



الباروميتر العربي
ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer V

Sudan Country Report



2019

Executive summary

In December 2018, thousands of Sudanese took to the streets to protest against deteriorating economic and living conditions in Sudan, resulting in the toppling of president Omar al-Bashir four months later in April 2019. Since then, negotiations with protesters have led to an agreement for an interim period of governance designed to culminate with multiparty elections. The Arab Barometer fielded a survey that finished twelve days before the first protests started. Thus, it provides a detailed picture about Sudanese discontent towards economy, government and state institutions on the eve of these events.

The results indicate that Sudanese are far less likely to evaluate the economy as good or very good than in the past – only 16 percent of Sudanese have this opinion, compared with 39 percent in 2011. Also, only four-in-ten think that economy will be better or much better in future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as a result Sudanese cite the economic situation is the most pressing problem facing Sudan.

Additionally, corruption represents a major concern for Sudanese. A vast majority say that corruption is present within state institutions to either large or medium extent, but less than half think that the national government is making substantial efforts to address this problem.

Migration is a major concern for Sudan. Half of Sudanese want to emigrate, which is one of the highest percentages among countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer. Economic issues are the main reason for migration, followed by educational opportunities.

Sudanese have little trust in government institutions and are also skeptical about democracy. Compared to other countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer, a relatively low percentage of Sudanese are supportive of democracy: a minority think that democracy is always preferable to any other form of governance.

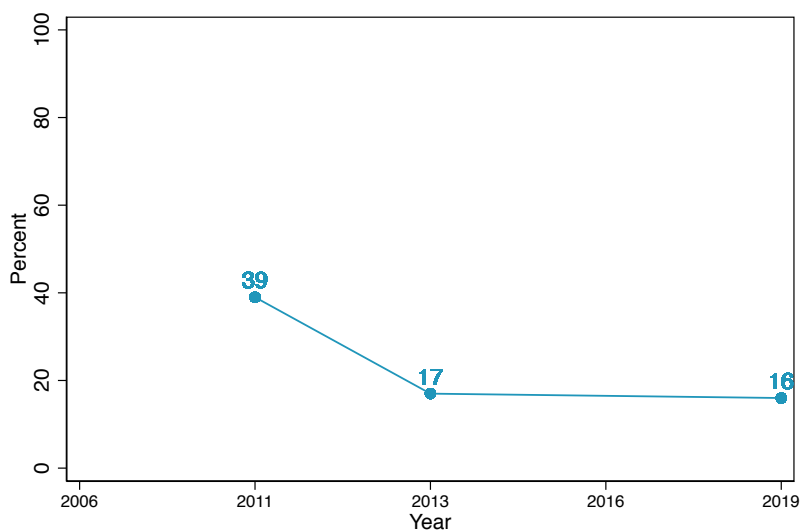
Internationally, Sudanese are most in favor of stronger ties with Turkey and Qatar, while a substantial percentage also wants better relations with Saudi Arabia, the regional competitor of Turkey and Qatar. Meanwhile, Sudanese have a preference for foreign aid in general rather than wanting it from a specific country.

These are among the key findings from a nationally representative public opinion survey conducted in Sudan by the Arab Barometer from 17 September to 7 December 2018. The survey conducted 1,758 face-to-face interviews in the respondent's place of residence. It has a margin of error of ± 3 percent and a cooperation rate of 79 percent.

Economic Situation

Perhaps surprisingly given the large-scale protests that followed, in fall 2018, relatively few Sudanese said the country was going in the wrong direction. Instead, a majority (72 percent) said the direction was in between the right and the wrong one. However, few are satisfied with economic conditions, with the vast majority of Sudanese (84 percent) evaluating the current economic situation of Sudan as either bad (40 percent) or very bad (44 percent). Furthermore, 88 percent believe that economic situation was better a few years ago. Indeed, previous waves of the Arab Barometer demonstrate that Sudanese evaluations of economic conditions have deteriorated since 2011: the proportion of those who cite national economy as good or very good decreased to 16 percent in 2018 from 39 percent in 2011.

How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country? *% saying the current economy is very good or good.*



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

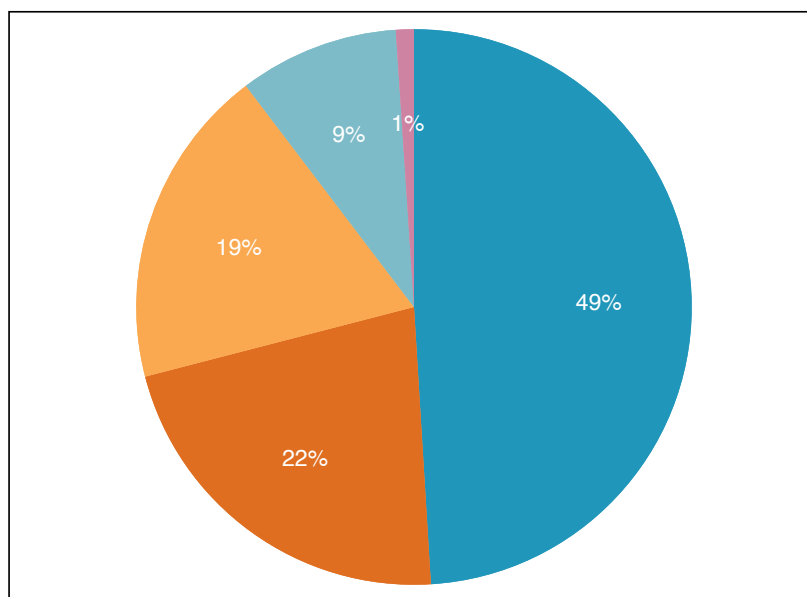
Evaluation of economic conditions is linked with age and education levels to some extent. Those with university degree are the least likely to evaluate national economic situation as bad or very bad (14 percent), followed by those with a basic level of education (18 percent) and those with secondary degree (20 percent). By comparison, those ages 30 to 39 years old are more likely to believe that national economic situation is good or very good (18 percent) relative to other age groups.

When asked about the most important challenge that Sudan faces, about half of Sudanese (49 percent) say that the economic situation is the most pressing

problem in country, followed by financial and administrative corruption (19 percent), and public services (9 percent). Thus, the Arab Barometer results clearly demonstrate the extent of concern about economic deterioration of Sudan, which was a key frustration that led to protests in December 2018.

What is the most important challenge facing your country today?

% who say...



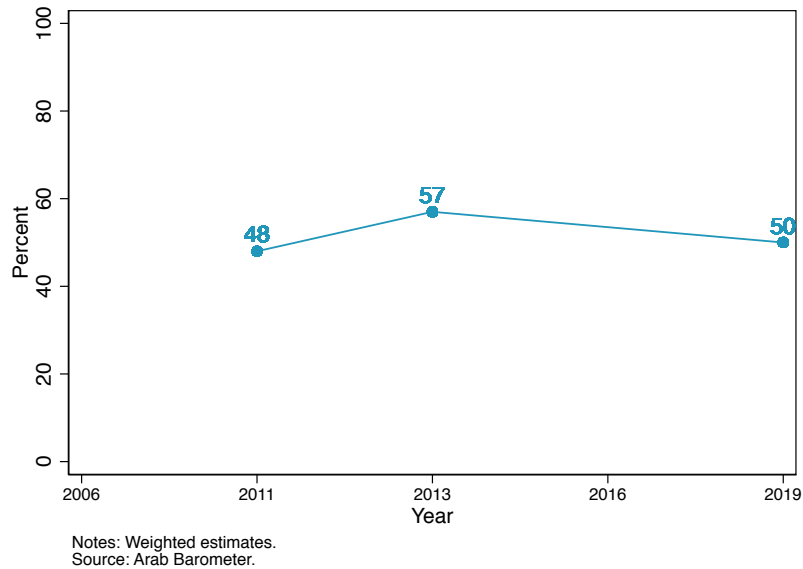
- economy
- corruption
- don't know/refused
- other
- public services

Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Migration

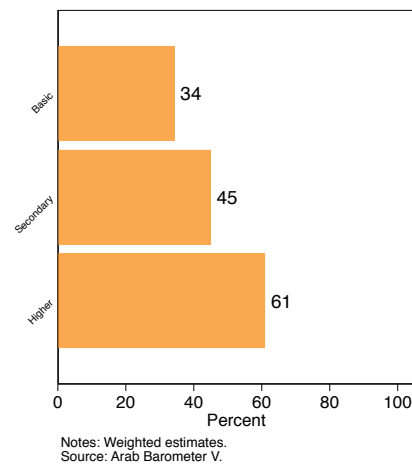
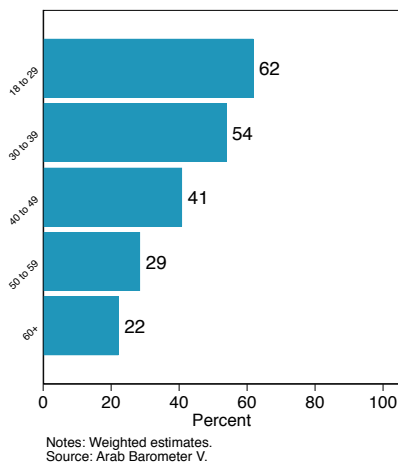
In recent decades, many Sudanese have migrated to countries around the globe. Even though Sudanese desire to migrate has decreased since 2013, half of Sudanese still say that they want to migrate, one of the highest levels of any country surveyed by Arab Barometer. Considering an estimated three million Sudanese are displaced internally, this result demonstrates the degree to which this problem represents a challenge for the new government.

Have you ever thought about emigrating from Sudan?
% saying they thought about emigrating.



Notably, desire to migrate varies dramatically by age and level of education. Although more than half of those ages 18 to 29 (62 percent) and 30 to 39 (54 percent) say that they want to migrate, only 29 percent of those ages 50 to 59 and 22 percent of those older than 60 say the same.

Have you ever thought about emigrating from Sudan?
% saying they thought about emigrating.



Meanwhile, those with a higher level of education are more likely to want to emigrate - 61 percent of those with a university degree want to migrate, compared

with 45 of those with a secondary-level education. However, those with only a basic education are somewhat less likely to have desire to migrate (34 percent). These results suggest the potential for brain drain in Sudan.

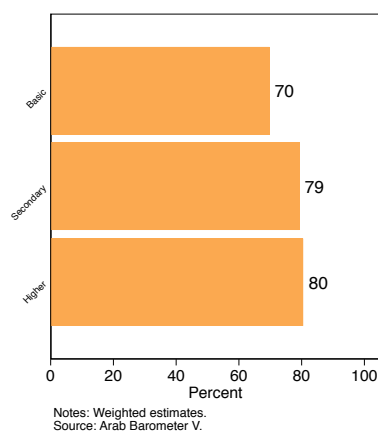
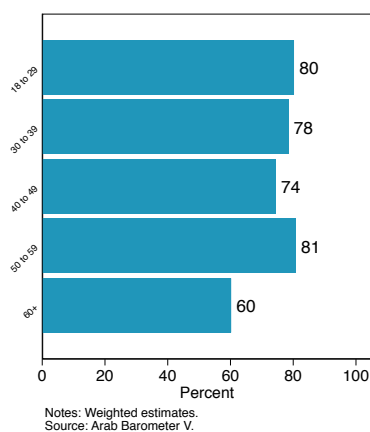
Given concerns about the state of the economy, it is unsurprising that Sudanese are most likely to cite economic opportunities as the reason for migration (51 percent). Other common reasons include educational opportunities (22 percent) and political reasons (8 percent).

Sudanese are most likely to want to migrate to a GCC country (51 percent), followed by North America (24 percent), Europe (19 percent), or a non-GCC country in MENA (17 percent). Additionally, 43 percent of potential migrants would leave even if they lacked the official papers necessary to do so.

Corruption

Corruption constitutes a significant concern for Sudanese, who list it as the second most important problem facing their country. Overall, more than three-quarters (77 percent) say that corruption is found within state institutions to either a large or medium extent, which is similar to the percentage in 2013 (73 percent).

To what extent do you think that there is corruption within the national state agencies and institutions in Sudan?
% saying to a large or medium extent.



Perception of corruption is linked with age and education. Those who have higher levels of education are more likely think that there is corruption within state institutions – 80 percent of those with a university degree and 79 percent

of those with secondary education hold this view compared with 70 percent of those with a basic education.

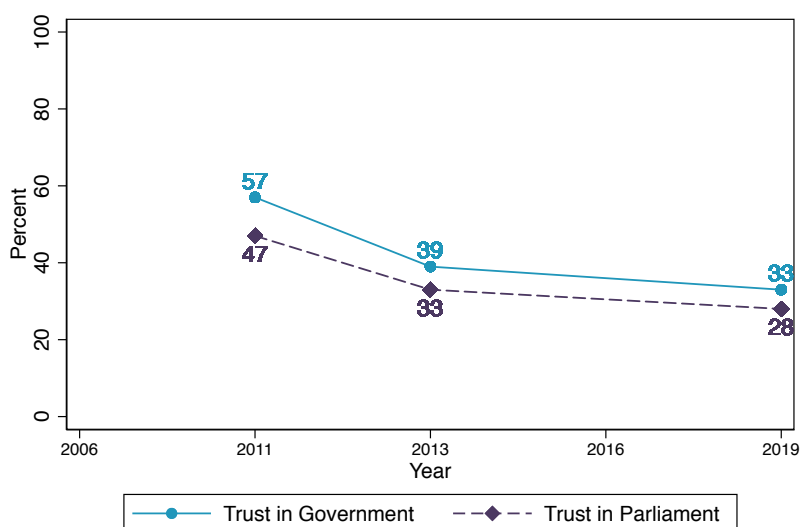
Additionally, older Sudanese are less likely to believe that there is corruption within state institutions: six-in-ten who are 60 or older believe there is corruption in state institutions to a large or medium extent compared with 81 percent of those ages 50 to 59, and 80 percent of those ages 18 to 29.

While corruption is perceived as rampant, few Sudanese think that the government is taking necessary steps to eliminate it. More specifically, fewer than half (44 percent) think that the national government is working to address corruption to a large or a medium extent. Moreover, at least half think that it is necessary to pay an unofficial fee (*rashwa*) to a civil servant in Sudan to receive better education (51 percent) and health services (55 percent).

Trust in Institutions

Sudanese have become less likely to trust the government in recent years. While more than half (57 percent) say that they trusted the government in 2011, this proportion has fallen to 33 percent in 2018. Trust in parliament has followed a similar trend, dropping from 47 percent in 2011 to 28 percent in 2018.

Trust in political institutions
% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in...

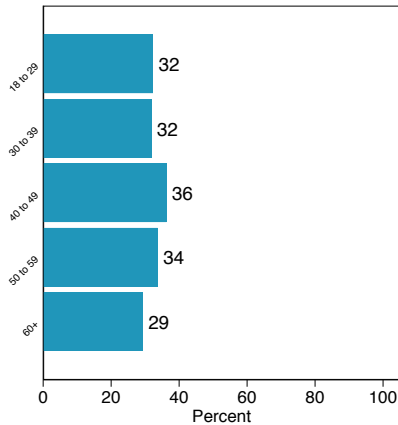


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

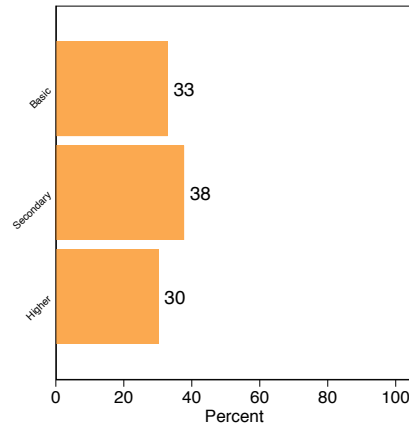
Even though trust in government and parliament follow similar trends, there are notable differences by age and education. Those with ages 40-49 (36 percent)

are more likely to trust the government than than Sudanese of other ages (29-34 percent). Moreover, those with higher levels of education are less likely to trust the government (30 percent), compared with 38 percent of those with a secondary education, and 33 percent with a basic education.

How much trust you have in the government?
% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.



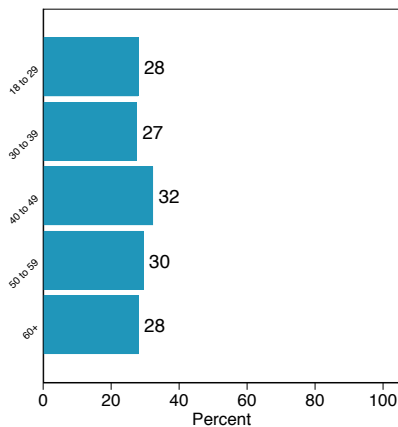
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Source: Arab Barometer V.



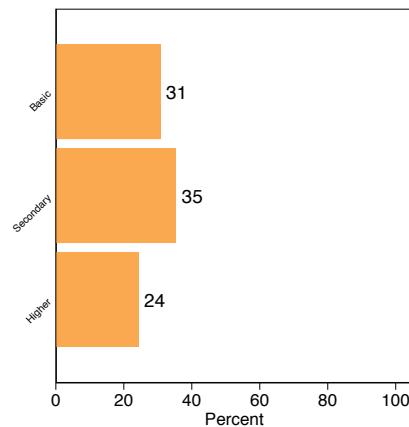
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Trust in parliament does not vary significantly across age groups. However, there are differences by level of education – 35 percent of those with secondary education trust parliament, compared with 31 percent of those with a basic education. Meanwhile, about a quarter (24 percent) of those with university or higher degree trust parliament.

How much trust you have in the parliament?
% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

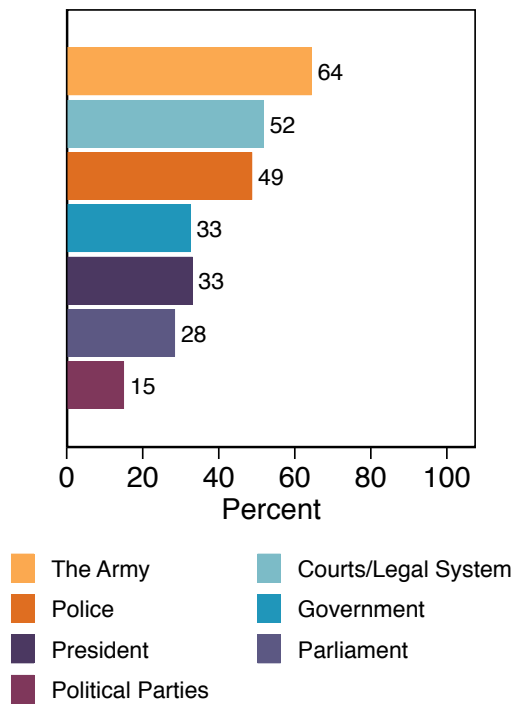


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

The army remains as the most trusted institution in Sudan with 64 percent of Sudanese saying that they have either great or quite a lot of trust in the army, followed by the courts and legal system (52 percent) and police (49 percent). Notably, only one-third trust the former President Omar al-Bashir. Political parties are the least trusted institutions – only 15 percent of Sudanese trust political parties, a common trend across the countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer.

Trust in political institutions

% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in...



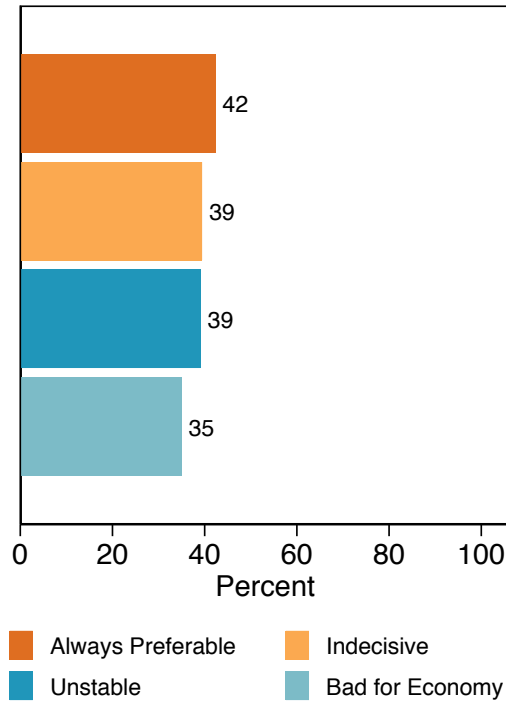
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Political Preferences

Following the country's transitional accords, it is important to understand the political preferences of Sudanese. A sizable minority (42 percent) believe that democracy is preferable to any other form of political system. However, this percentage is second lowest among the 12 countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer.

Views of Democracy

% saying democracy is...

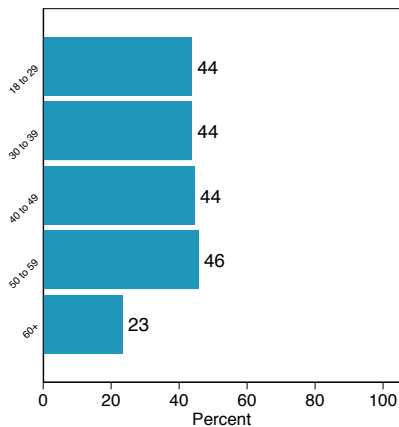


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

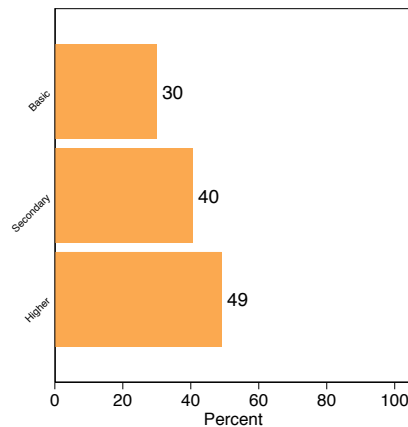
Notably, those who 60 years or older are the least likely to favor democracy (23 percent). By comparison, all other age groups exhibit relatively similar levels of support for democracy (44 - 46 percent).

Additionally, support for democracy in Sudan is linked with level of education: 49 percent of those with a university degree are supportive of democracy, followed by 40 percent of those with a secondary education and 30 percent of those with a basic education.

“Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government.”
% who agree by age & education.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Sudanese are somewhat more likely to conceptualize democracy based on substantive outcomes than procedural outcomes. Three-in-ten (31 percent) say that the most essential characteristic of a democracy is the government ensuring law and order, compared with 17 percent who say it is a government that ensures job opportunities for all. Meanwhile, 26 percent say the most essential characteristic is multiparty elections (26 percent) while 18 percent say it is the freedom of the media to criticize government.

Relatively few Sudanese are concerned about possible negative traits sometimes associated with democracy. Roughly a third (35 percent) agree or strongly agree that under a democratic system the country’s economic performance is weak. By comparison, four-in-ten say that democratic regimes are indecisive and full of problems or that they are not effective at maintaining order and stability (39 percent, respectively).

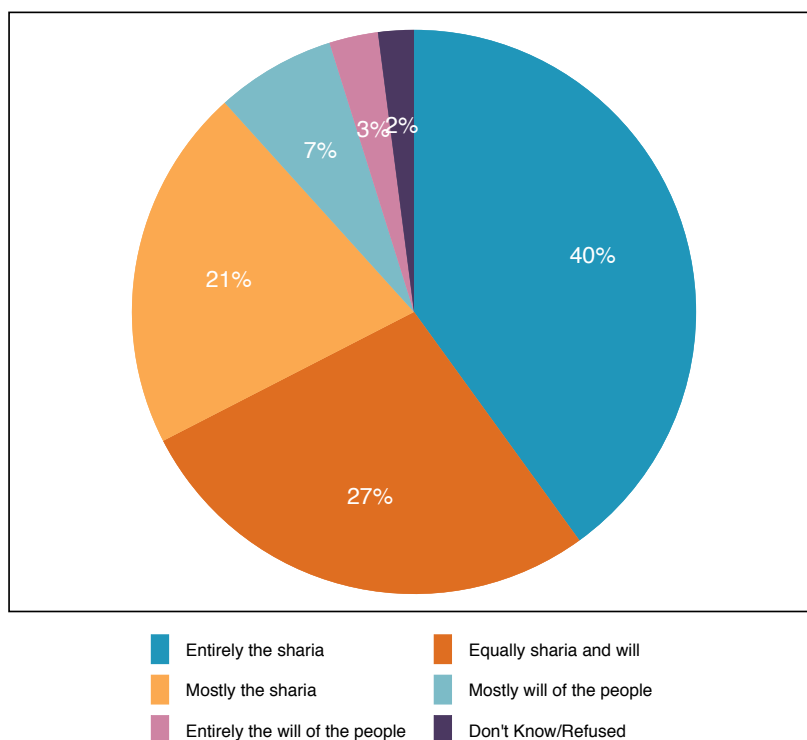
Religion & Politics

Many Sudanese prefer religion to have a significant influence in politics. Roughly two-thirds (65 percent) think that Sudan is better off if religious people hold public positions in the state. Meanwhile, about half (52 percent) say religious clerics should have influence over the decisions of government, which is the highest level in any country surveyed by the Arab Barometer. These findings suggest that Sudanese are more open toward mixing religion and politics than most other Arab publics.

Sudanese are also supportive of having a government that implements the sharia over one that implements the will of the people. Two-thirds of Sudanese (67 percent) believe that Sudan’s law should be based entirely or mostly on sharia.

However, the conceptualization of sharia differs widely among Sudanese. A considerable proportion (45 percent) believe that the most essential aspect of sharia government is one that is free of corruption, while 22 percent cite the provision of basic services such as health facilities, schools, garbage collection, or road maintenance. By comparison, 23 percent of Sudanese believe that using physical punishments to make sure people obey the law is the most essential aspect of sharia government, compared with 4 percent say it a government that restricts women’s role in the public sphere.

Support for Sharia
% saying the country’s laws should be...



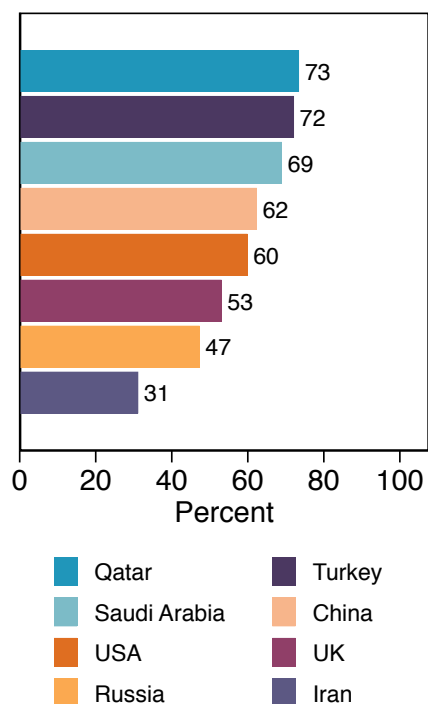
Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

International Relations

With some exceptions, Sudanese want to see economic relations with other countries to improve. Notably, the vast majority of Sudanese want stronger ties with Qatar (73 percent) and Turkey (72 percent). At the same time, most Sudanese prefer economic relations with Saudi Arabia (69 percent), the regional

competitor of Turkey and Qatar, to strengthen as well. Among global and regional powers, Sudanese are least likely to want stronger economic relations with Russia and Iran (47 and 31 percent, respectively).

International Relations
% wanting stronger economic relations with...



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Despite long-standing U.S. sanctions, six-in-ten Sudanese prefer better economic relations with the U.S., which is similar to the percentage who say the same about China (62 percent). These findings suggest that both countries face an opportunity to strengthen ties with Sudan’s new government.

Sudanese are also hopeful for an increase in foreign aid. Consistent with these findings, the vast majority of Sudanese want foreign aid to increase in the future. Notably, 86 percent of Sudanese want to see an increase in foreign aid coming from China, further demonstrating the potential of China’s influence. However, 85 percent want to receive more aid from the U.S., followed by 81 percent of those who say the same about the U.K. and 78 percent for the European Union. Thus, it is clear ordinary citizens in Sudan are hoping for greater international engagement to improve conditions in their country.



About Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006. The margin of error is ± 3 percent.

The Arab Barometer is the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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