

SIERRA LEONE ELECTIONS 2007

A Comprehensive Baseline Study of Knowledge, Priorities and Trust

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1) Knowledge about elections and political parties varies across sample Districts/Areas, is highest in Western Urban Area, but particularly low in the southern and eastern Districts of Bo, Pujehun and Kono.

- 86% of respondents from Western Urban area could name the date of the next national election in Sierra Leone, whereas this declines to 69%, 59% and 56% in Kono, Pujehun and Bo, respectively
- Self-reported confidence in knowledge of the electoral system is also particularly low in Bo and Pujehun, although much higher in Kono than knowledge about election date would suggest.
- Young people (18-25 year olds) are slightly less likely to know the date of election than older respondents.
- Respondents with no formal education are much less likely to know the date of elections than respondents who have (at least) completed secondary school. Only 51% of the former reported knowing the date of the next election, compared with over 90% of the latter.
- There is a strong association between involvement in wider social and political activities, and respondents' knowledge about elections and politics. Talking about politics with friends, membership of church, sports and other voluntary associations, having contacted an elected official about an issue, having taken part in a demonstration, are all examples of activities which are associated with higher levels of knowledge.
- Conversely, respondents with lower levels of knowledge about elections are more likely to also be disconnected from wider social and community activities. 'Social capital' is important.

2) Women are less likely than men to be able to name the date of the next election, are less likely to be able to name political parties, and are less likely to rate themselves as having a high level of knowledge about the electoral process

- 80% of men, compared with only 65% of women report knowing the date of the next national election in Sierra Leone.
- The proportion of female listeners who know the date of the next election is particularly low in Kono, Pujehun and Bo, declining to 60%, 52% and 43% respectively

- Only 25% of women report having a high level of knowledge about the electoral process, compared with 36% of men.
- Women are less likely than men to be able to name any of the political parties in Sierra Leone

3) A large proportion of people do not think that their views are represented by political parties, or that political parties offer them real choices on issues of policy

- 30% of all respondents think that there are no differences between political parties, with the proportion being particularly high in Kono (55%), Western Rural Area (47%), and Pujehun (47%)
- In six out of eight sample Districts/Areas, under 25% of people felt strongly that their views were represented by political parties, with Western Rural Area (13%), Western Urban Area (15%), and Bo District (15%), being particularly low. The proportions are much higher in Kono (53%), and Pujehun (38%), than elsewhere.
- 48% of respondents felt strongly that political parties in Sierra Leone do not offer real policy choices, the proportions being particularly high in Kono District (74%), Western Rural Area (63%), and Western Urban Area (58%)
- Only 26% of respondents feel strongly that their views are reflected in political discussions, the proportion being particularly low in Bombali (9%), and Bo (13%). It is much higher in Kono (53%) and Pujehun (40%).
- Men are slightly more likely than women to feel strongly that their views are represented in political discussions, and that their views are represented by political parties.

4) The key political priorities are Education, Water, and Electricity, although there are variations across Districts/Areas in stated priorities

- Across all Districts/Areas, Education, Water and Electricity appear in the top five most mentioned political priorities
- Roads are the most frequently mentioned priority in Kono and Kailahun, and the third most mentioned priority in Bo and Pujehun. Roads do not appear in the top five priorities in the Western Area, or the Northern Districts of Port Loko and Bombali
- Peace and Security is the second most frequently mentioned priority in Bo and Pujehun, but does not appear in the top five in any other District/Area.
- Women and men, and older and younger people appear to share similar political priorities.

5) There is a high demand for government to treat all people equally, protect the rights of minority groups, and to offer people opportunities to participate in the decision making process

- 86% of respondents place a high value on the protection of minority rights, 82% on treating everybody equally, and 78% and 76% respectively think that government should take account of the views of citizens and offer opportunities to participate in the decision making process.
- A much lower proportion of respondents from Port Loko, compared with all other Districts/Areas, place a high value on equality and protection of minority rights. Respondents from Bo (62%) and Port Loko (65%) are also less likely to place a high value on the importance of government giving more opportunities to participate in government

6) The overwhelming majority of respondents place a high value on the importance of voting, and a similarly high proportion of respondents (aged 23 and over) report that they had voted in the previous national election in Sierra Leone. The majority of respondents also think that the previous election was honest, although there are variations across Districts/Areas

- 90% of respondents (aged 23+) report having voted in the previous national election, and over 90% place a high value on the importance of voting. There is a strong association between voting in previous national election and a positive attitude towards the value of voting – 84% of respondents who rated voting as having a high level of importance, voted in the last national election. This compares with only 50% of those who placed a low level of importance on voting.
- Western Urban Area has the lowest proportion of respondents (85%) reporting having voted in the last national election, whilst Pujehun has the lowest proportion of respondents (87%) placing a high value on the importance of voting.
- The three main reasons that respondents who were old enough to vote report not voting are:
 - they were not registered;
 - they were too busy; and
 - they didn't support any political party

- Having voted previously, and placing a high value on voting, are associated with membership and participation in a number of social and politically motivated activities, and participation in social and voluntary groups (church, sports etc).
- In six out of the eight sample Districts/Areas, over 50% of respondents rated the honesty of the last national election as 'high' with regard to the counting and reporting of votes. In Western Urban Area, however, this proportion is far lower than elsewhere, with only 27% of respondents reporting a high likelihood that the last elections were honest. Bombali had the highest number of people reporting a low level of trust in the honest of last national elections – 24%.

7) Levels of trust in politicians and elected officials, the legal system and the police are not high. Across seven out of eight sample Districts/Areas, under 50% of people placed a high level of trust in elected officials, under a third place a high level of trust in the police, and, other than in one District (Bombali), under half of respondents placed a high level of trust in the legal system.

- People place a higher degree of trust in local politicians than they do in national politicians. Only 17% of respondents report having a high degree of trust in national politicians, compared with 31% in local politicians. 53% report having little or no trust in national politicians, compared with 32% for local politicians. Differences in trust between national and local politicians are highest in Bo, Kono and Bombali.
- Trust in the police and the legal system is highest in the northern Districts of Bombali (48% placing high degree of trust in police, and 63% in legal system) and Port Loko. Trust is lower elsewhere, but particularly in the southern and eastern Districts of Bo, Pujehun and Kailahun (where only 11% place a high degree of trust in the police, and 19% in the legal system).
- In all but two Districts/Areas (Western Rural and Kono), under half of respondents reported placing a high level of trust in elected officials to 'do what is right'. In all Districts/Areas, under half of respondents reported feeling strongly that government would respond to protests about unjust laws.
- There are few differences between males and females as to the level of trust they place in politicians, the police and the legal system.

8) Involvement in organised social and political activity varies considerably across Districts/Areas, but Kailahun, Western Urban Area, and Kono District have higher levels of activity than other Districts/Areas, whereas Bo and Pujehun have relatively low levels of activity

- 31% of respondents in Kailahun report having taken part in a demonstration in the past year, 41% having attended a political rally, 33% having contacted a politician or civil servant to express their views, and 40% having raised money for a social or political activity. This is higher than across all other Districts/Areas
- In Bo, only 4% of respondents report having taken part in a demonstration in the past year, 16% having attended a political rally, 7% contacted a politician or civil servant, and 6% having raised money for a social or political activity. This is lower than across all other Districts/Areas, although similar to Pujehun, the other sample District from the southern province
- Women are less likely than men to have engaged in organised social and political activity.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from a survey of 2,600 18-59 year olds, carried out across eight Districts/Areas across the Western Area and Northern, Southern, and Eastern Provinces of Sierra Leone. The survey was carried out over February and March 2007.

The survey explored four key themes:

- i. Media consumption
- ii. Knowledge & attitudes in relation to forthcoming and previous elections
- iii. Political knowledge and attitudes towards political process and institutions
- iv. Participation and social and politically motivated activities, and membership of voluntary community groups (church, sports etc)

Findings from the survey are presented in two separate reports. This report presents findings on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to forthcoming elections.

It explores the following issues:

- Knowledge of the date of the forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone (scheduled for July 2007 at the time of the survey)
- Knowledge and attitudes towards political parties
- Voting behaviour and attitudes towards voting
- Trust in social and political institutions in Sierra Leone
- Engagement in political and socially motivated activity and membership of voluntary community groups.

2. METHODOLOGY

Sampling approach

A sample of 2,600 18-59 year olds was taken from eight Districts/Areas across Sierra Leone. **Table 1** shows the distribution of the sample across the eight Districts/Areas included in the survey.

Districts/Areas	No. of people sampled	Percent of total sample
Western urban	500	19.5
Western rural	300	11.5
Port Loko	300	11.5
Bombali	300	11.5
Kono	300	11.5
Pujehun	300	11.5
Bo	300	11.5
Kailahun	300	11.5
Total	2600	100

Table 1: Sample by District/Area

For all Districts/Areas outside of Freetown, samples were spread across three Chiefdoms, including the Headquarter Town. In Freetown Area, samples were taken from five zones across the city.

Table 2 gives details of all sample points within each District/Area.

Western Urban Area	Western Rural Area	Port Loko District	Bombali District
East1	Waterloo	Koya (western)	Bombali Sebora (Makeni Town)
East3	York	Loko Masama	Biriwa
Central1	Koya (rural)	Maforiki (Port Loko)	Paki Masabong
Central2			
West2			
Kono District	Pujehun District	Bo District	Kailahun District
Nimi Yama	Makpele	Kakua (Bo Town)	Jawie
Nimikoro	Panga-Kabonde (Pujehun Town)	Jaiama Bongor	Kissi Tongi
Tankoro (Koidu Town)	Barri	Valunya	Luawa (Kailahun Town)

Table 2: Sample Chiefdoms/Zones across Districts/Areas

Households were selected randomly within each sample Chiefdom (or zone, in Freetown). One individual meeting the sample criteria was selected from each household, where available.

Demographics of sample

The sample was split equally between men and women. An age quota was applied, dividing the sample into four age bands. **Table 3** shows the distribution of the sample across each age band.

Age	No. of people in each age band	% of total sample
18-25	579	22
26-34	637	25
35-45	823	32
46-59	561	22
Total	2600	100

Table 3: Age distribution of the sample

Table 4 shows the distribution of the sample across bands of educational attainment. The largest group are those with no formal education (39%), followed by those with some attendance at secondary school (22%).

Level of education achieved	No. in each category	% of total sample in each category
No formal education	1043	40
Primary school	158	6
Incomplete secondary school	556	21
Completed secondary school	366	14
Incomplete technical/vocational school	52	2
Completed technical/vocational school	98	4
Incomplete college/university	103	4
Completed college/university	155	6
Post-graduate	44	2
Total	2575	99
Missing or declined to answer	24	1
Total	2600	100

Table 4: Educational attainment across the sample

Table 5 shows the occupational structure of the sample. The largest occupational categories are farming and livestock (24%) and trading of some kind (21%).

Main occupation over last 12 months	No. in each category	% of total sample in each category	Main occupation over last 12 months	No. in each category	% of total sample in each category
Farming/livestock	632	24	Skilled trade (mechanic, carpenter, welder, mason etc)	157	6
Fishing	40	2	Tailor	60	2
Trader/merchant/sales	546	21	Hair dresser/barber	63	2
Transport (driver)	60	2	Security worker	43	2
Education professional admin.	151	6	Student	306	12
Health professional admin.	51	2	No activity/job	200	8
Other professional admin. (NGO/Government/Civil Service)	122	5	Other	89	3
Secretary/Clerical	33	1	Total	2597	100
Factory worker	17	1	Missing or declined to answer	3	0
Restaurant, bar, hotel	27	1	Total	2600	100

Table 5: Occupational structure of the sample

3. KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

This section looks at respondents' knowledge of the date of the next national election in Sierra Leone, and their self-reported confidence in their knowledge of the electoral process, and political parties¹.

Knowledge of date of national elections in Sierra Leone by District/Area

Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents in all sample Districts/Areas who report knowing the date of national elections in Sierra Leone

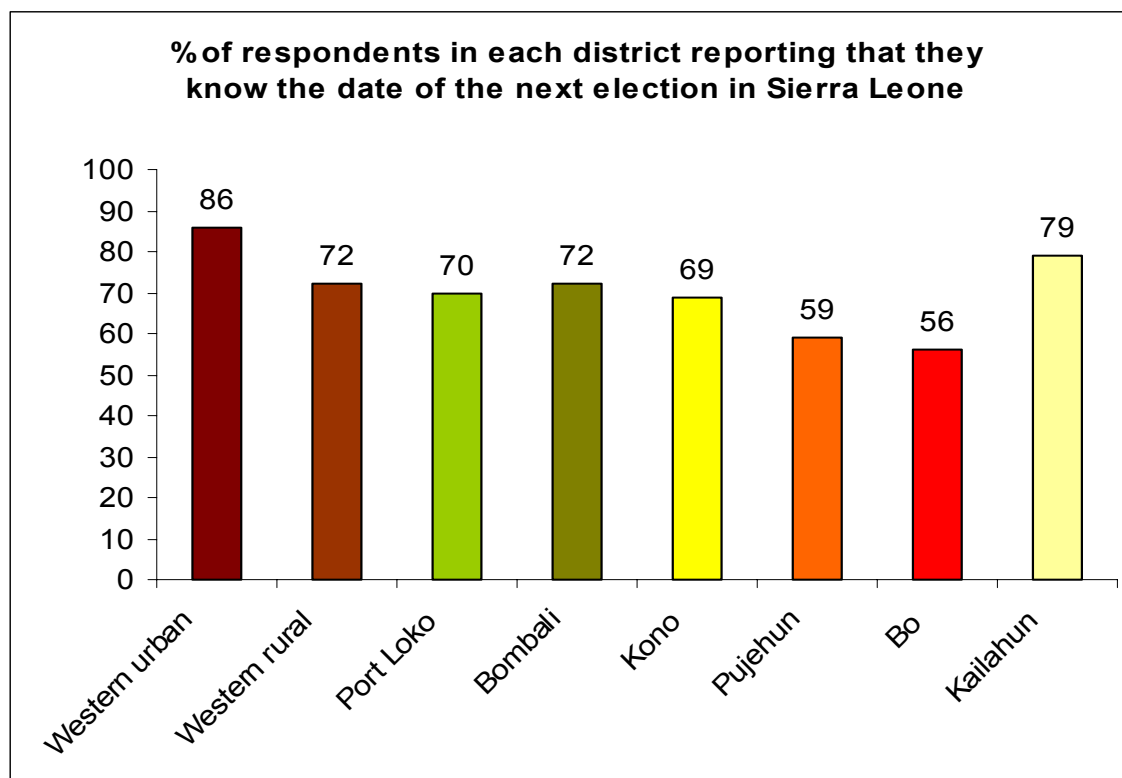


Figure 1: % of respondents across sample Districts/Areas who report knowing the date of the forthcoming national election (Base = All respondents)

The western urban district has the highest proportion of people reporting that they know when the next national elections in Sierra Leone are scheduled to be held, followed by Kailahun district.

Knowledge is particularly low in the southern districts of Bo and Pujehun, where only 56% and 59% (respectively) report knowing when the election is scheduled.

Respondents who reported knowing the date of the election were then asked to give the date. **Figure 2** shows the proportion of respondents from each sample District/Area who then went on to correctly name the date. Over 80% of respondents across all Districts/Areas were able to name the date correctly.

¹ Respondents were asked to name the year and month of the election. At the time of the survey, national elections were set for July 2007. The date was put back to August after the survey was completed.

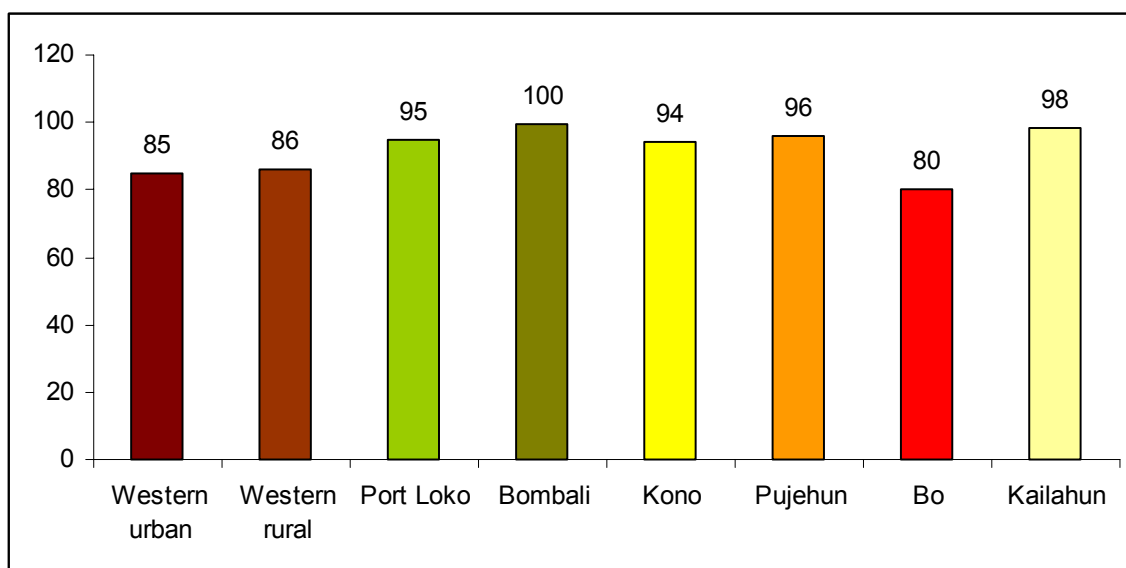


Fig 2: % of respondents who report knowing the date of elections who could give the correct date (Base = Respondents who report knowing the date of elections)

Self-reported knowledge by District/Area

Respondents were asked to rate their confidence in their knowledge of the electoral system (on a scale of 1-9). Responses have been grouped into three levels of confidence, 'high' (1-3), 'medium' (4-6) and 'low' (7-9). **Figure 3** shows the proportion of respondents falling into each of these groups across the eight Districts/Areas included in the survey.

- Kono, Western Urban, and Bombali Districts/Areas have the highest proportion of respondents ranking their knowledge as high.
- Bo, Western rural, and Port Loko Districts/Areas have the highest proportion of respondents ranking their knowledge as low.

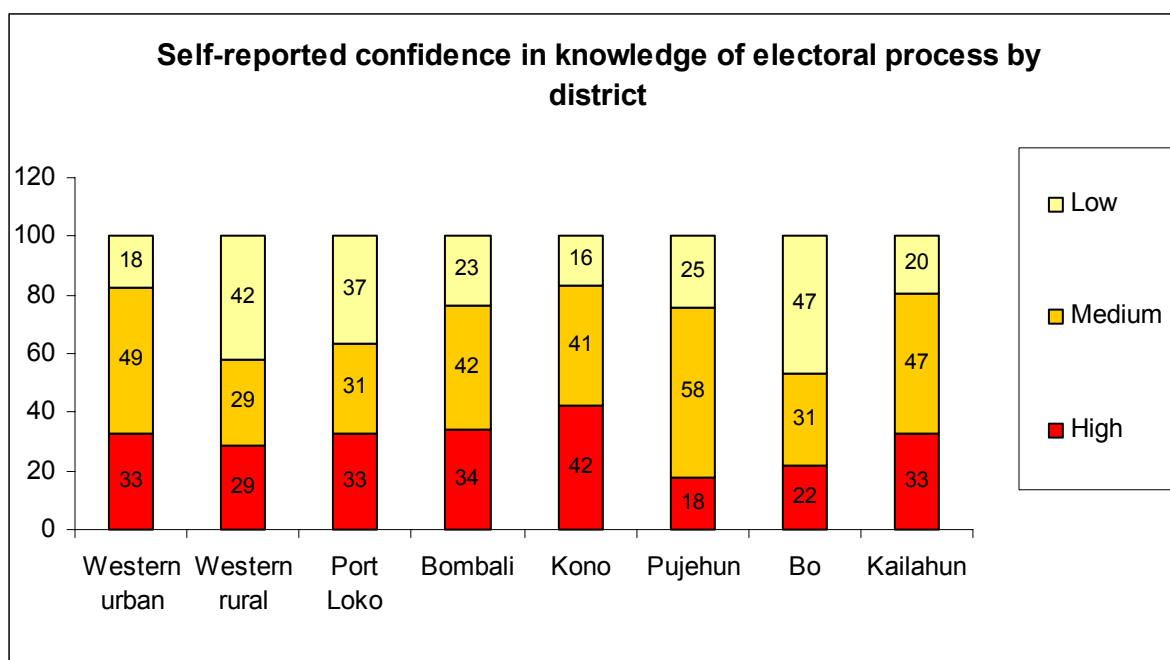


Figure 3: Self-reported confidence in knowledge of electoral system across sample Districts/Areas (Base = All respondents)

Knowledge of election date by gender and age

Figure 4 shows the proportion of men and women across each sample District/Area who report knowing the date of national elections. Women consistently show lower levels of knowledge and awareness about the electoral process and political parties.

Only 65% of women, compared with 79% of men, reported that they know when national elections will be held in Sierra Leone.

Knowledge is particularly low in the southern Districts of Pujehun and Bo, where only 52% and 43% (respectively) of women reported that they knew the date of the next national elections. 90% of males and females, who reported knowing date, could name the month and year correctly.

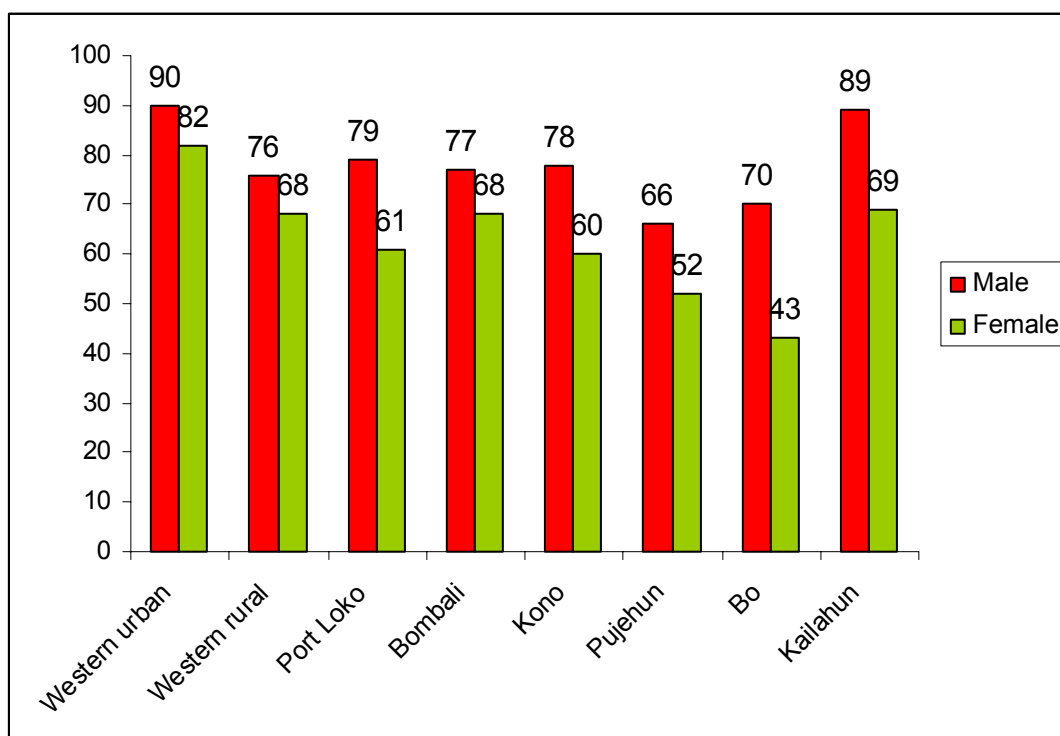


Fig 4: % of men and women who report knowing date of national elections, across sample Districts/Areas (Base = All respondents)

Figure 5 shows the proportion of men and women who rank themselves as having 'high', 'medium' and 'low', knowledge of the electoral process.

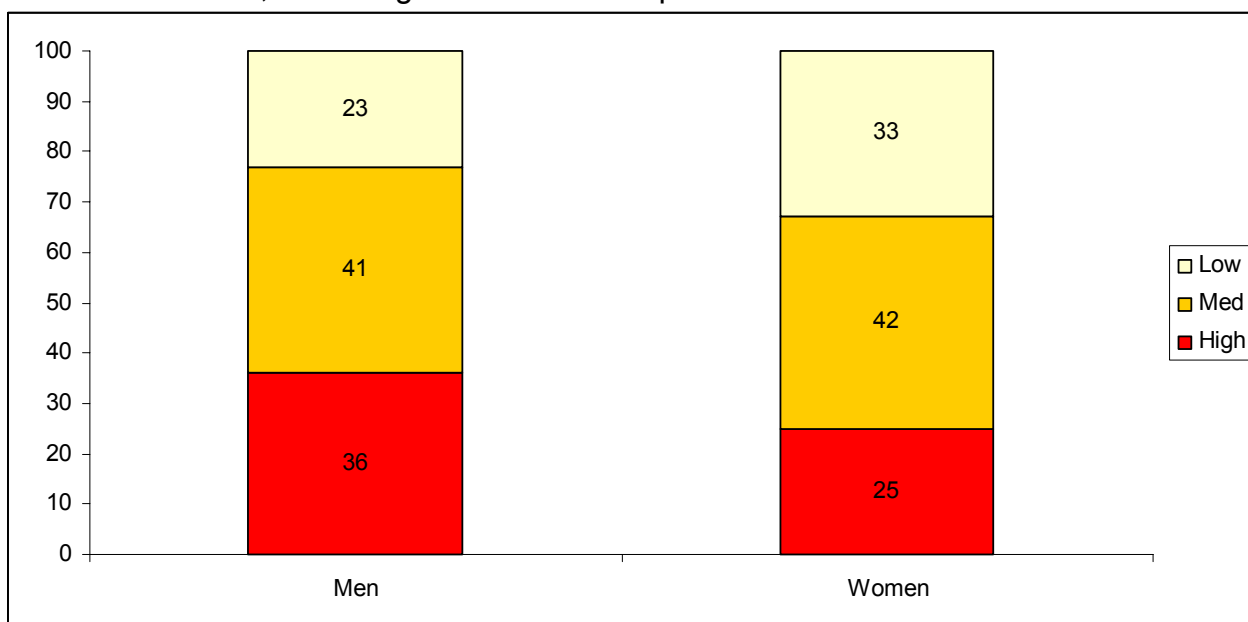


Figure 5: Self-reported confidence in knowledge of electoral process across sample Districts/Areas among men and women (Base = All respondents)

Age in itself is not a significant variable in levels of knowledge around the forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone. Those aged 18-25 are slightly less aware of the date of the election than those in older age groups, but the difference is not substantial (between 3%-

4%pts difference). **Figure 6**, however, shows that a lower proportion of young people reporting a high level of confidence in their knowledge of the electoral process.

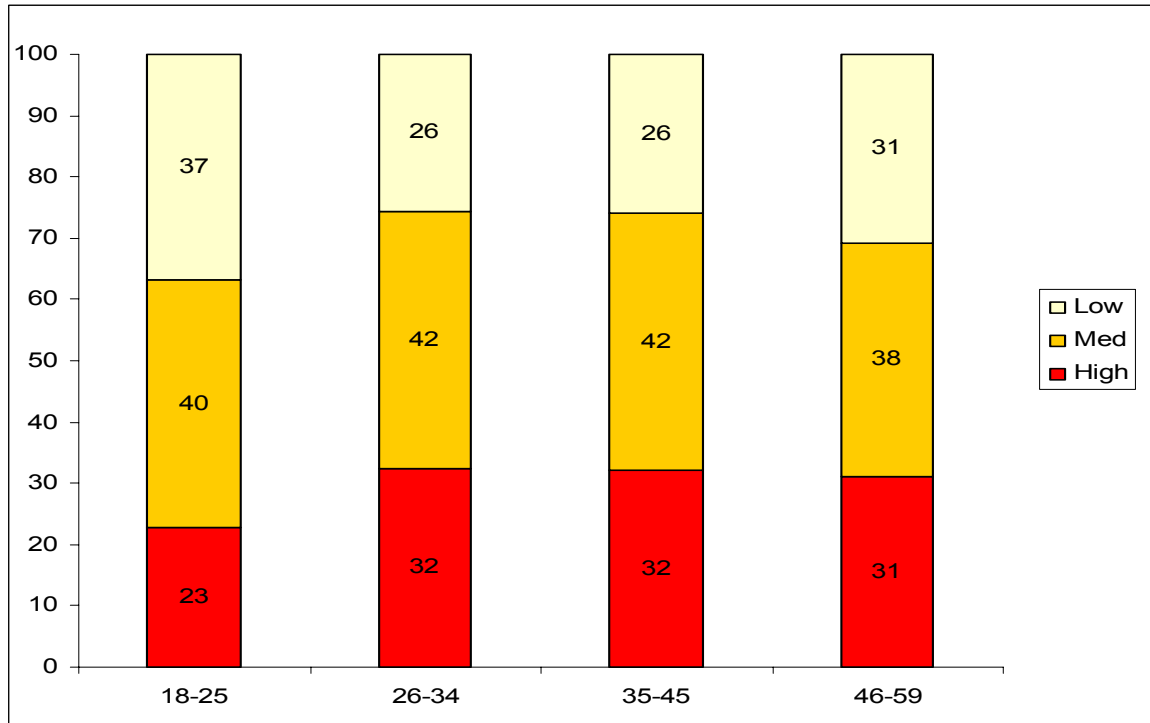


Fig 6: Self-reported confidence in knowledge of electoral system across sample Districts/Areas across age groups (Base = All respondents)

Knowledge of political parties by District/Area

Respondents were asked to name all of the political parties that they are aware of².

Figures 9 and 10 show the proportion of respondents in each District/Area who mentioned each political party (**figure 9** showing the four most mentioned parties, **figure 10** showing the 5th-8th most mentioned).

² Respondents were asked to name all of the political parties they were aware of, but were not prompted.

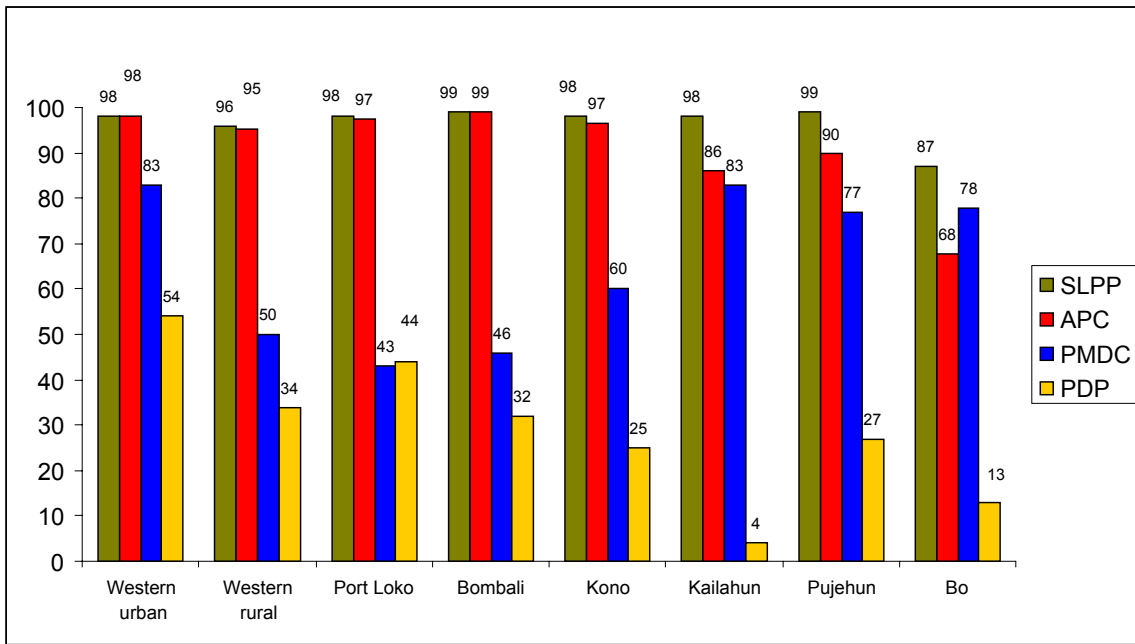


Fig 7: Respondents naming each political party across all sample Districts/Areas

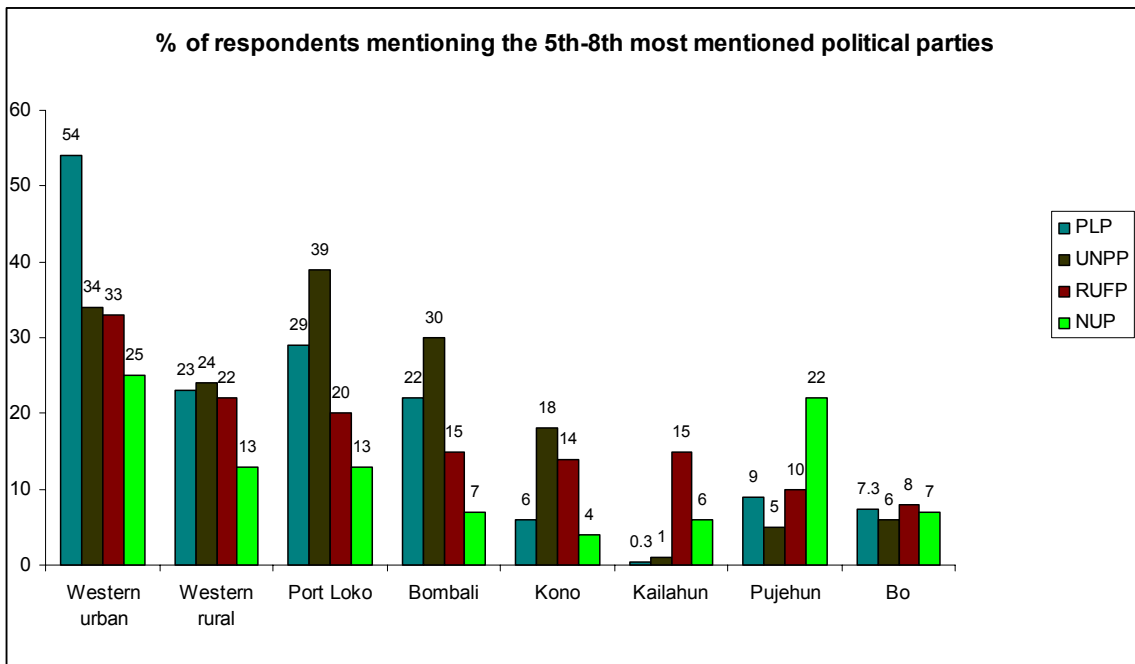


Fig 8: Respondents naming each political party across all sample Districts/Areas

The general pattern of recall of political parties is similar across all districts, although there are some notable differences. For example, whilst 54% of respondents in western urban mentioned the PDP, they were mentioned by only 13% of respondents in Bo, and only 4% in Kailahun.

Whilst around 80% of respondents in western urban, Kailahun, Pujehun and Bo District, mention the PMDC, they were mentioned by only 43% of respondents in Port Loko, and 46% in Bombali.

Similarly, the NUP were mentioned by a relatively large proportion of respondents in Pujehun (22%), and western urban districts (25%), they are mentioned by only 7% of respondents in Bombali, 4% in Kono, 6% in Kailahun, and 7% in Bo.

Knowledge of political parties by gender and age

Women are less likely than men to report having heard of the four main political parties.

Figure 9 shows knowledge of 4 main political parties by men and women. All other parties are mentioned more often by men than by women.

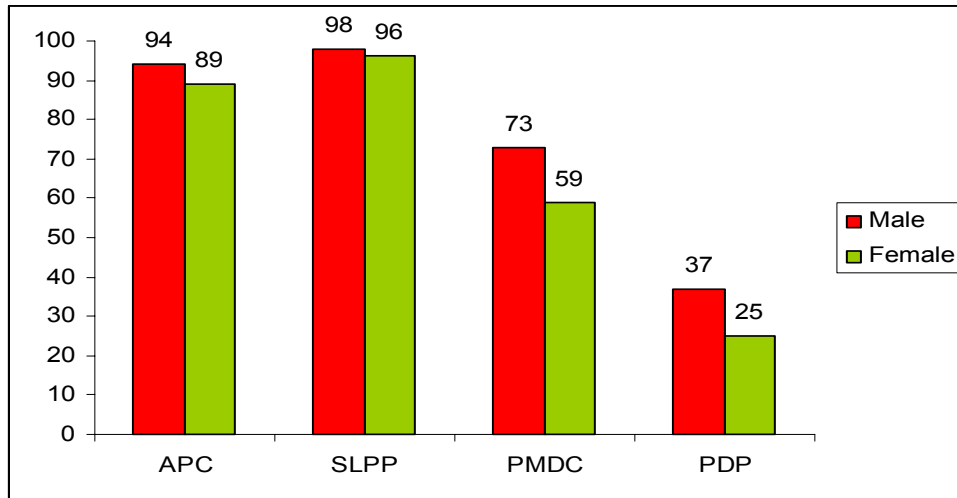


Figure 9: Proportion of men and women naming each political party

Figure 10 shows that age does not appear to be a substantial factor in determining respondents' knowledge or recall. All four age bands (18-25; 26-34; 35-45; 46-59) were equally as likely (or unlikely) to recall most political parties. The major difference between age groups is, understandably, for the Young People's Party. This was named by 30% of those aged 18-25, but only 17% of those aged 46 and over.

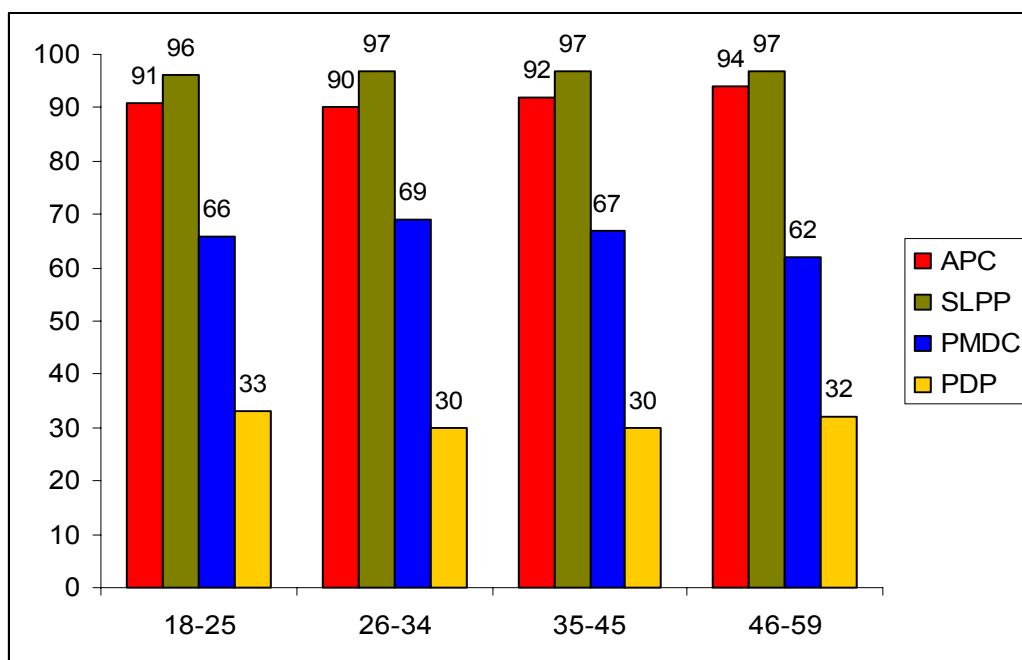


Fig 10: Knowledge of main political parties across age groups

Access to radio and knowledge about elections

Analysis was carried out to explore how respondents with access and those without access, to radio vary in their knowledge of the election date, and their self-reported confidence in their knowledge of the electoral process.

Figure 11 shows the proportion of radio listeners and non-listeners who report knowing the date of national elections. **Figure 12** shows the proportion of listeners and non-listeners who rank themselves as having high, medium and low knowledge about the electoral process.

A greater proportion of radio listeners than non-listeners know the date of elections, and a greater proportion of listeners than non-listeners report high levels of confidence in their knowledge of the electoral process.

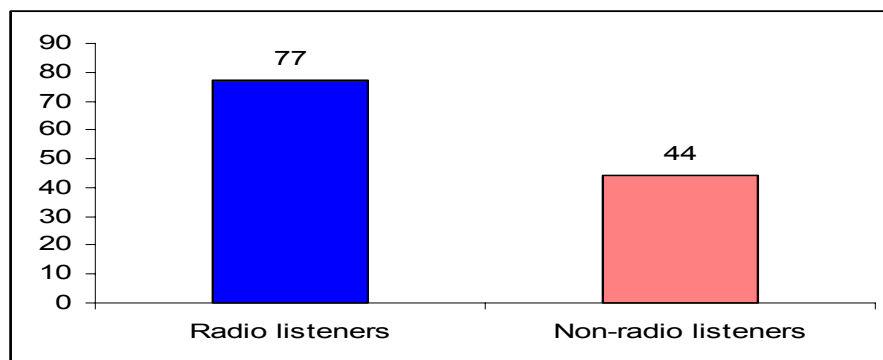


Fig 11: Knowledge of election date by radio listeners and non-listeners (Base = All respondents)

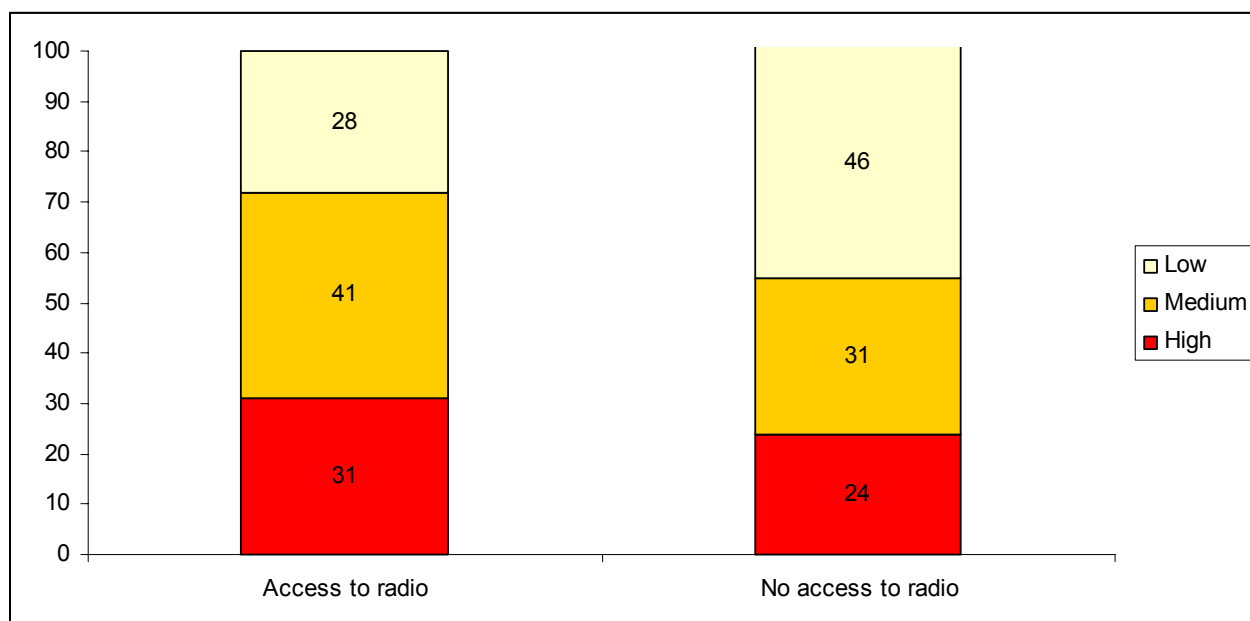


Fig 12: Self-reported knowledge of elections among radio listeners and non-radio listeners (Base = All respondents)

Knowledge of election date and political parties, and respondents' involvement in social and political activities, and voluntary community groups

Analysis was carried out to explore the extent to which knowledge of election date, and knowledge of political parties, is associated with respondents' involvement with a range of socially and politically motivated activities, and voluntary community groups.

Analysis shows that the following are all associated with a greater likelihood of knowing the date of elections, and being able to name key political parties:

- Having an interest in politics
- Talking about politics with friends, work colleagues and family
- Having attended a political rally
- Having contacted a civil servant or elected official about an issue
- Having ever signed a petition
- Taking part in a demonstration
- Belonging to a political party
- Current or past member of a church
- Current or past membership of sports clubs and other voluntary associations

This points to a strong association between involvement in wider social and political activities and respondents' knowledge about elections. Respondents with lower levels of knowledge about elections are more likely to also be disconnected from wider social and community activities. 'Social capital' is important.

Emphasising this point, whilst radio listeners are more likely than non-listeners to score higher on indicators of electoral and political knowledge, in Kailahun, where radio access is the lowest across all sample Districts, knowledge is relatively high. Kailahun, however, also has a high number of people who are active in social and political activity.

Attitudes towards differences between political parties

Respondents were asked what, if anything, they thought were the main differences between political parties in Sierra Leone. **Figure 13** shows responses across all sample Districts/Areas.

- Kailahun, Bombali and Western Urban Area have the highest proportion of people reporting 'policy on social issues' and 'political priorities', as being a difference between parties.
- Kono, Pujehun and Western Rural have the highest proportion of people reporting that there are no differences between parties
- Bombali, Kailahun, and Port Loko have the highest proportion reporting that region/social group represented are the key differences.

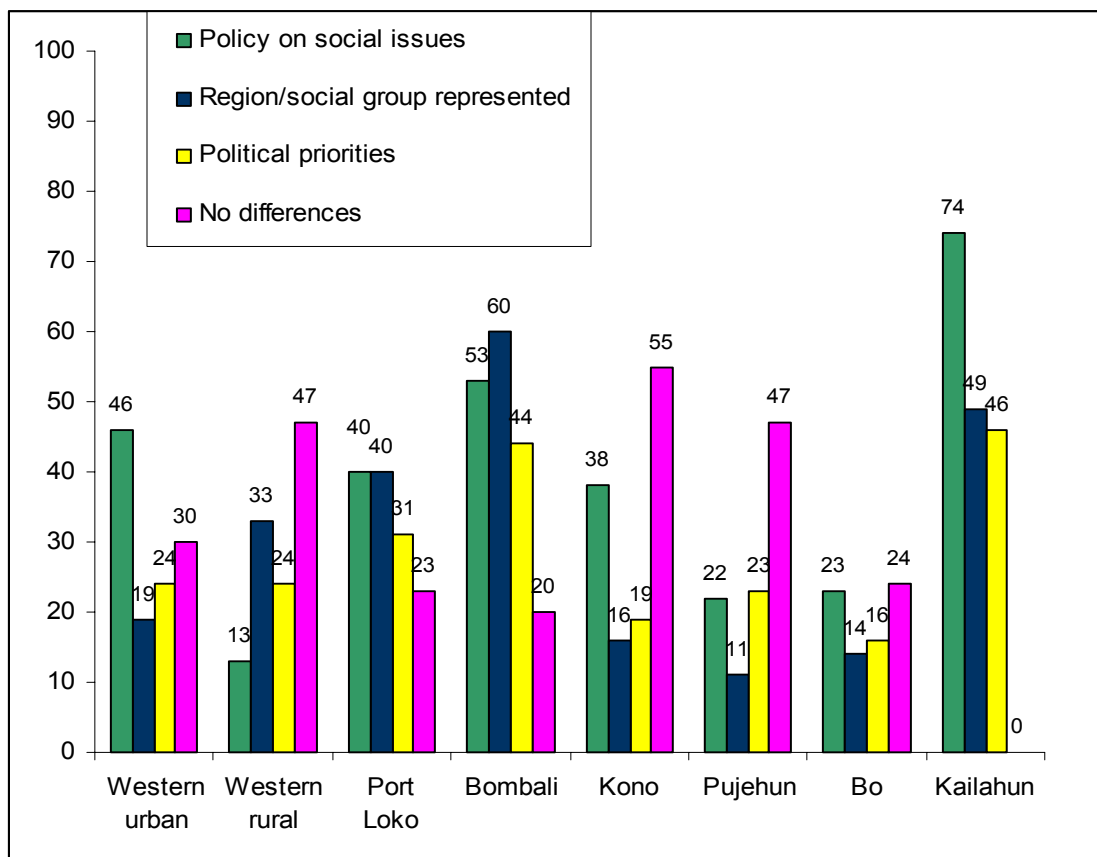


Fig 13: Differences between political parties across sample Districts/Areas (Base = All respondents)

Figure 14 shows that people who know the date of elections are more likely to identify social policy as a key difference between parties. It also shows that those who do not know the date of elections are more likely to report that there are no differences between political parties.

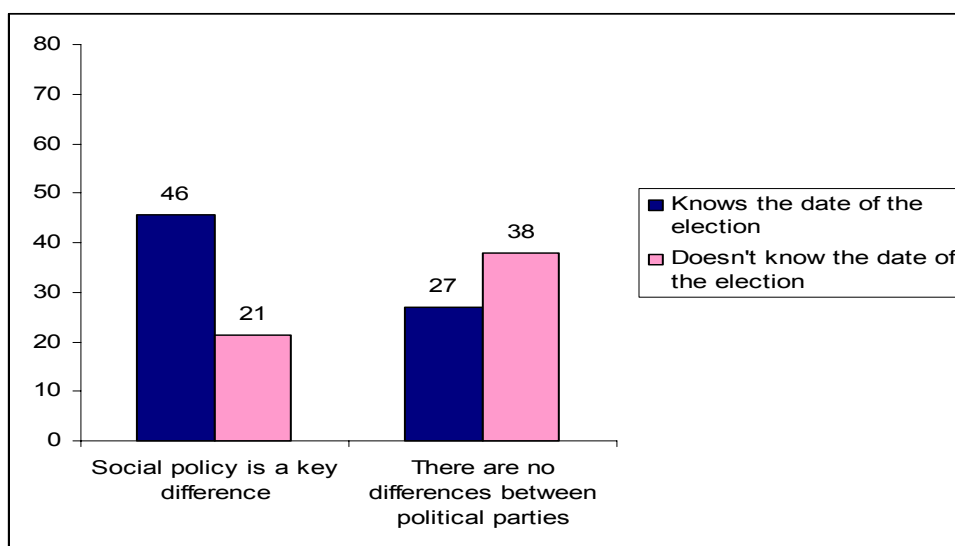


Fig 14: Key differences between political parties by those who know and those who don't know the date of the election (Base = All respondents)

Respondents who reported that they thought social policy was a key difference between political parties were then asked to say which specific issues they think parties differ on.

Figure 15 shows that, for the three Districts/Areas with the highest proportion of respondents mentioning social policy as a key distinction between parties, education is the most commonly mentioned issue. In Kailahun and Bombali, health is the next most frequently mentioned issue, whereas in Western urban Area it is electricity.

Peace and security is seen as a distinction by a substantial proportion of respondents in Freetown and Kailahun, but much less so in Bombali.

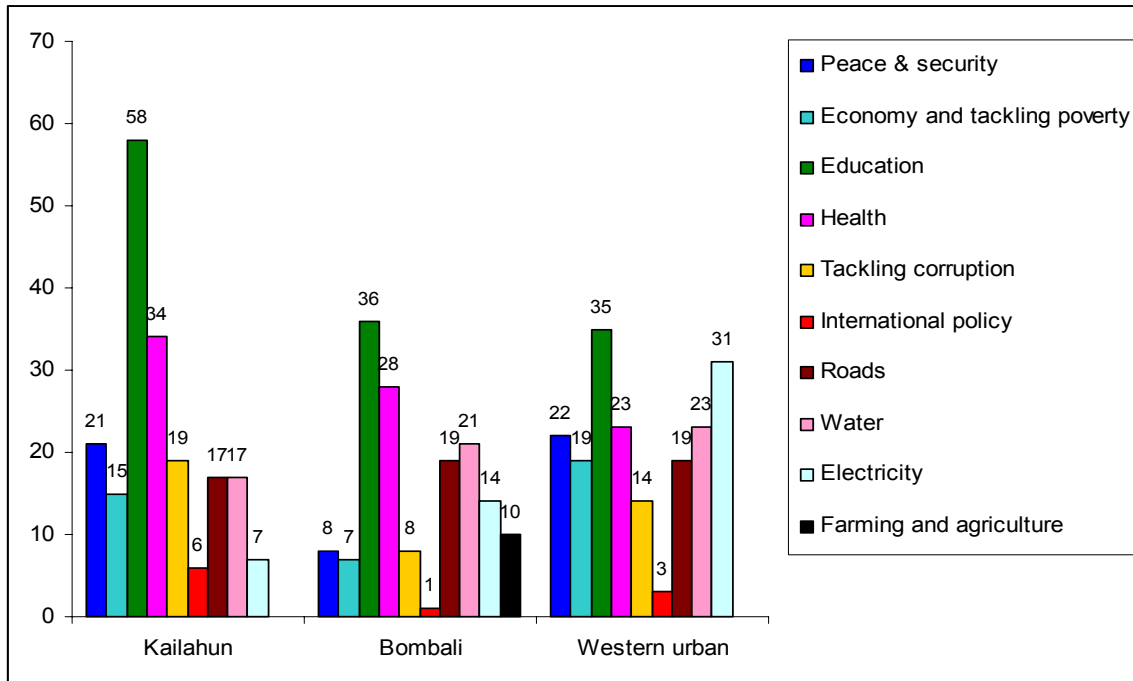


Fig 15: Social policy issues mentioned across Kailahun, Bombali and Western Urban Area (Base = respondents who said that social policy was a key distinction between parties)

Educational achievement and knowledge of elections

In addition to presenting responses by District, age and gender, further analysis was carried out to explore what impact educational achievement has on knowledge of the next election date

Respondents with no formal education were about 2.5 times less likely to correctly name the date of elections, compared with those with primary school or secondary school education.

Only 51% of respondents with no formal education reported knowing the date of the next election, compared with over 90% of respondents who had (at least) completed secondary school.

Election issues that people would like to know more about

Respondents were asked which specific issues about elections they would like to have more information on. Figure 16 shows that, across all sample Districts/Areas other than Kono, information on 'how to vote' was the most frequently mentioned issue. 'How people get elected' and the 'responsibilities of elected officials' were highest in Kono, and were often mentioned by respondents across other Districts/Areas.

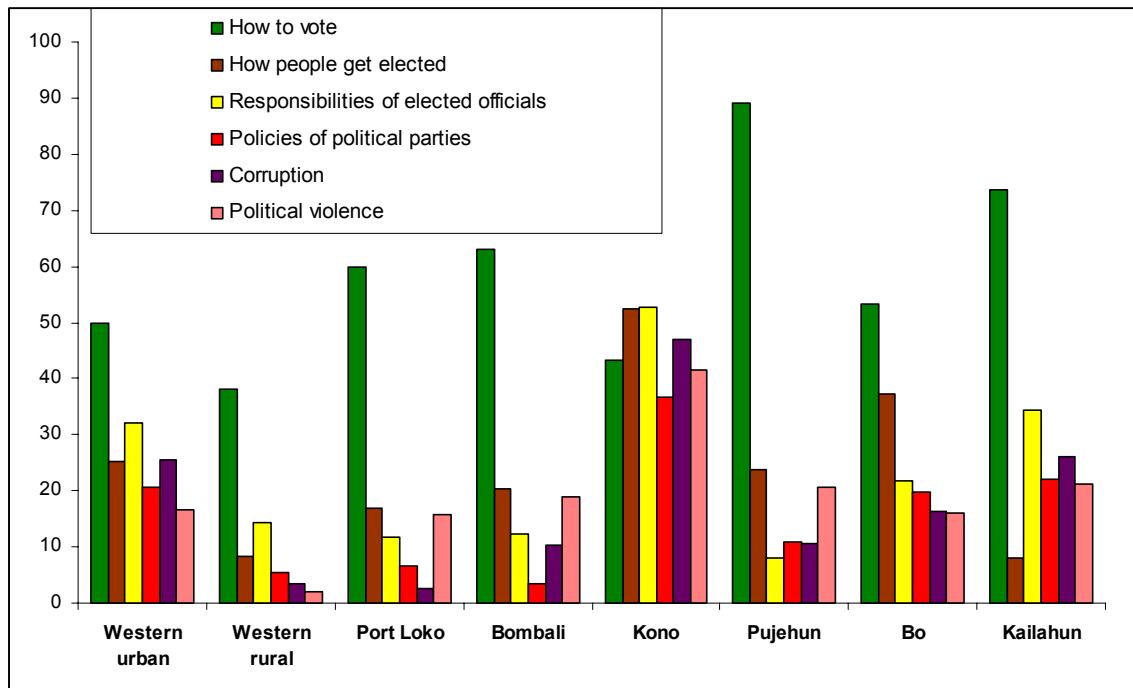


Fig 16: Election issues people would like to know more about (Base = All respondents)

There is not much variation between men and women, and younger and older age groups, but a greater proportion of women than men, and younger people (18-25 yrs) report wanting to know more about how to vote. 61% of women, compared with 55% of men, and 67% of 18-25 year olds, compared with 54%-55% for all other age groups.

Attitudes towards political parties

Respondents were asked three questions exploring their attitudes towards the extent to which political parties represent their views. Respondents were given three statements and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with them. The three statements were:

- i) *My views are represented by political parties*
- ii) *Political parties do not offer people real policy choices; and*
- iii) *I often hear my views represented in political discussions*

Figures 17, 18 and 19, shows how respondents scored the extent to which political parties represent their own views and opinions, broken down by District/Area, men and women, and across different age groups.

In most Districts/Areas, the majority of respondents report a medium or low score, indicating that they do not feel that parties represent their own views. Respondents from Western Urban and Western Rural Areas, and from Bombali and Bo Districts, scored particularly low.

Compared with all other Districts/Areas, Kono and Pujehun have a much higher proportion of people who report a high degree of feeling that political parties reflect their own views.

A slightly higher proportion of men than women report positive views on political parties representation of their own views, although the differences are not substantial. Younger people are slightly less likely to report positive views about representation than other age groups, although, again, the differences are not substantial.

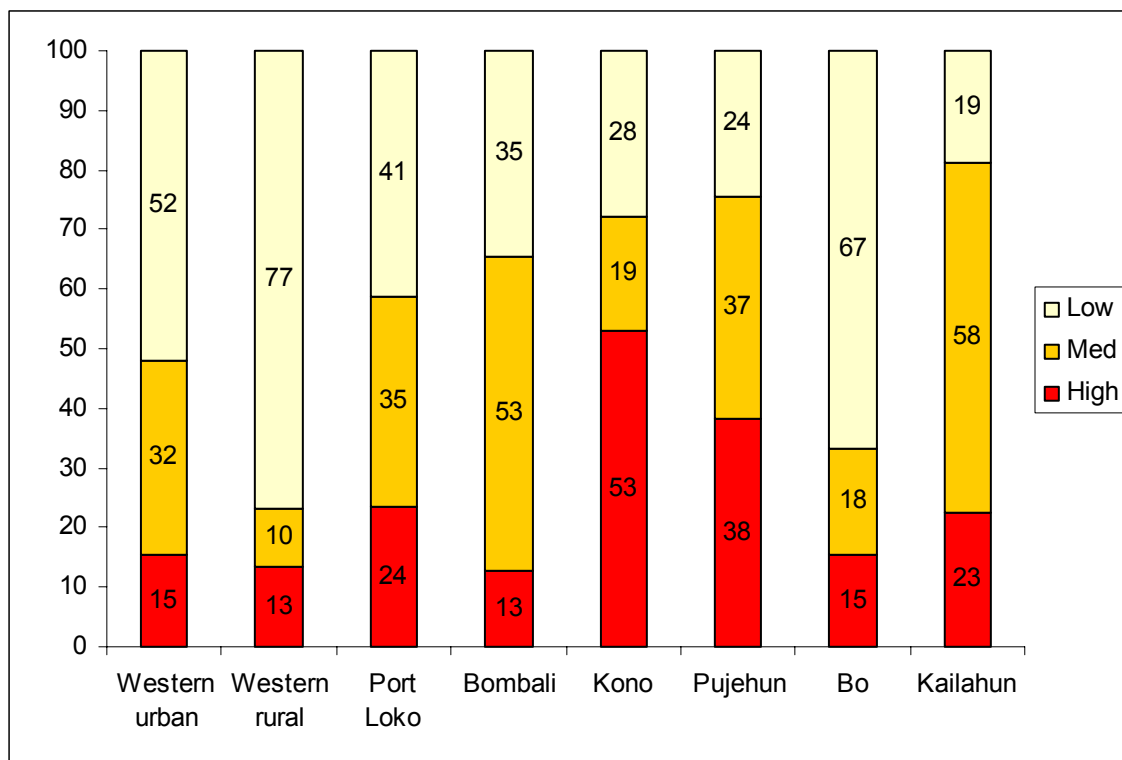


Fig 17: Rating of agreement with statement 'My views are represented by political parties' (Base = All respondents)

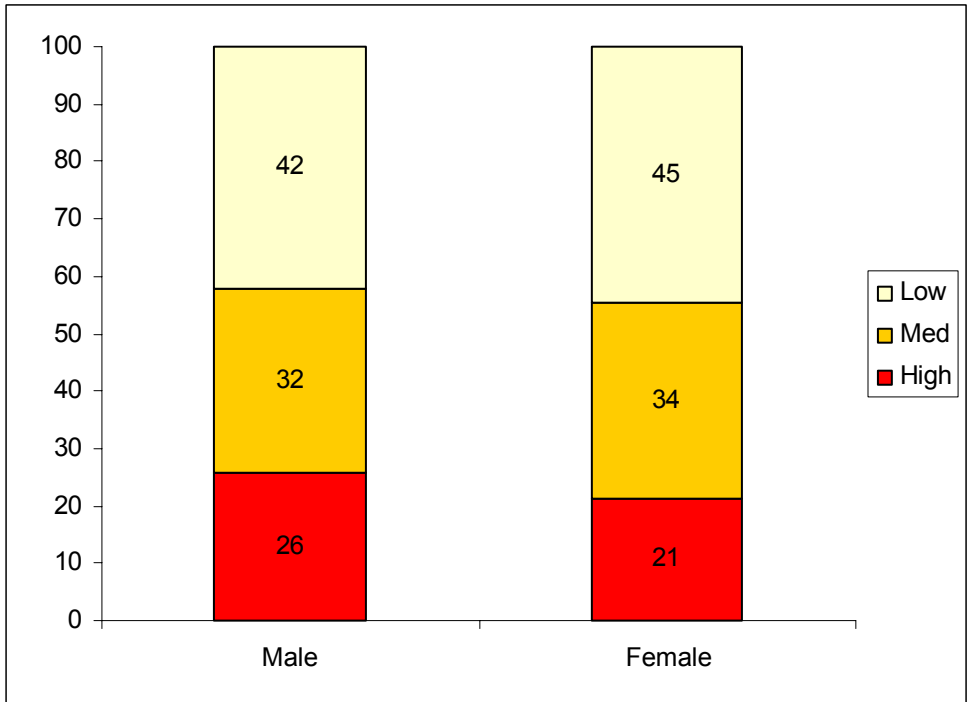


Fig 18: Rating of agreement with statement 'My views are represented by political parties' (Base = All respondents)

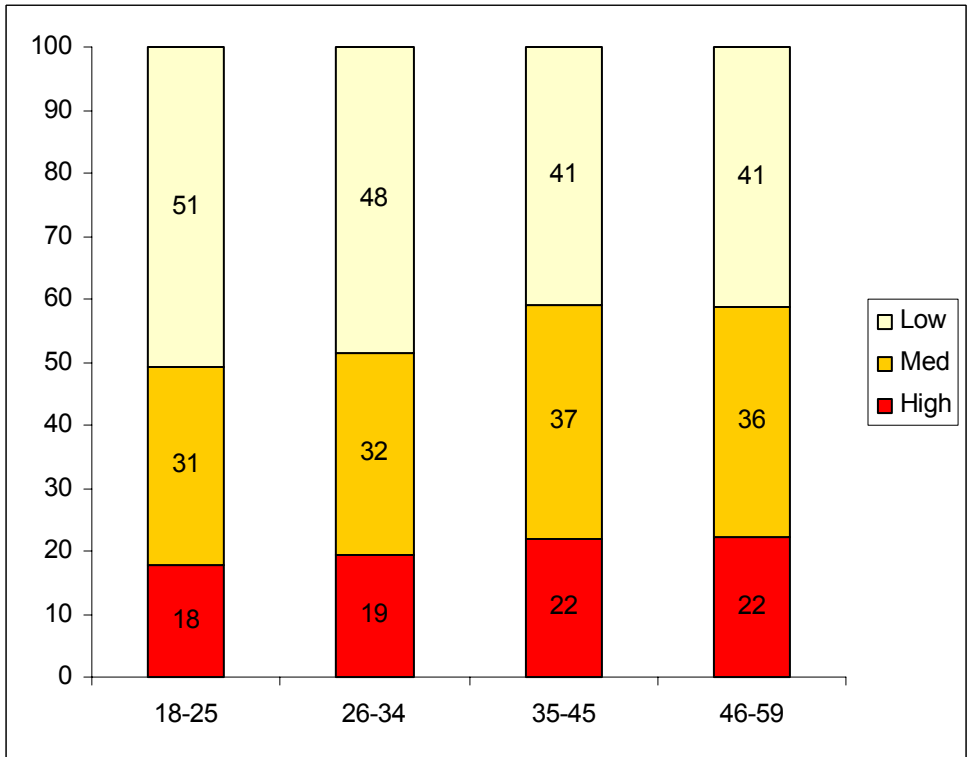


Fig 19: Rating of agreement with statement 'My views are represented by political parties' (Base = All respondents)

Figures 20, 21 and 22 show how people rated their level of agreement with the statement, 'political parties do not offer people real policy choices', broken down by District/Area, by men and women and by age groups.

Across almost all Districts/Areas, the majority of people had a high level of agreement with the statement, indicating that there is, generally, a low level of perception that political parties offer real policy choices.

The extent of feeling is particularly prevalent in Kono District, and Western Rural and Western Urban Areas. Kailahun and Port Loko have the lowest proportion of people indicating strong agreement with the statement.

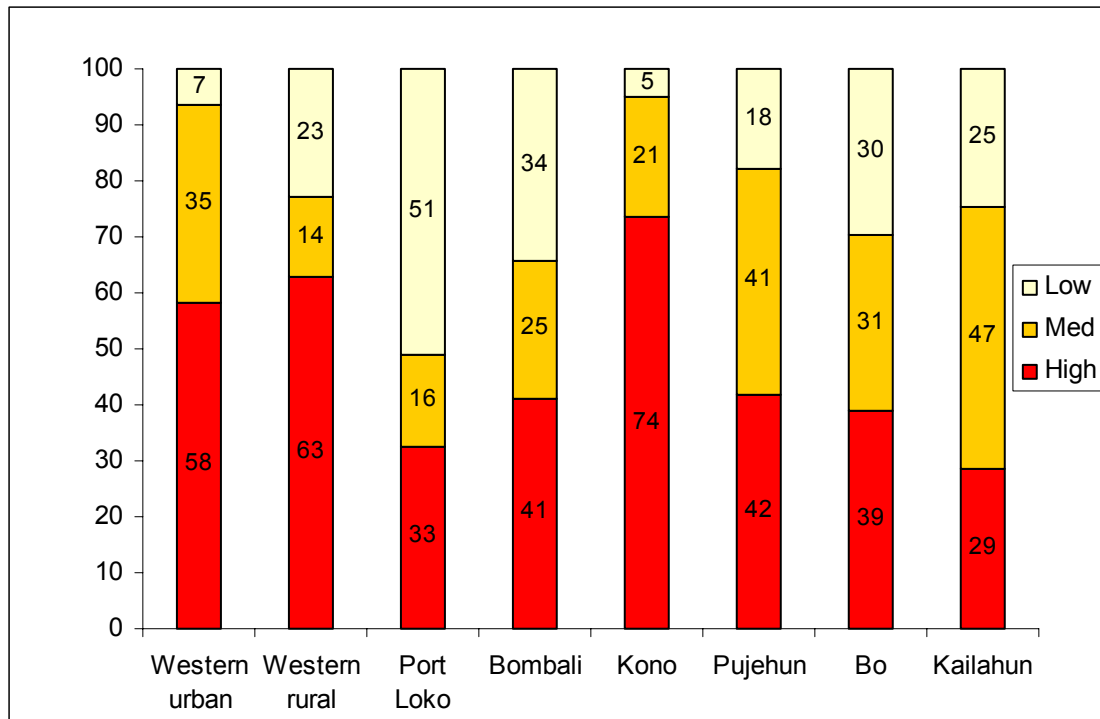


Fig 20: Rating of agreement with statement, 'Political parties do not offer real policy choices' (Base = All respondents)

Slightly more males than females agree with the statement, although the difference is not substantial. There is not a substantial difference across age groups.

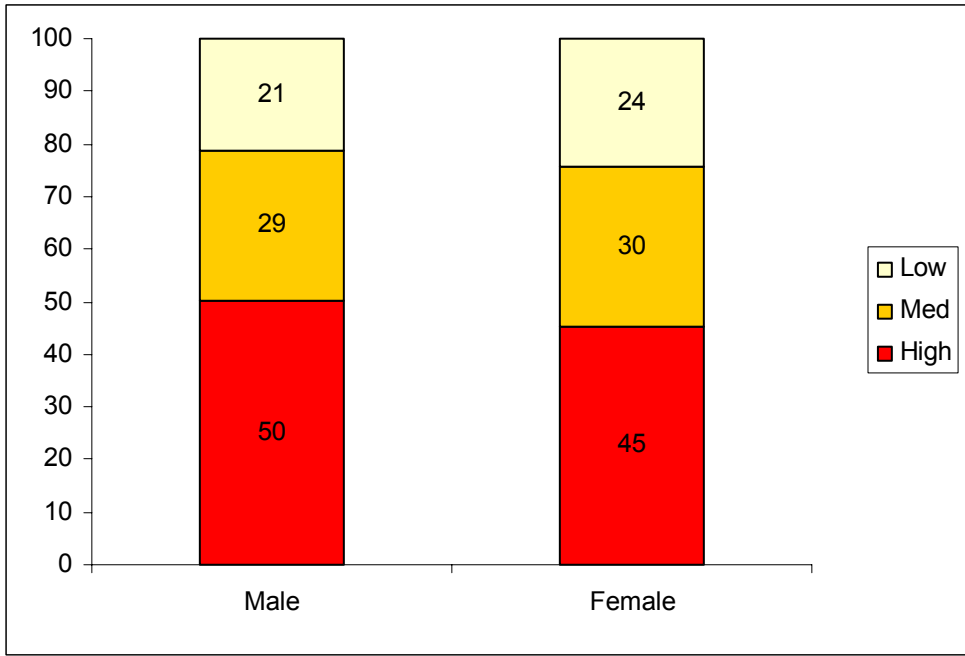


Fig 21: Rating of agreement with statement, 'Political parties do not offer real policy choices' (Base = All respondents)

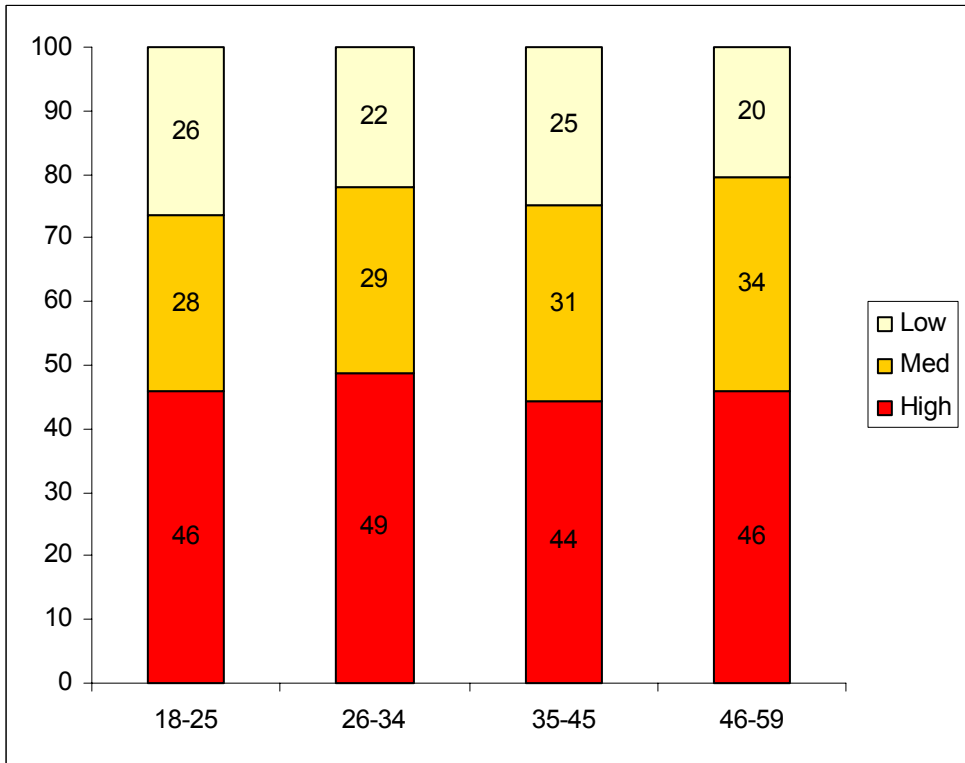


Fig 22: Rating of agreement with statement, 'Political parties do not offer real policy choices' (Base = All respondents)

Respondents were asked the extent to which people feel that their views are represented in political discussions. **Figures 23, 24, and 25** show responses by District/Area, gender and age. Again, relatively few people felt that strongly that their views were represented, with a large proportion of people in Bombali, Bo, and Kailahun reporting this.

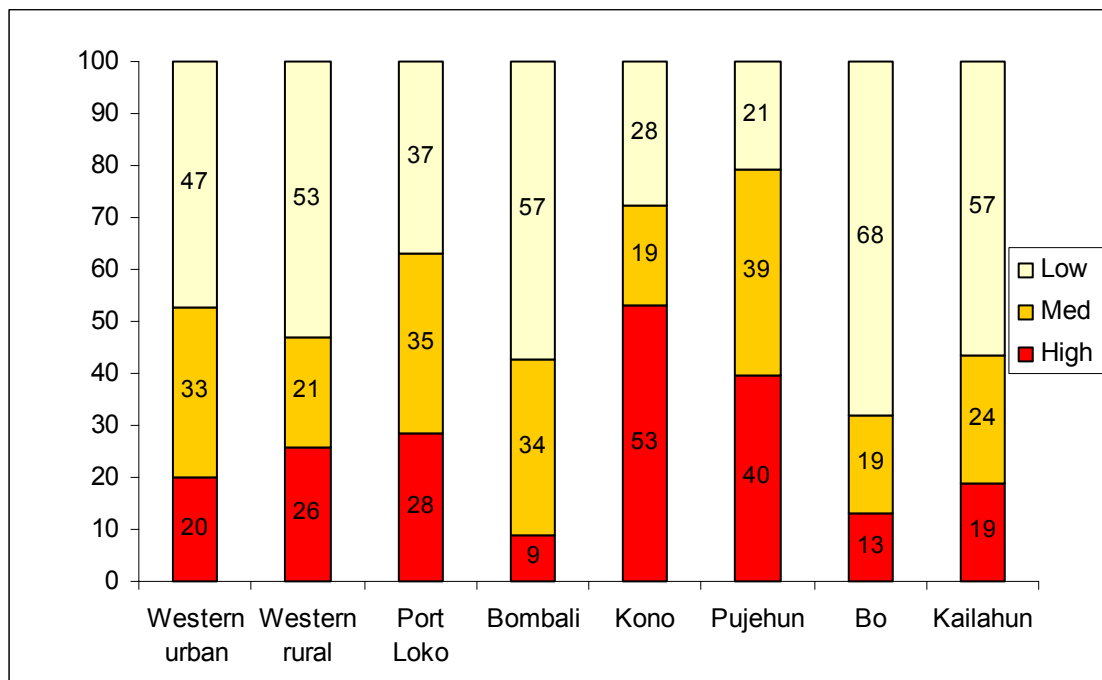


Fig 23: Rating of agreement with statement, 'I often hear my views represented in political discussions' (Base = All respondents)

A slightly higher proportion of men than women reported feeling strongly that their views were represented in political discussions, although the differences are not substantial. Similarly, a slightly lower proportion of young people (18-25 years) compared with older groups, report feeling strongly that their views are represented, but the differences are not substantial.

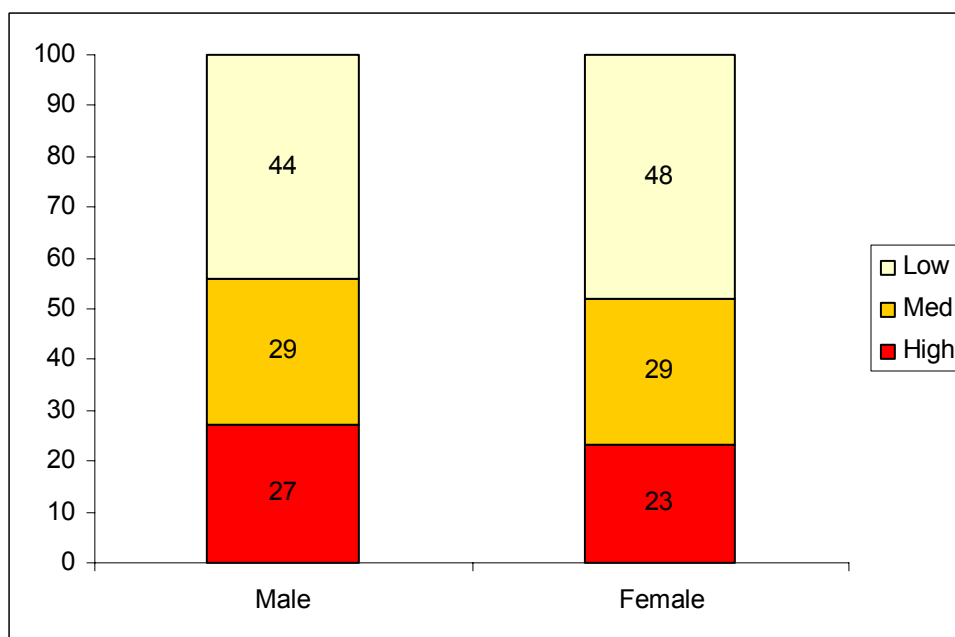


Fig 24: Rating of agreement with statement, 'I often hear my views represented in political discussions' (Base = All respondents)

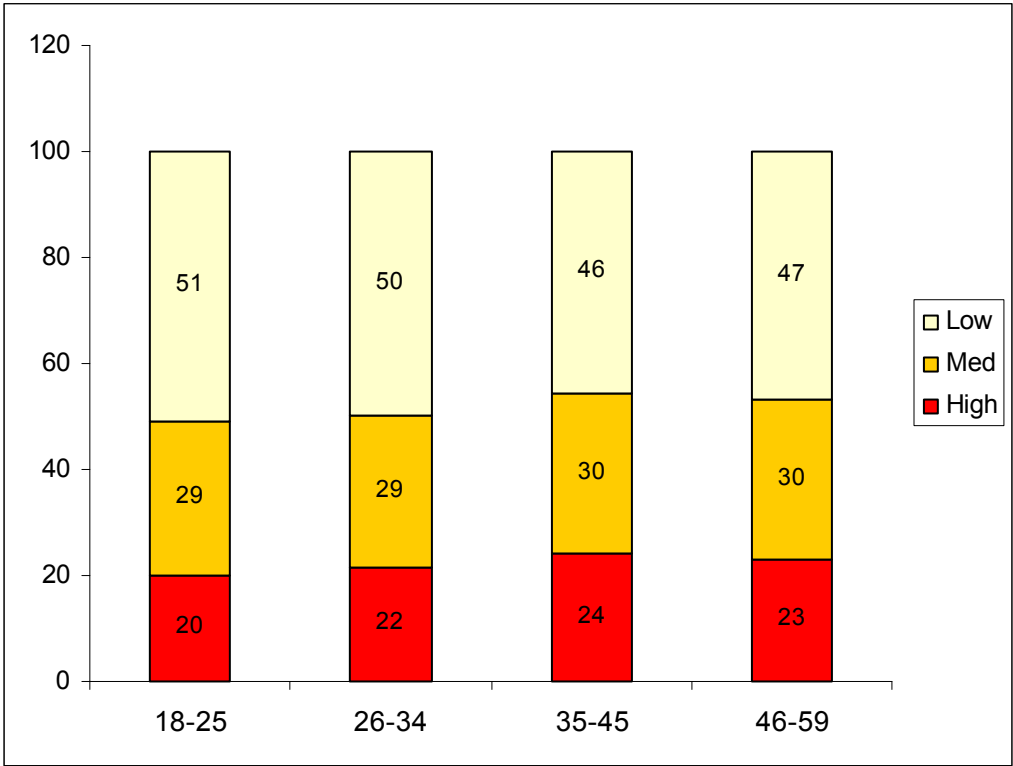


Fig 25: Rating of agreement with statement, 'I often hear my views represented in political discussions' (Base = All respondents)

4. POLITICAL PRIORITIES

This section explores respondents' political priorities, and the extent to which these vary across sample Districts/Areas, gender, and age groups. It also explores respondents' attitudes towards issues of equality and public involvement in the decision-making process.

Political priorities by District/Area

Respondents were asked to name the social and political issues which they saw as being priorities for the future of Sierra Leone³. Three issues appear in the top five most mentioned priorities across all provincial districts:

- Education;
- Electricity; and
- Water

Health, roads, peace and security and the economy all appear in the top five most mentioned priorities in at least three districts.

There are some substantial regional variations across districts:

- Respondents from the western area in and around Freetown give greater priority to electricity than those in other areas.
- Roads are a key priority for more people in the eastern and southern districts of Kono, Kailahun, Bo and Pujehun, than in other parts of the country.
- Peace and security appear to be a much greater priority in the southern districts of Bo and Pujehun, but also in the western urban district (Freetown), than in other parts of the country

Western Area

Across the Western Area districts of Western Urban and Western Rural, electricity, education, water and health are in the top four. Peace and security is in the top five most mentioned priorities in the Western urban Area (in and around Freetown). Roads, rather than peace and security is in the top five issues mentioned by respondents from the Western rural Area.

³ Respondents were asked to name the issues they thought were political priorities for Sierra Leone. Respondents were not prompted to mention particular issues.

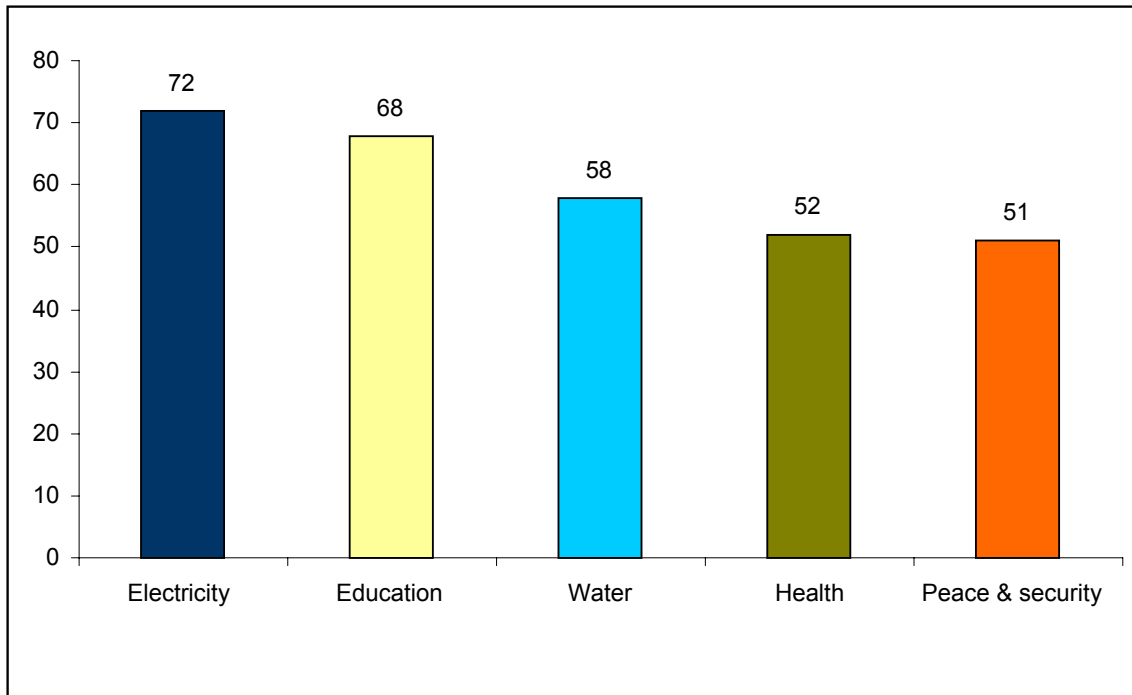


Fig 26: Political priorities in Western Urban Area (Base = All respondents, Western Urban Area)

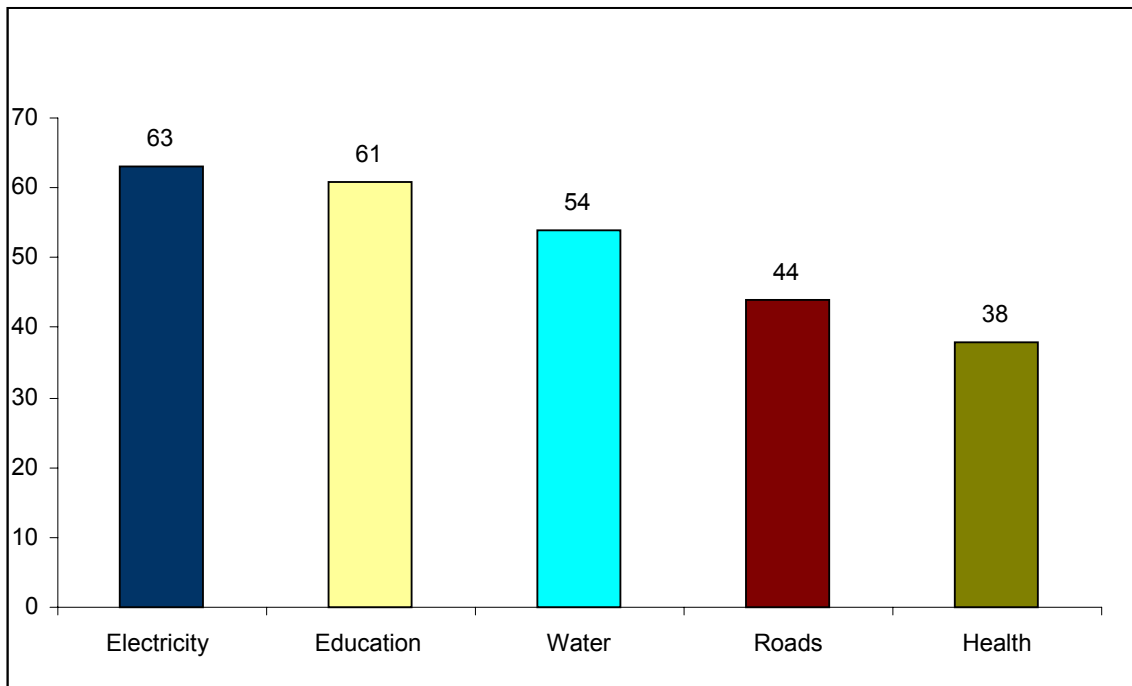


Fig 27: Political priorities in Western Rural Area (Base = All respondents, Western Rural Area)

Northern Province

In the Northern Districts of Port Loko and Bombali, electricity, education, water and health all appear in the top five most mentioned political priorities. The economy and tackling poverty is in the top five in Port Loko, whereas roads are in the top five in Bombali.

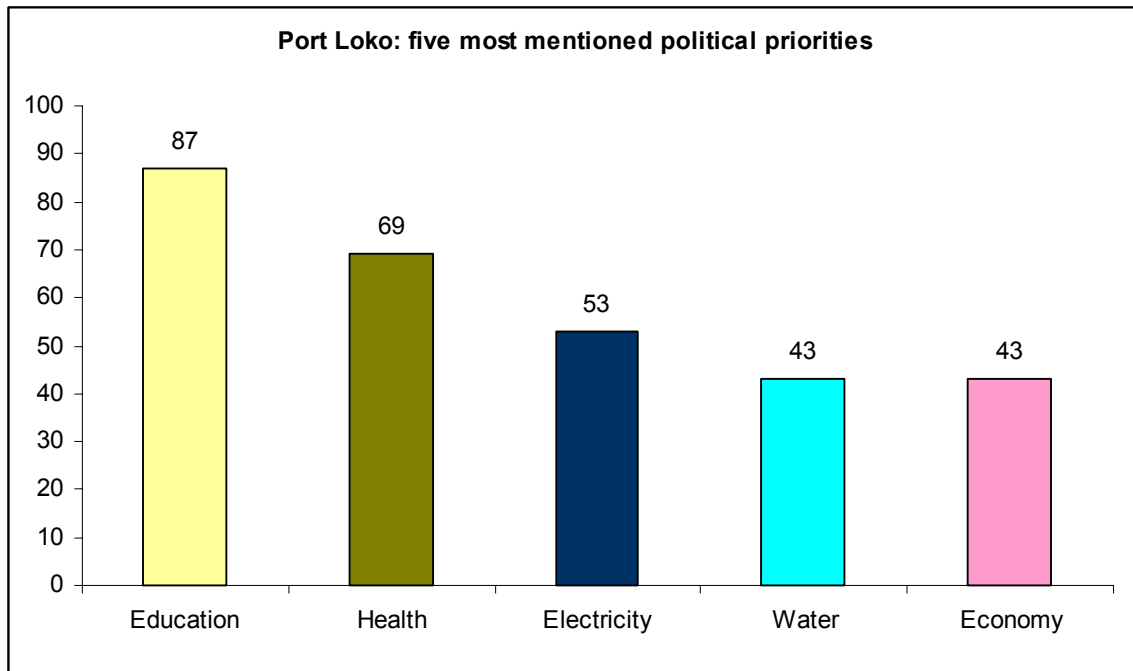


Fig 28: Political priorities in Port Loko (Base = All respondents, Port Loko)

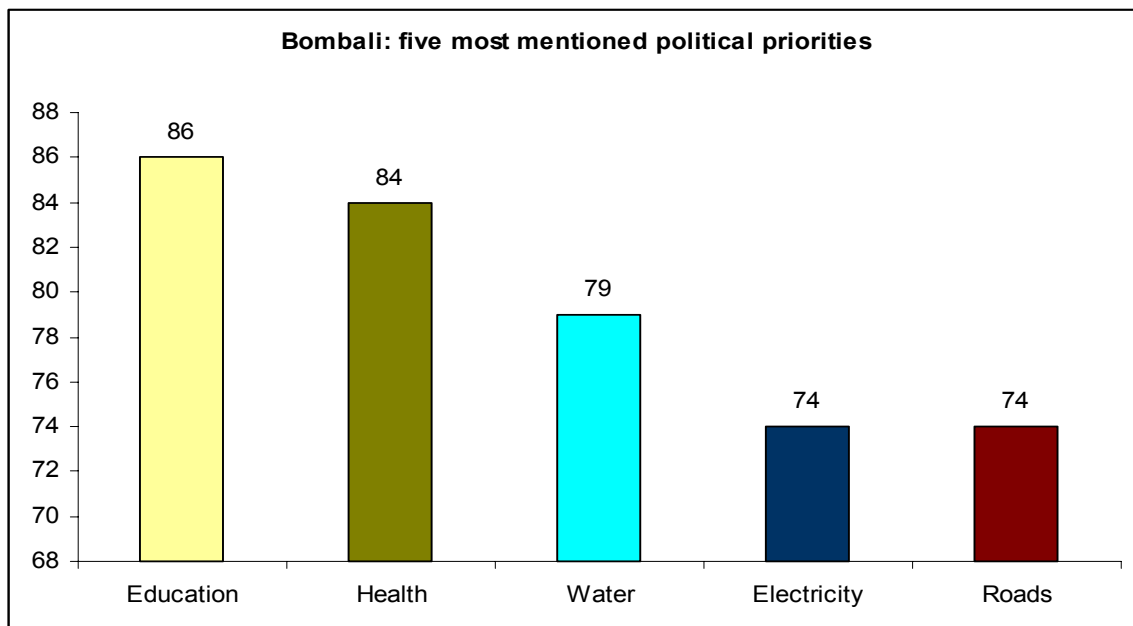


Fig 29: Political priorities in Bombali (Base = All respondents, Bombali)

Eastern Province

In the Eastern Districts of Kono and Kailahun, roads, education, water and electricity all appear in the top five political priorities. The economy and tackling poverty is in the top five in Kono, and health is in the top five in Kailahun.

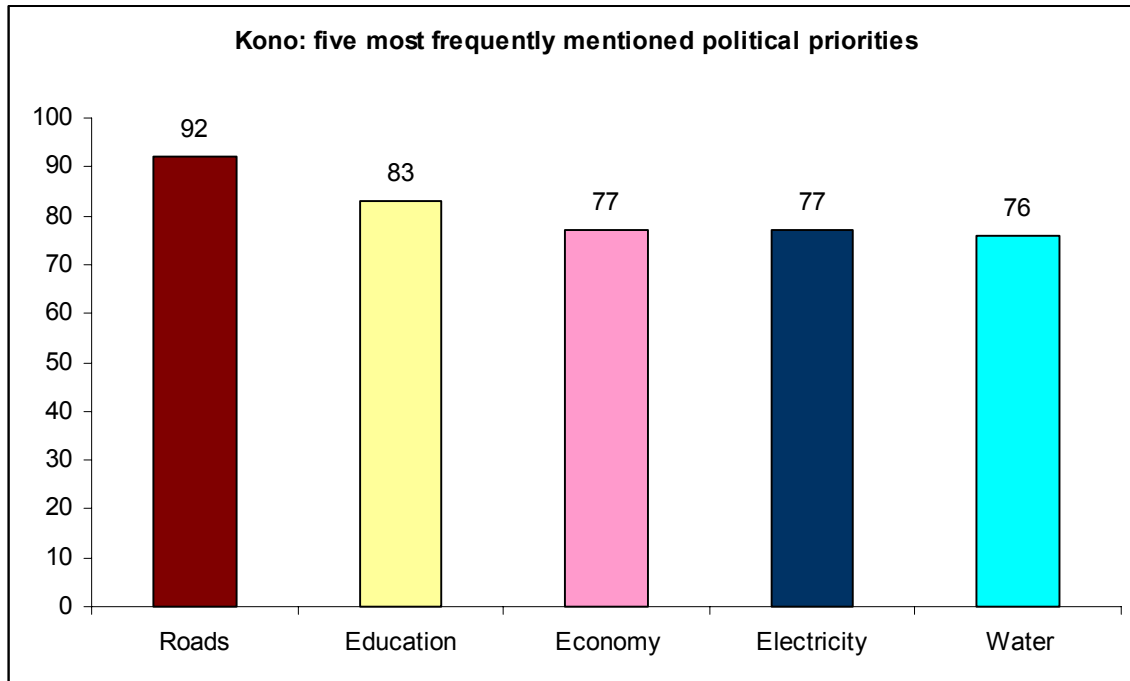


Fig 30: Political priorities in Kono (Base = All respondents, Kono)

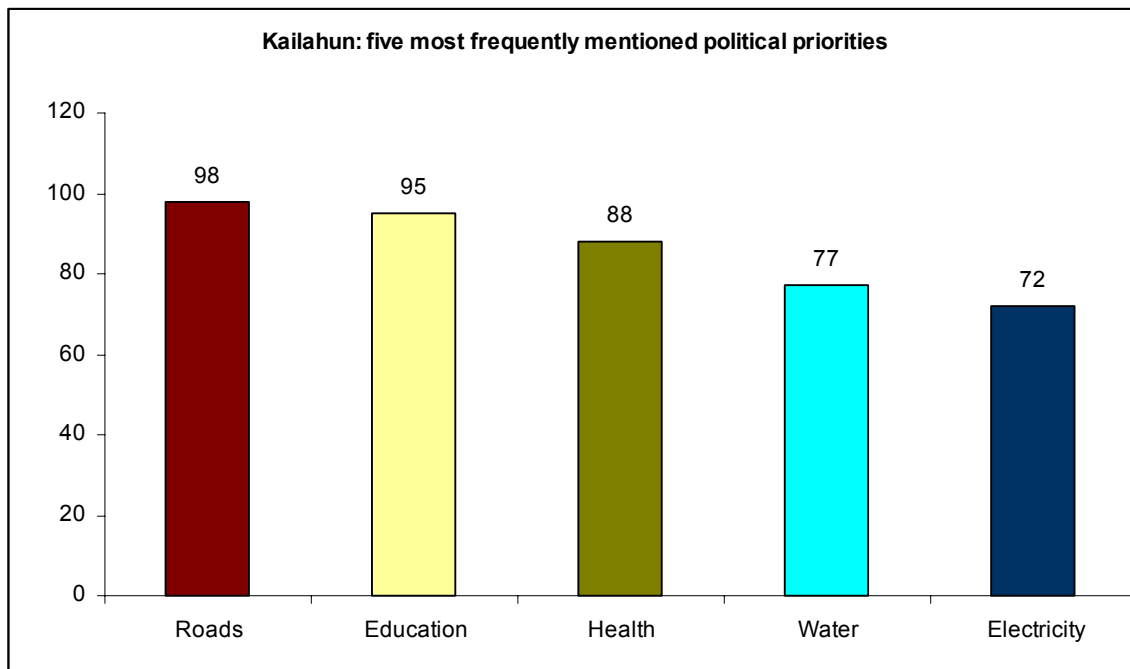


Fig 31: Political priorities in Kailahun (Base = All respondents, Kailahun)

Southern Province

In the Southern Districts of Pujehun and Bo, education, peace and security, roads and water are all in the top five most mentioned political priorities. The economy and tackling poverty is in the top five in Bo, whereas health is in the top five in Pujehun.

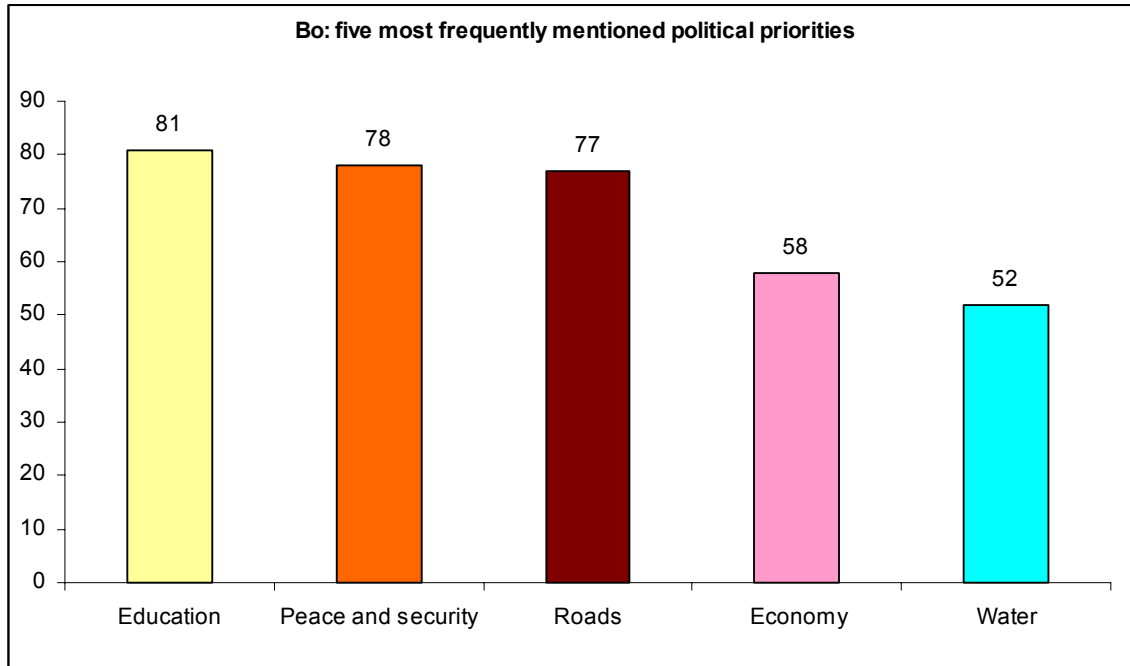


Fig 32: Political priorities, Bo (Base = All respondents, Bo)

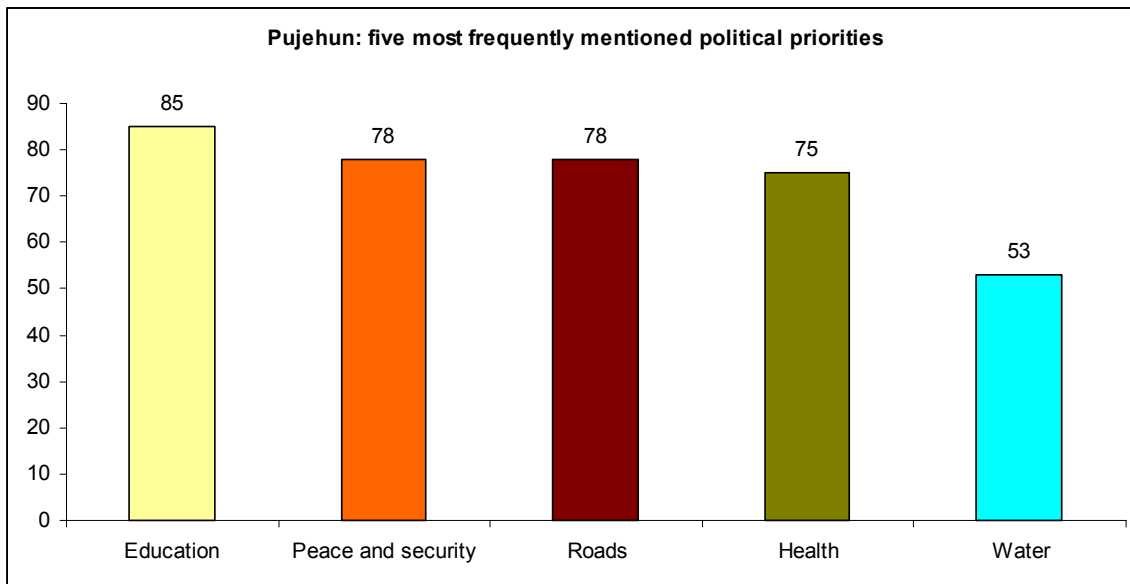


Fig 33: Political priorities, Pujehun (Base = All respondents, Pujehun)

Political priorities of men and women, and of different age groups

Younger and older people have similar political priorities, although a lower proportion of younger, compared to older people mentioned peace and security as a priority (38% of 18-25 yr olds, compared with 52% of 26-34 yr olds, 47% of 35-45 yr olds, and 48% of those aged 46-59 yrs). Health and tackling corruption were also issues mentioned less

frequently by 18-25 year olds compared to other age groups, but the differences are not substantial.

Electricity was mentioned less often by those aged 46-59 yrs than it was by other age groups, although the differences are not big (mentioned by 57% of 46-59 yr olds, compared with 65% of 36-45 year olds, 61% of 26-34 year olds, and 64% of 18-25 year olds).

Gender seems to make little difference on people's political priorities. Males and females ranked issues more or less the same in terms of their importance.

Importance of equality and inclusion in government

In addition to being asked about specific policy priorities, respondents were also asked to rate the importance they placed on government upholding values around inclusion, equality and participation. Respondents were given three statements and asked to rate the extent they agreed with each of them. The statements were:

- i. It is important for government to protect the rights of minorities;*
- ii. It is important that government treats everybody equally; and*
- iii. It is important that government gives opportunities to participate in decision making*

Figures 33, 34, and 35 show the scores for each of these questions across the eight sample Districts/Areas.

Across all sample Districts/Areas, the vast majority of respondents ranked all three values as being of high importance. Fewer respondents from Port Loko, compared to other Districts/Areas, ranked the rights of minorities and equality as being of high importance. Respondents from Bo and Port Loko were less likely than other respondents to place high importance on the government offering people greater opportunities to participate in decision making.

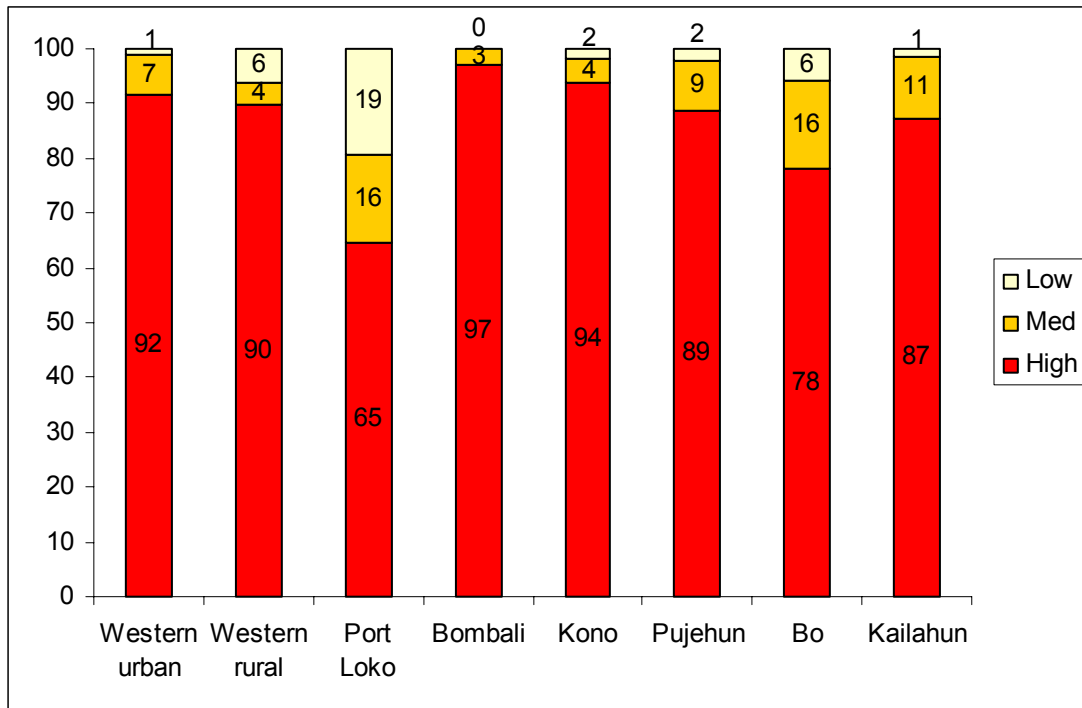


Fig 33: Rating of agreement with statement, 'It is important for government to protect rights of minorities' (Base = All respondents)

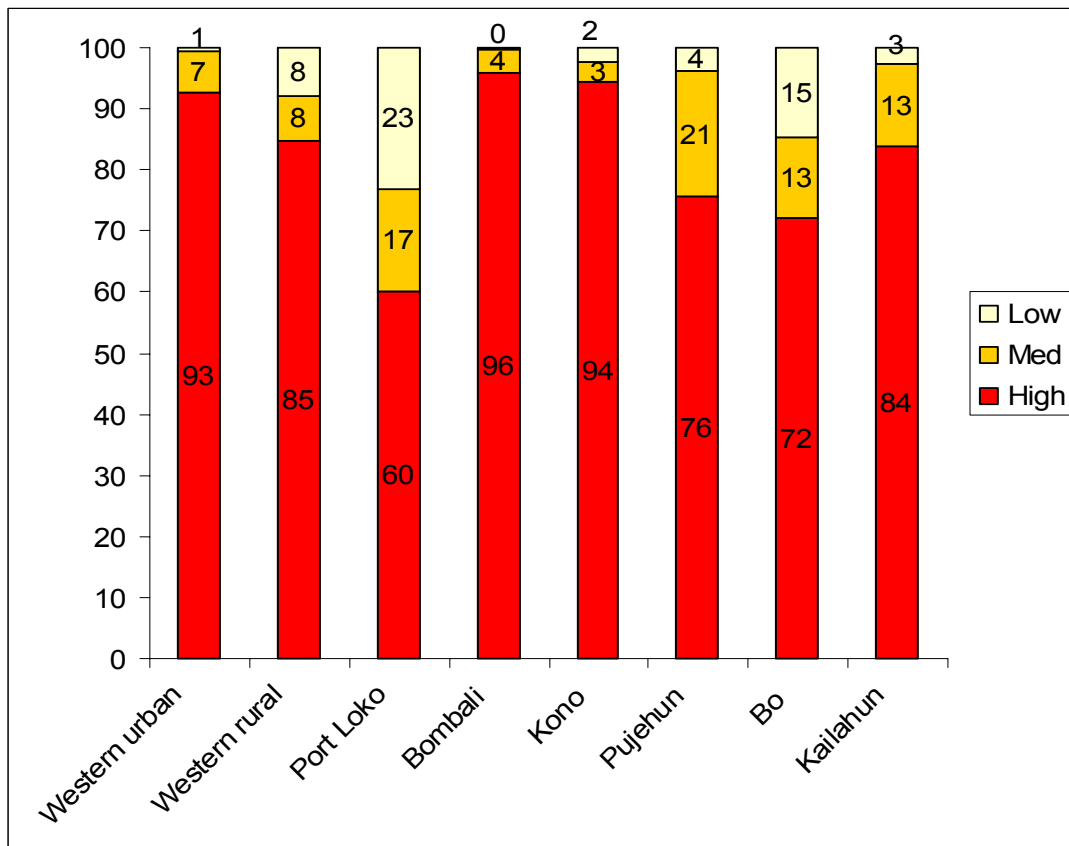


Fig 34: Rating of agreement with statement, 'It is important that government treats everybody equally' (Base = All respondents)

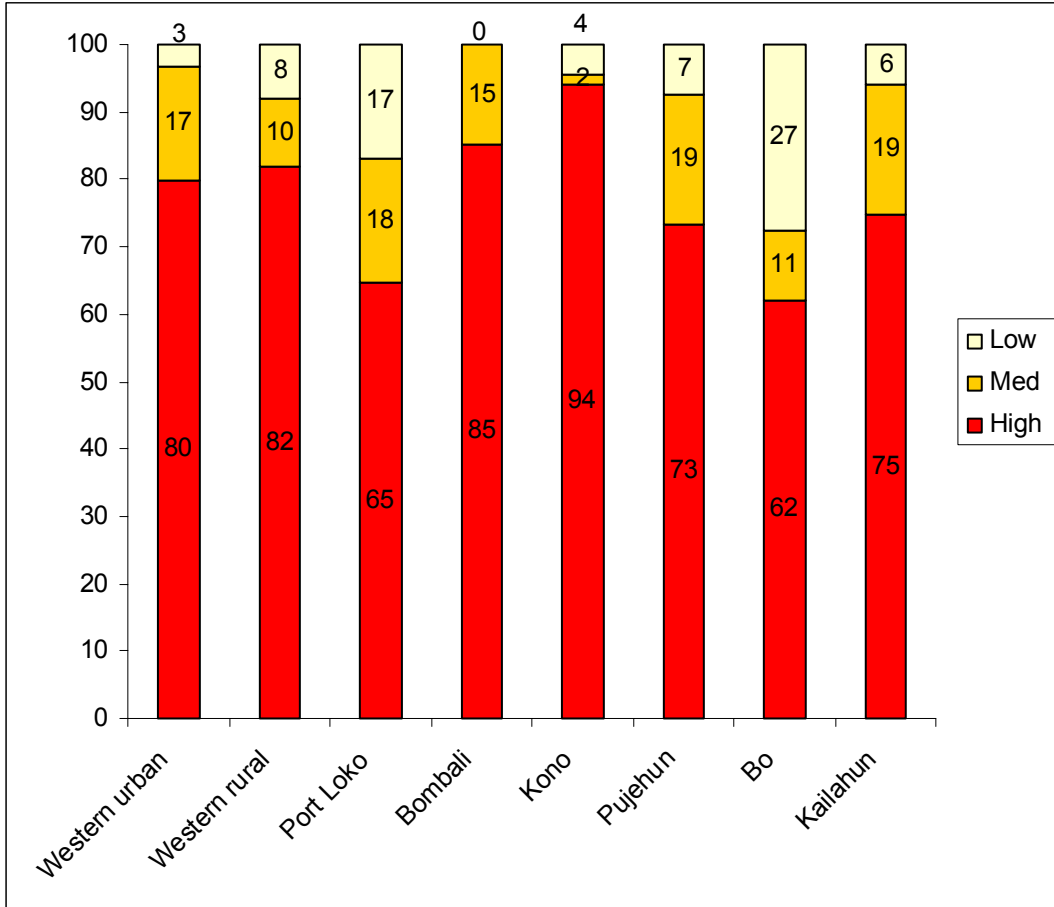


Fig 35: Important that Govt gives people more opportunities to participate in decision making (Base = All respondents)

5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOTING AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR

This section presents information on voting behaviour, attitudes which people have towards voting, and attitudes towards the honesty of the previous national election in Sierra Leone.

Voting in previous national election in Sierra Leone by District/Area

Figure 36 shows the proportion of people across sample Districts/Areas who report having voted in the previous national elections. **Figure 37** shows the same information for men and for women. The vast majority of respondents across all areas report having voted in the last elections, the highest proportion in Pujehun, the lowest in Western Urban Area. Men are more likely to have voted than women, but there is little difference across age groups.

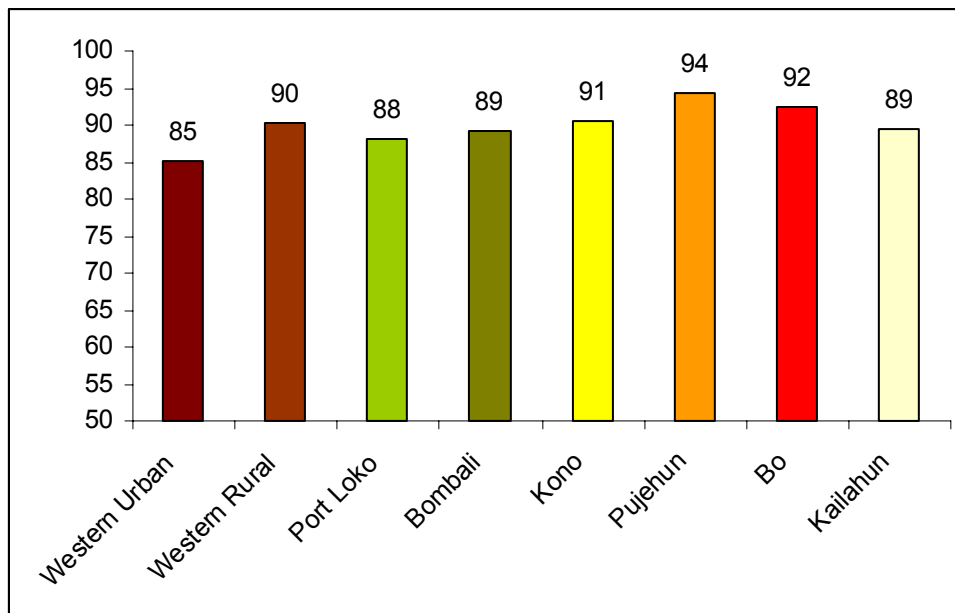


Fig 36: Voted in last election, District/Area, aged over 22 (Base = All respondents over age 22)

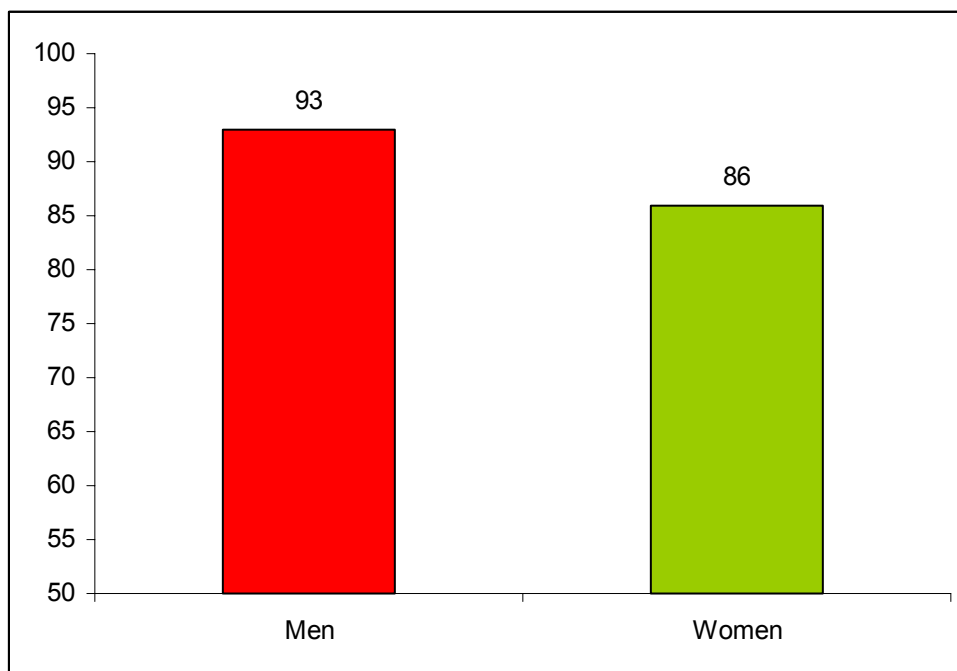


Fig 37: Voted in last election, men/women, aged 22 and over (Base = All respondents aged over 22)

For those over 22 who didn't vote in last election, the three most cited reasons were:

- Not registered
- Too busy; and
- Didn't support any political party.

Attitudes towards voting

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement, '*It is important for people to vote in elections*'. **Figure 38** shows respondents' views across the sample Districts/Areas, **Figure 39** shows the same information for men and women.

Respondents across all Districts/Area place a high level of importance in voting. There are only small differences across Districts/Areas, and between men and women.

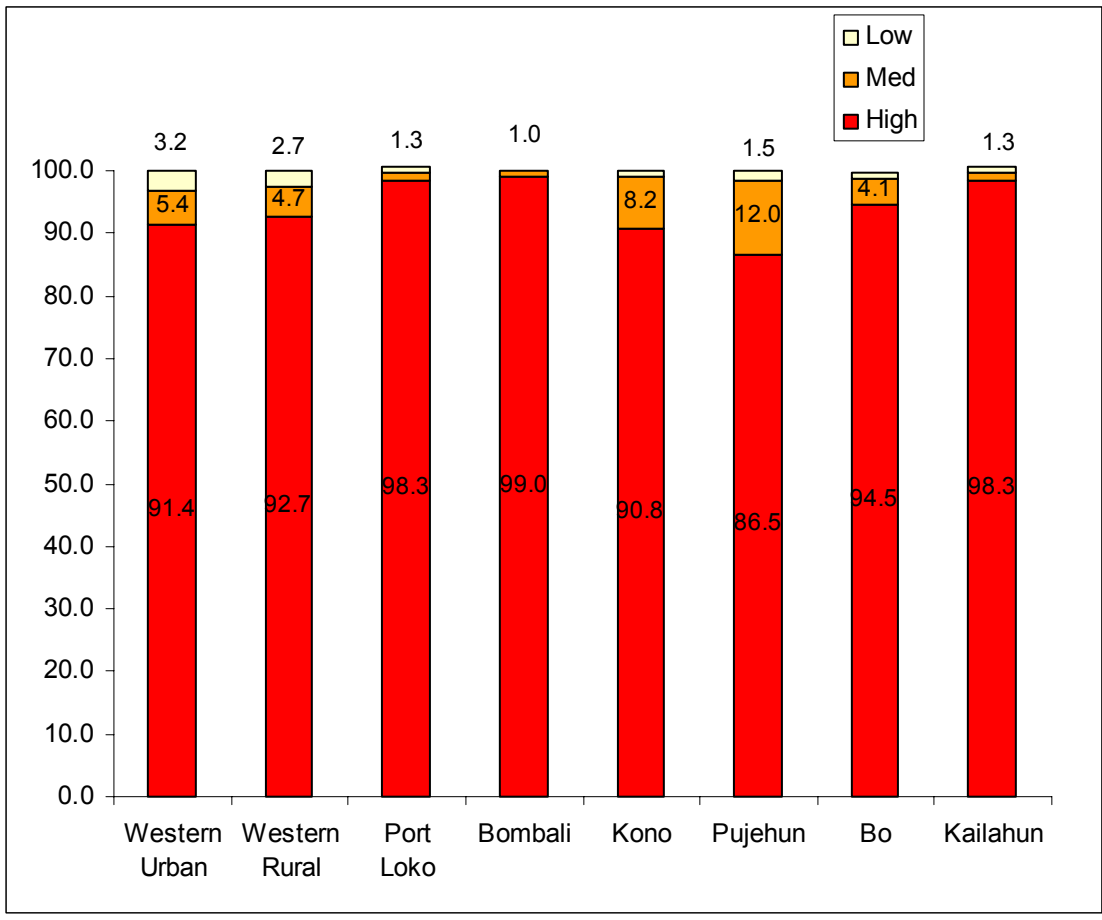


Fig 38: Rating of agreement with statement, 'It is important that people vote in elections' (Base = All respondents)

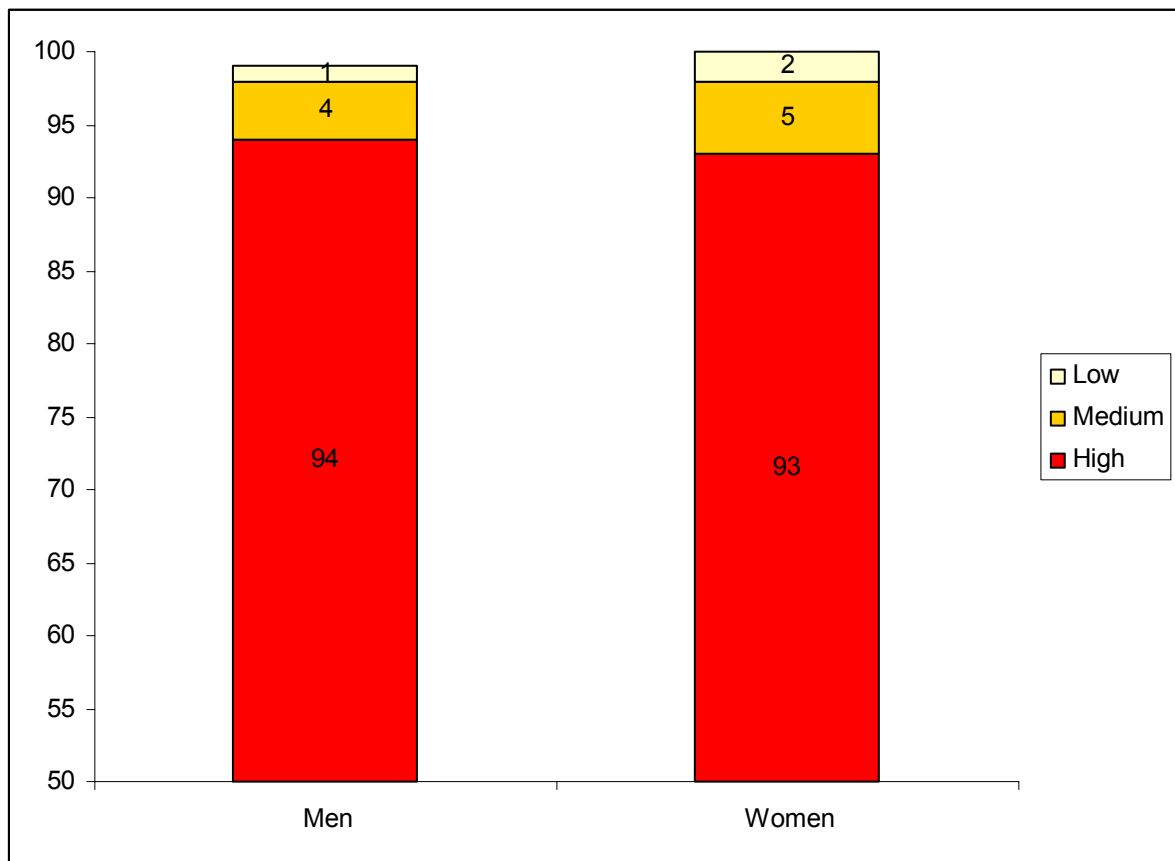


Fig 39: Rating of agreement with statement, 'It is important that people vote in elections' (Base = All respondents)

Voting behaviour and engagement in wider socio-political activity

Analysis explored the extent to which a range of attitudes and socially motivated activities are related to likelihood of voting. It showed that respondents who:

- hold positive attitudes towards voting (see **figure 40**)
- discuss politics with friends, work colleagues, family
- donated or raised funds for political party
- contacted a civil servant or elected official to give their view
- attended a political meeting or rally
- ever signed a petition
- are members or have been members of church, sports and other voluntary associations; or who have
- ever taken part in a demonstration

are all more likely to have voted in the previous election than people who have never done these activities at some point in their lives.

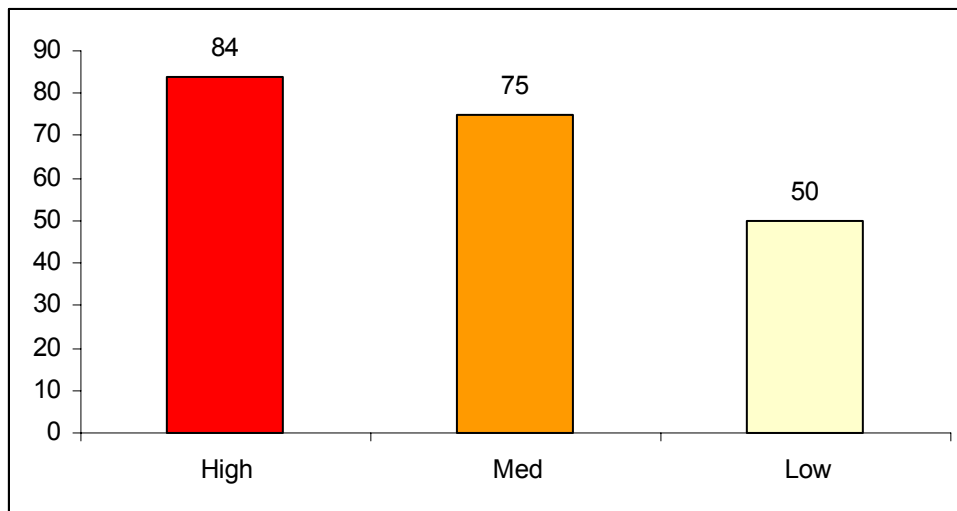


Fig 40: The proportion of people with 'high', 'medium' and 'low' rating of the importance of voting in elections, who voted in last national election (Base = All respondents)

Attitudes towards honesty of last national elections in Sierra Leone with regard to the counting and reporting of votes

Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they thought that previous national elections in Sierra Leone had been honest, with regard to the counting and reporting of votes. **Figure 41** shows, that across almost all Districts/Areas, over 50% of respondents report thinking that previous elections had a high level of honesty.

In Western Urban Area, however, only 27% of respondents think that the previous national election was honest, far lower than across all other Districts/Areas.

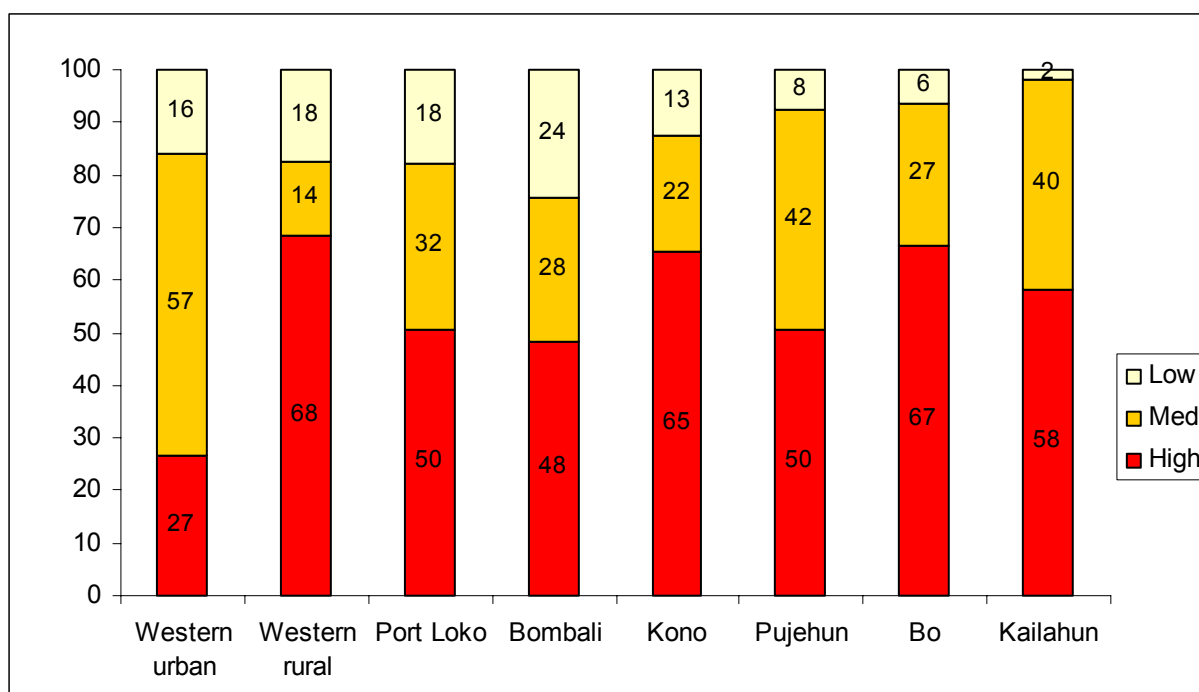


Fig 41: Respondents' rating of honesty of last national elections (counting and reporting of votes) in Sierra Leone (Base = All respondents)

Figure 42 shows that there are only small differences between the proportion of men and women who think that the previous election was honest.

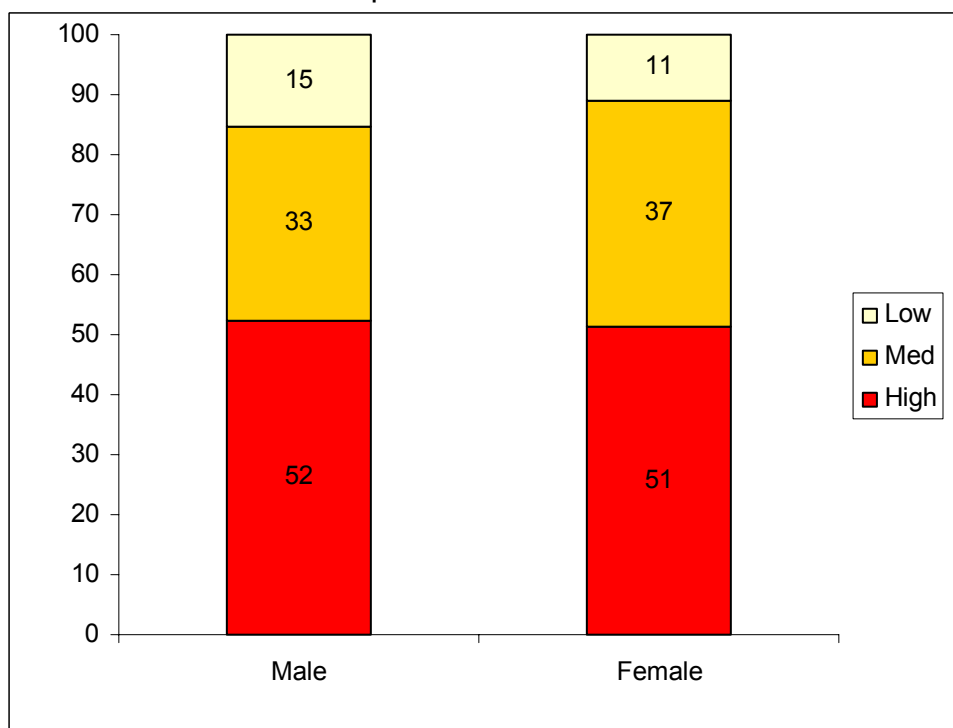


Fig 42: Respondents' rating of the honesty of last national elections (counting and reporting of votes) in Sierra Leone by men and women (Base = All respondents)

Figure 43 shows that the youngest age group (18-25 year olds) were slightly less likely than older age groups to give a high rating to the honesty of the previous election.

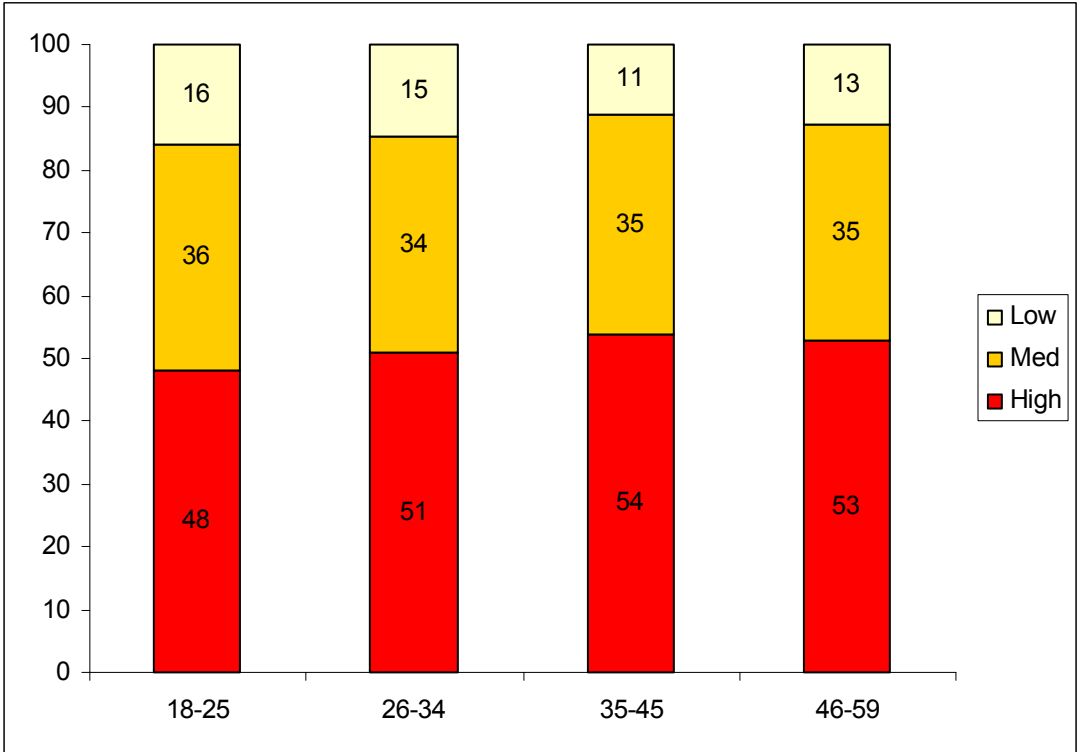


Fig 43: Respondents' rating of the honesty of last national elections (counting and reporting of votes) in Sierra Leone by men and women (Base = All respondents)

6. TRUST IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS & PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

This section presents findings on the levels of trust which respondents place in key social and political institutions. It explores respondents' attitudes towards:

- national and local politicians
- perceived government response to protests against 'unjust' laws
- levels of trust in the police; and
- levels of trust in the legal system

Trust in national and local politicians

Respondents were asked to rate the level of trust they have in both local and national politicians. **Figure 44** shows that a higher proportion of respondents rated themselves as having high trust in local politicians than national politicians.

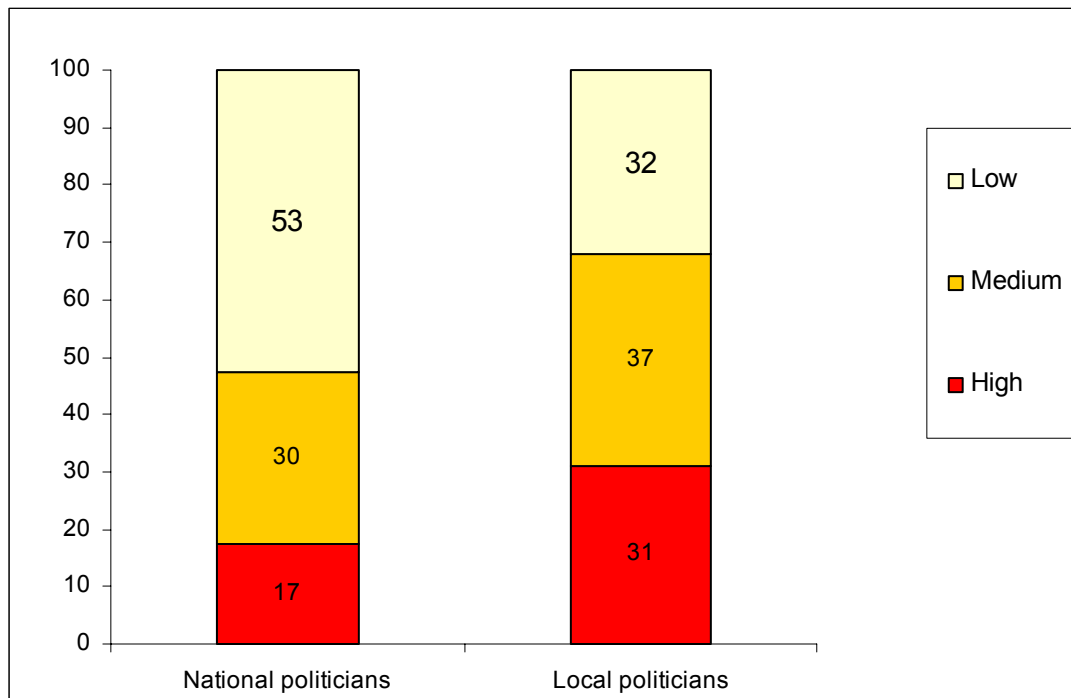


Fig 44: Rating of trust placed in local and national politicians (Base = All respondents)

Figure 45 shows the proportion of respondents reporting a high level of trust in local and national politicians across the eight sample Districts/Areas.

Respondents in Bo, Kono and Bombali register the biggest difference, with a far higher proportion of respondents reporting high levels of trust in local politicians compared to national politicians. The smallest differences are in Western Rural and Western Urban Areas, and in Pujehun District.

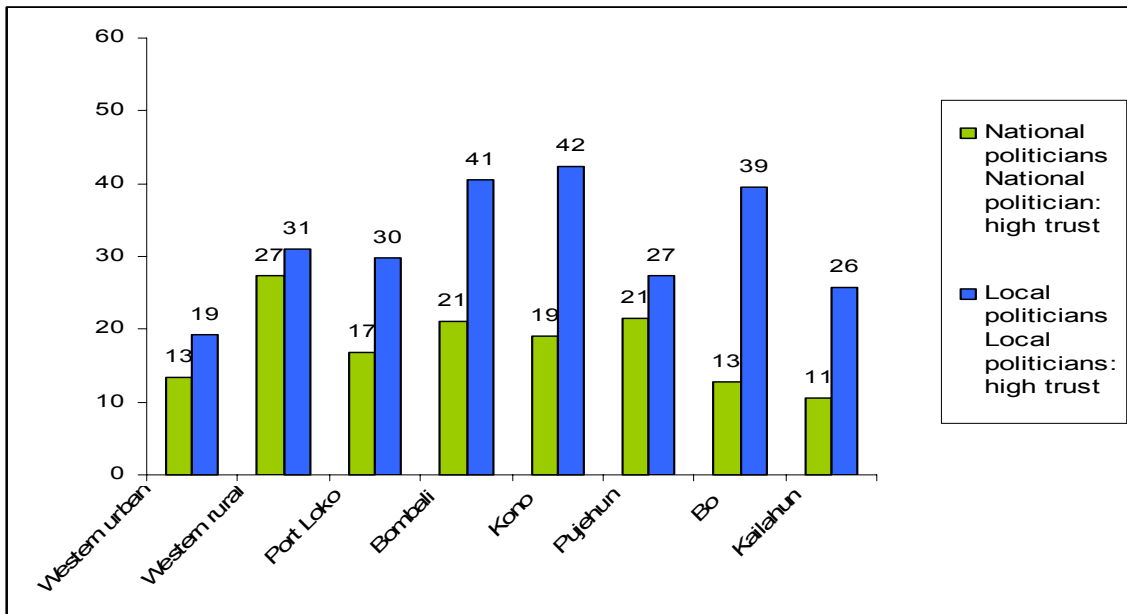


Fig 45: % of respondents having a high level of trust in national and local politicians across sample Districts/Areas (Base = All respondents)

Perceived efficacy of government and elected officials

Respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement they have with the statement: *'most of the time, we can trust elected officials to do what is right'*.

Figure 46 shows responses across all sample Districts/Areas

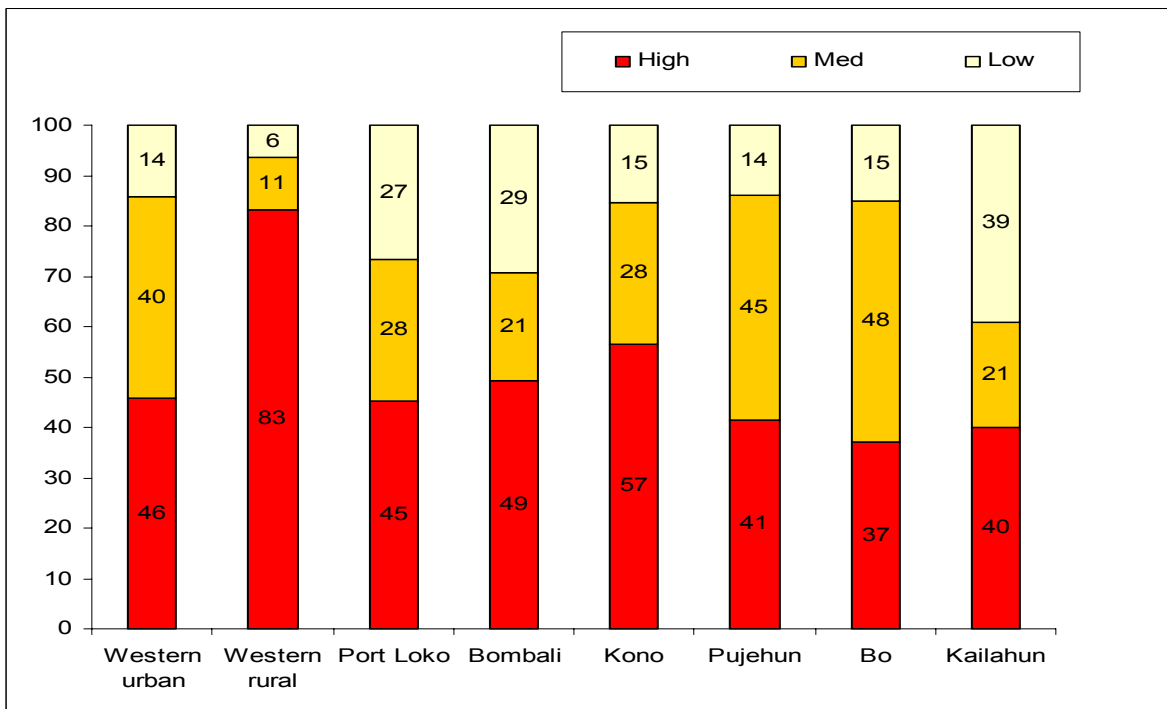


Fig 46: Rating of agreement with statement, *'Most of the time, we can trust elected officials to do what is right'* (Base = All respondents)

Respondents were asked to rate the likelihood that government would respond to protests about legislation perceived to be unjust. **Figure 47** shows how respondents across the sample Districts/Areas rated this likelihood.

Across most Districts/Areas, a relatively low proportion of respondents (under 40%), thought that there was a high likelihood that Government would respond to protests about perceived injustice. The proportion is particularly low in Western Urban Area and Port Loko District (14% and 10% respectively, rating the likelihood as 'high'), and is relatively high in Pujehun and Bombali Districts (46% and 39% respectively).

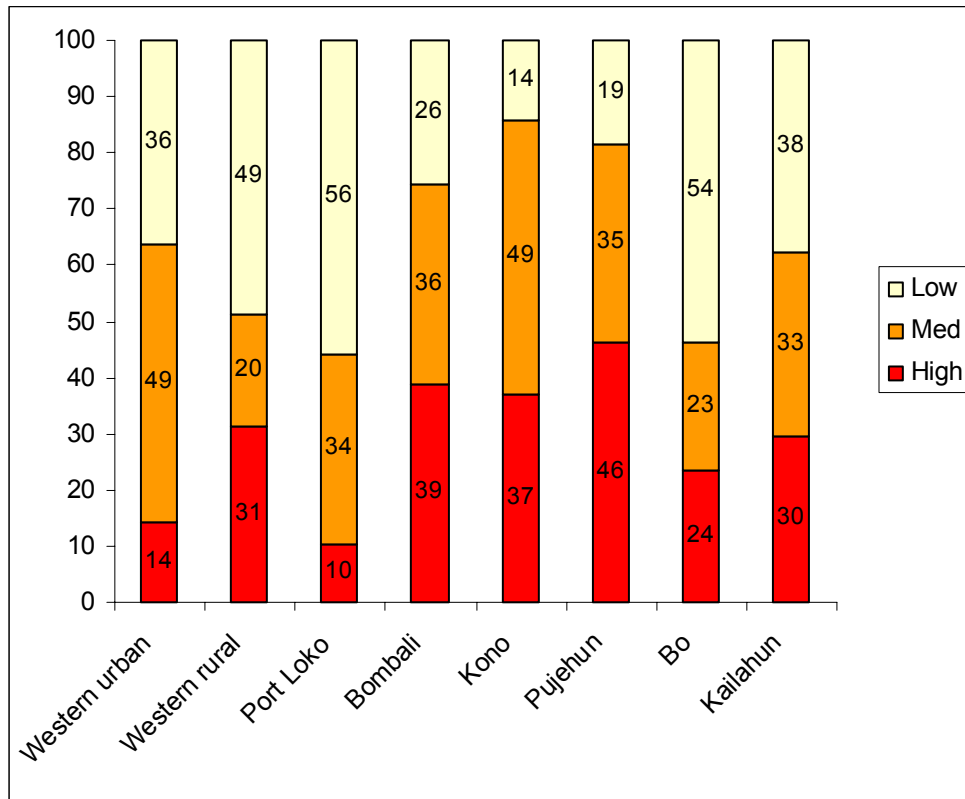


Fig 47: Rating of likelihood that government would respond to protests about unjust laws' (Base = All respondents)

Figure 48 shows that a greater proportion of men than women reported a high likelihood that government would respond to protests.

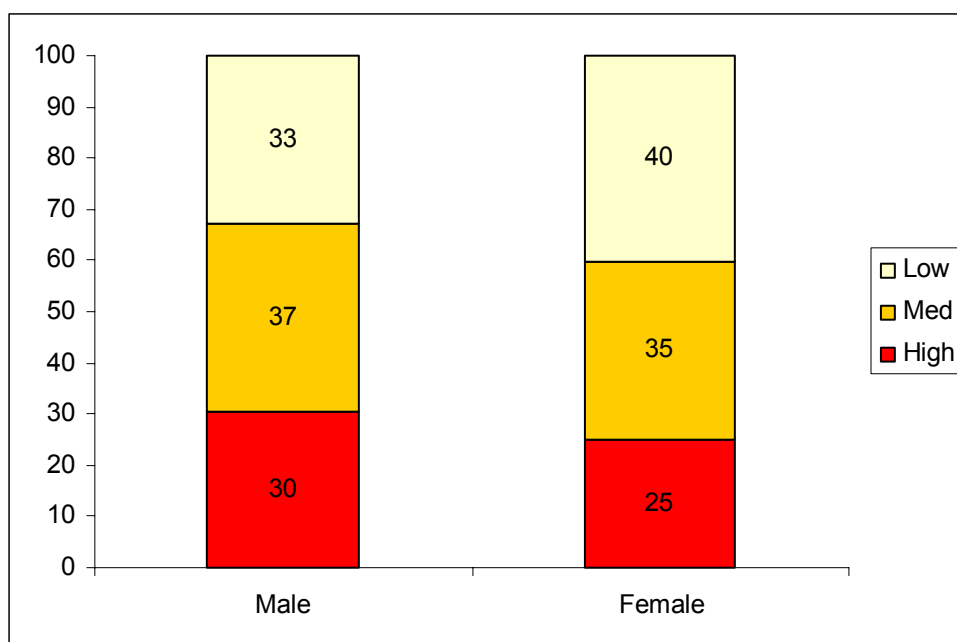


Fig 48: Rating of likelihood that government would respond to protests about unjust laws' (Base = All respondents)

Levels of trust in the police and the legal system

Respondents were asked to rate the level of trust they have in the police and the legal system in Sierra Leone. **Figure 49** shows how respondents rate their trust in the police, and **figure 50** shows trust in legal system.

Levels of trust in police are generally quite low, with only one District (Bombali) with over 40% of respondents reporting a high level of trust. Trust is particularly low in the eastern Districts of Kono and Kailahun, with over 50% of respondents reporting low level of trust in police.

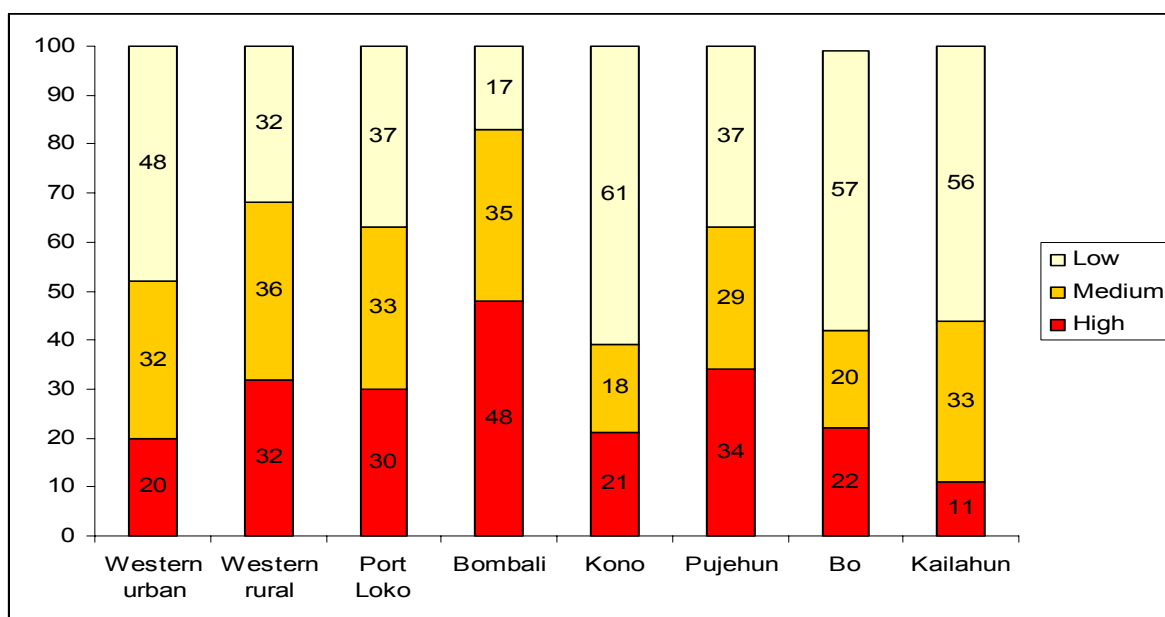


Fig 49: Rating of trust in the police (Base = All respondents)

Figure 50 shows that there are large variations across Districts/Areas in the levels of trust which respondents report having in the legal system. A low proportion of respondents in Western Urban Area and Kailahun District report a high level of trust in the legal system, whereas a relatively high proportion of respondents in Port Loko, Bombali and Pujehun report a relatively high level of trust.

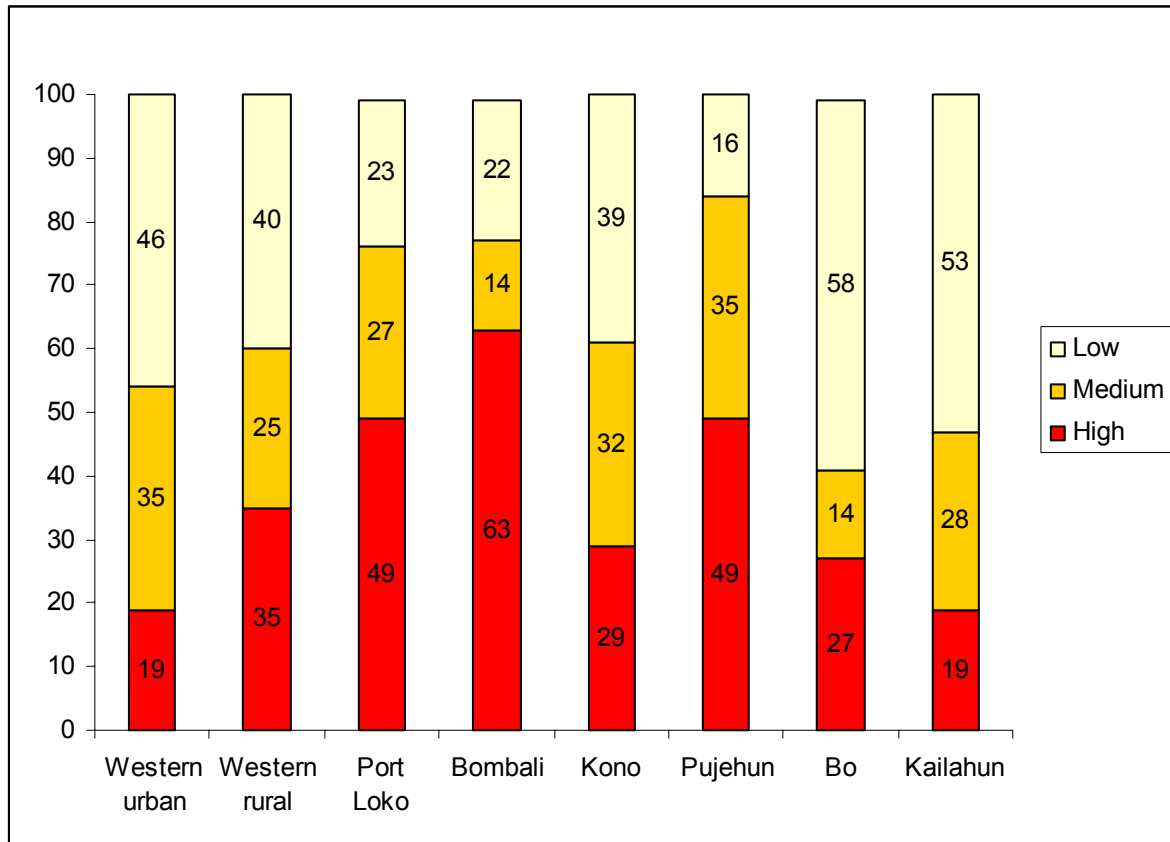


Fig 50: Rating of trust in the legal system (Base = All respondents)

Involvement in social and politically motivated activity

Respondents were asked questions about a number of politically motivated activities, enquiring as to whether they had ever done them and the likelihood that they may do so in the future. The activities presented here cover:

- taking part in a demonstration;
- attending a political rally;
- contact with a politician or civil servant to express views; and
- raising funds for political or social activity

Figures 51 – 54 show the proportion of respondents across each District/Area reporting whether they have:

- done activity in the past year
- done it in more distant past
- not done it, but might do in the future; and

- have never done it and never will do

Involvement in organised social and political activity varies considerably across Districts/Areas, but Kailahun, Western Urban Area, and Kono District have higher levels of activity than other Districts/Areas, whereas Bo and Pujehun have relatively low levels of activity

- 31% of respondents in Kailahun report, in the past year, having taken part in a demonstration, 41% having attended a political rally, 33% having contacted a politician or civil servant to express their views, and 40% having raised money for a social or political activity. This is higher than across all other Districts/Areas
- In Bo, in the past year, only 4% of respondents report having taken part in a demonstration, 16% having attended a political rally, 7% contacted a politician or civil servant, and 6% having raised money for a social or political activity. This is lower than across all other Districts/Areas, although similar to Pujehun, the other sample District from the south.
- Women are less likely than men to have engaged in organised social and political activity

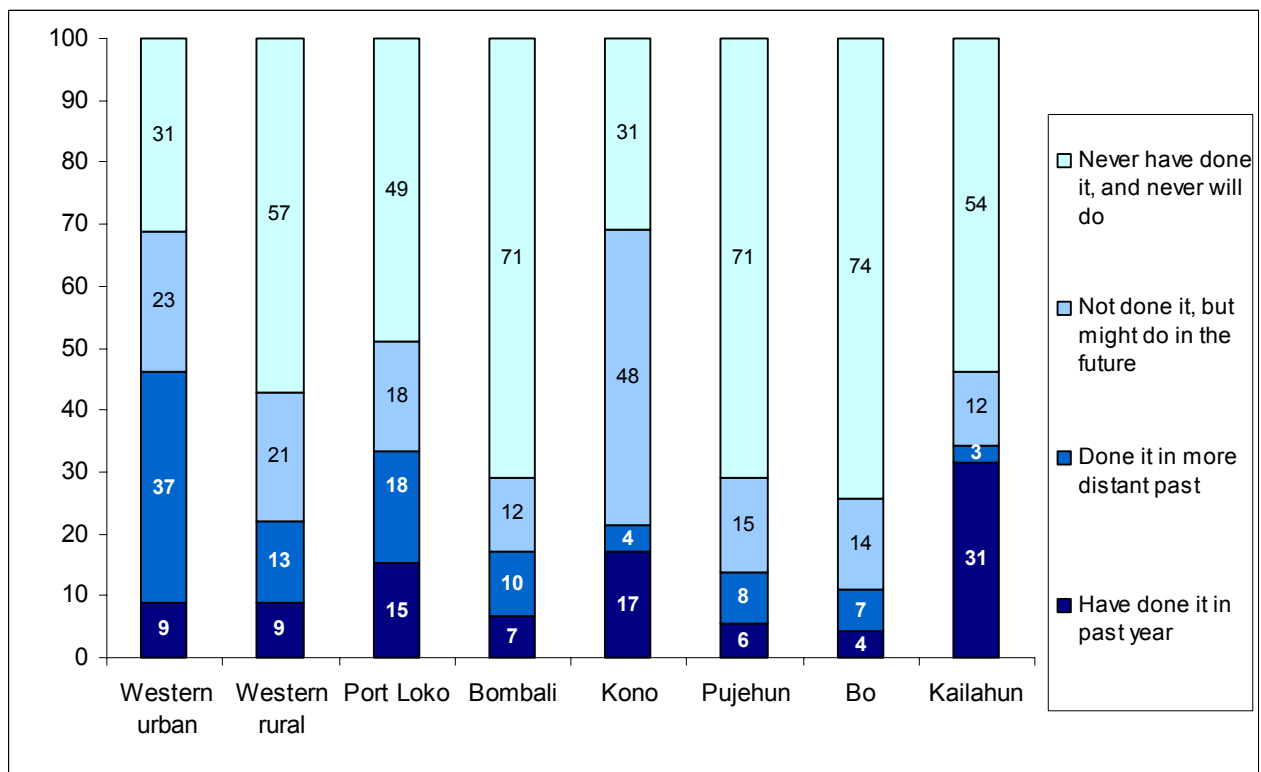


Fig 51: Ever taken part in a demonstration (Base = All respondents)

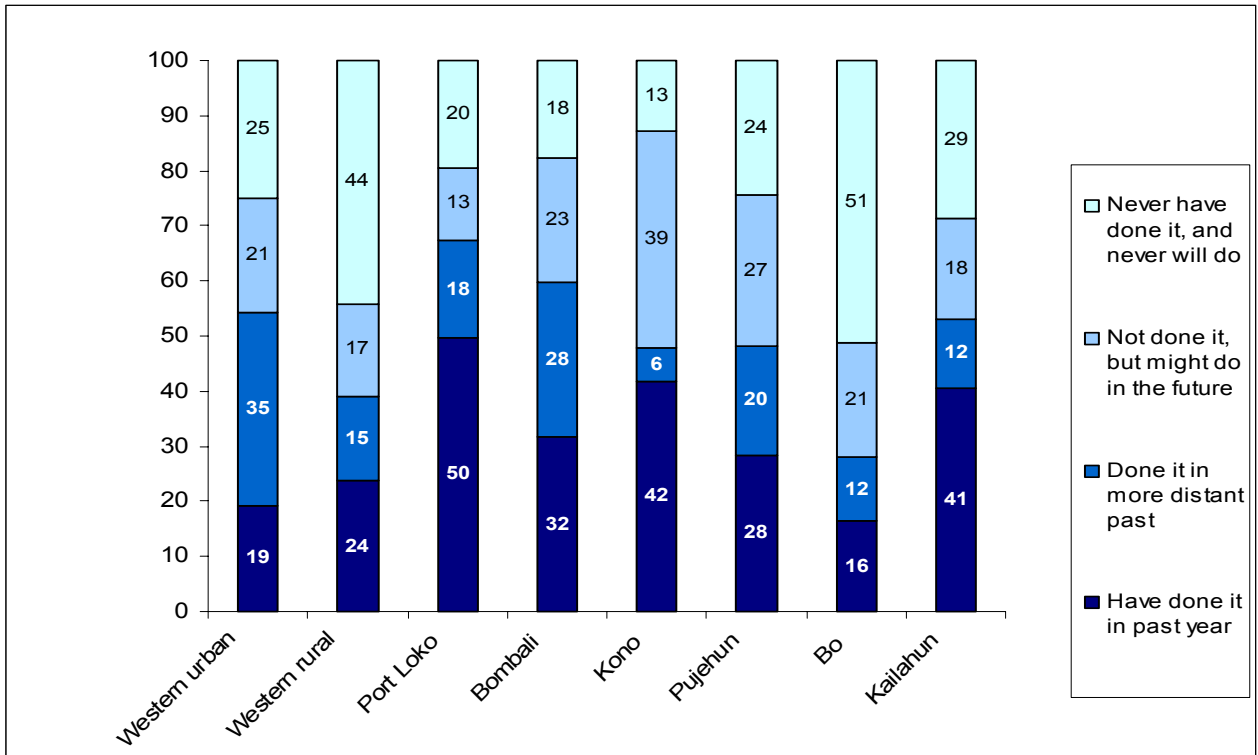


Fig 52: Ever attended a political rally (Base = All respondents)

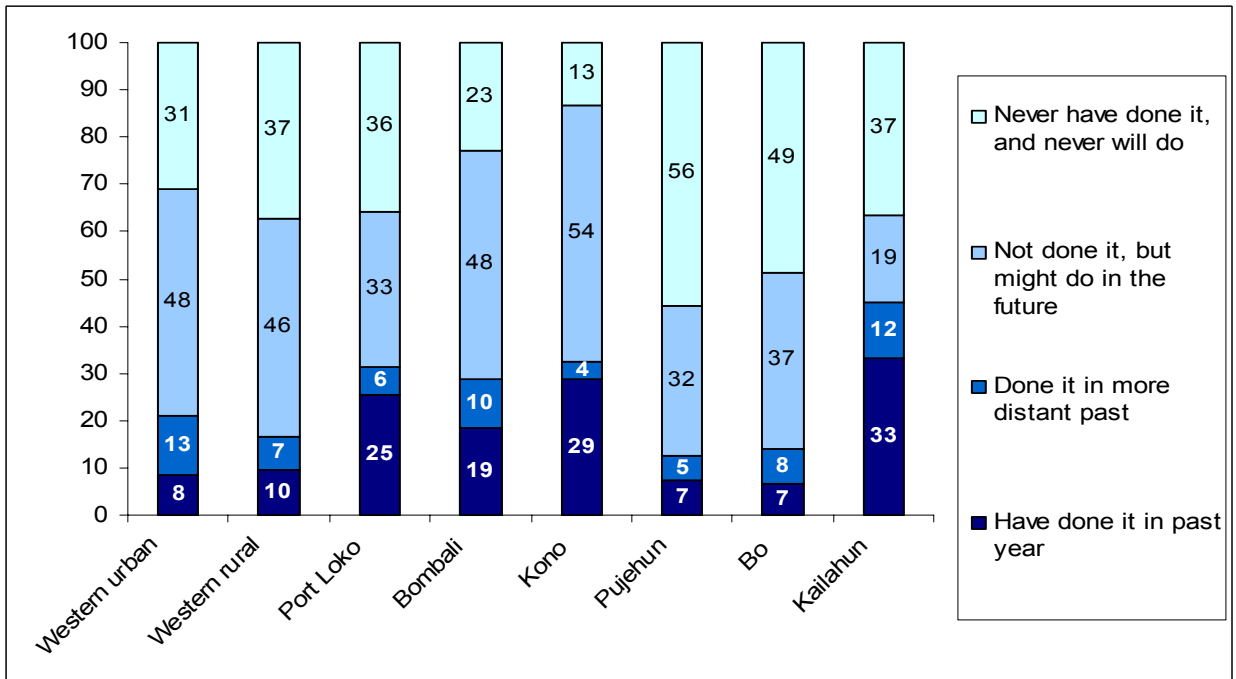


Fig 53: Ever contacted a politician or civil servant to express your views (Base = All respondents)

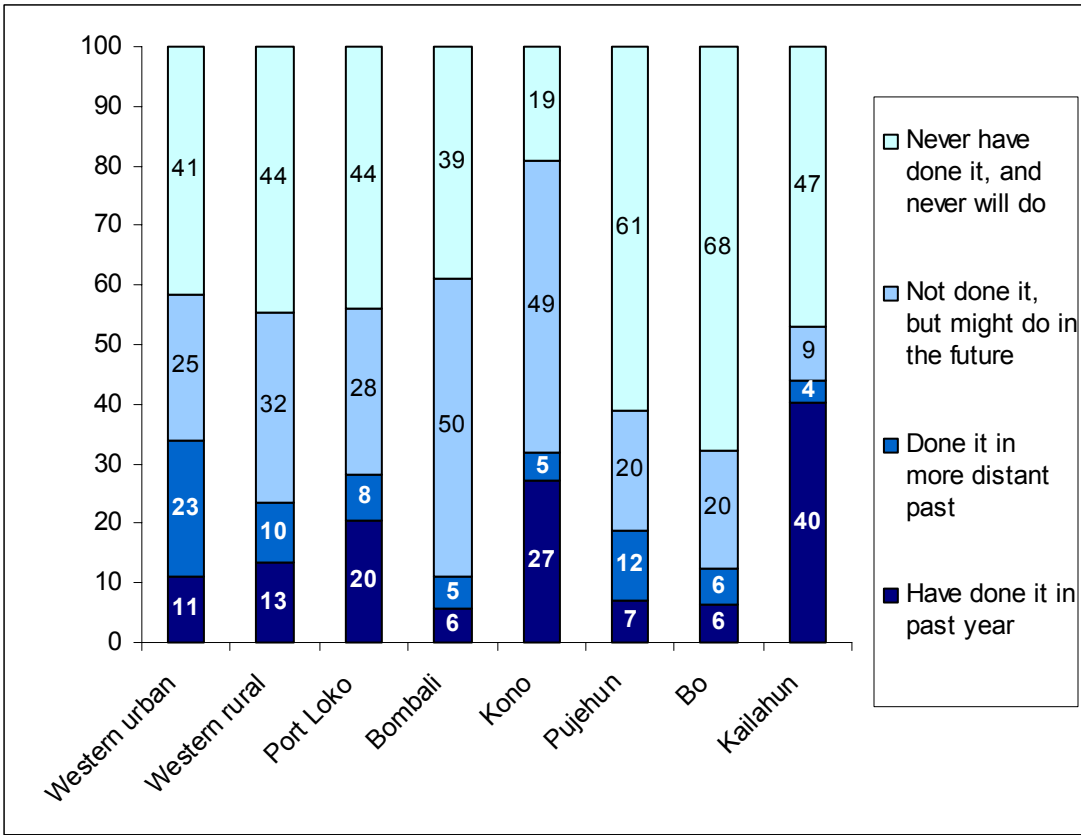


Fig 54: Ever raised money for a social or political activity (Base = All respondents)

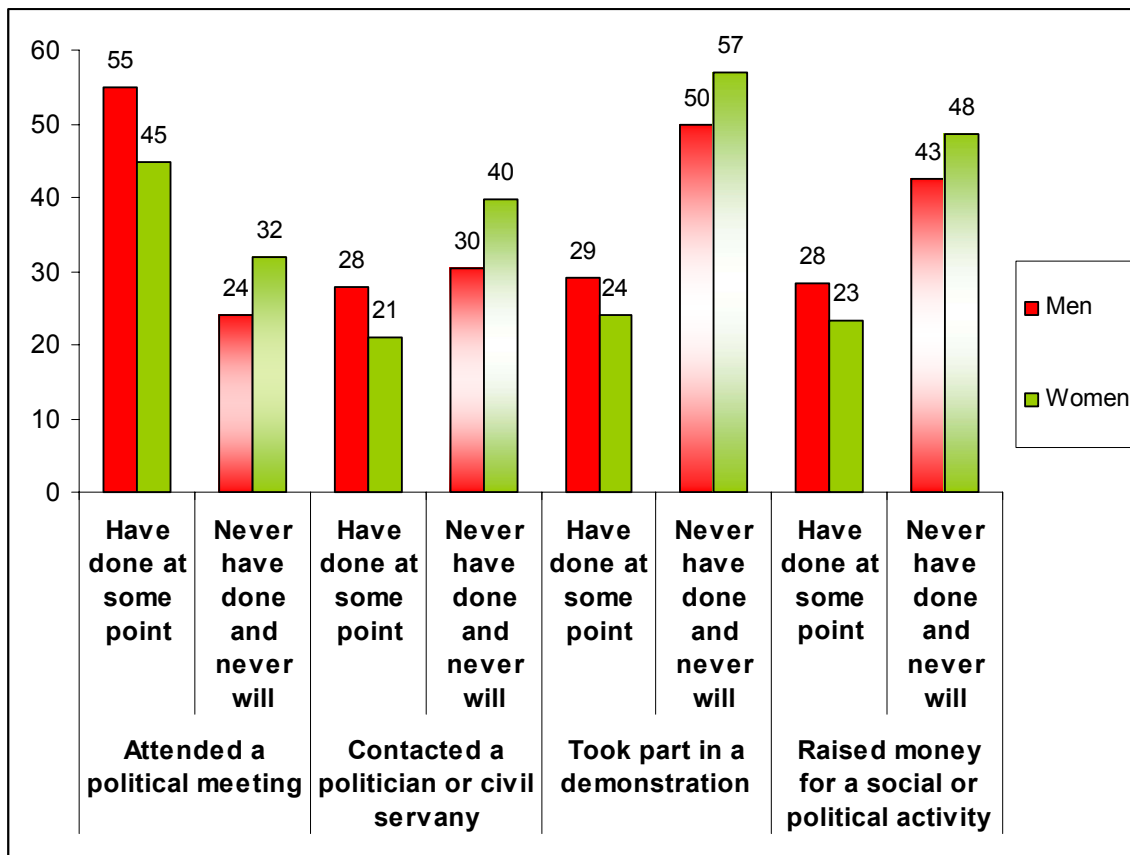


Fig 54: Political activity by men and women (Base = All respondents)

7) POPULATION SEGMENTS: KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTIONS, INTEREST IN POLITICS, AND TRUST IN ELECTED OFFICIALS

Analysis was carried out to identify groups or segments within the sample population that share common attitudinal characteristics. This approach allows for a number of related issues to be looked at together and gives a better understanding of how populations 'cluster' into groups of people with similar attitudes.

The three variables used were:

- Self-reported confidence in knowledge of electoral system
- Self-reported level of interest in politics; and
- Self-reported level of trust in elected officials to do what is right

In consideration of responses to these three variables, analysis points to there being five main groupings:

- **Group 1:** Low level of knowledge of electoral process, medium interest in politics, high trust in the elected officials
- **Group 2:** Medium level of knowledge of electoral process, medium interest in politics, high trust in elected officials
- **Group 3:** Low/medium knowledge of electoral process, low interest in politics, low trust in elected officials
- **Group 4:** Medium knowledge of electoral process, low interest in politics, high trust in elected officials
- **Group 5:** High knowledge of electoral process, high interest in politics, low/medium trust in elected officials

Further analysis then explored the proportion of respondents in each District/Area that falls into each of these groups. **Figure 55** shows the proportion of the population falling into each of the attitudinal groups, with the colour key giving the characteristics of each grouping.

The analysis presented shows that:

- The proportion of the 'disengaged and cynical' population increases in the southern Districts of Bo and Pujehun and also in the Eastern District of Kailahun. This group (green) have low levels of knowledge about the electoral system, low levels of interest in politics and low levels of trust in elected officials.
- There is a sizeable group of 'well informed cynics' in the eastern District of Kono and the Northern District of Bombali. This group have relatively high knowledge, have a high interest in politics, but low levels of trust in elected officials.
- Whilst there are a substantial number of knowledgeable and less knowledgeable 'trustees' in the Western Areas, Northern Districts, and Kono, these Districts/Areas are polarised, with a large proportion of the population having low levels of trust.

1	Low level of knowledge of electoral process, medium interest in politics, high trust in the elected officials
2	Medium level of knowledge of electoral process, medium interest in politics, high trust in elected officials
3	Low/medium knowledge of electoral process, low interest in politics, low trust in elected officials
4	Medium knowledge of electoral process, low interest in politics, high trust in elected officials
5	High knowledge of electoral process, high interest in politics, low/medium trust in elected officials

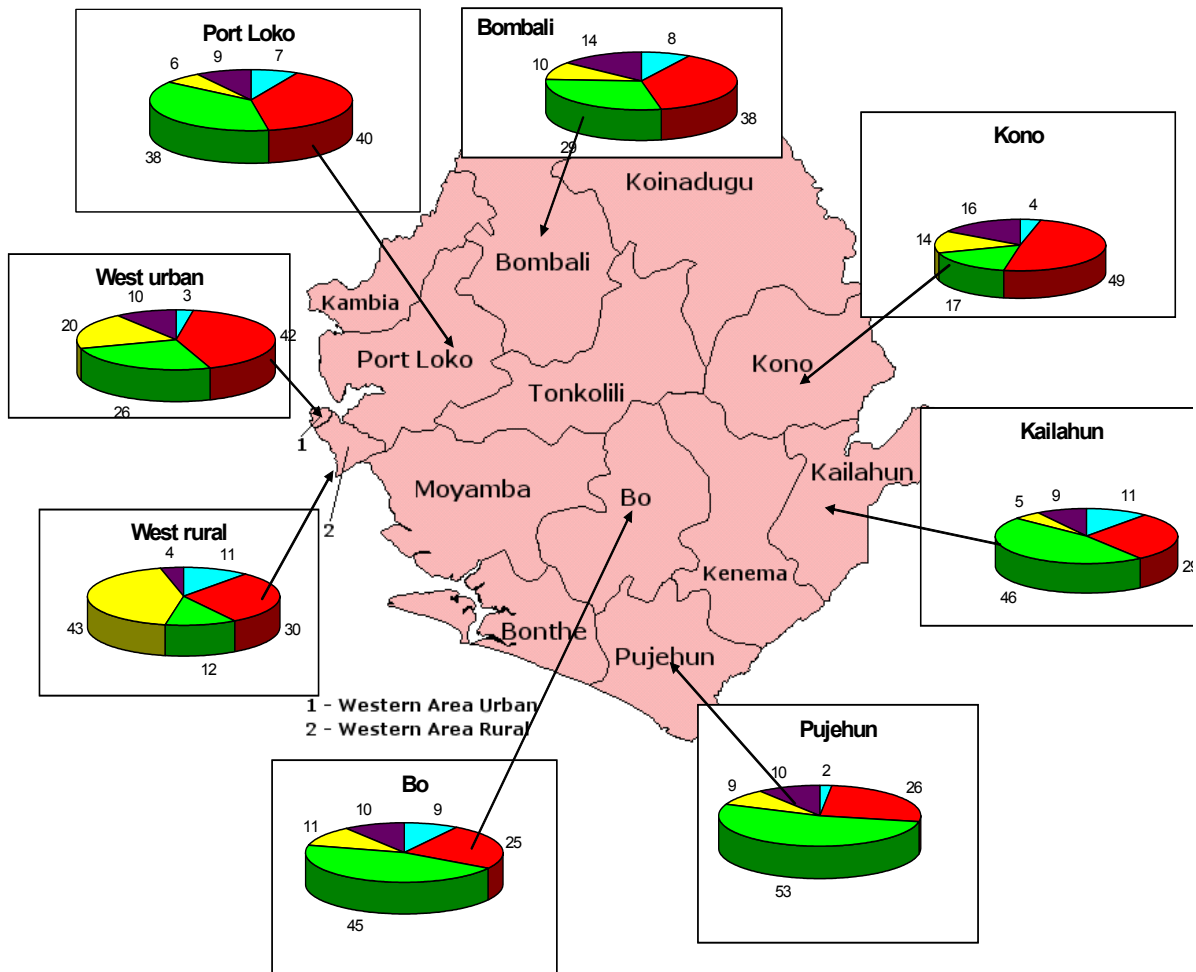


Figure 55: Proportion of population in each District/Area that fall into each of the five knowledge/attitudinal groups