



POPULAR OPINIONS ON ISSUES AT STAKE IN THE 2016 ELECTION

Evidence from a CDD-Ghana survey

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
 - All respondents are randomly selected.
 - The sample is distributed across regions 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.
- Sample size of 2,400 yields a margin of error of $\pm 2\%$ at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork (or data collection) took place from July 2 to 18, 2016.

SETTING THE SCENE OR CONTEXT OF THE SURVEY

Issues dominating the news headlines immediately before and during the survey



- Controversy was still raging over the integrity of the voter register and its cleaning.
- The supreme court's rulings on the voter roll's cleaning, including the deletion of 56,000 NHIS card registrants the EC claimed to have identified seemed to badly upset the ruling NDC and its supporters. This was dramatically manifested in the pro-NDC radio station Montie FM panelists' threat of physical harm to the Chief Justice and other Supreme Court judges.
- Partisan bickering emerged over the proposal to bring forward the December 7 election date to November 7 by constitutional amendment.

Issues dominating the news headlines

- The country was experiencing the return of power outages (dumsor) in the midst of public outrage over huge spike in electricity tariffs.
- Candidates and parties intensified their election campaigns, with NDC and NPP formally launching their 2016 election campaigns; some named their campaign teams; and began to outline their policies and programs.
- The tone of the election campaign as well as political discourse became increasingly bellicose; the use of inflammatory language in the media and political party (mainly NDC and NPP) mobilization of private militias escalated.

Issues dominating the news headlines

- The IGP's threat to close down the social media on election-day to prevent “anarchy” was eliciting strong media/CSO push back.
- There was an increase in party and candidate supporter partisan tagging of civil society and independent non-state actors as “opposition stooges”.
- Ethnic undertones emerged in election campaign.
- Open endorsement of presidential candidates by some local chiefs provoked debates over the appropriateness of traditional authorities' involvement in partisan politics.

Issues dominating the news headlines

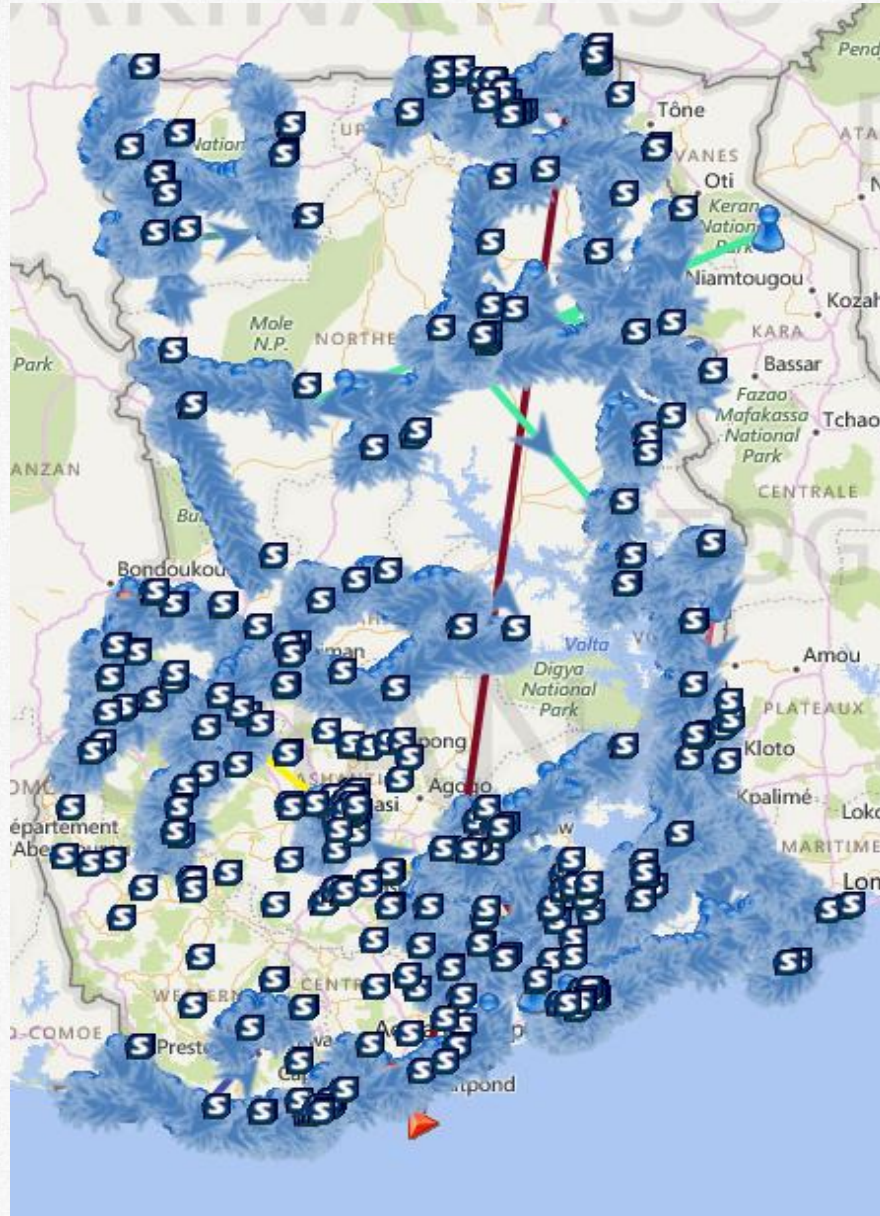
- Government/ruling party corruption/conflict of interest emerged as a focal election campaign issue, mainly triggered by media reports that the President had received a Ford Expedition vehicle gift from a Burkinabe private contractor undertaking several government public works contracts.
- Advocacy for peaceful elections/political tolerance surged, reflecting the rising political temperature and deployment of abusive language against political opponents and growing partisan militancy.
- A newly constituted National Peace Council was inaugurated, with Rev. Dr. Asante (chair of the previous Council and presidential nominee to the Council) as its Chair.
- The EC received criticisms, especially from the opposition for failing to adhere to its own election time table.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY LOCATION AND RESPONDENTS

Demographics (About survey location)

Region	Survey distribution	National distribution of adult population
Western	9.7%	9.5%
Central	8.7%	8.7%
Greater Accra	18.3%	18.6%
Volta	8.6%	8.6%
Eastern	10.7%	10.6%
Ashanti	19.3%	19.5%
Brong Ahafo	9.0%	9.0%
Northern	9.0%	8.9%
Upper East	4.0%	4.0%
Upper West	2.7%	2.6%
Geographical location and coverage		
Rural	46.0%	46.0%
Urban	54.0%	54.0%
Number of districts surveyed		163
Number of towns/villages surveyed		291

Demographics (About survey location)



Demographics (About survey respondents)

Gender	
Male	50.0%
Female	50.0%
Age	
Youth (18-35 years)	51.0%
Young adults (36-50 years)	28.0%
Old adults (51-60 years)	11.0%
Elderly (61 years and above)	10.0%
Mean age	39 years
Median age	35 years
Modal age	30 years
Lowest age	18 years
Highest age	99 years
Highest level of education	
Secondary (completed & partial)	46.0%
Primary (completed & partial)	22.0%
None or informal schooling	16.0%
Tertiary (post-sec/polytechnic/university)	15.0%

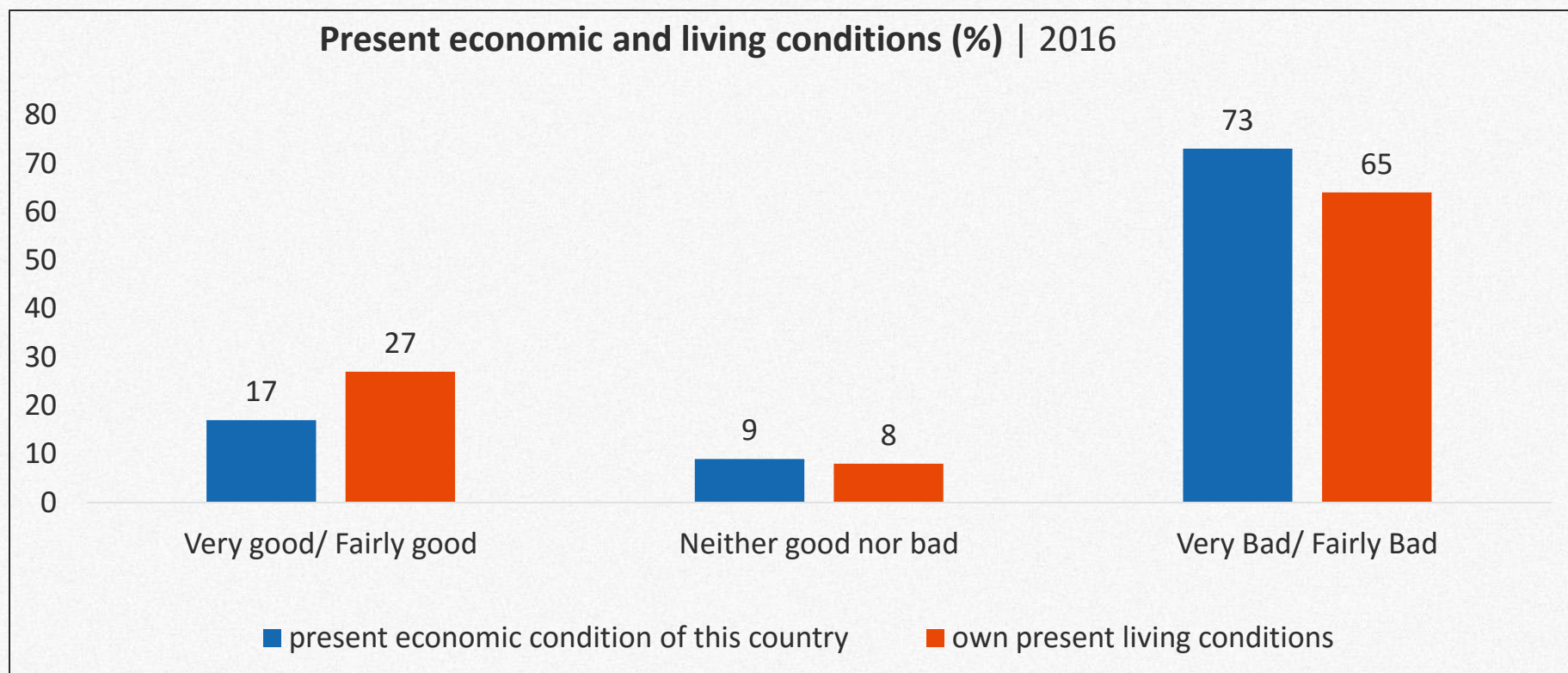
Demographics (About survey respondents)

Religion	
Christian religion	74.0%
Islamic religion	21.0%
Traditional religion (including Hinduism)	2.0%
None	2.0%
Other (Atheist/Christian science/Refused/Don't know)	1.0%
Main occupation	
Trader (retailer/shop owner, hawker & vendor)	27.0%
Agriculture (farming, fishing & forestry)	22.0%
Never had a job, housewife, or student	19.0%
Artisan or skilled manual worker	14.0%
Mid and upper level professionals	9.0%
Unskilled manual worker	5.0%
Clerical or secretarial	1.0%
Supervisor / Foreman / Senior Manager	1.0%
Security services (police, army, private security)	1.0%

POPULAR EVALUATIONS OF PREVAILING ECONOMIC & LIVING CONDITIONS

Evaluations of economic and living conditions

- Over 7 in 10 Ghanaians (73%) describe the present economic condition as 'very' or 'fairly' bad; and 65% describe their personal living conditions in similar terms.

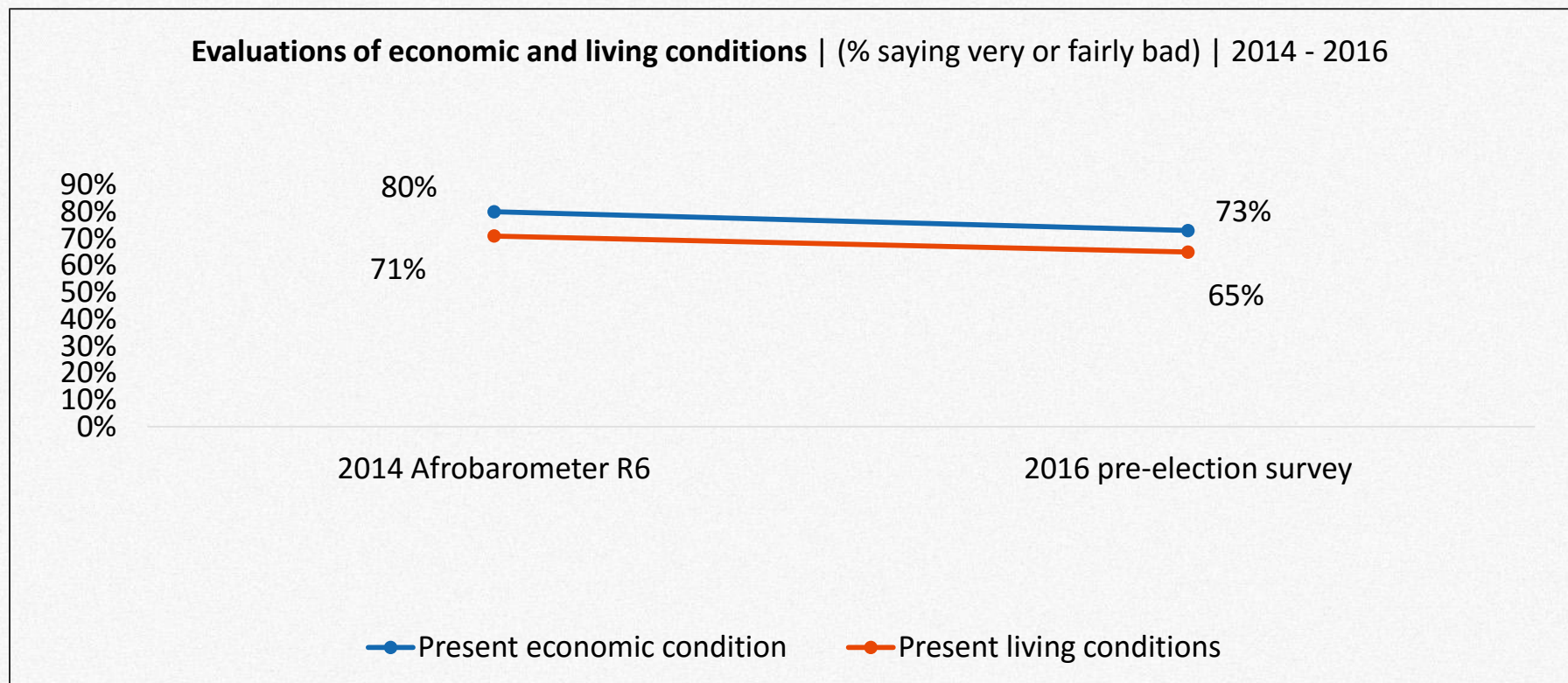


Q5. In general, how would you describe (a) The present economic condition of this country? (b) Your own present living conditions?

Evaluations of economic and living conditions

| 2014 - 2016

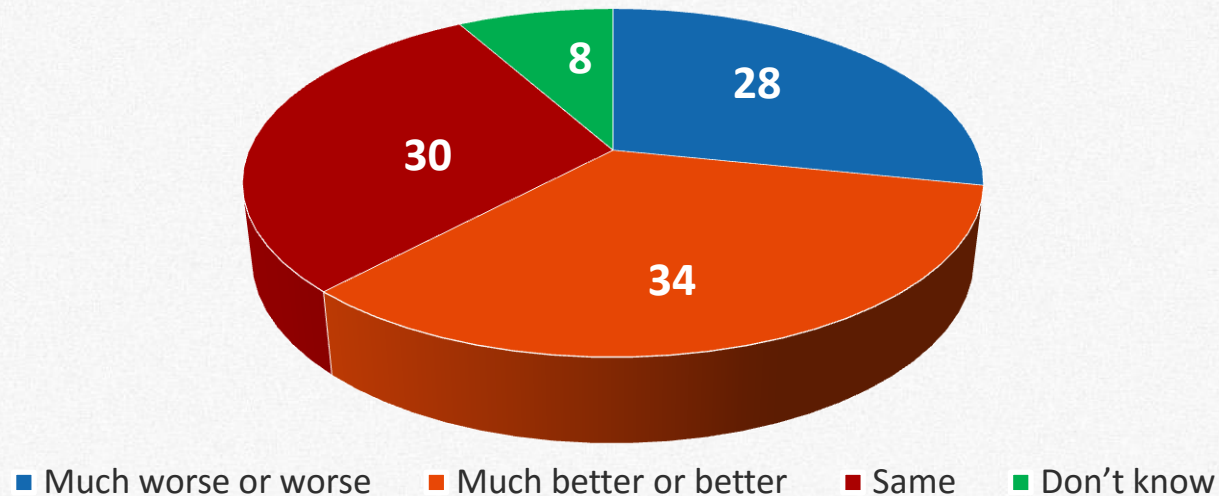
- Compared to the 2014 AB R6 findings, negative ratings of economic and living conditions declined by 7 and 6 percentage points, respectively, between 2014 and 2016.



Evaluations of one's living conditions compared to others

- Just a little over one-third of Ghanaians think their living conditions are better than other Ghanaians.
- A little under one-third however think their living conditions are the same as other Ghanaians.
- A little over one-quarter think their situation is 'much worse' or 'worse' than those of other Ghanaians.

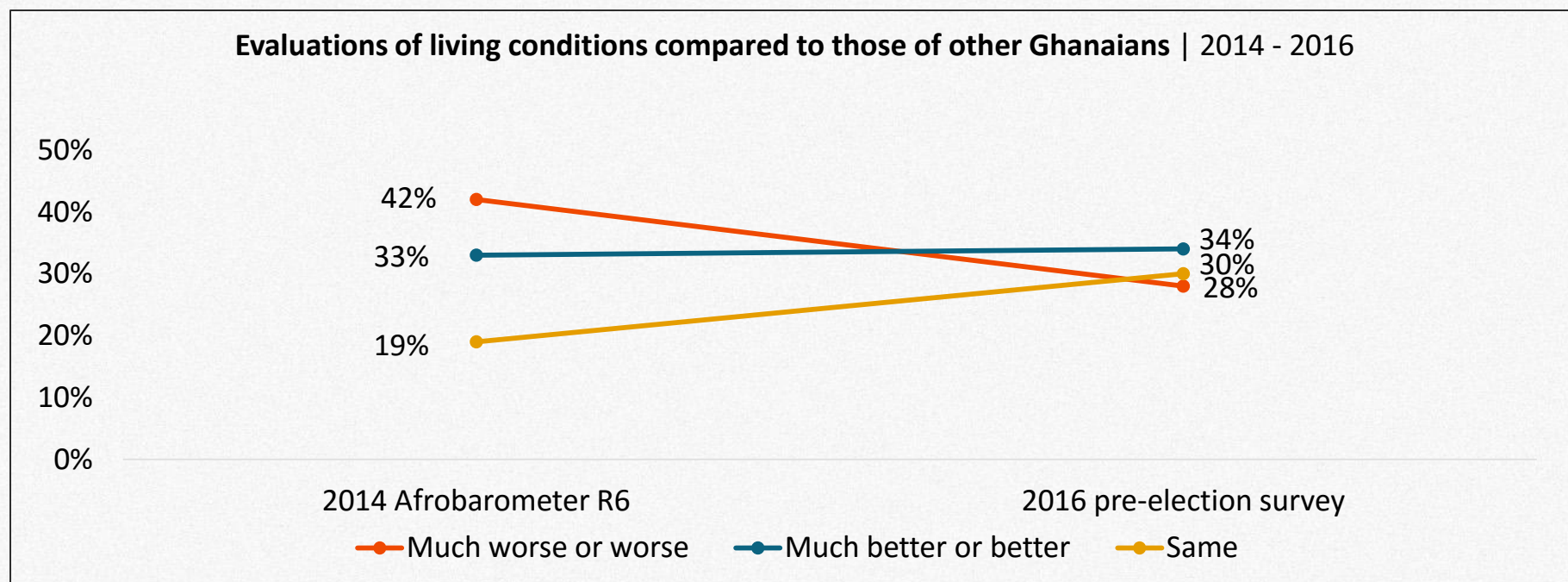
Living conditions compared to those of other Ghanaians (%) | 2016



6. In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared to those of other Ghanaians?

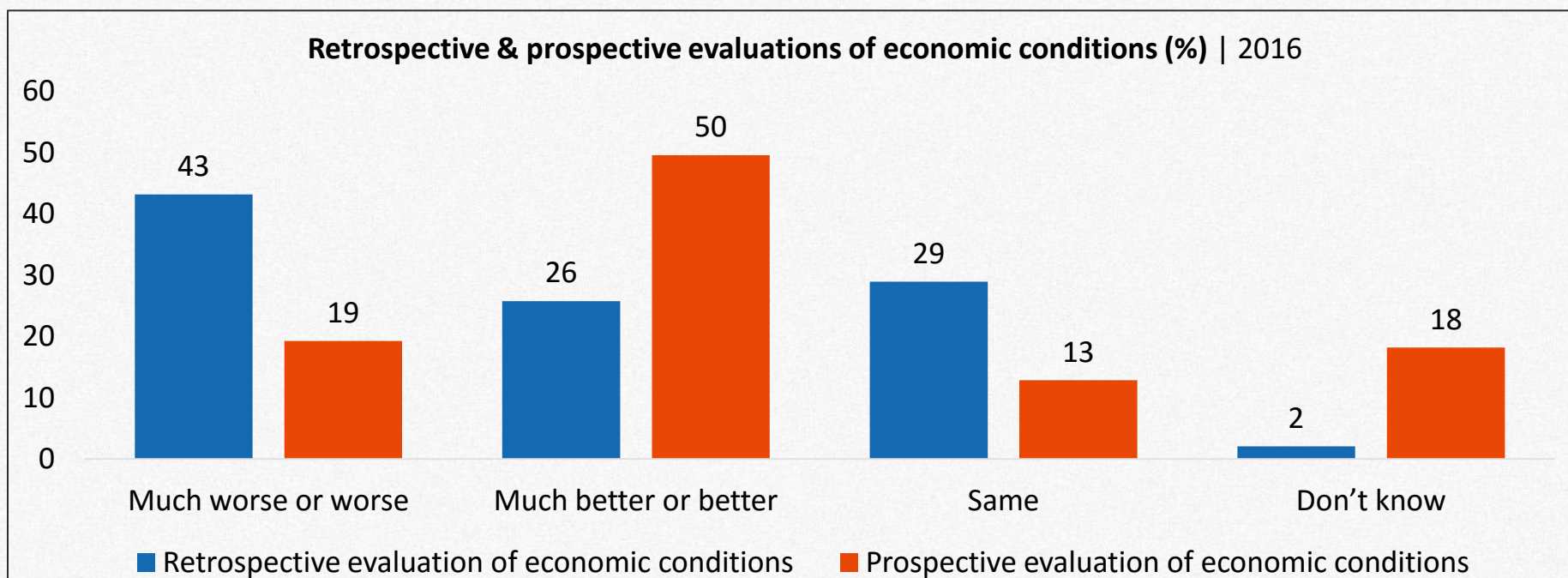
Evaluations of one's living conditions compared to others | 2014 - 2016

- Between 2014 and 2016, those who describe their living conditions compared to other Ghanaians as 'much worse' or 'worse' dipped a 14 percentage point.
- Those who say their situation is 'much better' or 'better' remained fairly stable and a sizeable portion of the reduction in negative assessment (i.e. 9%) translated into an increase in the proportion who consider their situation as 'same' as other Ghanaians.



Retrospective and prospective evaluations of economic conditions

- A little over 4 in 10 Ghanaians (43%) describe present economic conditions as 'much worse' or worse' compared to a year ago; a little over a quarter do not see any difference or think it is relatively better (see blue bars).
- Nonetheless, half are optimistic that economic conditions will be 'much better' or better' in 12 months time, though almost 2 in 10 are pessimistic (see red bars).

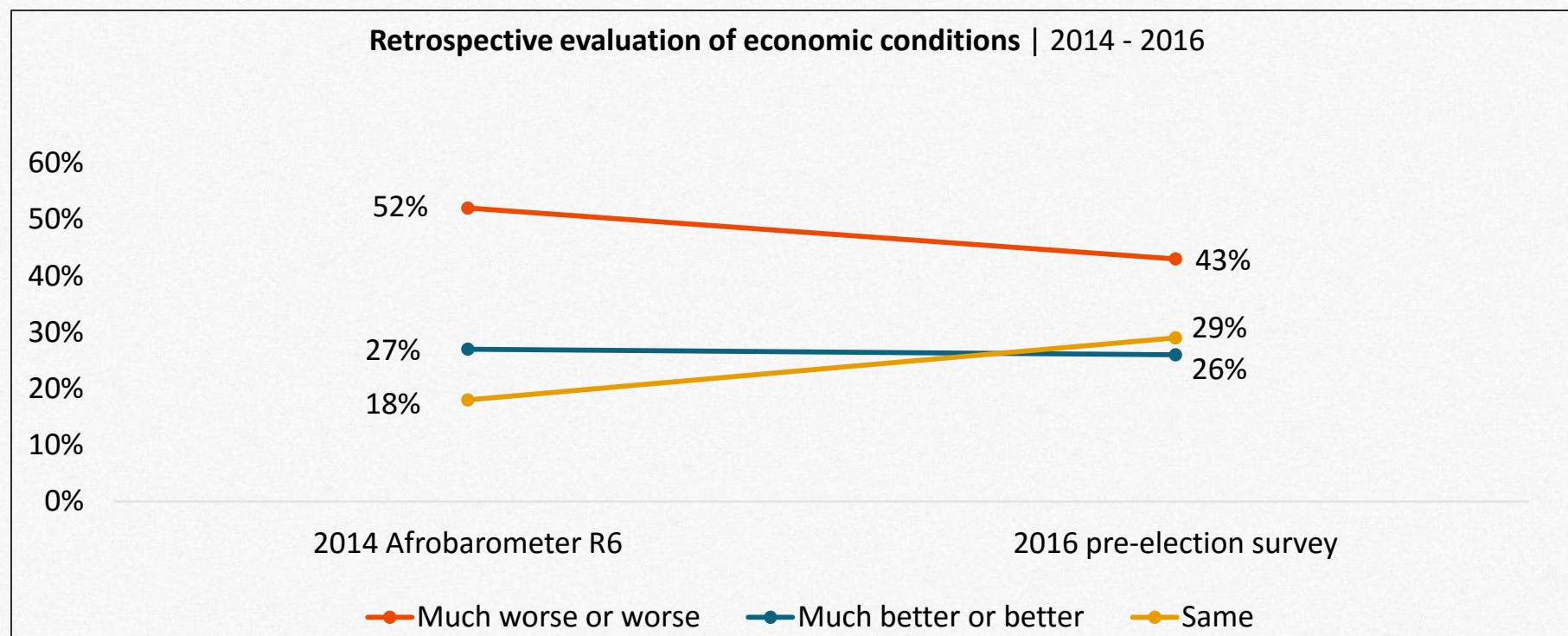


Q7. Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to twelve months ago?

Q8. Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in twelve months time?

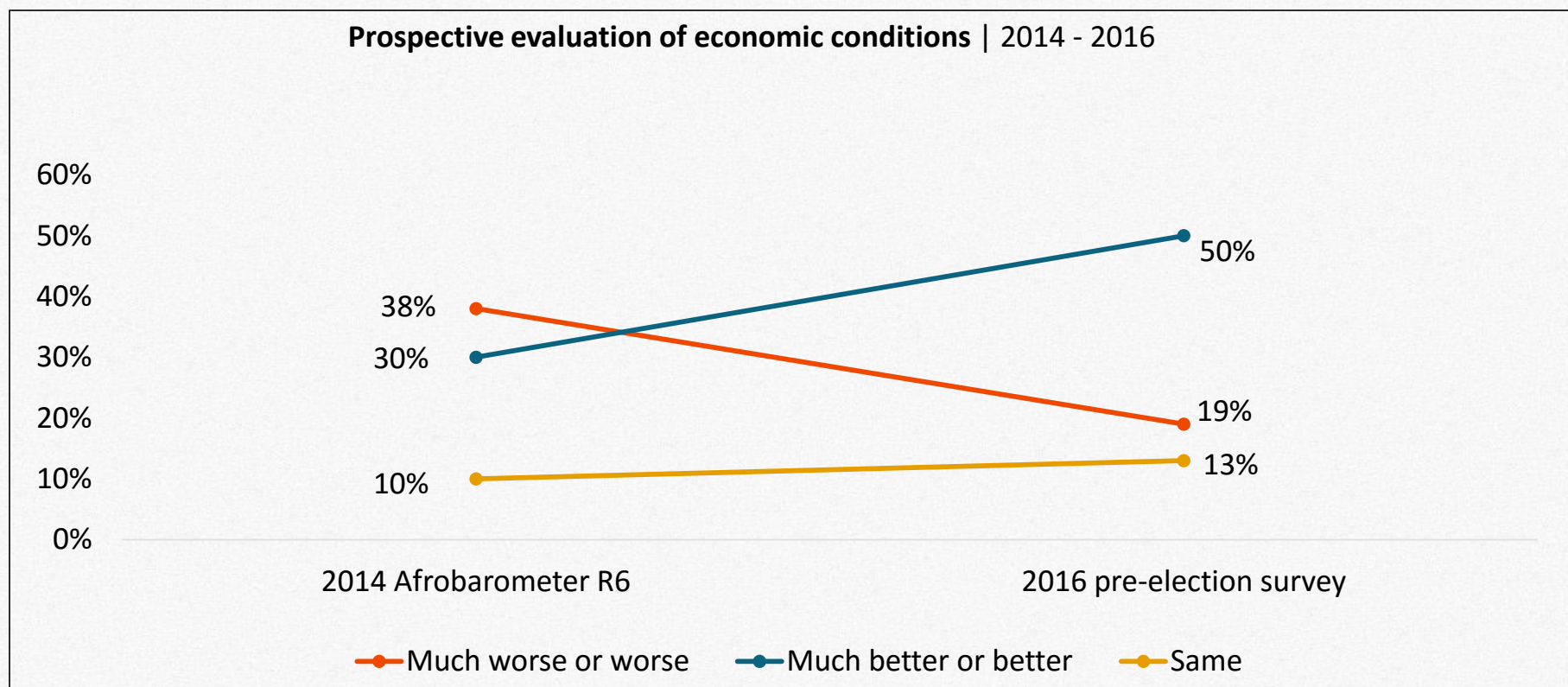
Retrospective evaluation of economic conditions | 2014 - 2016

- Negative retrospective assessment of economic conditions declined by 9% between 2014 and 2016; remained stable among the positive assessors; and rose by 11% for those who perceived no difference.



Prospective evaluations of economic conditions | 2014 - 2016

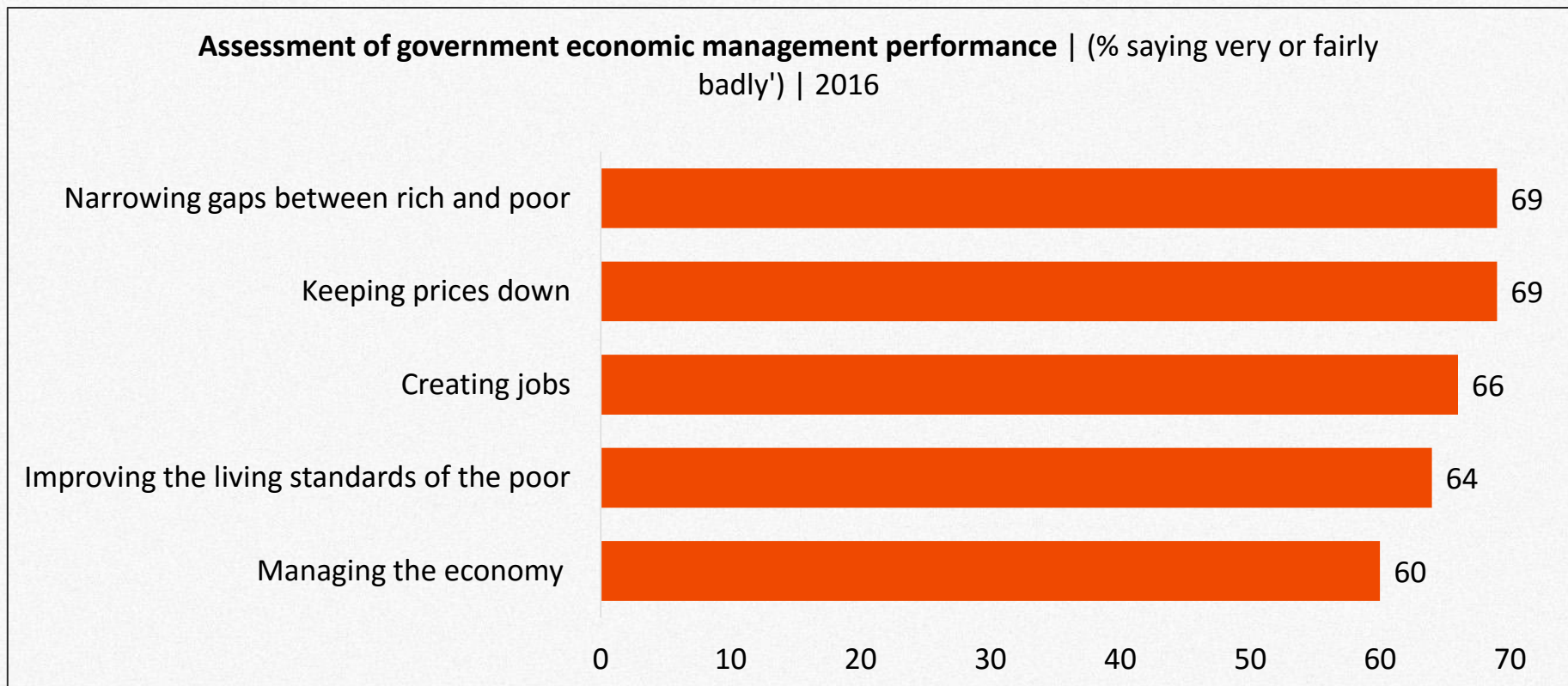
- Ghanaians who are optimistic about the economic conditions in a year's time rose remarkably by 20 percentage points while those who are pessimistic dropped by almost similar percentage (i.e. 19%) between 2014 and 2016.



POPULAR ASSESSMENTS OF GOVERNMENT DELIVERY OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GOODS

Assessments of government economic management performance

- Solid majorities rate the government's management of the macro-economy negatively. They perceive the government to have performed 'very' or 'fairly' badly across a range of macroeconomic indicators.



Q67. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? (a) Managing the economy (b) Improving the living standards of the poor (c) Creating jobs (d) Keeping prices down (e) Narrowing gaps between rich and poor.

Assessments of government economic management performance | 2014 - 2016

- Negative assessment of government across five key macroeconomic indicators declined significantly (from 7% to 12%) between 2014 and 2016.

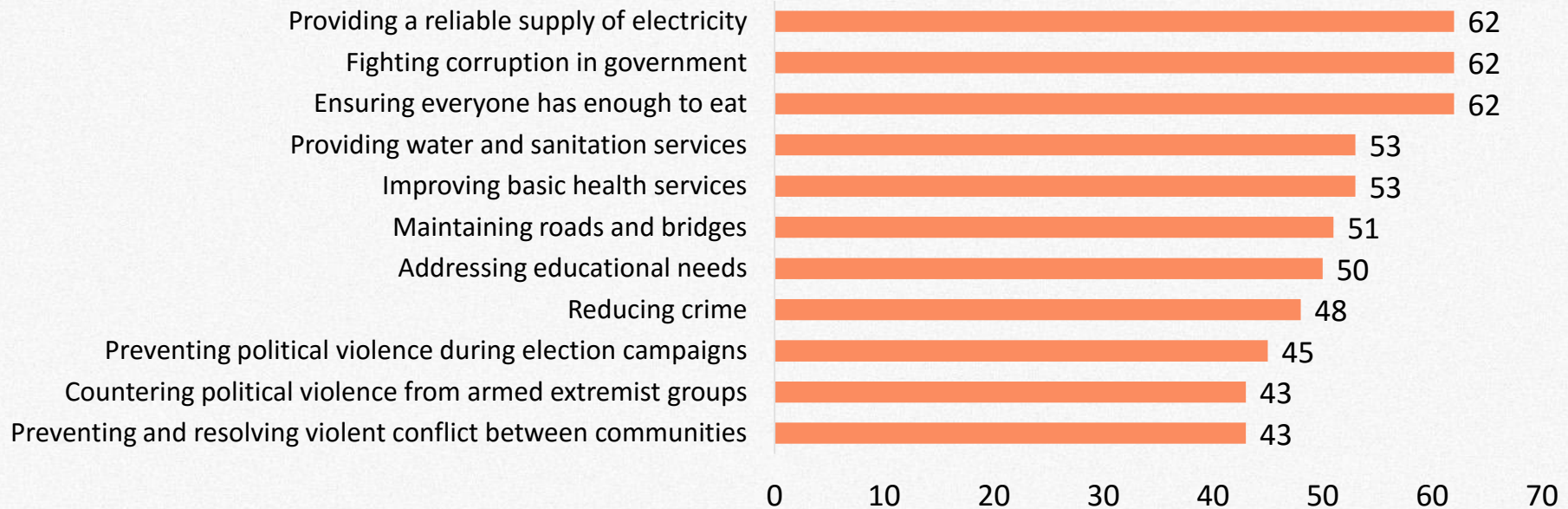
Change negative evaluations of government macroeconomic performance | 2014 - 2016

	2014 Afrobarometer R6	2016 pre-election survey	Change [2014 - 2016]
Managing the economy	72%	60%	-12%
Improving the living standards of the poor	76%	64%	-12%
Keeping prices down	81%	69%	-12%
Creating jobs	76%	66%	-10%
Narrowing gaps between rich and poor	76%	69%	-7%

Assessments of government delivery of social goods

- A little over 6 in 10 Ghanaians graded government poorly in providing reliable electricity, combating corruption, and ensuring enough food for everyone; half or more citizens rated water and sanitation provision, improving basic health services and bridges/roads maintenance, and addressing educational needs negatively; and 4 in 10 or more gave negative marks to the government's crime and violence prevention efforts.

Assessment of government delivery of social goods | (% saying very or fairly badly') | 2016



Q67. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? (f) Reducing crime (g) Improving basic health services (h) Addressing educational needs (i) Providing water and sanitation services (j) Ensuring everyone has enough to eat (k) Fighting corruption in government (l) Maintaining roads and bridges (m) Providing a reliable supply of electricity (n) Preventing political violence during election campaigns (o) Preventing and resolving violent conflict between communities (p) Countering political violence from armed extremist groups.

Assessments of government delivery of social goods | 2014 - 2016

- Similarly, the negative assessment of government delivery of a range of social goods also witnessed significant reduction (from 8% to 13%) between 2014 and 2016.

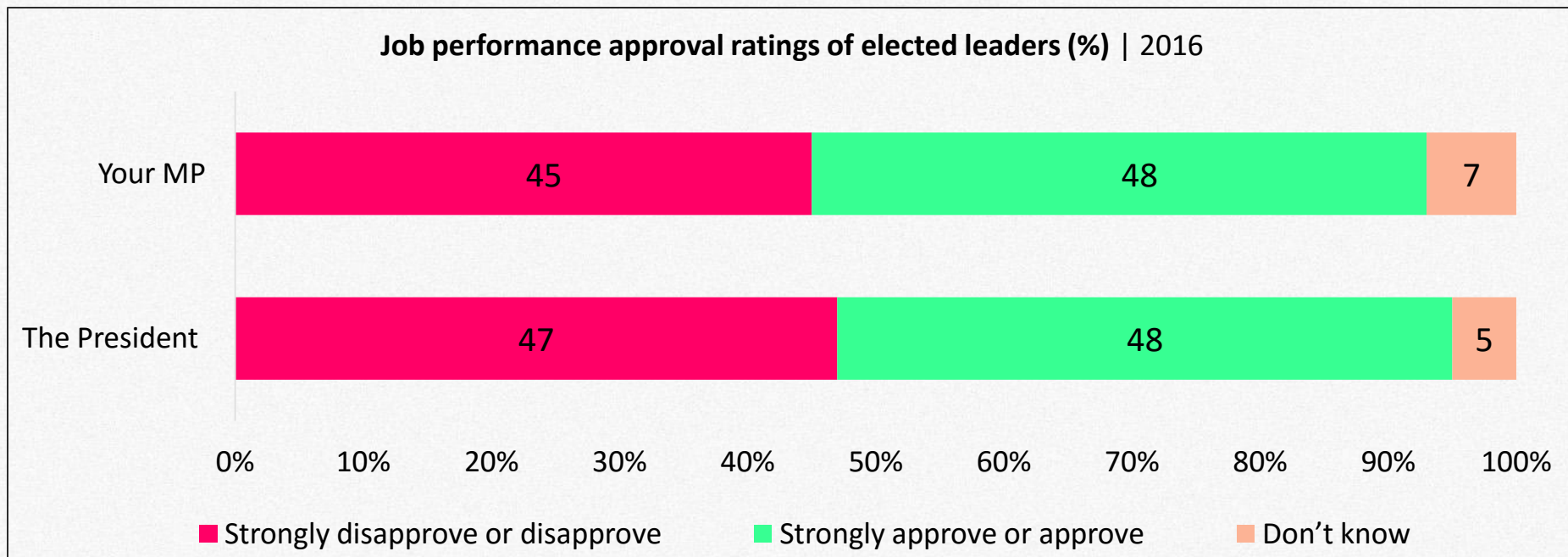
Change negative evaluations of government delivery of social 2014 - 2016			
	2014 Afrobarometer R6	2016 pre-election survey	Change [2014 - 2016]
Addressing educational needs	63%	50%	-13%
Providing water and sanitation services	66%	53%	-13%
Providing a reliable supply of electricity	75%	62%	-13%
Ensuring everyone has enough to eat	73%	62%	-11%
Maintaining roads and bridges	61%	51%	-10%
Reducing crime	57%	48%	-9%
Fighting corruption in government	71%	62%	-9%
Improving basic health services	61%	53%	-8%

JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS OF ELECTED LEADERS

Job performance ratings of the president and MPs

Ghanaians are split in their evaluations of the job performance of their MPs and the President.

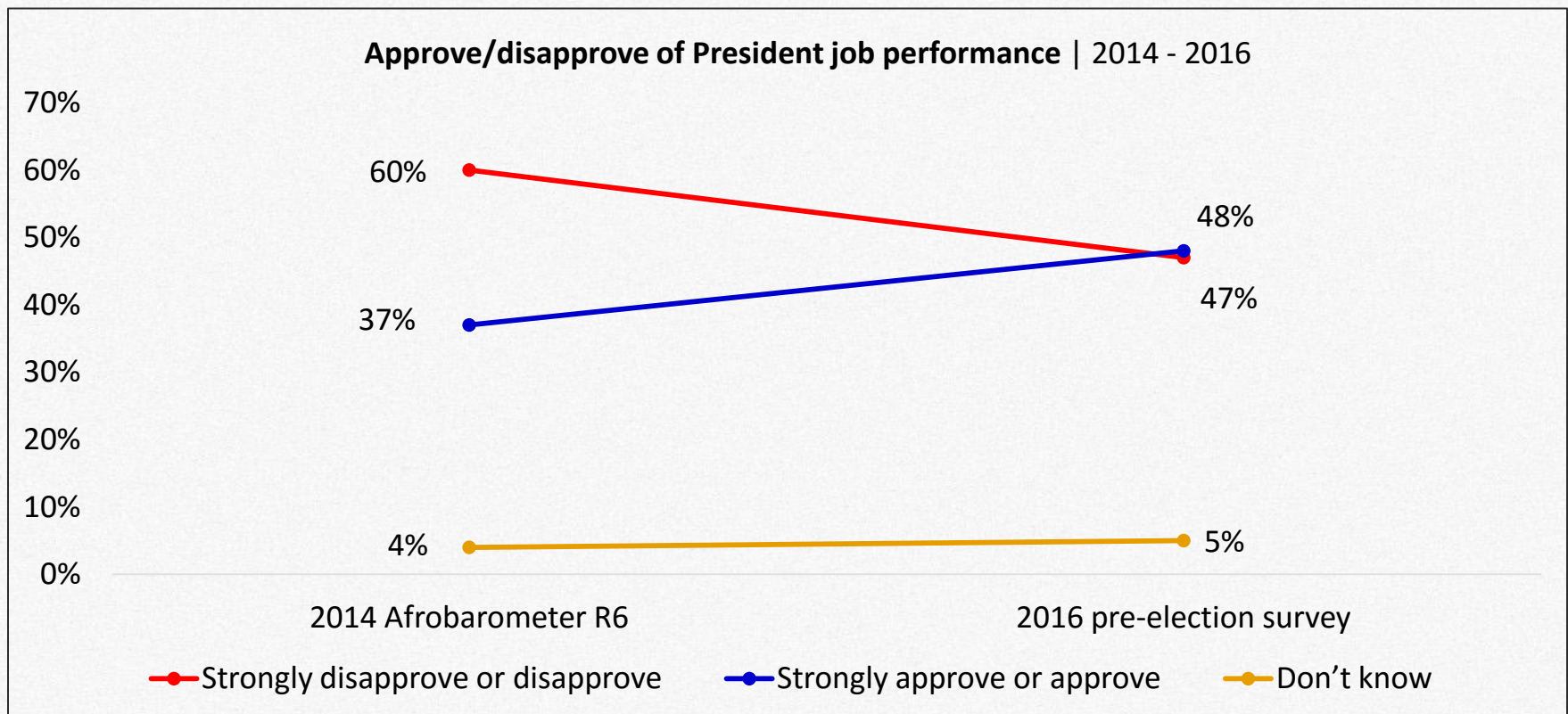
- Nearly half of Ghanaians expressed approval/strong approval of the job performance of the President and MPs (48% each).
- Roughly similar percentages (47% and 45%, respectively) 'strongly disapprove' or 'disapprove' of the job performance of the same elected leaders.



Q64. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (a) President John Dramani Mahama? (b) Your Member of Parliament?

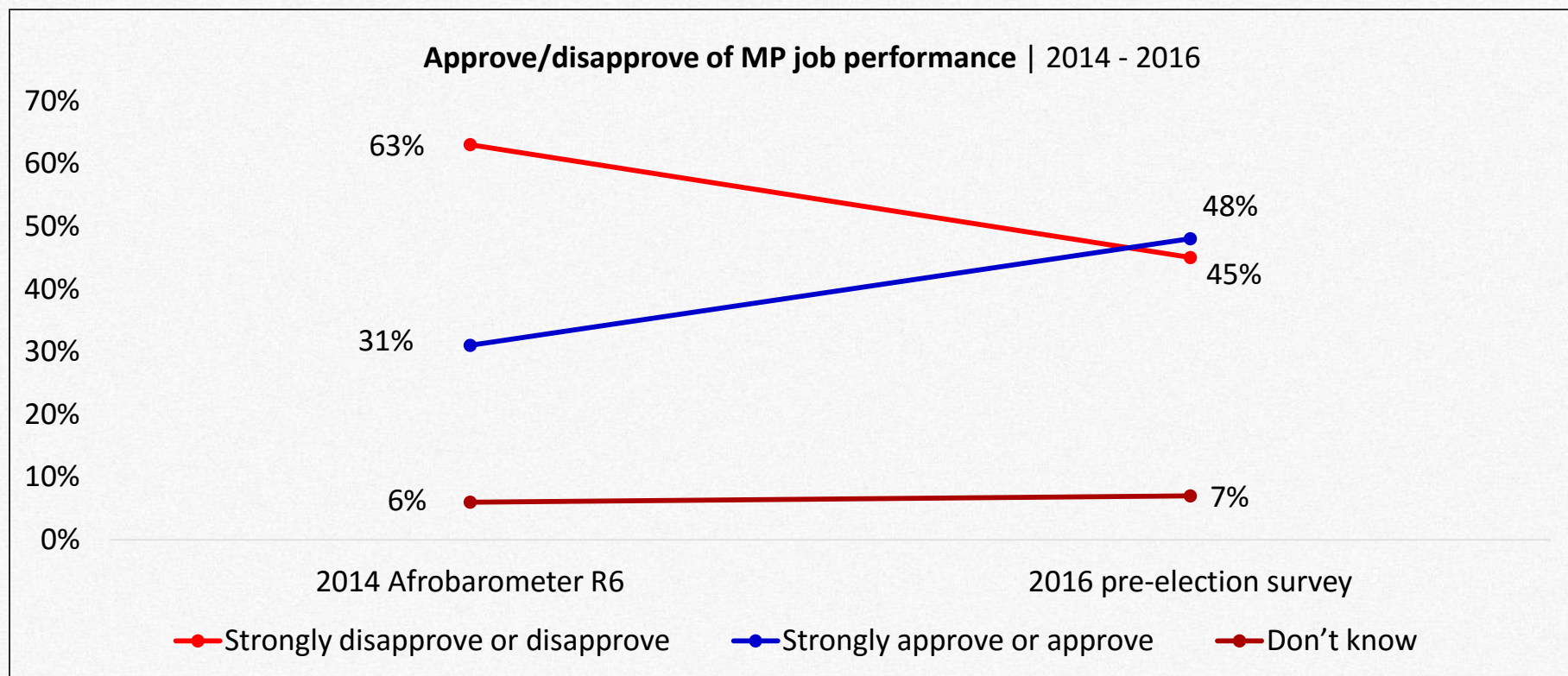
Job performance ratings of the president and MPs | 2014 - 2016

- Disapproval of the President's job performance rate dropped from 60% to 47% (i.e. -13 percentage points) while approval rating increased from 37% to 48% (i.e. +11 percentage points) between 2014 and 2016.



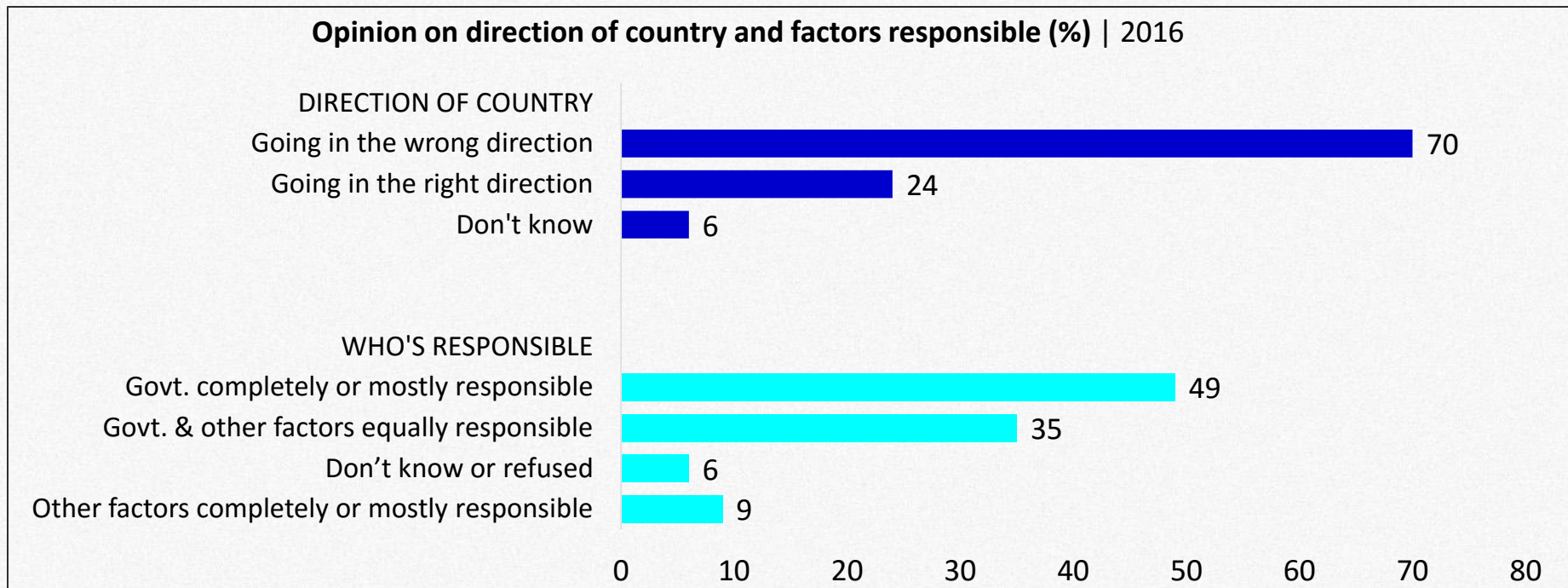
Job performance ratings of the president and MPs | 2014 - 2016

- Similarly, between 2014 and 2016, negative rating of MPs job performance dipped by 18 percentage points while positive rating increased by a 17 percentage point.



Opinions on the direction of the country

- Seven in 10 Ghanaians (70%) believe the country is going in the wrong direction. Only a quarter (24%) think the country is headed in the right direction.
- Nearly half (49%) attribute the direction of the country 'completely' or 'mostly' to the government.



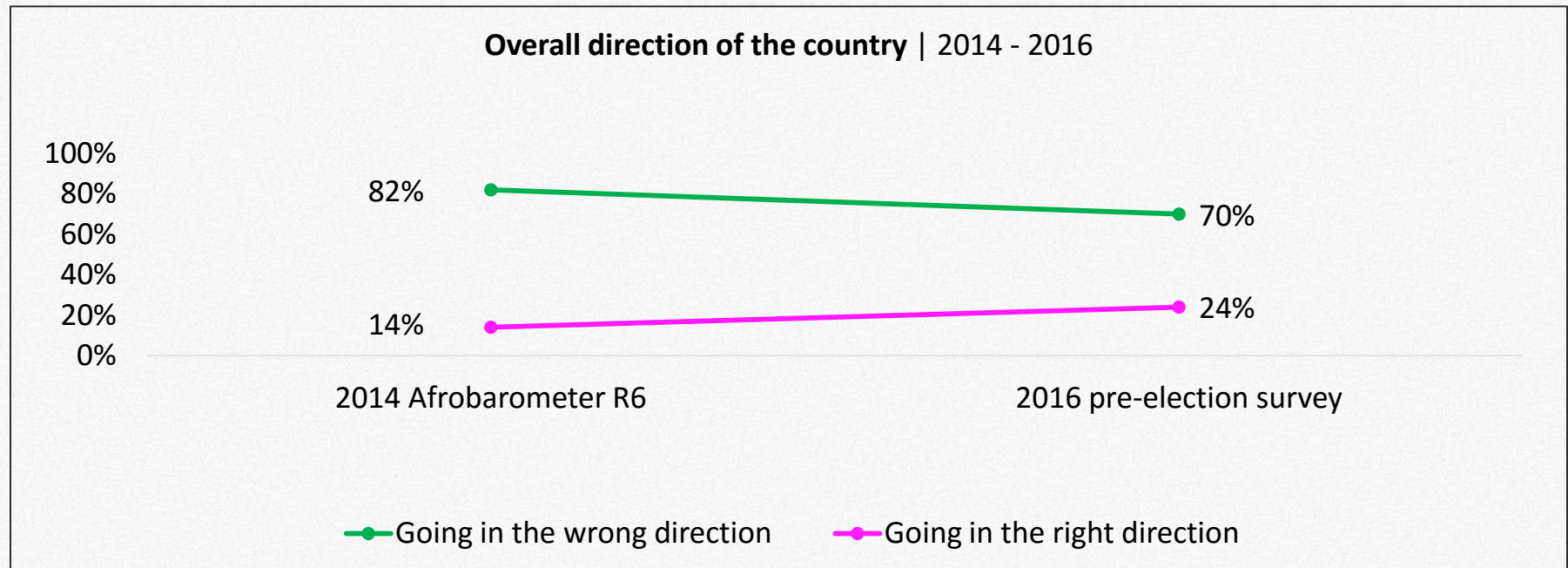
Q3. Let's start with your general view about the current direction of our country. Some people might think the country is going in the wrong direction. Others may feel it is going in the right direction. So let me ask YOU about the overall direction of the country: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?

Q4. Would you say that the current NDC government is mainly responsible for the overall direction the country is going? Or would you say that factors other than government are mainly responsible for the direction of the country?

Opinions on the direction of the country | 2014 - 2016



- The number of Ghanaians who perceive the country to be heading in the wrong direction declined by 12 percentage points between 2014 and 2016.
- On the flipside, those who think the country is in the right direction rose by 10 percentage points during the same period.



POLICY PRIORITIES OF GHANAIS IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS

- ***Ghanaians consider unemployment as a crucial issue that the 2016 election campaigns must address.*** Unemployment topped the first and second policy priority list, electricity and education came up as the third policy priority.

Policy priorities that electorates want 2016 election campaign to address (%) | 2016

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Unemployment	25	17	9
Electricity	15	12	10
Management of the economy	11	--	--
Education		10	10

Q31. In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that the forthcoming 2016 elections campaign should address? [Accept up to three answers]

Policy priorities of electorates | 2014 - 2016

The Ghanaian policy priority witnessed a major shift between 2014 and 2016.

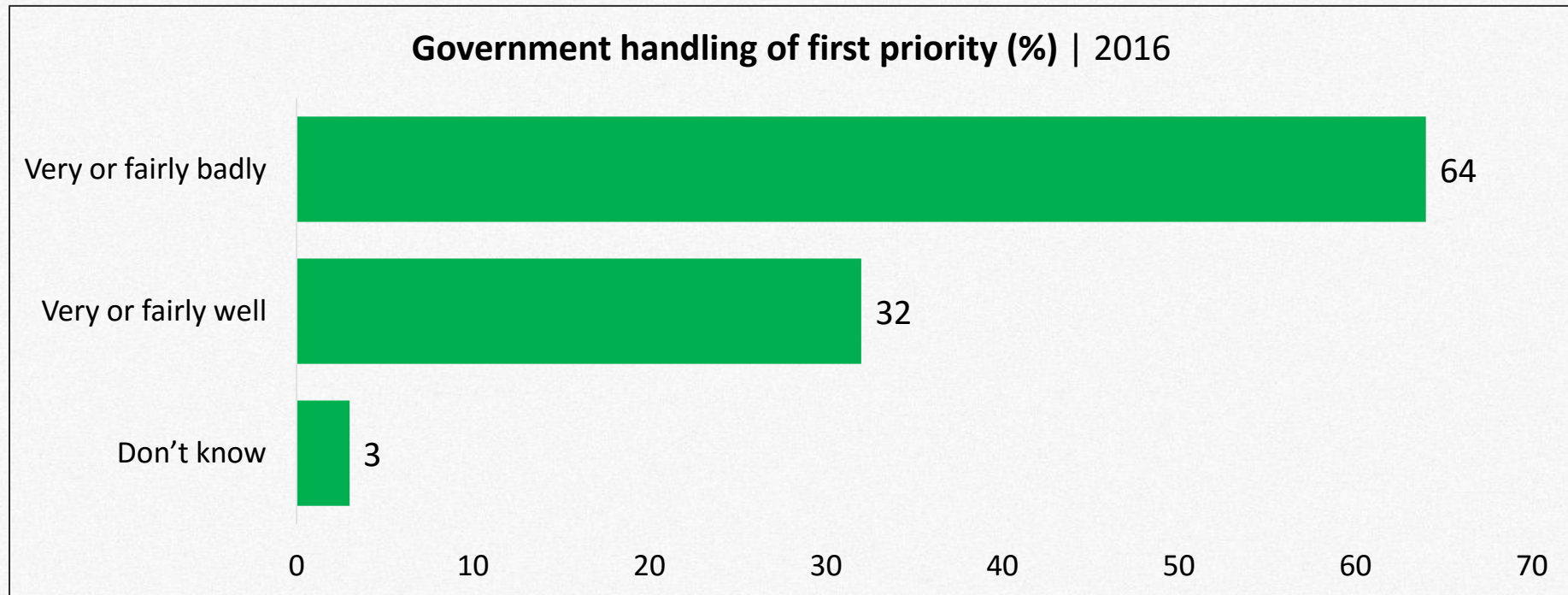
- Unemployment became the first and second priority of Ghanaians in 2016 compared to the management of the economy (i.e. first priority in 2014) and electricity and education (i.e. second priority in 2014).
- In general, however, the policy priority mix – unemployment, electricity, education, and economic management – appears not to have changed so much.

Policy priorities of Ghanaians | 2014 - 2016

	2014 Afrobarometer R6			2016 pre-election survey		
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Unemployment	17%	10%	--	25%	17%	9%
Electricity	10%	12%	9%	15%	12%	10%
Management of the economy	18%	--	--	11%	--	--
Education	10%	12%	9%	--	10%	10%
Health	--	--	10%	--	--	--

Government handling of top policy priority

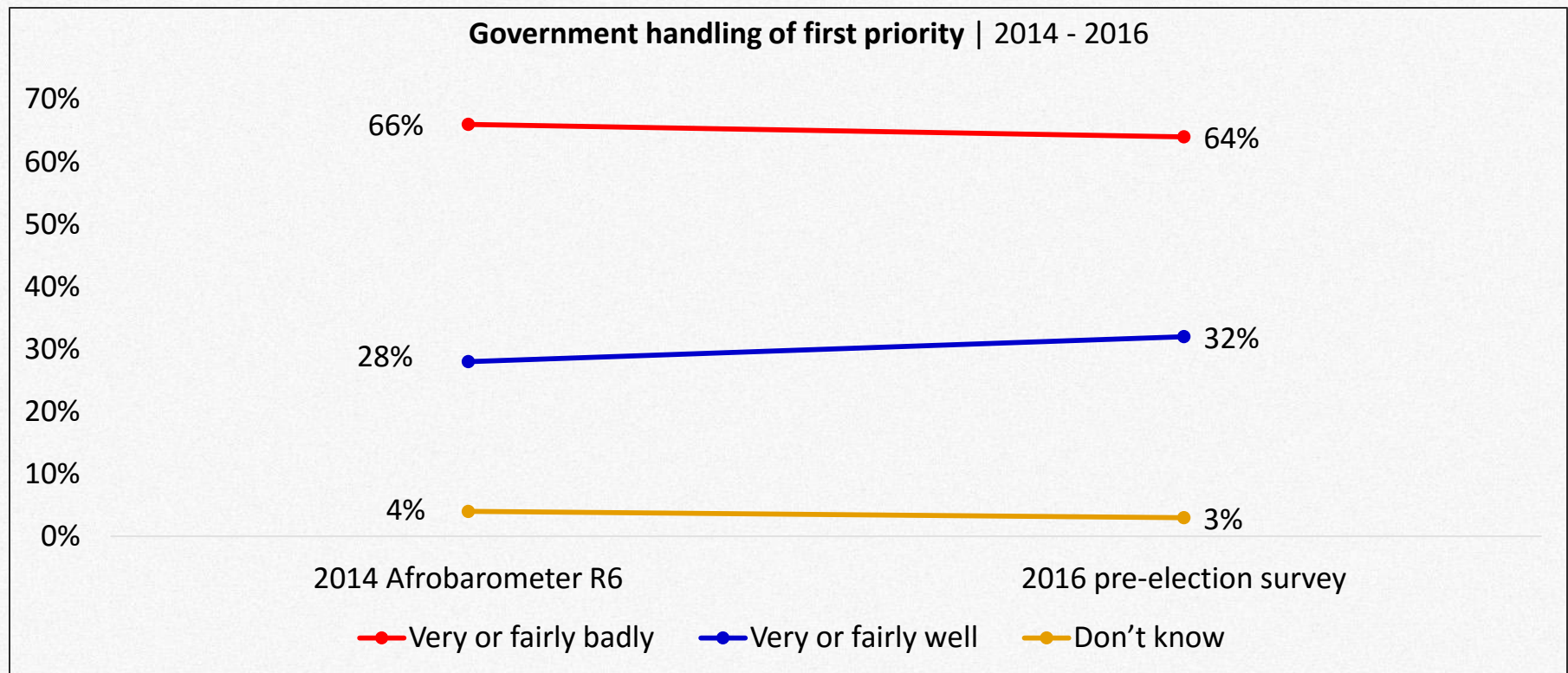
- A clear majority (64%) assesses government's performance in addressing their first most important problem negatively (i.e. 'very' or 'fairly' badly).
- About one-third, however, rate the government's performance as 'very' or 'fairly' well.



Q32. Thinking of the problem you mentioned first, how well or badly would you say the current government is handling this problem?

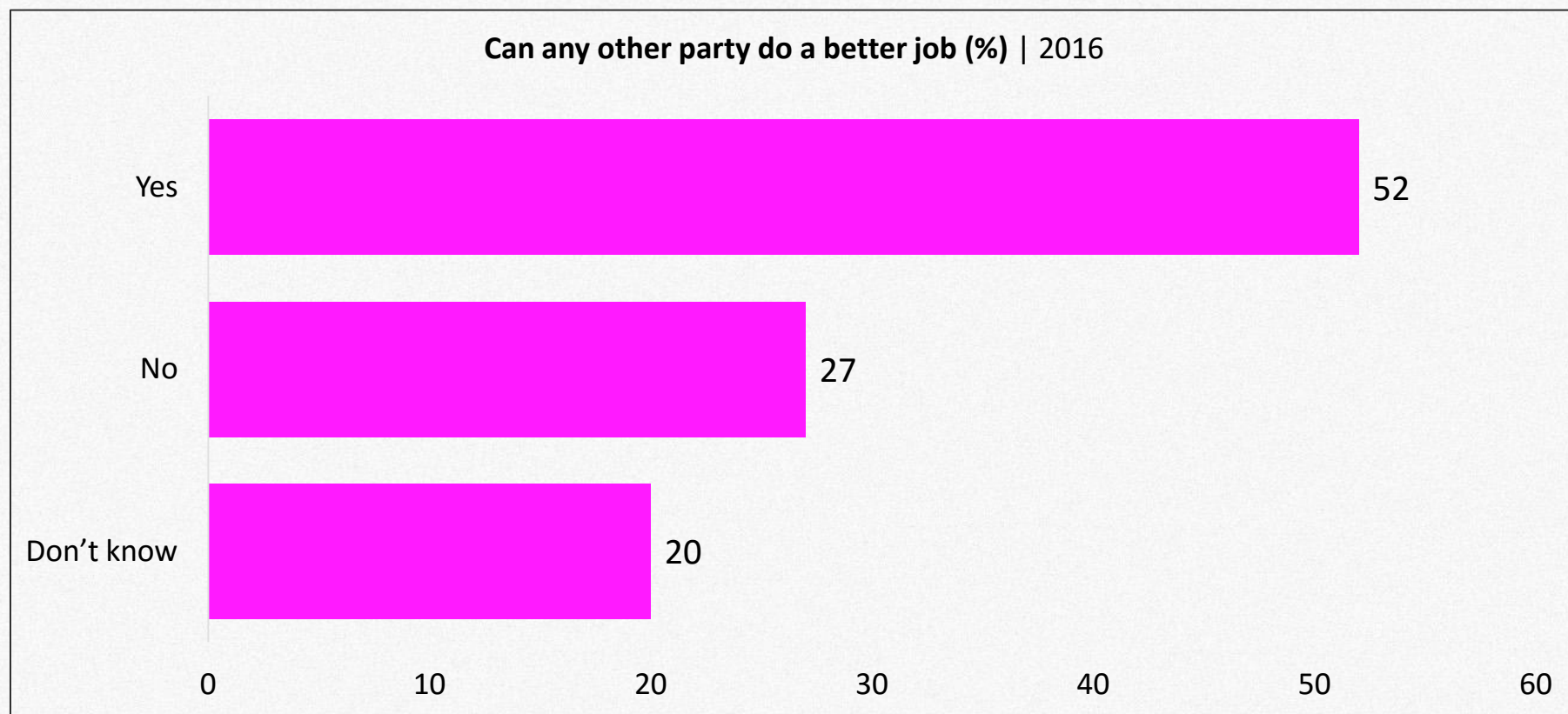
Government handling of top policy priority | 2014 - 2016

- The percentage that think government has performed 'very' or 'fairly' badly in addressing their first most important problem remained high and stable between 2014 and 2016.



Can any other party do a better Job addressing top policy priority?

- A narrow majority (52%) also believe that another political party can do a better job of addressing their first most important problem.



Q33. In your opinion, is there any other political party that could do a better job in solving this problem?

FACTORS LIKELY TO INFLUENCE VOTER PREFERENCES IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS

Factors likely to influence voter choices

- Solid majorities of Ghanaians claim their vote choices in the 2016 polls would be influenced ‘a great deal’ or ‘somewhat’ by a variety of policy and campaign issues ranging from bad roads to national embarrassments such as the World Cup scandal, the Independence Day brochure and the Ruby cocaine scandal.

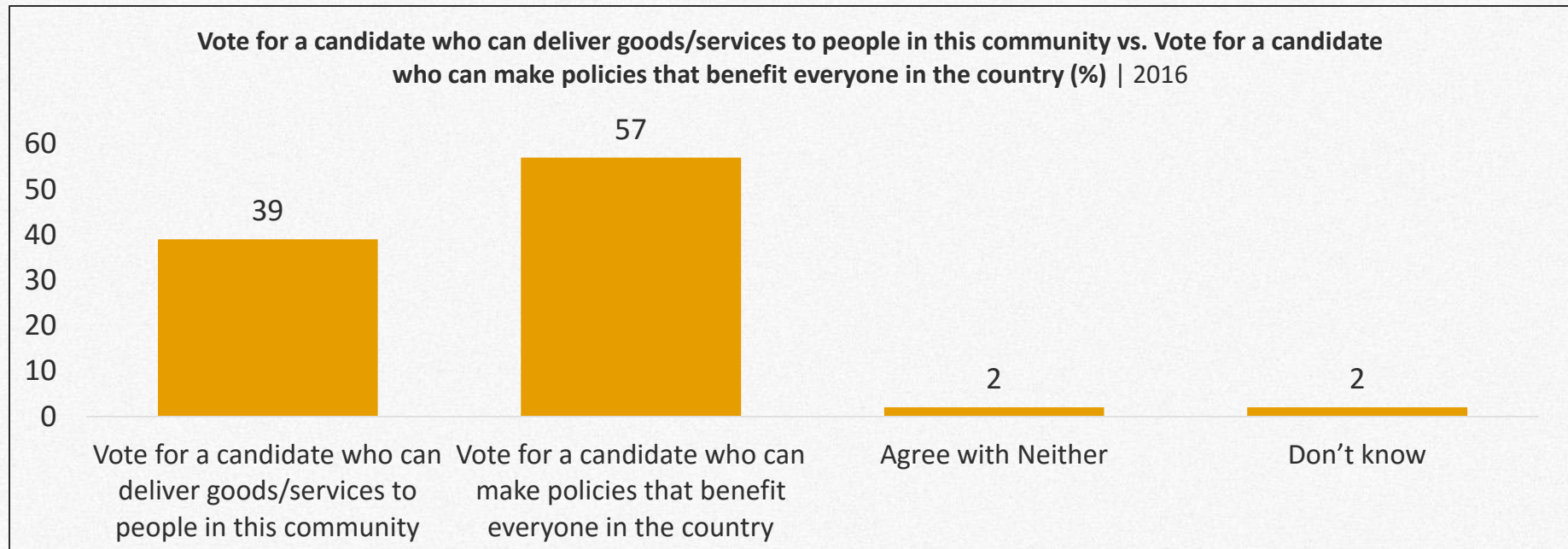
Those who say their vote choice in the 2016 polls will be influenced by the following issues (%) | 2016

	Will influence it a great deal or somewhat	Will not at all or will not influence	Don't know
Bad roads	76	22	3
Perceived government corruption	75	21	4
Power outages	72	24	4
High prices of foodstuffs	72	25	3
Ability to get medical care	72	25	3
Use of abusive language	71	26	4
Arrogance/disrespectful posture of politicians	68	27	5
Perceived ungodliness of candidate	66	29	4
Perceived aggressiveness of political party	66	28	7
Perceived abuse of incumbency	63	29	8
National embarrassments	53	35	12

Q35. Let's talk about your vote in the 2016 elections. Please tell me whether as a voter, your choice of party and/or candidate WILL/WILL NOT be influenced by

Factors likely to influence voter choices: Policy or patronage?

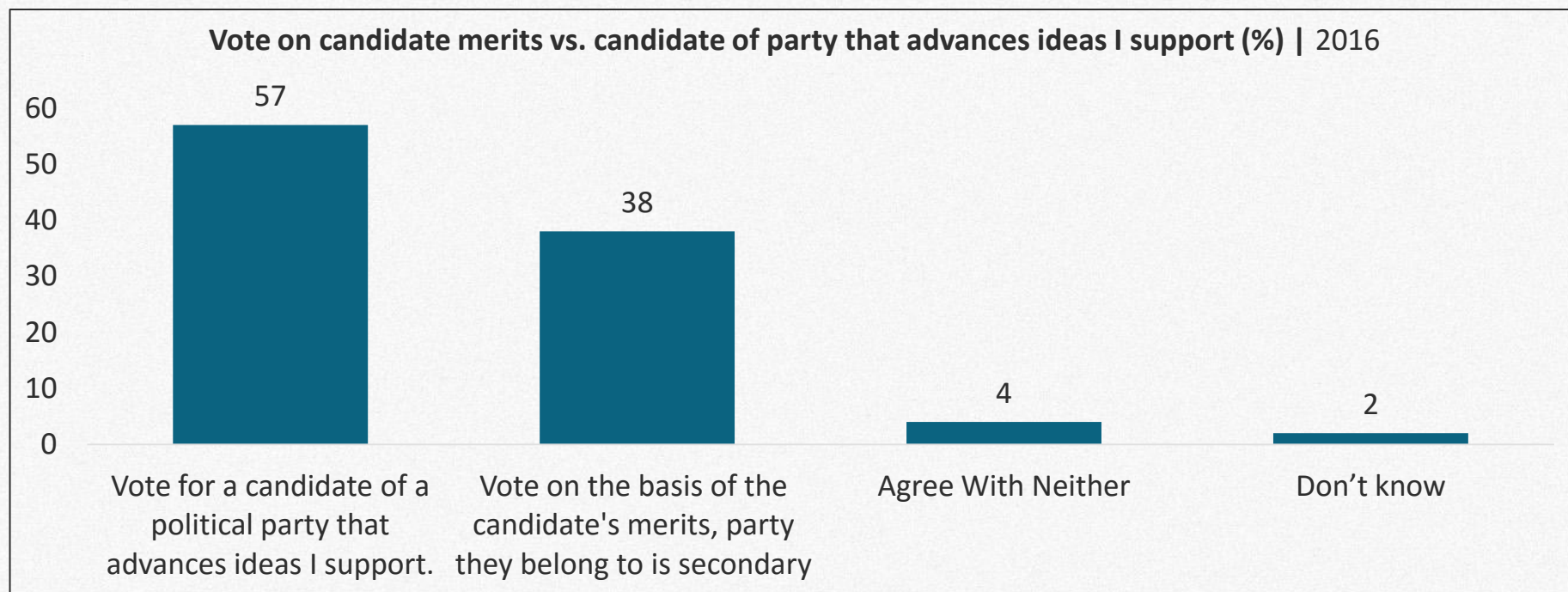
- A majority of Ghanaians (57%) endorse voting for the parliamentary candidate who would make policies that benefit everyone in the country.
- However, nearly 4 in every 10 Ghanaians say they will vote for candidates who can deliver goods and services to people in their communities.



Q62. Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement 1: In electing a member of parliament, I prefer to vote for a candidate who can deliver goods and services to people in this community. Statement 2: In electing a member of parliament, I prefer to vote for a candidate who can make policies that benefit everyone in our country

Factors likely to influence voter choices: Party or candidate?

- A majority of Ghanaians 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement that they vote for the parliamentary candidate of the political party that advances ideas they share.
- Nearly 4 in every 10 Ghanaians on the other hand say they vote on the basis of the merits of the candidate, and that party affiliation is secondary.



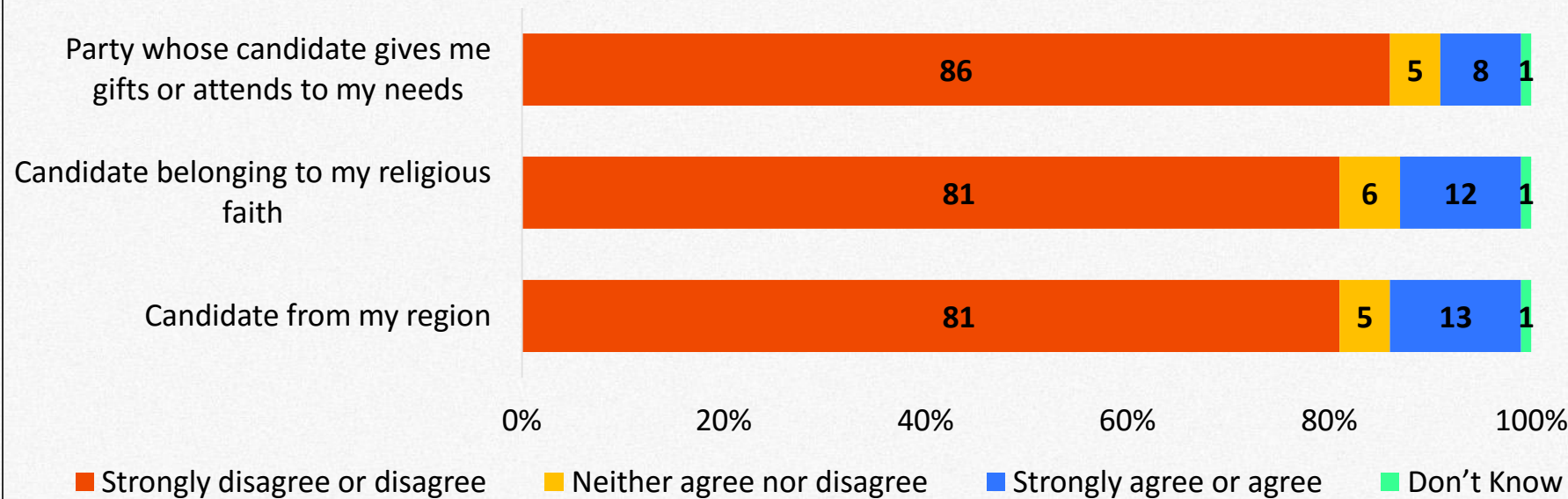
Q63. Statement 1: I vote on the basis of the individual merits of a man or woman. The party they belong to is of secondary interest. Statement 2: In electing a member of parliament, I prefer to vote for a candidate who can make policies that benefit everyone in our country.

FACTORS UNLIKELY TO INFLUENCE VOTER PREFERENCES IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS

Factors unlikely to influence voter preferences/choices

- An absolute majority of Ghanaians ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’ with the assertions that they will vote for
 - parties whose candidates offer gifts or see to their personal needs.
 - candidates who identify with their religious faith.
 - candidates who come from their home region.

Voting on the basis of regional and religious ties or personal material benefits (%) | 2016



Q37. For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree?

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Summary of findings

- Majorities of Ghanaians offer highly negative evaluations of national economic (7 in 10) and their own living conditions (65 percent). However, more are optimistic than pessimistic about the prospect of improvement a year from now.
- The government also receives poor grades from a clear majority of Ghanaians across a range of macroeconomic indicators: narrowing income gaps, keeping prices down, creating jobs, improving living standards of the poor and managing the economy.
- Majorities rate the government as 'very' or 'fairly' bad in the delivery of a range of economic and social goods: providing reliable electricity, combating corruption, ensuring enough food for everyone; providing water and sanitation, improving basic health services and maintaining bridges/roads and addressing educational needs.
- Government performance is somewhat positive with respect to crime and violence prevention, where a minority (4 in 10) offers negative assessment.

- Ghanaians place unemployment, electricity and education on top of policy priorities they want the 2016 polls to address.
- And yet, a clear majority assesses government's performance in addressing their policy priorities negatively. Indeed, a narrow majority seems to believe that another political party can do a better job of addressing their first most important problem.
- Solid majorities of Ghanaians claim the following factors would have a great deal of or some influence on their choice of candidates and parties in the 2016: bad roads, government corruption, power outages, high prices of food, access to medical care, use of abusive language, posture of politicians, etc.

- However, Ghanaians say the following factors will not have influence on their vote choices: candidates' offer of gifts, their religious faith, or home region.
- The mood of the electorate going into the 2016 polls is broadly negative. Seven in 10 Ghanaians believe the country is going in the wrong direction; and nearly half blame this 'completely' or 'mostly' on the government. Only a quarter think the country is headed in the right direction
- Nonetheless, Ghanaians are split in their evaluations of the job performance of the president and MPs. Nearly half approve the overall job performance of the president and their respective MPs, but the rest disapprove.



THE END