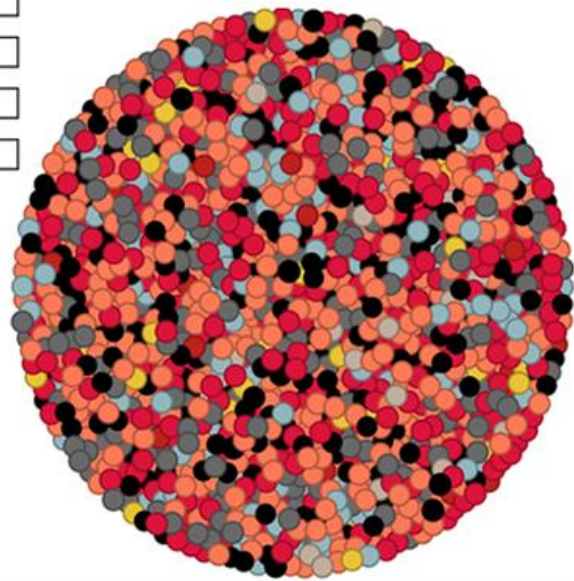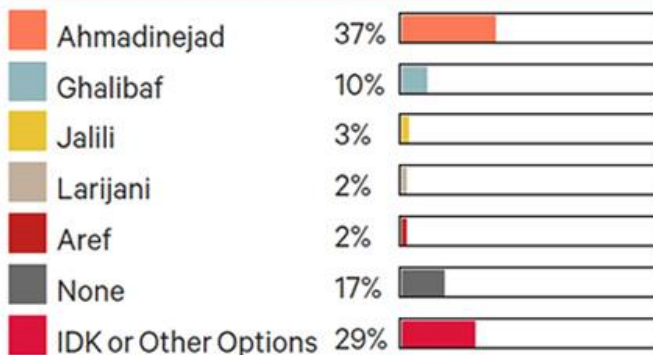## Ahmadinejad is the Frontrunner in Iran's 2021 Presidential Election

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a frontrunner in Iran's next presidential election. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents in the latest Stasis poll say that they will vote for Ahmadinejad, followed by Ghalibaf (the current speaker of the Majlis, 10%), Jalili (the former national security adviser, 3%), Larijani (the former speaker of the Majlis, 2%), and Aref (the Majlis minority leader between 2016 and 2020, 2%).

The poll, conducted in October 2020 by Stasis, also found that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the most favorable political figure in Iran among a list of politicians including heads of three branches of the government, former presidents, potential candidates in the next presidential election, and the current foreign minister. Sixty-four percent of Iranians "very much" or "to an extent" like him.

The results of this poll indicate an overall disapproval of Rouhani's presidency. Only 25% of respondents approve of his job, where 64% disapprove his job as a president.

To view the results of this poll in an interactive map, click the link.

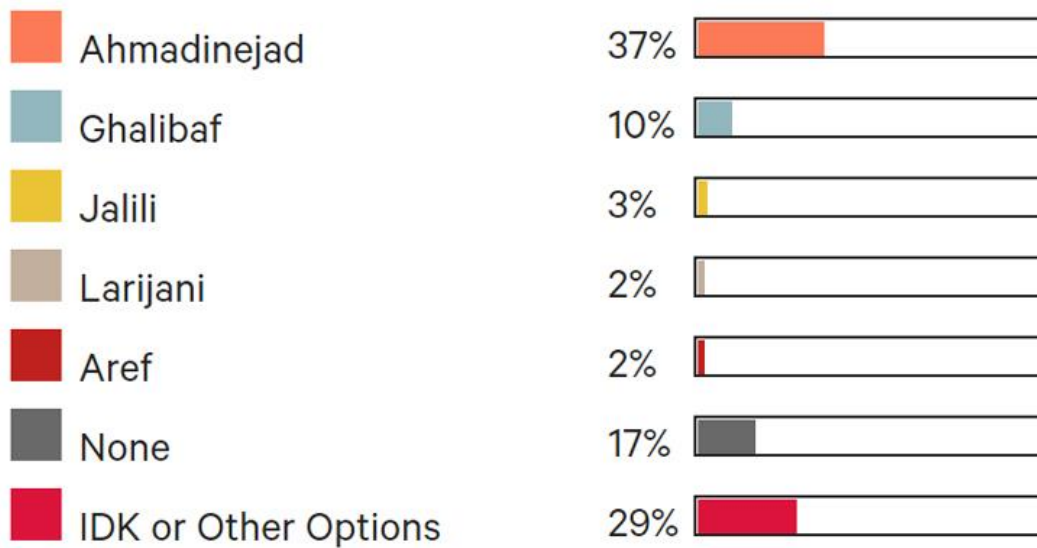http://www.surveycenter.io/election2021/202010/en/

This platform details the results of each question by gender, age group, location, and education in the bar chart.

Assessment of Iran's Next Presidential Election

The next presidential election in Iran will not be held until June 2021 but some political figures have already signaled a potential run. The survey conducted by Stasis in October 2020 shows among some of the presumptive nominees, former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad garners 37% support from Iranian adults, giving him a 27-point lead over his closest rival, Speaker Ghalibaf, who has 10% support. The other three potential candidates, including Saeed Jalili (former national security adviser), Ali Larijani (former speaker of the Majlis), and Mohamadreza Aref (former reformist Majlis minority leader) all trail behind with 3%, 2%, and 2% of support respectively.
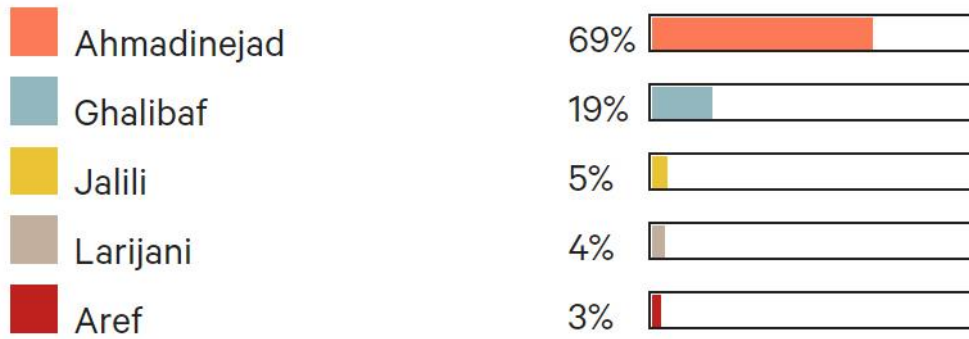
2021 Presidential Election

There has been some discussion in the media of possible nominees for candidacy in the next presidential election. Regardless of the likelihood of your participation in the upcoming presidential election, if you wanted to vote, of these names who would you choose: Ahmadinejad, Jalili, Aref, Ghalibaf, Ali Larijani ?

Candidate	Support
Ahmadinejad	37%
Ghalibaf	10%
Jalili	3%
Larijani	2%
Aref	2%
None	17%
IDK or Other Options	29%

Stasis

Twenty-nine percent of respondents chose noncommittal options, such as "I don't know" or "I have not made my decision." Another 17% say they do not support any of these candidates. If these undecided respondents are removed and results are measured just among those respondents who affirmed their support of any of these candidates, then Ahmadinejad is leading his opponents in this part of the electorate by a wide margin. Sixty-nine percent of Iranians pick him as their first choice in the next presidential election in Iran.

2021 Presidential Election (Among Those Who Report a Preference)

There has been some discussion in the media of possible nominees for candidacy in the next presidential election. Regardless of the likelihood of your participation in the upcoming presidential election, if you wanted to vote, of these names who would you choose: Ahmadinejad, Jalili, Aref, Ghalibaf, Ali Larijani ?

🟧 Ahmadinejad	69%	
🟦 Ghalibaf	19%	
🟨 Jalili	5%	
🟫 Larijani	4%	
🟥 Aref	3%	

Stasis ▲▼▲

Female respondents are more likely to prefer Mr. Ahmadinejad as their pick for the next president (72%) as opposed to male respondents (66%).

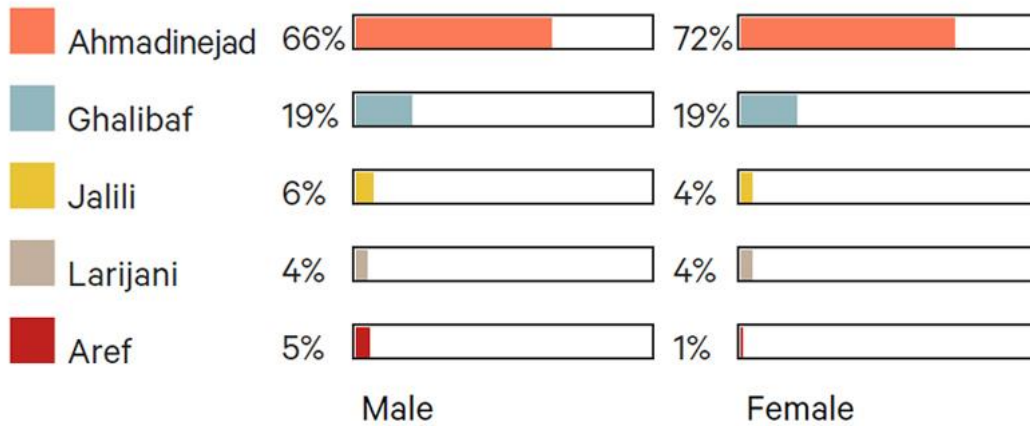## 2021 Presidential Election (Among Those Who Report a Preference)– by Gender

There has been some discussion in the media of possible nominees for candidacy in the next presidential election. Regardless of the likelihood of your participation in the upcoming presidential election, if you wanted to vote, of these names who would you choose: Ahmadinejad, Jalili, Aref, Ghalibaf, Ali Larijani ?

	Male	Female
🟧 Ahmadinejad	66%	72%
🟦 Ghalibaf	19%	19%
🟨 Jalili	6%	4%
🟫 Larijani	4%	4%
🟥 Aref	5%	1%

Stasis ▲▼▲

Moreover, respondents who reside in rural areas are more likely vote for him (79%) than those who reside in urban areas (65%).

2021 Presidential Election (Among Those Who Report a Preference) by Location

There has been some discussion in the media of possible nominees for candidacy in the next presidential election. Regardless of the likelihood of your participation in the upcoming presidential election, if you wanted to vote, of these names who would you choose: Ahmadinejad, Jalili, Aref, Ghalibaf, Ali Larijani ?
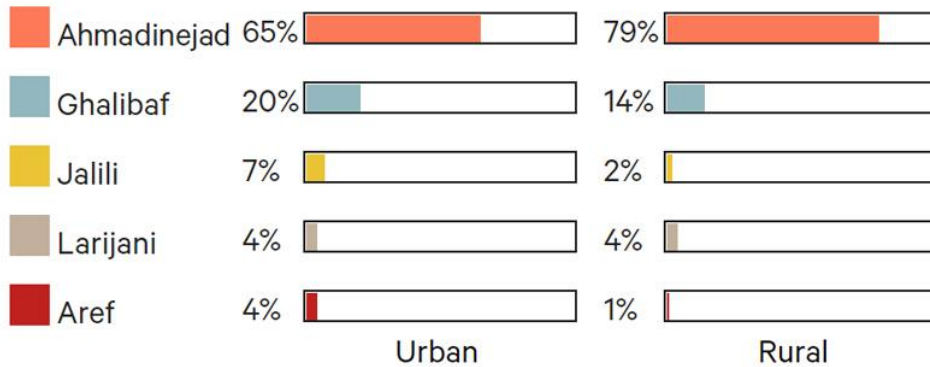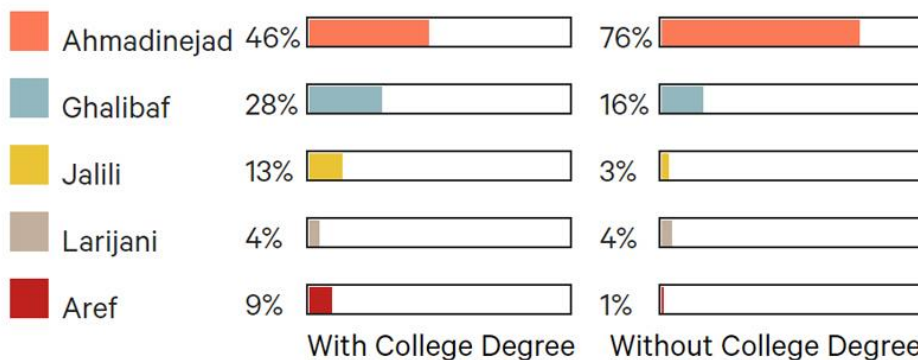
	Urban	Rural
Ahmadinejad	65%	79%
Ghalibaf	20%	14%
Jalili	7%	2%
Larijani	4%	4%
Aref	4%	1%

Stasis

However, the main factor in support for Ahmadinejad's candidacy is education level. Respondents without a college degree prefer Mr. Ahmadinejad by a wide margin. Seventy-six percent of respondents without a college degree prefer Mr. Ahmadinejad compared to only 46% of college educated respondents.

2021 Presidential Election (Among Those Who Report a Preference) by Education

There has been some discussion in the media of possible nominees for candidacy in the next presidential election. Regardless of the likelihood of your participation in the upcoming presidential election, if you wanted to vote, of these names who would you choose: Ahmadinejad, Jalili, Aref, Ghalibaf, Ali Larijani ?
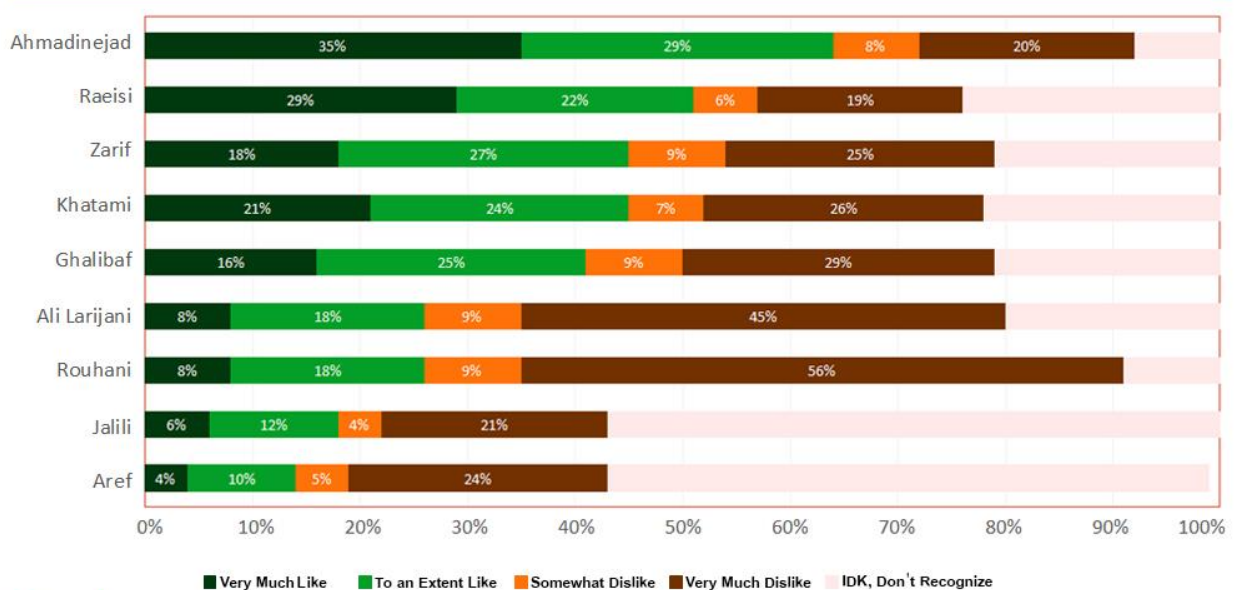
	With College Degree	Without College Degree
Ahmadinejad	46%	76%
Ghalibaf	28%	16%
Jalili	13%	3%
Larijani	4%	4%
Aref	9%	1%

Stasis

Political Figures' Favorability

According to this poll, former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the most favorite domestic political figure among respondents given the choice of a group of politicians. Stasis asked about a number of politicians, including heads of three branches of the government, former presidents, the foreign minister, and potential candidates in the next presidential election in Iran. Sixty-four percent of respondents favor Ahmadinejad. Thirty-five percent of respondents reported liking him "very much" and twenty-nine percent like him "to an extent."
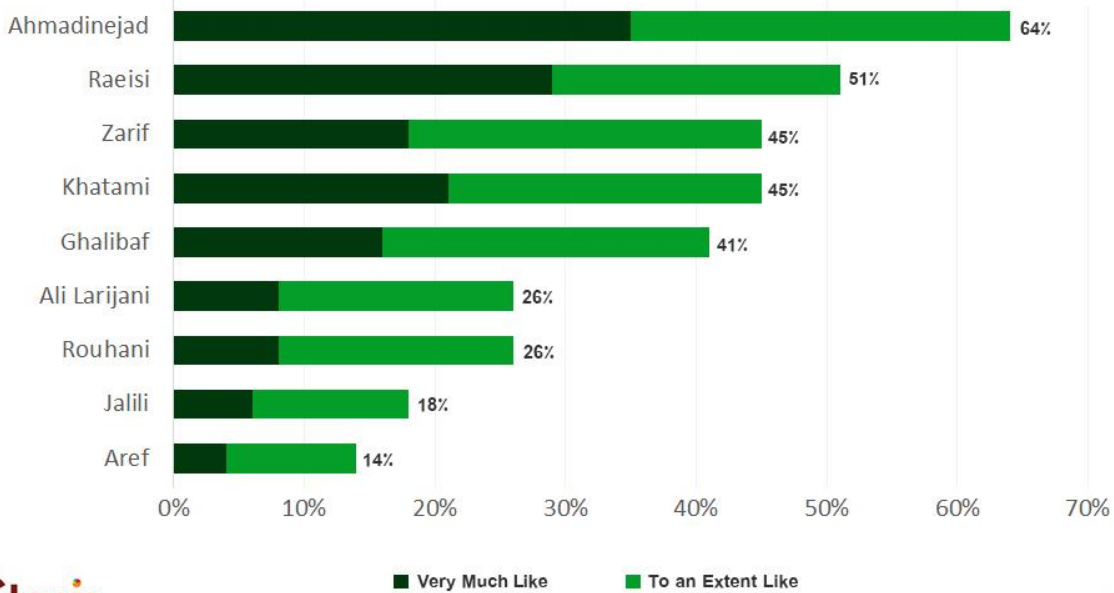
Question: Let me name some political figures. Please express the level of your interest in each one. For each name I read, you can respond with: Very much like, like to an extent, dislike, or very much dislike. If there's a name you don't recognize, please say so.

Level of Interest Toward Political Figures (Favorability & Unfavorability)

Figure	Very Much Like	To an Extent Like	Somewhat Dislike	Very Much Dislike
Ahmadinejad	35%	29%	8%	20%
Raeisi	29%	22%	6%	19%
Zarif	18%	27%	9%	25%
Khatami	21%	24%	7%	26%
Ghalibaf	16%	25%	9%	29%
Ali Larijani	8%	18%	9%	45%
Rouhani	8%	18%	9%	56%
Jalili	6%	12%	4%	21%
Aref	4%	10%	5%	24%

Legend: ■ Very Much Like ■ To an Extent Like ■ Somewhat Dislike ■ Very Much Dislike ■ IDK, Don't Recognize
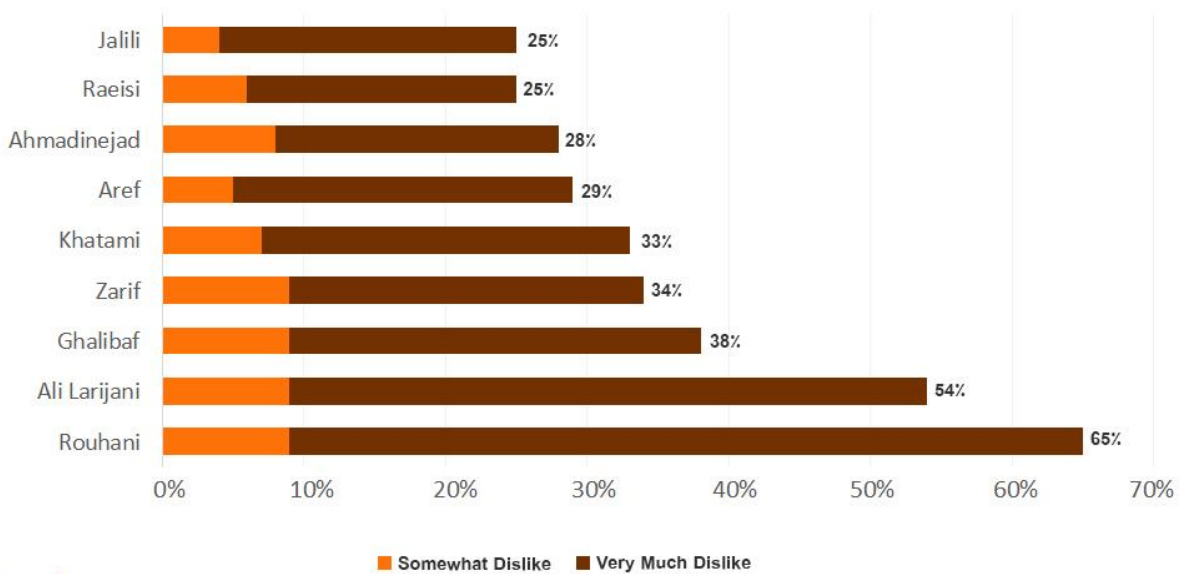
Stasis

After Mr. Ahmadinejad with a 64% favorability rate, the head of the judiciary branch, Mr. Raeisi, came in second with a 51% percent favorability rate. These are the only two politicians who were favored among more than 50% of respondents. Foreign Minster Zarif and former president Khatami tied in ranking at 45% each, followed by Speaker Ghalibaf (41%), former speaker Larijani and President Rouhani (each at 26%), former national security adviser Jalili (18%), and finally former Majlis minority leader Aref (14%).

Favorability of Political Figures (Very Much Like or To an Extent Like)

On the other side of the spectrum, Sixty-five percent of Iranian mentions their dislike of President Rouhani, making him the most unfavorable political figure in Iran. Mr. Larijani and Mr. Ghalibaf ranked second and third in this ranking.
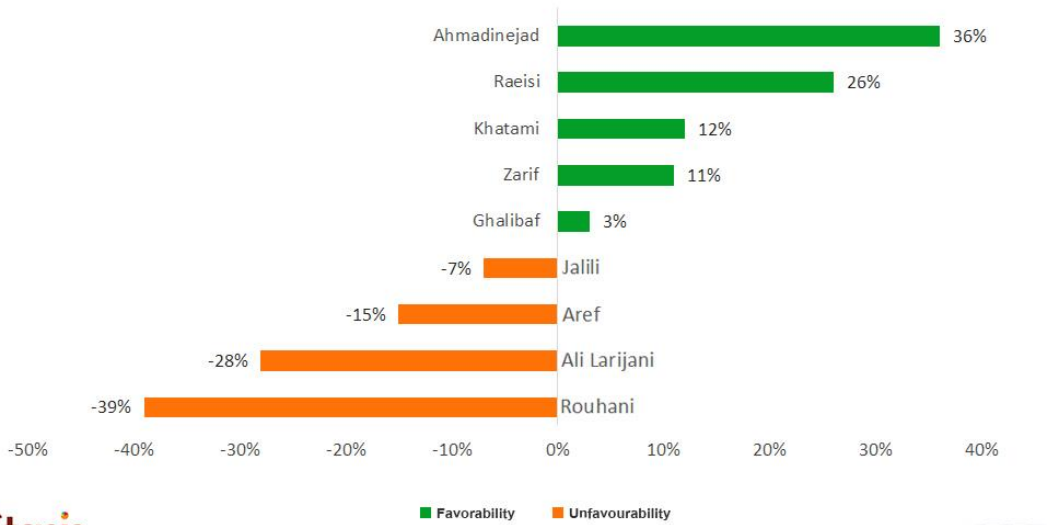
Unfavourability of Political Figures (Somewhat Dislike or Very Much Dislike)

Considering the net favorability (favorability minus unfavourability) of these figures, former president Ahmadinejad still ranks at the top of net favorability with 36%, followed by Mr. Raeisi (26%), and Mr. Khatami (12%). President Rouhani has the lowest level of net favorability by negative 39% (-39%).

Net Favorability of Political Figures (Favorability minus Unfavourability)
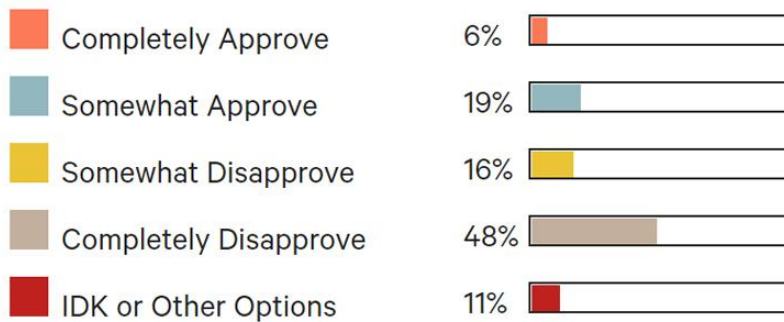

President Rouhani's Approval Rating: 25%

President Rouhani's job approval is 25% and that support is tepid at best; only 6% of respondents "completely approve" of the way he is handling his job as the president, where 19% "somewhat approve". Moreover 64% of respondents disapprove of his work performance. Of those, 48% "completely disapprove" and 16% "somewhat disapprove."
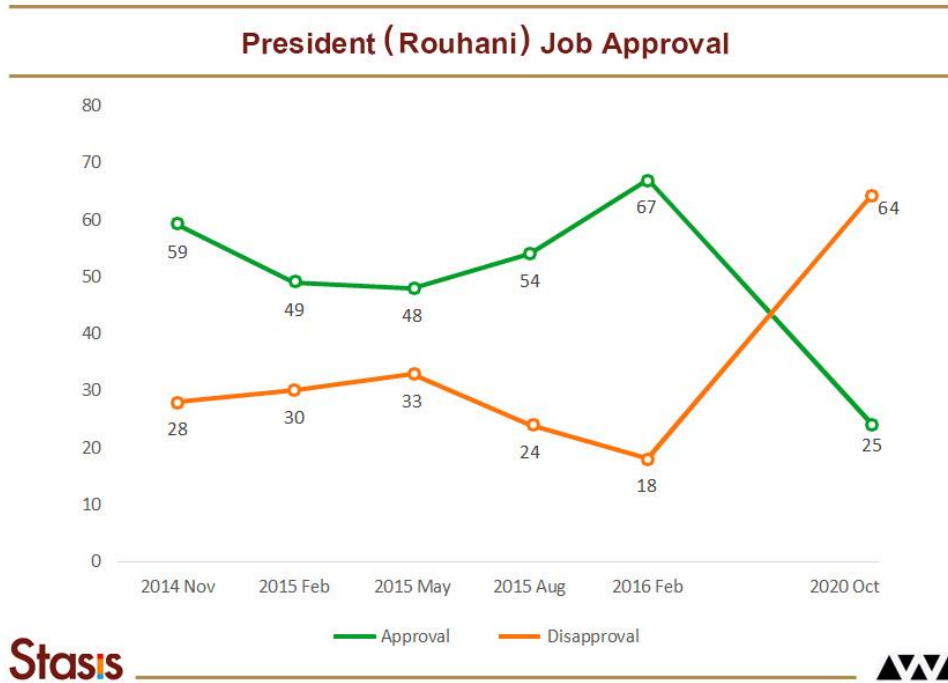
Presidential Approval Rating

To date, President Rouhani has been sitting in power for more than seven years. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Rouhani is handling his job as president?

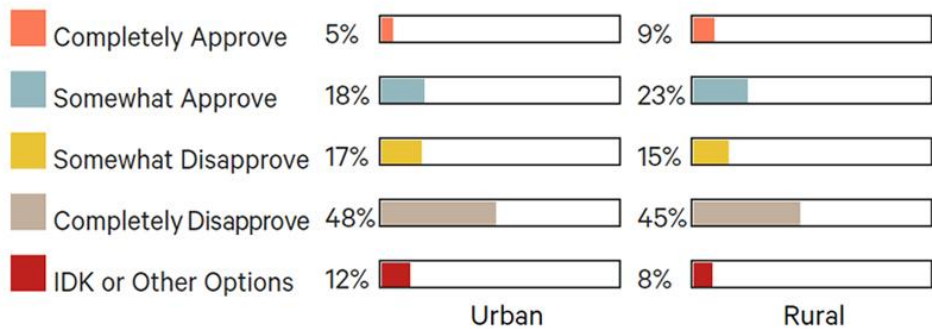## Iranian Public Opinion on 2021 Presidential Election – October 2020

President Rouhani's current approval is the worst approval rating we have ever analyzed. In the poll co-conducted by Arash Ghafouri—who led the Stasis team in this survey– in February 2016, around 67% of respondents approved of Rouhani's presidency. His approval rating has decreased by 42% in the last four years and stands at just 25% in October 2020. Moreover, Mr. Rouhani's disapproval shows a 46% increase in comparison with that February 2016 study (from 18% to 64%).

President (Rouhani) Job Approval

People who reside in urban areas or have a college degree are more likely to register their disapproval of Rouhani's presidency.

Presidential Approval Rating – by Location

To date, President Rouhani has been sitting in power for more than seven years. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Rouhani is handling his job as president?

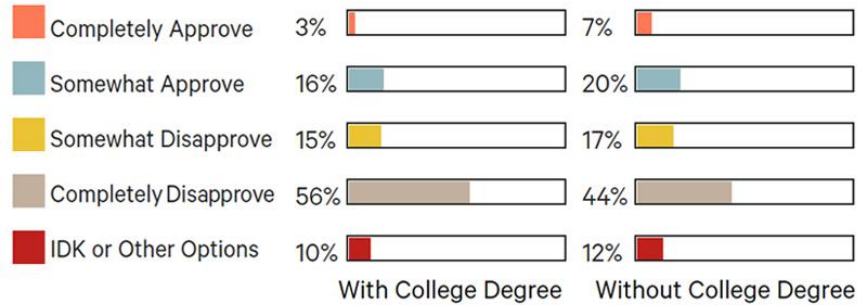|		Urban	Rural
Completely Approve		5%	9%
Somewhat Approve		18%	23%
Somewhat Disapprove		17%	15%
Completely Disapprove		48%	45%
IDK or Other Options		12%	8%

Presidential Approval Rating – by Education

To date, President Rouhani has been sitting in power for more than seven years. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Rouhani is handling his job as president?

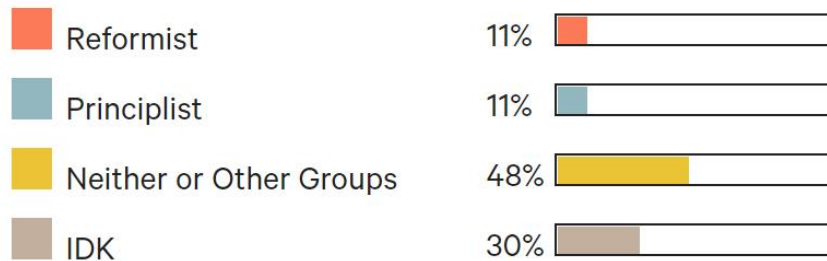|	With College Degree	Without College Degree
Completely Approve	3%	7%
Somewhat Approve	16%	20%
Somewhat Disapprove	15%	17%
Completely Disapprove	56%	44%
IDK or Other Options	10%	12%

Stasis ▲▼▲

Political Party Preference

According to this poll, a large number of Iranians (48%) did not identify with either of the two main domestic political parties. Reformists have the avowed support of 11%of the population, marking a decrease of at least 14% in comparison with 2016. In March 2016, we polled the same question (IPOS poll) and found 25% of Iranians were leaning toward Reformists and 5% were supporting the Moderates (Reformist adjacent).

Eleven percent of Iranians are leaning toward the Principlist party which is a more modest decrease (2%) from 2016.

Political Party Preferences

There are two main groups in Iran, Principlists and Reformists. Which of these groups do you tend to lean toward? Which is to say, with which group's ideas do you most agree? Or is it the case that you do not agree with either of them or are leaning toward other groups?

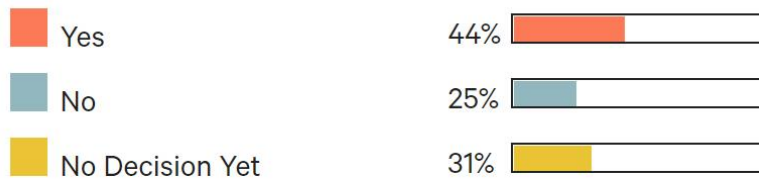|	
Reformist	11%
Principlist	11%
Neither or Other Groups	48%
IDK	30%

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Election Participation

Around 44% of respondents in the survey report that they will vote in the next presidential election in Iran. However, according to our previous analysis, the level of participation is likely to be approximately 10% below the survey's findings. Moreover, given the more than eight months until the next election (which will take place in June 2021), identifying likely voters is beyond the scope of this survey. However, in the coming months, Statis will conduct further research to analyze more accurate levels of likely voters.
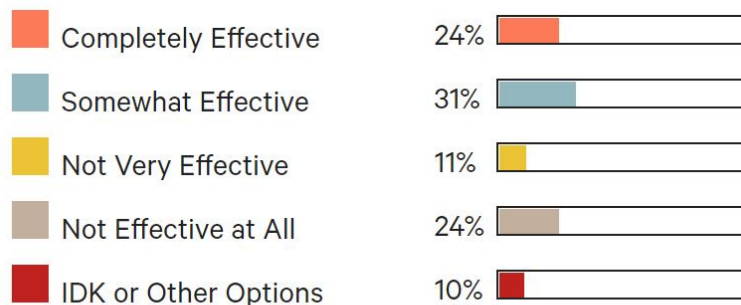
Election Turn Out

You might be aware that the next presidential election in Iran will be held several months from now.
Do you plan to cast a ballot in the next presidential election? Which is to say: are you going to vote or not?

Yes	44%
No	25%
No Decision Yet	31%

In this poll, respondents were also asked how confident they are that electoral participation can effectively resolve the issues the country is facing. Around 24% say it will be "very effective" and the same percentage believe it will be completely ineffective. In the middle of the spectrum, 31% report the belief that voting can be "somewhat effective" and 11% of respondents think it is not likely to be very effective.

Election Participation Effectiveness

In your opinion how effective do you believe that voter participation in the election will be in resolving
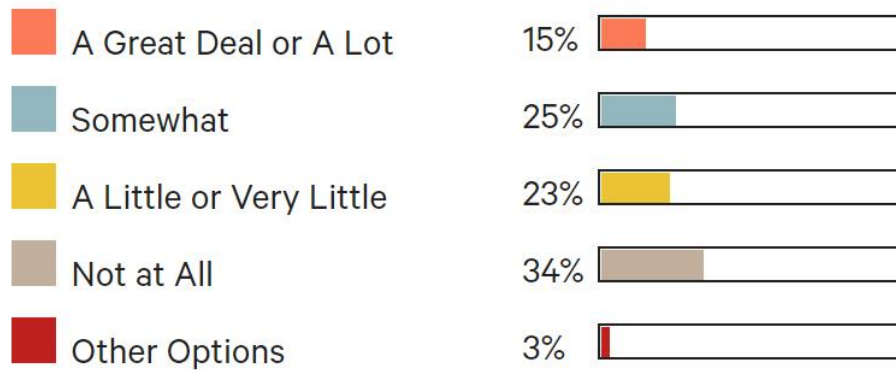the issues the country is now facing?

Completely Effective	24%
Somewhat Effective	31%
Not Very Effective	11%
Not Effective at All	24%
IDK or Other Options	10%

United States Presidential Election

The poll found that around 40% of Iranians are closely following United States election news ("A great deal," "a lot," or "somewhat").
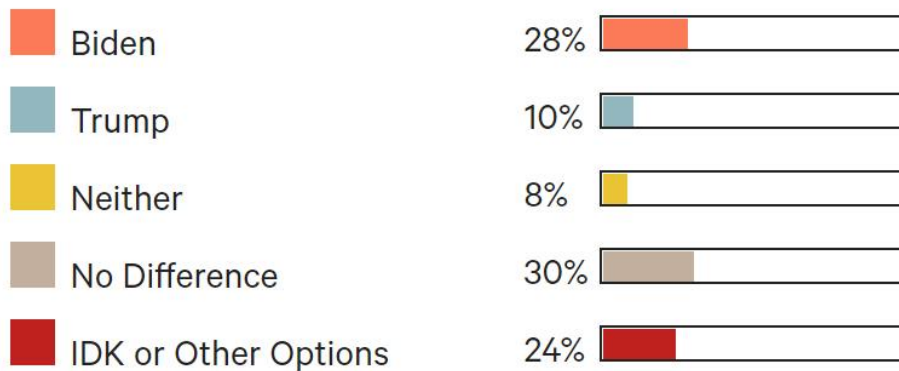
Following News Related to the U.S. Presidential Election

You may be aware that the United States will also hold a presidential election soon. How much you follow the United States' election news?

A Great Deal or A Lot	15%
Somewhat	25%
A Little or Very Little	23%
Not at All	34%
Other Options	3%

Stasis

Moreover, 28% of Iranians prefer Joe Biden as opposed to Donald Trump, who has the support of 10% of Iranians (This poll was conducted before the U.S. presidential election).

U.S. Presidential Election (Biden or Trump)

There are two candidates vying to be the next president of the United States: Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden. Who would you prefer to be the next president of the United States? Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump?

Biden	28%
Trump	10%
Neither	8%
No Difference	30%
IDK or Other Options	24%

Stasis

Stasis

Remarks

The results of this poll have been interactively visualized in the link below:

http://www.surveycenter.io/election2021/202010/en/

This is an interactive platform detailing the results of every question, distinguished by gender, age group, location, and education in a bar chart.

For each question, there is a bubble chart (consisting of many small circles), detailing the respondents' information. Each circle represents a single respondent and by clicking on it, you can find the complete answer set for that particular respondent. The color coding is consistent between the bubble chart and bar chart for easy comparison.

Methodology

- Telephone interviews were conducted from October 22-28, 2020, with a random sample of 1,136 Iranians aged 18 and older living in Iran. Native Farsi speakers conducted the interviews during daylight hours.

- The proportional two-stage sample includes respondents from every province. Provinces have been sampled based on their population.

- Based on the sample, there is a 95% confidence that the margin of sampling error is between ± 2.8 and ± 3.1 percentage points, depending on the number of respondents for each question.

- Results are weighted by gender, age, and location (urban vs. rural areas) based on the Iranian national census of 2016 and 2018 statistical yearbook.

- Rates of respondent candor and reliability were appraised by experienced interviewers. Forty-two persons found to be lacking in these areas were removed from the sample.

- This poll was carried out by Stasis for Iranwire. Arash Ghafouri, an Iranian pollster, has led the survey team.