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News release

Ethiopians trust traditional leaders more than other institutions, would like to see their influence increase, Afrobarometer survey shows

Ethiopians trust their traditional leaders more than state institutions and elected officials, and would like to see their influence increase, Afrobarometer survey findings show.

However, most citizens want their traditional leaders to stay out of politics.

Second only to religious leaders, traditional leaders enjoy greater popular trust than the prime minister and legislators, security forces, courts of law, and political parties. Citizens say traditional leaders do a better job of listening to their constituents than do members of the House of Peoples' Representatives and of local government councils.

Traditional leaders are most widely seen as influential in solving local disputes and governing their communities, and most citizens say their influence should increase in the future.

Key findings

- More than six in 10 Ethiopians (62%) say they trust traditional leaders "somewhat" or "a lot," a higher level of popular trust than is enjoyed most state institutions and officials (Figure 1).
- A majority of Ethiopians say traditional leaders have "some influence" or "a lot of influence" in solving local disputes (79%) and governing local communities (60%). Fewer think that traditional leaders are influential in allocating land (42%) or affecting how people vote (36%) (Figure 2).
- An overwhelming majority (81%) would like the influence of traditional leaders to increase (Figure 3).
- A clear majority (61%) want traditional leaders to stay out of politics (Figure 4).
- More than half (52%) of Ethiopians say traditional leaders "often" or "always" do their best to listen to their constituents, compared to only about one in 10 who say the same about members of the House of Peoples' Representatives (9%) and local government councillors (12%) (Figure 5).

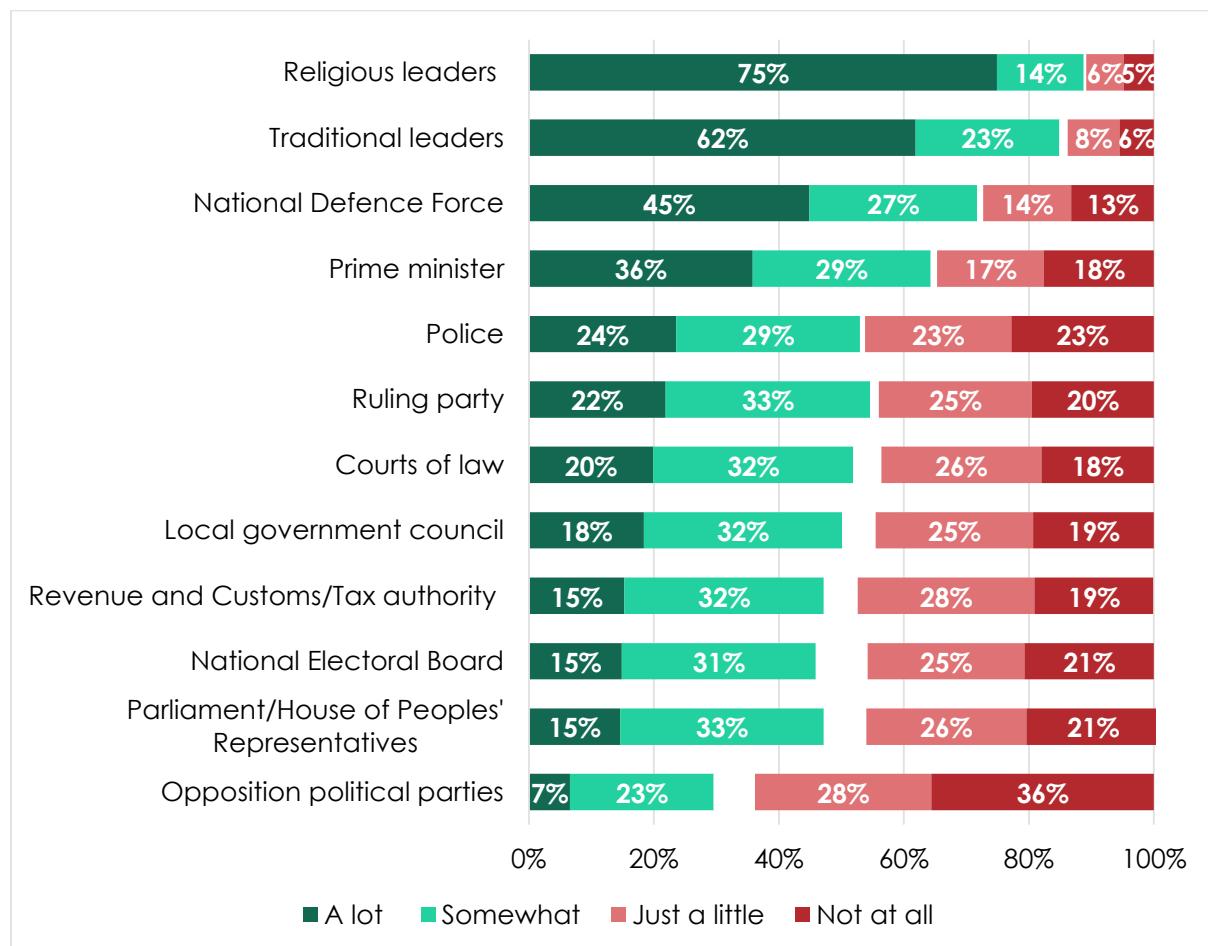
Afrobarometer surveys

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 in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

These findings are drawn from a survey of 2,400 adult citizens conducted in December 2019–January 2020 by ABCON Research & Consulting with financial support from Freedom House. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. A previous survey was conducted in Ethiopia in 2013.

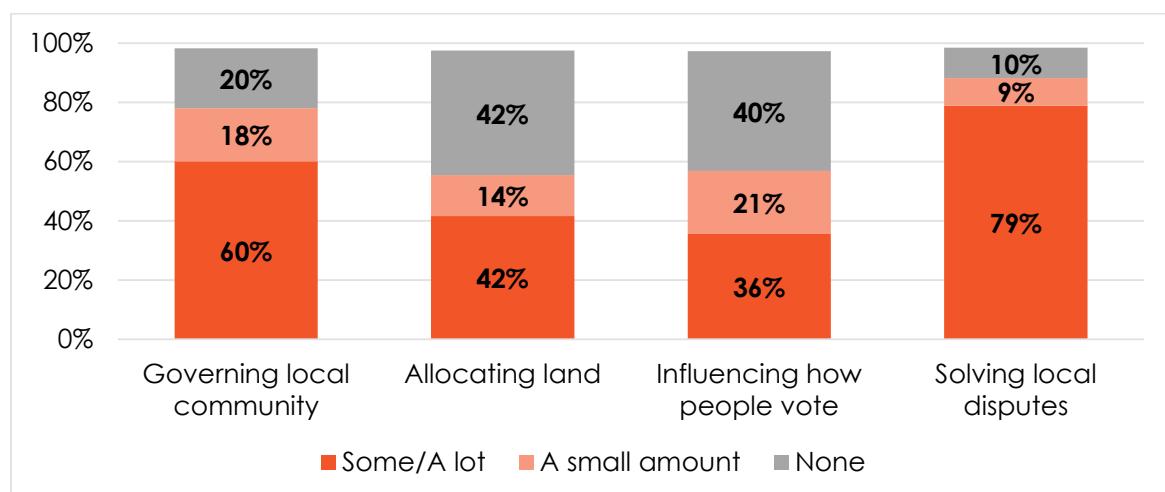
Charts

Figure 1: Trust in institutions and leaders | Ethiopia | 2020



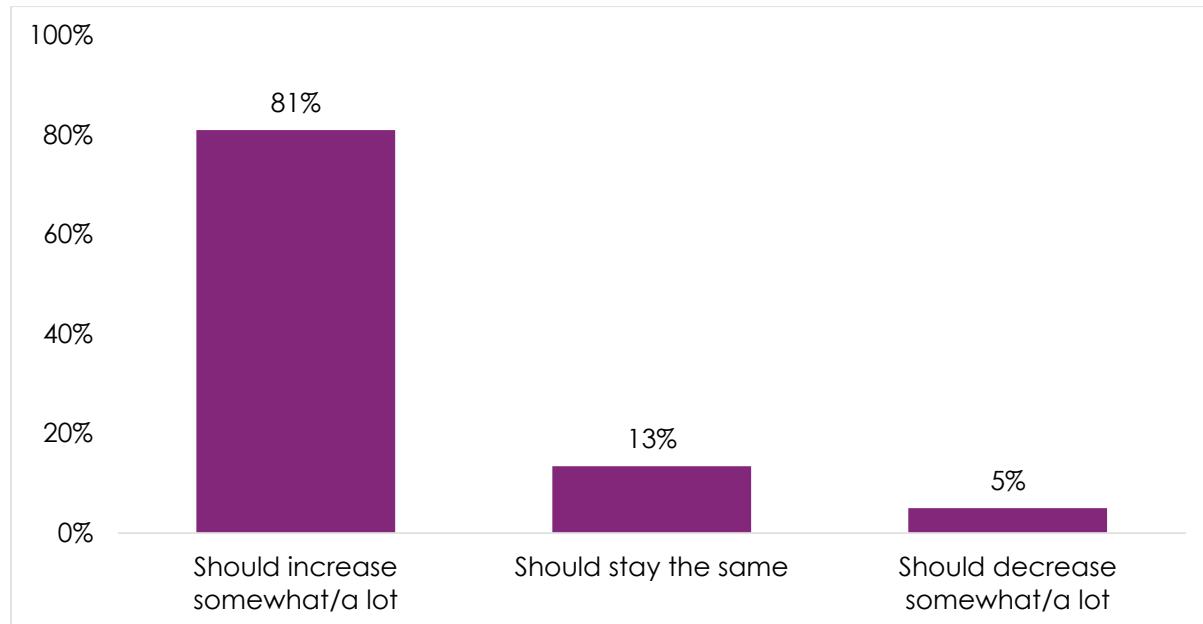
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

Figure 2: How much influence do traditional leaders have? | Ethiopia | 2020



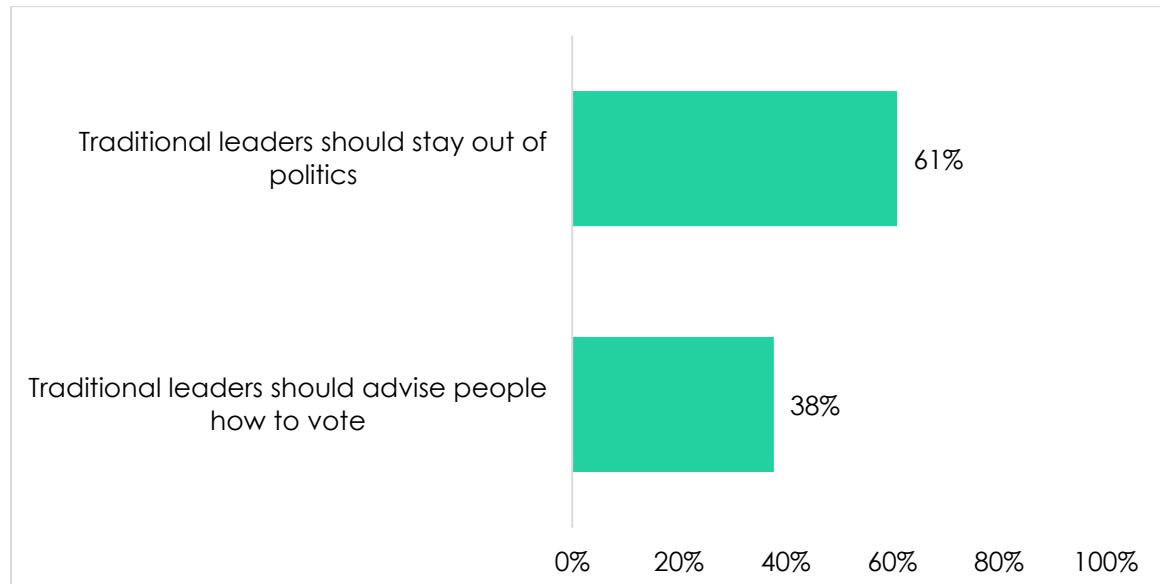
Respondents were asked: How much influence do traditional leaders currently have in each of the following areas: Governing your local community? Allocating land? Influencing how people in their communities vote? Solving local disputes?

Figure 3: Should traditional leaders have more influence or less? | Ethiopia | 2020



Respondents were asked: Do you think that the amount of influence traditional leaders have in governing your local community should increase, stay the same, or decrease?

Figure 4: Should traditional leaders advise on vote or stay out of politics? | Ethiopia | 2020

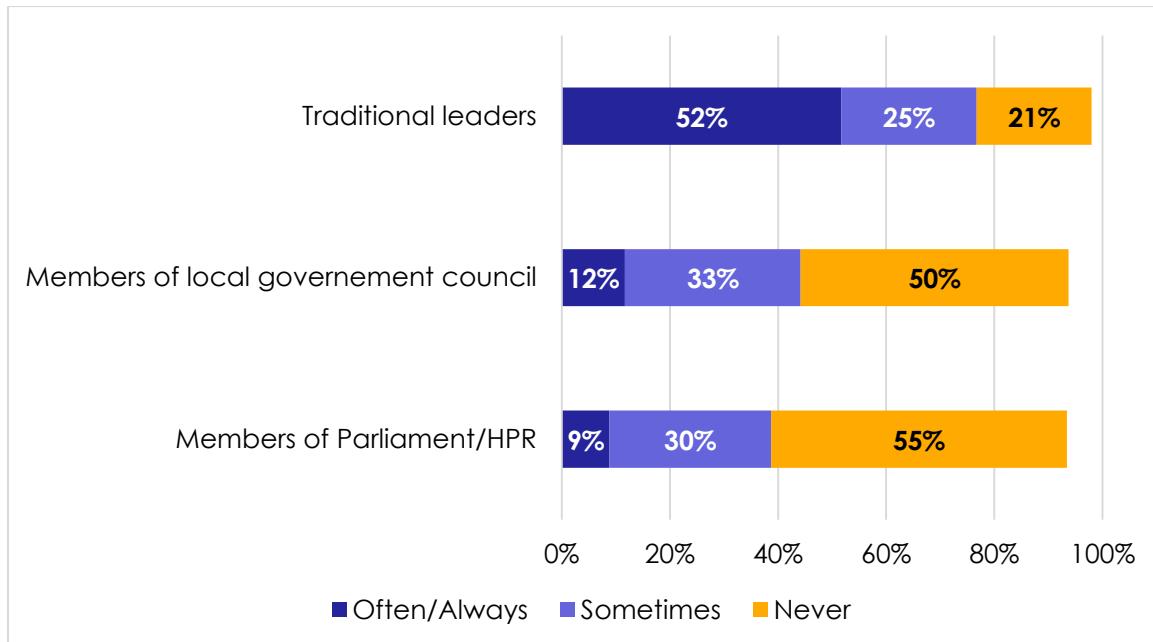


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Traditional leaders have a better grasp of political issues than ordinary people; they should give their people advice about how to vote.

Statement 2: Traditional leaders should stay out of politics and leave people to make their own decisions about how to vote.

Figure 5: How often leaders listen to constituents | Ethiopia | 2020



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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