

SADC Citizens' Election Attitudes

**High-level Policy Dialogue on Elections,
Election Observation and their
Contribution in the SADC Region**



**Boniface Dulani , PhD & Ms. Paula Park
Afrobarometer**

What is the Afrobarometer?



- = The Afrobarometer (AB) is a comparative series of public opinion surveys that measure public attitudes toward democracy, governance, the economy, leadership, identity, and other related issues
- = The AB is an independent, non-partisan, African-based network of researchers
- = The first round of surveys took place in 1999-2001 in 12 countries. The Network is now conducting “Round 5” surveys in up to 35 countries during 2011-2012
- = **Purpose:** To measure popular perspectives on the social, political, and economic environments in each country where it is implemented and across Africa
- = **Goal:** To give the public a *voice* in policy making processes by providing high-quality public opinion data to policy-makers, policy advocates and civil society organizations, academics, media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans

= **Round 1, 1999-2001, 12 countries**

- *Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.*

= **Round 2, 2002-2003, 16 countries**

- *All Round 1 countries together with Cape Verde, Kenya, Mozambique, and Senegal.*

= **Round 3, 2005-2006, 18 countries**

- *All Round 2 countries together with Benin, and Madagascar.*

= **Round 4, 2008-2009, 20 countries**

- *All Round 3 countries together with Burkina Faso, and Liberia.*

= **Round 5, 2011-2013, 35 countries targeted**

- *All Round 4 countries together with Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Togo, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Egypt and Ethiopia.*

Country Coverage: 1999-2012



Who is Afrobarometer?



A Pan-African Network of opinion survey researchers and analysts:

- = In each country there is a **National Partner** responsible for survey implementation and advocacy.
- = **Four Core Partners** provide technical assistance and Network management:
 - *Center for Democratic Development (CDD), Ghana*
 - ***Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), South Africa***
 - *Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, Kenya*
 - *Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP), Benin*
- = Two **Support Units** for capacity building and quality assurance
 - *Michigan State University*
 - *University of Cape Town*
- = Round 5 **Core Funders** include
 - *DFID*
 - *SIDA*
 - *USAID*
 - *Mo Ibrahim Foundation*

- = Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
 - *All respondents are randomly selected.*
 - *Every adult citizen has an equal and known chance of being selected.*
- = Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.
- = Standard survey instrument across all countries for comparability.
- = The survey interviewed 1,200 citizens in smaller countries like Lesotho and 2,400 in larger countries. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of $\pm 2.0\%$ at the 95% confidence level.
- = Field work for Round 5 in SADC countries was conducted between October 2011 and January 2013
- = Afrobarometer's work in Southern Africa was coordinated by IDASA and field work was carried out by research consultants and universities.

Findings

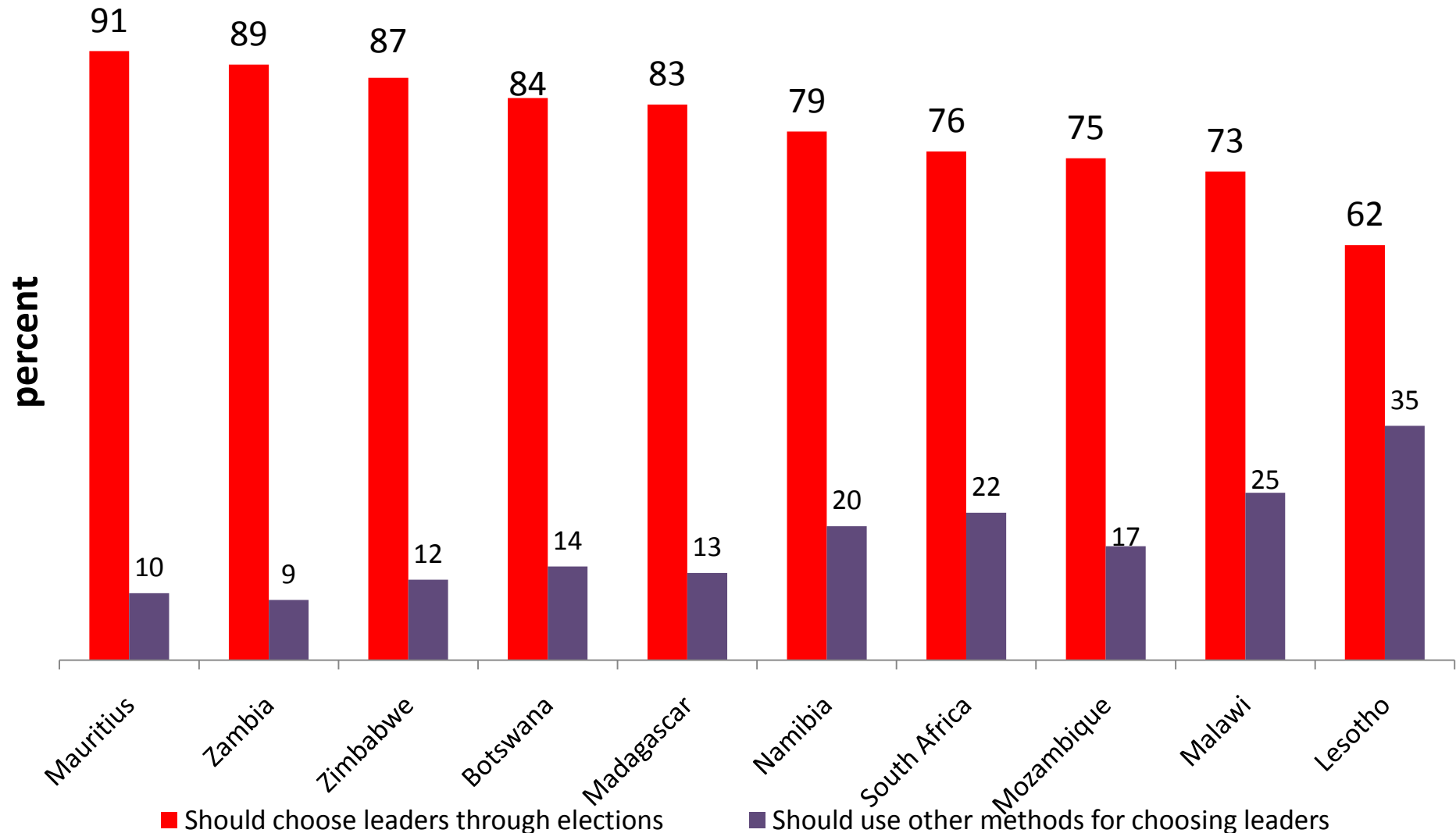
- Absolute majorities of SADC residents say that elections are essential to democracy
- Majorities of residents in most countries say their elections are free and fair
- Zimbabwe is an outlier on almost all questions related to elections – with more people saying the most recent election was unfair, and reporting intimidation and offering of gifts in exchange for votes

Support for elections

SADC citizens were asked, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections.
- Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders.

Majorities in SADC countries endorse elections as a means to choosing political leaders



Quality of elections

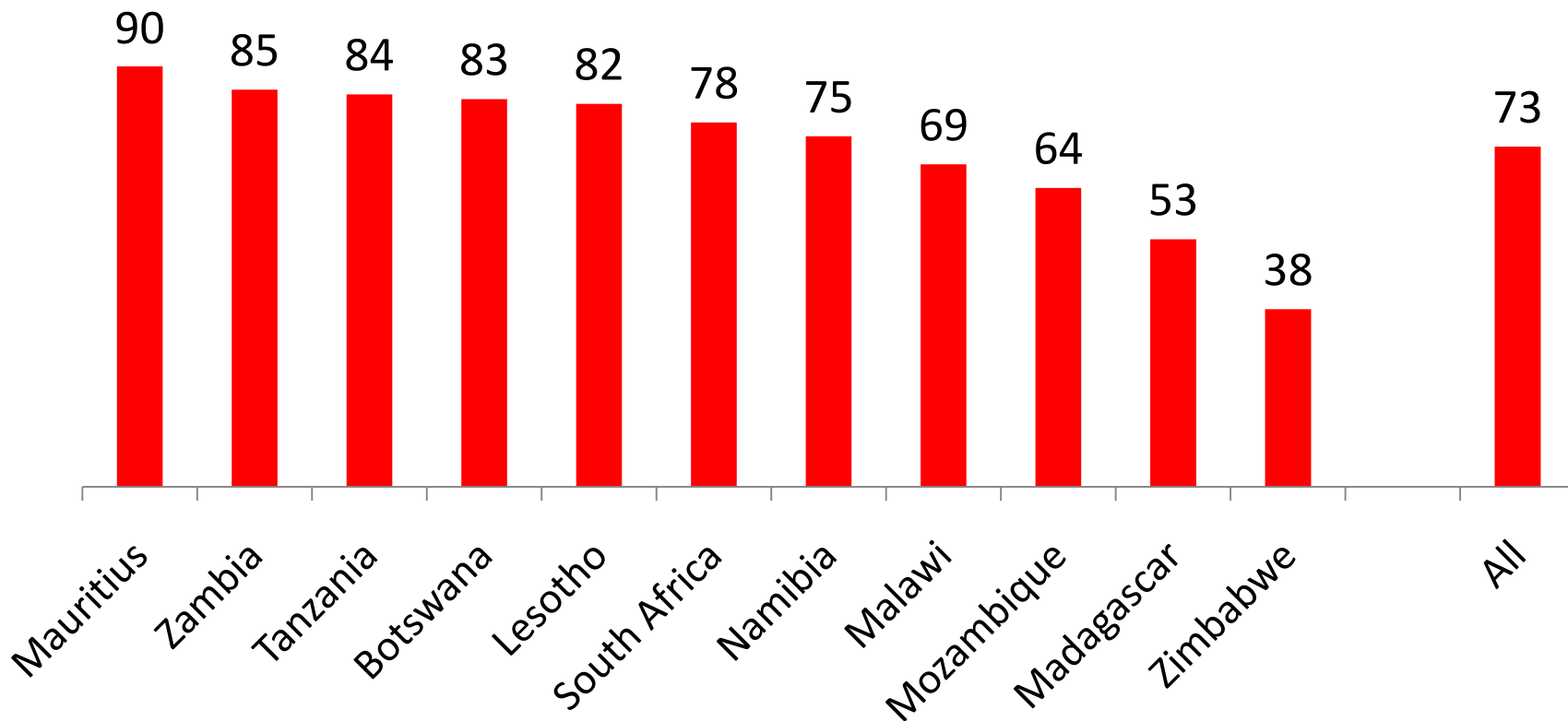
The majority of SADC residents say their elections were free and fair, however

- More than half the people in Zimbabwe
- More than one in five Malawians, and
- Nearly one in five Zambians and Namibians say:

The most recent election had major problems or was not free & fair

SADC Election Quality

Percent who say elections were free & fair with minor problems or completely free

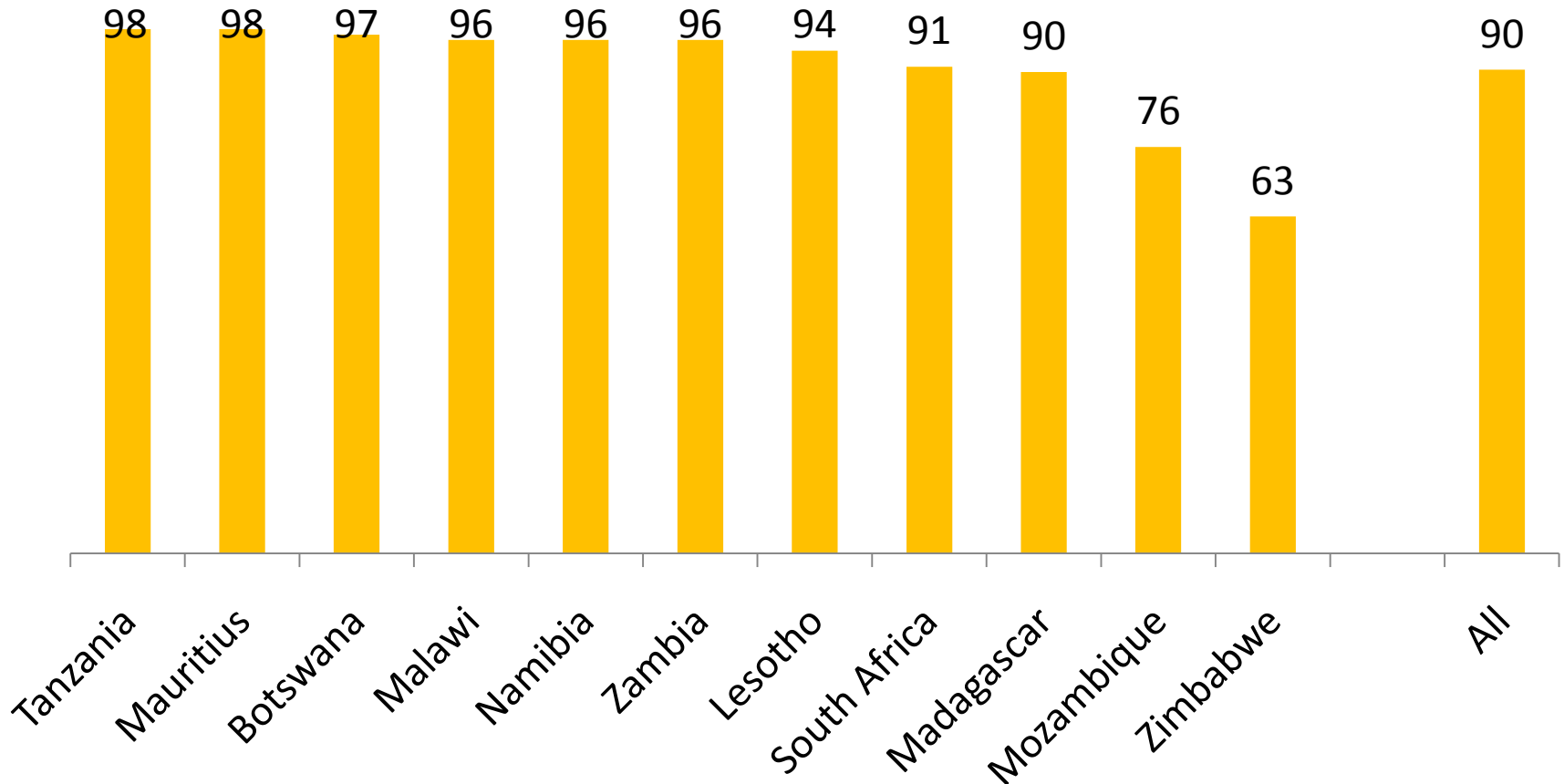


Question: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?

Election participation

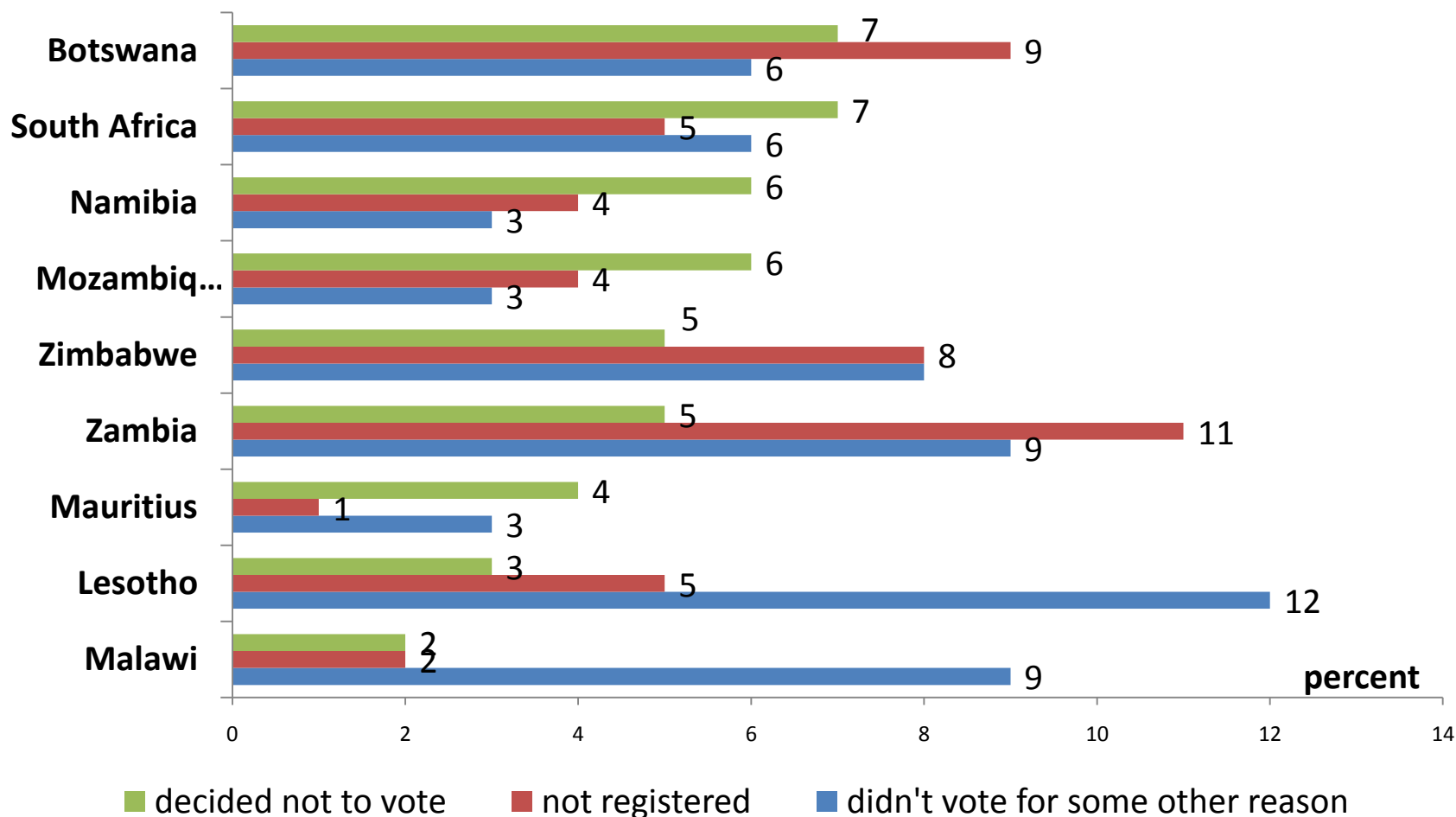
- Nine out of ten citizens in the SADC region state that they have the freedom to choose who to vote for.
- While many people report to have voted in the previous elections, most citizens show little interest in other kinds of election participation – in most countries minorities attended rallies, worked for parties, or even tried to persuade people to vote for particular candidates or parties
- Only in Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe & Malawi did majorities participate in election rallies

Freedom to choose who to vote for



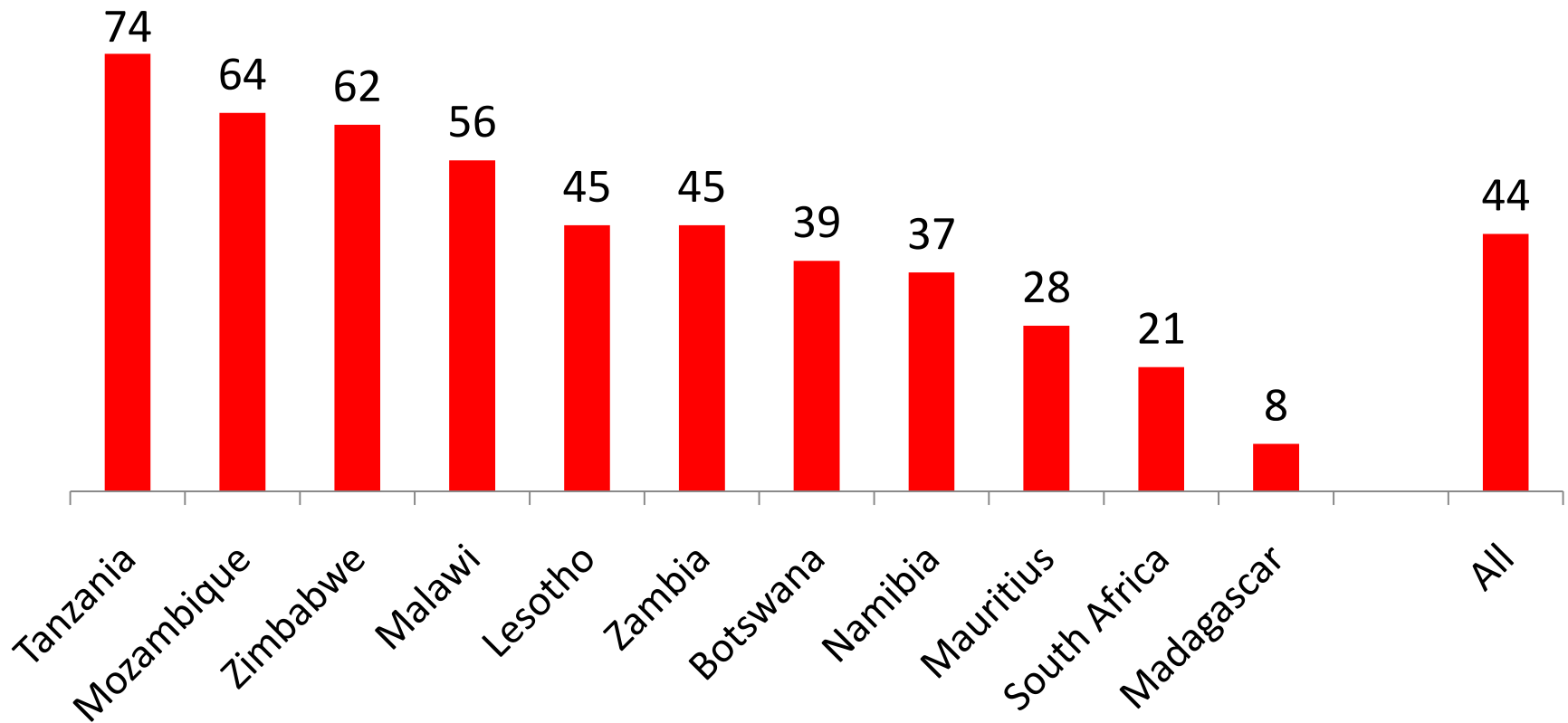
Qn. Wording: In this country, how free are you to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured (percent saying somewhat free or completely free)

Top reasons people didn't vote



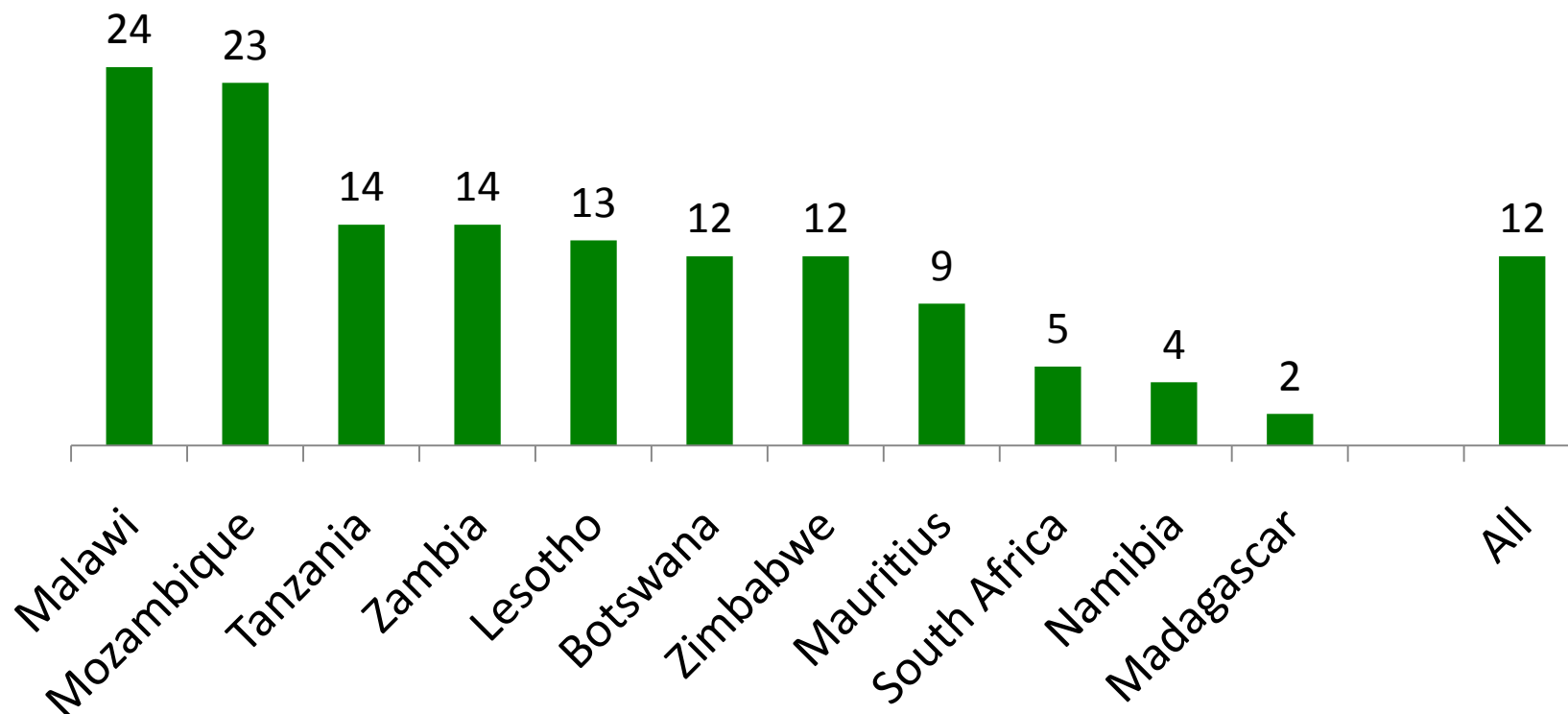
Question: With regard to the most recent national election, which statement is true for you? (% who chose the options)

Attendance in campaign meetings, rallies



Thinking about the last national election, did you participate in a campaign meeting or rally?
 (% who said they had)

Political party work

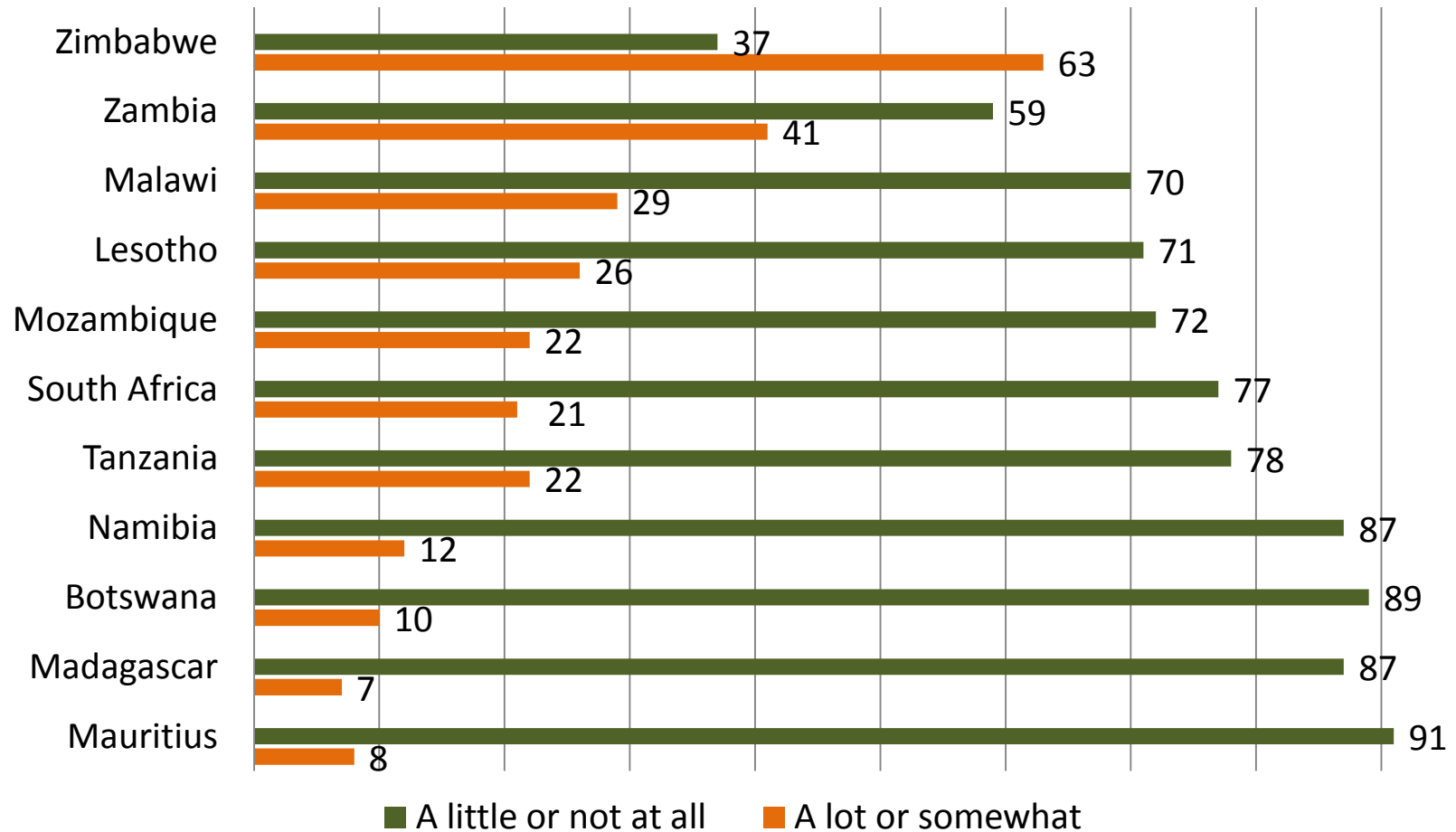


Thinking about the last national election, did you work for a particular political party or candidate? (% who said they had or had not)

Coercion of SADC voters

- Majorities in every country except Zimbabwe reported never feeling fear of becoming a victim of intimidation in the most recent election
 - Six out of ten Zimbabweans reported fear of intimidation
 - Four of ten Zambians reported feeling fear
 - Three of ten Malawians did so

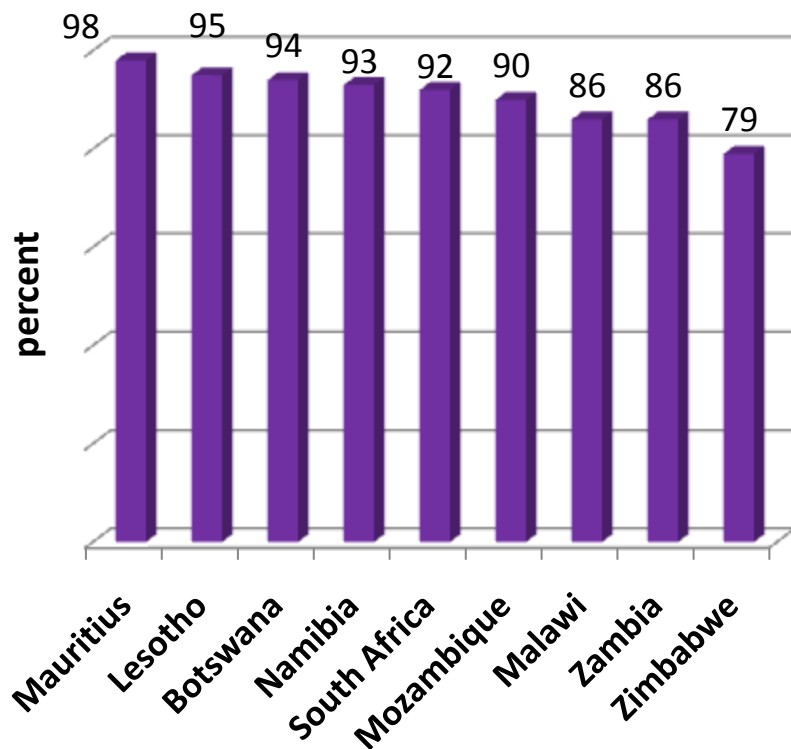
Fear of election intimidation



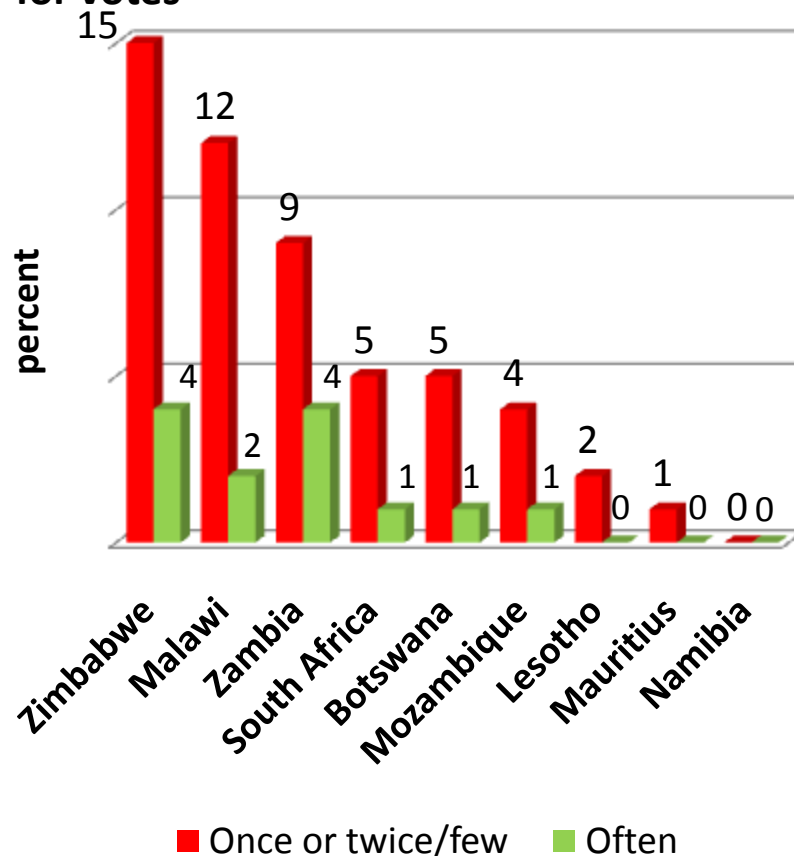
Question: During election campaigns in this country, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence? (% who said not at all, a little, somewhat or a lot)

Gift giving for votes in SADC countries

Absolute majorities of SADC citizens say they have never been offered gifts in exchange for votes



Zimbabwe, Malawi & Zambia report highest percentages gift offers in exchange for votes

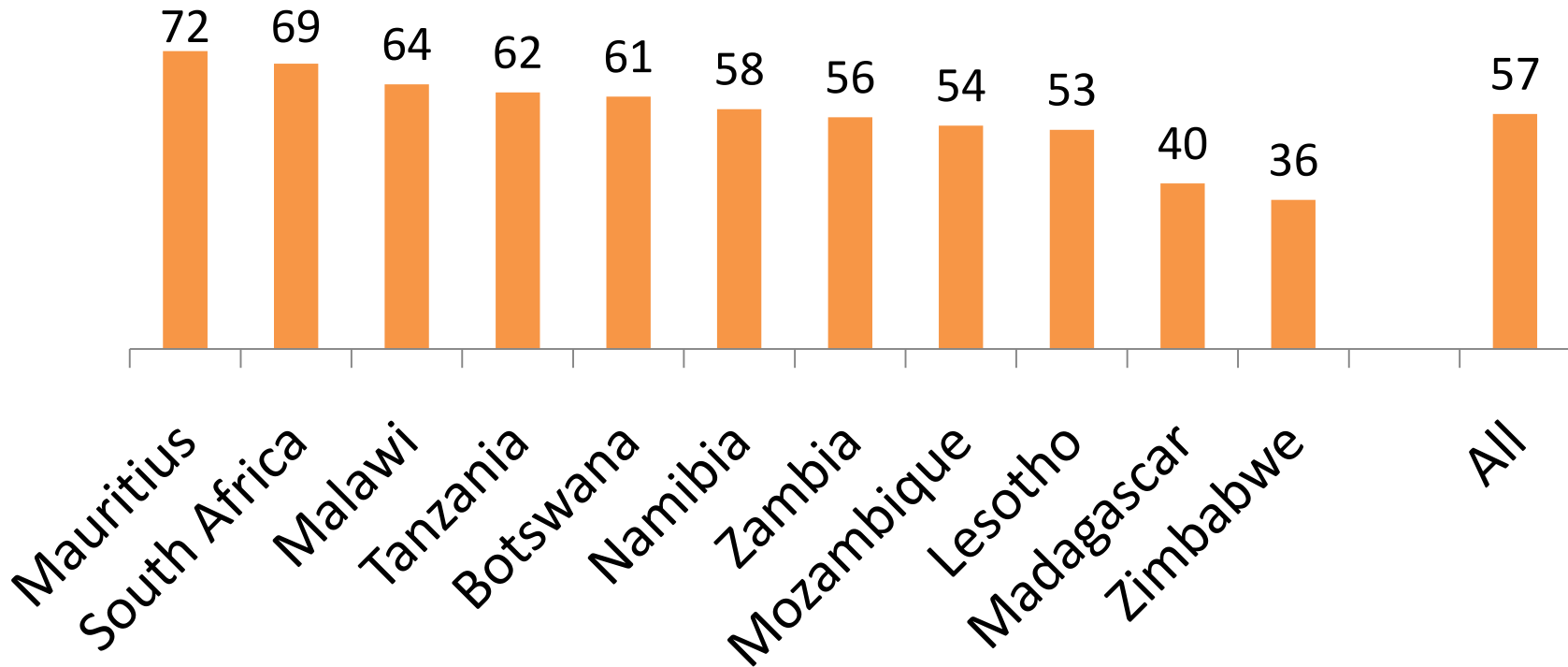


How often, if ever, did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you something such as food, a gift or money for your vote? (% who said never, once or twice, a few times, or often)

Faith in electoral authorities

- Majorities in nearly every country trust their independent electoral bodies.
- The following said they did not trust those who monitor elections:
 - More than half of Malagasy and Zimbabweans
 - Four in ten Zambians and Namibians
 - One in three Mozambicans and Basotho
 - Three in ten Botswana, Malawians & South Africans
 - One in five Mauritians

Trust in Elections Management Bodies



Qn wording: How much do you trust the [Electoral Commission]

Conclusions

Broad majorities in most countries say elections are free & fair, and most people vote, however, survey results suggest NGOs and SADC delegates investigate further:

- Concerns about the fairness of elections by a majority in Zimbabwe and significant minorities in Zambia, Malawi and Namibia
- The absence of activity by majorities in support of parties or candidates before the ballot in all but three countries
- The lack of trust in independent electoral bodies by large minorities in all countries.