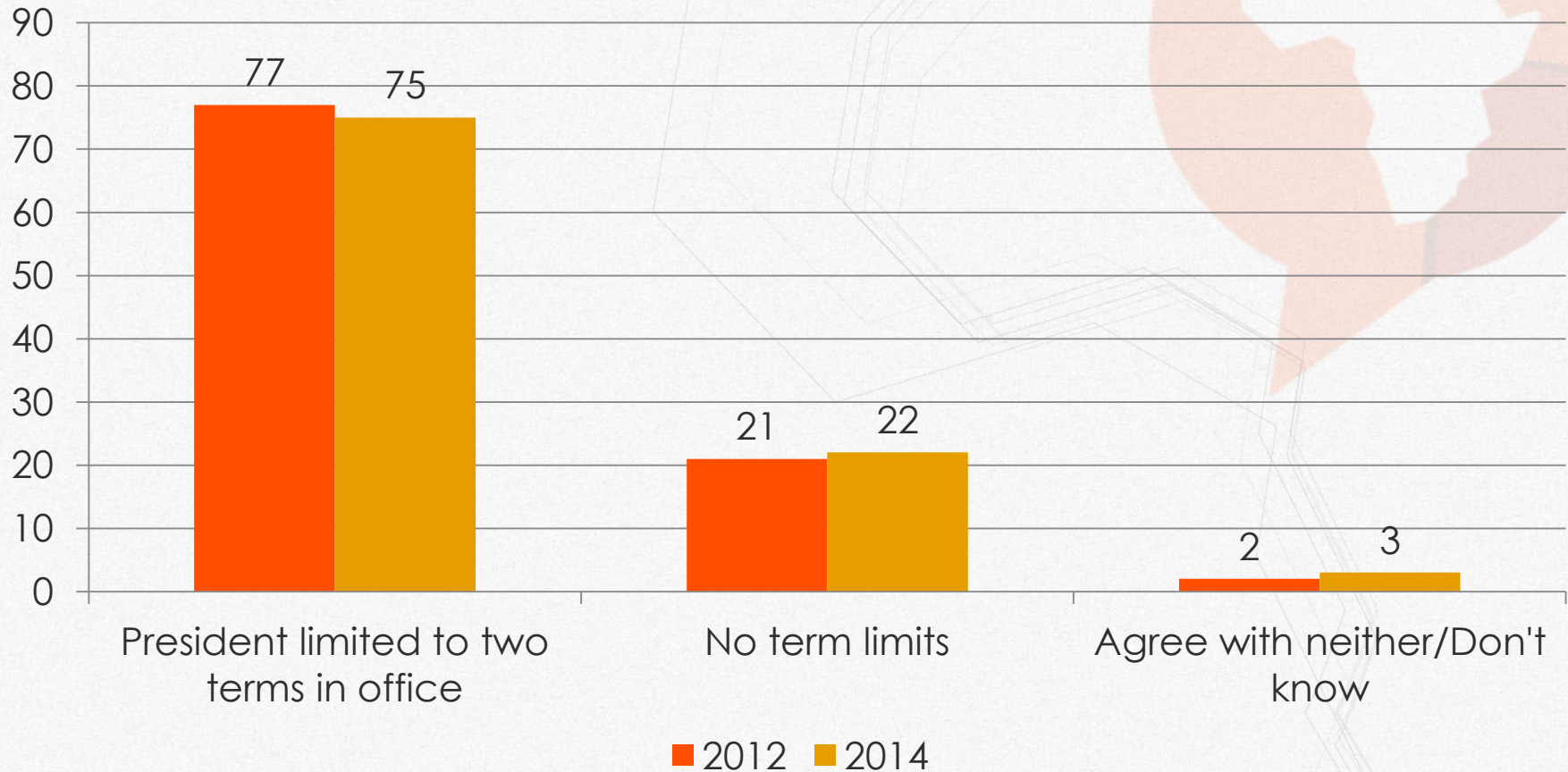
## Role of opposition parties after elections | by region | 2014



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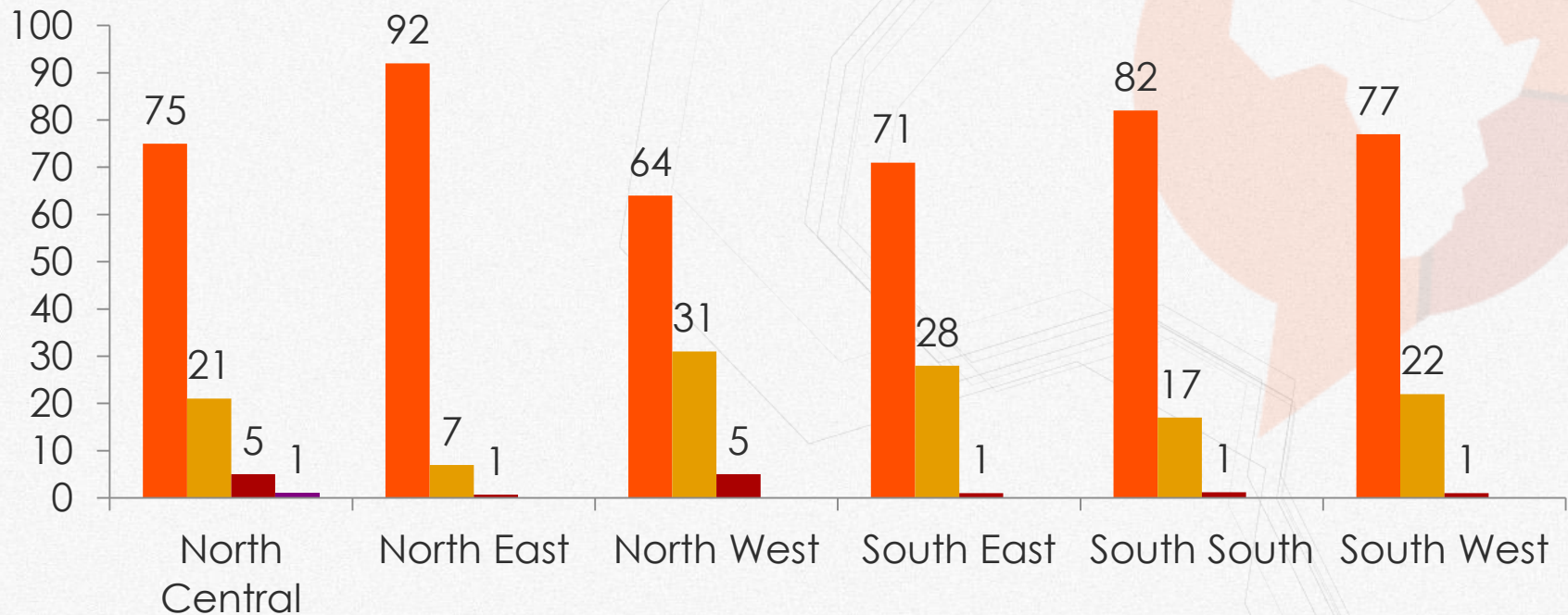


## Views on term limits | 2012-2014



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. (%) 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.

## Views on term limits | by region | 2014

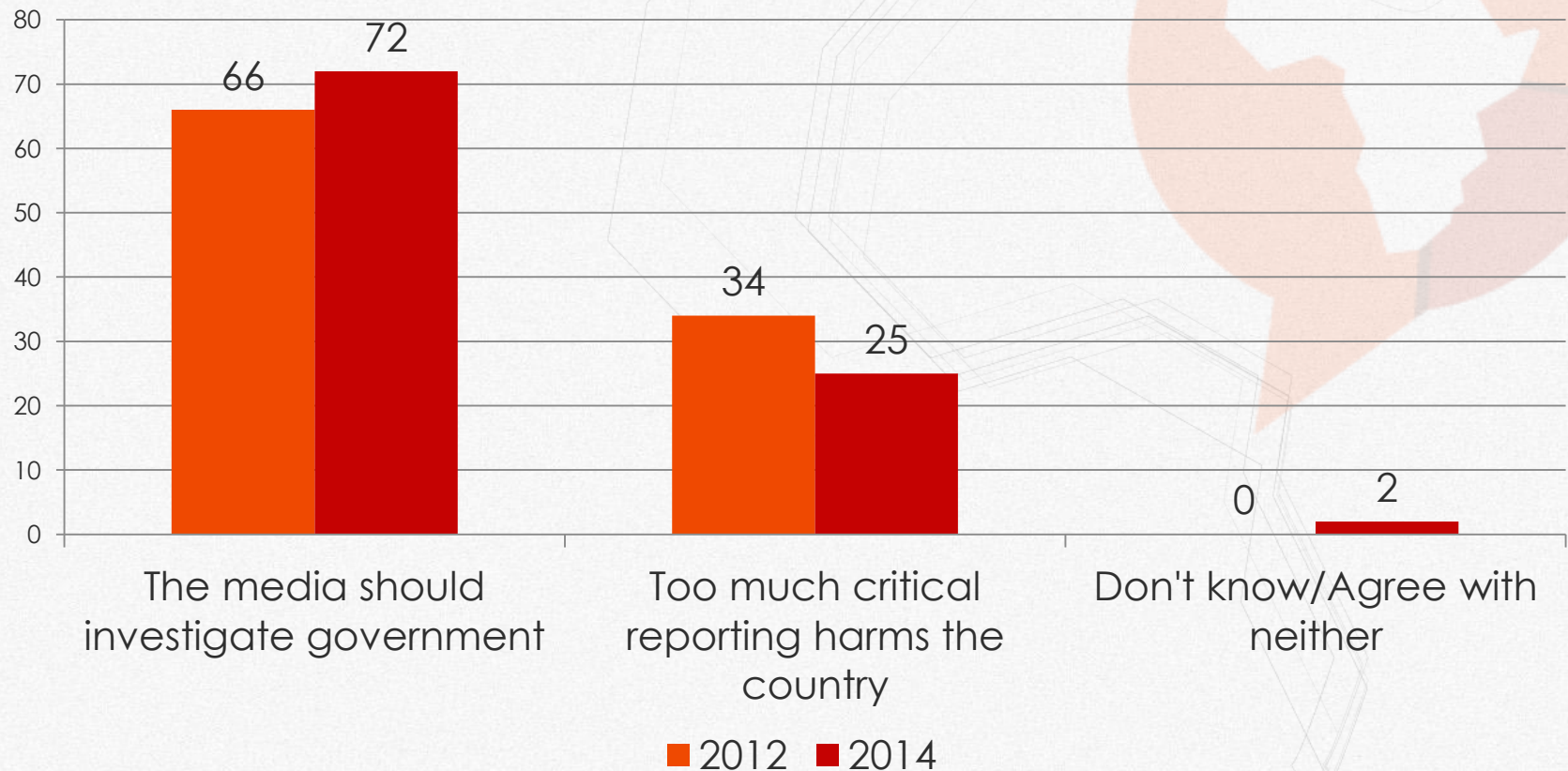


- President limited to two terms in office
- No term limits
- Don't know/Agree with neither

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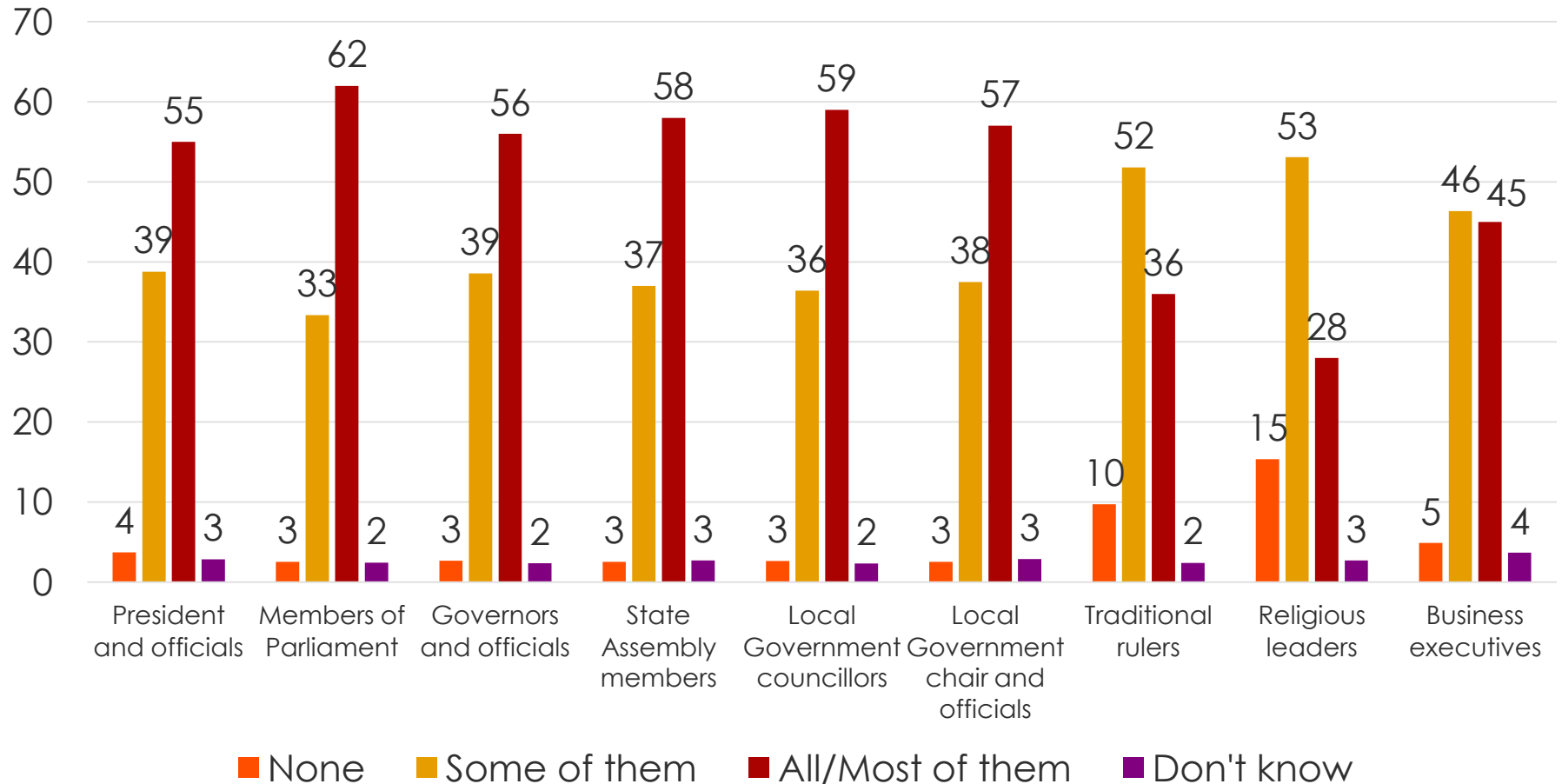


## Check on government by the media | 2012-2014



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: The news media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption. Statement 2: Too much reporting on negative events, like government mistakes and corruption, only harms the country (%)

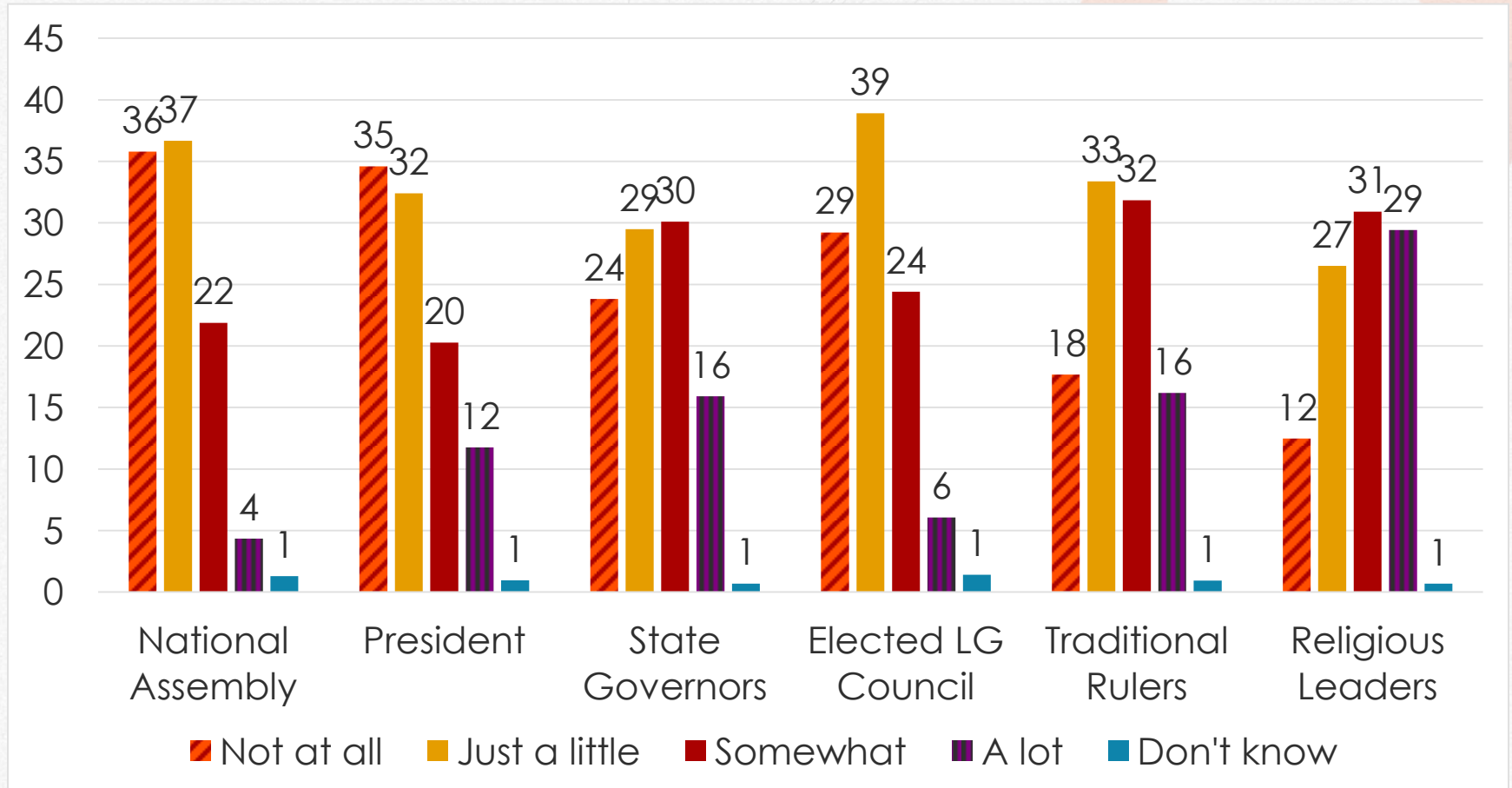
# Perceptions of corruption | 2014



**Respondents were asked:** How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (%)

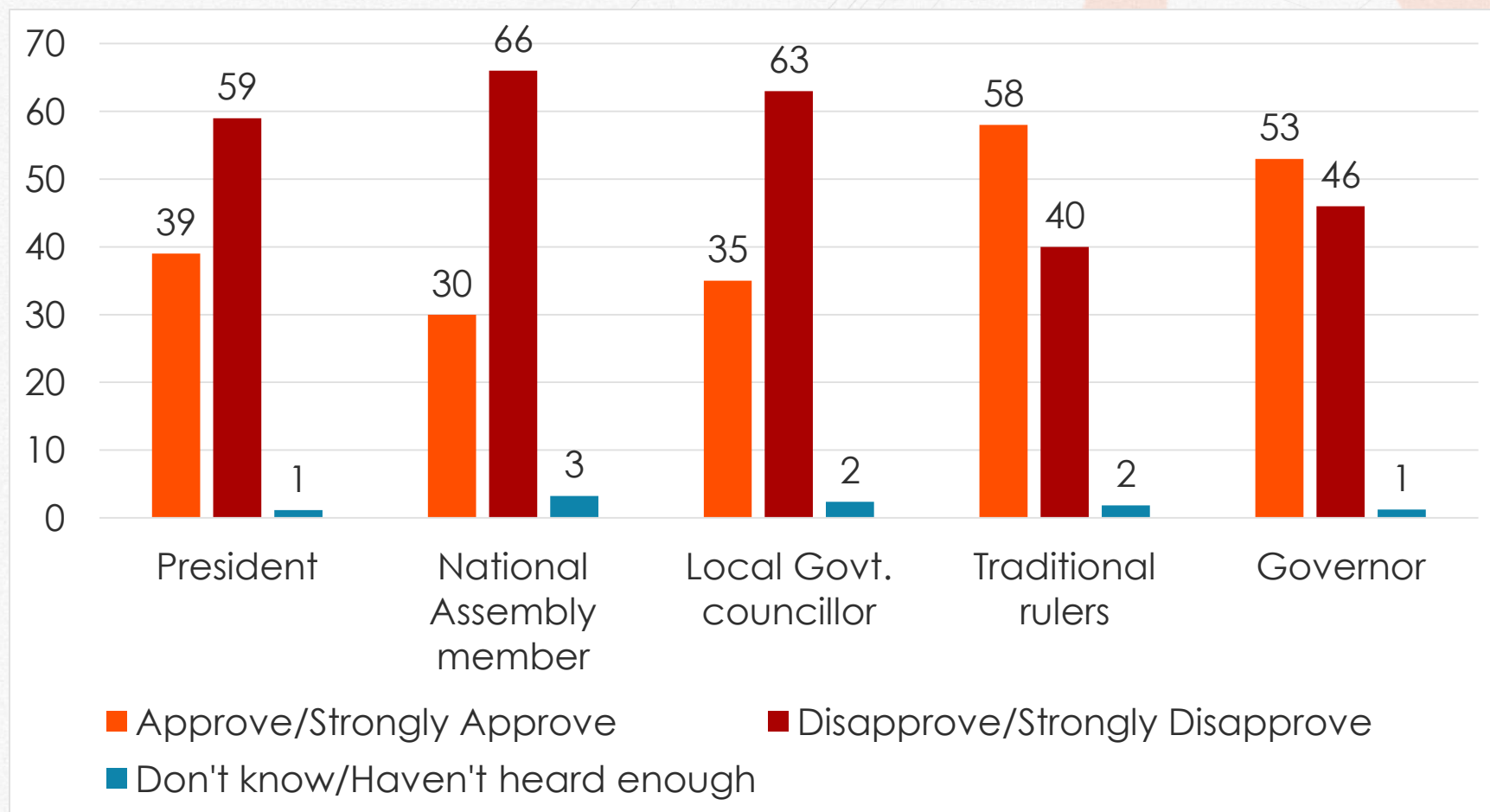


# Trust in political, traditional, and religious leaders | 2014



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

# Performance ratings of leaders | 2014



**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? (%)*





# Conclusion

- As Nigerians head toward their fifth general elections since 1999, strong majority support for democracy co-habits with a high level of tolerance for values and practices at variance with democracy.
- Nigerians do not consider their role as voters to be crucial in ensuring accountability among public officials.
- While institutional checks and balances are crucial in every democracy, Nigerians may need to consider the value of the ballot as a viable guarantor of accountability.





Thank you