

Mbabane, Eswatini  
13 December 2021

## News release

---

### Emaswati increasingly dissatisfied with their democracy

Citizens are more dissatisfied with the workings of Eswatini's democracy than at any time since Afrobarometer began its national surveys in the country in 2013.

The latest Afrobarometer survey shows declines in public perceptions of Eswatini as a functioning democracy as well as in popular satisfaction with the way their democracy is working.

In recent months, citizen dissatisfaction has found expression in protests across different parts of the country.

In November, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa visited Eswatini in his capacity as chairperson of the Southern African Development Community's Organ of Defence, Politics and Security Cooperation to discuss the country's political and security issues with King Mswati III. After the meeting, the government announced that a national dialogue forum will facilitate talks between pro-democracy groups and the government to manage political tensions in the Kingdom.

### Key findings

- Only about a quarter (27%) of Emaswati say their country is "a full democracy" or "a democracy with minor problems" (Figure 1). The share who describe the country as "not a democracy" or "a democracy with major problems" has increased by 6 percentage points since 2013.
- Fewer than two in 10 citizens (16%) say they are "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way their democracy is working (Figure 2). This proportion has dropped by more than half since 2013, when 35% expressed satisfaction.
- Citizens with no formal education (58%) or primary schooling (62%) are less likely to express dissatisfaction with the country's democracy than their more educated counterparts (72%) (Figure 3).
- Dissatisfaction is less pronounced among older citizens (61% of those aged 56 or older) than among the younger population (70%-72%) (Figure 3).

### Afrobarometer surveys

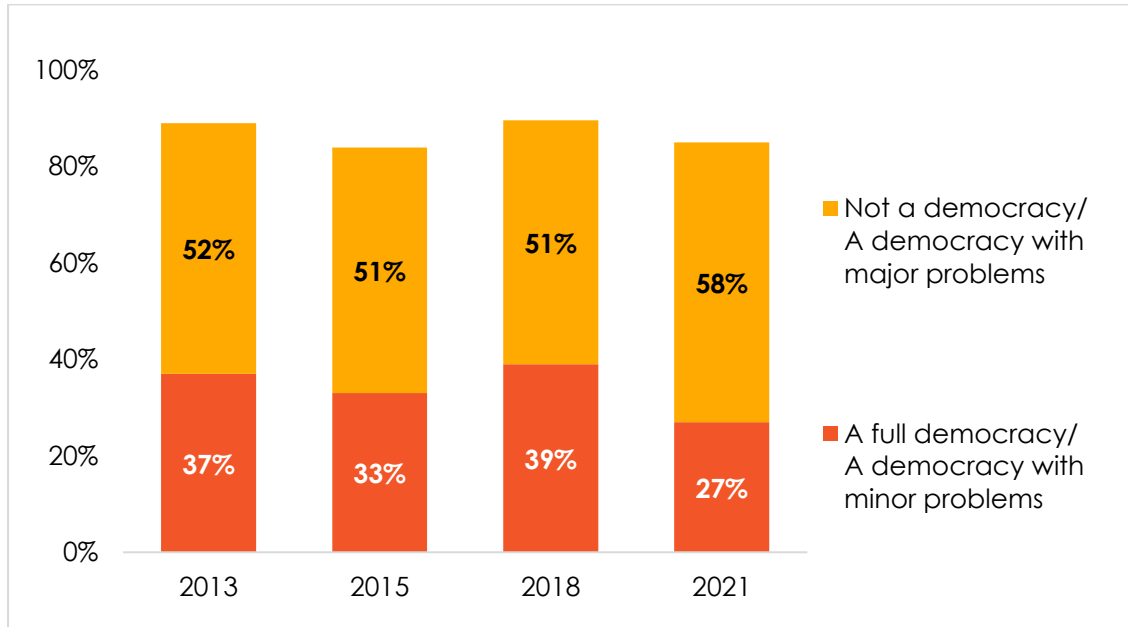
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Eswatini, led by ActivQuest, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult Emaswati in March-April 2021. 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 were conducted in Eswatini in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

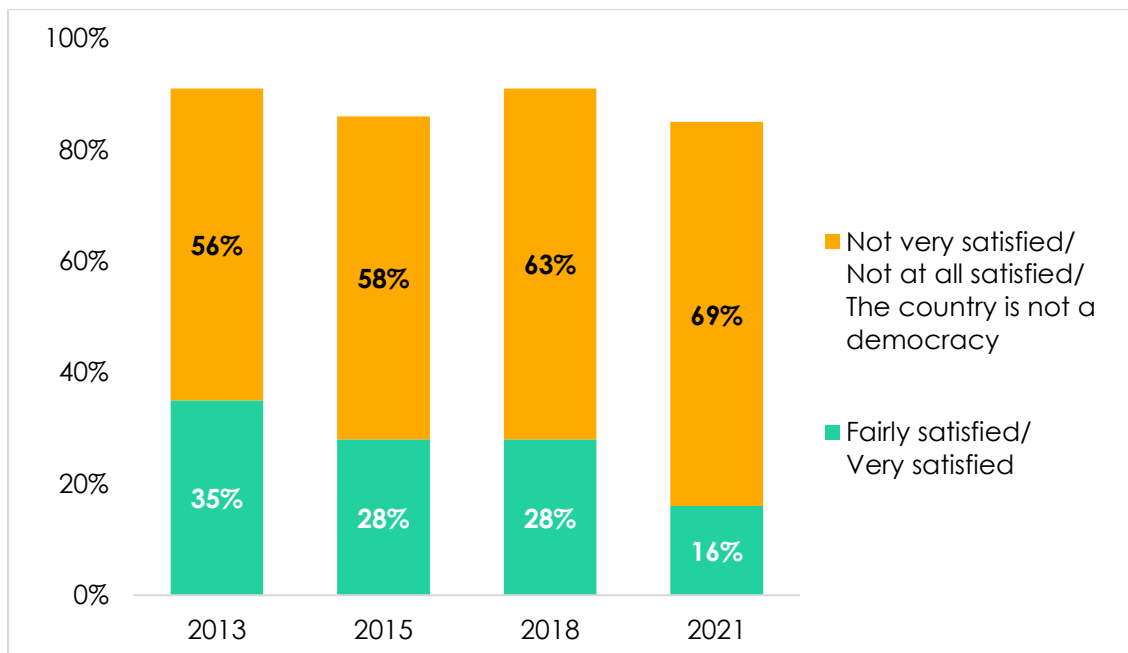
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Extent of democracy | Eswatini | 2013-2021**



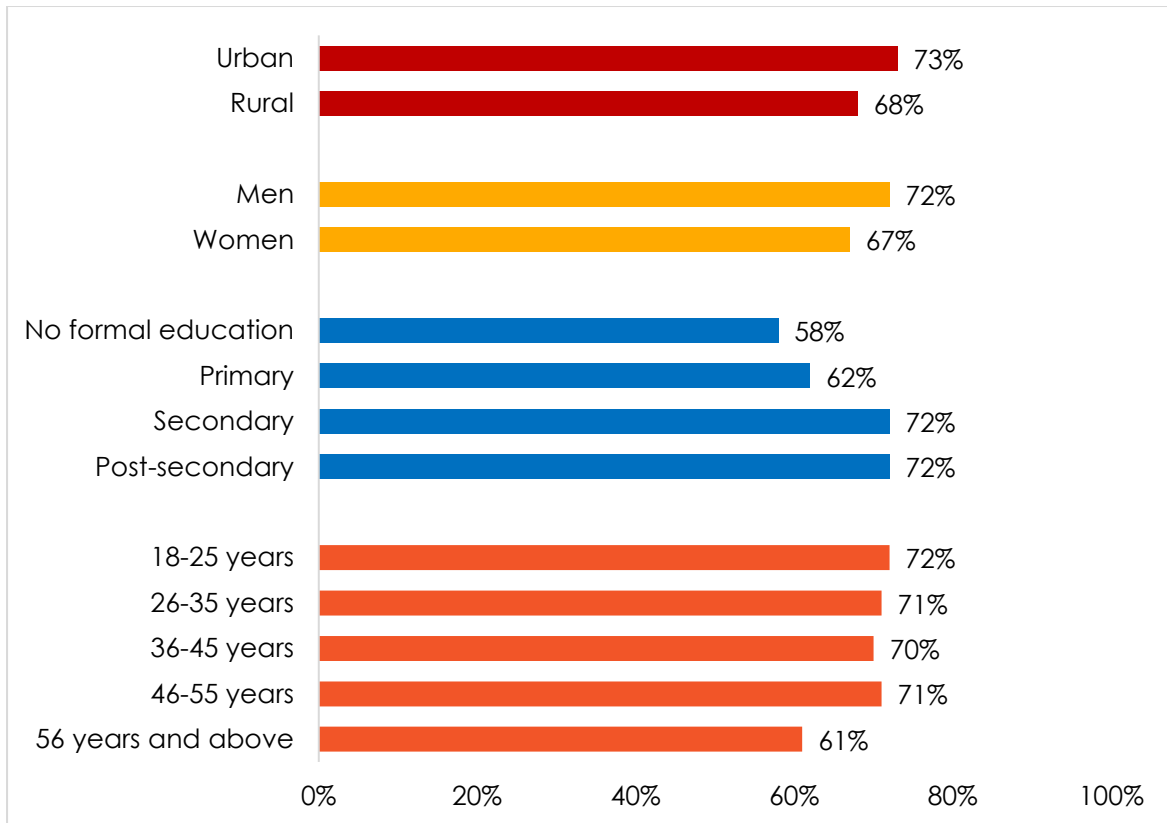
**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Eswatini today?

**Figure 2: Satisfaction with democracy | Eswatini | 2013-2021**



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

**Figure 3: Dissatisfaction with democracy** | by socio-demographic group | Eswatini  
 | 2013-2021



**Respondents were asked:** Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Eswatini? (% who say "not very satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" or "the country is not a democracy")

**For more information, please contact:**

Mbuso Dlamini  
 Managing director  
 ActivQuest  
[info@activquest.com](mailto:info@activquest.com)  
 +268-2422 1934

Visit us online at:  
[www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

