



Sierra Leonean perceptions of democracy

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 6 survey in Sierra Leone



At a glance

- **Support for democracy:** A majority of Sierra Leoneans prefer democracy, support multiparty elections, and reject non-democratic alternatives (one-party, one-man, and military rule).
- **Satisfaction with democracy:** More than one-third of Sierra Leoneans say they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country.
- **Accountability:** A majority of Sierra Leoneans want their government to be accountable for its actions.
- **Term limits:** A large majority of Sierra Leoneans (87%) support a two-term limit for the presidency.



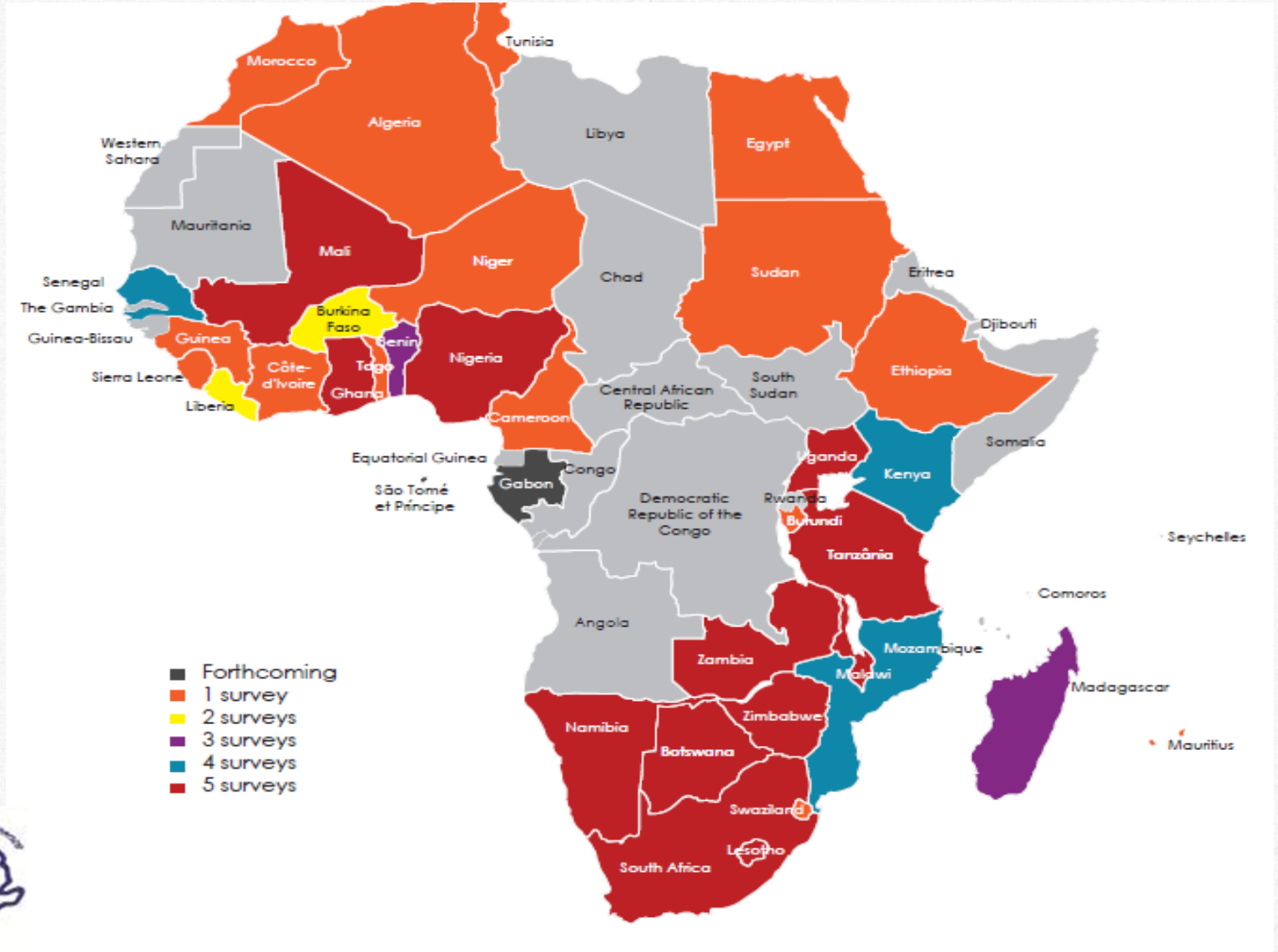
What is Afrobarometer?



- 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 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013).
- **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.
- National Partners in each country conduct the survey. In Sierra Leone, Afrobarometer Round 6 survey fieldwork was conducted by ITASCAP, and CGG and Lena Thompson are responsible for dissemination.



Where Afrobarometer works



Methodology

- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
 - ❑ All respondents are *randomly* selected.
 - ❑ Sample is distributed across districts/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 Sierra Leone of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3% with a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 6 in Sierra Leone was conducted between 22 May and 10 June 2015.



Survey demographics

	%
Gender	
Male	50
Female	50
Location	
Urban	37
Rural	63
Region	
East	25
North	33
South	22
West	20
Education	
No formal education	45
Primary	13
Secondary	28
Post-secondary	14
Religion	
Christian	22
Muslim	73
Other	4



Results



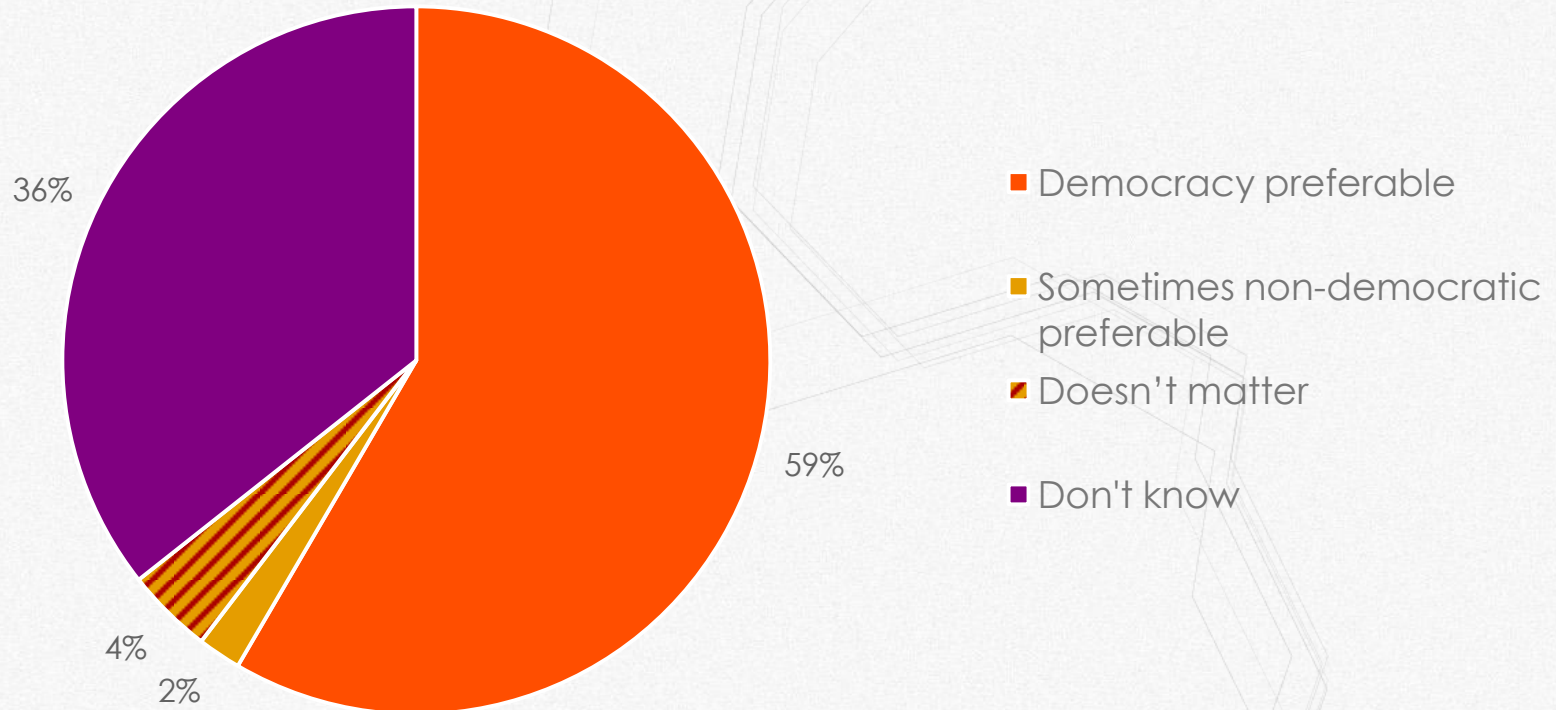
Support for democracy

Key findings

- Six in 10 Sierra Leoneans (59%) prefer democracy over any other form of government.
- About nine in 10 reject non-democratic alternatives (one-party, one-man, and military rule).
- An overwhelming majority of Sierra Leoneans (92%) prefer to choose their leaders through open and honest elections.
- About two-thirds (64%) support multiparty competition. This is an increase of ten percentage points from 2012.

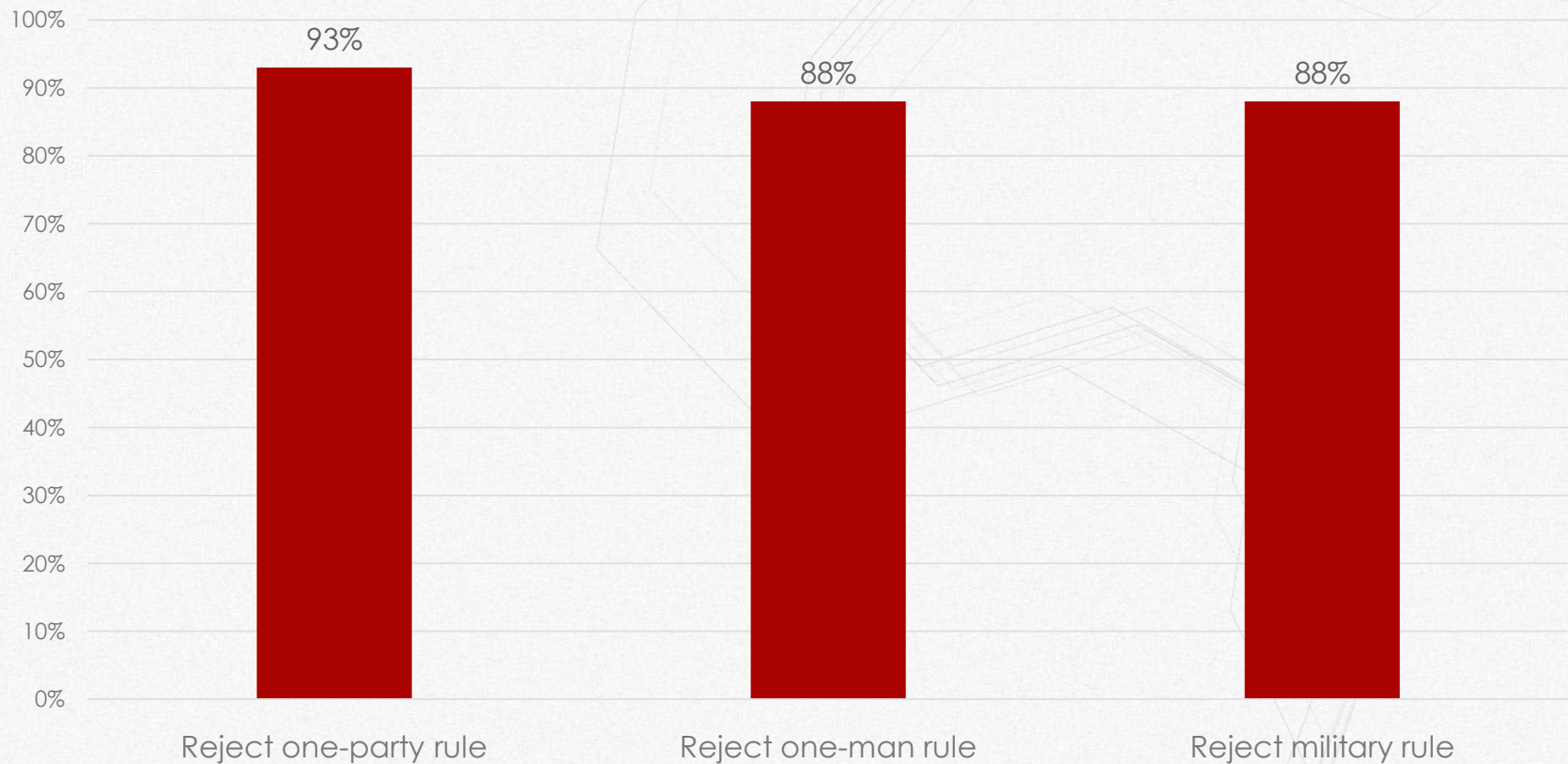


Preference for democracy | 2015



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.

Rejection of non-democratic alternatives | 2015



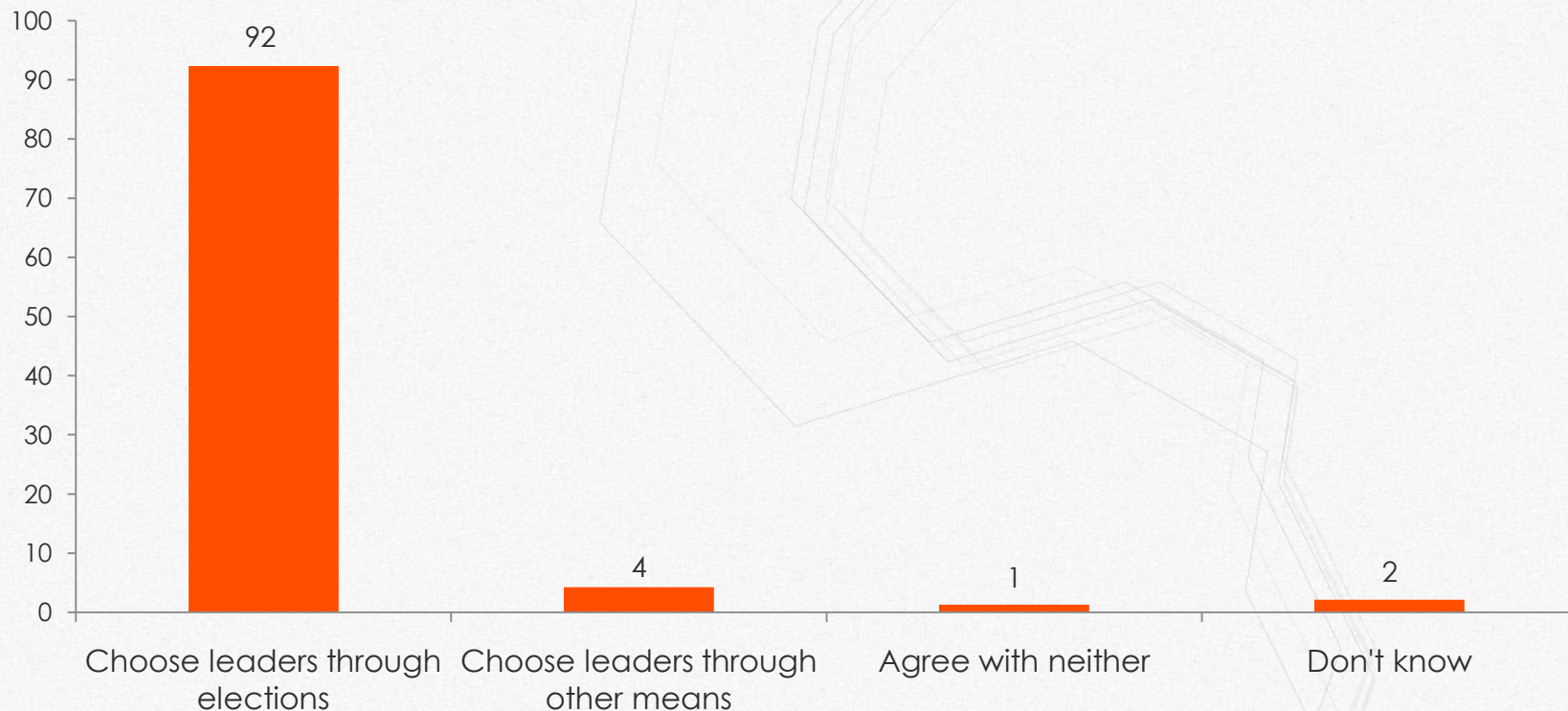
Respondents were asked: *There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office? Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything? The army comes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

Understanding of democracy

Asked what “democracy” means to them, Sierra Leoneans’ most common responses were:

- Civil liberties or personal freedoms (cited by 19% of respondents)
- Voting , elections, multiparty competition (10%)
- Effective governance or rule of law (4%)

Support for choosing leaders through elections | 2015



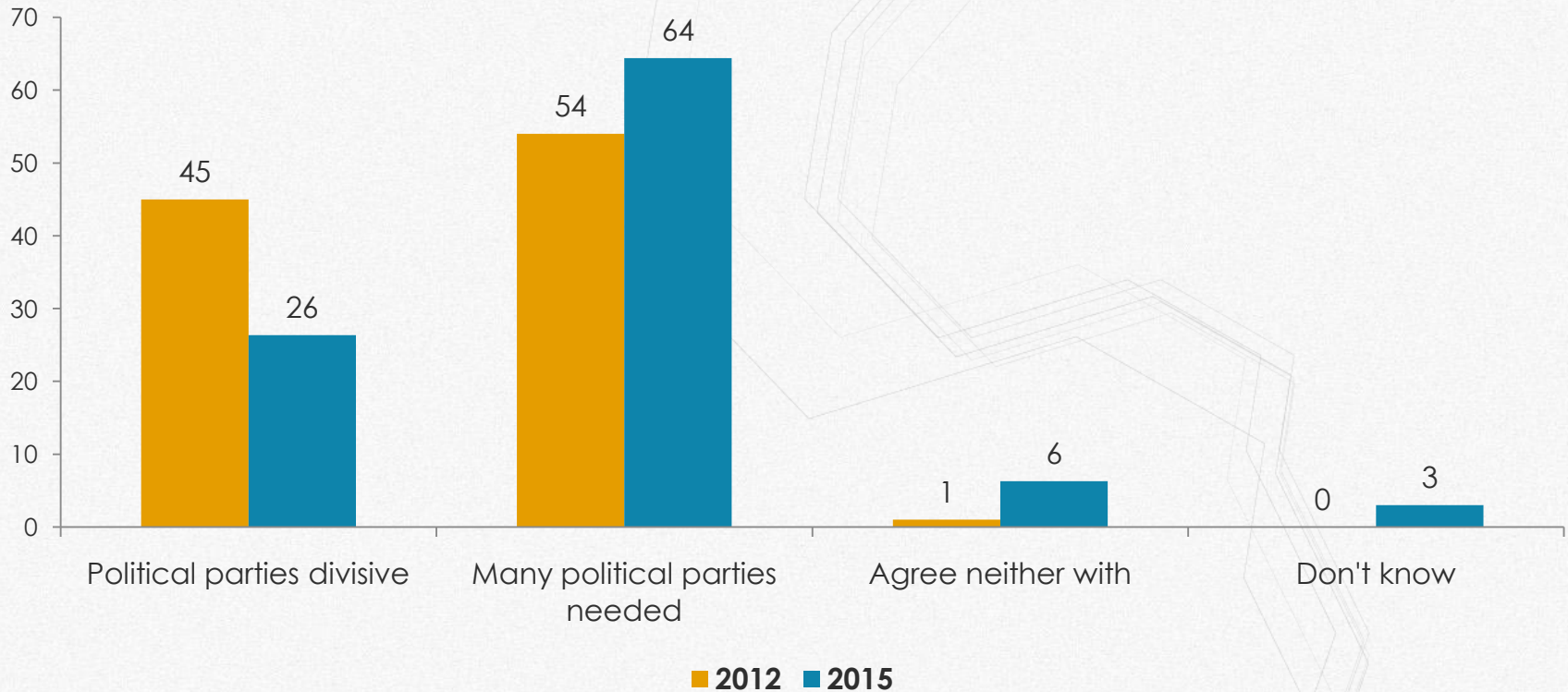
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

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 "agree very strongly")

Support for multiparty competition | 2012-2015

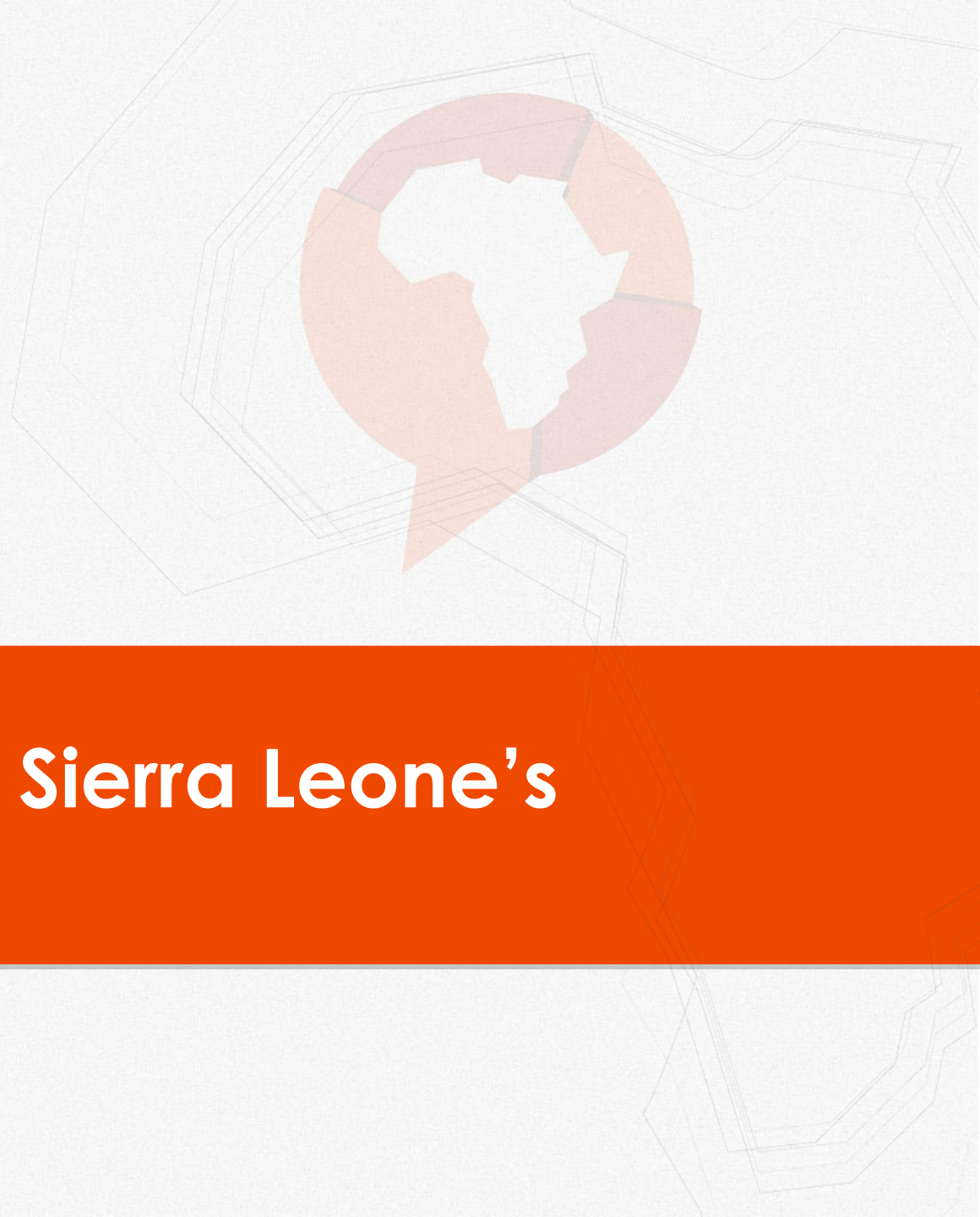


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

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

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

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



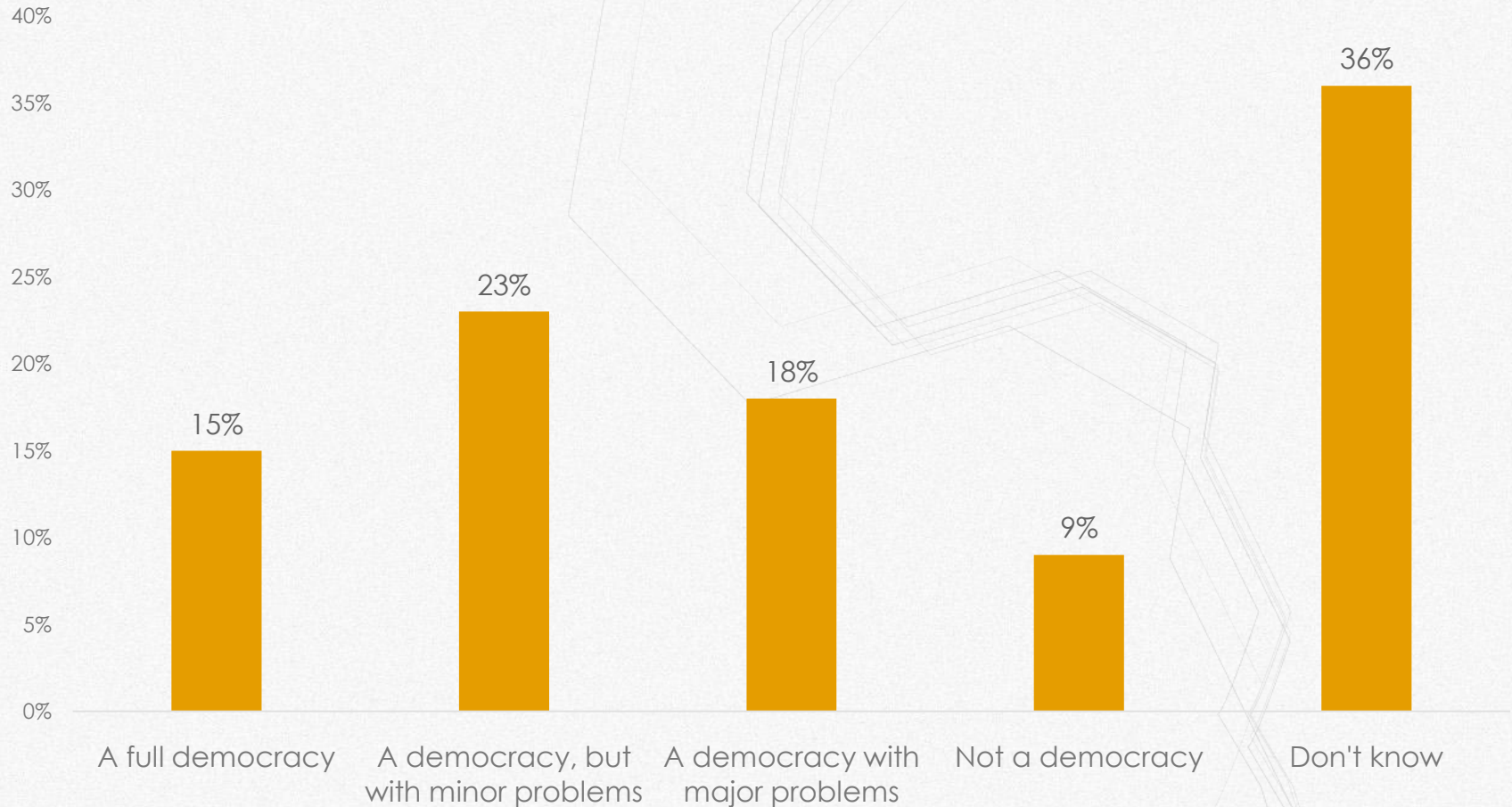
Perceptions of Sierra Leone's democracy

Key findings

- 38% of Sierra Leoneans say their country is “a full democracy” or “a democracy, but with minor problems.”
- More than one-third of Sierra Leoneans say they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country.

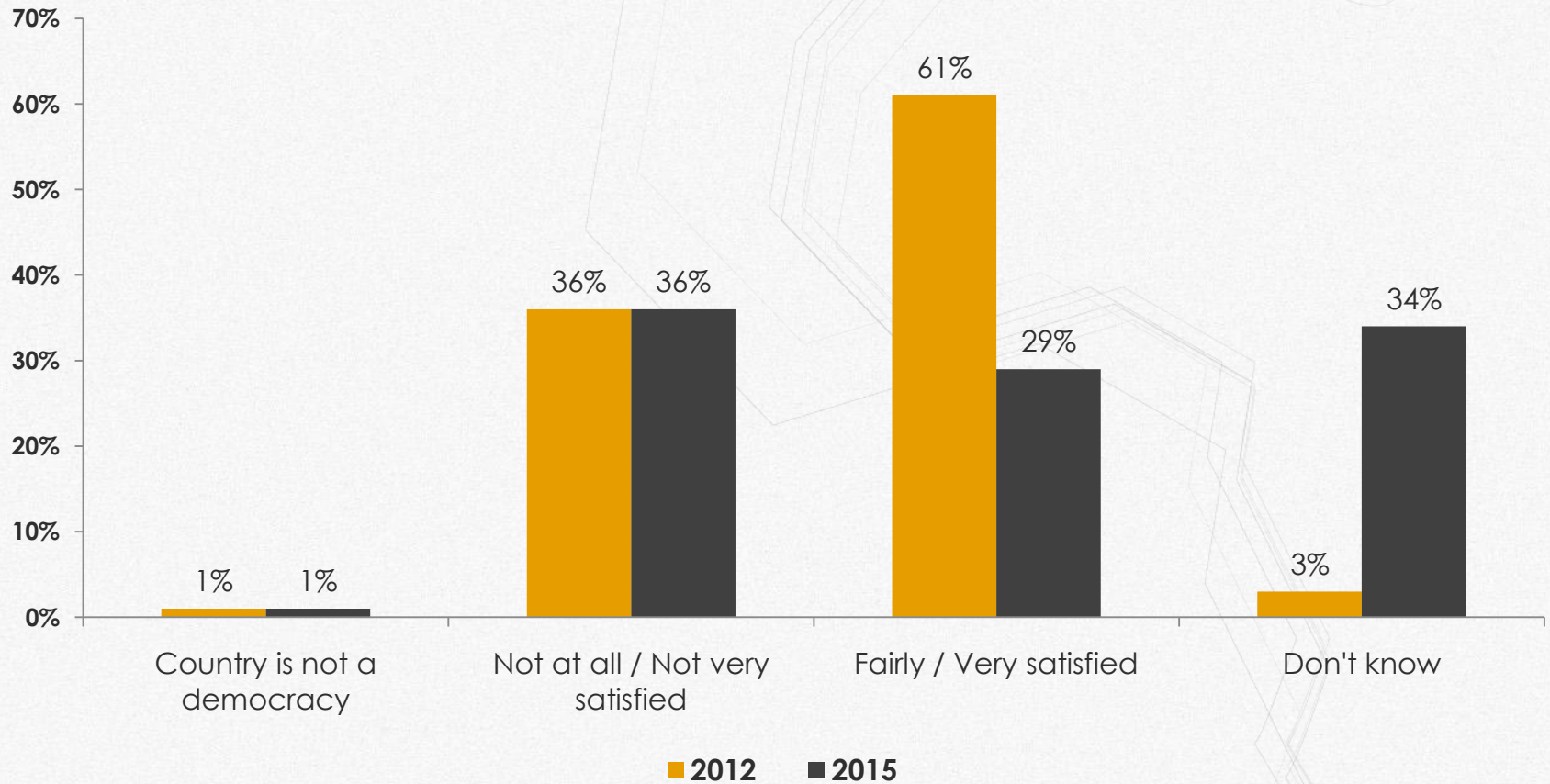


Extent of democracy | 2015



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

Satisfaction with democracy | 2012-2015



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



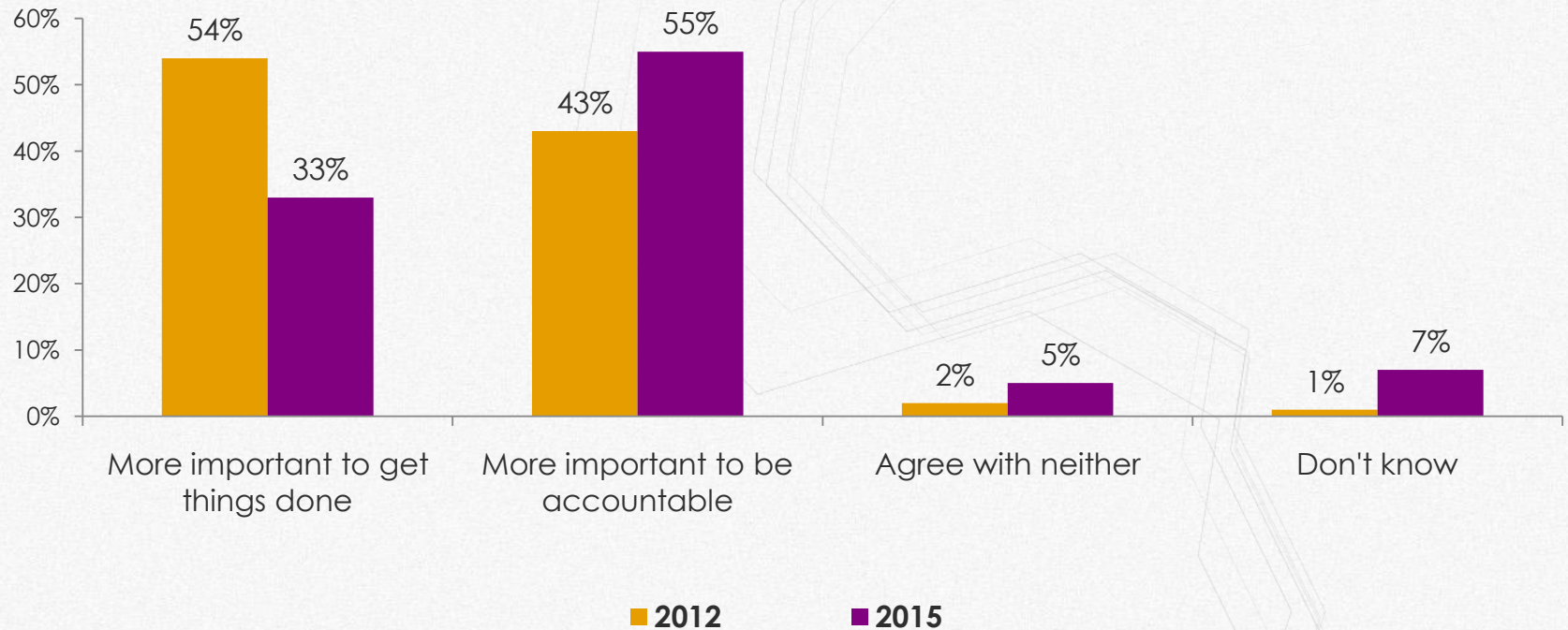
Roles in a democracy

Key findings

- A majority (55%) of Sierra Leoneans say it is more important for the government to be accountable than to get things done quickly.
- Six in 10 citizens say the president must always obey the country's laws and courts.
- Three-fourths (76%) of citizens say that Parliament should ensure that the president explains to it on a regular basis how the government spends taxpayers' money.
- A slim majority (54%) say the opposition should cooperate with the government, while 41% say opposition parties should monitor the government and hold it accountable.



Accountable vs. efficient government | 2012-2015



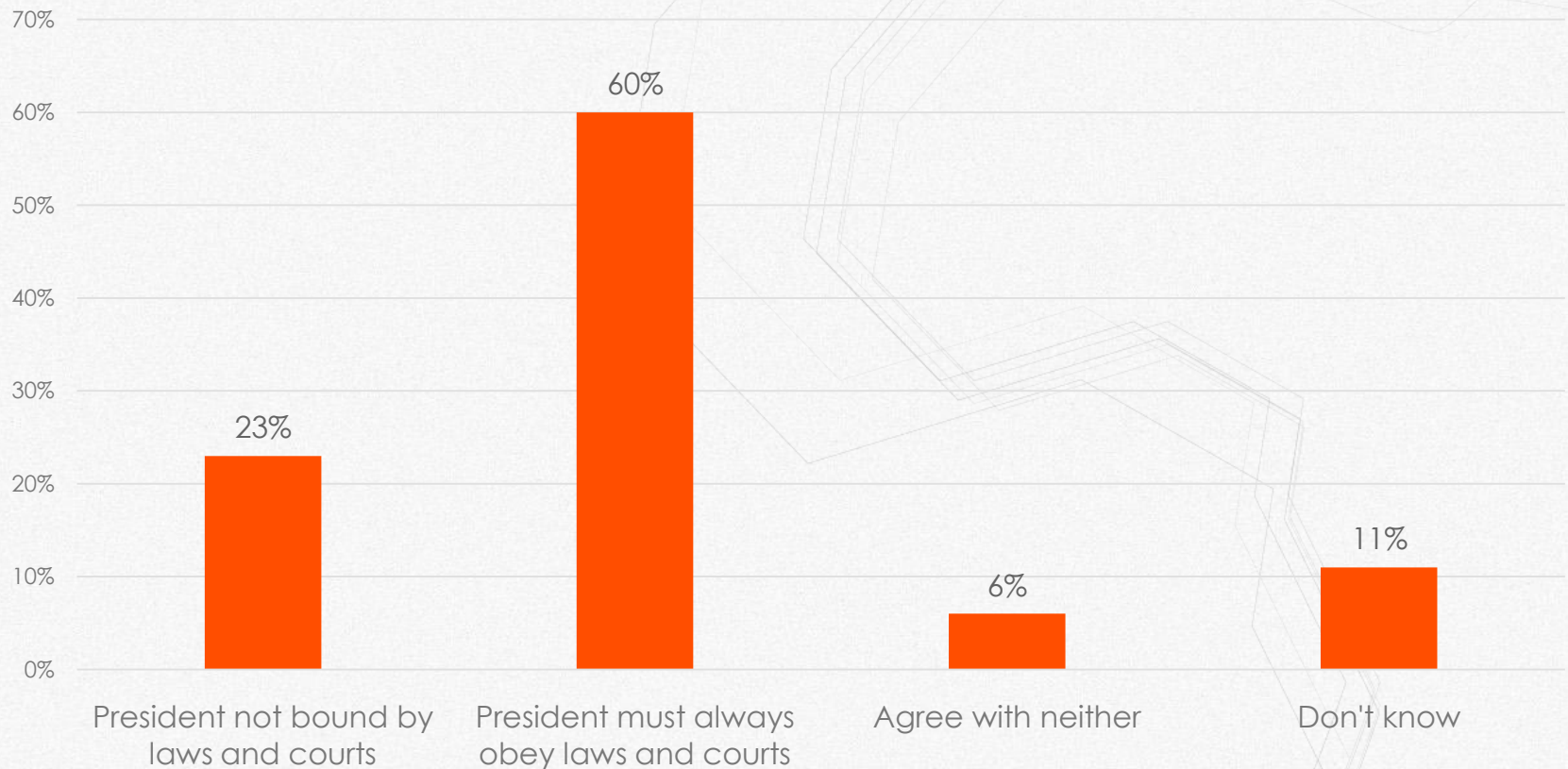
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

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 "agree very strongly" with each statement)

President must obey laws and courts | 2015



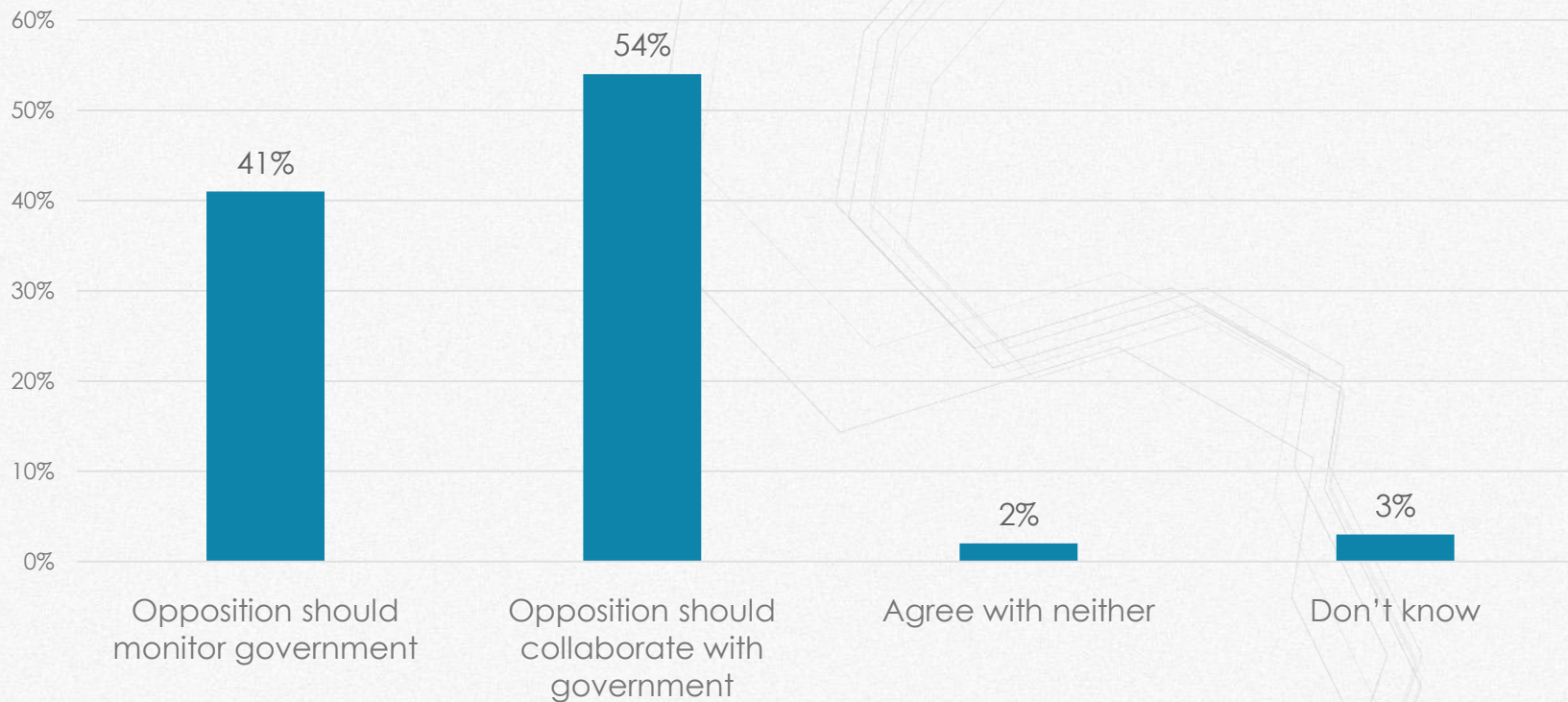
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

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 "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

Opposition should cooperate or monitor? | 2015



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.

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



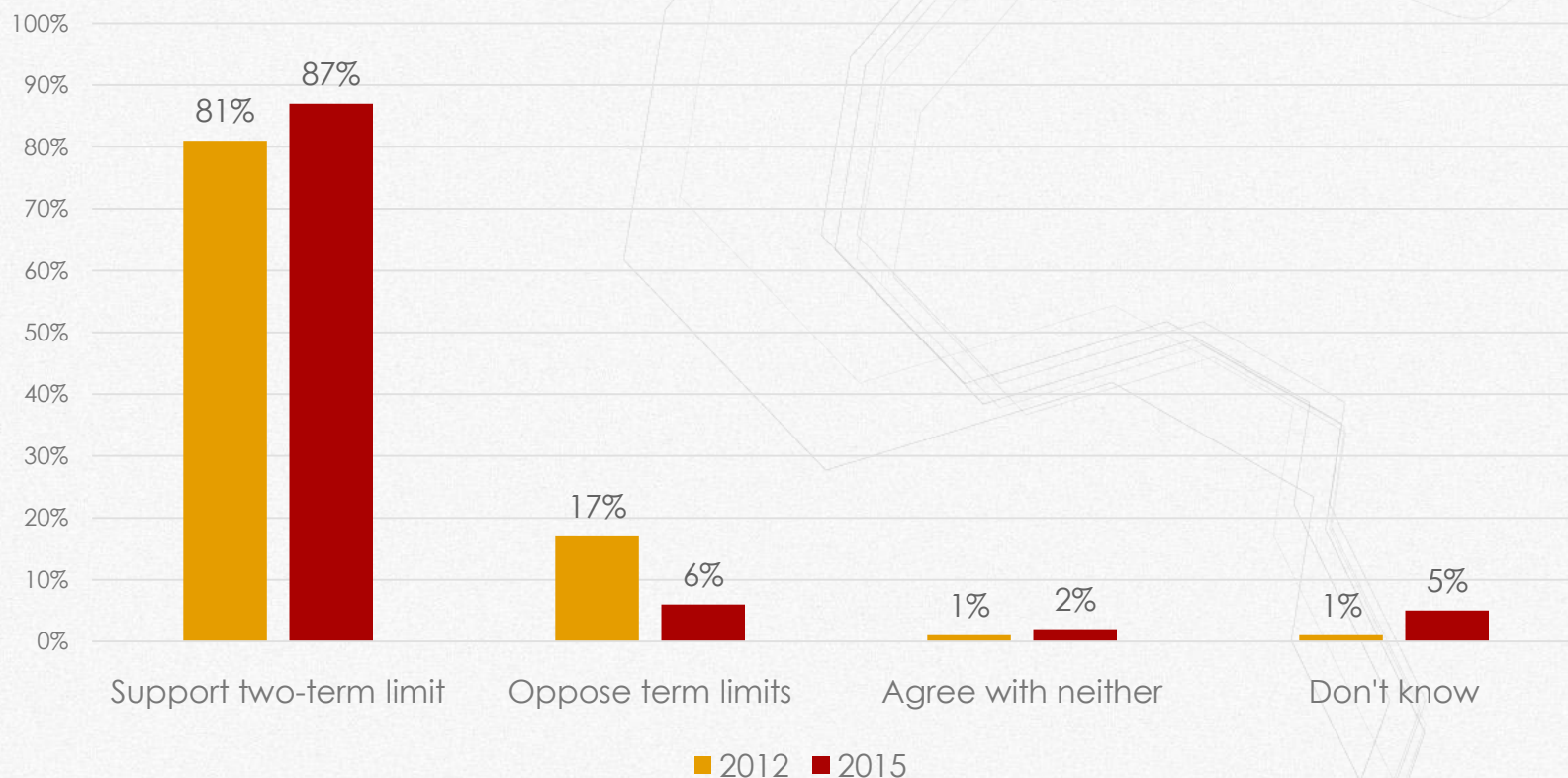
Term limits

Key finding

- An overwhelming majority (87%) of Sierra Leoneans endorse a two-term limit on presidential mandates. This is an increase of 6 percentage points from 2012.



Support for presidential term limits | 2012-2015



Respondent 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.

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



Conclusion

Conclusion

- A majority of Sierra Leoneans prefer democracy as a system of government and reject non-democratic alternatives (one-party, one-man, and military rule).
- But a sizeable proportion of the population is dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in their country.
- A majority of Sierra Leoneans favour government accountability over freedom to act.
- Support for term limits has grown even stronger since 2012.





Thank you