



The Rule of Law in the United States of America

Key Findings from the General
Population Poll 2021

Acknowledgements

The Rule of Law in the United States of America: Key Findings from the General Population Poll 2021 was produced by the World Justice Project under the research oversight of Alejandro Ponce and the executive direction of Elizabeth Andersen.

The production of this report was led by Ana María Montoya and Tanya Primiani. This report was prepared by Santiago Pardo, Hannah Rigazzi, Victoria Thomaides, and Carlos Toruño.

The findings in this report are taken from the General Population Poll (GPP) conducted for the World Justice Project in 2021. The GPP's conceptual framework and methodology were developed by Mark David Agrast, Juan Carlos Botero, and Alejandro Ponce. The production of this iteration of country report series was developed by Ana María Montoya, Santiago Pardo, Alejandro Ponce, Tanya Primiani, Hannah Rigazzi, Natalia Rodríguez Cajamarca, Victoria Thomaides, and Carlos Toruño Paniagua with the support of Said Aarji, Erin Campbell, James Davis, Joshua Fuller, Skye Jacobs, and Moss Woodbury.

Sampling, fieldwork, and data processing in the United States of America was conducted by YouGov, Nordic. Mariana Lopez was the graphic designer for this report. FlitStudio served as lead website developer for the online version of this report with assistance from Natalia Jardon, Mariana Lopez, and Enrique Paulin.

Photo for cover provided by Michael Discenza via Unsplash.

© Copyright 2023 by the World Justice Project.

Requests to reproduce this document should be sent to:

Alejandro Ponce
World Justice Project
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005, USA
Email: aponce@worldjusticeproject.org

WASHINGTON, DC

1025 Vermont Avenue
NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005,
USA
P +1 (202) 407-9330

MEXICO CITY

Gobernador José
Guadalupe Covarrubias
57-20, San Miguel
Chapultepec, 11850,
Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico
City
worldjusticeproject.mx

 worldjusticeproject.org

 facebook.com/thewjp/

 twitter.com/TheWJP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

5 About This Report

7 Executive Findings

2. THEMATIC FINDINGS

SECTION I: AUTHORITARIANISM, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

11 Authoritarianism

14 Fundamental Freedoms

19 Government Accountability

SECTION II: CORRUPTION AND TRUST

21 Corruption

23 Trust

24 Political Perceptions

SECTION III: SECURITY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

26 Crime Victimization

27 Security

28 Criminal Justice

31 Police

SECTION IV: DISCRIMINATION

34 Discrimination

3. PROJECT DESIGN

37 Methodology

4. APPENDIX

40 About the WJP

41 Other Publications

ABOUT THIS REPORT

5 About This Report

7 Executive Findings

ABOUT THIS REPORT

EFFECTIVE RULE OF LAW reduces corruption, combats poverty and disease, and protects people from injustices large and small. Strengthening the rule of law is an important objective for governments, donors, and civil society organizations around the world. To be effective, rule of law development requires clarity about the fundamental features that define the rule of law, as well as an adequate basis for its evaluation and measurement.

The Rule of Law in the United States of America: Key Findings from the General Population Poll 2021 presents question-level data drawn from the General Population Poll (GPP), an original data source designed and collected by the World Justice Project. To provide a more in-depth view of trends in perceptions of rule of law in the United States of America, this report also presents select findings over time and compared to other countries in the international Group of 7 (G7).

The GPP was conducted through online interviews to a nationally representative sample of 1,258 American households in 2021. This poll was designed to capture data on the experiences and perceptions of ordinary people regarding a variety of themes related to the rule of law.

This report represents the voices of people in the United States of America and their experiences with the rule of law in their country.

The data derived from the General Population Poll is presented in this report as thematic briefs, each one highlighting a different dimension of the rule of law from the perspective of Americans. These thematic briefs focus on the current rule of law ecosystem in the United States of America while simultaneously illuminating changes over time and comparisons across the following peer countries in the G7: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Each section touches upon perceptions of and attitudes towards the following topics: accountability, authoritarianism, fundamental freedoms, corruption, trust in institutions, the criminal justice system and its actors, crime victimization, security, police performance and discrimination.

Note on the United States

The data presented in *The Rule of Law in the United States of America: Key Findings from the General Population Poll 2021* represents the perceptions and experiences of individuals living in the United States. The results show a decrease in the perception of the rule of law in the country, compared to results from previous years.

The data presented in this report has undergone a rigorous validation process. The WJP team conducted four separate tests to ensure the accuracy of the data:

1. **Survey validation:** The team verified the data routing, labeling, and coding and did not find any issues.
2. **Internal quantitative checks:** The team performed statistical tests to identify significant breaks or trend changes between survey waves within the country.
3. **External quantitative checks:** The team normalized the General Population Poll data in the United States and compared these scores to other external quantitative sources, including the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)'s *AmericasBarometer*. These checks compared overall trends for a broader set of questions on trust in political institutions, crime and security, and fundamental freedoms, with similar perception questions in the LAPOP questionnaires.
4. **External qualitative checks:** The team reviewed current events, expert-based measures – including the WJP Qualified Respondents Questionnaires–, and qualitative reports from other organizations such as the Pew Research Center, Freedom House, Transparency International, and Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem).

The results of our various checks confirmed the high accuracy of our data. However, there may be discrepancies between our data and other data sources coming from expert assessments. For instance, our data consistently indicates lower levels of fundamental freedoms across the board when compared with the most recent data from Freedom House and Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). This systematic difference could be due to inherent differences in the process of how experts and the general public form their perceptions.

The data sourced from the General Population Poll 2021 was gathered through computer-assisted web interviews (CAWI). For the selection of participants, a stratified random sampling technique was employed, which took into account factors such as place of residence, age, gender, and reported income. However, the demographic composition in terms of race and ethnicity was determined by the randomness of the selection. Within the GPP sample, 80% of respondents self-identified as white, while only 20% identified themselves in any other category. Therefore, it is important to regard the estimations presented in this report, concerning perceptions of corruption, trust in institutions, and perceptions of the police, as conservative approximations (lower bounds) of the actual state of the rule of law in the United States. This is based on our observation that non-white respondents consistently express more negative viewpoints on these three topics, implying that the actual conditions might be even more pronounced. Further information on the rule of law in the United States can be found at the [Country Insights](#) page from the *WJP Rule of Law Index 2022®*.

EXECUTIVE FINDINGS

The Rule of Law in the United States of America: Key Findings from the General Population Poll 2021 provides a comprehensive overview of how citizens perceive and experience the rule of law in the United States of America alongside comparative findings across the following peer countries in the G7: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Several themes in this report include regression analysis based on the political affiliation of respondents and select sociodemographic characteristics.

SECTION 1

Authoritarianism, Fundamental Freedoms, and Accountability

1. Authoritarianism

Respondents in the United States had more positive attitudes toward democracy and the rule of law than towards authoritarianism and had more positive attitudes toward rule of law compared to respondents in most other G7 countries. Perceptions of constraints on government powers were varied, with the highest percentage of respondents believing that the courts were likely or very likely to stop the president's illegal actions (65%), followed by Congress (52%) and citizens (30%). When considering political affiliation, there is no statistically significant difference between Republicans' and Democrats' attitudes toward democracy or perceptions of constraints on government powers.

2. Fundamental Freedoms

The percentage of respondents who believe that freedom of expression, participation, and religion are guaranteed in the United States declined between 2018 and 2021. Only the belief that local government officials are elected through a clean process increased between 2018 and 2021. The most significant trends between 2018 and 2021 include declines in the perceptions that people can vote freely without feeling harassed or pressured (15 percentage points), people can express opinions against the government (14 percentage points), and the media can express opinions against the government (13 percentage points between 2018 and 2021). Democrats tend to believe more often than Republicans that fundamental freedoms are guaranteed with two exceptions: Republicans more often believe that religious minorities can observe their holy days and that people can vote freely without feeling harassed or pressured.

3. Accountability

Less than one-quarter (24%) of Americans believe that high-ranking government officials would be held accountable for breaking the law, marking a significant decline from 2018 of 10 percentage points. While 2021 data is not available for all G7 countries, there is a general decline in perceptions of accountability across all countries beginning as early as 2014.

SECTION 2

Corruption and Trust

4. Corruption

Perceptions of corruption in the United States deteriorated across all actors between 2018 and 2021. Perceptions of corruption deteriorated most for police officers, climbing from 15% to 27% of all respondents who believe that most or all police officers are corrupt. Members of Congress are considered the most corrupt actor in the United States. Approximately 54% of respondents believe that most or all members of Congress are involved in corrupt practices, marking a four-percentage point increase from 50% of respondents in 2018. Public defense attorneys are considered the least corrupt actor in the United States, with 18% of respondents reporting that they believe most or all teachers are involved in corrupt practices.

5. Trust

Levels of trust in the United States declined across almost every institution between 2018 and 2021. Americans only reported higher levels of trust in national government officers and public defense attorneys, with increases of one and three percentage points, respectively, in the percentage of respondents who have some or a lot of trust in these actors. Trust in police officers declined the most, dropping 13 percentage points between 2018 and 2021. In 2021, Americans most often reported having some or a lot of trust in judges and magistrates (62% of respondents) and least often reported having some or a lot of trust in national government officers (42%).

6. Political Perceptions of Corruption and Trust

Perceptions of corruption across actors in the judiciary demonstrated no statistically significant difference between Republicans and Democrats. However, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe that both members of Congress and national government officers are corrupt at a statistically significant level while Democrats are more likely than Republicans to believe police officers are corrupt at a statistically significant level.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to have a lot or some trust in the police at a statistically significant level. On the other hand, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to have a lot or some trust in national government officers and public defense attorneys at a statistically significant level.

SECTION 3

Security and Criminal Justice

7. Crime Victimization

Fourteen percent (14%) of Americans reported experiencing a crime between May 2020 and May 2021. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of American respondents who were victims of a crime reported the crime to an authority and, of those respondents, 85% reported that the case ended in prosecution.

8. Security

In the United States, most respondents (80%) reported feeling safe in their neighborhood at night in 2021, marking a slight decline from 82% of respondents in 2018. Americans were less likely to feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night if they were women, not white, did not have a Bachelor's degree, or were financially insecure.

9. Criminal Justice

Between 2018 and 2021, perceptions of the criminal justice system's overall performance deteriorated. Perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system in delivering justice worsened the most between 2018 and 2021 with a decline of 11 percentage points. In 2021, Americans were most confident that the criminal justice system is effective in delivering justice (56%). Americans were least confident that the criminal justice system ensures timeliness (30%).

Across all dimensions of criminal justice system's performance, Republicans had more positive perceptions than Democrats. While Republicans were most often confident that the criminal justice system ensures widespread access (72%), Democrats were most often confident that the criminal justice system is effective (51%). Both Republicans and Democrats were least confident that the criminal justice system ensures timeliness (33% and 27%, respectively).

10. Police Performance

When asked about their impressions of police performance, respondents in the United States were most confident that:

- Police help them feel safe (78%)
- Police are available to help when needed (78%)
- Police resolve security problems in the community (75%)

Respondents in the United States were least confident that:

- Police investigate crimes in an independent manner (39%)
- Police are held accountable for violating laws (45%)
- Police respect the rights of suspects (60%)

In the United States, respondents most often indicated that citizenship status, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity would most likely be factors of discrimination in a criminal investigation.

Across nearly all dimensions evaluating the effectiveness and legitimacy of the police, Republicans have more positive perceptions than Democrats at a statistically significant level. The only dimensions in which Republicans and Democrats do not have a statistically significant difference is the belief that police investigate crimes in an independent manner.

SECTION 4

Discrimination

11. Discrimination

Fourty percent (40%) of Americans reported having experienced some form of discrimination in the 12 months prior to the interview. People who identified themselves as non-white, who are younger than 30 years old, or that are in a financially insecure situation are more likely to report having feel discriminated in the previous year.

Reasons why people feel discriminated vary depending on the respondents ethnic and racial background. People who identified as white reported that their age, gender, and physical appearance were the main reasons why they feel discriminated. On the contrary, people who identified as non-white reported that their ancestry, race, and skin color where the main reason why they feel discriminated.

THEMATIC FINDINGS

SECTION I
**AUTHORITARIANISM,
FUNDAMENTAL
FREEDOMS,
AND
ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 11 Authoritarianism
- 14 Fundamental Freedoms
- 19 Government Accountability

AUTHORITARIANISM

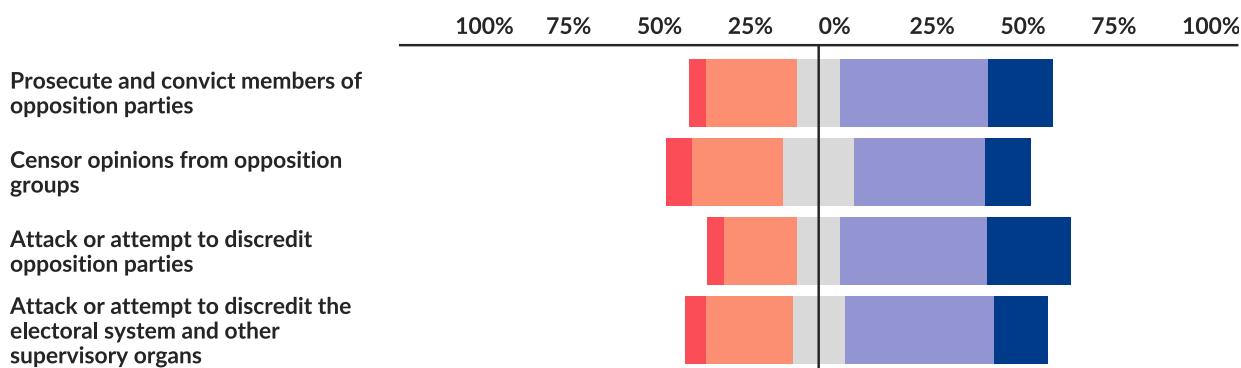
CHART 1.

Perceptions of Authoritarian Behaviors

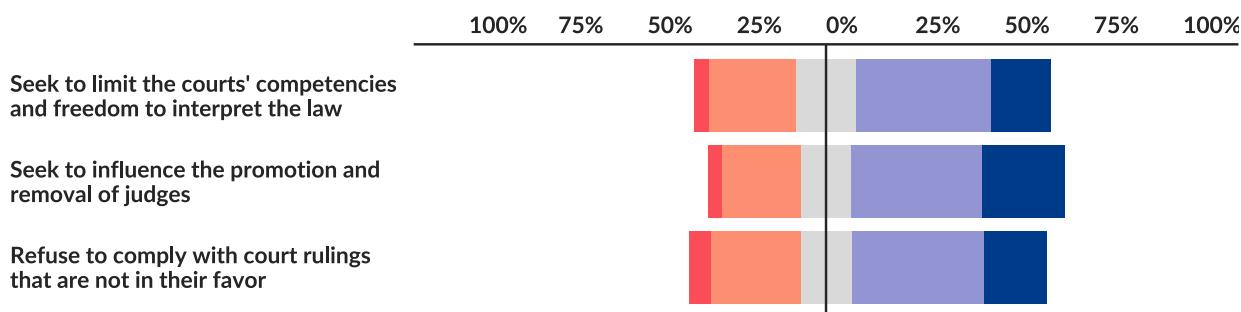
Percentage of respondents in North Macedonia who believe that top government officials...

● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● No answer ● Agree ● Strongly Agree

ATTACKS ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES



ATTACKS ON THE JUDICIARY



ATTACKS ON THE MEDIA AND MISINFORMATION

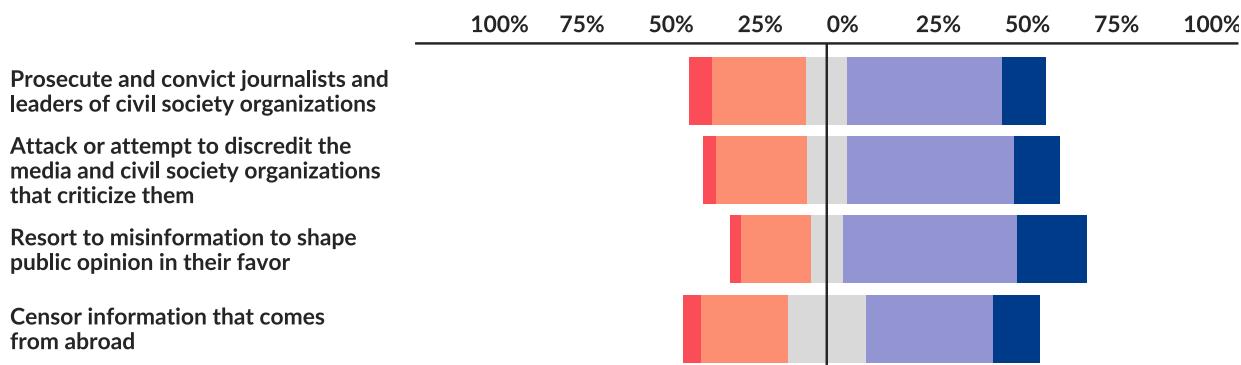


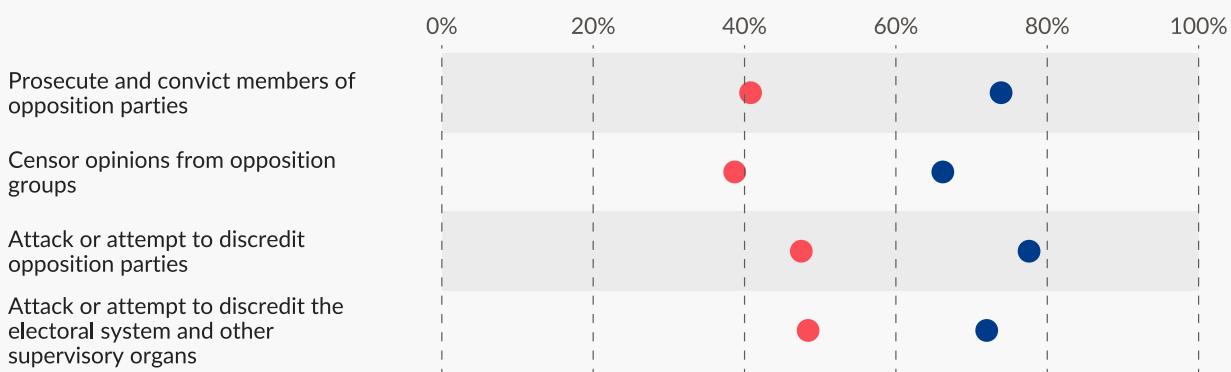
CHART 2.

Perceptions of Authoritarian Behavior, by Support for the Current Administration

Percentage of respondents in North Macedonia who believe that top government officials...

● Government Supporter ● Non-Government Supporter

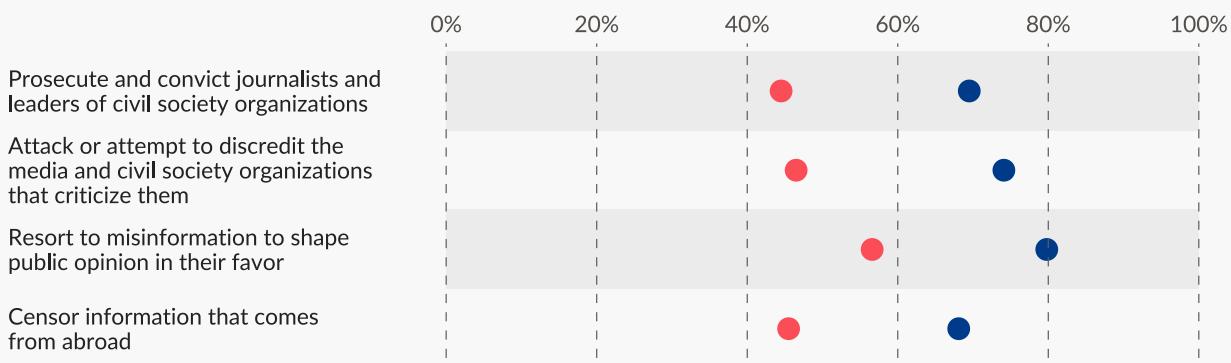
ATTACKS ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES



ATTACKS ON THE JUDICIARY



ATTACKS ON THE MEDIA AND MISINFORMATION



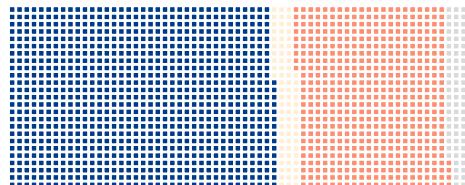
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2023

CHART 3.

Attitudes Towards Authoritarianism and Rule of Law

Percentage of respondents who agree with the following statements

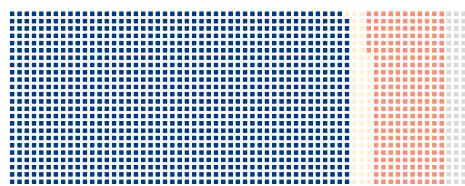
■ The president can attack the media, civil society, and opposition groups



■ The president must respect the media, civil society, and opposition groups

■ None of the above

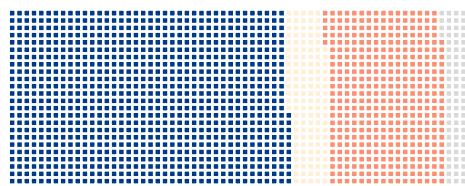
■ The president can undermine independent authorities



■ The president must respect independent authorities

■ None of the above

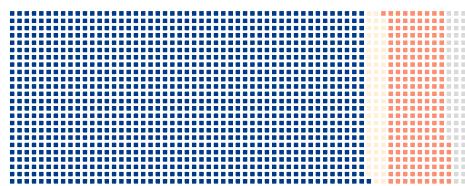
■ Government efficiency is more important than citizen influence



■ It is important that citizens have a say in government matters, even at the expense of efficiency

■ None of the above

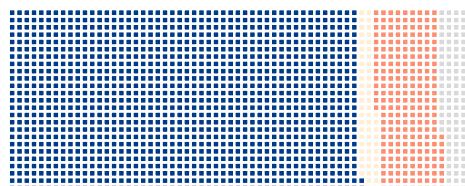
■ The president should not be bound by the laws or courts



■ The president must always obey the law and the courts

■ None of the above

■ It is not necessary to obey the laws of a government that you did not vote for



■ It is important to obey the government in power, no matter who you voted for

■ None of the above

FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

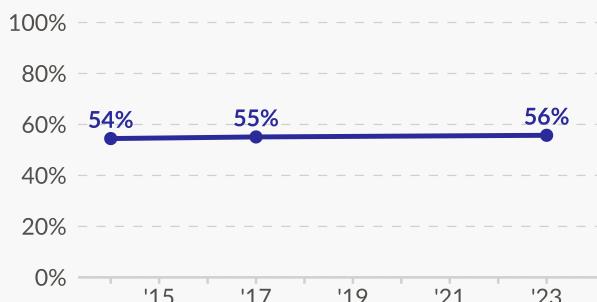
CHART 4.

Fundamental Freedoms in North Macedonia Over Time

Percentage of respondents who believe the following statements

EXPRESSION

People can express opinions against the government



Civil society organizations can express opinions against the government



Political parties can express opinions against the government



The media can express opinions against the government without fear of retaliation



The media can expose cases of corruption



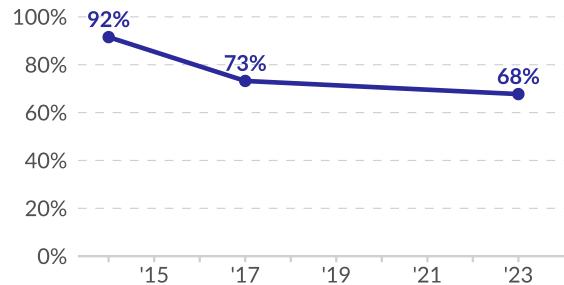
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2017, and 2023

■ PARTICIPATION

People can attend community meetings



People can join any political organization



People can organize around an issue or petition



■ ELECTIONS

Local government officials are elected through a clean process

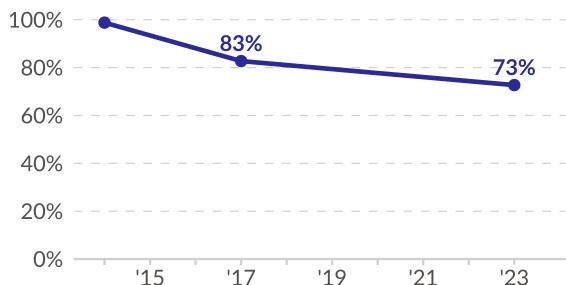


People can vote freely without feeling harassed or pressured



■ RELIGION

Religious minorities can observe their holy days



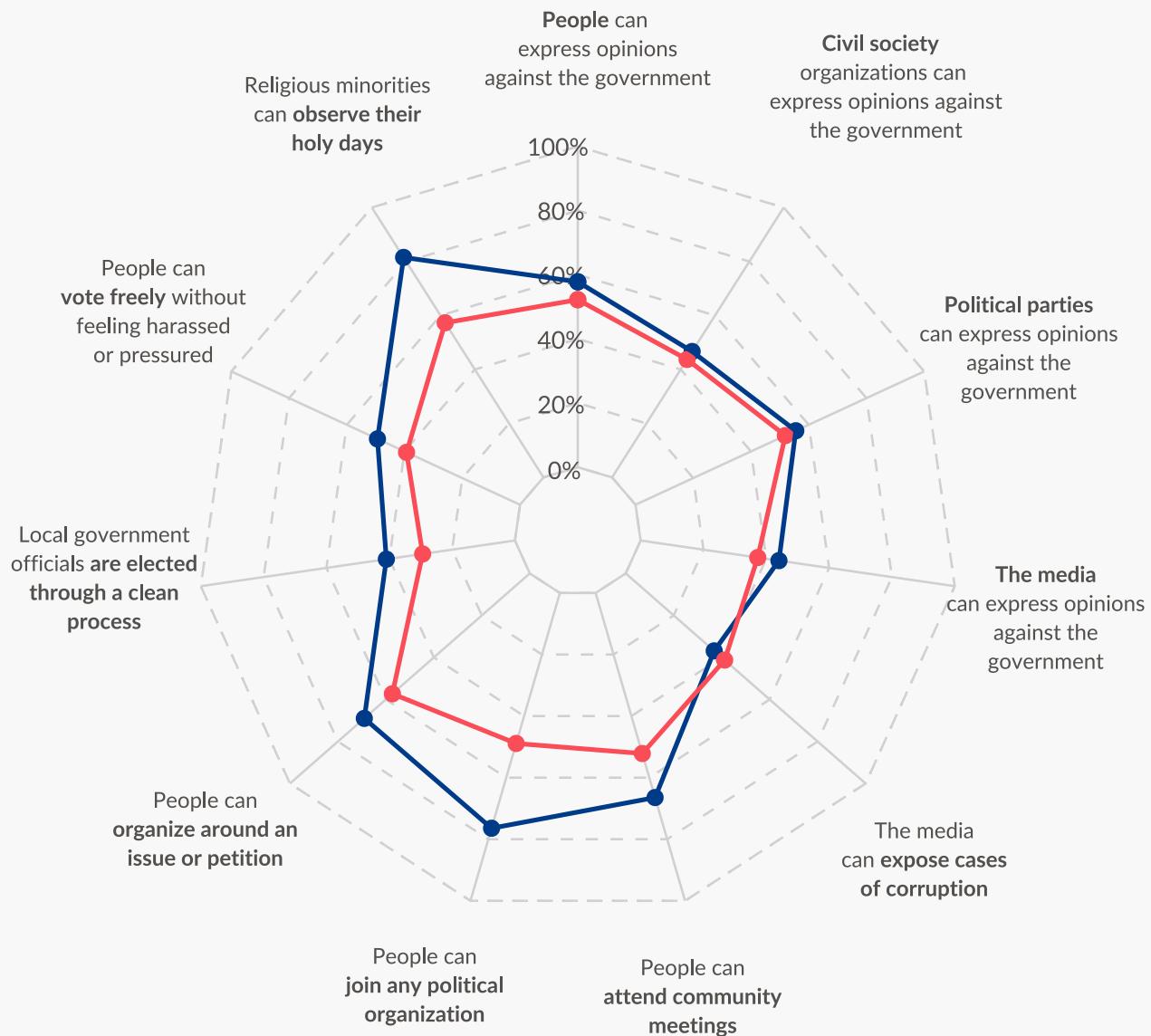
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2017, and 2023

CHART 5.

Perceptions of Fundamental Freedoms, by Ethnicity Group

Percentage of respondents who believe the following statements

● Macedonian ● Other



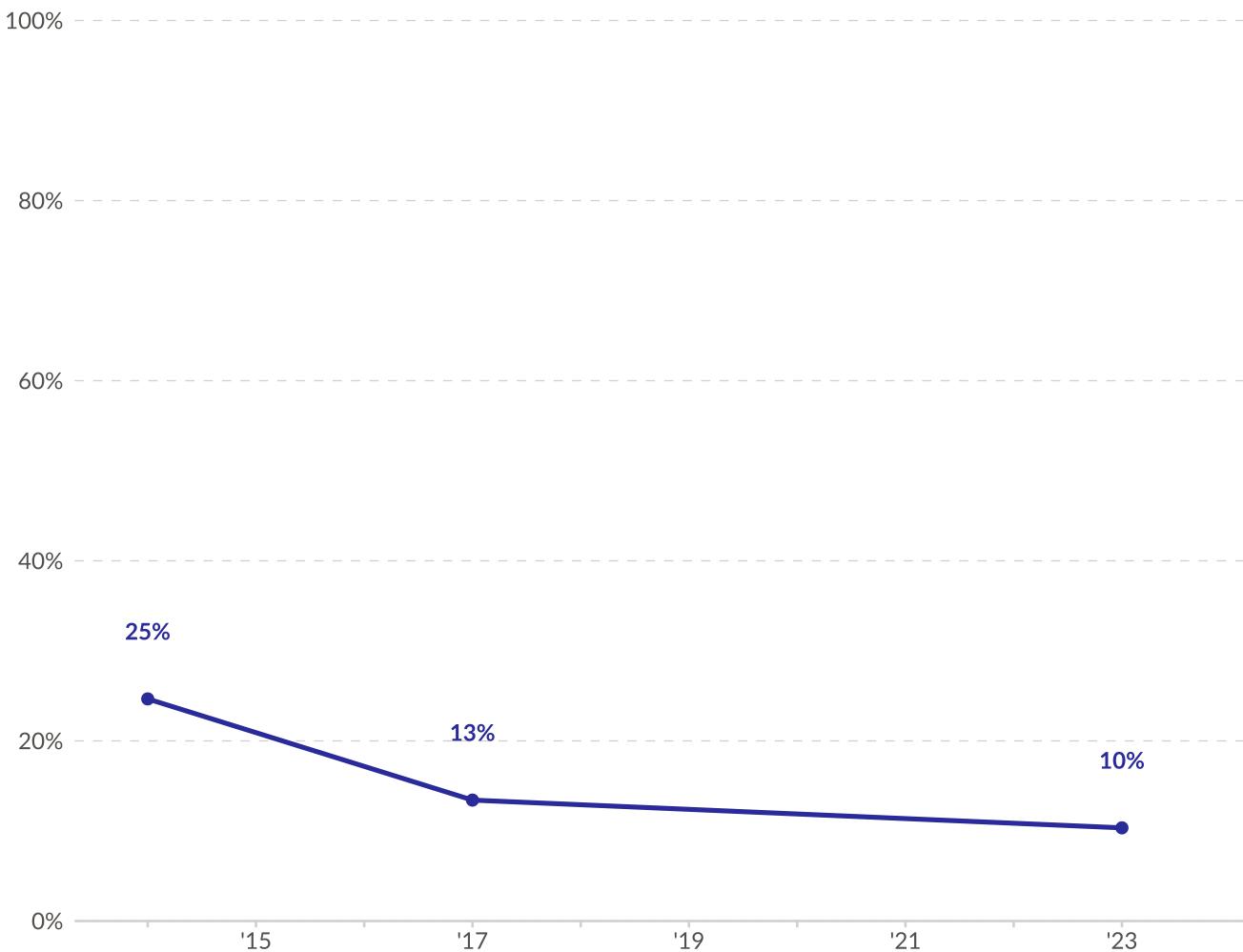
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2023

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

CHART 6.

Perceptions of Accountability in North Macedonia Over Time

Percentage of respondents who believe that high-ranking government officials would be held accountable for breaking the law



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2017, and 2023

THEMATIC FINDINGS

SECTION II CORRUPTION AND TRUST

- 21 Corruption
- 23 Trust
- 24 Political Perceptions

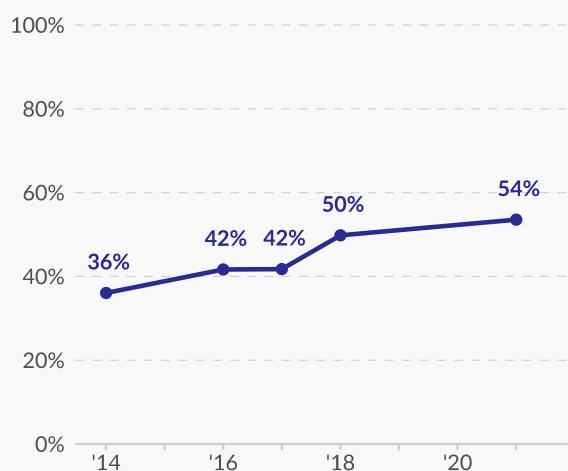
CORRUPTION

CHART 8.

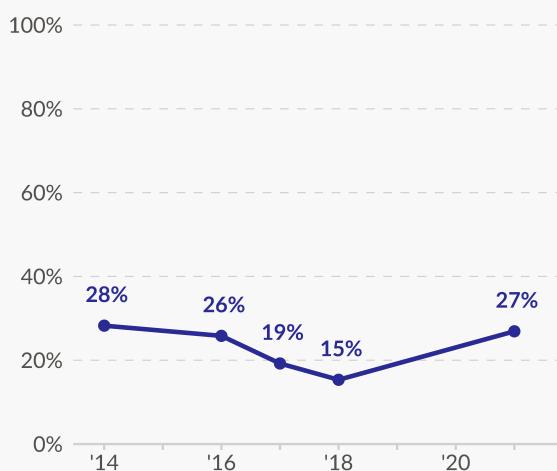
Perceptions of Corruption by Institution Over Time

Percentage of respondents who believe that most or all people working in the following institutions are corrupt

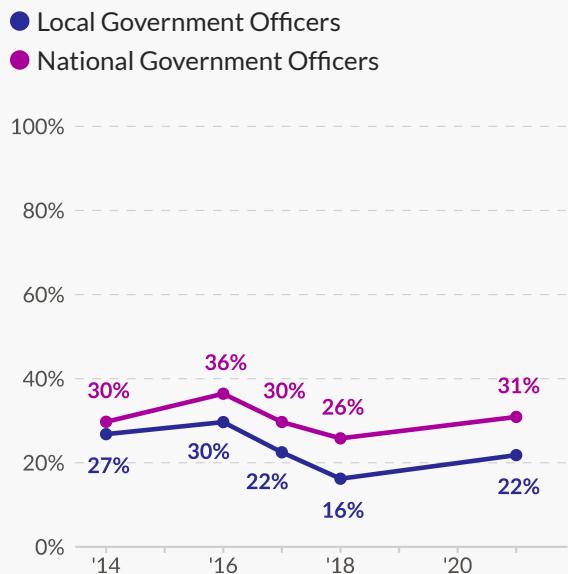
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS



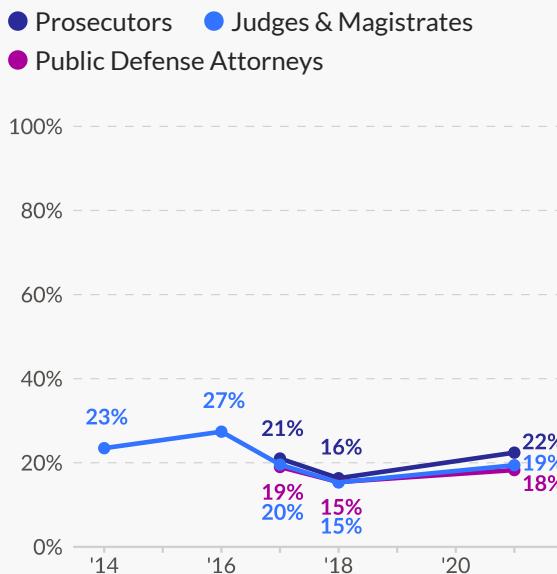
POLICE OFFICERS



EXECUTIVE



JUDICIARY



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2021

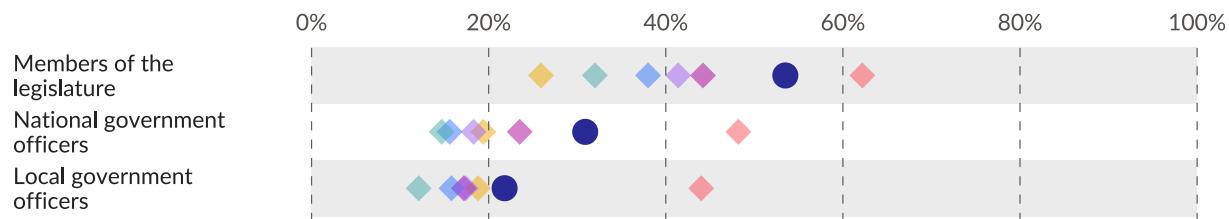
CHART 9.

Perceptions of Corruption in the G7 Countries, by Institution

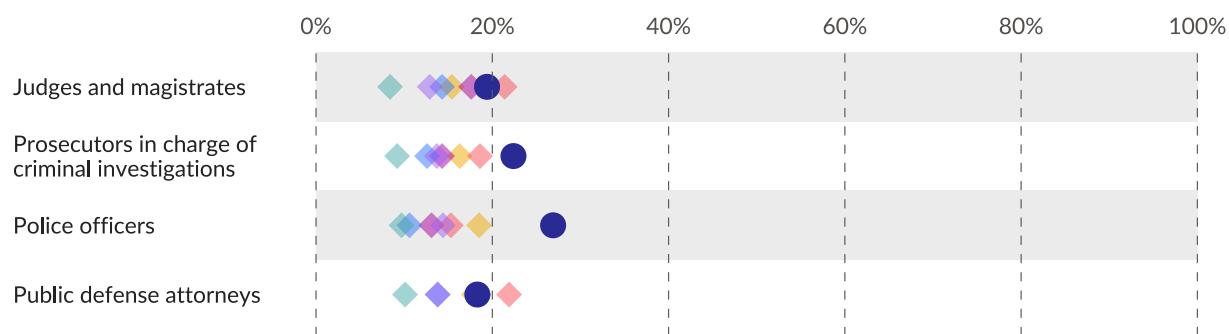
Percentage of respondents who think people in the following groups are involved in corrupt practices

◆ Canada ♦ France ▲ Germany ◆ Italy △ Japan ◇ United Kingdom ● United States

NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



SECURITY AND JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS



Note: The data presented in this analysis is sourced from multiple editions of the General Population Poll. Specifically, information for France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom is derived from the 2018 edition, while data concerning Canada and Italy is obtained from the 2017 edition. Notably, insights into the United States are based on data from the 2021 edition of the General Population Poll.

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2017, 2018, and 2021

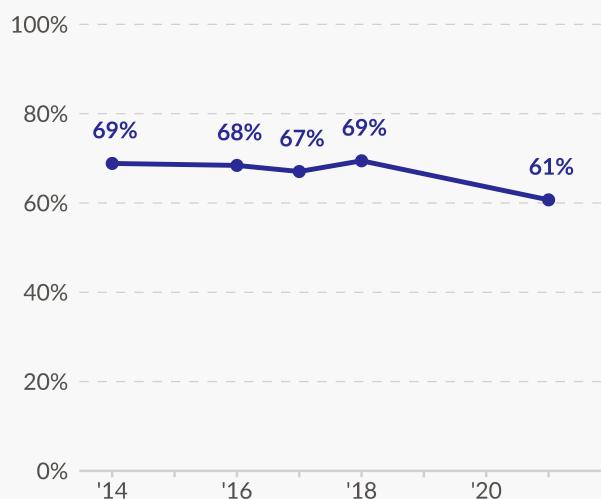
TRUST

CHART 10.

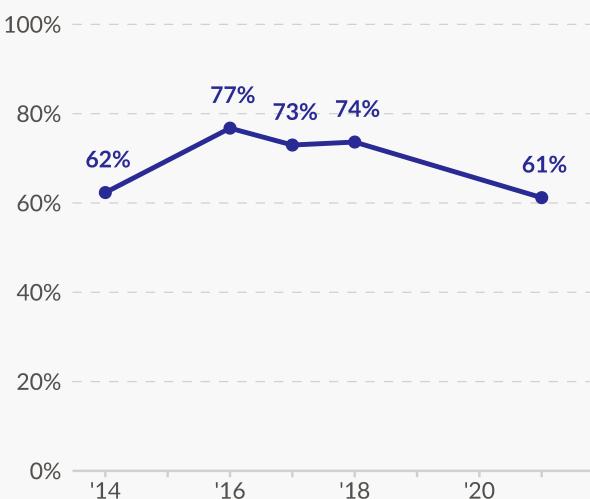
Trust in Institutions Over Time

Percentage of respondents who have a lot or some trust in...

PEOPLE LIVING IN THEIR COUNTRY

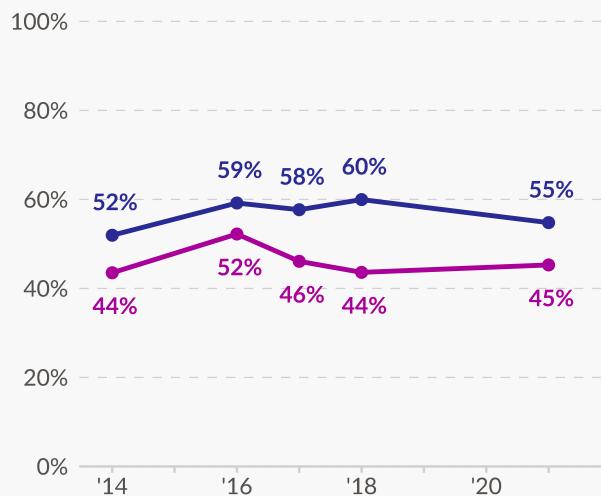


POLICE OFFICERS



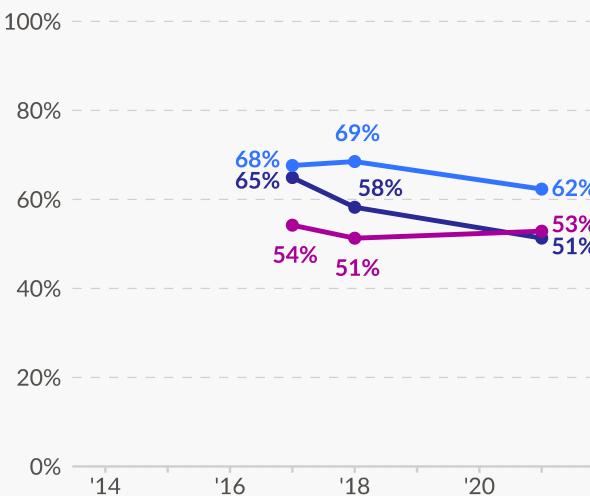
EXECUTIVE

- Local Government Officers
- National Government Officers



JUDICIARY

- Prosecutors
- Judges & Magistrates
- Public Defense Attorneys



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2021

POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION AND TRUST

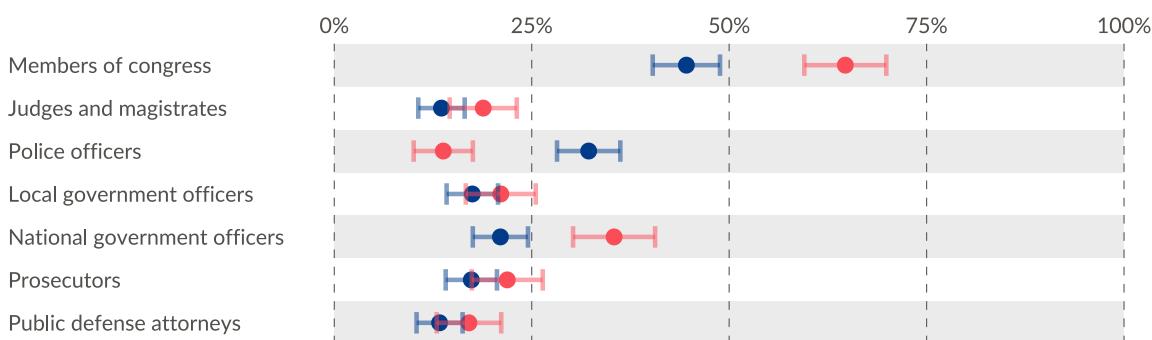
CHART 11.

Perceptions of Corruption and Trust, by Political Affiliation

● Republican ● Democrat

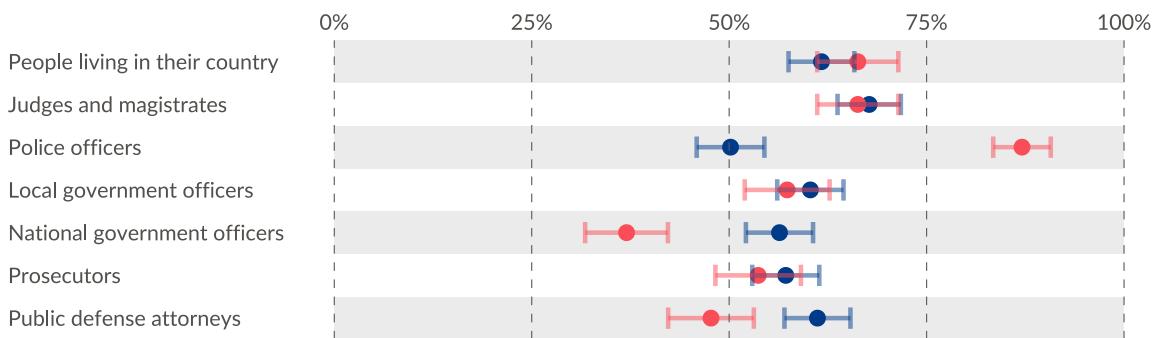
CORRUPTION

Percentage of respondents who believe that most or all people working in the following institutions are corrupt



TRUST

Percentage of respondents who have a lot or some trust in...



Note: The error bars encompassing the data points in our visuals are indicative of 95% confidence intervals. These intervals provide a reliable range within which we can reasonably infer that the true values lie.

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

THEMATIC FINDINGS

SECTION III
**SECURITY AND
CRIMINAL
JUSTICE**

26 Crime Victimization

27 Security

28 Criminal Justice

31 Police

CRIME VICTIMIZATION

CHART 12.1

Types of Crimes Experienced by People in the United States of America

Victimization rate, by type of crime

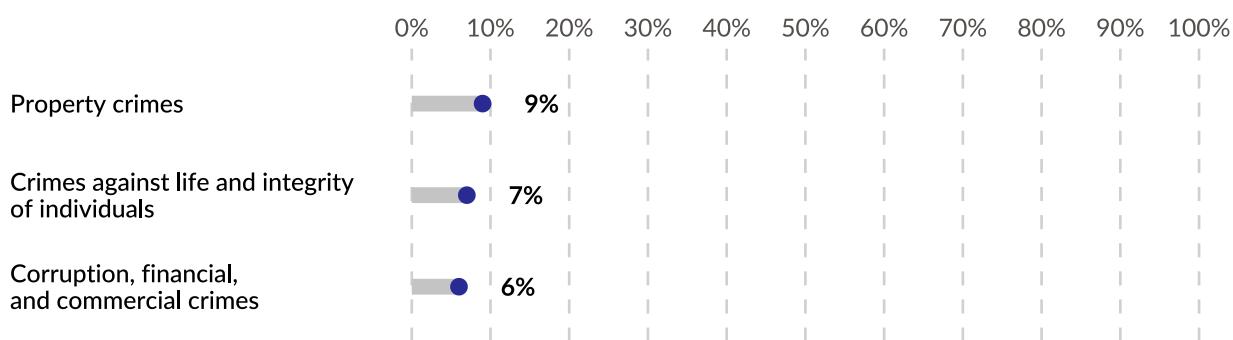
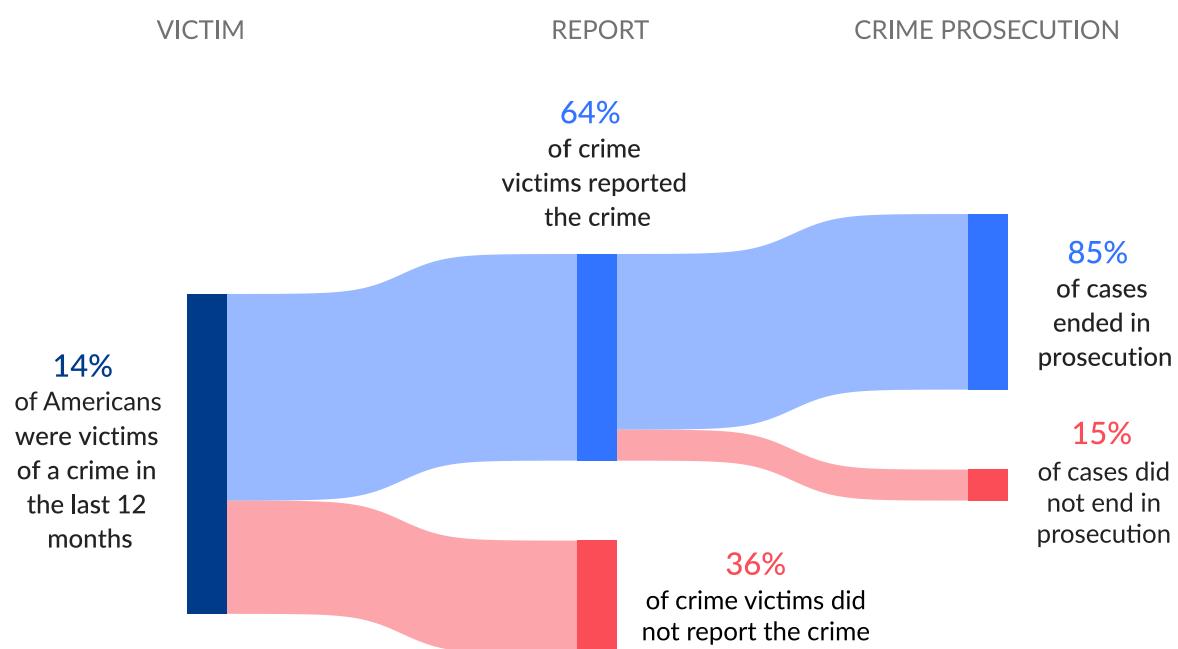


CHART 12.2

Crime Victimization Rates and Reporting

Data on crime victimization, reporting, and prosecution in the United States of America



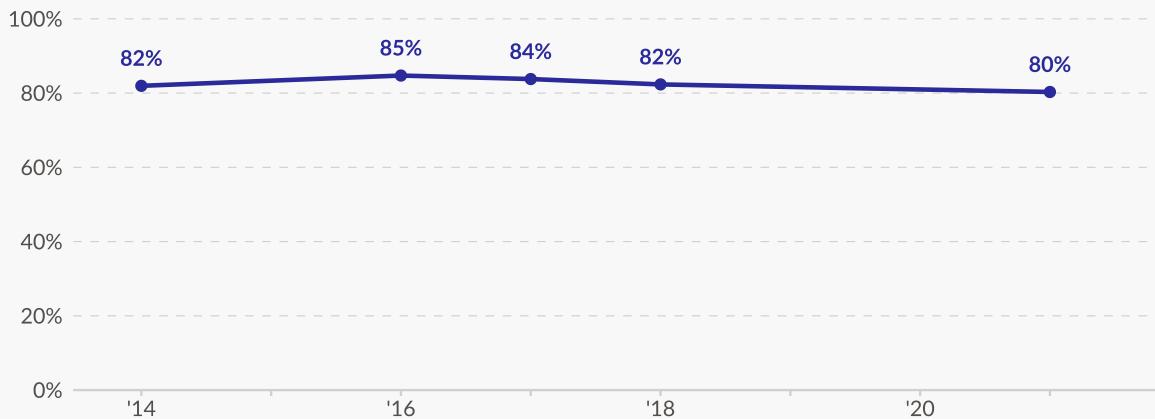
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

SECURITY

CHART 13.1

Perceptions of Security in the United States of America Over Time

Percentage of respondents who reported that they feel safe or very safe walking in their neighborhood at night

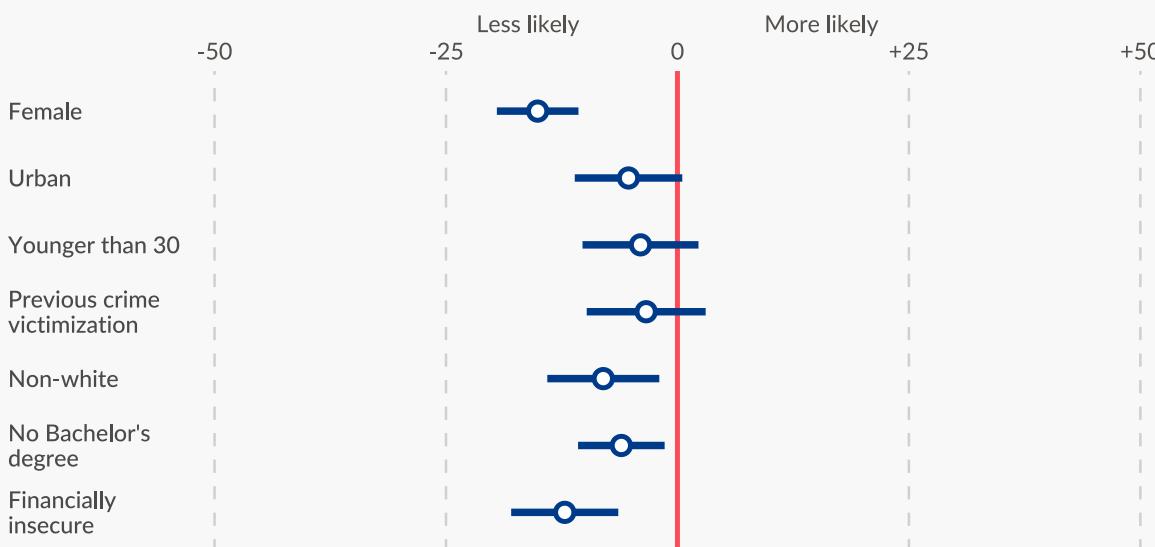


Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2021

CHART 13.2

Impact of Sociodemographic Characteristics on Perceptions of Safety

Likelihood that respondents feel safe or very safe walking in their neighborhood at night



Note: The results in this infographic were obtained from a logit regression. Each point indicates the average marginal effect of the corresponding sociodemographic characteristic on the predicted probability of a respondent to answer "safe" or "very safe" to the question "How safe do you feel walking in your neighborhood at night?" The lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals of each average marginal effect.

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

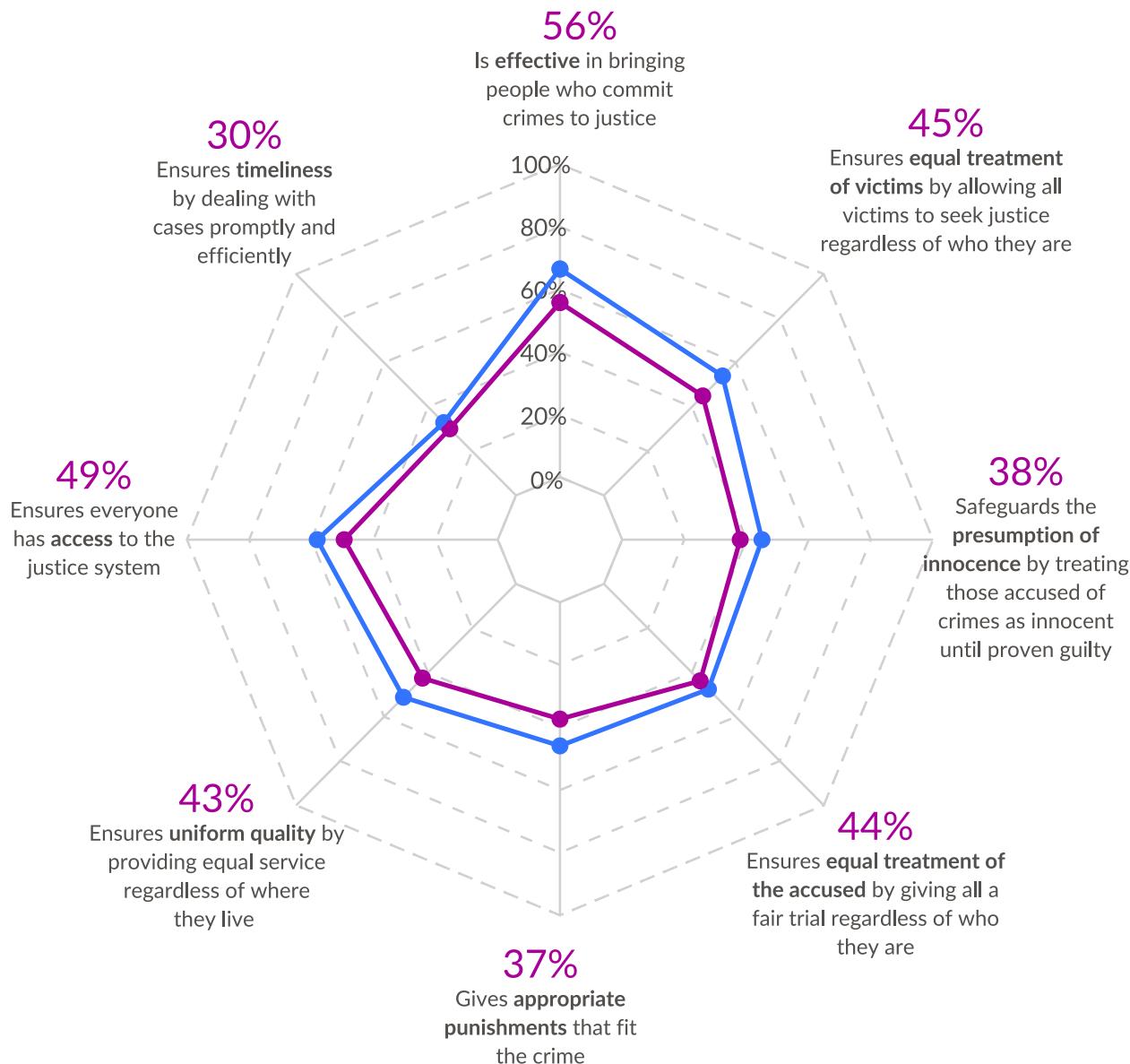
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

CHART 14.

Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System in the United States of America

Percentage of respondents who are confident that the criminal justice system...

● 2021 ● 2018



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2018 and 2021

CHART 15.

Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System, by Political Affiliation

Percentage of respondents who are confident that the criminal justice system...

● Republican ● Democrat

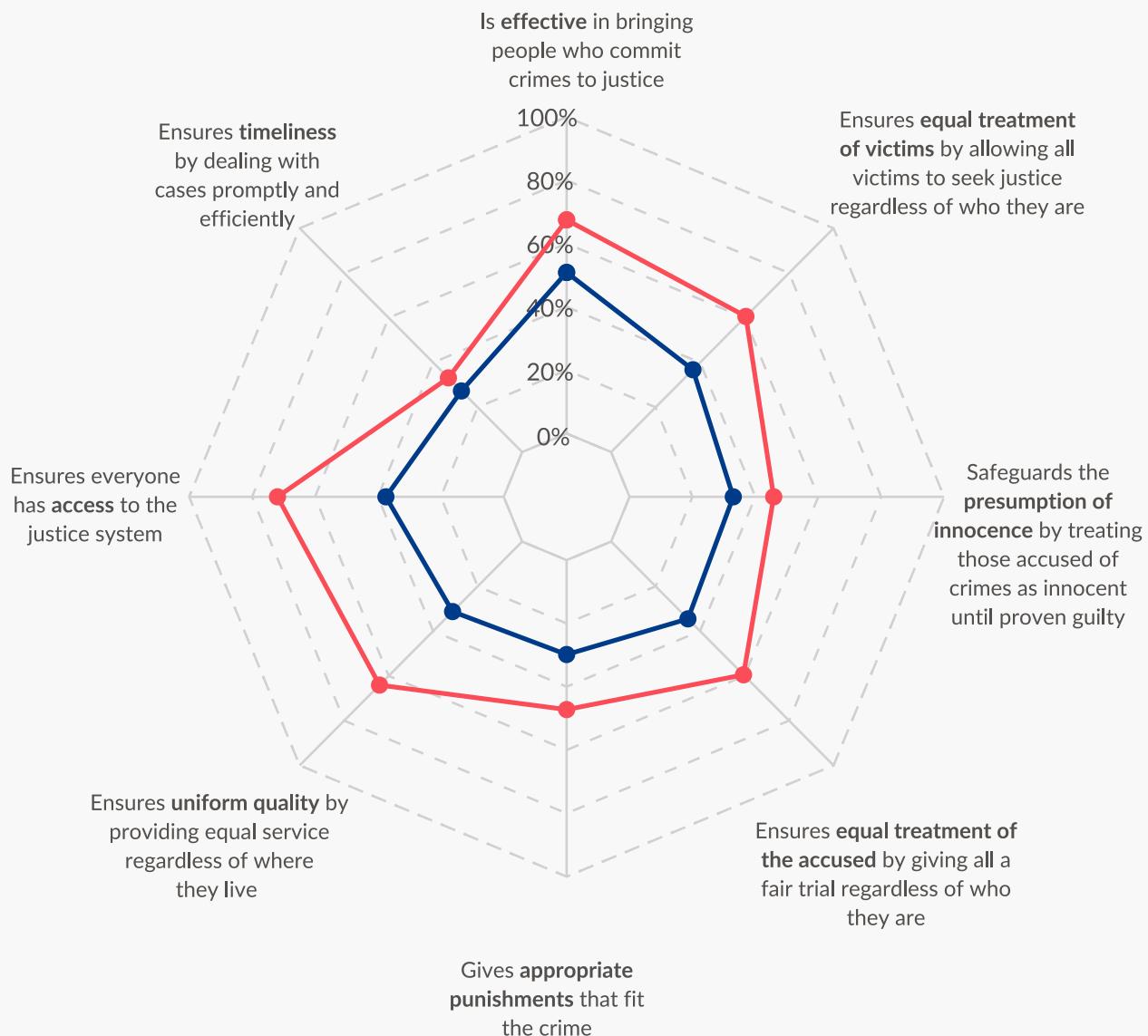


CHART 16.

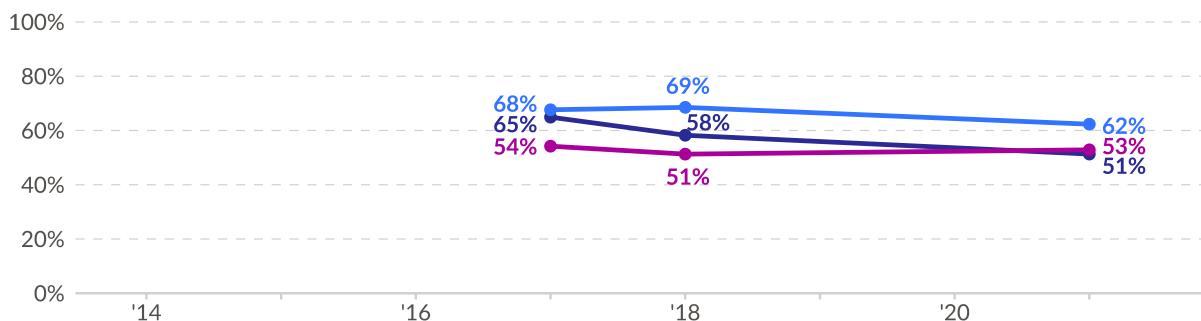
Criminal Justice Actors

Perceptions of criminal justice actors in the United States of America

● Prosecutors ● Public Defense Attorneys ● Judges & Magistrates

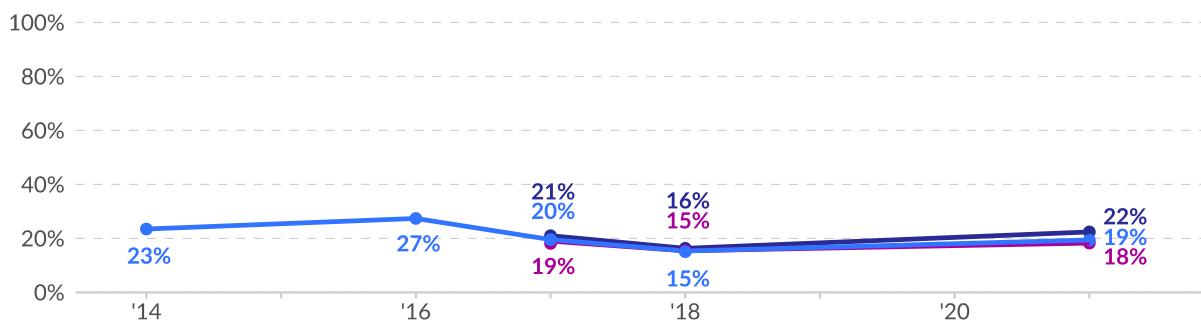
TRUST IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACTORS OVER TIME

Percentage of respondents who have a lot or some trust in prosecutors, public defense attorneys, and judges and magistrates



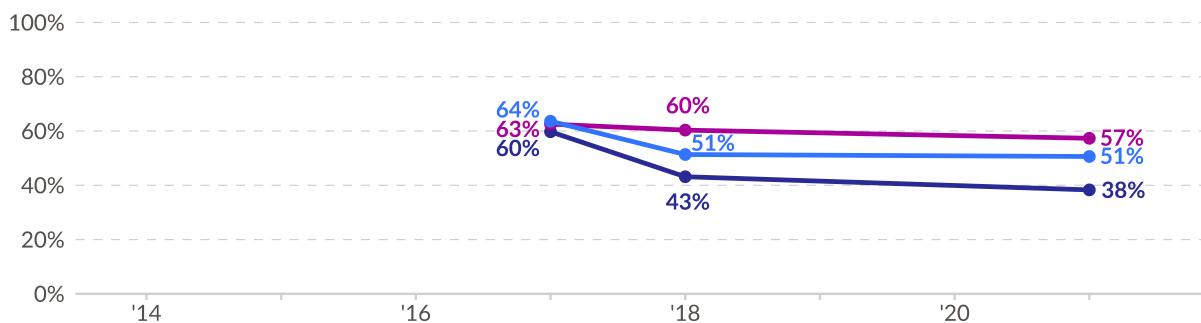
PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION ACROSS CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACTORS OVER TIME

Percentage of respondents who believe that most or all prosecutors, public defense attorneys, and judges and magistrates are corrupt



PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACTORS OVER TIME

Percentage of respondents who believe that prosecutors, public defense attorneys, and judges and magistrates do their job well



Note: Variables in Effectiveness category are as follows: Prosecutors prosecute crimes committed in an independent manner and are not subject to any sort of pressure; Public defenders do everything they can to defend poor people that are accused of committing a crime; Judges decide cases in an independent manner and are not subject to any sort of pressure.

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2021

POLICE

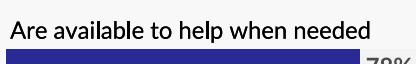
CHART 17.

Perceptions of the Police

Opinions on the effectiveness and legitimacy of law enforcement

TRUST AND SAFETY

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police...



ACCOUNTABILITY AND DUE PROCESS

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police...



DISCRIMINATION

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police do not discriminate against suspects based on...



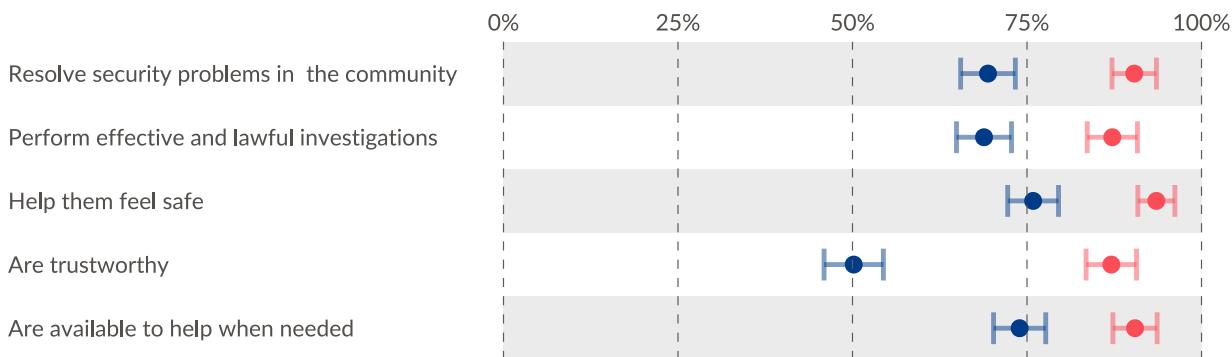
CHART 18.

Perceptions of the Police, by Political Affiliation

● Republican ● Democrat

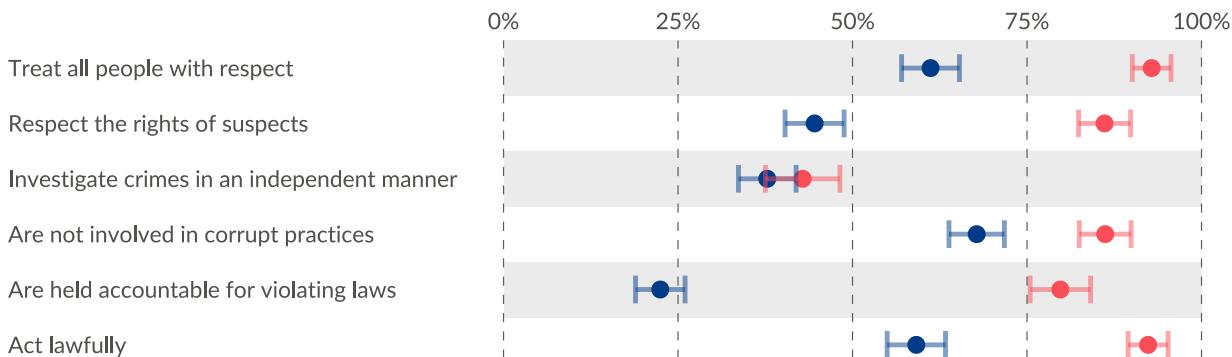
TRUST AND SAFETY

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police...



ACCOUNTABILITY AND DUE PROCESS

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police...



DISCRIMINATION

Percentage of respondents who believe that the police do not discriminate against suspects based on...



Note: The error bars encompassing the data points in our visuals are indicative of 95% confidence intervals. These intervals provide a reliable range within which we can reasonably infer that the true values lie.

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

THEMATIC FINDINGS

SECTION IV DISCRIMINATION

34 Discrimination

DISCRIMINATION

CHART 19.1.

Discrimination Experiences

Percentage of respondents in the United States of America who reported having experienced some form of discrimination



Note: The General Population Poll captures five different discrimination-related situations: a) "You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people", b) "You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores", c) "People act as if they think you are not smart", d) "People act as if they are afraid of you", and e) "You are threatened or harassed".

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

CHART 19.2.

Impact of Sociodemographic Characteristics on Discrimination

Likelihood that, at least once a month, respondents feel that...

| They are treated with less courtesy than other people



| People are afraid of them



Note: These figures show the results of two logit regressions. On the left, each point indicates the average marginal effect of the corresponding sociodemographic characteristic on the predicted probability that a respondent answers a frequency of at least once a month to the question "How often do any of the following things happen to you? You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people." On the right, each point indicates the average marginal effect of the corresponding sociodemographic characteristic on the predicted probability that a respondent answers a respondent answers a frequency of at least once a month to the question "How often do any of the following things happen to you? People act as if they are afraid of you."

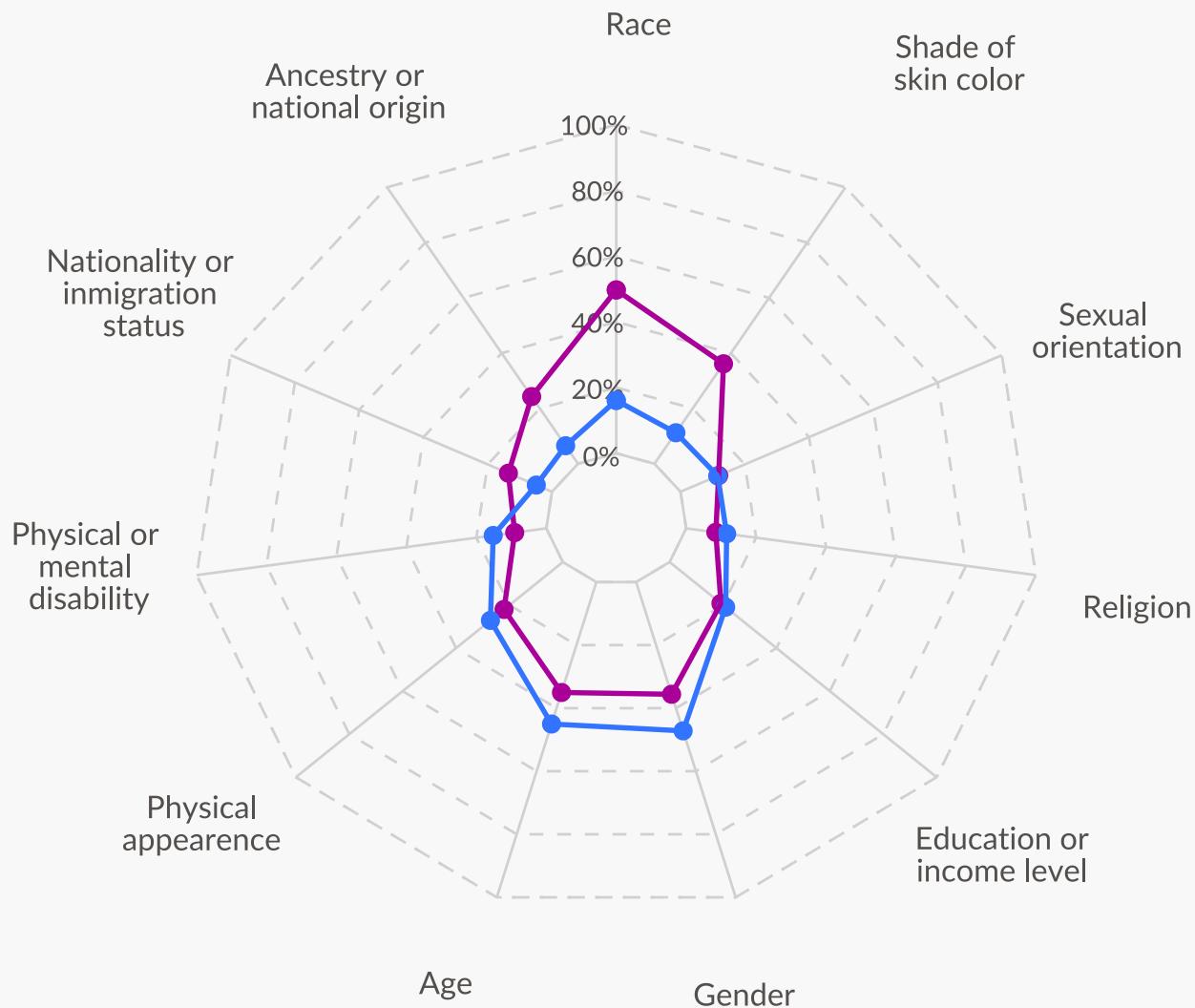
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021

CHART 20.

Reasons Why People Feel Discriminated, by Shade of Skin Color

Percentage of respondents who think that the main reason why they experience discrimination is due to their...

● Non-white ● White



Note: The General Population Poll captures five different discrimination-related situations: a) "You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people", b) "You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores", c) "People act as if they think you are not smart", d) "People act as if they are afraid of you", and e) "You are threatened or harassed".

Source: WJP General Population Poll 2022

PROJECT DESIGN

37 Methodology

METHODOLOGY

To present an image that accurately portrays the rule of law as experienced by ordinary people, data in this report is drawn from the General Population Poll (GPP), an original data source designed and collected by the World Justice Project (WJP). The GPP captures the experiences and perceptions of ordinary citizens concerning the performance of the state and its agents and the actual operation of the legal framework in their country.

The General Population Poll used to collect data in the United States of America in 2021 features several questions that highlight perceptions on salient issues, including authoritarian behavior, corruption, criminal justice, fundamental freedoms, security, and discrimination. In total, the General Population Poll questionnaire includes 88 perception-based questions and 69 experience-based questions, along with sociodemographic information on all respondents. Additionally, the GPP in the United States of America was administered to a sample of 1,258 respondents.

Data Collection

The GPP in the United States of America was conducted for the WJP's *The Rule of Law in the United States of America: Key Findings from the General Population Poll 2021* with sampling, fieldwork, and data processing by YouGov, Nordic, based in Copenhagen, Denmark. YouGov Nordic administered the surveys in May 2021, conducting computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) using a stratified random sampling design. The target population group for this survey included Americans aged 18 years or older residing across all four regions throughout the country.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLE FRAME

The General Population Poll in the United States of America represents an achieved total sample size of 1,258 interviews distributed proportionally across four regions. YouGov based the sampling frame on the most recent population estimates from the United States Census Bureau, acquiring a proportionally stratified sample by region, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and level of urbanization.

In order to address all relevant topics while controlling the questionnaire length, the World Justice Project split three of the survey modules into two versions (Option A and Option B) and randomly assigned one option to each respondent for each module. These modules included: Hypothetical Situations, Civic Participation, and Institutional Performance. Aside from these modules, the questionnaires are identical.

SAMPLING

All interviews in the United States were conducted using a CAWI methodology. All respondents are registered members of the YouGov Survey Panel. They were selected based on their place of residence, age, gender, and reported income in order to fulfill predefined quotas to achieve a nationally representative sample.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

COVERAGE: Interviews were distributed across regions to create a nationally representative sample. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the interviews took place in the South region, 28% in the West, 20% in the Midwest and the remaining 17% of the interviews took place in the Northeast region of the country.

GEOGRAPHY: Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents resided in rural areas, while 85% of respondents resided in metro areas or cities.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND: Eighty percent (80%) of respondents identified themselves as White, followed by Hispanic (5%) and Black (5%). The remaining 10% of respondents identified themselves as part of other ethnic groups.

GENDER: Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents were female and 48% were male.

EDUCATION: Most respondents (94%) reported that they had received at least a high school diploma or vocational degree.

RESPONSE RATES

Incomplete and rejected surveys	209
Rejected Submissions	113
Break-off	96

INTERVIEWING AND QUALITY CONTROL

All interviews were conducted online in English. As part of quality control, the duration of all completed surveys was checked and any surveys that were completed in less than 7 minutes were flagged and rejected from the final sample.

DATA REVIEW AND JUSTIFICATION

As part of the data analysis process, the team consulted several third-party sources in order to contextualize and validate perception-based data captured by the General Population Poll and compare it with the objective rule of law situation in-country. Peer data sources consulted include select indicators measured by Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's *Transformation Index (BTI)*, and Freedom House's *Freedom in the World*. While certain trends captured by the 2021 General Population Poll in the United States of America are comparable to trends in perceptions data measured by other indices and measures, the experiences and perceptions presented in this report may not always coincide with the reality of the rule of law performance in the United States of America as measured by other sources.

HISTORICAL DATA

Historical data in this report derives from the WJP Rule of Law Index®'s General Population Poll that is typically administered every two to three years using a nationally representative probability sample ranging from 500 to 1,000 respondents. These household surveys were administered in the three largest cities of most countries until 2018, when the World Justice Project transitioned to nationally representative coverage as the preferred methodology for polling. The historical polling data used in this year's reports was collected in the following intervals: Data for Canada and Italy was collected in 2014 and 2017. Data for France, Germany and Japan was collected in 2016 and 2018. Data for the United Kingdom was collected in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Data for the United States of America was collected in 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2021.

APPENDIX

40 About the WJP

41 Other Publications



ABOUT THE WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT

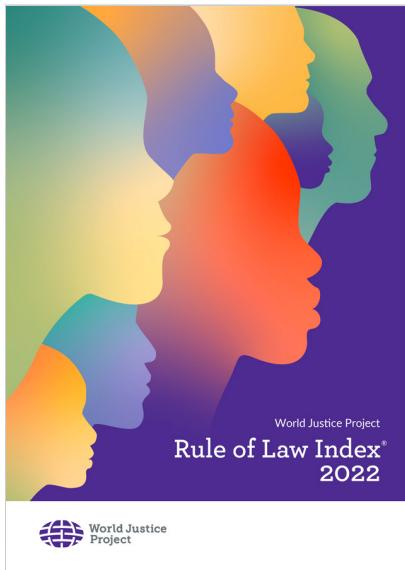
The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working to create knowledge, build awareness, and stimulate action to advance the rule of law worldwide. Effective rule of law is the foundation for communities of justice, opportunity, and peace—underpinning development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights.

The WJP builds and supports a global, multidisciplinary movement for the rule of law through three lines of work: collecting, organizing, and analyzing original, independent rule of law data, including the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index; supporting research, scholarship, and teaching about the importance of the rule of law, its relationship to development, and effective strategies to strengthen it; and connecting and building an engaged global network of policymakers and advocates to advance the rule of law through strategic partnerships, convenings, coordinated advocacy, and support for locally led initiatives.

Learn more at: worldjusticeproject.org.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

For more information click on the publication.

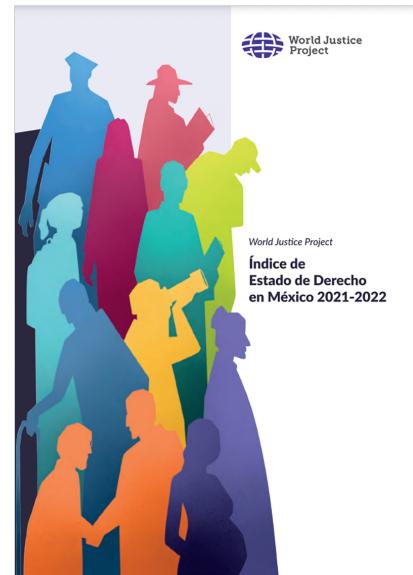


WJP Rule of Law Index 2022



WJP Rule of Law Index 2022 Insights

Highlights and data trends from the
WJP Rule of Law Index 2021

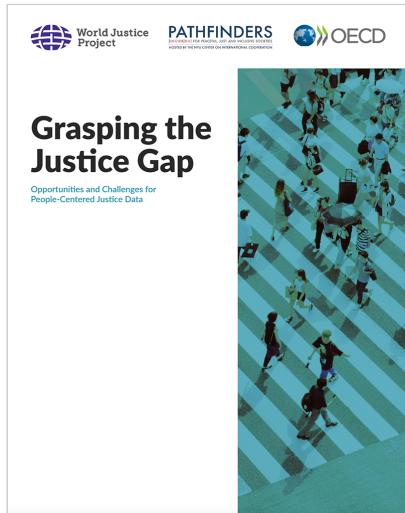


WJP Mexico States Rule of Law Index 2020-2021

Perceptions and experiences in 32 states



World Justice Challenge 2021
Outcome Report



Grasping the Justice Gap 2021



Environmental Governance Indicators for Latin America & the Caribbean 2020

For more information or to read these reports, visit worldjusticeproject.org/our-work



World Justice
Project