



NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE

Public Perceptions of Politics and Government

*Findings from Recent Research in
Moldova, including a nationwide survey
and focus groups of November 2014
parliamentary voters*

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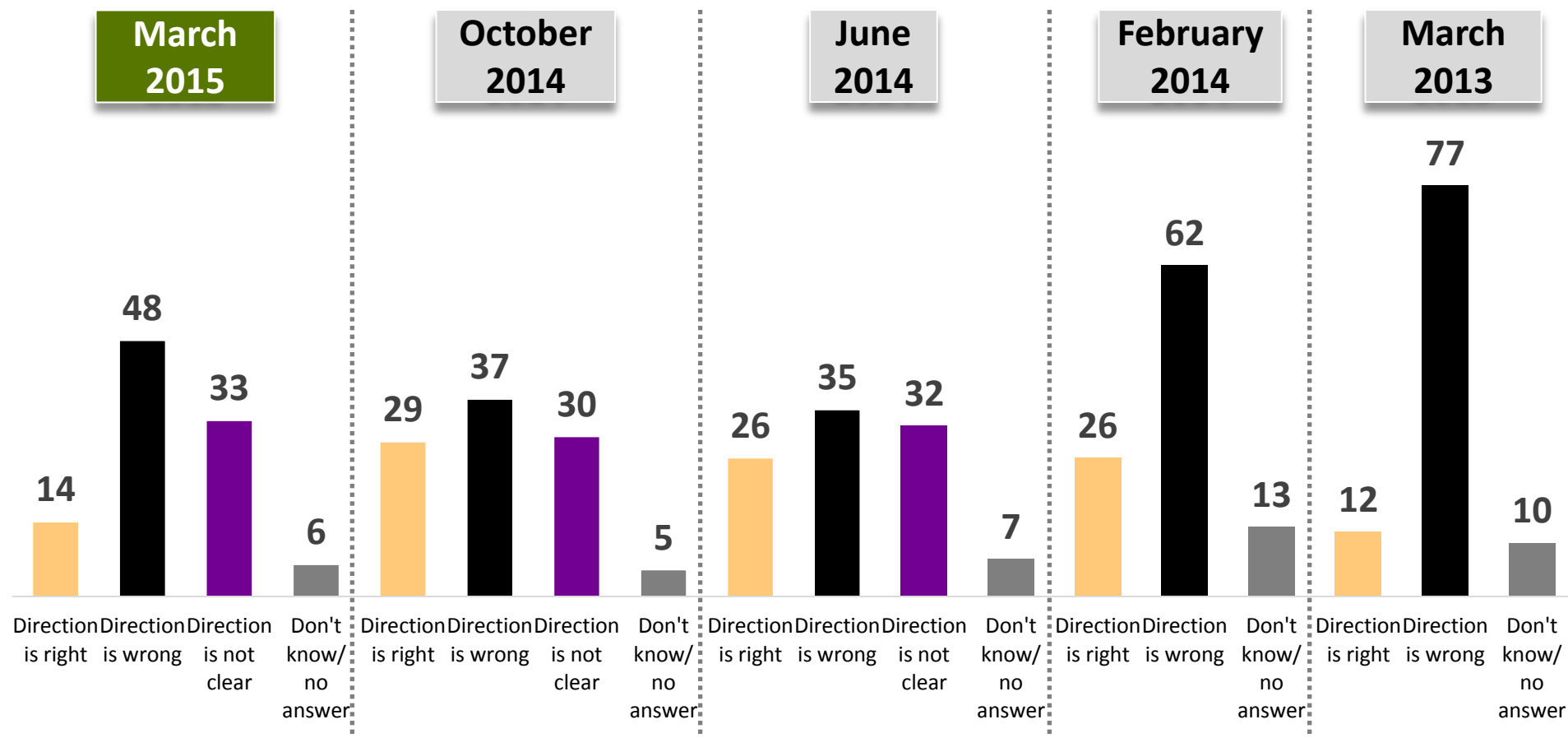


The Political Context

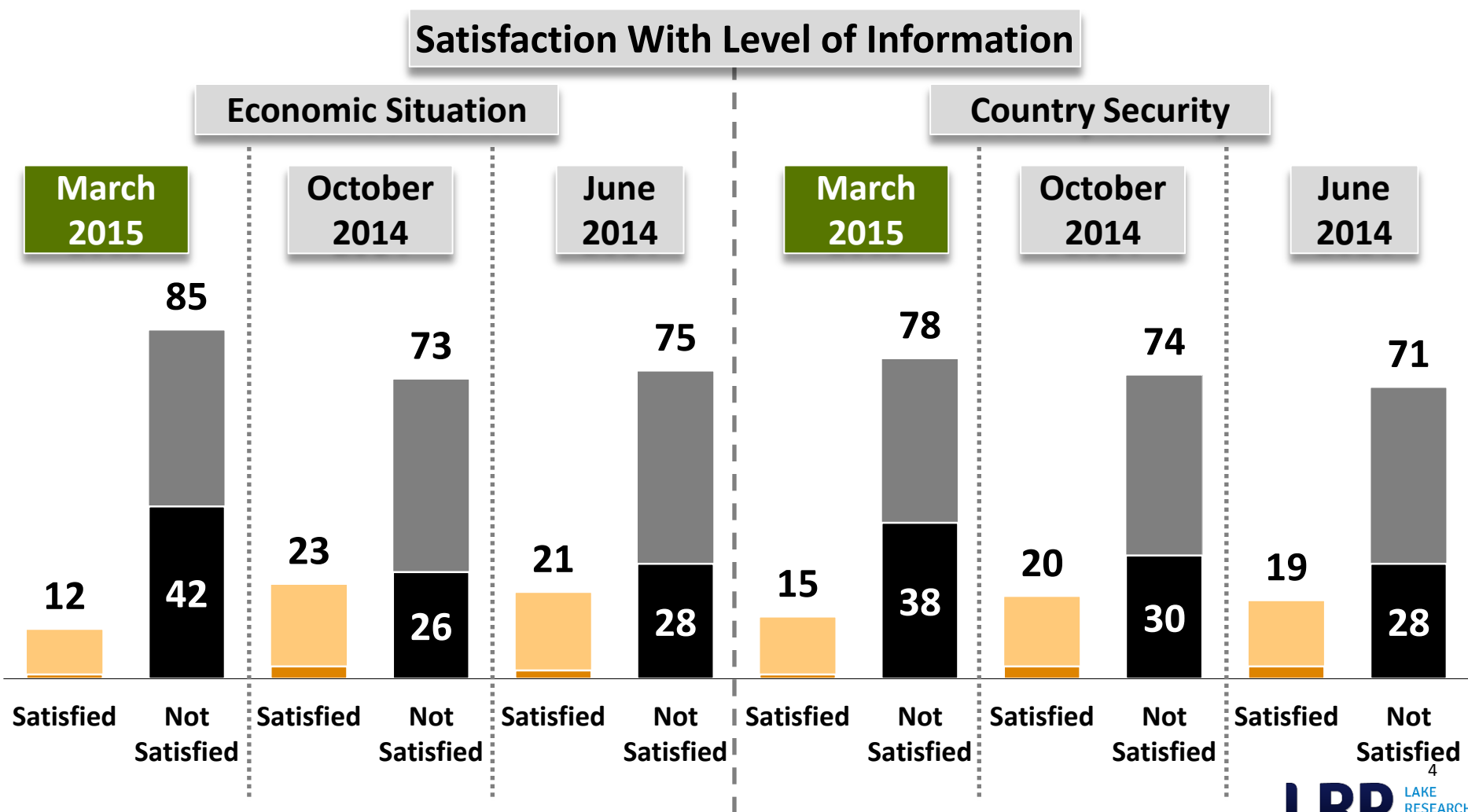
Attitudes on the Direction of the Country, State of the Economy, and the National Issue Agenda

A near majority of Moldovans believes the country is headed in the wrong direction and a third of the country continues to believe the direction is not clear. Opinions of the direction of the country have decreased across the board, with younger men and women in general having substantially more pessimistic views since October. Only a fraction of voters believes the country is headed in the right direction which is a distinct indication that the country remains change-oriented.

Direction of Moldova

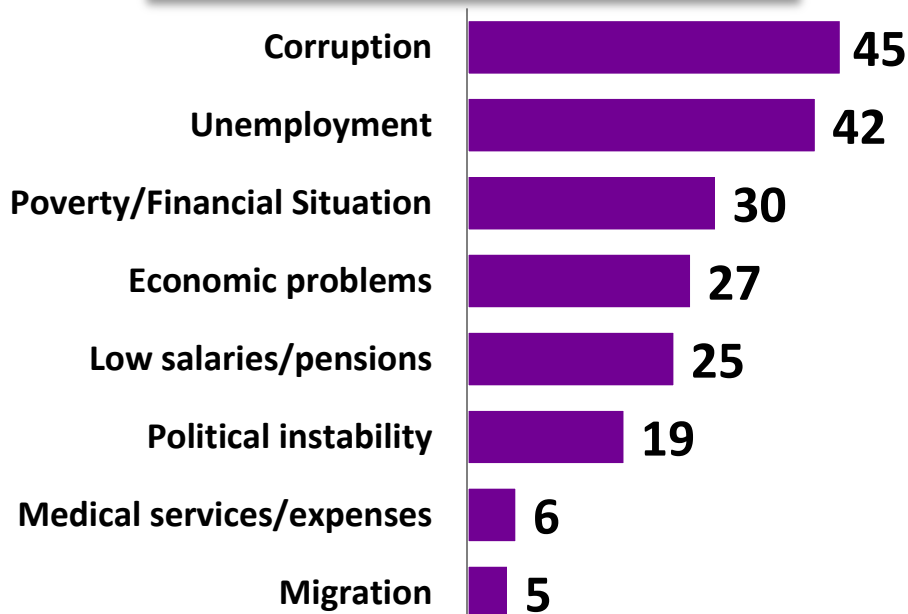


The desire for more information—regarding the status of Moldova’s economy and national security—remains prevalent and is more pronounced than it was a few months ago, particularly among older women and men overall. This is also true among undecided voters in the upcoming local elections. The situation in Ukraine continues to pique voters’ concerns when it comes to Moldova’s security.



Corruption now tops economic issues as the top issue focus for the country, due to a significant increase in awareness among women of all ages. That said, economic concerns continue to dominate the issue agenda in Moldova with economic problems, unemployment, and poverty all being top concerns in voters' minds. Similarly, economic issues top voters' concerns within their household with the addition of a general lack of funds outside of poverty and low wages.

Top Issues Facing the Country*

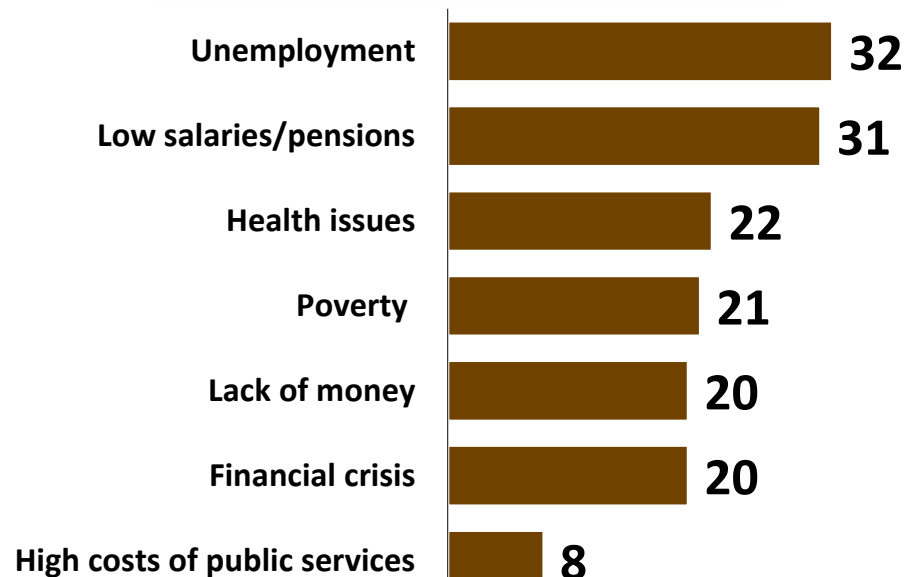


Oct 2014: Top Issues – 37% Unemployment, 32% Corruption, 31% Poverty/Financial Situation

June 2014: Top Issues – 43% Unemployment, 31% Corruption, 23% Poverty, 21% Low salaries/pensions

February 2014: Top Issues – 45% Unemployment, 34% Corruption, 31% Poverty, 28% Low salaries/pensions

Top Issues Facing Your Family*



Oct 2014: Top Issues – 43% Poverty/Financial Situation, 25% Low salaries/pensions, 23% Unemployment

June 2014: Top Issues – 46% Poverty, 24% Unemployment, 22% Low salaries/pensions, 10% Health

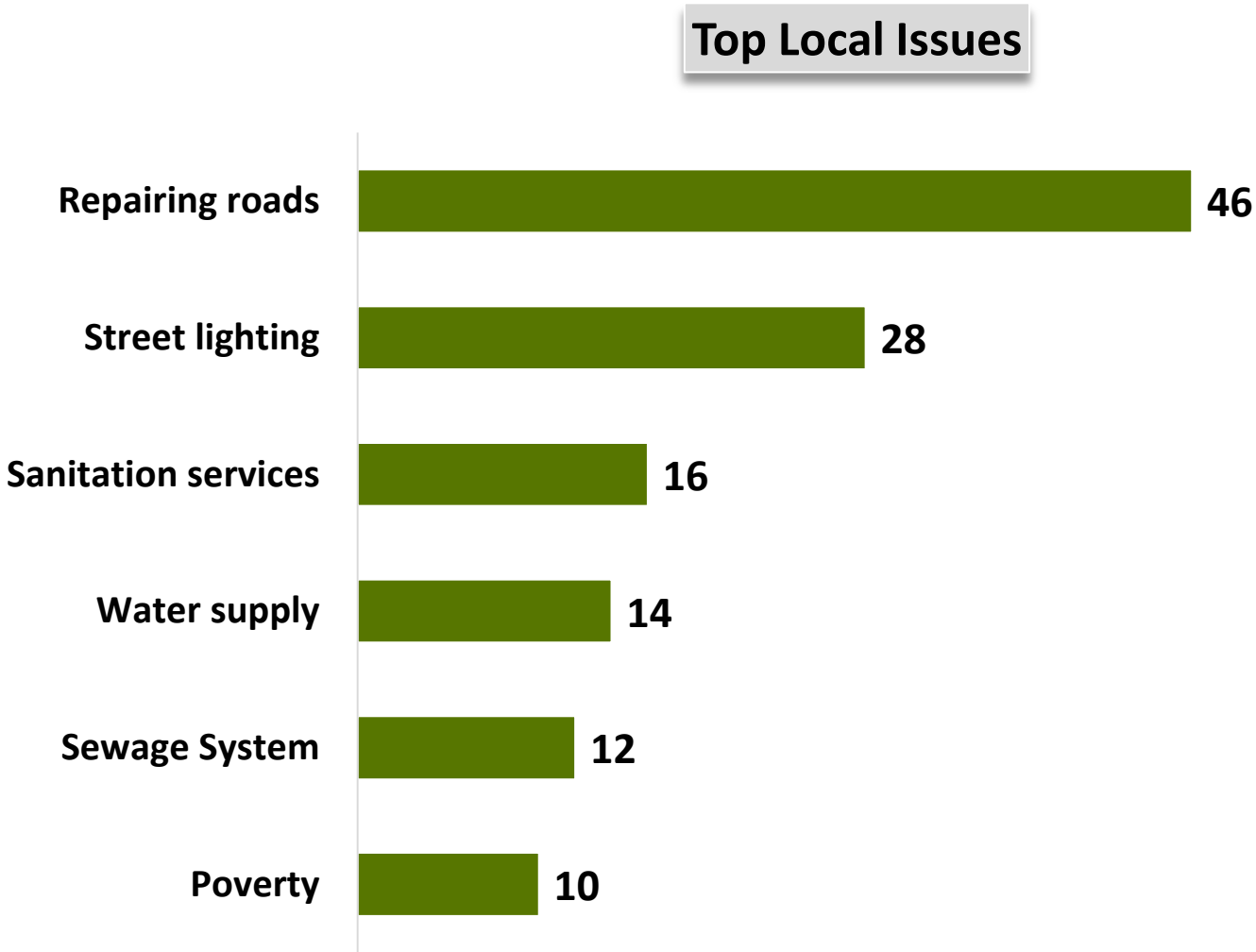
February 2014: Top Issues – 41% Poverty, 28% Low salaries/pensions, 25% Unemployment, 11% High prices of services

*Each respondent provided their top three choices (in no particular order), which we aggregated for the purposes of these graphs.

C2: What are the top three issues facing our country today?

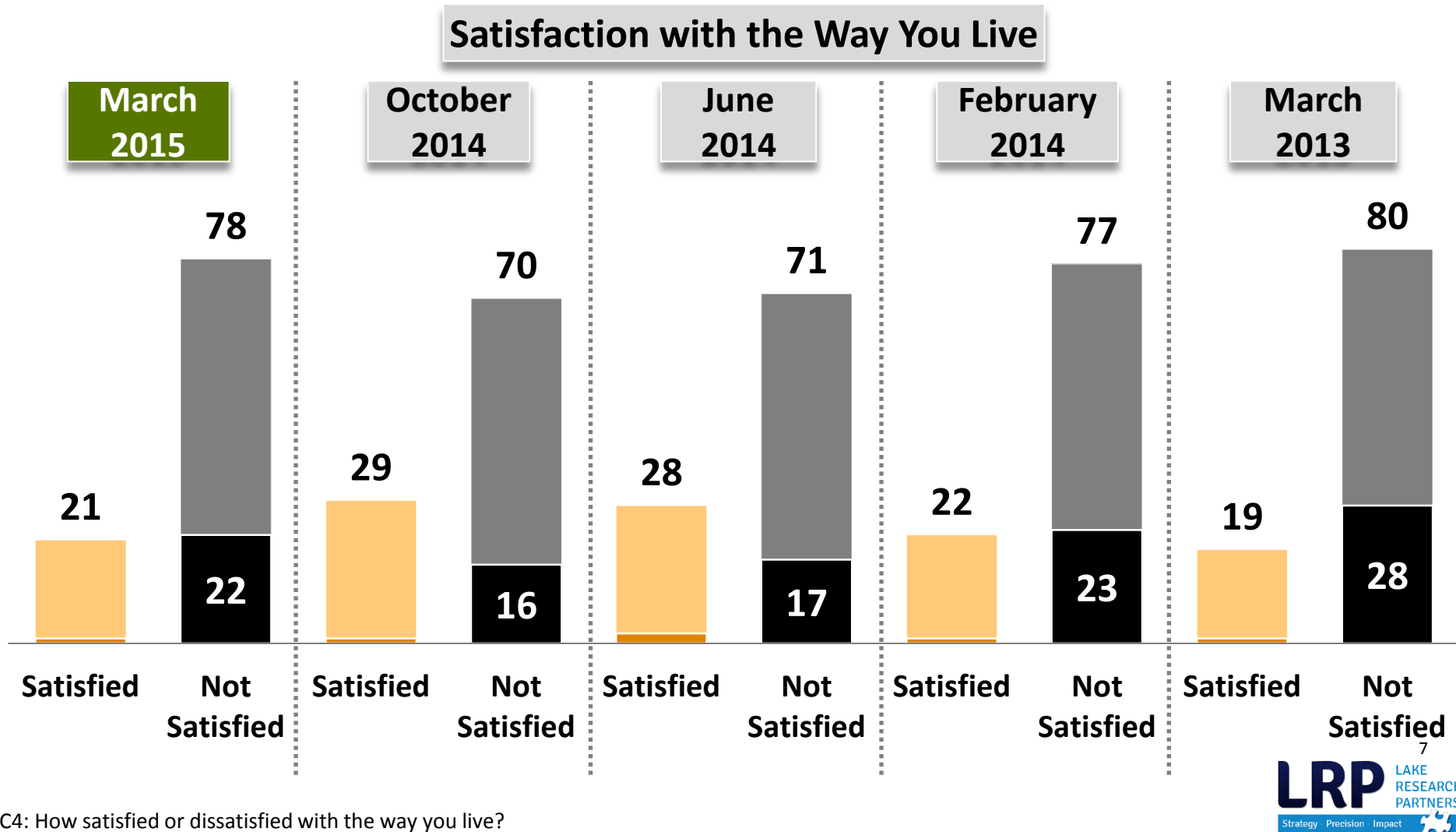
C3: What are the top three issues facing you family today?

Shifting to local issues, addressing infrastructure problems remains a top priority for voters—specifically road repair which has resurfaced as a chronic issue plaguing local voters. Similarly, concern has risen for all other infrastructure projects. Undecided voters are also concerned heavily with infrastructure problems.



Past Surveys		
Oct 2014	June 2014	Feb 2014
38	46	49
20	26	24
13	22	22
13	15	10
8	10	10
N/A	N/A	N/A

Dissatisfaction with quality of life has risen since October, with intense dissatisfaction returning to levels similar to early 2014. Voters' discontent with the way their lives are going will likely continue to drag down all other opinions and perceptions and leave voters increasingly open to the prospect of radical change.



C4: How satisfied or dissatisfied with the way you live?

Moldovans are nearly universally worried about their personal household financial situation and the country's economy. Moldovans are more distressed than they were in October across the board. They are also particularly concerned with their local community's economy which is a warning sign for the upcoming local elections.

How worried are you regarding...

World Economic Situation

Economic Situation of Moldova

Household Financial Situation

Local Community Economic Situation

21

75

36

94

60

5

95

73

4

91

56

7

Not so
much/not at
all

A lot/quite
worried

Not so
much/not at
all

A lot/quite
worried

Not so
much/not at
all

A lot/quite
worried

Not so
much/not at
all

A lot/quite
worried

PREVIOUS RESULTS:

Oct 2014: 34% Not, 59% Worried
June 2014: 36% Not, 55% Worried

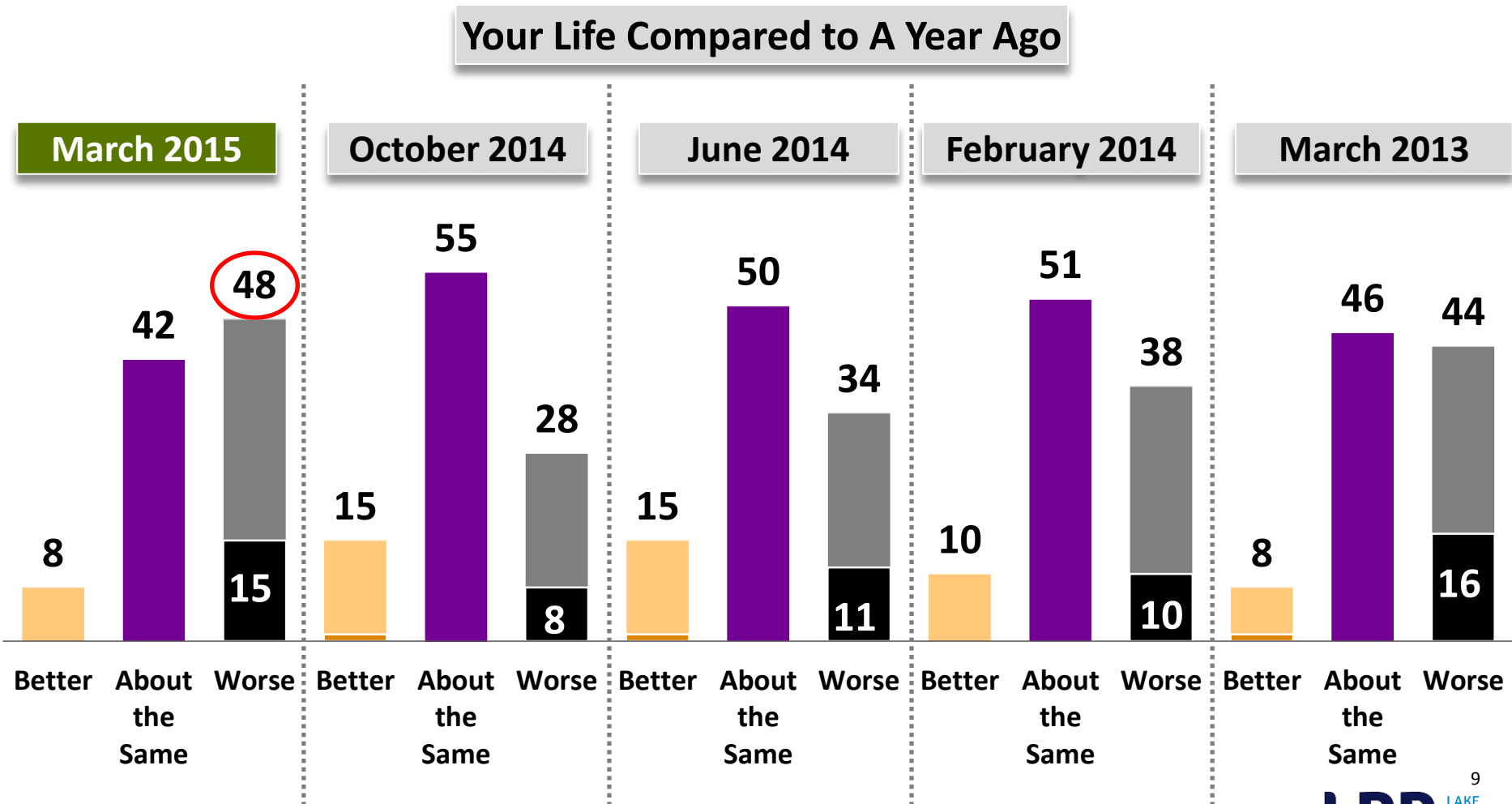
PREVIOUS RESULTS:

Oct 2014: 14% Not, 81% Worried
June 2014: 16% Not, 78% Worried

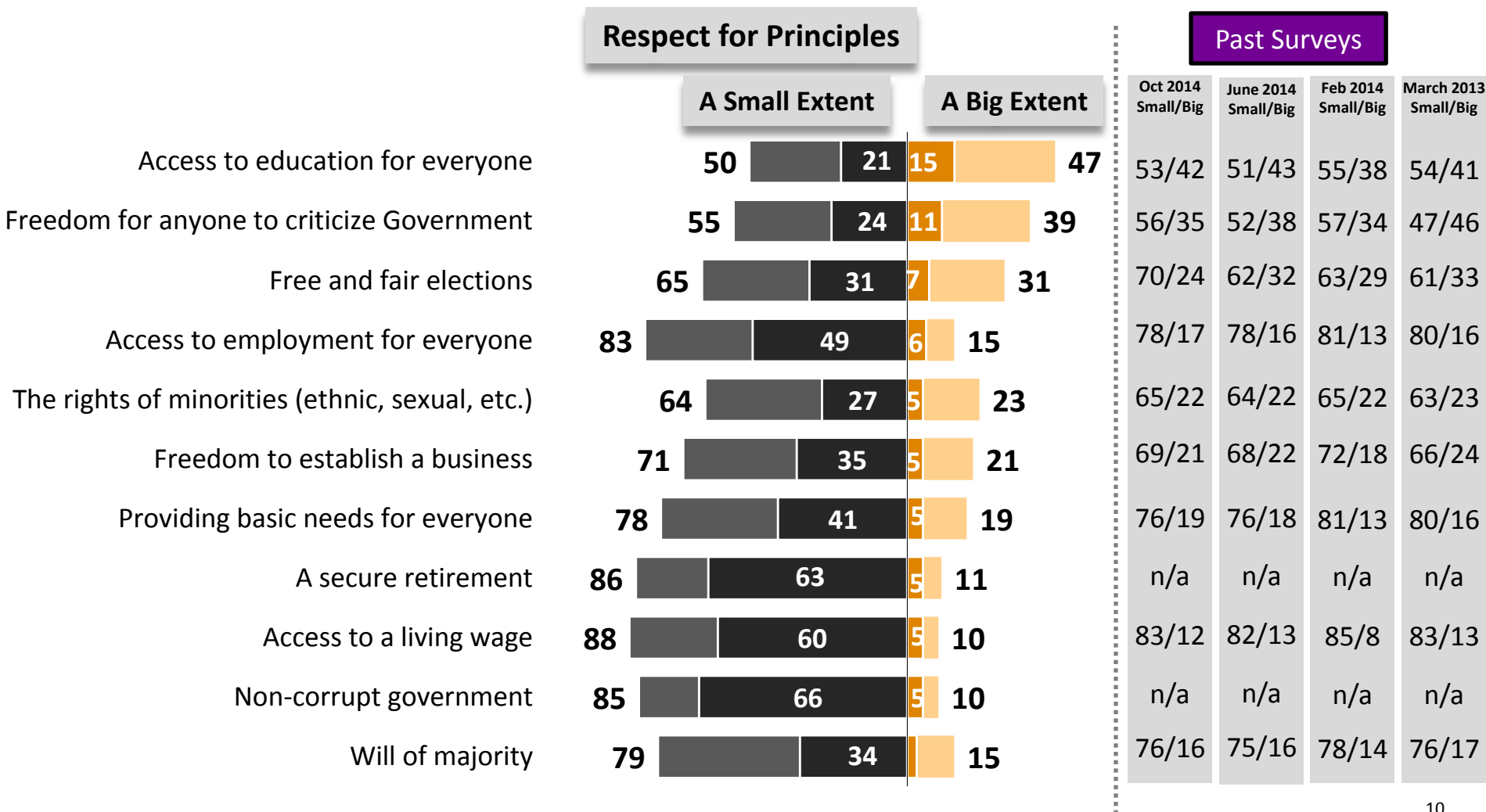
PREVIOUS RESULTS:

Oct 2014: 7% Not, 89% Worried
June 2014: 11% Not, 85% Worried

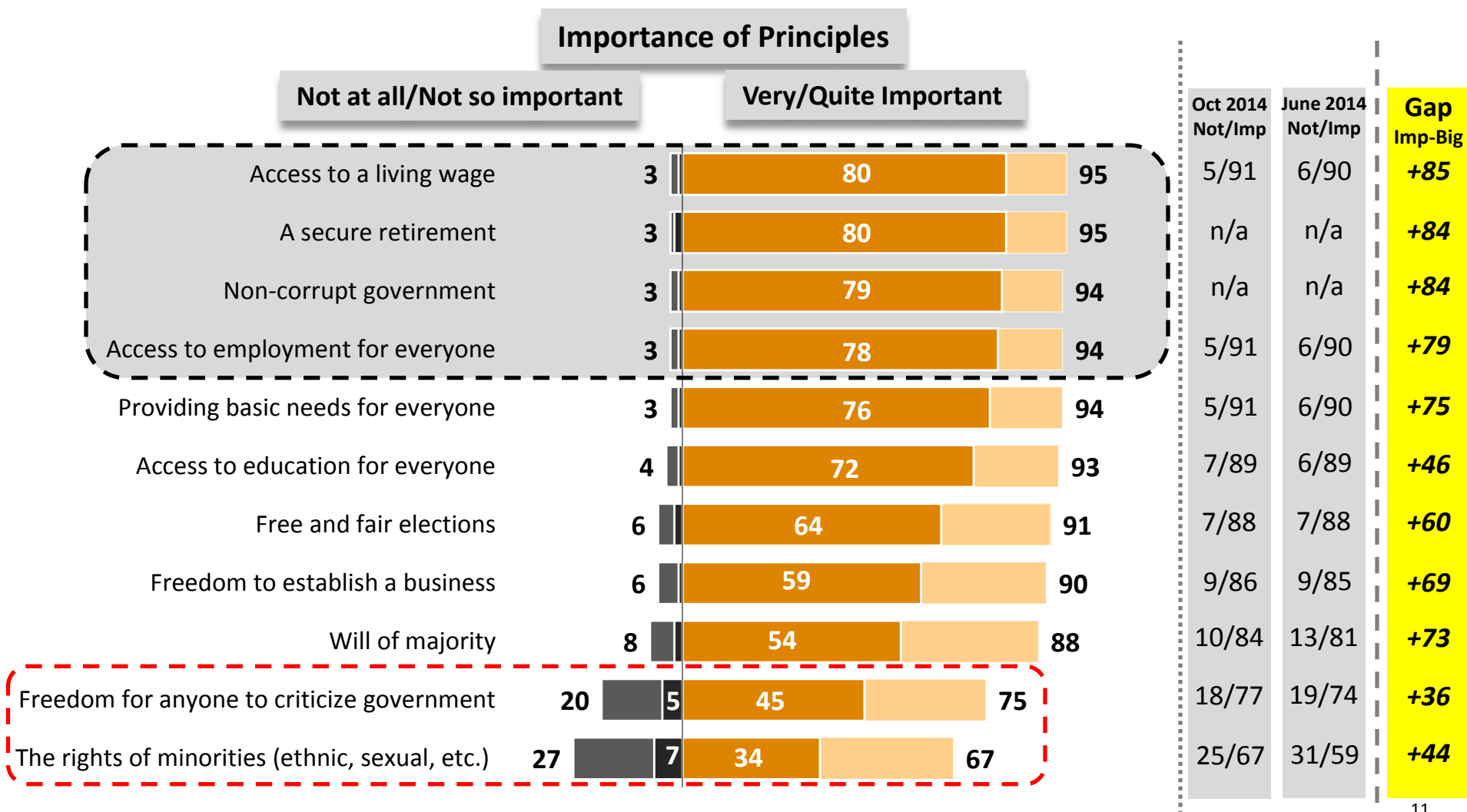
For the first time in two years, Moldovans believe they are worse off now than they were the year before. While intensity remains low, this is a key indicator that Moldovans will be open to looking for new leadership and solutions to move the country forward.



Across the board, Moldovans continue to believe key principles are not sufficiently upheld or defended in Moldova. This has changed very little since the last survey. The only two principles that are perceived to register a modicum of respect are access to education for everyone and freedom for anyone to criticize the government. Solid majorities of Moldovans believe a non-corrupt government, a secure retirement, and access to a living wage receive no respect at all and access to employment for everyone is not far behind.



In stark contrast with Moldovans' belief that most principles are held in low regard by those in power, voters themselves place great importance on most of these principles, especially the issues that are accorded least respect – access to a living wage, a secure retirement, a non-corrupt government, and access to employment for everyone. Moldovans tend to believe the freedom for anyone to criticize the government and the rights of minorities are far less important priorities than economic concerns.



The church continues to be the most trusted institution in Moldova. Voters are divided on their confidence with the media and mayors, but both receive much more confidence than other large institutions like the government, parliament, or political parties. Most of the goodwill afforded in the last few surveys has eroded and confidence has fallen to an all-time low for many groups, both among voters overall and undecided voters. The importance of the mayors in the next local – and parliamentary – election will be key to a party's electoral success.

Confidence in Institutions

Little Confidence

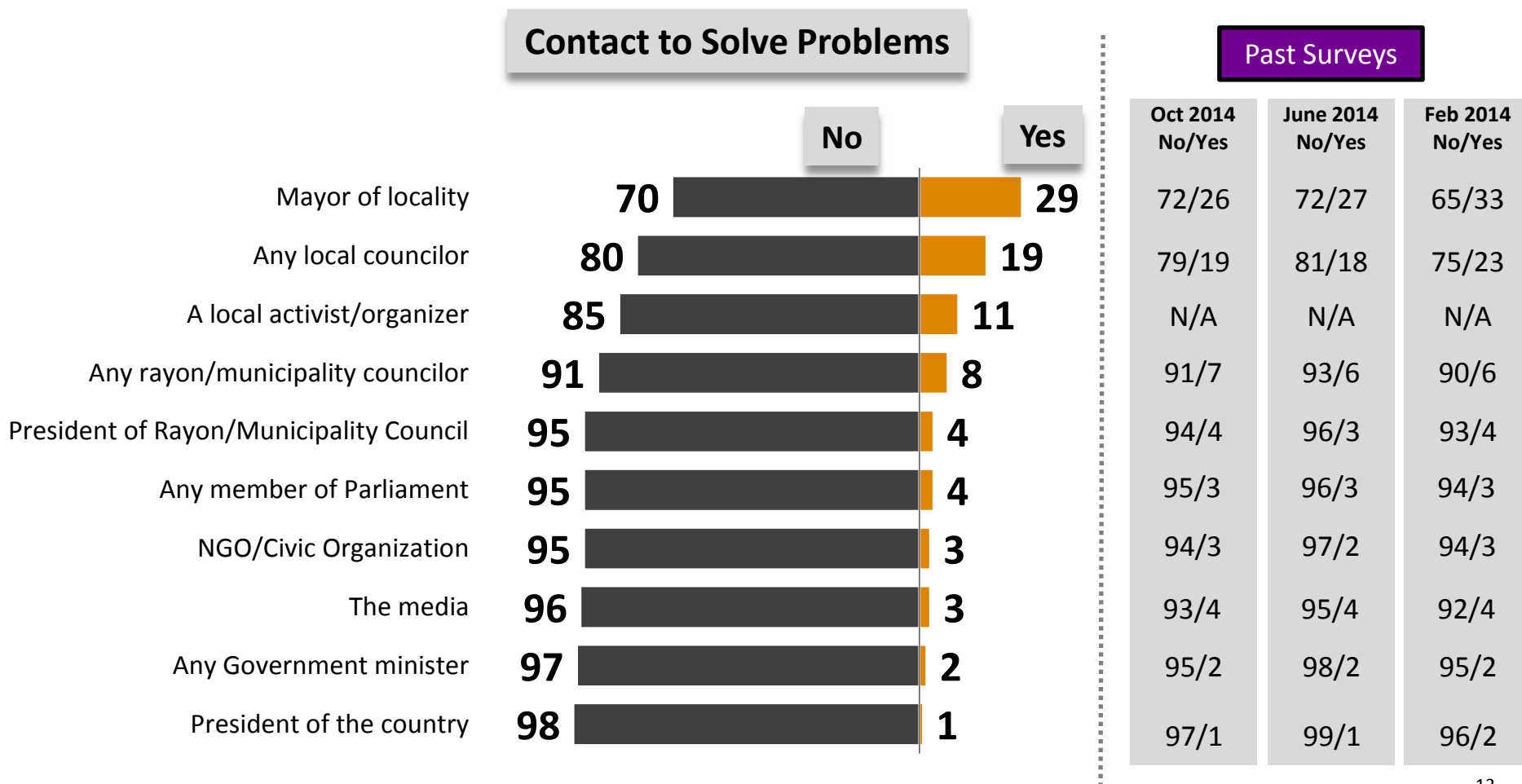
Much Confidence

Past Surveys

Oct 2014 Little/Much	June 2014 Little/Much	Feb 2014 Little/Much	March 2013 Little/Much
26/71	24/72	19/79	22/75
46/50	41/55	49/46	41/55
47/51	49/48	47/51	49/47
50/41	50/39	N/A	N/A
56/40	56/37	N/A	N/A
52/31	49/30	54/26	49/30
54/37	55/34	56/38	53/39
55/36	59/30	N/A	N/A
63/32	62/33	71/26	67/29
57/32	58/30	N/A	N/A
61/29	61/25	N/A	N/A
59/34	59/32	63/31	57/36
73/21	73/20	N/A	N/A
72/24	72/25	78/20	80/16
72/23	72/21	78/18	75/20
70/26	70/28	80/18	81/16
71/26	67/30	79/19	81/16

12

Local mayors, councilors, and even activists are more likely to be a point of contact for Moldovans than any national figure. This is true for both voters overall as well as undecided voters. These preferences need to be capitalized on in the upcoming local elections.



However, political parties still have time to change their course for the upcoming local elections. Voters in the post-election focus groups wanted political parties to demonstrate that they are listening to and understand the challenges facing everyday citizens (“people”)—and that they have the wherewithal to deliver on their promises. Parties should focus on touting concrete accomplishments in the local elections over making the perceived same promises that they have for years. This could help enthuse and inspire an electorate that is growing more cynical and even indifferent to the political parties and the political process.

What Voters Want from Elected Officials

PEOPLE INTERESTS
RESULTS HEAR
TOGETHER STABILITY GOOD WORD NEW WORK HONEST
UNITE THINK

*“Transparency in everything they do and make us trust them by concrete steps, **rather than by words.**”* – Woman, coalition party switcher, voted PSRM or PCRM, Chisinau.

*“To **do man’s interests**, people’s interests, young people’s interests, to be seen the **result of their work**, but such results are not really seen.”* – Woman, coalition party switcher, did not vote, Orhei

*“To **listen to the people.**”* – Man, late deciding PSRM voter, Briceni.

In thinking about the 2015 election, voters most want to hear of accomplishments and action agendas in the areas of economic development, combatting corruption (both internally as a party or in the government institutions like the judiciary), and improving the outlook for ordinary Moldovans. Additionally, touting any results from the association agreement with the European Union should help assuage concerns that Moldova has received too little from the relationship.

Issues Voters Want Solved by Government

JUSTICE BUDGET
CORRUPTION WELL-BEING JUDICIARY
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
ECONOMY WORKPLACES
NEPOTISM

"Corruption, economy." –
Man, late deciding PSRM
voter, Briceni.

*"To fight corruption in the
judiciary, first of all. It is a
disaster there."* - Woman, late
deciding PLDM voter, Criuleni.

*"To decide in which
way they want to go:
or to EU, or to Customs
Union, or some other
way."* - Man, first time
voter, Chisinau.

*"To raise people's welfare.
The social aspect. We cannot
go to Europe with such a
disaster like in some
localities."* - Woman, late
deciding PLDM voter, Criuleni.

During the post-election focus groups, voters indicated that they were motivated by change, building a better future for Moldova, and improving the lives of their children and future generations on Election Day. Their impetus for voting was driven less by any single issue and more on a sense of duty and responsibility as citizens to elect a government that is more attuned to their needs and aspirations. This is likely the reason Moldovans are willing to switch party alliances – they are seeing alternatives that can bring about real change.

Reasons Moldovans Voted in Parliamentary Elections

A word cloud where the words are of varying sizes and colors (green, yellow, red, purple). The words represent reasons for voting, such as 'COUNTRY', 'CHILDREN', 'FUTURE', 'CHANGE', 'BETTER', 'DUTY', 'RESPONSIBILITY', 'OBLIGATION', 'GROW', 'JOB', 'DESERVES', 'LIVING', 'TOWARDS', 'DECENT', 'COUNTRY'S', 'BENEFIT', 'EU', 'CUSTOM'S', 'CORRUPTION', 'UNION', 'THINGS', 'DEVELOP', 'CITIZEN', 'CHILDREN'S', and 'BETTER'.

*"I want to say that each nation has **the government it deserves**. And I thought that my vote is important to establish in this country a government that we deserve. To have a government that **takes care of the ordinary citizens, thinks about tomorrow, our country deserves to have more**." - Woman, late deciding PLDM voter, Criuleni.*

*"The **future of the country** and **children**, and also our future, for a **decent living**." – Woman, late deciding PDM voter, Nisporeni.*

*"I have **voted for children**, for our children's future, that we are already old, you know... For a **better future**." – Woman, late deciding PSRM voter, Briceni.*

The International Environment

Moldovans' Perceptions of the European Union, Russia, and
their Place in the World

Voters remain divided on which posture they would like the country to take when it comes to Europe and Russia; although their preference for a pro-Russian stance is at an all-time low. Instead, voters prefer relationships with both regions.

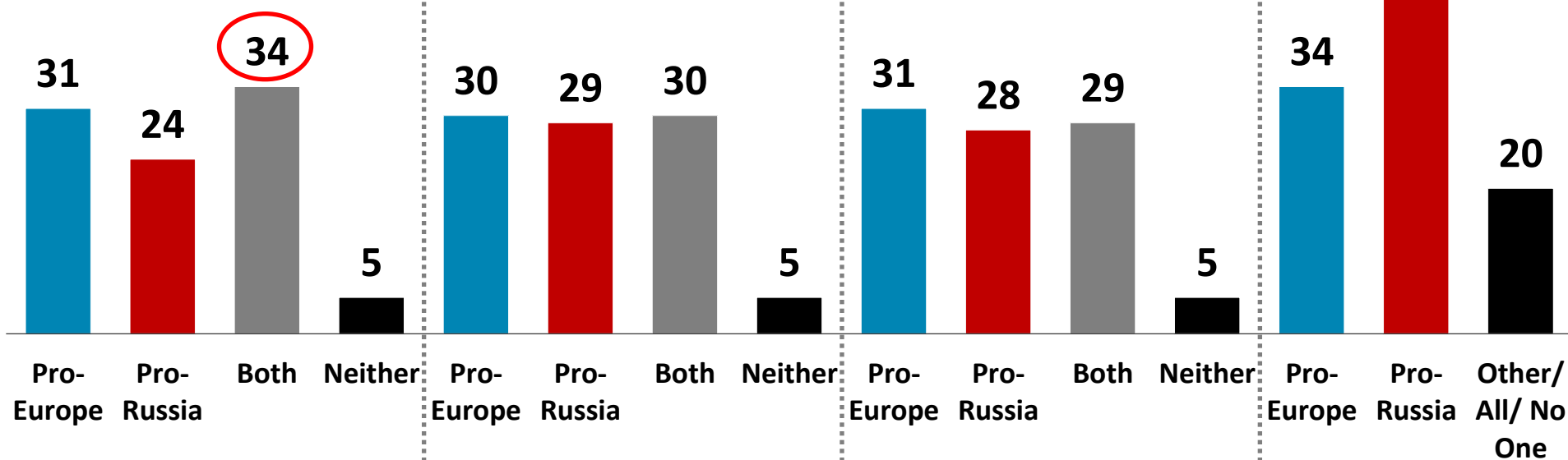
Foreign Policy Orientation Preference

March 2015

October 2014

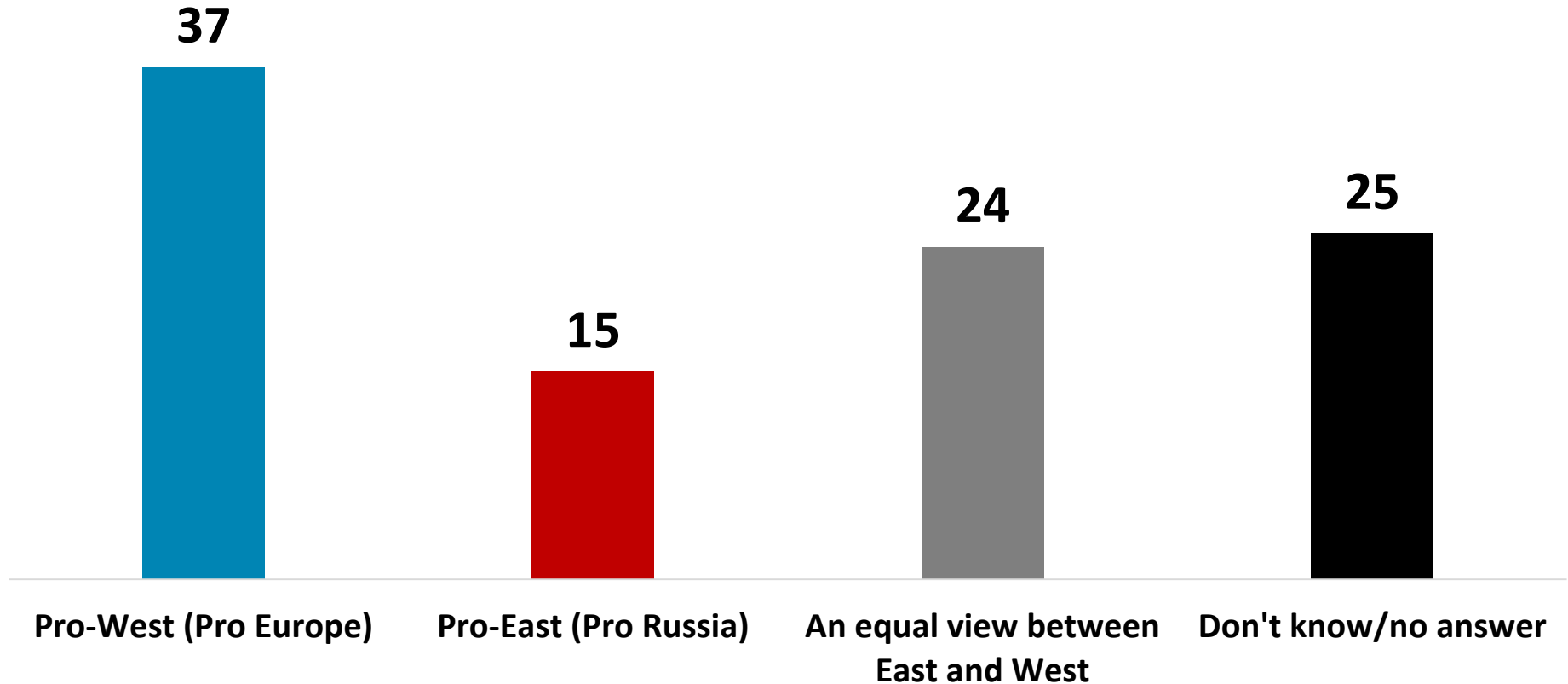
June 2014

February 2014



Voters do not have a clear impression of which stance is preferred by the current governing coalition. A little more than one-third of voters believes they share a pro-western view, while one-quarter believes they support having relationships with both. In all regards, voters need more information to know which way their country is headed.

Foreign Policy Orientation of Governing Coalition

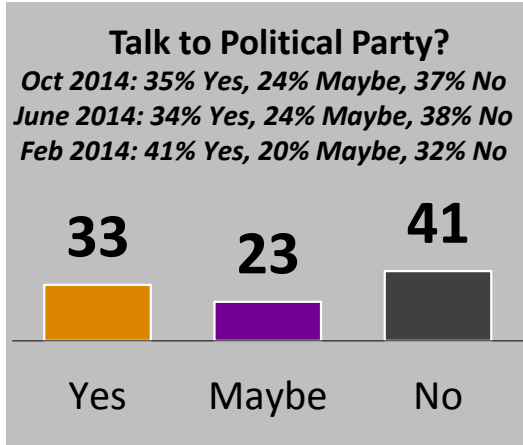
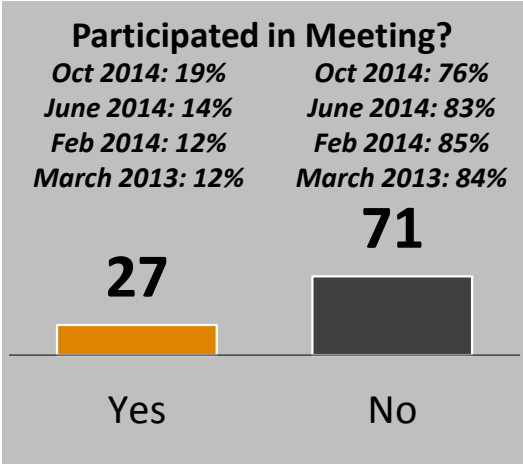
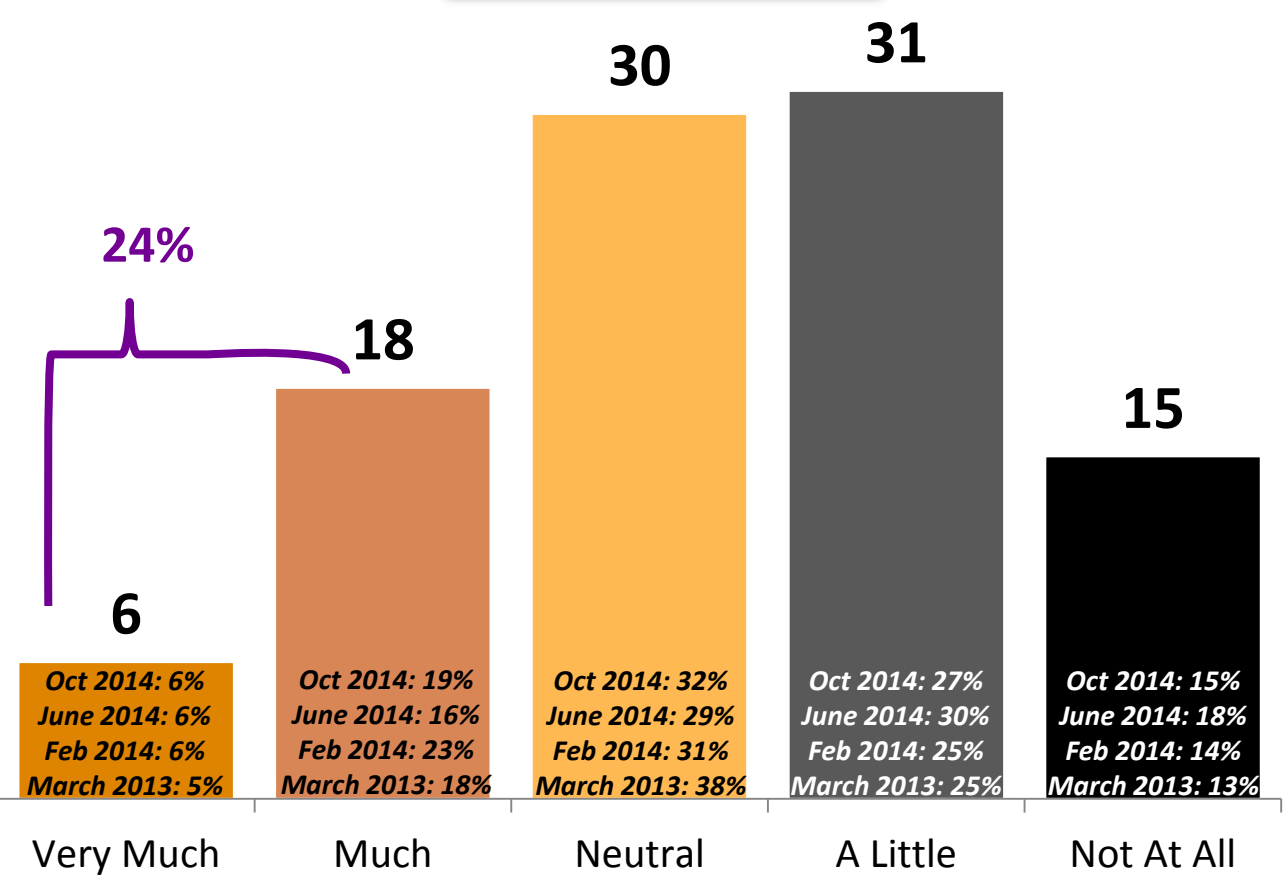


Civic Participation

Moldovans' Perceptions of Their Ability to Effect Political Change

Moldovans continue to be far more apathetic than enthusiastic toward politics. While there is a slight uptick in the number of Moldovans who say they have attended a political meeting—likely due to the recent elections –interest in talking to a political party remains mixed and tepid.

Interest in Politics

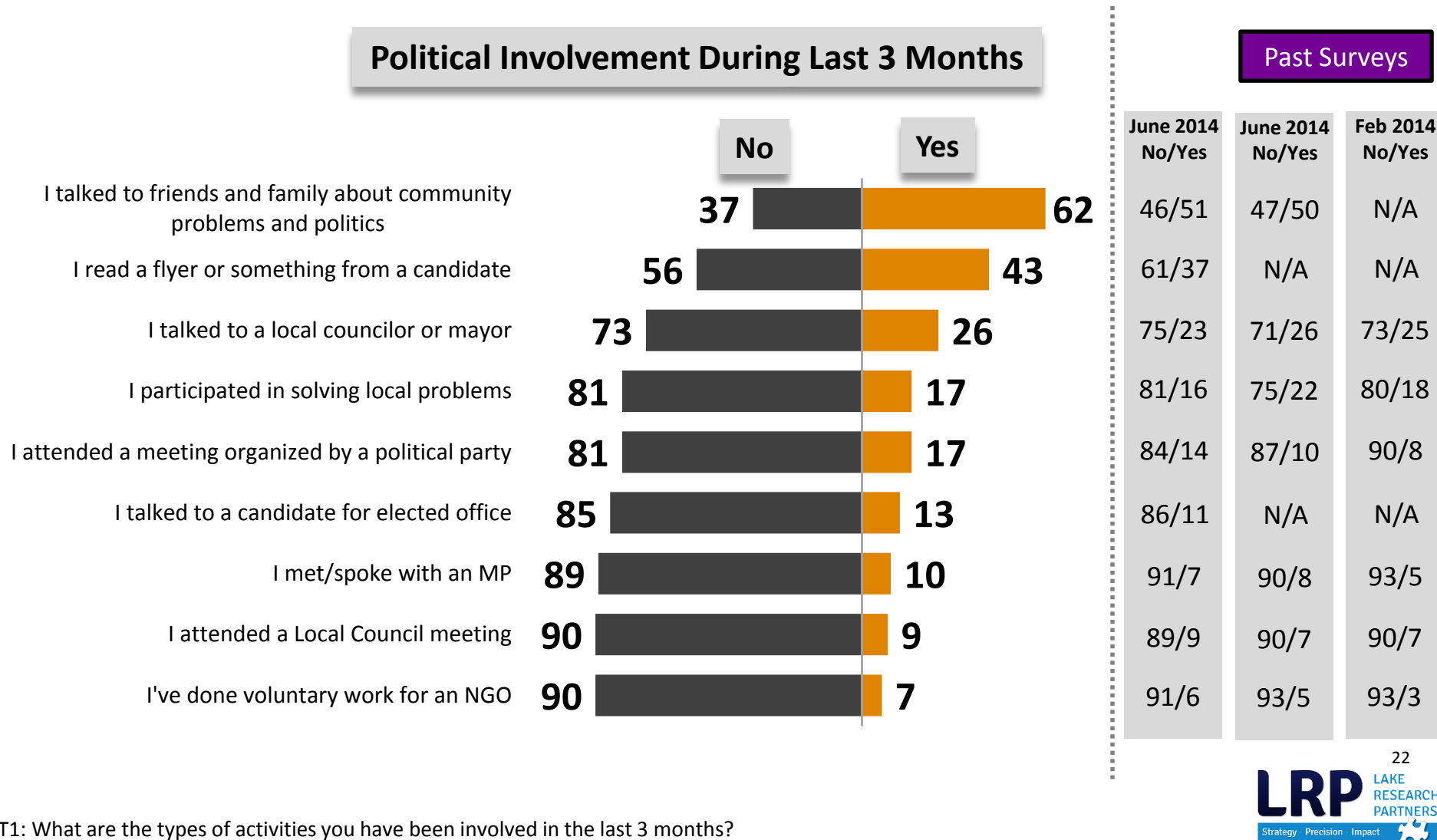


C14: Please indicate to what extent are you interested in politics.

C15: In the last 12 months, have you participated in any political meeting? (congress party meeting, meeting organized by any party, etc.)?

C16: In the next 6 months you want to talk to any representative of a political party?

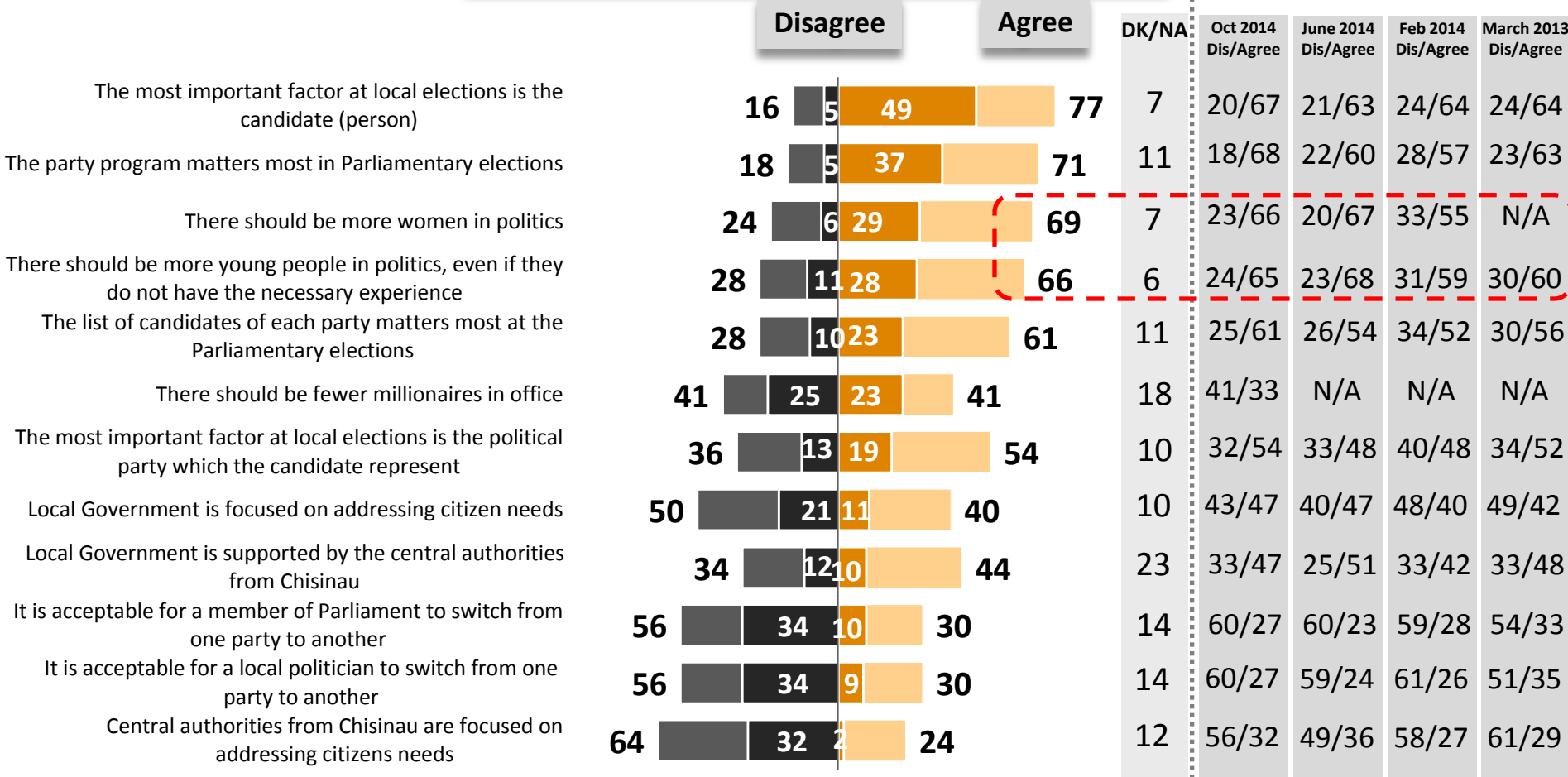
Personal networks of friends and family remain the most popular means of political engagement, though a plurality of voters have read communication materials from a candidate, and nearly one-quarter have spoken to a local councilor or mayor. Face-to-face communications will likely help voters become more engaged in the political process.



Voters continue to like local candidates and are looking for strong candidates with substantive issue platforms. They also continue to be interested in having more young people and women involved in politics—the highest they have been in the last two years—two issues that could help define and separate parties from each other. Moldovans tend to believe central authorities ignore citizen needs, a key issue parties will need to overcome in the upcoming local elections.

List of Statements on Political Life in Moldova

Past Surveys





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