



Monrovia, Liberia
8 July 2021

News release

Liberians prefer democratic governance but are dissatisfied with the way democracy is working, Afrobarometer survey shows

Liberians support democracy and reject authoritarian alternatives, but they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Support for presidential term limits and elections remain high in the country.

But support for multiparty competition has declined considerably over the past decade; about half of citizens now say that having many political parties just creates division and confusion.

Key findings

- Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian alternatives have been consistently high among Liberians over the past decade. A preference for democracy over any other type of political system has increased from 72% in 2008 to 83% in 2020 (Figure 1).
- An overwhelming majority (85%) of Liberians “agree” or “strongly agree” that the president should be limited to a maximum of two terms in office, a position that has held steady over the past decade (Figure 2).
- Nine out of 10 Liberians (90%) prefer to choose leaders through regular, open, and honest elections (Figure 3).
- Only half (50%) of citizens support multiparty democracy, a 20-percentage-point decline since 2012 (Figure 4).
- Two-thirds (67%) of citizens describe Liberia as a “full democracy” or a “democracy with minor problems” (Figure 5).
- But six in 10 (61%) say they are “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with the way democracy works in Liberia (Figure 6).

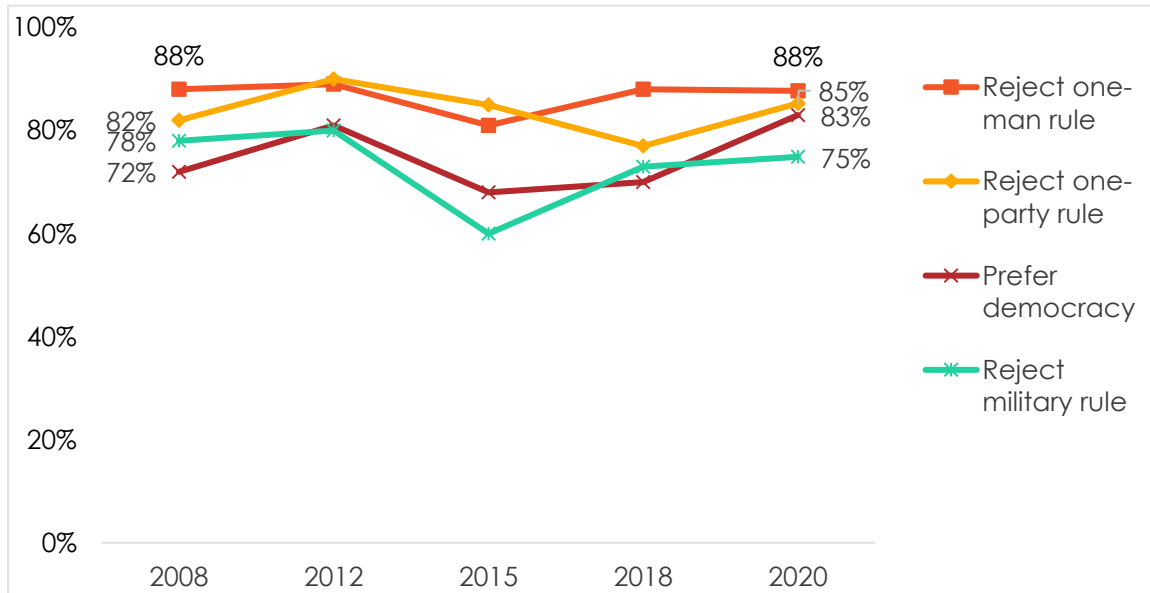
Afrobarometer surveys

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 conducted in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018, and Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) covering 34 countries are close to completion. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult Liberians between October and December 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 were conducted in Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2018.

Charts

Figure 1: Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian alternatives | Liberia | 2008-2020



Respondents were asked:

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? (% who "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove")

Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office.

The army comes in to govern the country.

Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

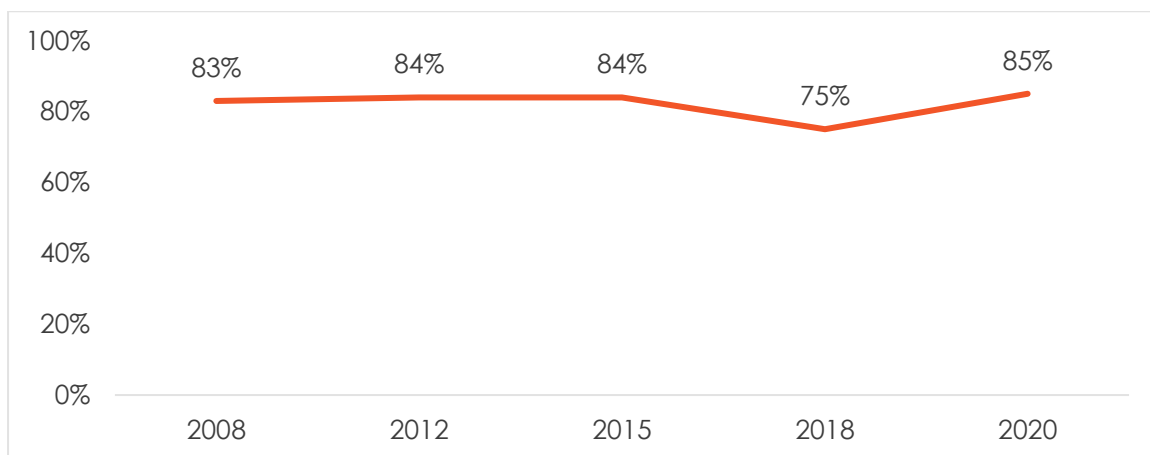
Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? (% who choose Statement 1)

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.

Figure 2: Support for term limits | Liberia | 2008-2020



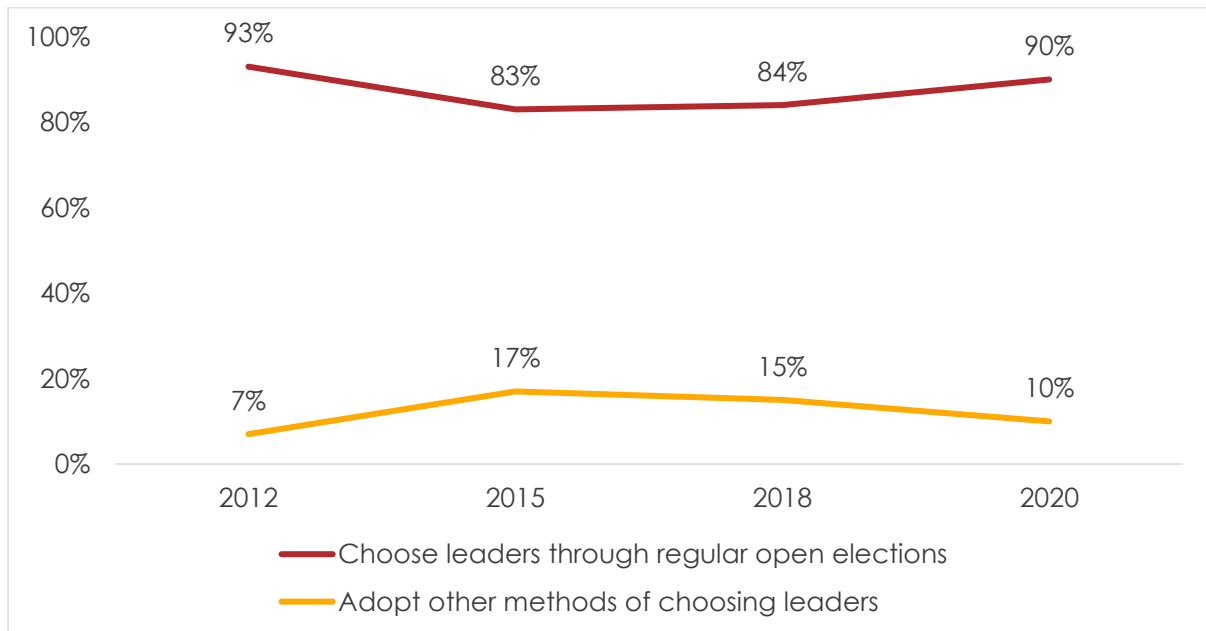
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own view?

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.

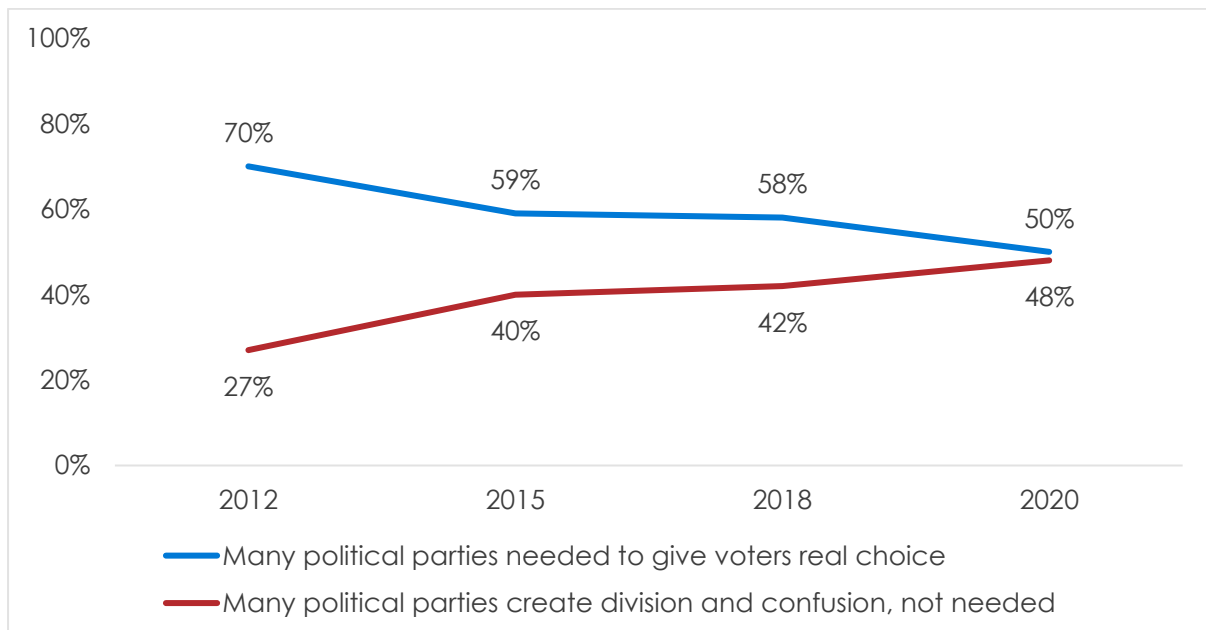
(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement 1)

Figure 3: Support for elections | Liberia | 2012-2020



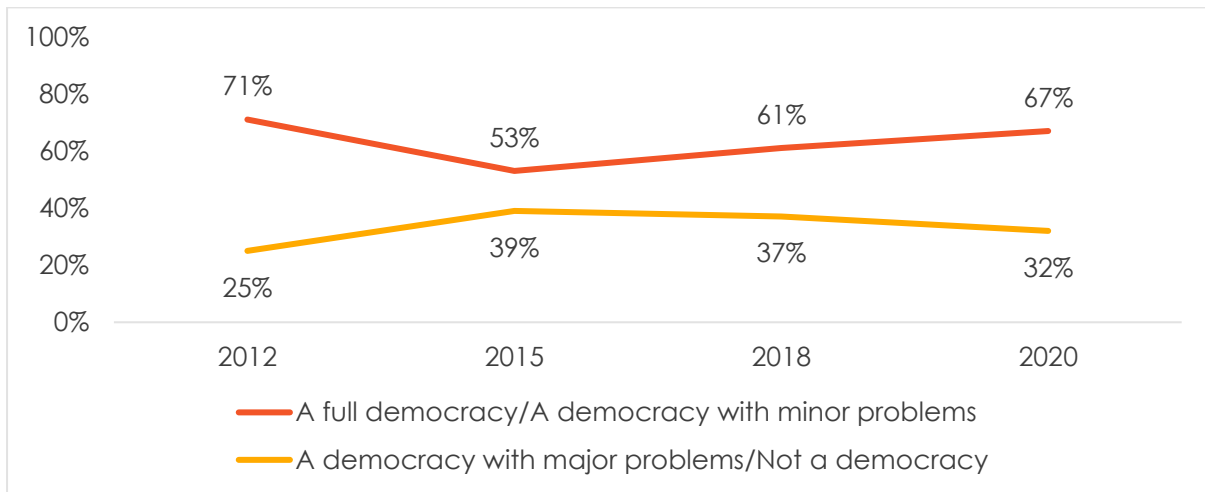
Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your own view?
 Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open, and honest elections.
 Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" each statement)

Figure 4: Views on multiparty democracy | Liberia | 2012-2020



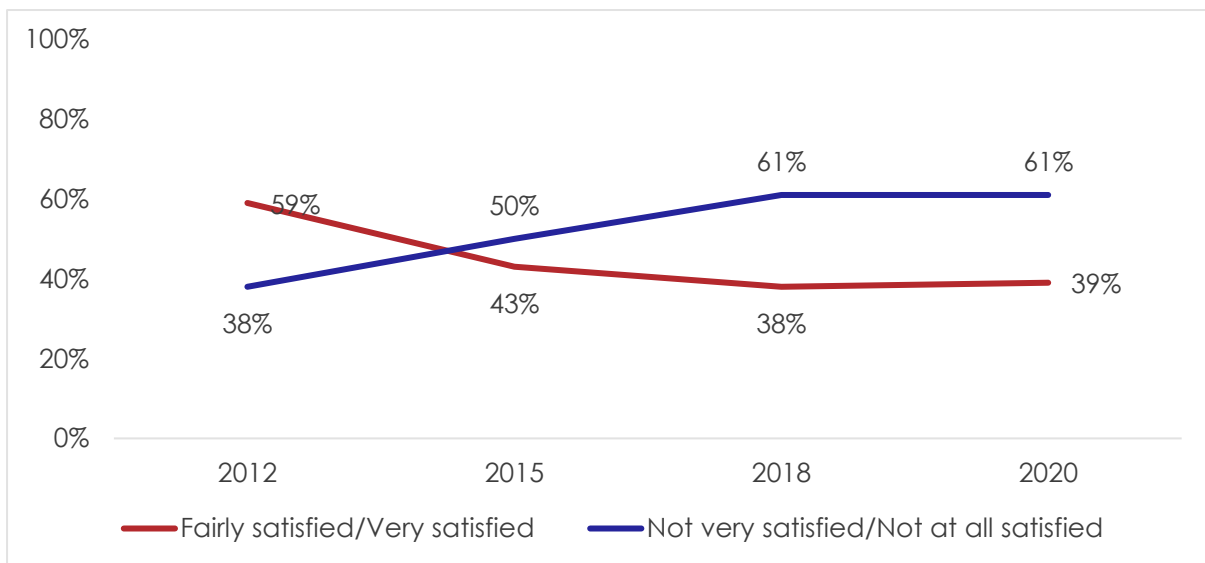
Respondents were asked: Which of these two statements is closest to your own view?
 Statement 1: Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in Liberia.
 Statement 2: Many political parties are needed to make sure that Liberians have real choices in who governs them
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" each statement)

Figure 5: Extent of democracy | Liberia | 2012-2020



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

Figure 6: Satisfaction with democracy | Liberia | 2012-2020



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

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