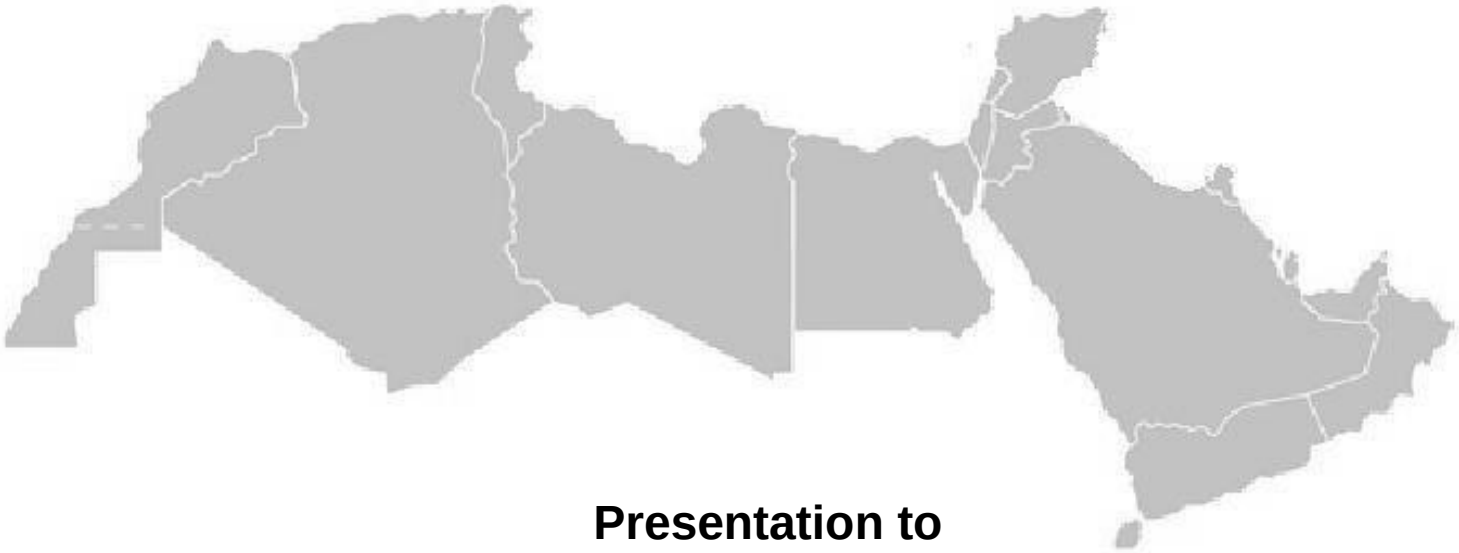
Understanding the "Arab Spring": Public Opinion in the Arab World

Craig Charney



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Sources

National Opinion Polls

This presentation is based on scientific, national, randomly-sampled opinion surveys taken in Arabic by trained local interviewers and polling groups.

Charney Research Polls:

- March 2011 – Egypt (615 respondents)
- August 2010 – Lebanon (1000 respondents), Palestine (1019 respondents)
- July 2009 – Palestine (2402 respondents)
- July 2008 – Lebanon (1800 respondents)
- Oct 2008 – Yemen (1304 respondents), Saudi Arabia (1199 respondents), Algeria (1199 respondents), Egypt (1205 respondents)

Other Polls:

- Spring 2011 – Gallup World Poll: Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE (1000 respondents each)
- April 2011 – Pew Research Center: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon (1000 respondents each)
- October 2010 – Gallup World Poll: Qatar (1000 respondents), UAE (1000 respondents), Kuwait (1000 respondents), Lebanon (1000 respondents)
- April 2010 – Gallup World Poll: Bahrain (1000 respondents), Jordan (1000 respondents), Syria (1000 respondents), Tunisia (2000 respondents)
- March 2010 – Gallup World Poll: Algeria (1000 respondents), Egypt (2000 respondents), Saudi Arabia (1000 respondents), Libya (1000 respondents), Morocco (1000 respondents)
- Feb 2010 – Gallup World Poll: Palestine (1000 respondents), Yemen (1000 respondents)
- Feb 2010 – Gallup World Poll: Palestine (1000 respondents), Yemen (1000 respondents)
- July 2010 – Shibley Telhami, University of Maryland: Egypt (818 respondents), Saudi Arabia (812 respondents), UAE (512 respondents), Morocco (816 respondents), Lebanon (509 respondents), Jordan (509 respondents)
- 2010 – Pew Global Attitudes Survey: Palestine (1100 respondents), Jordan (1000 respondents), Egypt (1000 respondents), Lebanon (1000 respondents)
- 2009 – Pew Global Attitudes Survey: Palestine (1100 respondents), Egypt (1000 respondents)
- August 2009 – IRI Poll: Jordan (1000 respondents)
- August 2009 – Greenberg Poll: Egypt (800 respondents)
- Jordan (1000 respondents)
- Fall 2006 – Arab Barometer Survey: Morocco (1277 respondents), Kuwait (750 respondents)
- Spring 2006 – Arab Barometer Survey: Palestine (1270 respondents), Jordan (1142 respondents)
- 2000: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

Today's Presentation

- **Distinguishing Factors: Economic and Political**
- **Common Elements: Political and Economic**
- **New Media**
- **Post-Revolutionary Conditions**
- **Post-Revolutionary Elections**
- **Religious Institutions and Identity**
- **International Issues**

Upheavals occurred where the fewest were thriving; stability prevailed where the most were.

Percent "thriving"

Group 1: Major Upheaval		Group 2: Spring 2011 Instability		Group 3: Stable	
Country	Thriving %	Country	Thriving %	Country	Thriving %
Syria	3%	Morocco	9%	Kuwait	45%
Egypt	6%	Algeria	18%	Qatar	48%
Bahrain	7%	Lebanon	18%	Saudi Arabia	50%
Yemen	11%	Jordan	28%	UAE	58%
Libya	14%				
Tunisia	16%				
Group 1 Average	10%	Group 2 Average	18%	Group 3 Average	50%

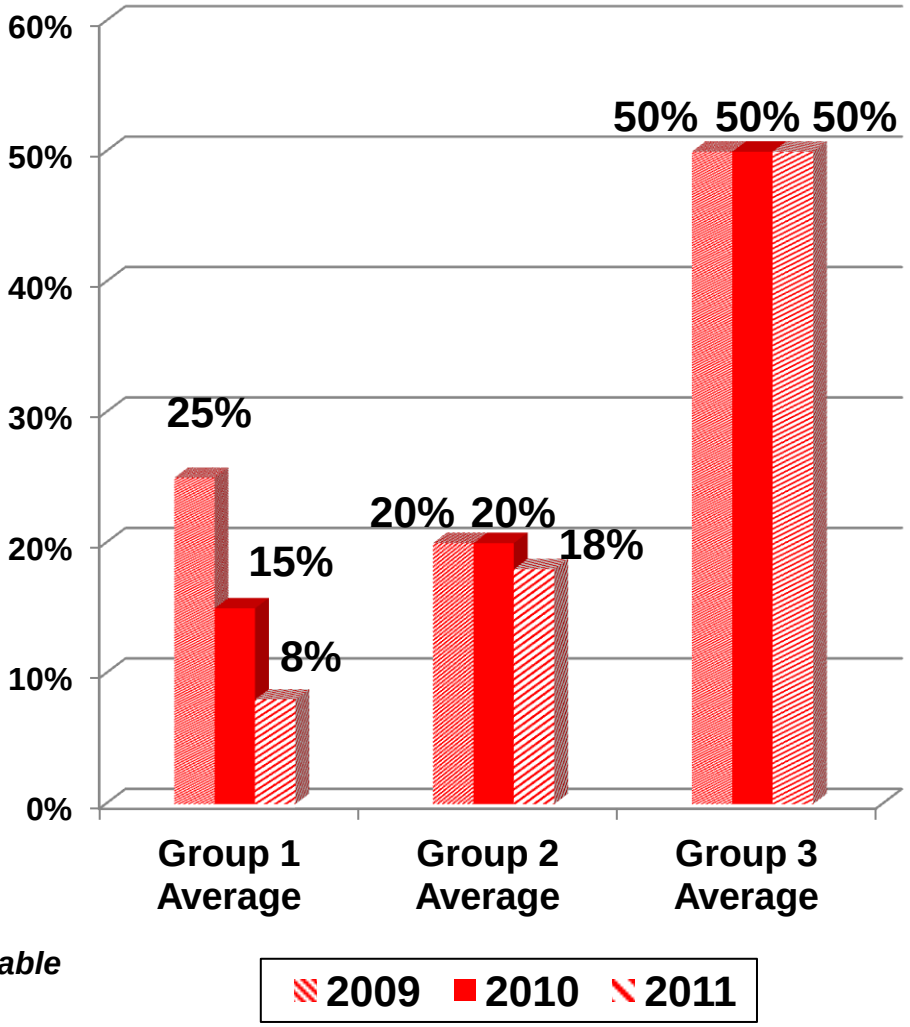
Gallup World Poll 2010, 2011

The countries in upheaval saw significant drops in the proportions of citizens thriving in the past three years, unlike the rest.

Group 1 Countries

Country	% Thriving (2009)	% Thriving (2010)	% Thriving (2011)
Syria	21%	10%	3%
Egypt	25%*	11%	6%
Yemen	17%	12%	11%
Libya	24%	14%	N/A
Tunisia	25%*	14%	16%
Bahrain	40%	27%	7%

Average thriving: 2009-2011*

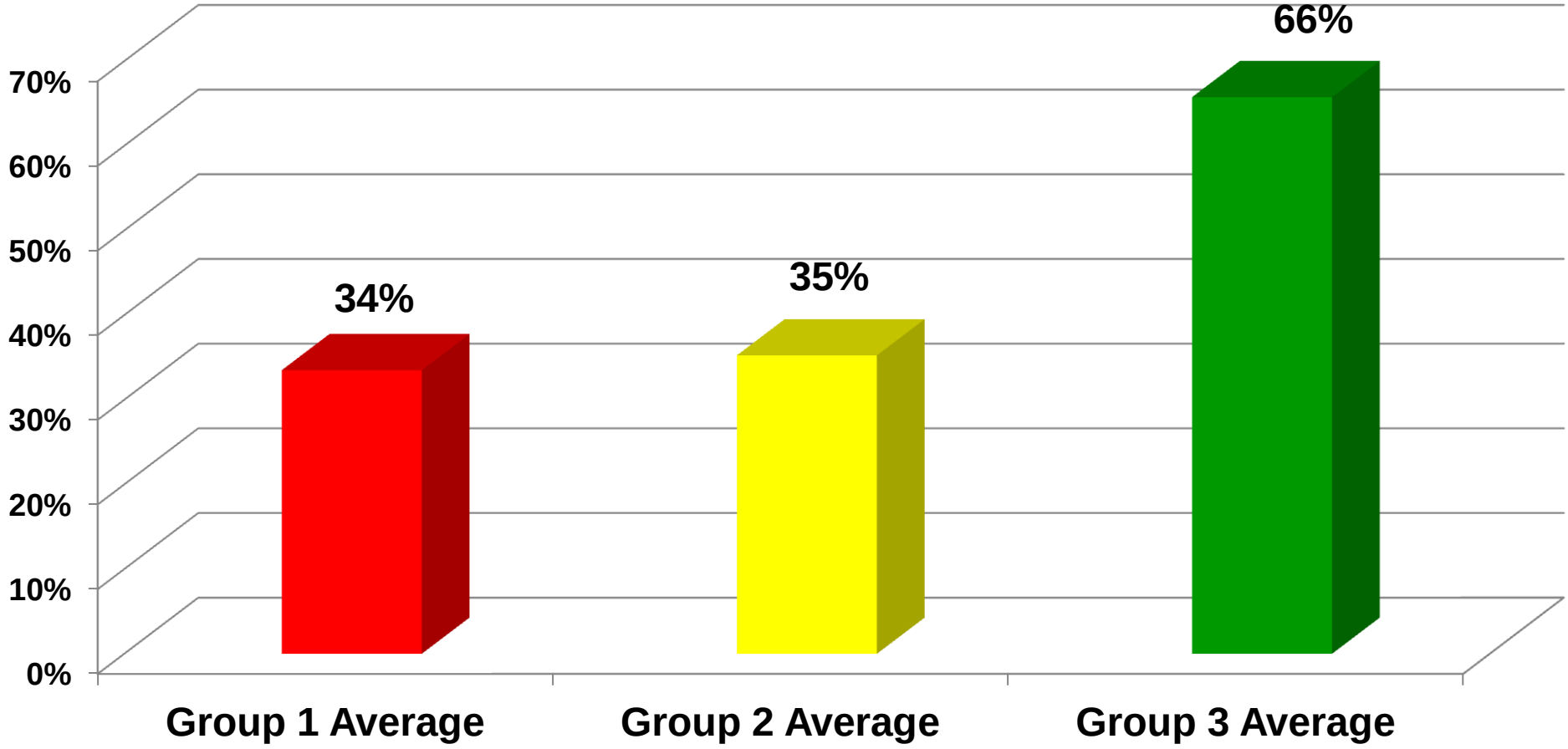


**Egypt and Tunisia from 2007-2008 – more tracking data available*

Gallup World Poll 2007-2011

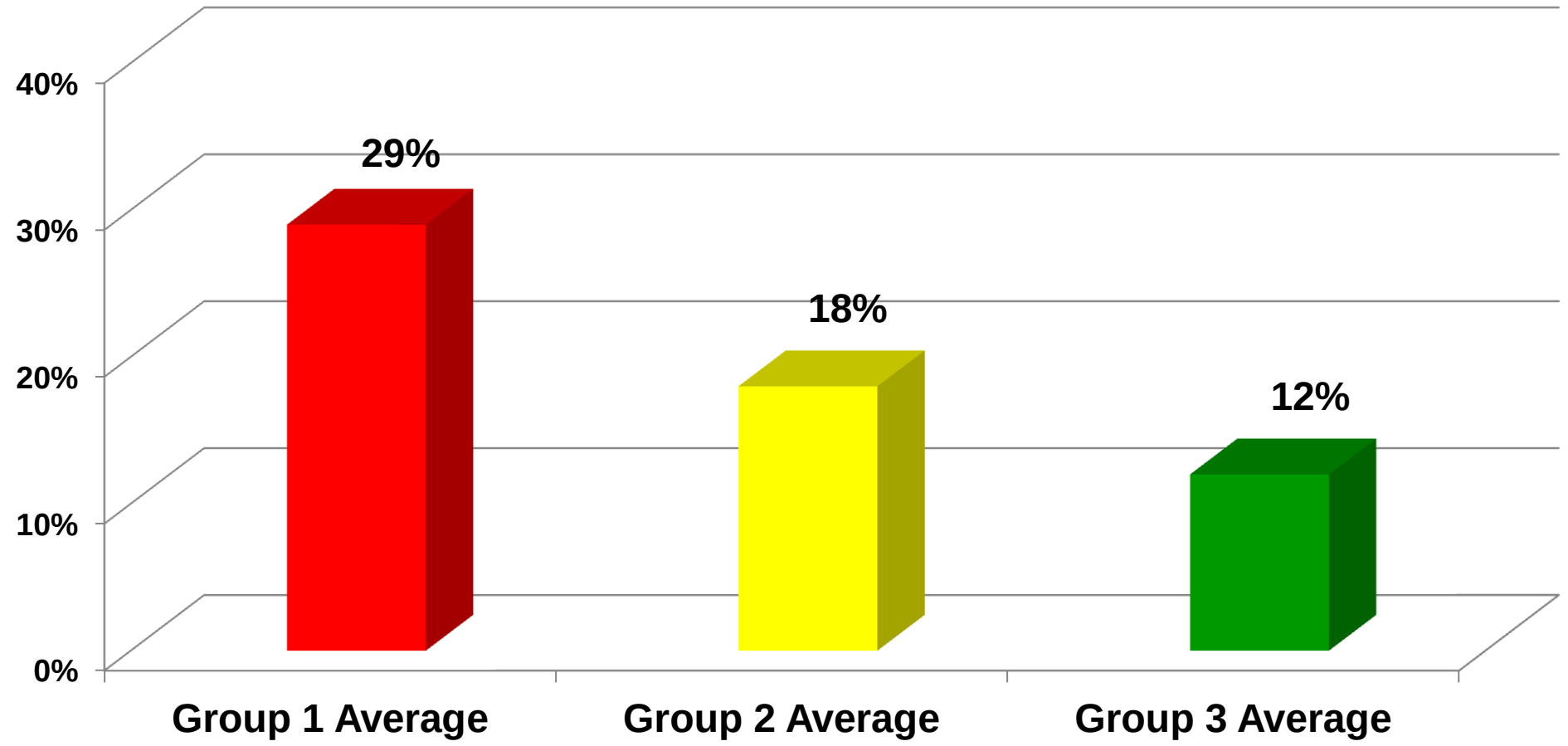
The countries most dissatisfied with job creation tended to be the least stable (Groups 1 and 2).

In your country, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the efforts to increase the number of quality jobs? (Satisfied only)



Countries with more poverty had more unrest.

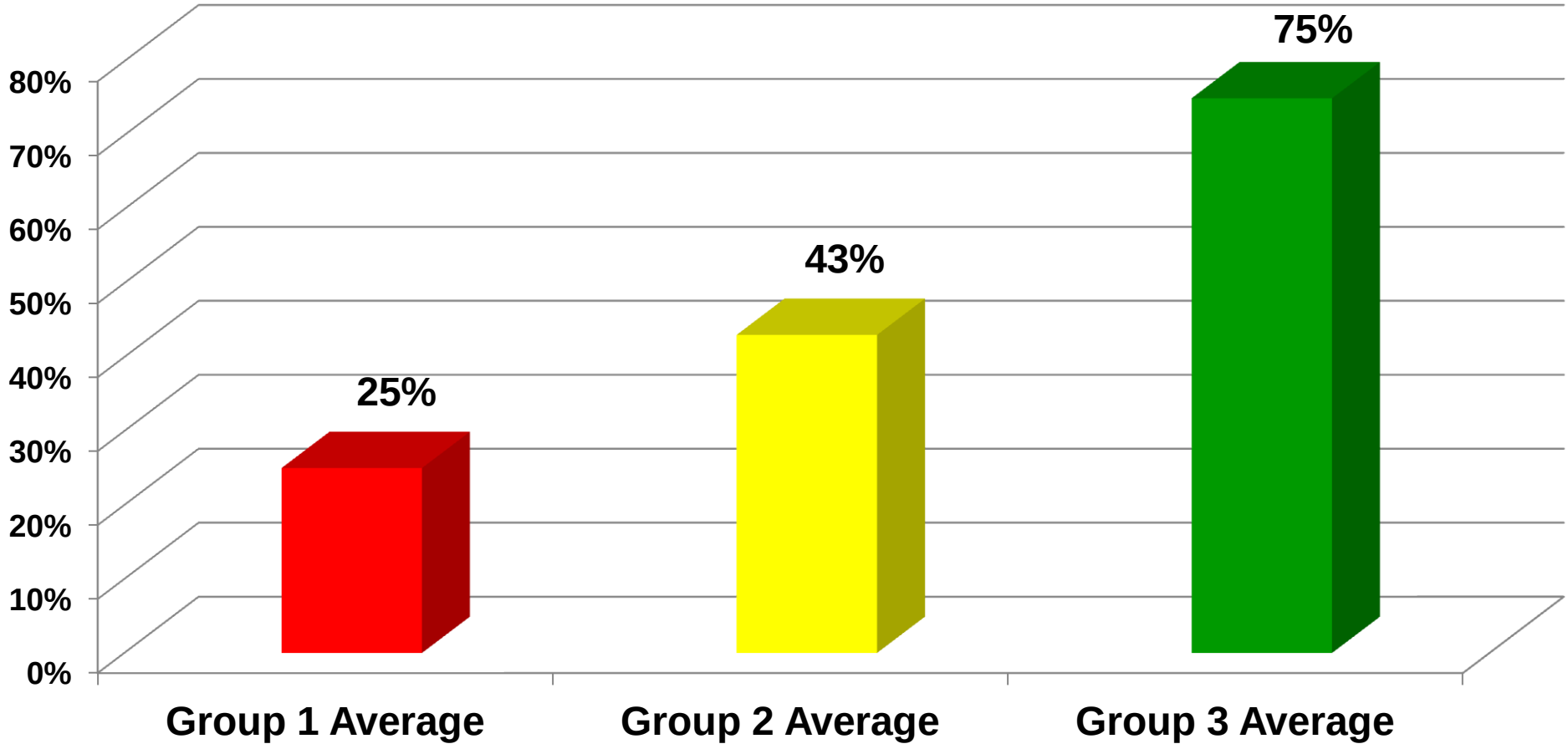
Have there been times in the last 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy the food that you or your family needed?
(Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010-2011

Dissatisfaction with the local economy was also closely linked to instability.

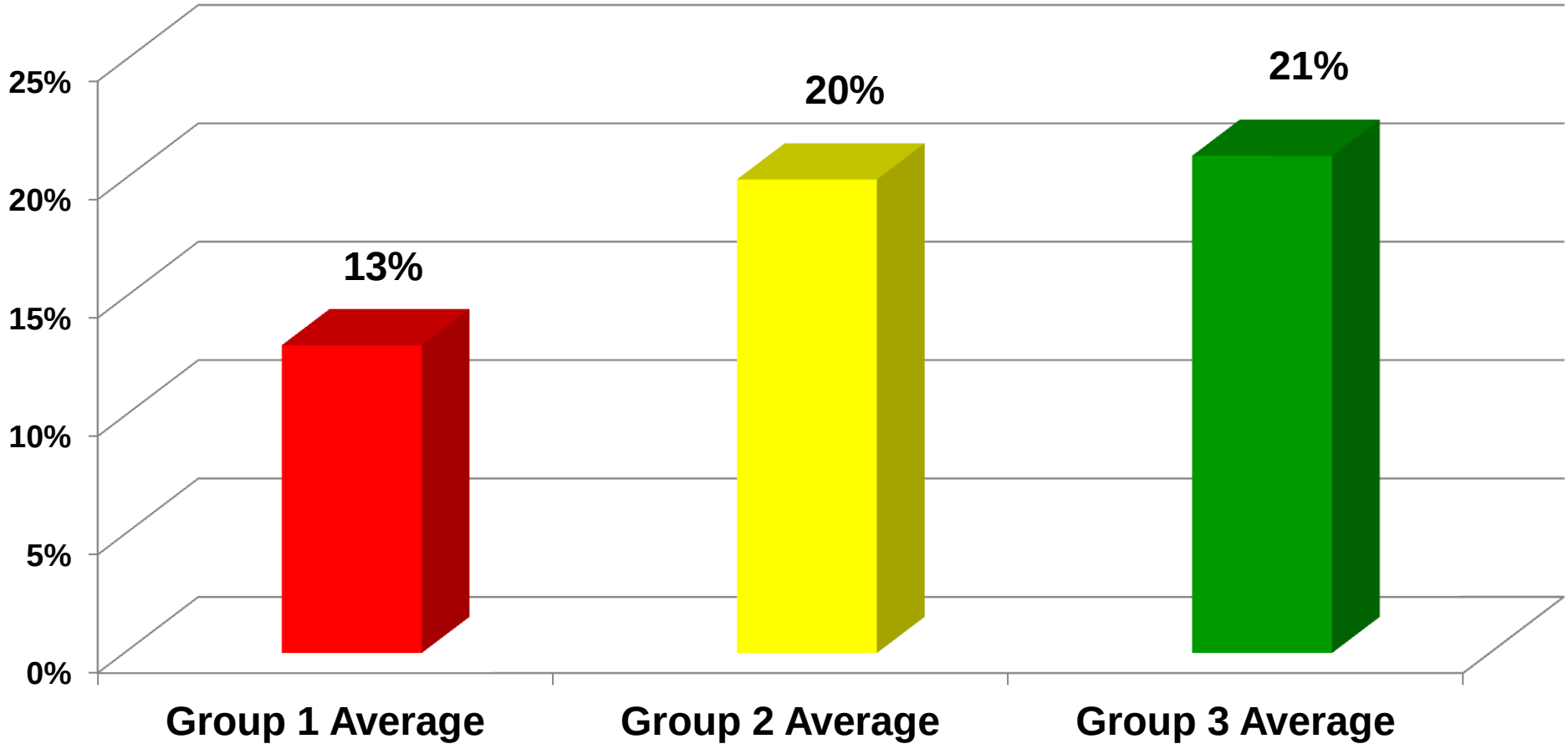
Right now, do you think the economic conditions in the city or area in which you live, as a whole, are getting better or worse?
(Better only)



Gallup World Poll 2010-2011

Regimes fell in countries where people felt the most voiceless.

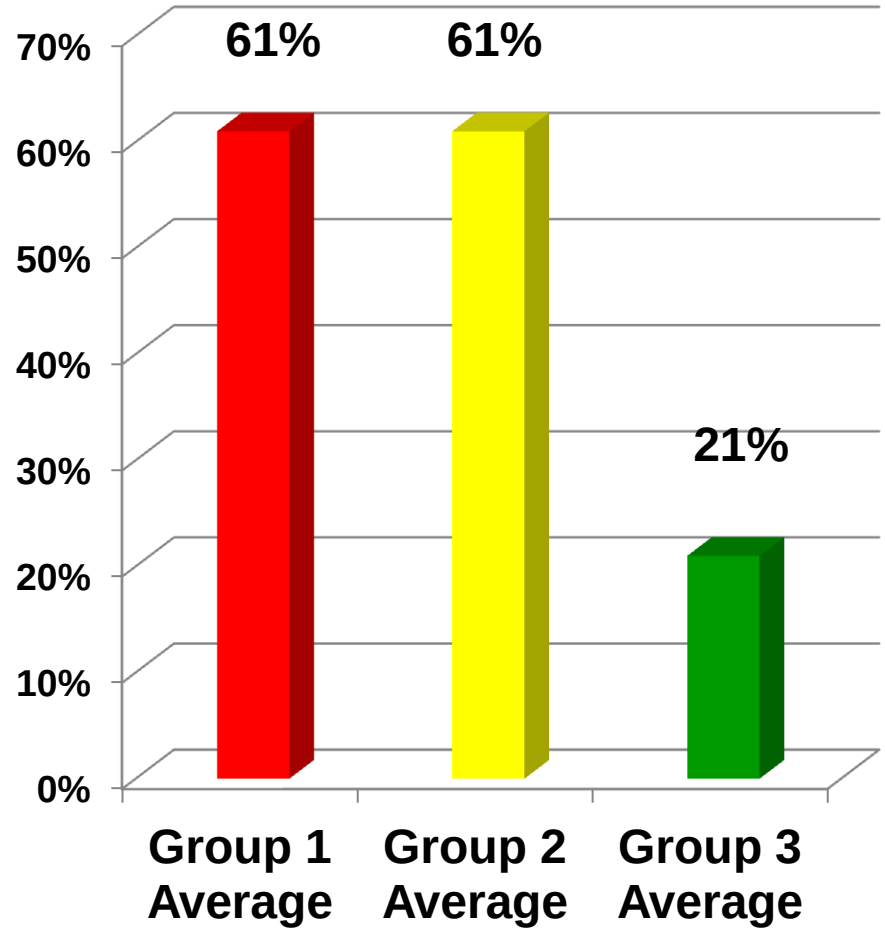
Have you voiced your opinion to a public official (in the last month)? (Yes only)



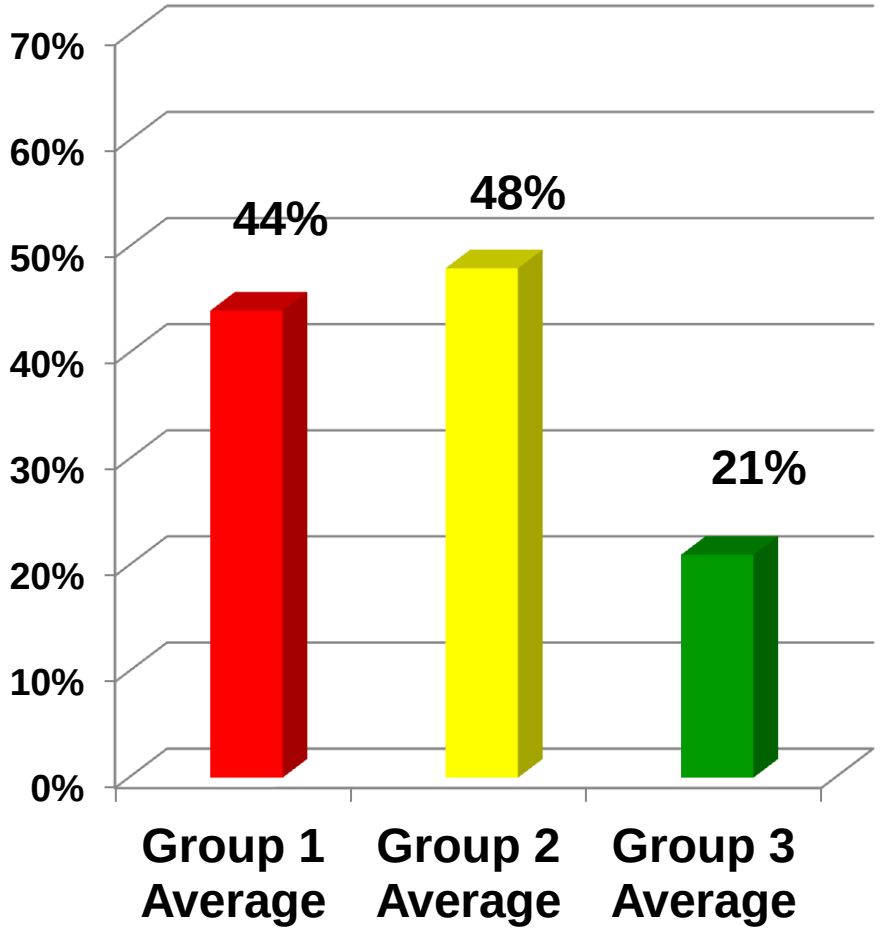
Gallup World Poll 2010

Perceptions of widespread corruption and reported problems were more common in Groups 1 and 2 – the less stable countries.

Is corruption widespread throughout the government in your country? (Yes only)



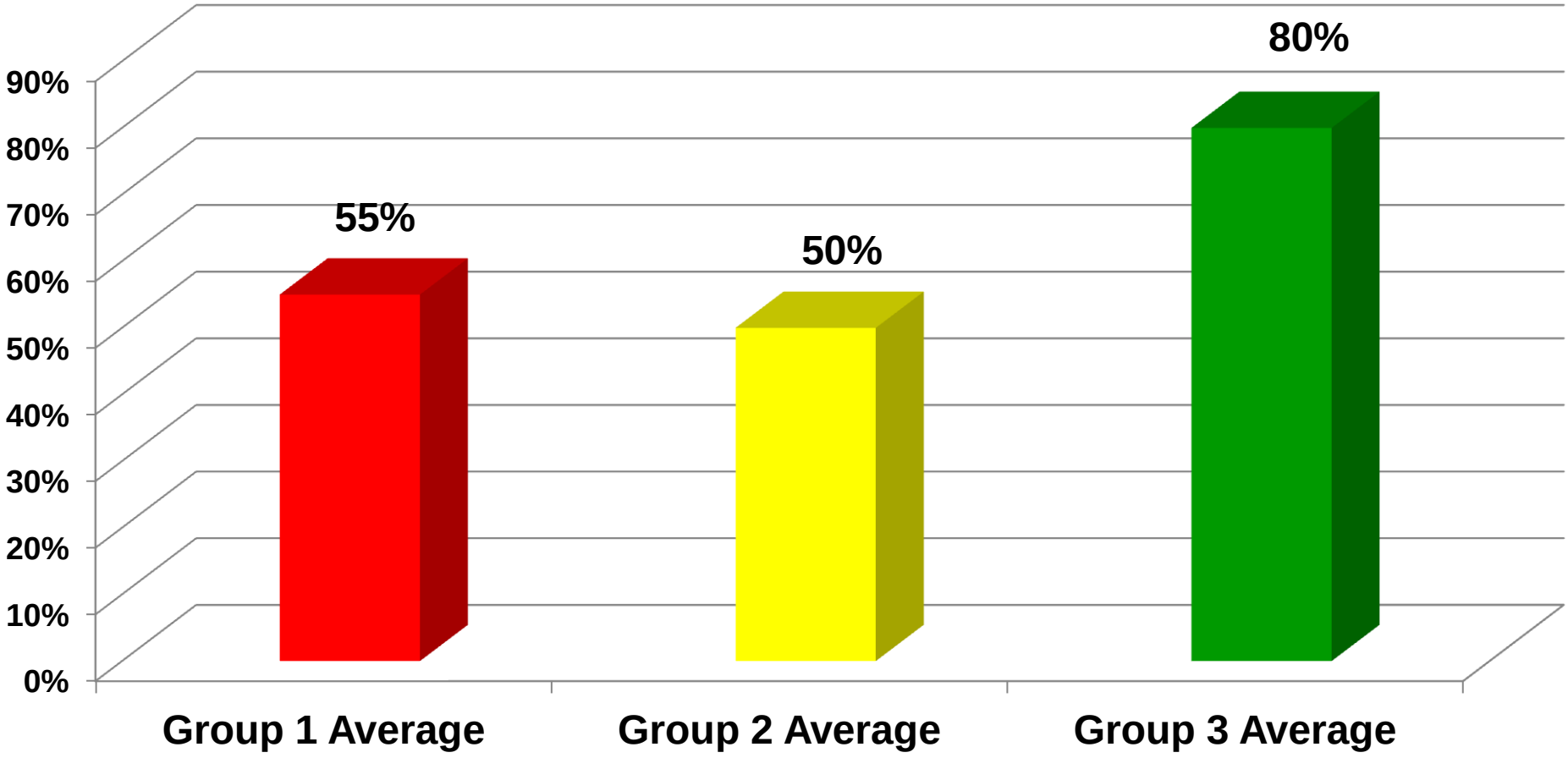
Paid bribe to official for service in past year (Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010-2011

Lack of confidence in the rule of law was linked to instability.

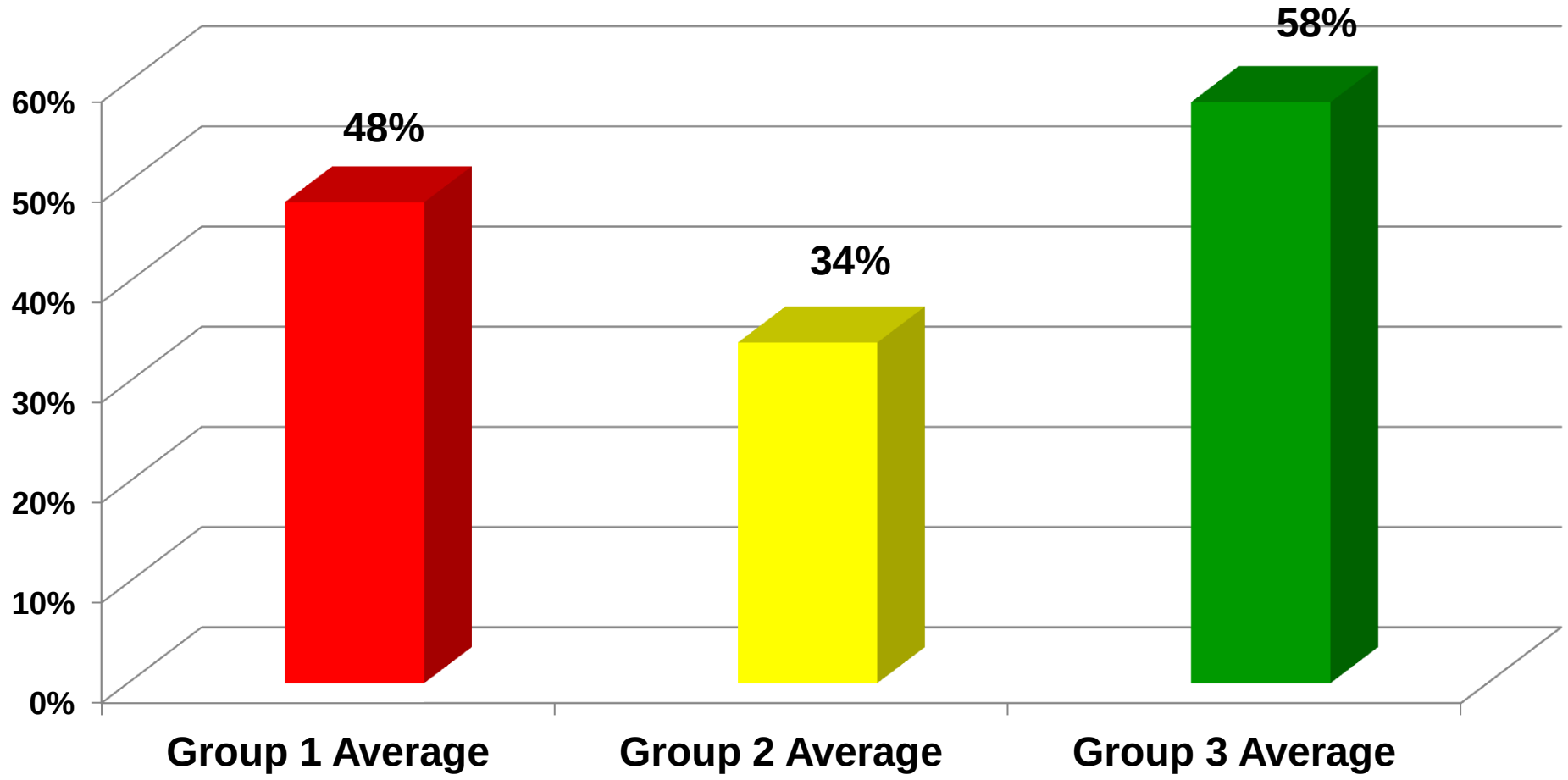
In your country do you have confidence in the judicial system and the courts? (Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010

Countries where elections were seen as rigged also were less stable.

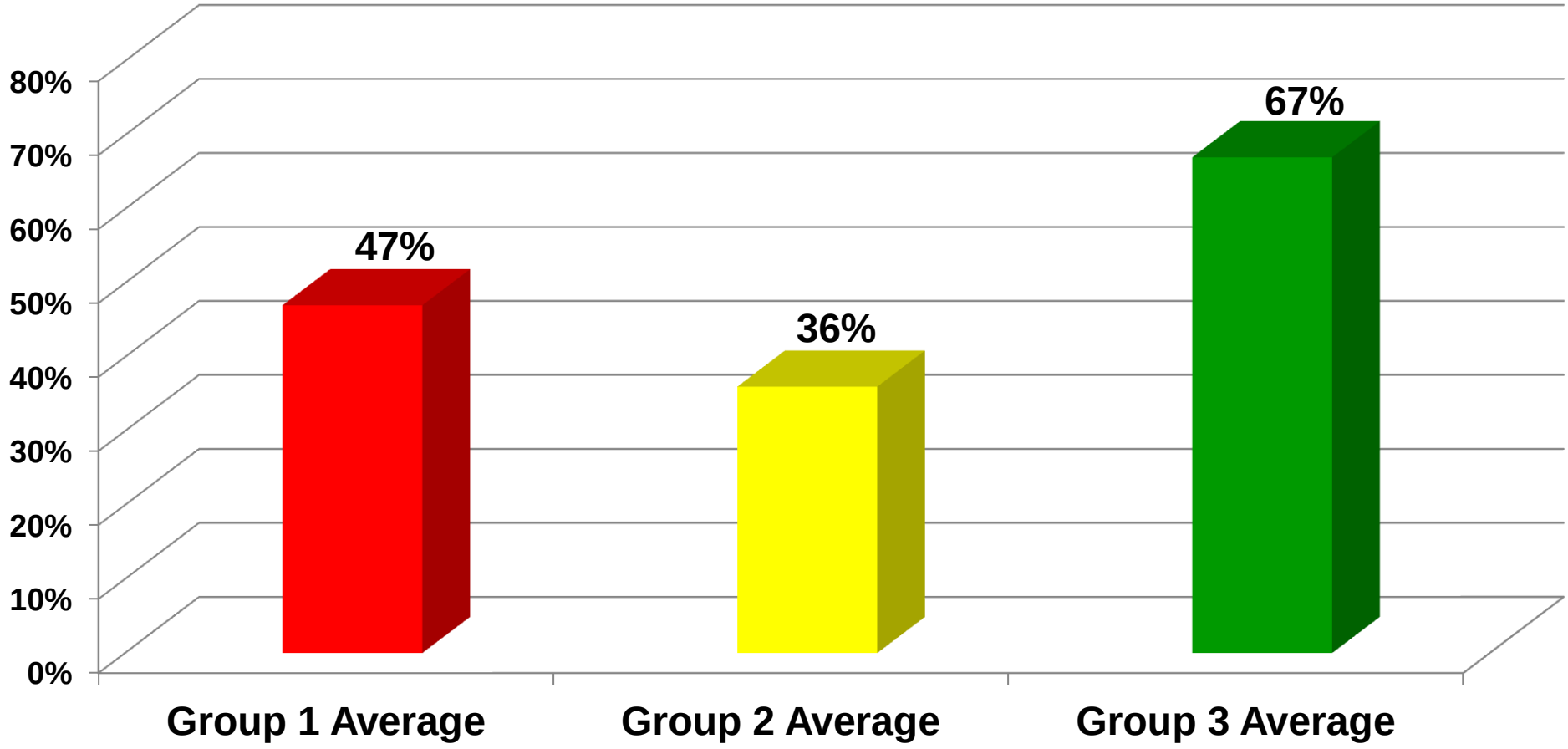
In your country do you have confidence in the honesty of elections? (Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010

Countries where mistrust of domestic media was higher (Groups 1 and 2) were more unstable.

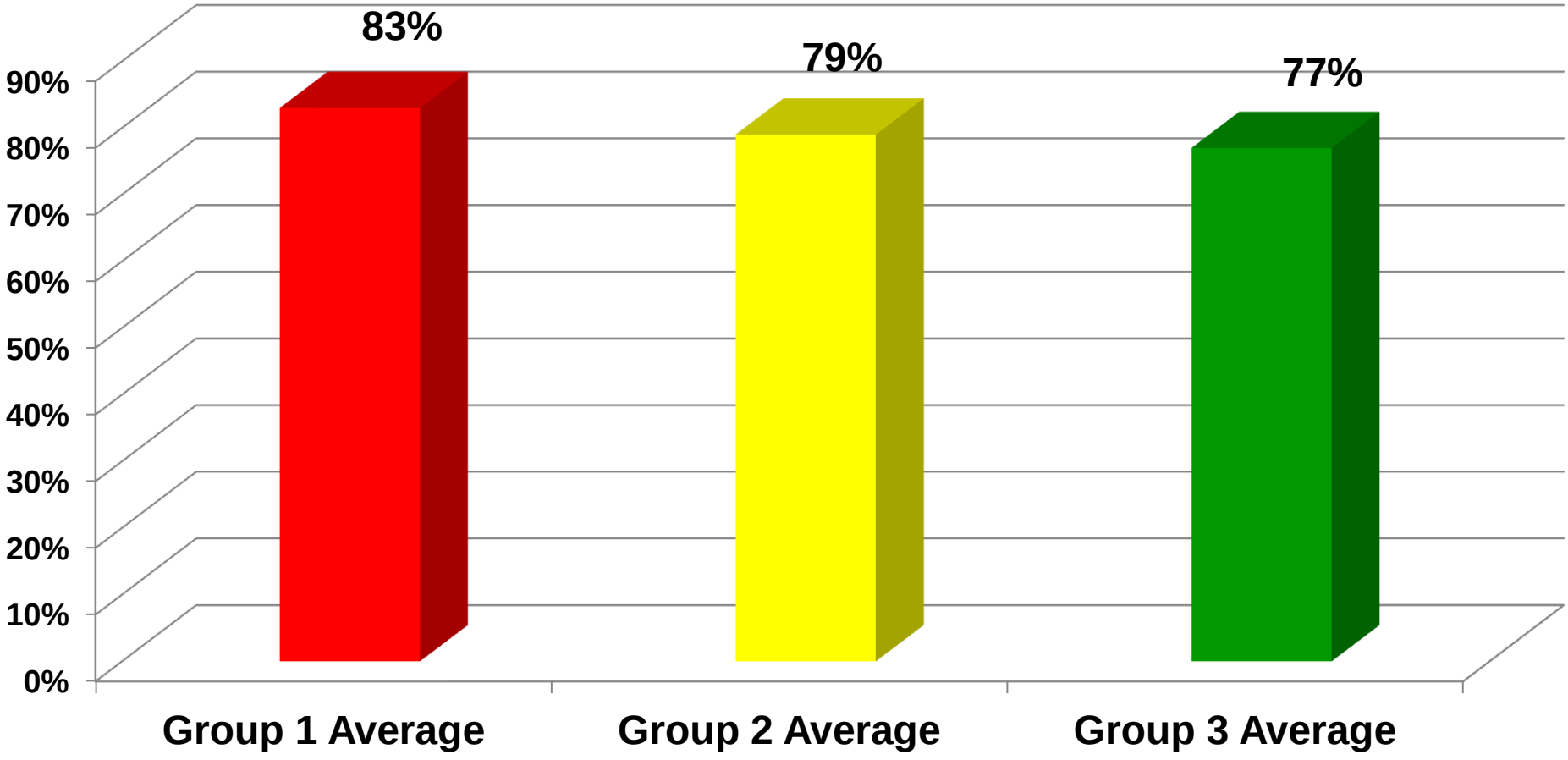
In your country do you have confidence in the quality and integrity of the media? (Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010

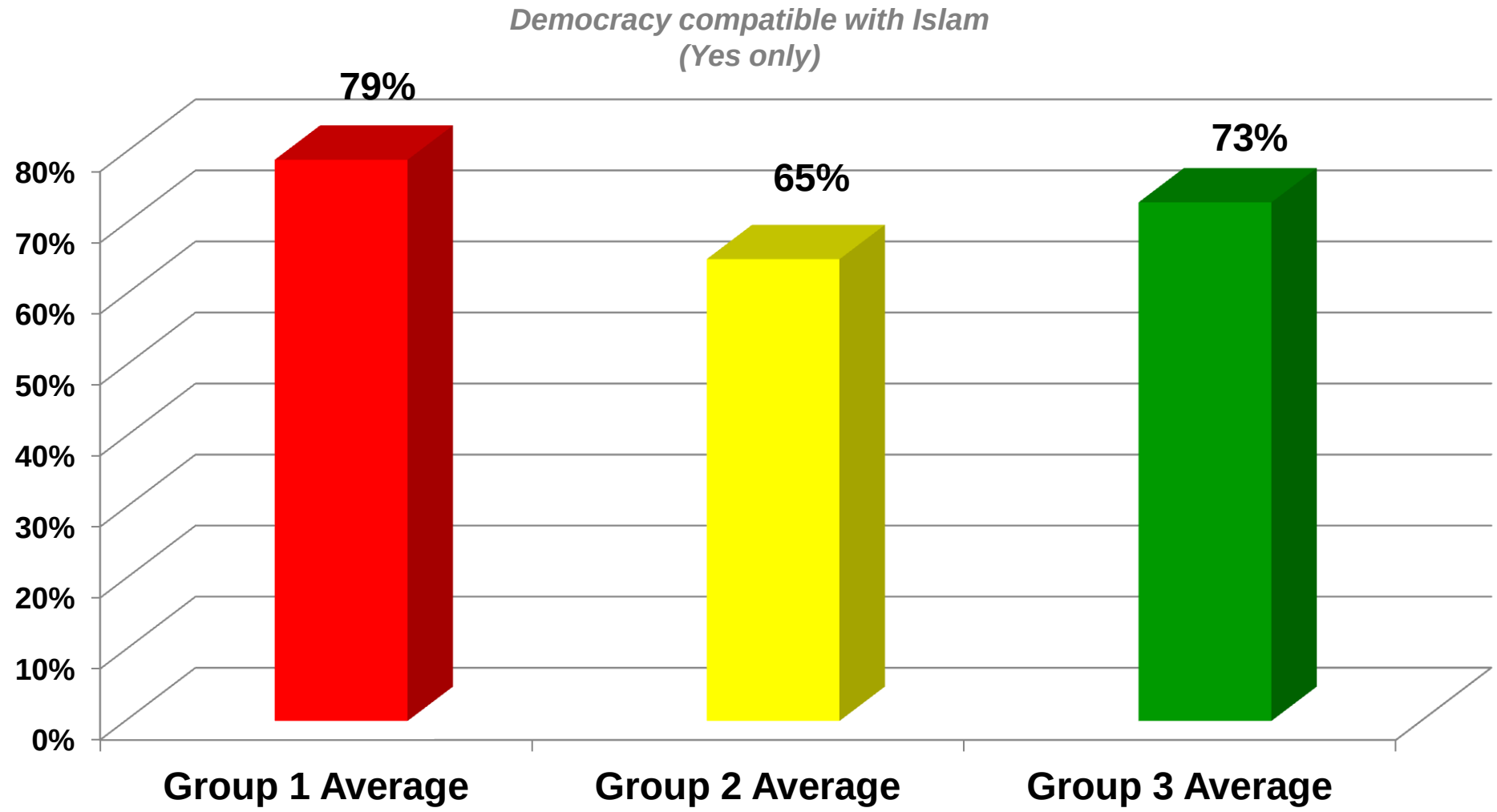
There is a strong desire for democracy across the region.

Percent preferring a democratic system of government



CR 2008, Arab Barometer 2006

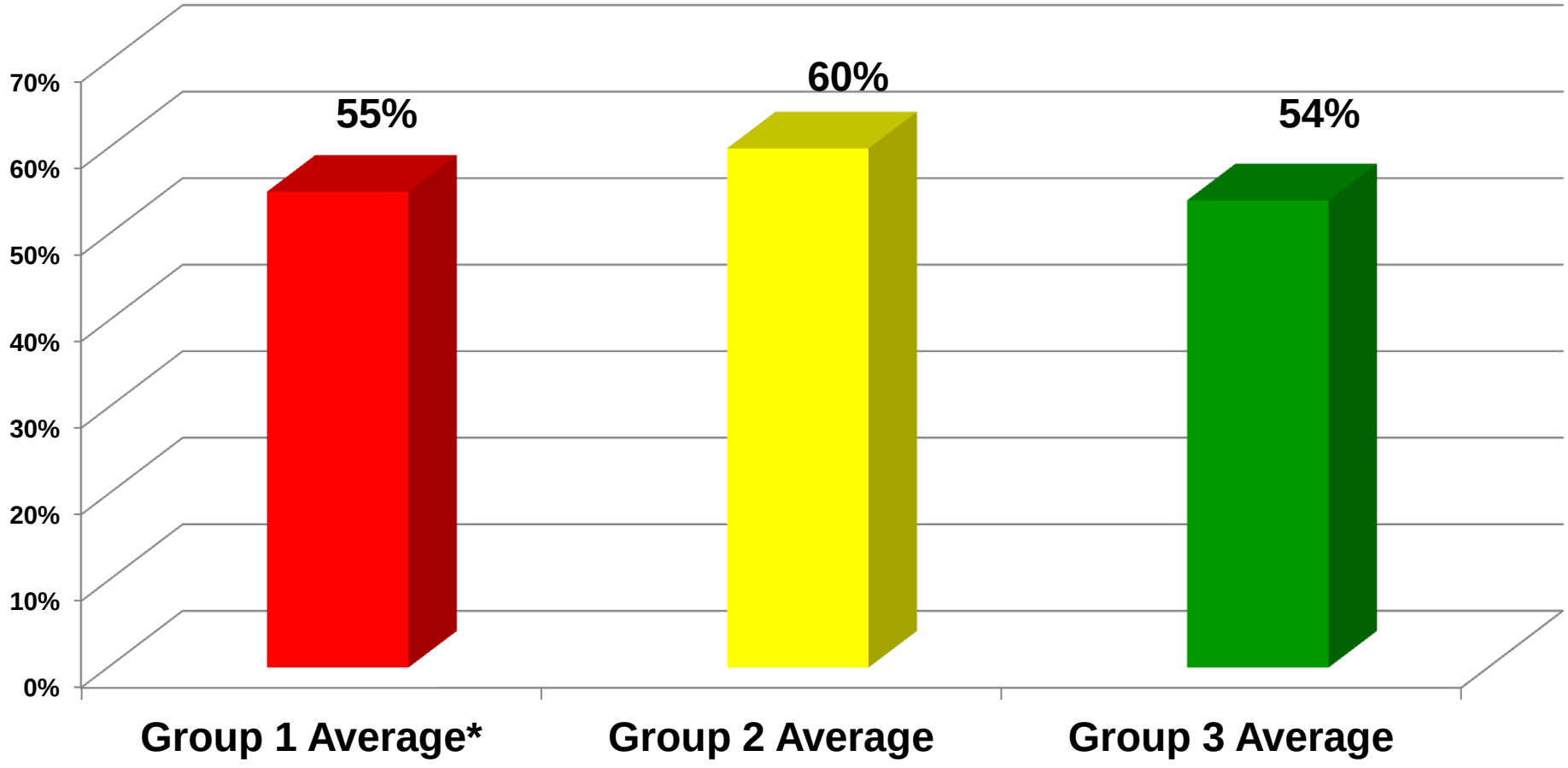
Majorities throughout the Arab world believe today that democracy is compatible with Islam.



Pew 2007, 2009, 2010; CR 2008, Arab Barometer 2006

The majority of citizens said political change should be peaceful in Arab countries (except Libya).

Some people believe that groups that are oppressed and are suffering from injustice can improve their situation by peaceful means ALONE. Others do not believe that peaceful means ALONE will work to improve the situation for such oppressed groups. What do you believe?
(Believe peaceful means ALONE only)

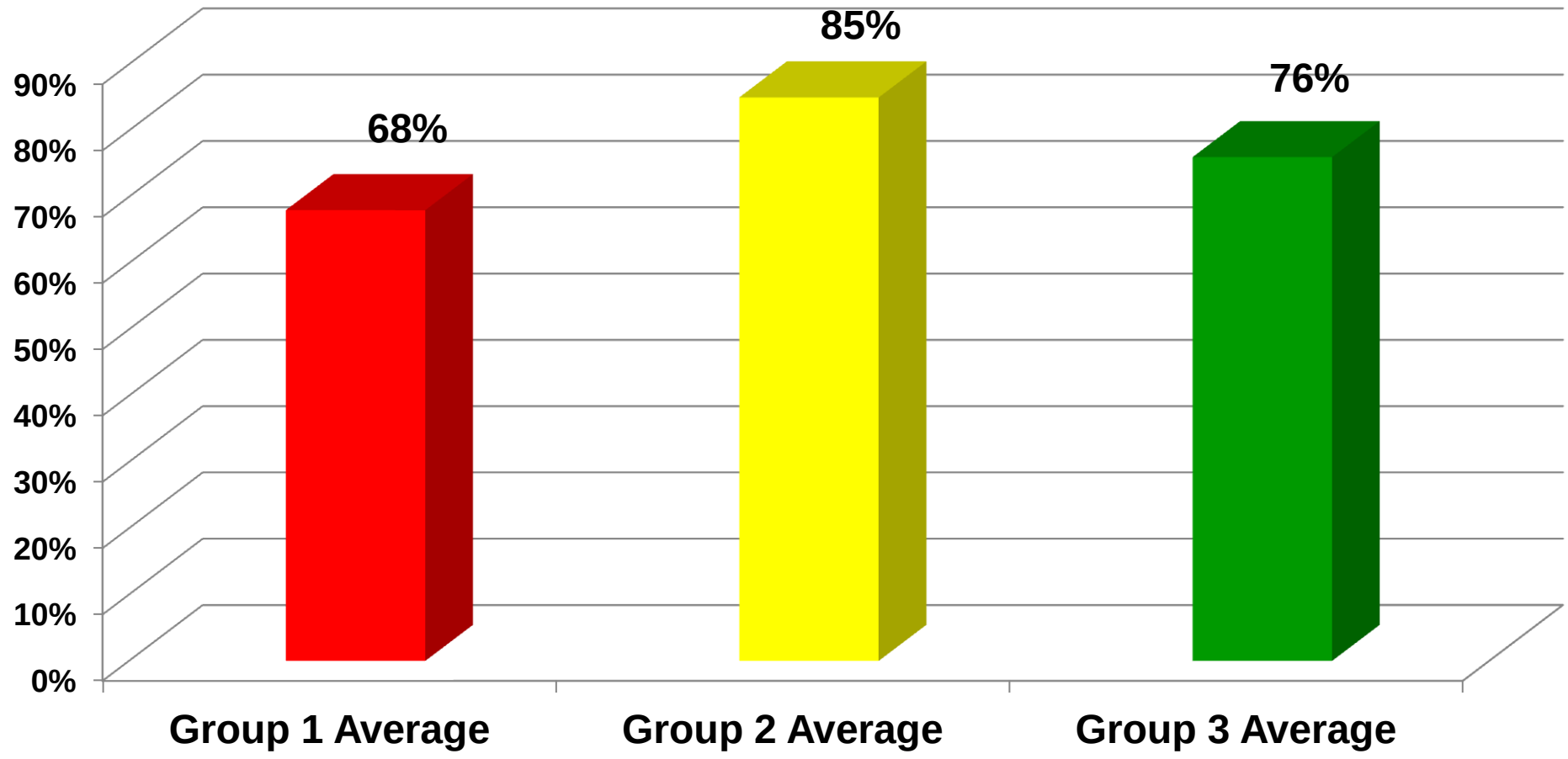


Gallup World Poll 2010

***Libya: 34%**

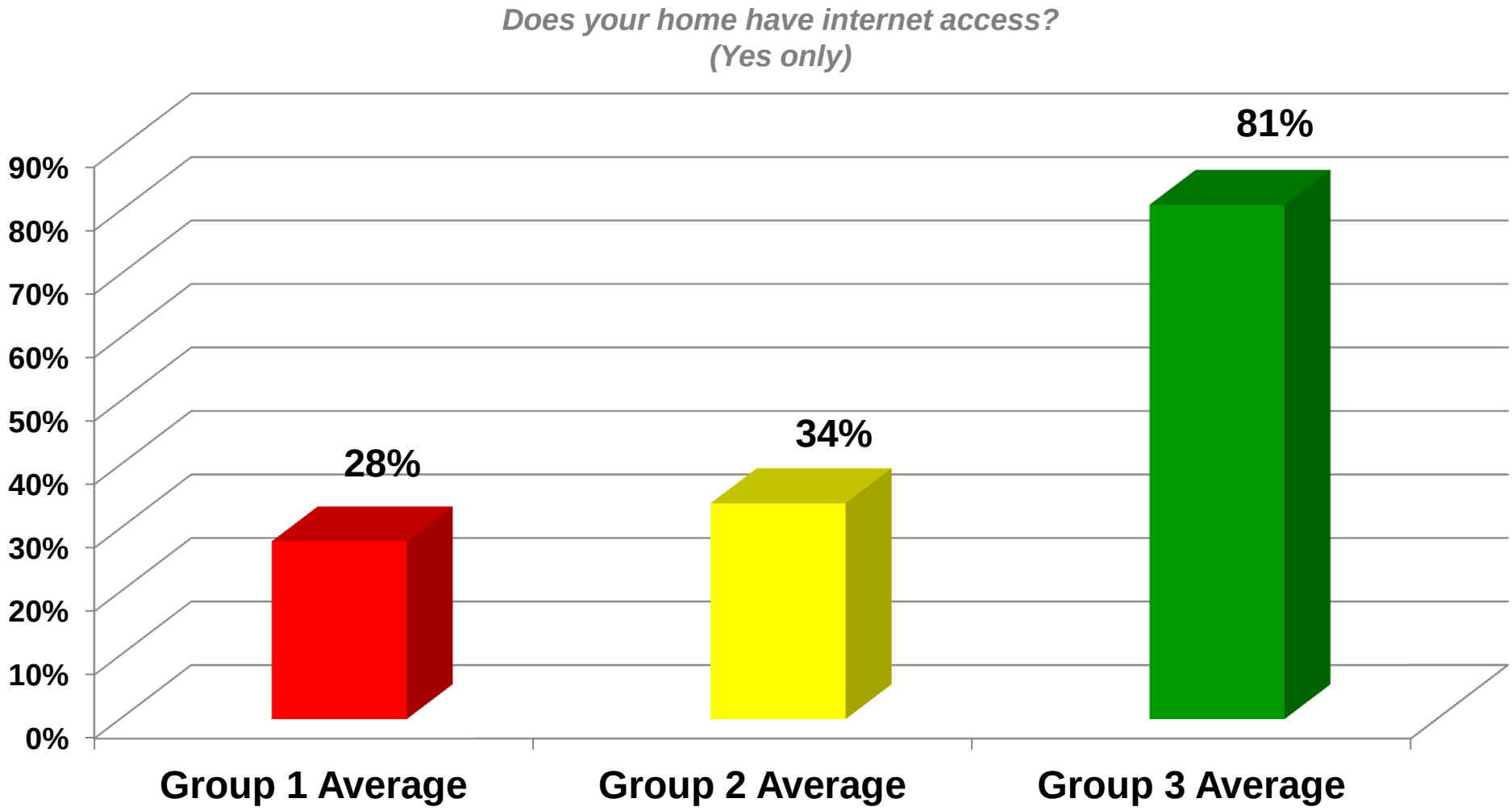
A consensus across the region favors foreign trade and globalization.

Percent saying greater foreign trade is good



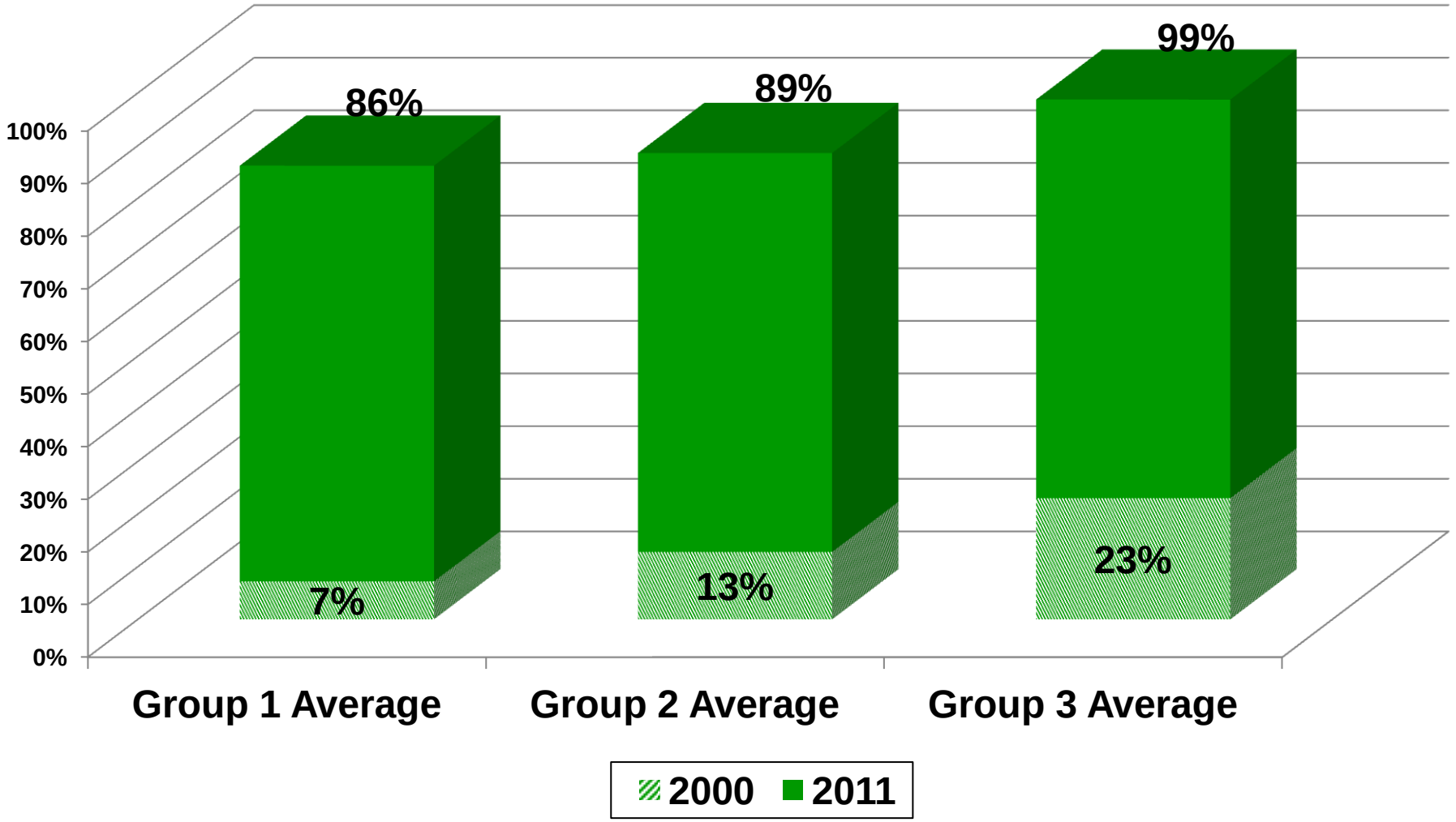
Pew 2010, 2009; CR 2008

Internet access is lower in the less stable countries – while it is nearly universal in the most stable (and developed).



Mobile phones have become almost ubiquitous in the Arab world, where very few had them a decade ago.

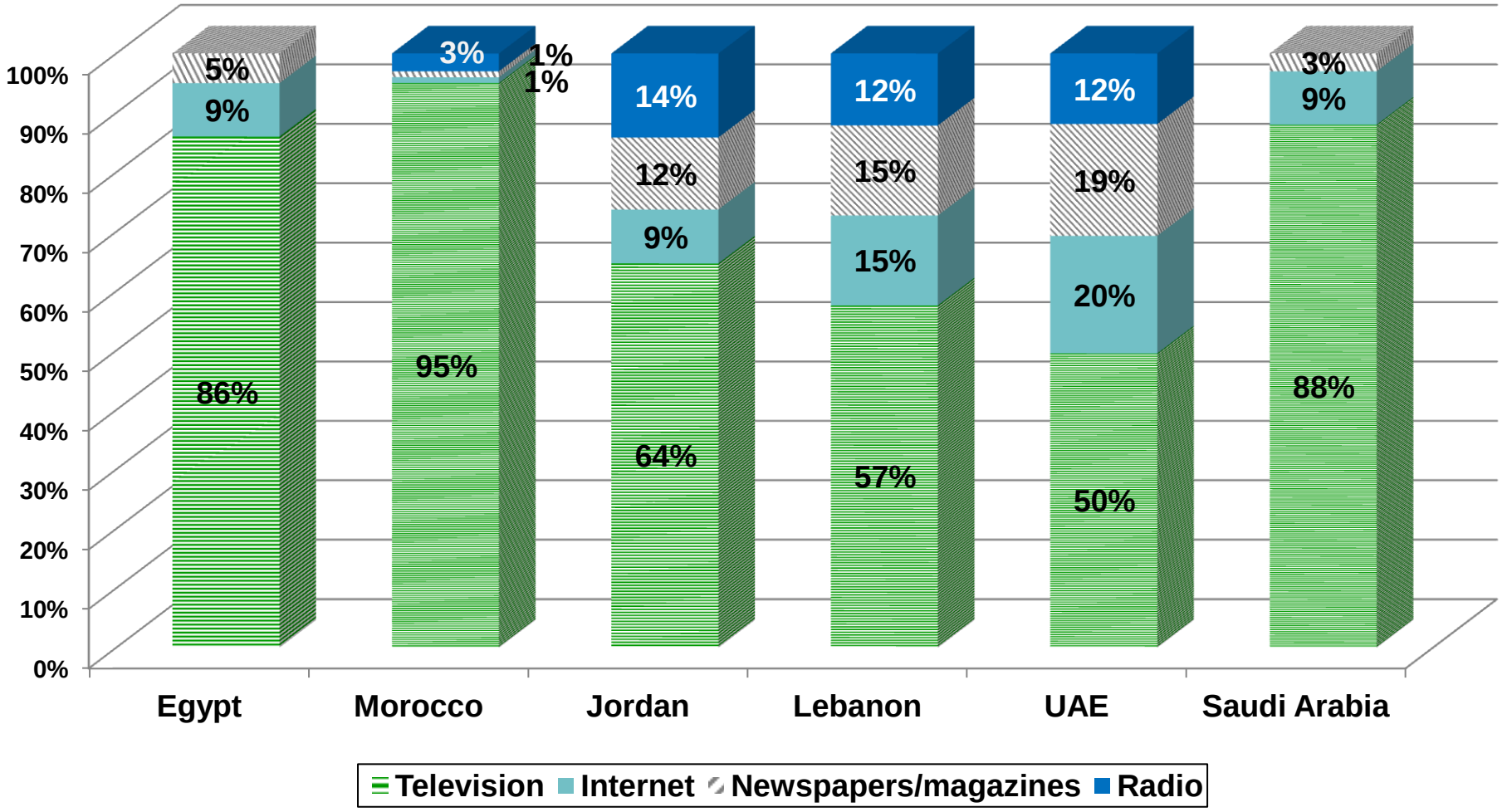
Does your home have a cellular phone?
(Yes only)



Gallup World Poll 2010, ICT 2000

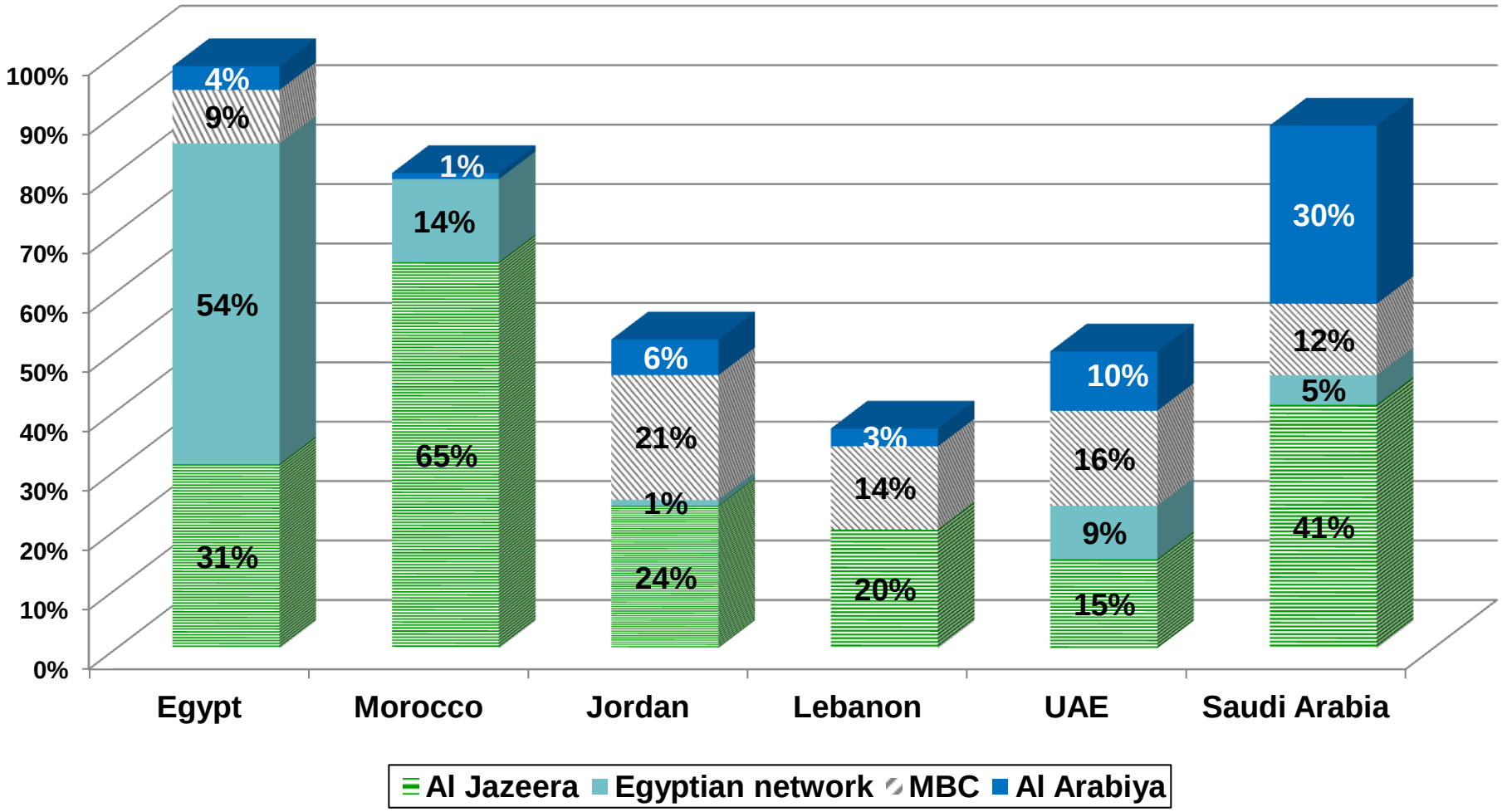
The key news medium in the region is television, though internet and print matter in some countries.

What is your primary source for international news?



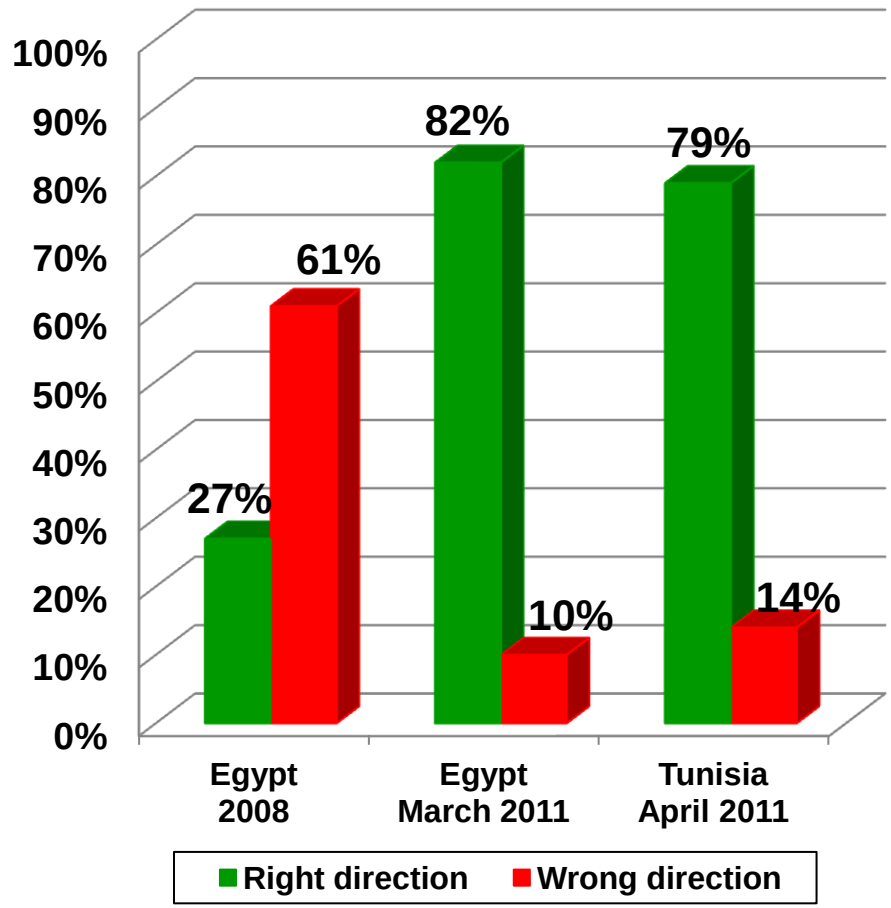
Al Jazeera leads as an international news source, but MBC, Al Arabiya, and Egyptian TV also have large audiences.

When you watch international news, which of the following networks do you watch most often?



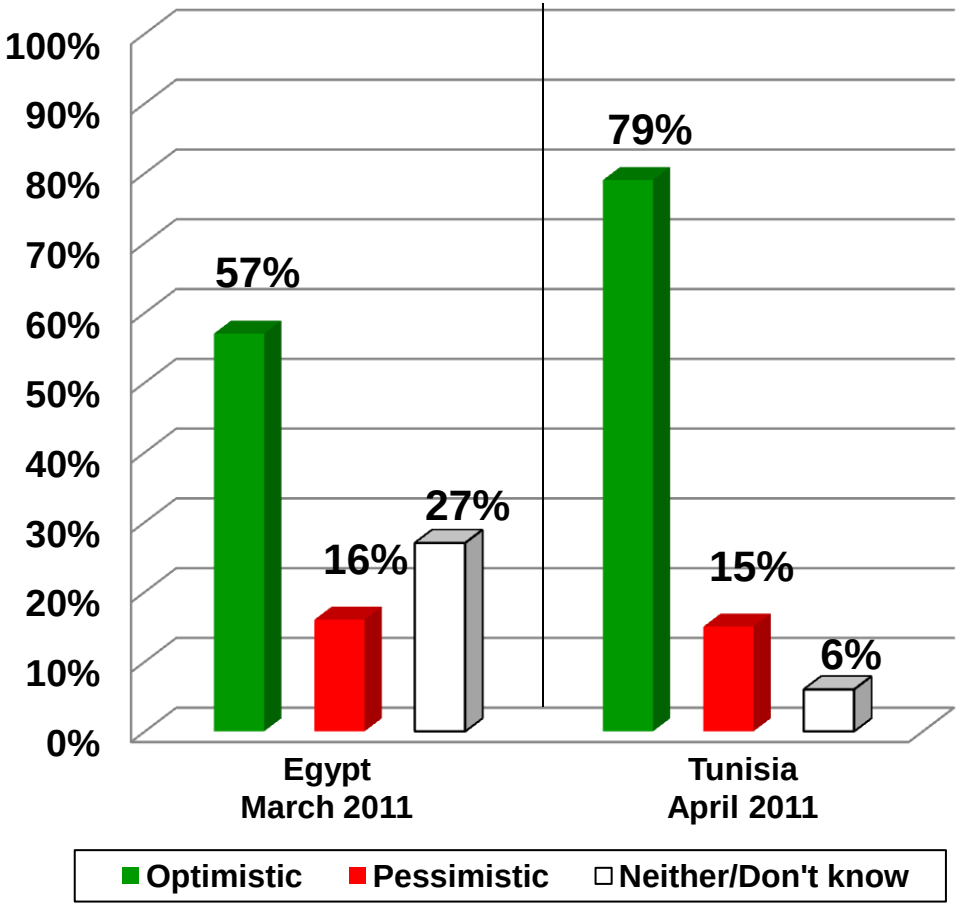
There was enormous hope and optimism in Egypt and Tunisia following the revolutions in those countries.

Generally speaking, do you think things in [Egypt/Tunisia] are going in the right direction or wrong direction?



Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the country? (Egypt)

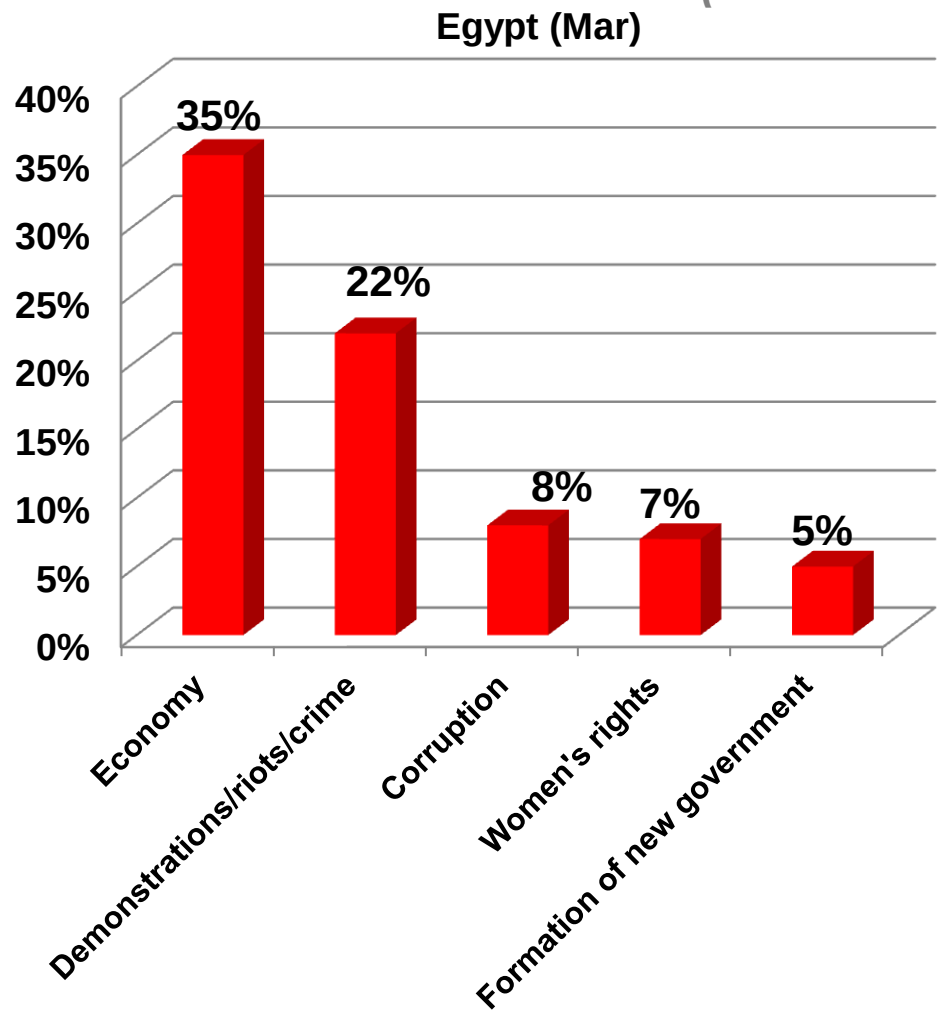
How do you feel about the future? (Tunisia)

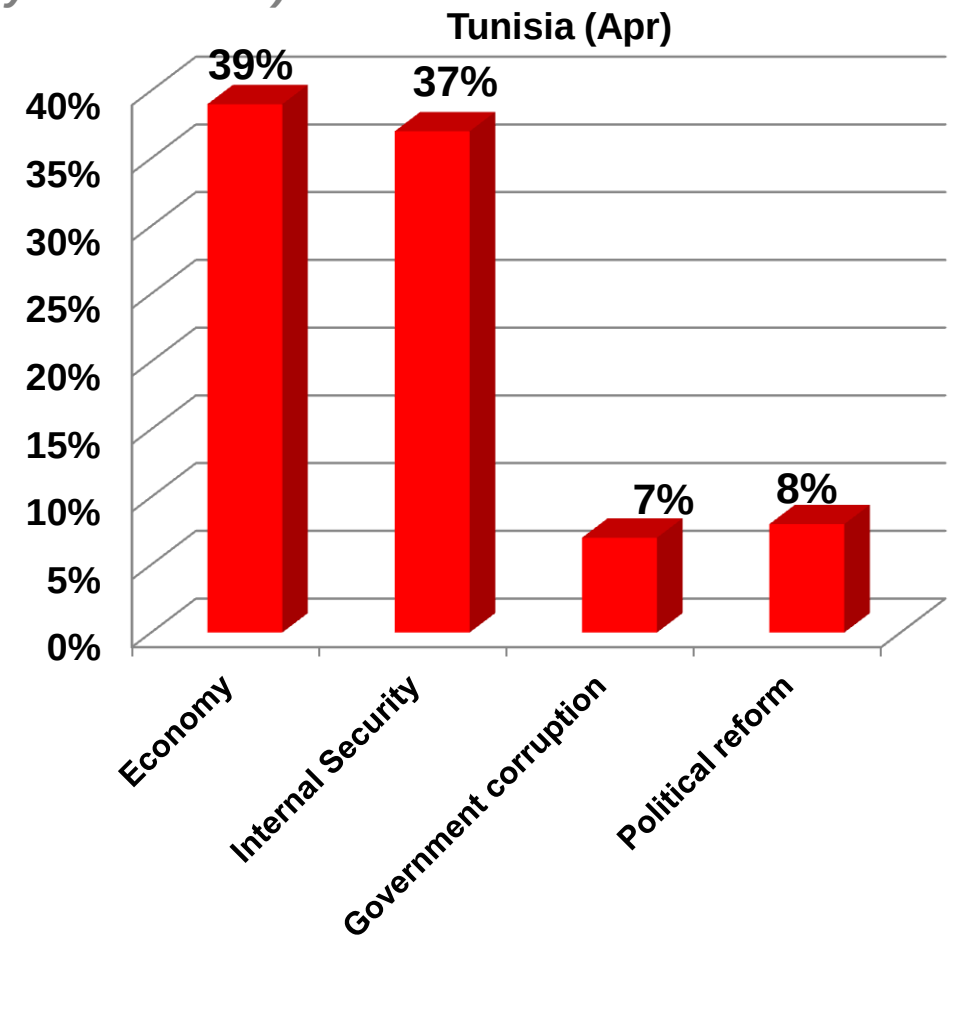


CR 2011, 2008; Pew 2011, EMRHOD 2011

Egyptians and Tunisians saw their countries' biggest problems as the economy and security; corruption and democracy ranked lower.

Biggest national problem
(mentioned by 5% or more)

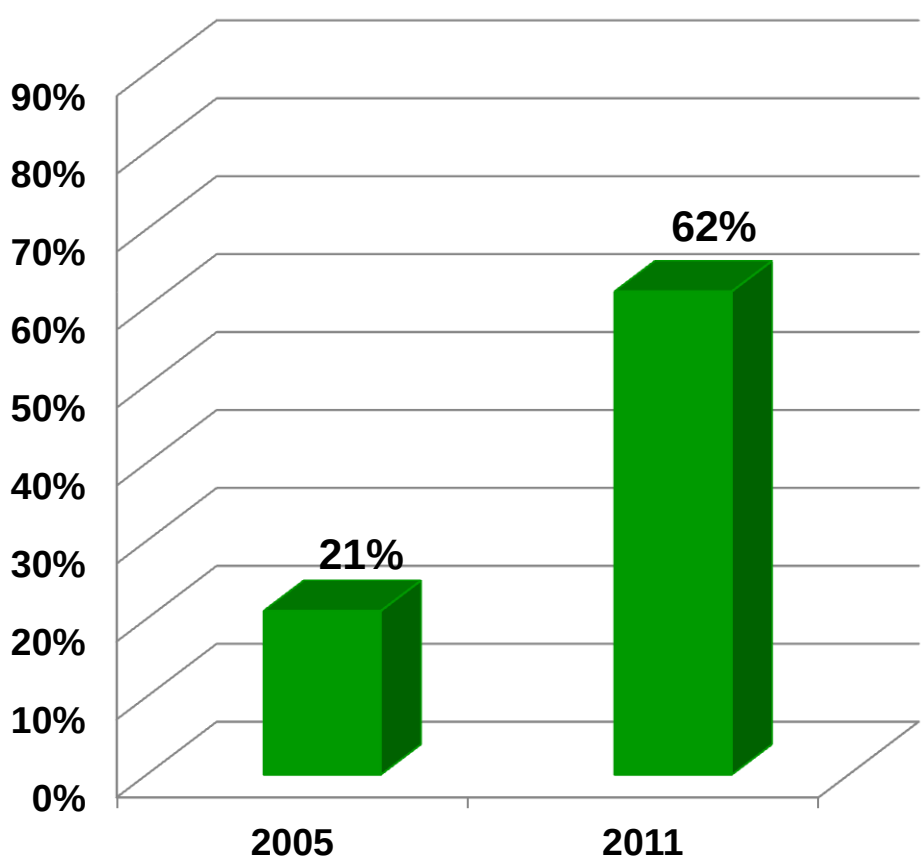




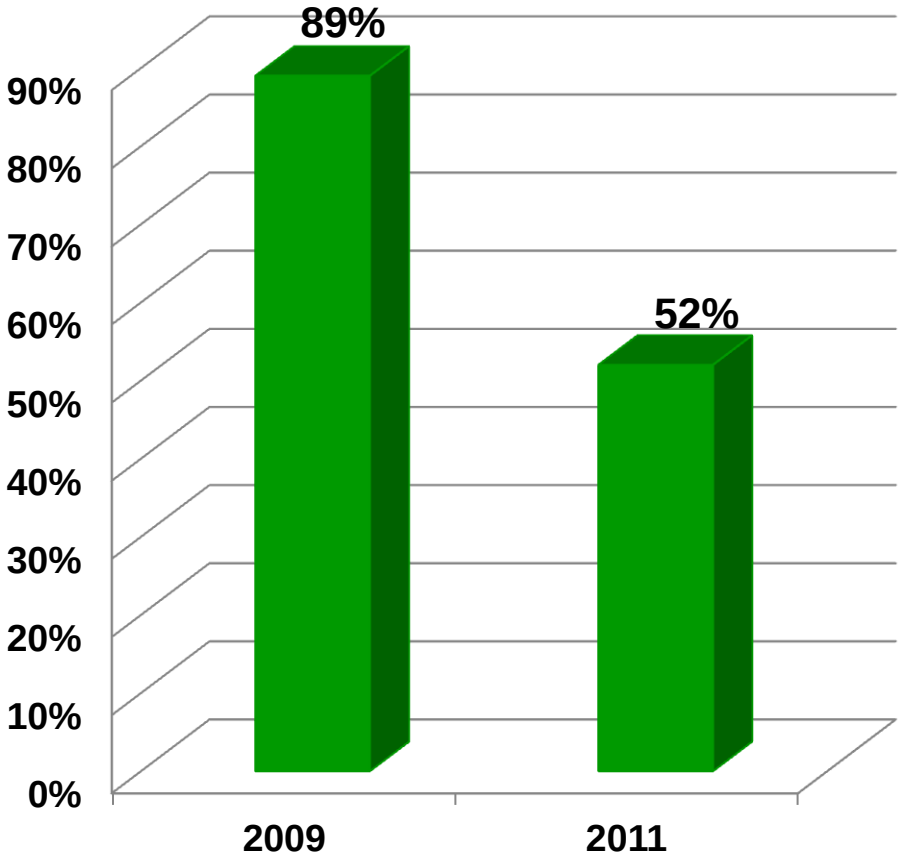
CR 2011, IRI 2011

Voter turnout soared as Egyptians could vote freely, but dropped as Tunisians were no longer coerced to vote.

Egypt Turnout



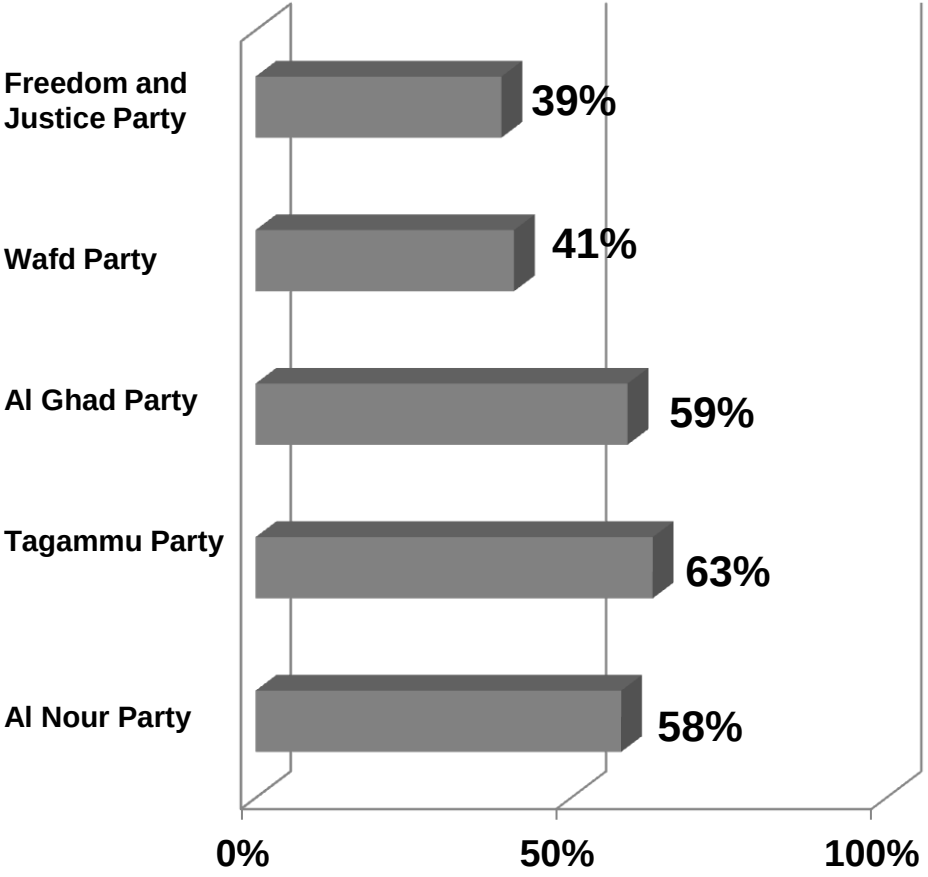
Tunisia Turnout



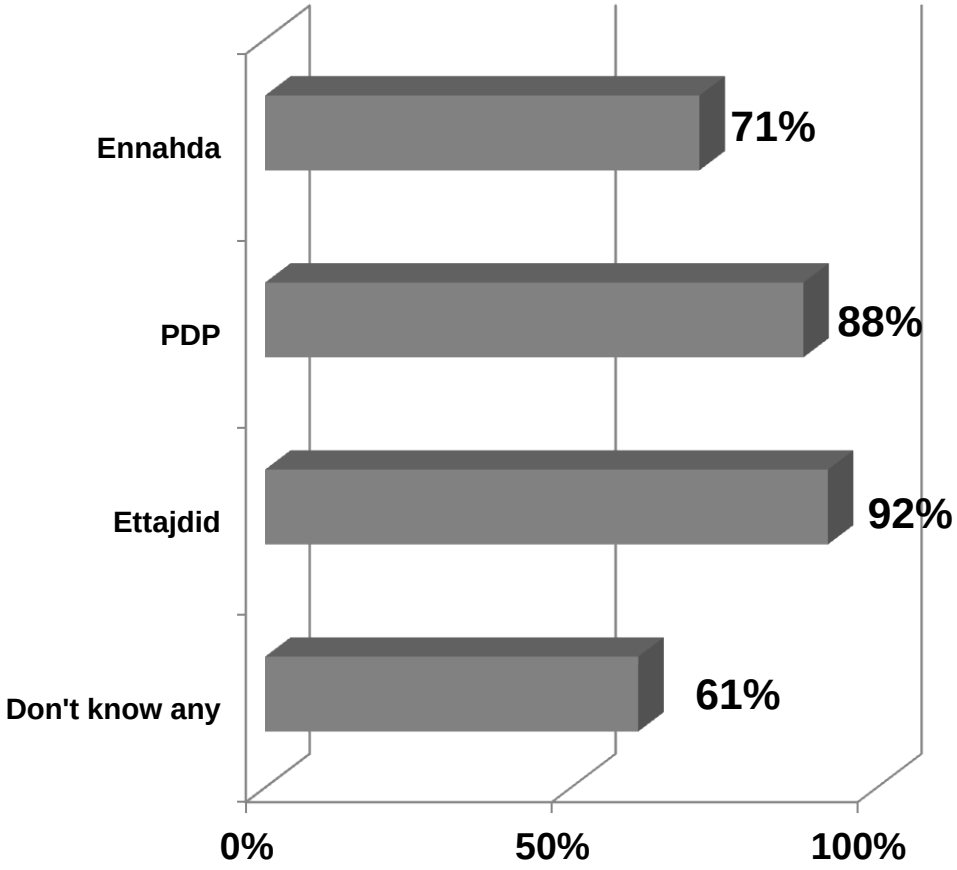
Official turnout

After the revolutions, political parties were unknown to large proportions of Egyptians and Tunisians.

Egypt – June 2011
Party familiarity – top 5 parties
(Don't know only)



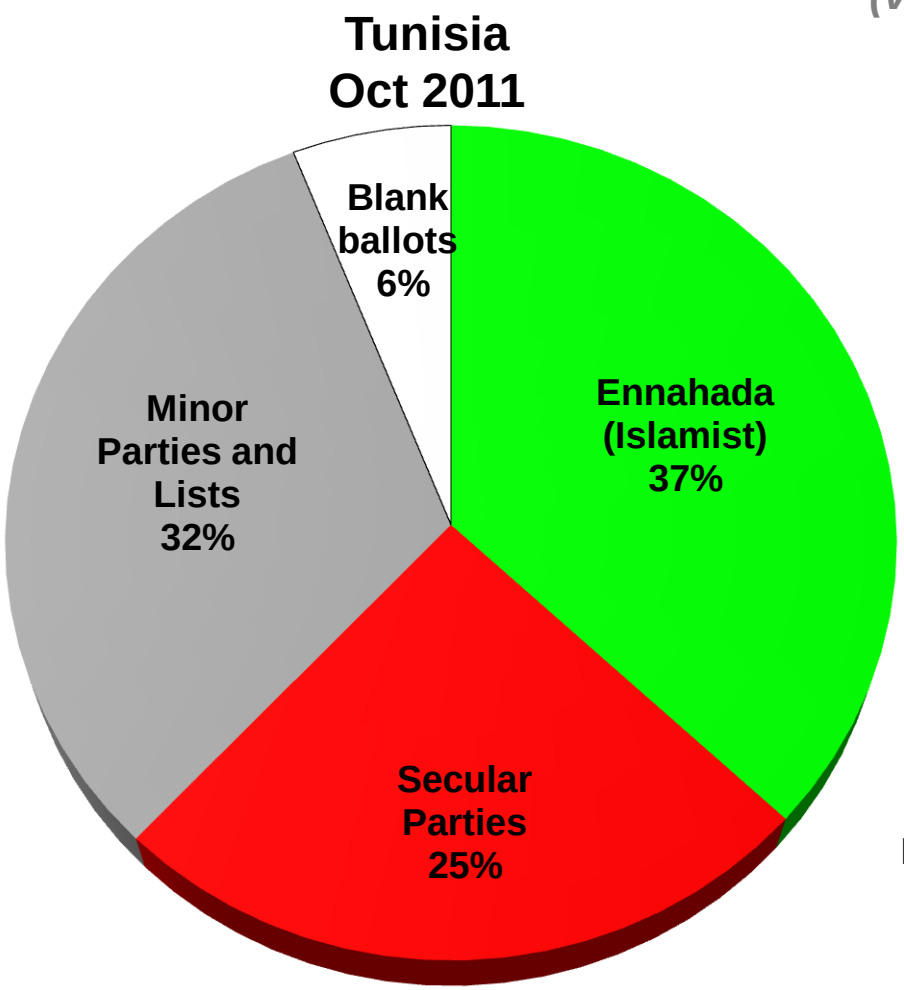
Tunisia – April 2011
Party familiarity – top 3 parties
(Don't know only)

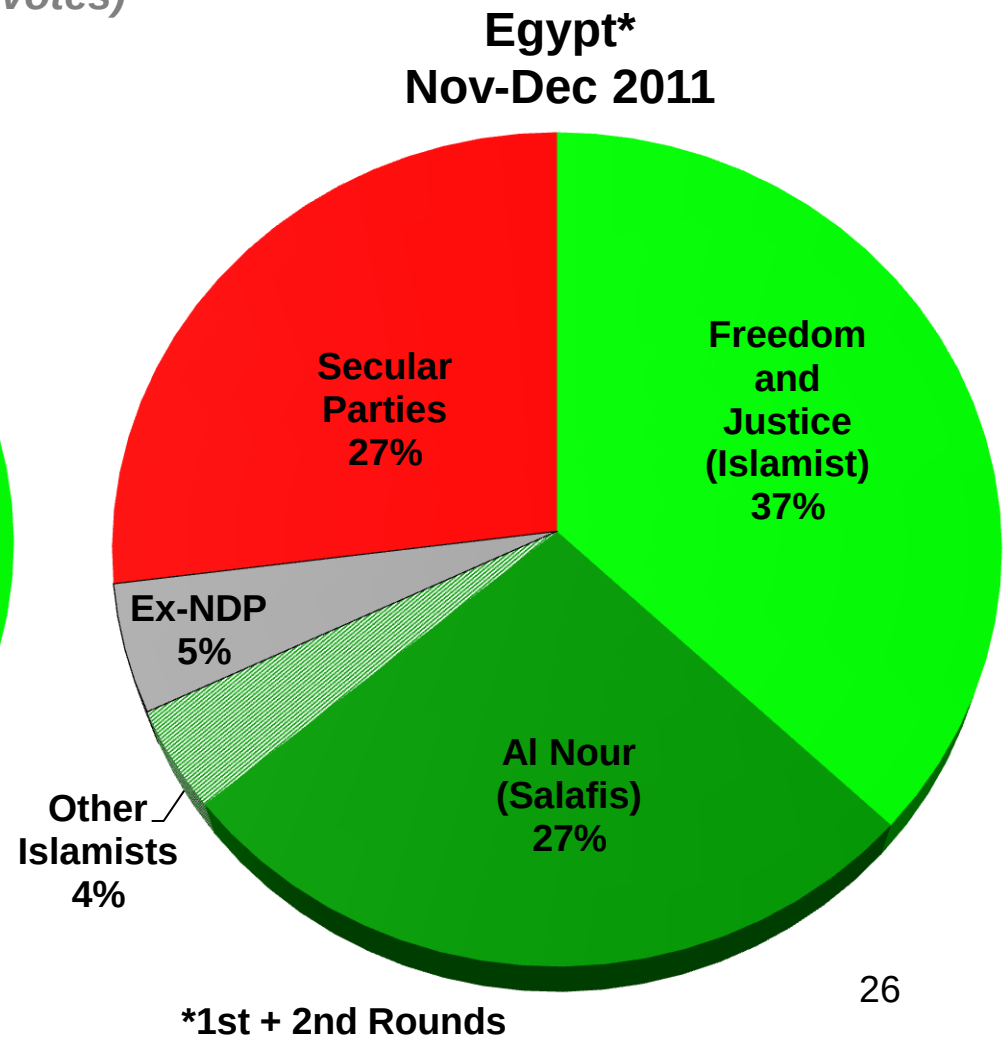


CR 2011, EMRHOD 2011

Moderate Islamists took two-fifths of the vote in Egypt and Tunisia, Salafis one-fifth more in Egypt.

Parliamentary Election Results (votes)

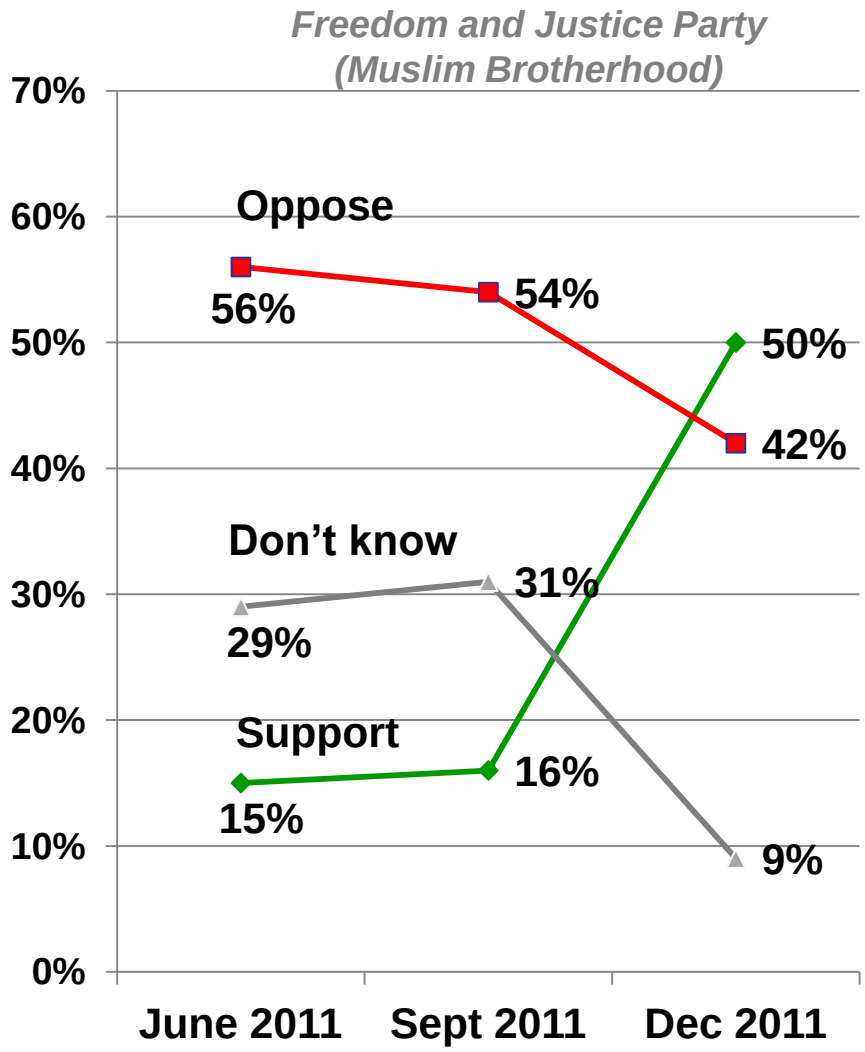


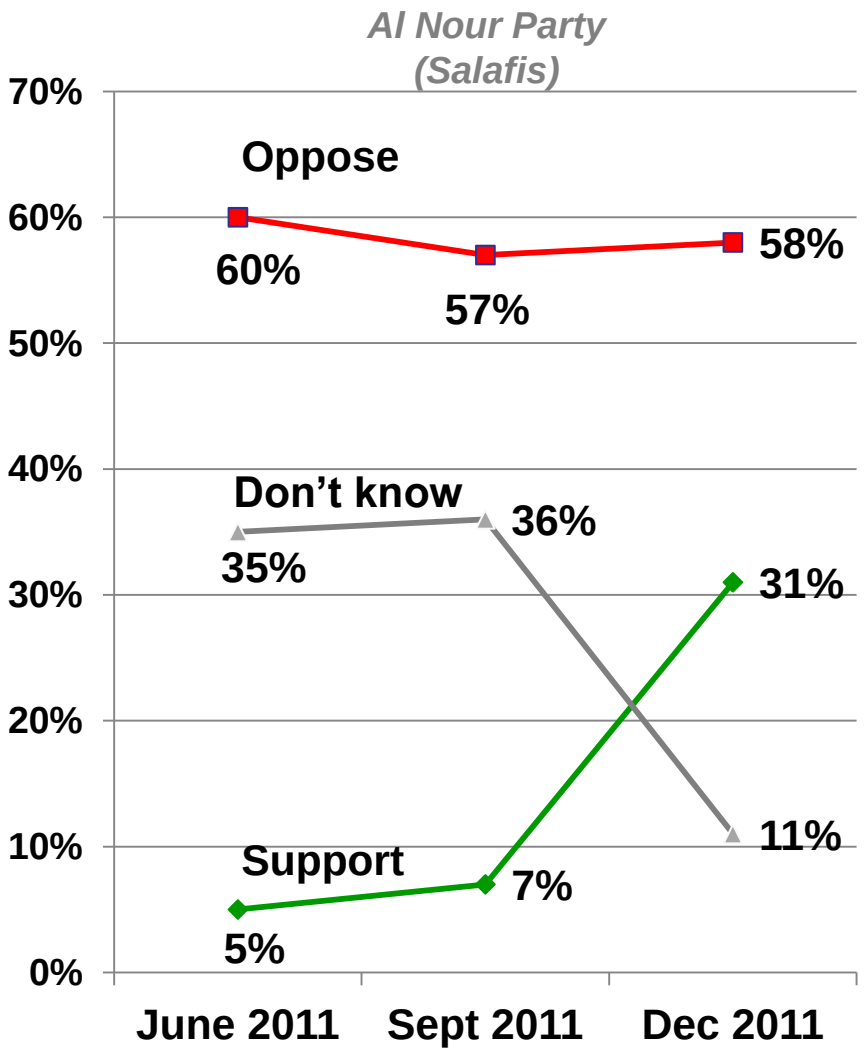


*1st + 2nd Rounds

Official results

In Egypt, undecideds broke decisively for the Islamists as the election approached.

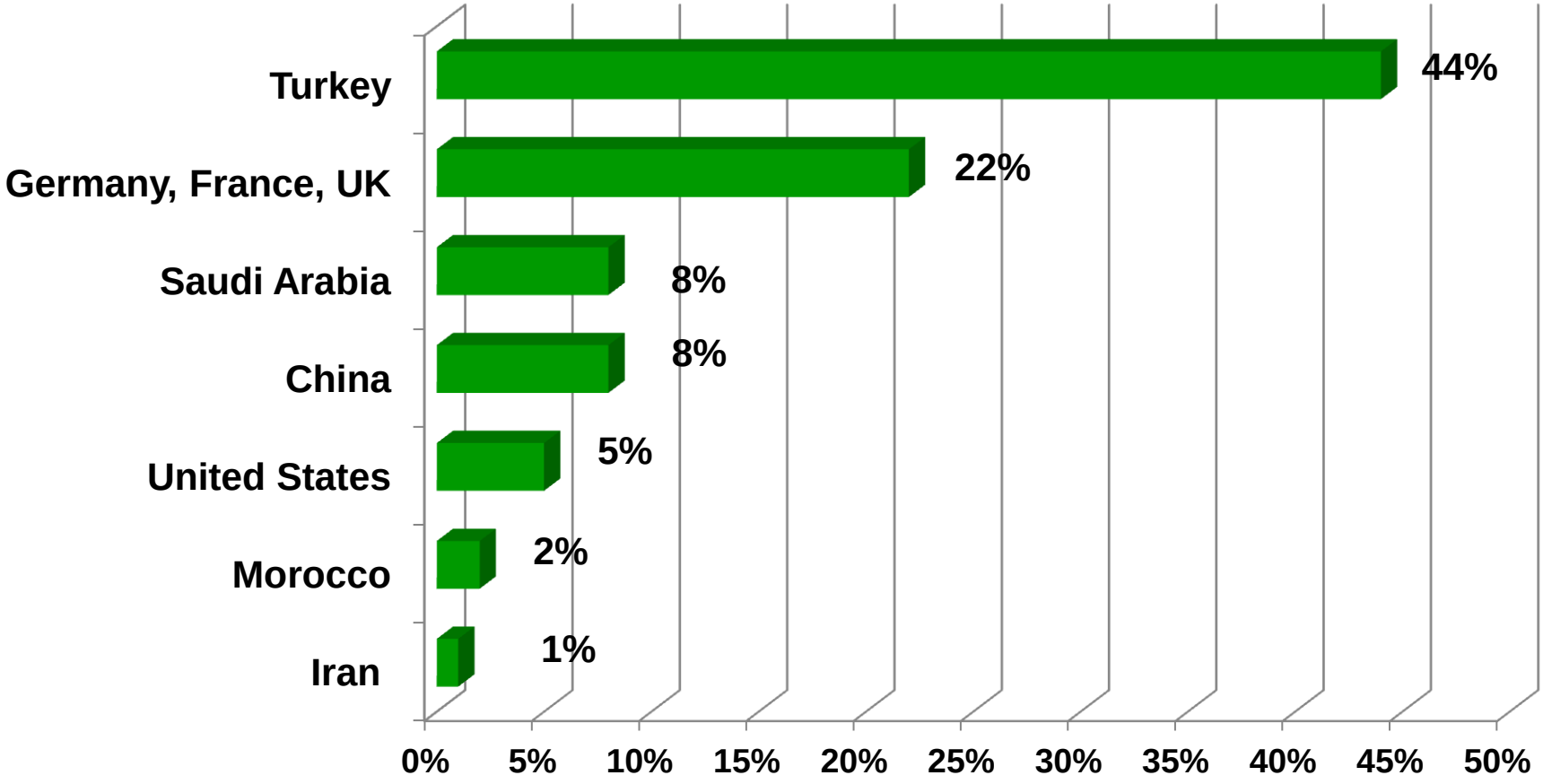




Gallup 2011

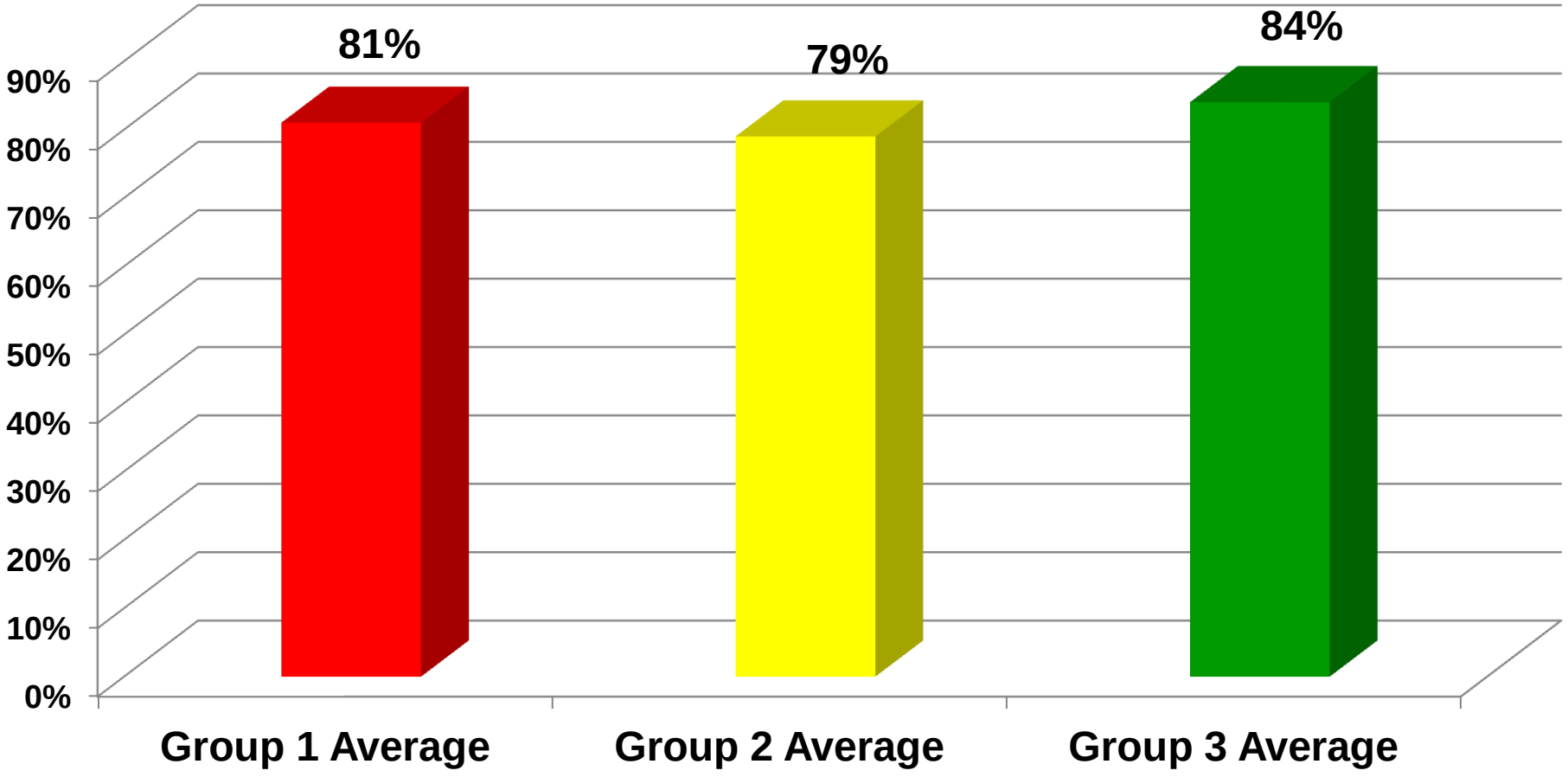
Turkey's political system is the most popular political model among Egyptians, followed by Europe.

If Egypt's political system looked like that of one of the following countries, which one would you prefer it to be?



Confidence in religious institutions is far higher across the region than that in political institutions.

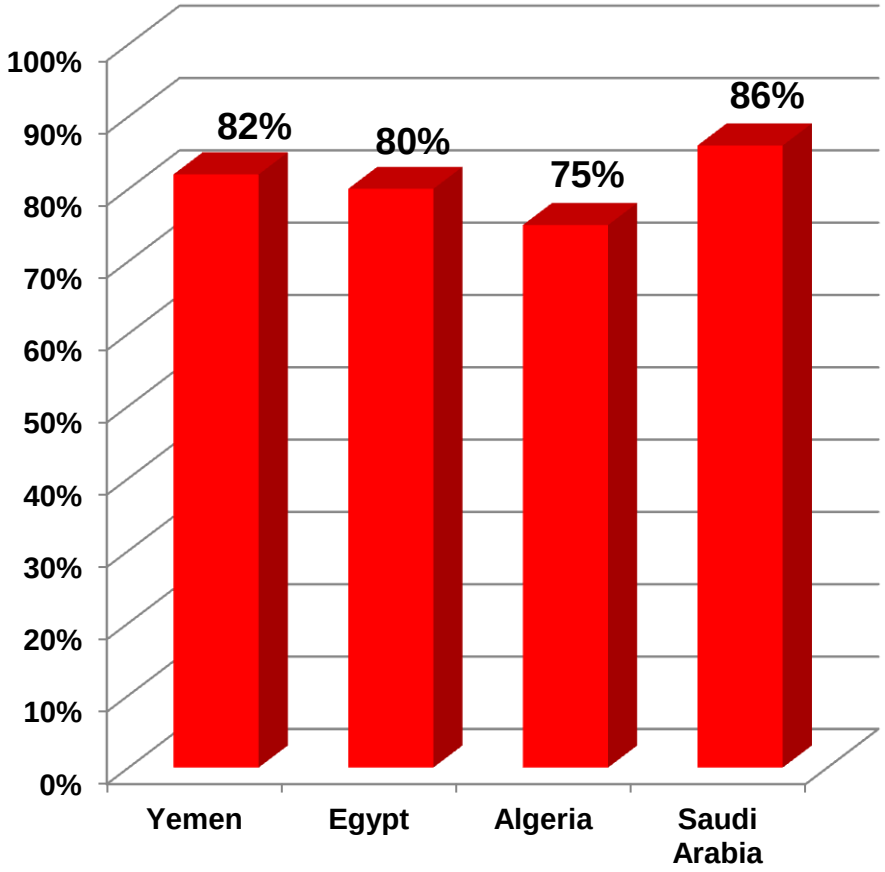
In your country do you have confidence in the religious organizations? (Yes only)



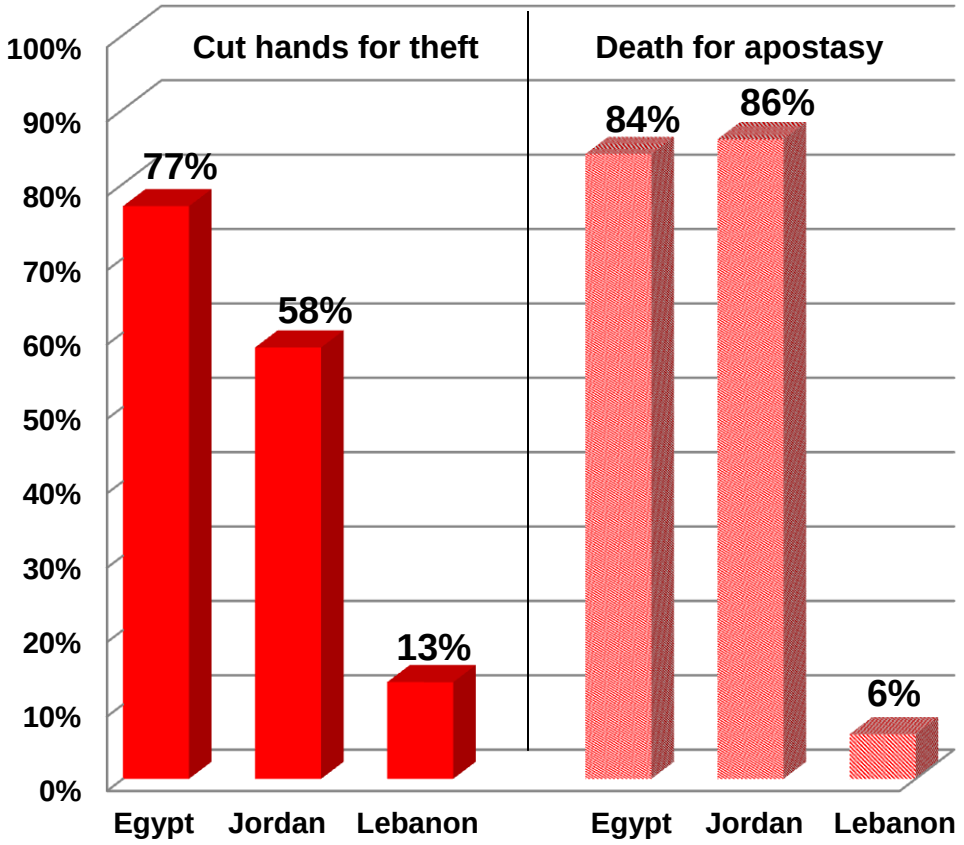
Gallup World Poll 2010

There is broad support for banning criticism of Islam and harsh Sharia punishments in several Arab countries.

Some people say the law should prohibit criticism of Islam or other religions. Would you agree or disagree? (Agree only)



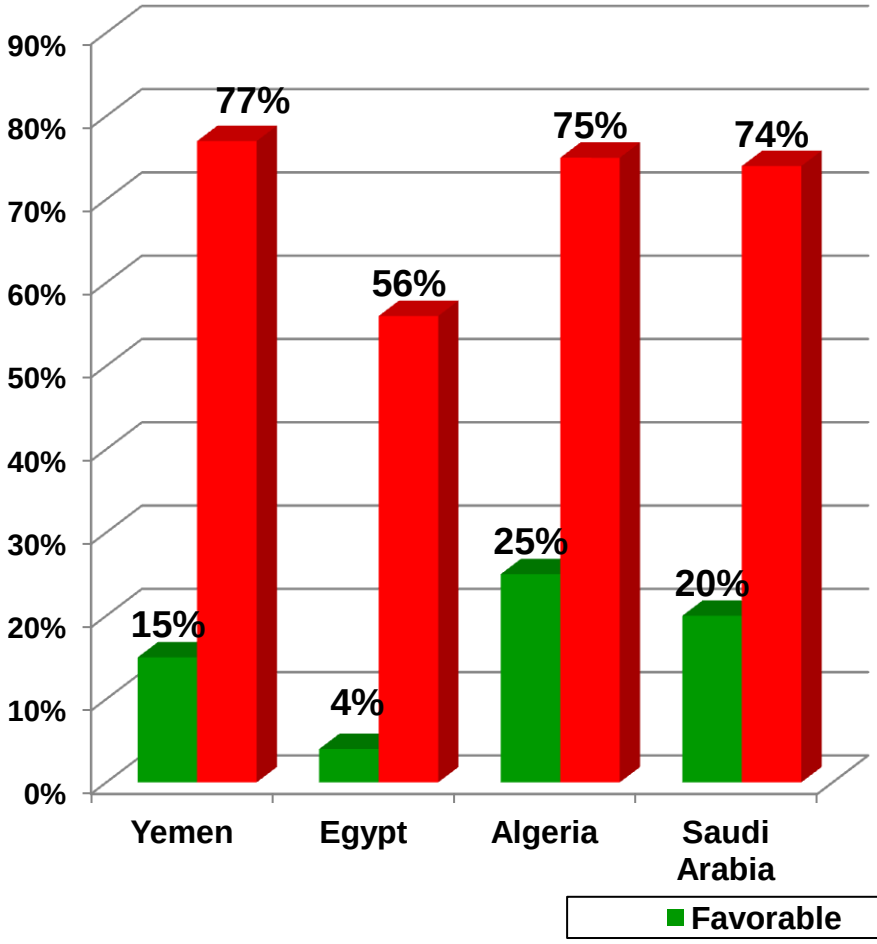
Views of Sharia punishments (Favor only)



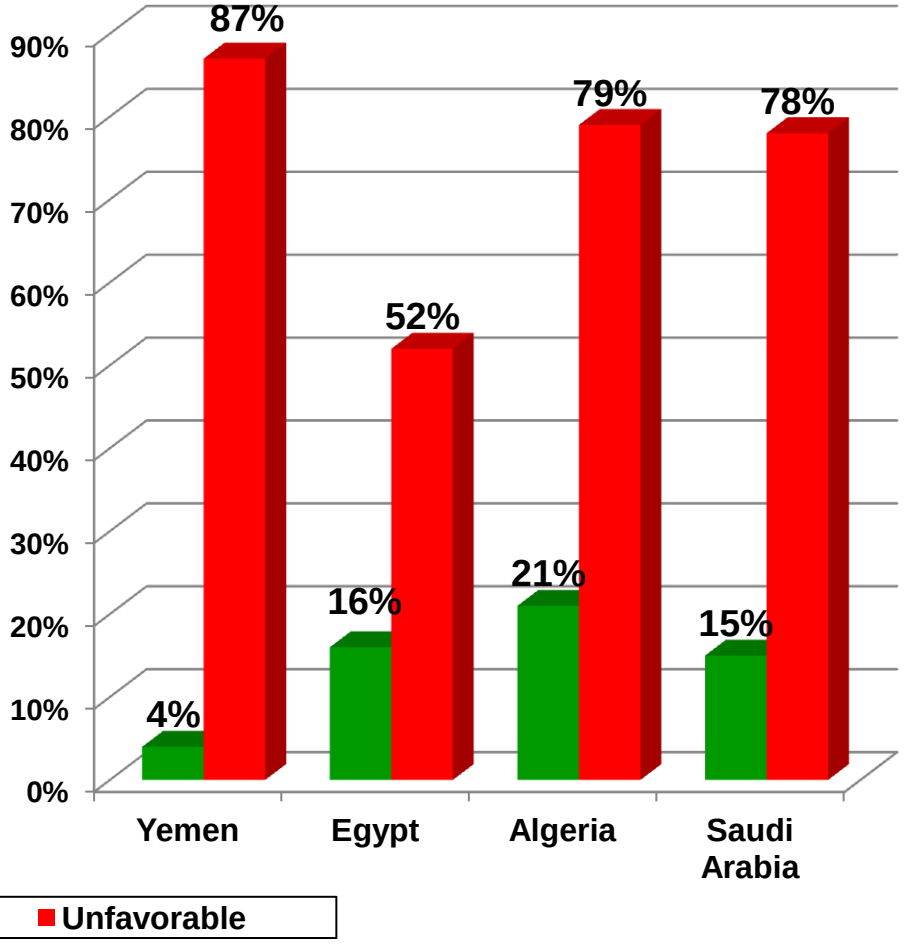
CR 2008, Pew 2010

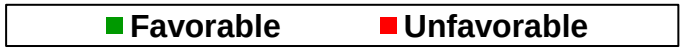
Tension between Sunni and Shia, and Muslim and Christian, is strong in a number of countries.

Is your opinion of Shia Muslims favorable or unfavorable?

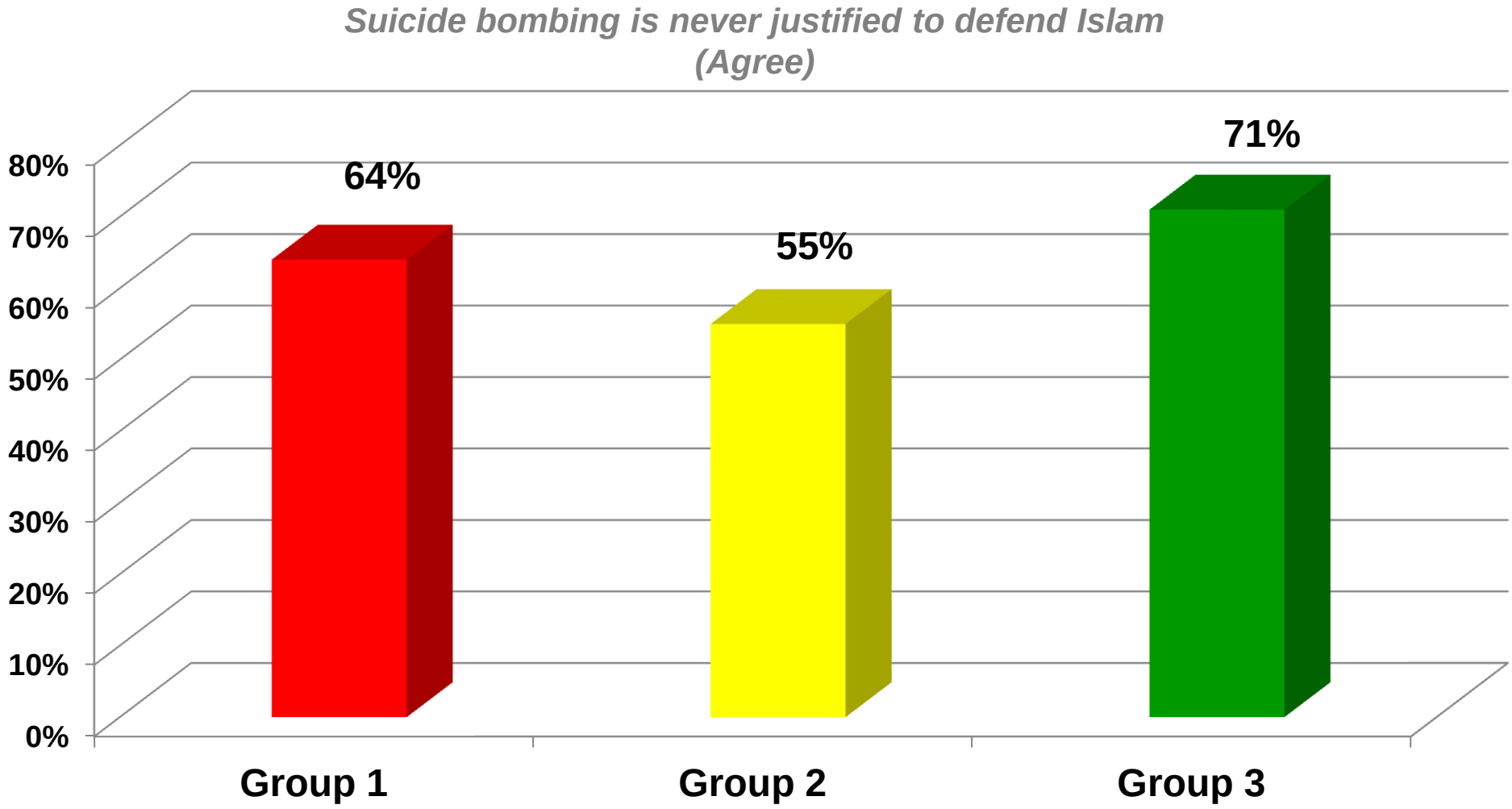


Is your opinion of Christians favorable or unfavorable?



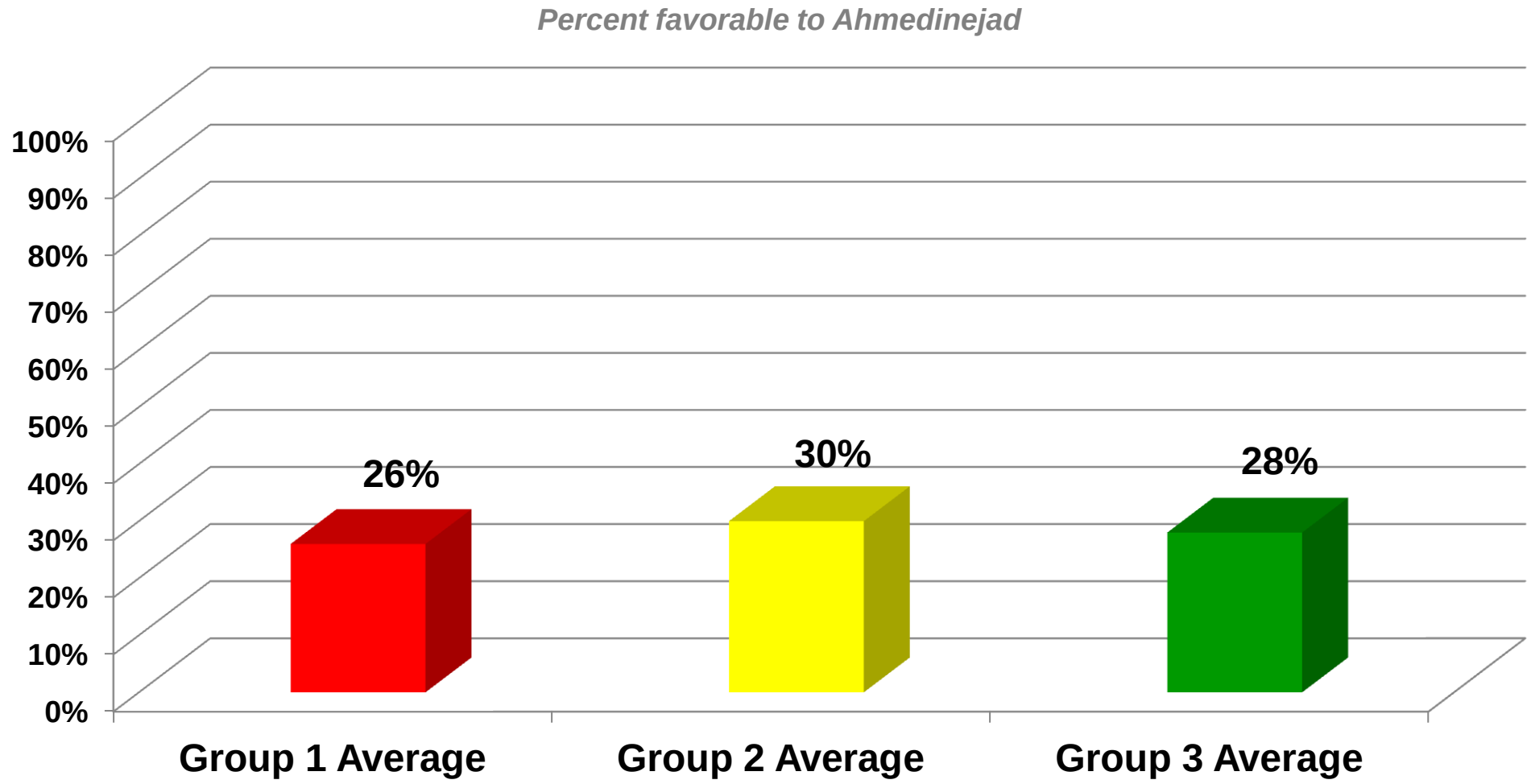


Suicide bombing is generally rejected across the region.



Pew 2009, 2010, 2011; CR 2011

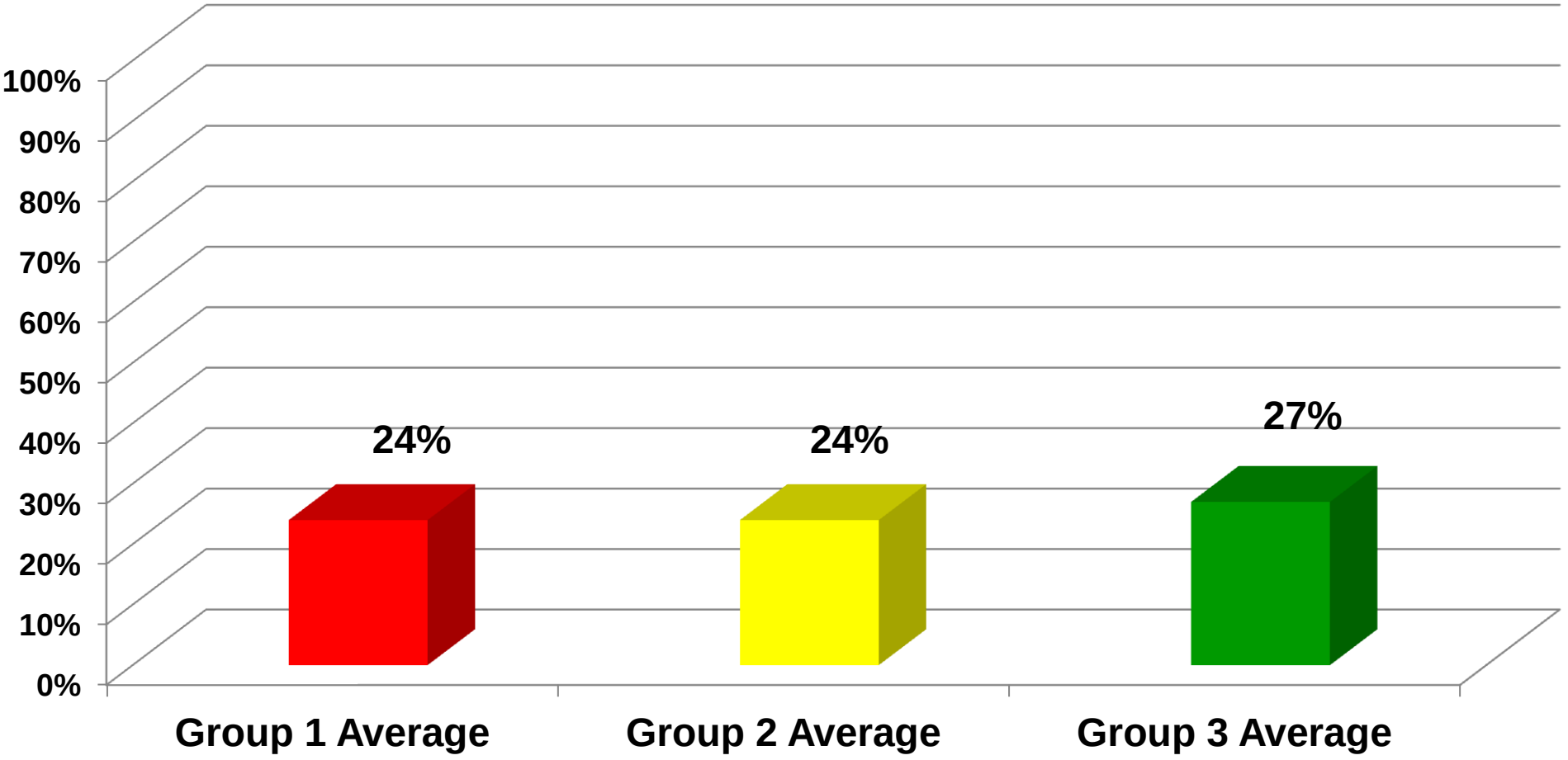
Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, Iran's president, is not very popular with most Arabs.



Pew 2009, 2010, 2011; CR 2008

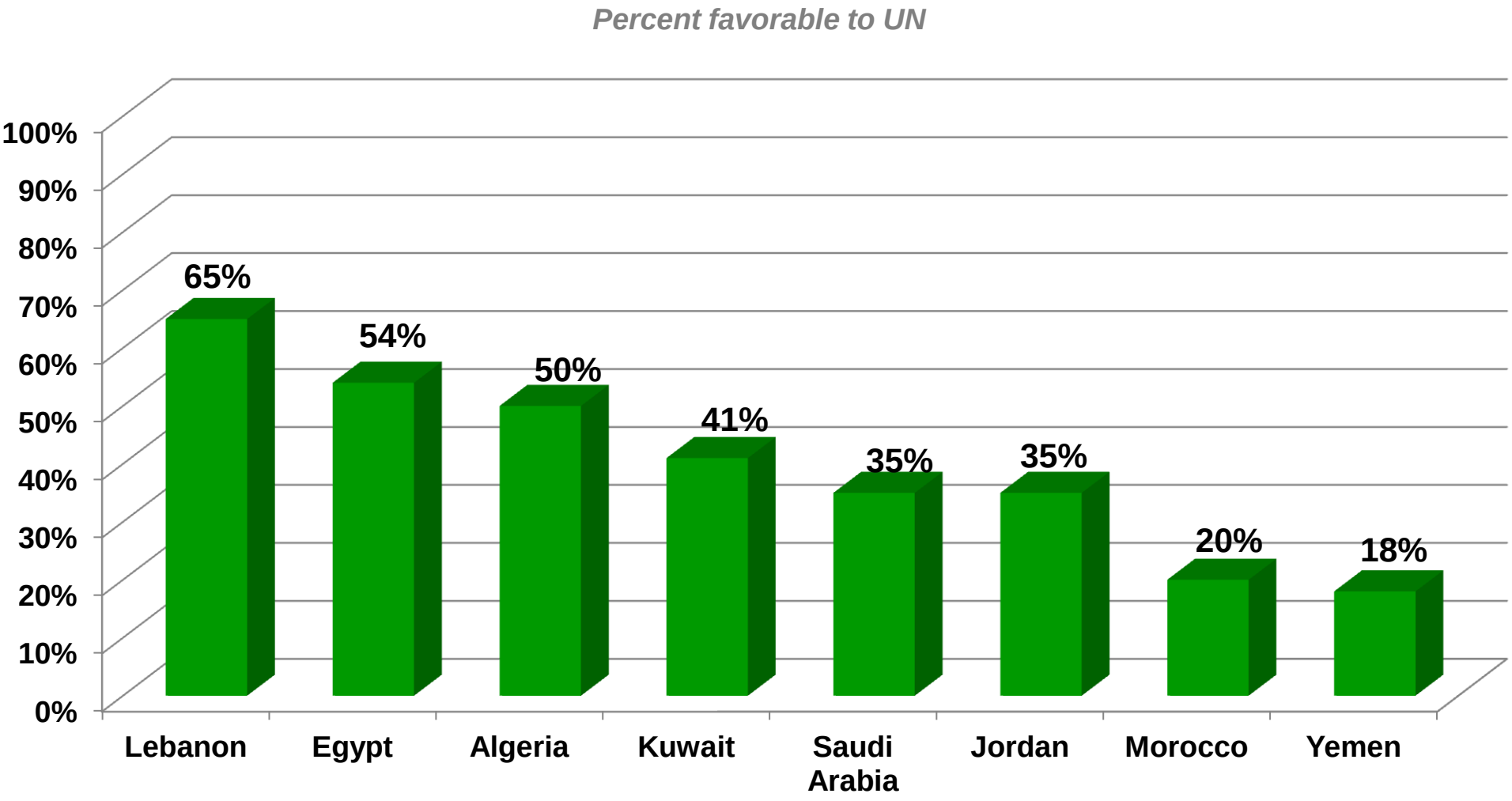
Favorability to America's leadership is low throughout the region, despite Barack Obama as president.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the USA? (Approve only)



Gallup World Poll 2010, 2011

Views of the UN are mixed, with greater popularity in countries touched by its work for the Palestinians.



Pew 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011; CR 2008, 2009; Greenberg 2009