

Port Louis, Mauritius
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News release

Mauritians welcome India's and China's economic and political influence, new Afrobarometer survey shows

Most Mauritians say India's and China's economic and political activities have a positive influence on their country, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Only half of citizens see the influence of the United States in a favourable light, one of the lowest ratings among major powers and international organizations. But the United States stands first among Mauritians' preferred development models, followed by Great Britain and China.

Most Mauritians are aware of Chinese loans and development assistance, but many are concerned that the Mauritian government has borrowed too heavily from China.

Key findings

- Most Mauritians say India's (80%) and China's (75%) economic and political activities have a "somewhat" or "very" positive influence on their country (Figure 1).
 - Only half (50%) say the U.S. influence is positive. One in 10 (10%) see it as negative, while the rest say it is "neither positive nor negative" (14%) or they "don't know" (25%).
 - Majorities welcome the influence of France (67%), Britain (58%), and South Africa (57%), as well as of the Southern African Development Community (61%), the African Union (56%), and United Nations agencies (56%).
- As in Afrobarometer's 2014 survey, the United States maintains its position as the most popular model to follow for the country's future development, cited by 23% of respondents. While Great Britain (18%) and India (1%) both declined substantially in popularity compared to 2014, China gained 3 percentage points, from 13% to 16% (Figure 2).
- A large majority of citizens think that India (86%) and China's (75%) economic activities exert "some" or "a lot" influence on the Mauritian economy (Figure 3).
- Seven out of 10 Mauritians (70%) are aware that their country receives loans and development assistance from China (Figure 4).
- Among those who are aware of China's assistance, most (81%) understand that Mauritius has to repay the loans, and a plurality (45%) say the government has borrowed too much from China, vs. just 18% who say it hasn't (Figure 4).
- Regarding strings attached to Chinese development assistance, Mauritians' assessment are mixed: 28% believe that China places about the same number of requirements as other donor countries and development partners, while 22% think it applies fewer and 11% that it applies more conditionalities. But a plurality (39%) say they "don't know" (Figure 5).

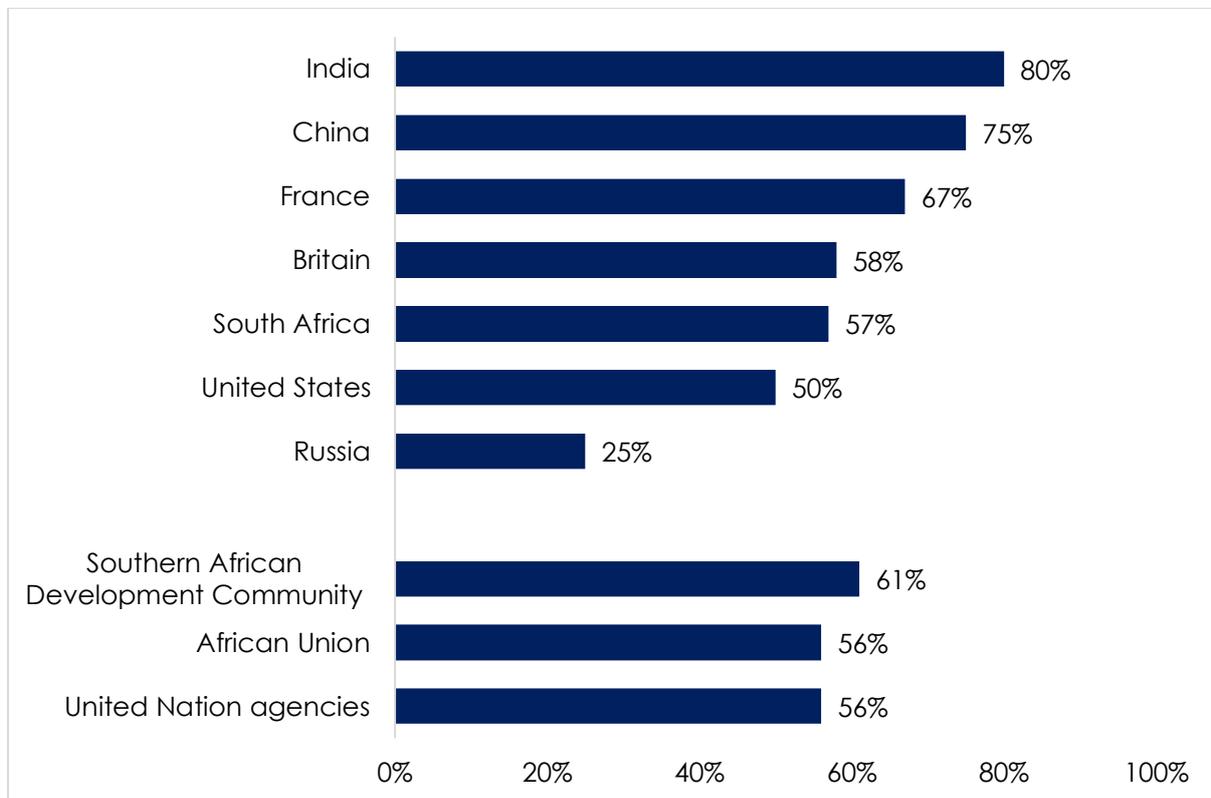
Afrobarometer survey

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 2019/2021 will cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Mauritius, led by Straconsult Ltd., interviewed 1,200 adult Mauritians in November 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 have been conducted in Mauritius in 2012, 2014, and 2017.

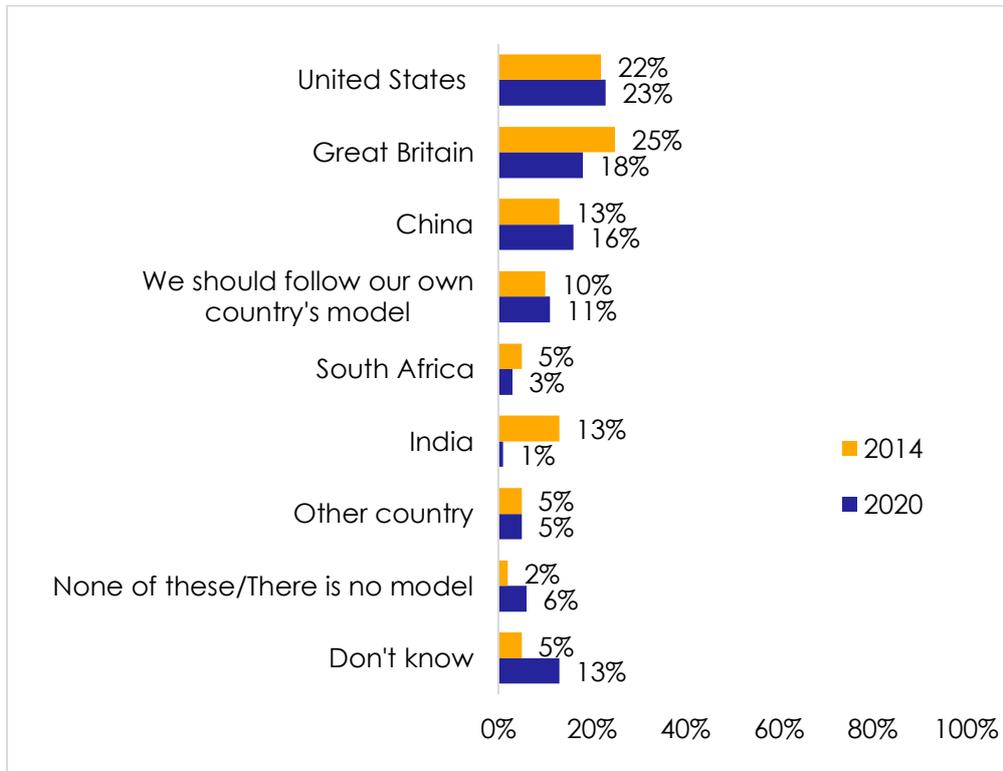
Charts

Figure 1: Countries and organizations with positive influence | Mauritius | 2020



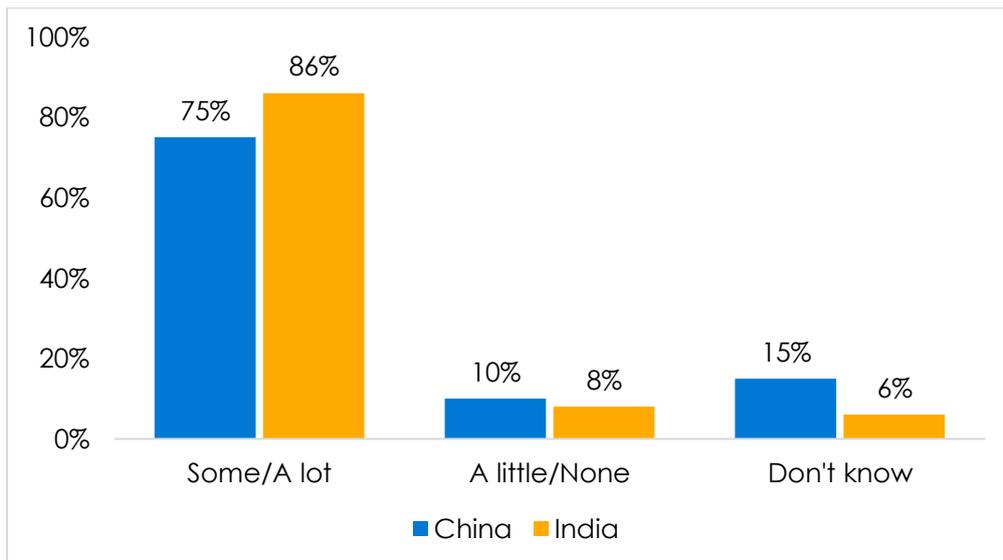
Respondents were asked: Do you think that the economic and political influence of each of the following [countries/organizations] on Mauritius is mostly positive, mostly negative, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "somewhat positive" or "very positive")

Figure 2: Best development model | Mauritius | 2014-2020



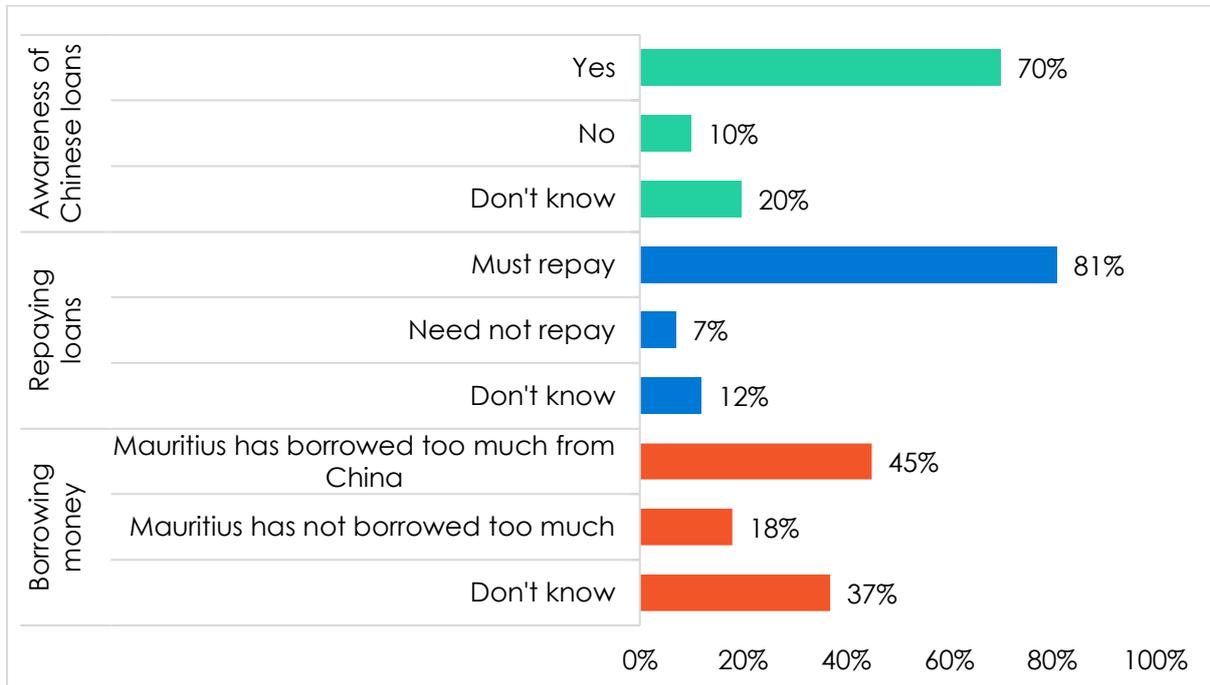
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following countries, if any, would be the best model for the future development of our country, or is there some other country in Africa or elsewhere, that should be our model?

Figure 3: China's and India's economic influence | Mauritius | 2020



Respondents were asked: How much influence do you think [China's/India's] economic activities in Mauritius have on our economy, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Figure 4: China's development assistance | Mauritius | 2020



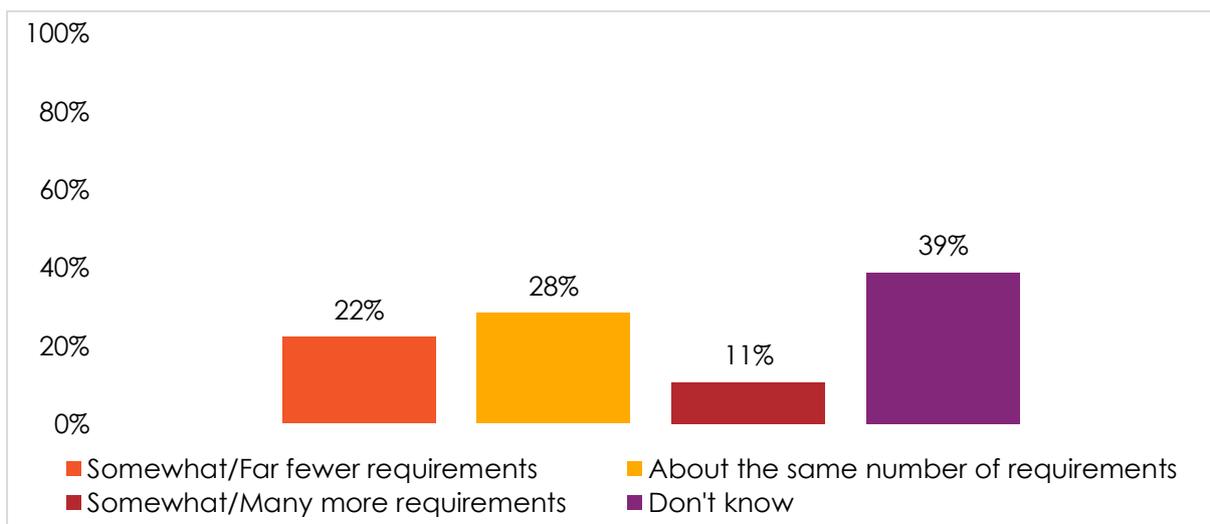
Respondents were asked: To your knowledge, does China give loans or development assistance to our country's government, or haven't you had a chance to hear about this?

Respondents who were aware of Chinese loans or development assistance were asked:

Do you think that our government is required to repay China for the loans and development assistance it provides to Mauritius, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Do you think our government has borrowed too much money from China, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Figure 5: Conditionality of development assistance: China vs. other development partners | Mauritius | 2020



Respondents were asked: When the government of China gives loans or development assistance to Mauritius, do you think they put more requirements or fewer requirements on our government compared to other donor countries, or haven't you heard enough to say?

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