



**SURVEY ON THE PERCEPTION OF
CITIZENS IN SWAZILAND ABOUT THE
PROPOSED PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE,
NOVEMBER 2022**

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(SUDF, 2022)

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Overview of findings

In June/July 2021, the country witnessed a people-led unrest based on 5 core demands. The state reacted by deploying tremendous force on unarmed individuals, resulting in the death of over 70 people, hundreds of injuries, and over 1,000 arrests on bogus charges. Some pedestrians were shot with live ammunition, resulting in fatalities or amputations. Other persons strolling along the streets were kidnapped by security personnel dressed in official uniforms and escorted to looted businesses where they were instructed to pick out some products. Whatever they chose was then used as proof of what they had stolen, and sham charges were filed against them. The youngest detainees as a pro-democracy activists were 15-year-old boys from Lubombo and Manzini Regions. A highly pregnant woman coming from the clinic for her monthly check-up was unfairly detained and accused of being a looter. She was eventually released through a court order and gave birth a few days after her release from custody. This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the state's violence towards defenseless citizens. Even though not a single protestor was apprehended with a rusty firearm, the authorities proceeded to use fatal force on unarmed civilians. SADC advised that the government have a people-to-people conversation often termed the people's dialogue in order to overcome the country's political crisis.

Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF), an alliance of pro-democracy groups formed in 2008, commissioned a countrywide poll in November 2021 to elicit individuals' perspectives on the people's discourse. SUDF consists of political parties, trade unions, students' unions and churches. The respondents were randomly drawn from the country's four regions, and a team of 120 professional data collectors conducted the surveys. Males made up 56% of respondents, while females made up the remaining 44%. Several of the results include the following:

- At ten percent, one out of every ten respondents in the country do not know the correct definition of a people's dialogue. Surprisingly, 90% of the respondents were able to define a people's dialogue.
- At 80% mark of the respondents, four out of every five respondents believe that the country needs a people's dialogue to resolve the political crisis.
- Almost 90% of the respondents in the country reported that they firmly believe that citizens in Swaziland should be educated on what is a people's dialogue.
- 50% of the respondents reported that they prefer that the people's dialogue should be held at the national stadium, a further ten percent said the Inkundla Centers are an alternative venue.
- Nine percent of the respondents chose a hotel as a neutral venue for the hosting the people's dialogue.
- Only five percent of the respondents reported that they would be comfortable if the people's dialogue was held at Esibayeni (King's Cattle byre). The remaining 26% said they either don't know where it should be held or it can be held anywhere.
- Approximately 33% of the respondents, approximately one out of every three respondents recommended that the proceedings of the people's dialogue should be broadcasted on radio.
- 33% of the respondents said they would like to see the people's dialogue aired on television.
- 33% of the respondents chose Internet-based platforms. Only one percent of the respondents said the proceedings of the people's dialogue should not be aired on any platform.

- At the 64% mark almost two out of every three respondents said the report of the people's dialogue should be released within 2 weeks after the end of the dialogue. Only one percent (1%) of the people said the report should not be released.
- 35% of the respondents said the contents of report of the people's dialogue should be released on radio, an additional 31% said it should be released on television, the remaining 34% of the respondents said it should be released on Internet based platforms.
- At the 23% mark, almost a quarter of respondents in Swaziland suggested that the implementation of the action points should be effected after four weeks.
- 41% of the respondents can easily give a correct definition of an absolute monarchy.
- 39% of the respondents can give a correct definition of multi-party democracy.
- 84% of the respondents translating to around four respondents in every group of five respondents reported that their most preferred system of governance for Swaziland is multi-party democracy.
- Only six percent of the respondents said they prefer an absolute monarchy.
- Only five percent of the respondents prefer socialism.
- Only one percent of the respondents reported that they preferred either a constitutional monarchy or communism.

Overview of methodology

All the participants were informed of the aim and design of the study. Random sampling was used to select the respondents who participated in the poll. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to the interview. The questionnaire was administered by 120 data collectors who had been trained to do so. The questionnaire was pilot tested in one neighborhood and then improved in response to field input. Final questionnaires were produced and distributed to the country's four regions by four regional teams. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in November 2021. Some of the questions posed were: *What is a people's dialogue? Do you believe that the people in Swaziland need a dialogue? What are the reasons behind your answers above? Should people be educated on what is a people's dialogue? What are the reasons for your answer above?* We interviewed to saturation, when we found that the viewpoints that the respondents were expressing were repeated and no new points were emerging.

In order to improve credibility, ensure accuracy and reduce biases, the data collectors had no prior personal relationship with the respondents but during the interview they established good rapport with the respondents. The good rapport enabled the data collectors to acquire an in-depth understanding of the respondents' experiences with the political crisis and proposed solution in the form of a people's dialogue. The respondents were given an opportunity to choose the date, time and place where the interview would be conducted. This was done in order to minimize inconvenience to the respondents and maximize their levels of being comfortable in expressing their views in a safe space. Following the data collection, data analysis began and was concluded in early February 2022. The report is scheduled to be issued in mid-February 2022.

Response rate

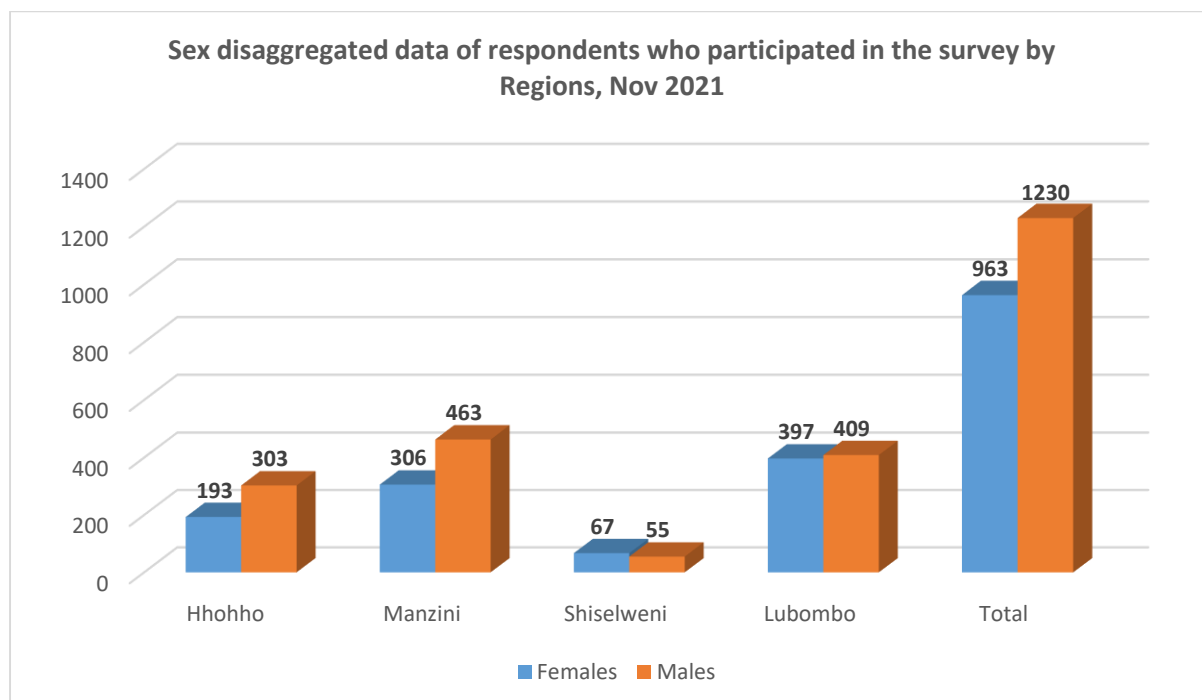


Figure 1 Sex disaggregated data of respondents who participated in the survey by Regions, Nov 2021

The face-to-face poll drew around 2,200 respondents from the country's four regions. Males made up 56% of respondents, while females made up 44%. No respondent declined to reveal his or her sex. 39% of respondents in the Hhohho Region were female. 40% of respondents in Manzini Region were female. Females made up 55% of respondents in Shiselweni Region, but just 49% in Lubomb Region.

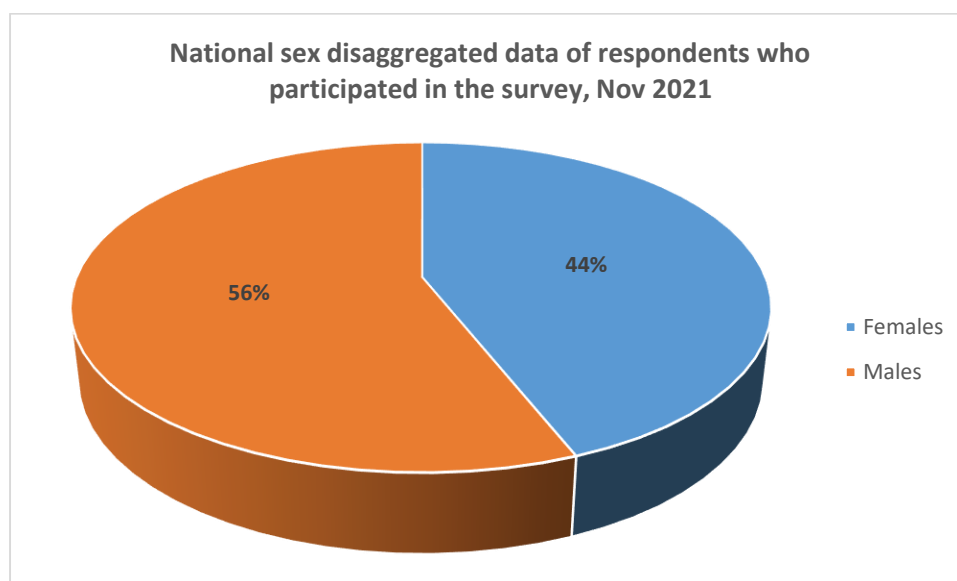


Figure 2 National sex disaggregated data of respondents who participated in the survey, Nov 2021

Findings

Concept of a people's dialogue

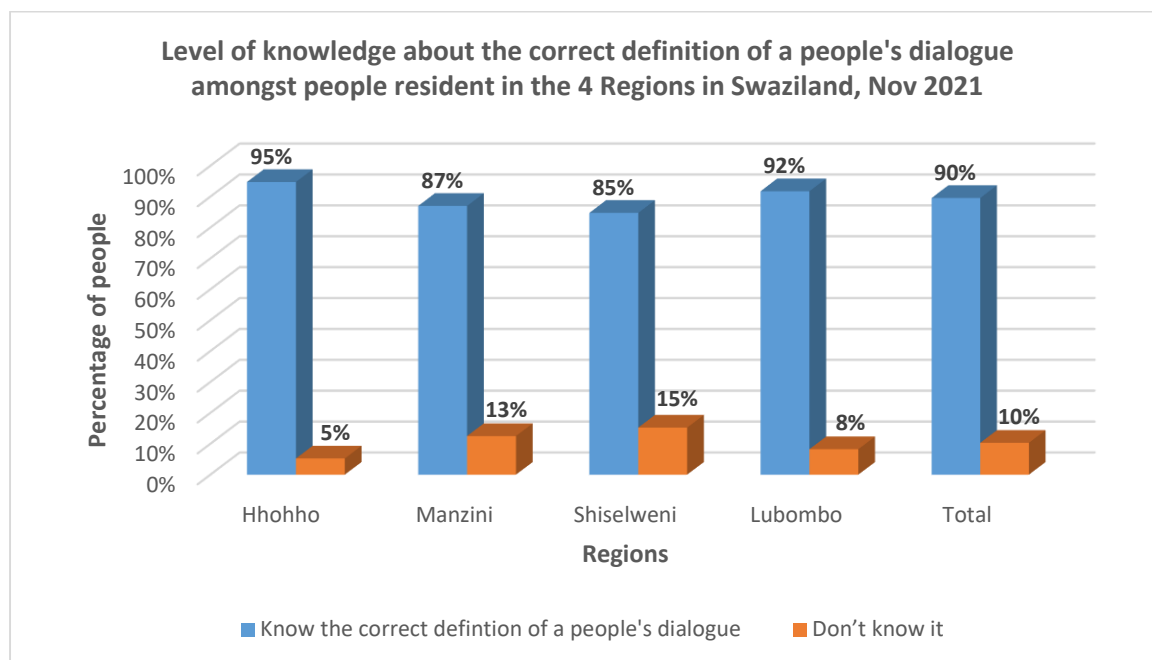


Figure 3 Level of knowledge about the correct definition of a people's dialogue amongst people resident in the 4 Regions in Swaziland, Nov 2021

At the national level, ten percent translating to one respondent out of every ten respondents in Swaziland does not understand the right concept of a people's dialogue. Interestingly, nine respondents out of every ten respondents which translates to 90% understand what a people's dialogue is. At 95% rate, the Hhohho Region has the largest proportion of respondents who understand what a people's dialogue is and this is equivalent to 19 respondents in each group of 20 respondents. At a rate of 85% in terms of knowledge, Shiselweni had the fewest responses with comparable expertise. In each group of 20 respondents in the Shiselweni Region, 17 respondents understand what a people's dialogue is.

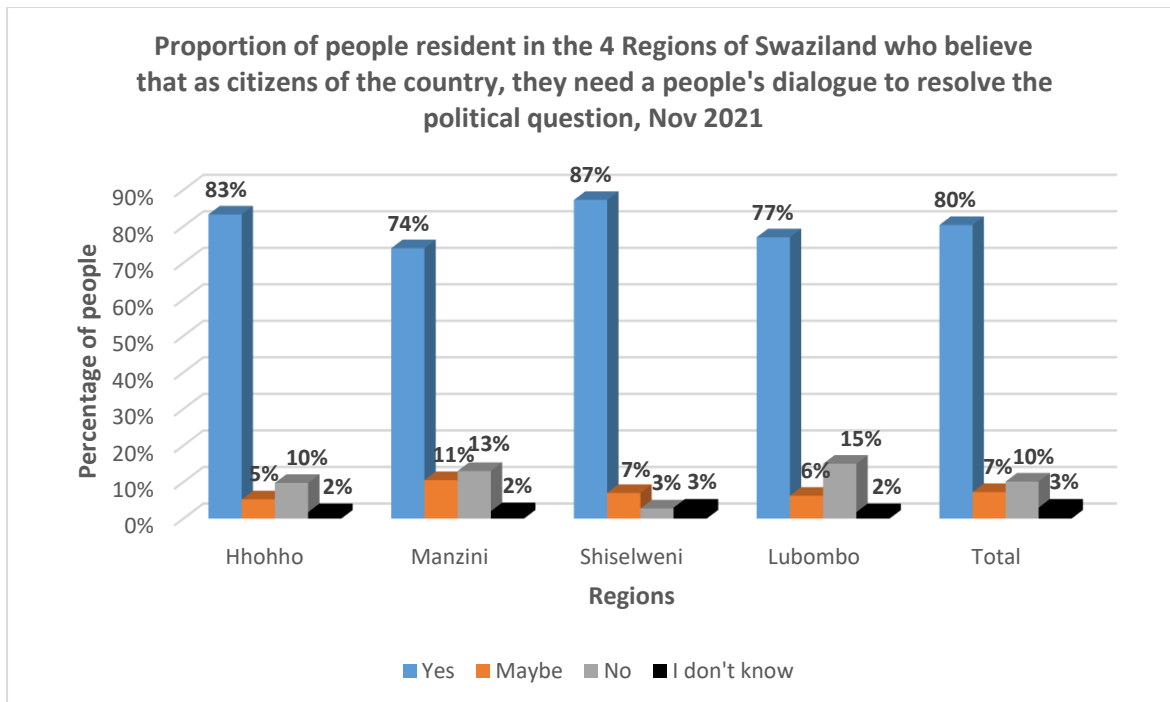


Figure 4 Proportion of people resident in the 4 Regions of Swaziland who believe that as citizens of the country, they need a people's dialogue to resolve the political question, Nov 2021

At the 80% mark, four respondents in every group of five respondents in Swaziland said unequivocally that the country's residents need a people's dialogue to resolve the country's political issues. Shiselweni Region has the largest percentage of respondents in favour of a people's discussion. 87% of respondents in Shiselweni Region said unequivocally that the nation needs a people-to-people dialogue. At the 74% mark, nearly three respondents in each group of four respondents in Manzini and Lubombo Regions expressed support for hosting a people's dialogue to resolve the political impasse. In Hhohho Region, about four respondents out of every five respondents have similar beliefs.

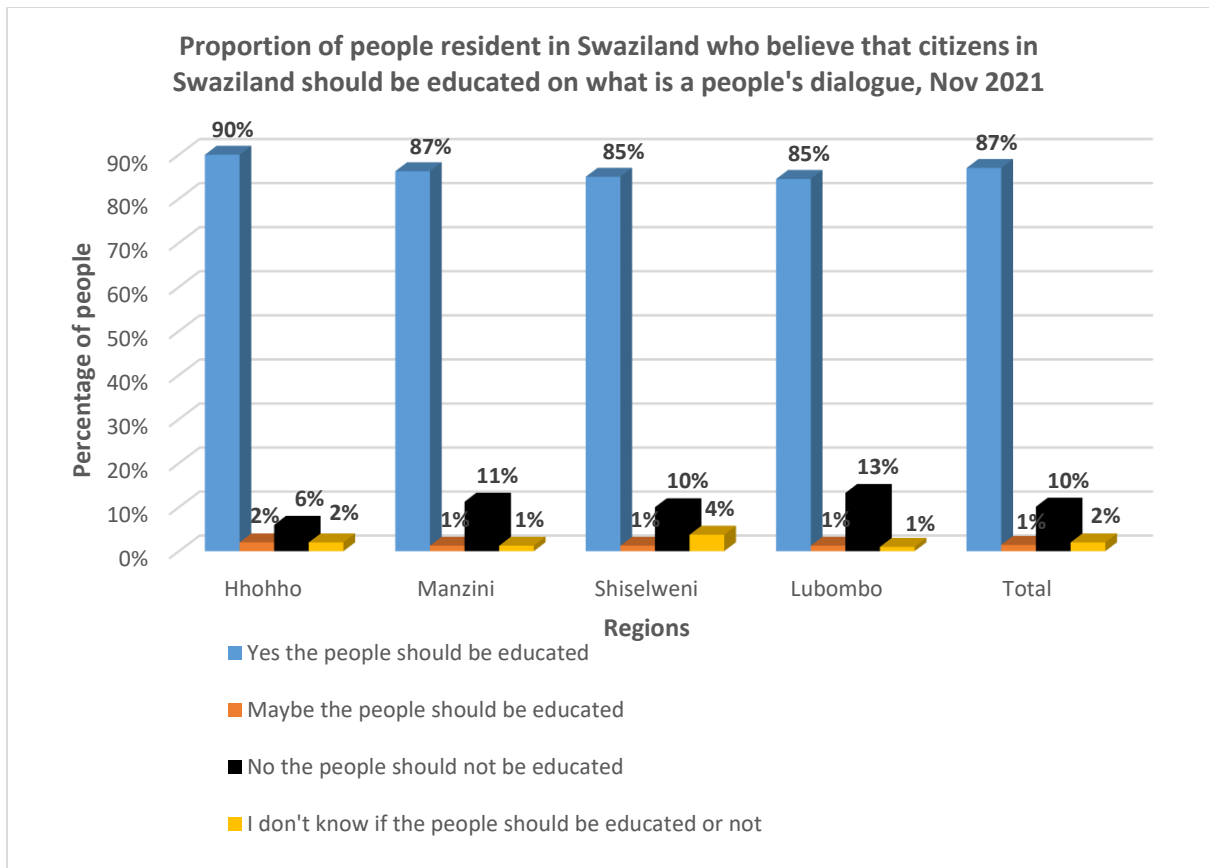


Figure 5 Proportion of people resident in Swaziland who believe that citizens in Swaziland should be educated on what is a people's dialogue, Nov 2021

Nearly 90% of respondents in Swaziland argued that residents should be taught on what a people's dialogue is. In Hhohho Region, 18 respondents in each set of 20 respondents said that residents should be educated about what a people's dialogue is. In the Manzini, Shiselweni, and Lubombo areas, around 17 respondents in each group of 20 respondents have similar opinions. This shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents insist that citizens should be sensitized about the meaning of a people's dialogue.

Proposed venues for hosting the people's dialogue

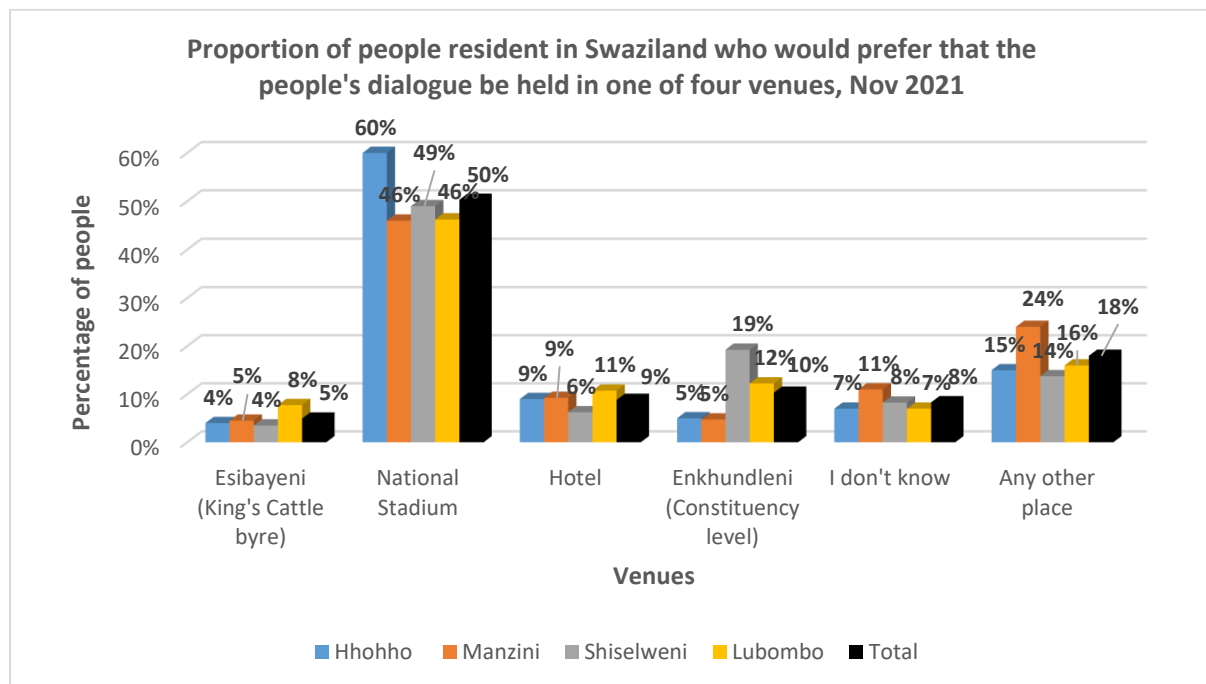


Figure 6 Proportion of people resident in Swaziland who would prefer that the people's dialogue be held in one of four venues, Nov 2021

Half of the respondents in Swaziland reported that they would prefer that the people's dialogue be held at the National Stadium. At the nine or ten percent mark, approximately one person in every group of ten respondents reported that they would prefer that the people's dialogue be held either in a hotel or at the Inkundla Center (Constituency Offices). At the five percent mark only one respondent in each set of 20 respondents expressed comfort with Esibayeni (King's Cattle byre) being used to host the people's dialogue. 26% of the respondents which translates to around four respondents in each group of 20 respondents said that the people's discussion may take place anywhere and that they have no preferred choice for the location.

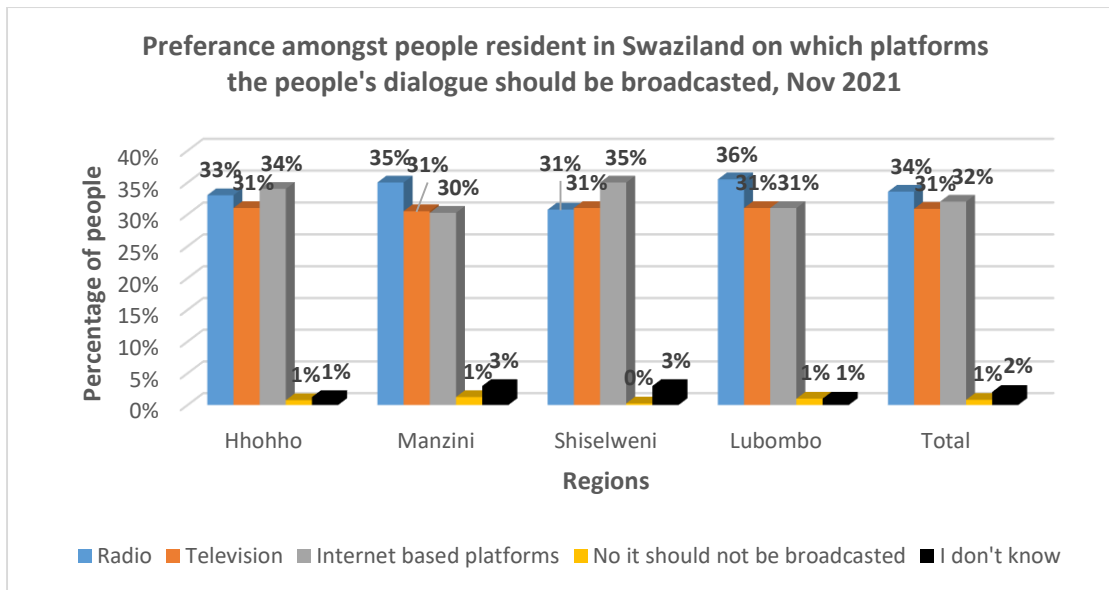


Figure 7 Preference amongst people resident in Swaziland on which platforms the people's dialogue should be broadcasted, Nov 2021

Approximately one person in every group of three people in Swaziland reported that they would like to see the people’s dialogue being aired live either on radio or television or Internet-based platforms. One percent of the respondents said it should not be aired. The remaining two percent said that they were unsure whether it should be aired. Consistent opinions were expressed in all four Regions.

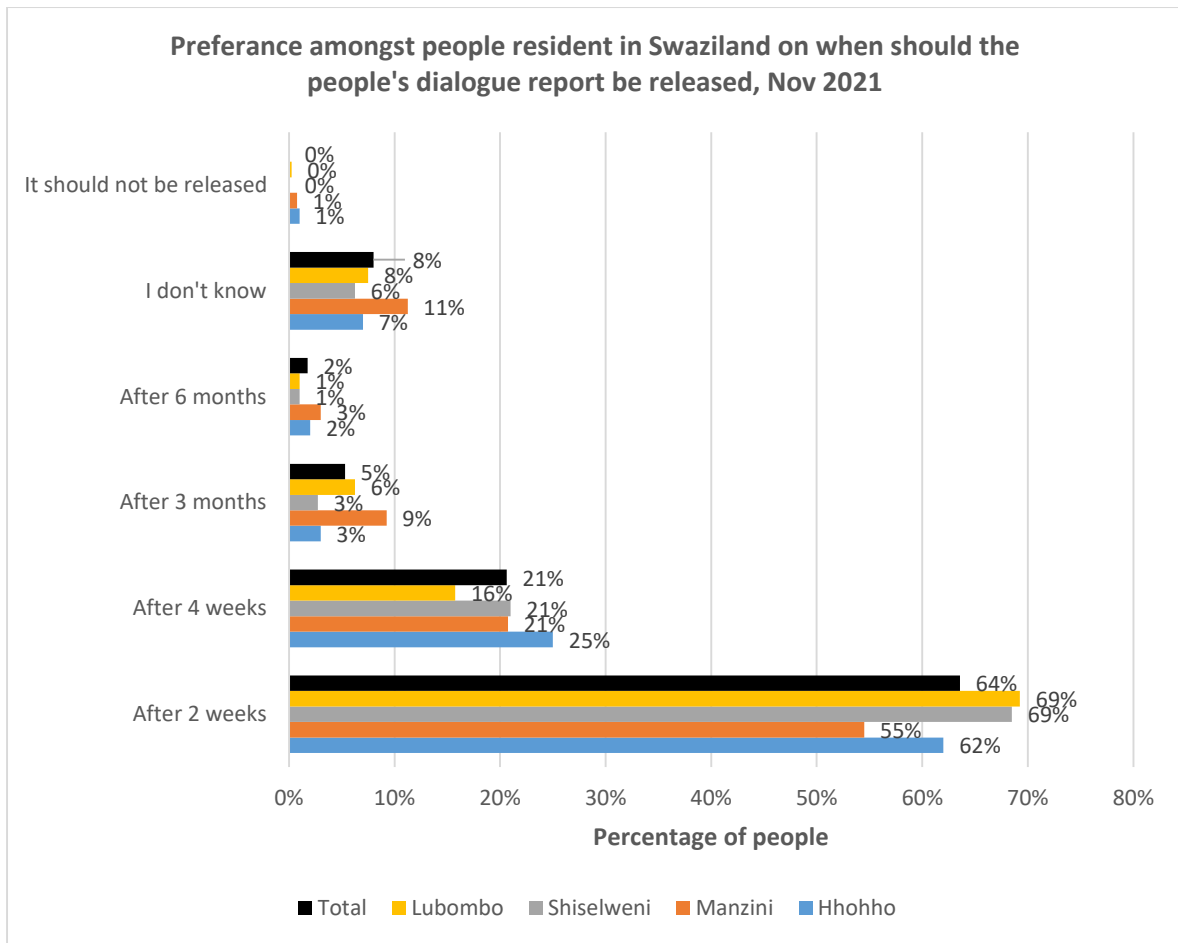


Figure 8 Preference amongst people in Swaziland on which platforms the people's dialogue should be broadcasted, Nov 2021

64% of respondents in Swaziland, or around two-thirds of the respondents, said that they would like to see the report on the people's dialogues publicized two weeks after the dialogues completed. At 21% around one-fifth of respondents said that they would like to see the report published after four weeks. Only five percent of respondents equivalent one person out of every group of 20 respondents said that they preferred the report to be provided after three months. Two percent of the respondents indicated that they preferred six months. This equates to and one person per group of 50 respondents. The remaining eight percent of the respondents, or one person in every group of 13 respondents, said they are unsure when the report should be issued.

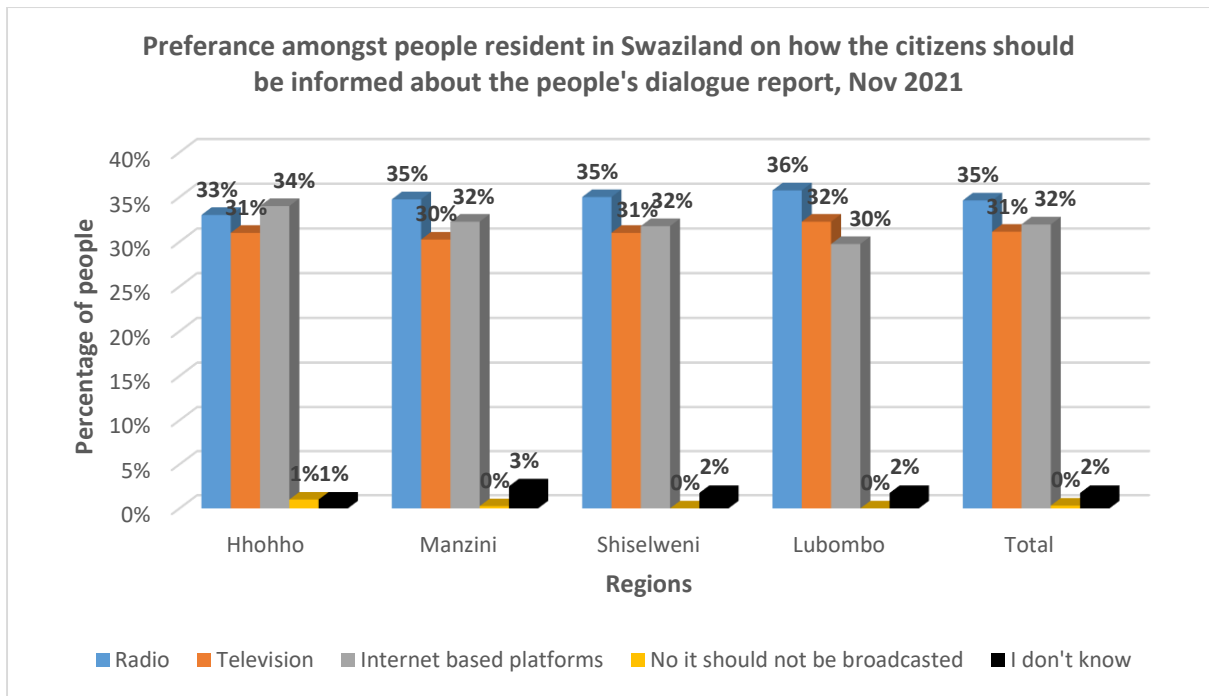


Figure 9 Preference amongst people resident in Swaziland on how the citizens should be informed about the people's dialogue report, Nov 2021

35% of the respondents equivalent to around one person in every group of three respondents in Swaziland expressed a desire for the report's contents to be spread through radio. 31% of the respondents said they prefer that television be used as a means of disseminating the people's dialogue report. 32% of the respondents almost equivalent to one person in every group of three respondents said they preferred the use of Internet-based media. At the two percent mark it means that only one respondent in every group of 50 respondents said that they are unsure which platforms should be utilized to communicate the report's contents. All respondents across the four Regions expressed similar sentiments.

Dissemination of a report on the people's dialogue

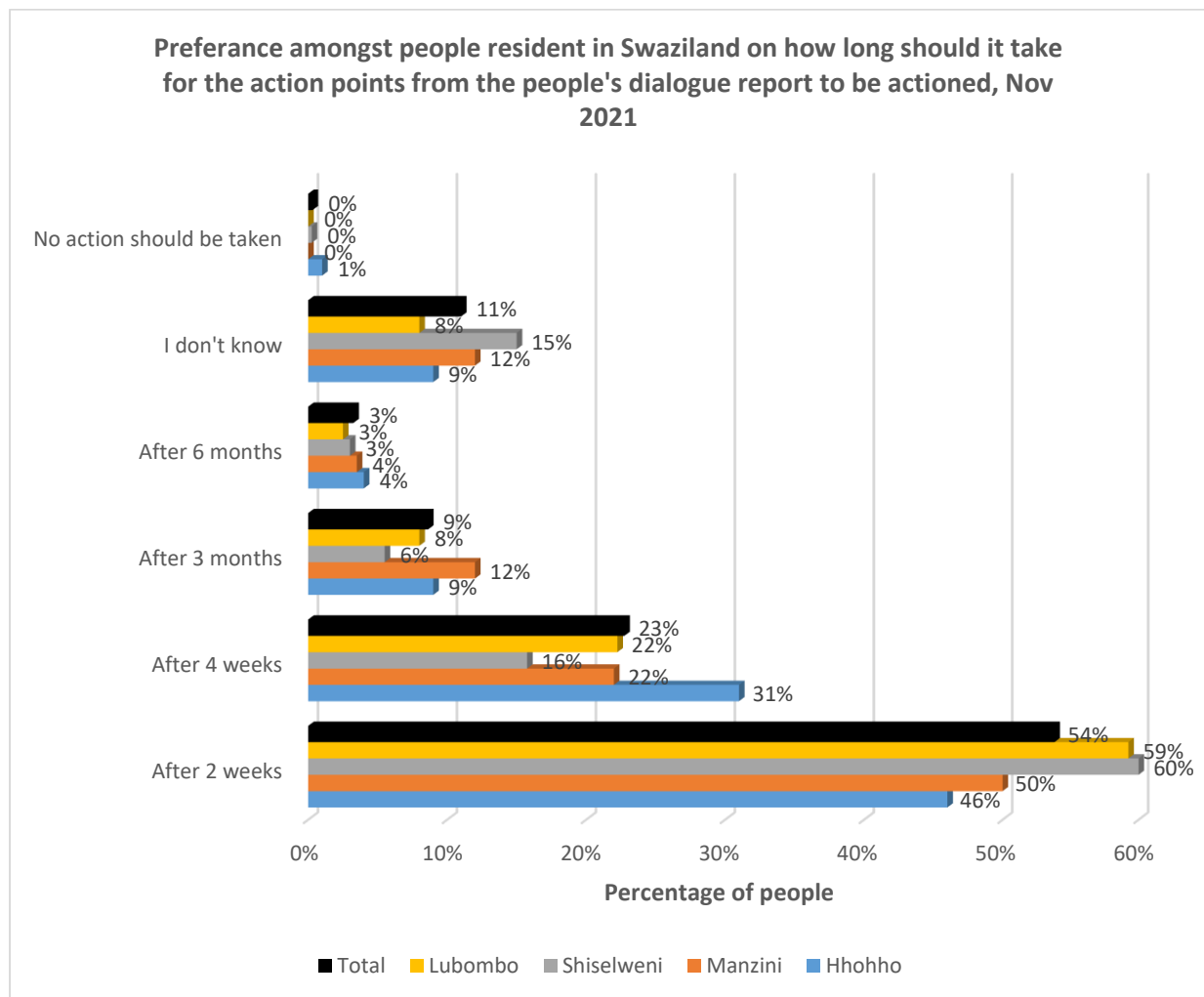


Figure 10 Preference amongst people resident in Swaziland on how long should it take for the action points from the people's dialogue report to be actioned, Nov 2021

In Swaziland, slightly more than half of respondents (54%) said that action points from the people's dialogue should be implemented two weeks after the discussion concludes. At the 23% mark, almost a quarter of respondents in Swaziland suggested that the implementation of the action points should be effected after four weeks. At the nine percent mark, approximately a tenth of respondents said that the action points should be executed within three weeks. At the 11% mark, a comparable number of respondents said that they had no idea how long it should take to execute the people's dialogue's action items. Three percent of the respondents equivalent to one person in every group of 33 respondents suggested that the action points should be implemented after six months.

Preference on systems of governance

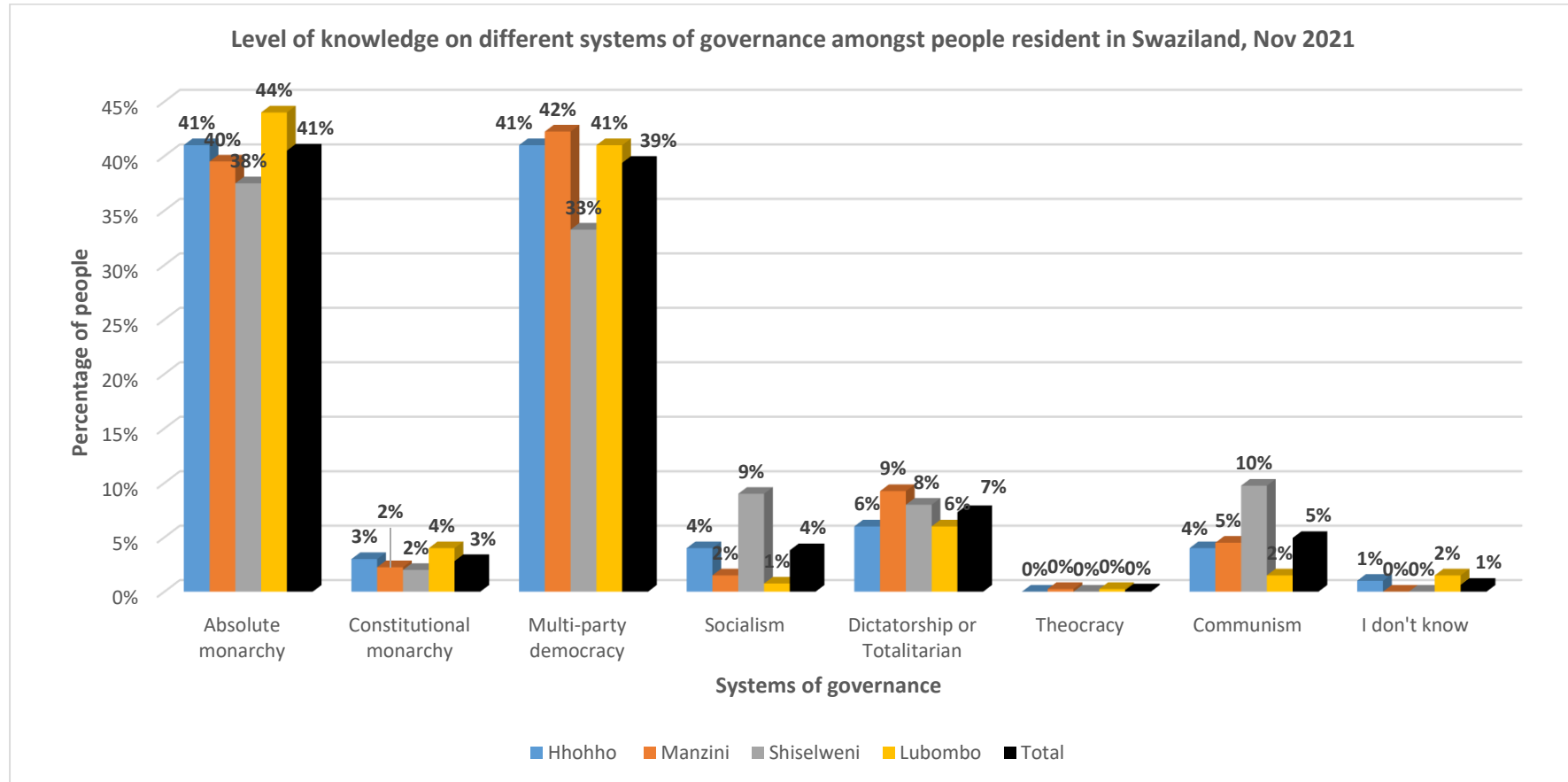


Figure 11 Level of knowledge on different systems of governance amongst people resident in Swaziland, Nov 2021

At slightly above the 40% mark, translating to approximately two respondents in every group of five respondents can easily give a definition of what is an absolute monarchy. Almost the same proportion of respondents (39%) can also give a correct definition of multi-party democracy. Only seven percent of respondents can define a dictatorship or totalitarian system of governance and that translates to one person in every group of 14 respondents. Only five

percent of the respondents were able to give a correct definition of communism and that translates to one person in every group of 20 respondents know the meaning of communism. At the four percent mark it means that one person in every group of 25 respondents were able to define socialism. At the three percent mark it means that approximately only one person in every group of 33 respondents were able to give the correct definition of a constitutional monarchy. The remaining one percent of the respondents could not give a correct definition of any system of governance.

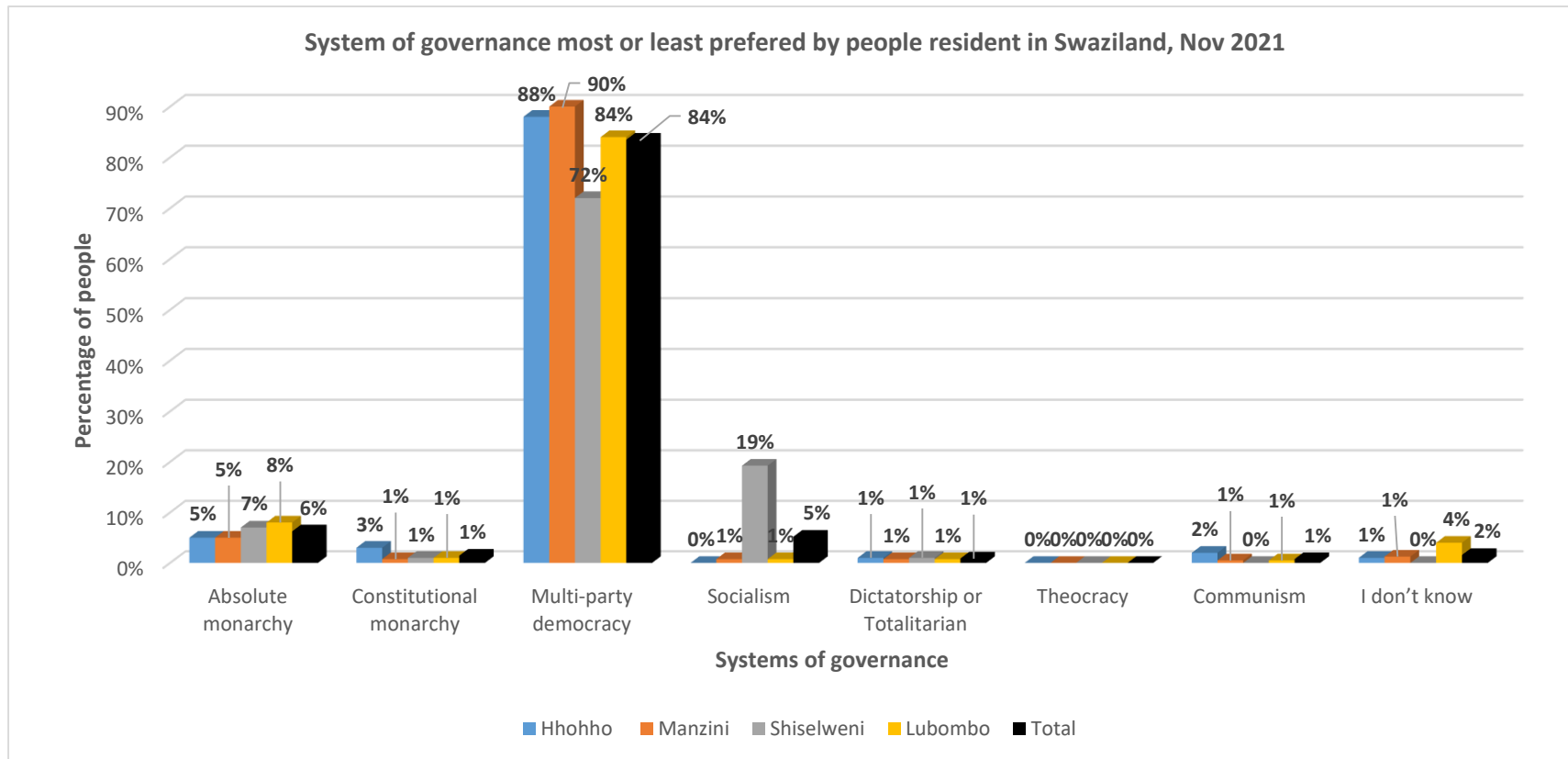


Figure 12 Level of knowledge on different systems of governance amongst people resident in Swaziland, Nov 2021

At the 84% mark, translating to approximately 17 respondents in every group of 20 respondents in the country reported that they prefer multi-party democracy as the most ideal system of governance for Swaziland. One percent of the population translating to one person in every group of 100 respondents said they preferred constitutional monarchy as the system of choice for governing their country. Six percent of the respondents equivalent to approximately one person in every group of 20 respondents prefer absolute monarchy as the system of governance for their country. Five percent of the respondents translating to around the figure of one person in every group of 20 respondents prefer socialism as the system of governance of choice. An additional one percent of the respondents prefers either communism or dictatorship or a totalitarian system of governance. Zero percent (0%) of the population prefer theocracy. The remaining two (2) percent have not yet made their minds or choices.

Conclusion

The conclusion is that the views of the people (Swazis) based in Swaziland who participated in the poll will be used to inform the planning and actual role out of the people's dialogue. They can also be used to evaluate how the people's dialogue was implemented. Did it comply with the people's expectations or not? If so, why and what can be done to move forward.

Contact details



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