

# ITUC Global Poll 2014 - BRICS Report



TNS opinion





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People across the world want an activist approach by their governments to secure jobs, workers' rights, tame corporate power and address climate change.

In Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) people want more intervention and stronger action on economic and social policies in support of working people, their families and communities.

The ITUC Global Poll 2014 shows that people are facing serious financial pressure with falling or stagnating wages.

Globally, more than one in two working families in fourteen countries that constitute half the world's population cannot keep up with the rising cost of living. [Chart 1]

In BRICS countries 73 percent of people cannot keep up with the rising cost of living. [Chart 1]

More than half of the people from 14 countries in the ITUC Global Poll cannot afford to save any money [Chart 2]. Sixty percent of women are not able to save any money, among men this is 54 percent.

In BRICS countries 59 percent of people cannot afford to save any money. [Chart 2]

Trend data from three years of ITUC polling in 2012, 2013 and 2014 shows that in the past three years over half the world's population has not been able to save any money.

One in ten families lack the money for essentials like housing, food and electricity. [Chart 3]

In BRICS countries 13 percent of people do not have enough for basic essentials. [Chart 3]

An overwhelming majority (79 percent) do not believe the minimum wage in their country is sufficient for leading a decent life. [Chart 4]

88 percent of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) respondents do not believe the minimum wage is sufficient to lead a decent life. [Chart 4]

The spectre of unemployment remains for millions of people.

41 percent of people are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or reduction in working hours. [Chart 5]

In BRICS countries 50 percent of people are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or reduction in working hours. [Chart 5]

Only one out of two people believe the next generation will find a decent job. [Chart 6]

BRICS countries have more optimism with 65 percent of people who believe the next generation will find a decent job. [Chart 6]

Global citizens feel confronted with an economic system that favours the wealthy – and is not fair to most people. Almost four out of five people (78 percent) believe the economic system favours the wealthy, rather than being fair to most people. [Chart 7]

In BRICS countries 82 percent believe the economic system favours the wealthy, rather than being fair to most people. [Chart 7]

The ITUC Global Poll 2014 covers the adult populations of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. The findings represent the opinions of more than 3.7 billion people, or according to UN estimates about half of the world population.

This report analyses the findings of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) surveyed in the ITUC Global Poll 2014 with the 14 country global mean.

The attitudes and experiences of the general public to economic and social issues are against a backdrop of a global economic context where there is a cooling of emerging market economics and emerging market debt in countries such as Brazil China and Russia has reached unsustainable levels.

The world's economies are no more stable today than they were at the start of the financial crisis. The BRICS poll findings give an insight into public attitudes in five emerging market economies, once seen as the drivers of growth for the world's economy.

“

Nearly three quarters of people in BRICS countries cannot keep up with the rising cost of living.

”

## Trust in government is broken

People want to be able to trust the economic system.

Over three years the ITUC Global Poll 2012, 2013 and 2014 shows unequivocally that this trust does not exist.

The ITUC Global Poll 2012 found only 13 percent thought voters had any influence on economic decisions.

The ITUC Global Poll 2013 found just 13 percent of people believe their government is focused on the interests of working families.

There is not a single country in the 2014 Global Poll where a majority believes the economic system is fair to most people. Four out of five people (78 percent) believe the economic system favours the wealthy. [Chart 7]

In BRICS countries 82 percent believe the economic system favours the wealthy, rather than being fair to most people. [Chart 7]

## Economic and social outlook

### The world needs a pay rise

Global workers are facing serious financial pressure with wages falling behind the cost of living.

More than half of the respondents (53 percent) say their family income has fallen behind the cost of living in the past two years. [Chart 1] An additional one-third of the respondents (29 percent) say their family income has stayed even with the cost of living in the past two years.

In BRICS countries, 42 percent say income has fallen behind the cost of living, 31 percent say income has stayed even with the cost of living and 73 percent are falling behind or stagnating. [Chart 1]

Family incomes have developed much less favourably in South Africa (17 percent), Brazil (18 percent) and China (21 percent) where minorities of people have incomes which have gone up with the cost of living.

Ten percent of global respondents now lack the money for basic essentials like housing, food and electricity. [Chart 3]

The five European countries including Germany have the bleakest experiences of incomes and cost of living, closely followed by the Canada and the USA.

Two risks groups emerge in the ITUC Global Poll 2014, when those with lower education and age groups above forty are combined almost two out of three respondents (64 percent) experience incomes falling behind the cost of living.

### Minimum wage is insufficient

An overwhelming majority (79 percent) of the global respondents from 11 countries with a minimum wage say the (national) minimum wage is insufficient to enable workers to lead a decent life. [Chart 4] 82 percent of women say the minimum wage in their country is not enough for a decent life compared with 76 percent of men.

The greatest scepticism with regard to the minimum wage is with Brazil, Russia, India and China.

In BRIC countries, 88 percent believe the minimum wage is insufficient to enable workers to lead a decent life. [Chart 4]

Overall evaluations of the economy continue to be negative: more than half of the respondents in the ITUC global poll (56 percent) rate the current economic situation in their country as bad. [Chart 8] Just 1 out of 3 respondents in Europe rate their economy as good. 60 percent of women rate their economies as bad.

In BRICS countries 49 percent of people rate the current economic situation in their country as bad. [Chart 8]

### Spectre of unemployment

Over the past two years, more than 4 in 10 respondents have directly experienced unemployment or the reduction of working hours – either in their own job or that of a family member. [Chart 5]

# A sense of disempowerment across the world and in BRICS countries

Majority say their income cannot keep up with the rising cost of living [Chart 1]

73 percent of BRICS respondents say their wages are falling behind the cost of living or stagnating [Chart 1]

More than half respondents can't save any money [Chart 2]

59 percent of BRICS respondents can't save any money [Chart 2]

10 percent of people lack the money for essentials like housing, food and electricity [Chart 3]

13 percent of people in BRICS countries lack the money for essentials like housing, food and electricity [Chart 3]

An overwhelming majority believe the minimum wage is insufficient for leading a decent life [Chart 4]

88 percent of respondents from Brazil, Russia, India and China believe the minimum wage is insufficient for leading a decent life [Chart 4]

Large numbers of people hold negative views of the economy [Chart 8]

49 percent of BRICS respondents hold negative views of the economy [Chart 8]

The spectre of unemployment is alive 41% have experienced (partial) unemployment [Chart 5]

50 percent of BRICS respondents have experienced (partial) unemployment [Chart 5]

Just one in two believe the next generation will find a decent job [Chart 6]

65 percent of BRICS respondents believe the next generation will find a decent job [Chart 6]

78 percent of people think the economic system favours the wealthy [Chart 7]

82 percent of BRICS respondents think the economic system favours the wealth [Chart 7]

Respondents from BRICS countries have on average a greater chance of directly experiencing (partial) unemployment, with 50 percent of respondents experiencing unemployment or reduced working hours. [Chart 5]

The pain is felt harshest in South Africa 63 percent, but 6 points less than in 2013;

Russia 57 percent, 2 points less than in 2013;

Brazil 56 percent, 5 points less than in 2013;

India 39 percent, 4 points up with 2013;

China 33 percent, 7 points down from 2013.

Young women under the age of forty in the 14 countries surveyed have most experience of (partial) unemployment. 53 percent of this group say they have experience of unemployment.

### Future prospects are dim

Previous ITUC polls have shown great concern about the next generation with more than 66 percent of people saying future generations “would be worse off than my own generation” in 2012.

The ITUC Global Poll 2014 finds just 1 in 2 respondents expect the next generation to find a decent job. Just 39 percent of European respondents believe the next generation will be able to find a decent job. [Chart 6]

Two out of three BRICS respondents expect the next generation will be able to find a decent job (65 percent). [Chart 6]

Optimism in India, China and Brazil is in stark contrast with South Africa where just 35 percent think the next generation will find a decent job and Russia 58 percent.

### Power dynamics favouring the wealthy

The current economic system favours the wealthy, rather than being fair to most people – no country has a majority saying it is fair to most people.

That is the opinion of 78 percent of all respondents in the 2014 Global Poll. [Chart 7] One in five European respondents believes the economic system is fair to most. 80 percent say it favours the wealthy.

Only 18 percent of BRICS respondents believe the economic system is fair to most people. [Chart 7]

A striking 84 percent of global respondents say that ‘ordinary citizens’ do not have enough influence on economic decision-making. 60 percent think corporates interests have too much influence. [Chart 10] There is not a single country in the ITUC Global Poll 2014 that does not support giving ordinary citizens more influence in the process of economic decision making. [Chart 9] There is a consensus among countries that corporate interests have too much power. [Chart 10]

84 percent of BRICS respondents agree that ‘ordinary citizens’ do not have enough influence on economic decision-making. [Chart 9]

### Global citizens want corporate power to be tamed

First and foremost, global citizens want ordinary citizens to be brought back in the picture of the economic decision-making process. 62 percent say they want the power of corporations to be tamed. [Chart 11]

The majority of BRICS respondents (58 percent) think their governments should do more to tame corporate power. India (62 percent), Russia (62 percent) and South Africa (60 percent) hold this view strongly

## A roadmap for government action

Vacancy: activist national governments in the international arena  
People are not satisfied with their government performance. Governments are admonished ‘to do more’ when it comes to:

### 1 Taming corporate power [Chart 11]

Taming corporate power (62 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 58 percent ‘do more’.

Keeping more of the spoils from national natural resources (73 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 73 percent ‘do more’.

### 2 Jobs, wages and working conditions [Chart 12]

Reducing the gap between rich and poor (79 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 82 percent ‘do more’.

Ensuring fair wages (82 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 86 percent ‘do more’.

Increasing job security (81 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 84 percent ‘do more’.

Establishing reasonable working hours (60 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 68 percent ‘do more’.

### 3 International action [chart 13]

Intervening more actively in the economy to share wealth more equally (86 percent ‘favour’). BRICS 90 percent ‘favour’.

Ensure workers’ rights are an essential part of global trade agreements (94 percent ‘favour’). BRICS 96 percent ‘favour’.

Strengthening international rules to make companies provide better wages and conditions (94 percent ‘favour’). BRICS 96 percent favour’.

Promote lifting the minimum wage in every country around the world (88 percent ‘favour’). BRICS 93 percent ‘favour’.

### 4 Dealing with climate change [Chart 14]

Limiting pollution that causes climate change (73 percent ‘do more’). BRICS 84 percent ‘do more’.

compared with Brazil (58 percent) and China (47 percent). [Chart 11]

## Frustration with poor performance in tackling unemployment

Citizens across the globe are frustrated with their government's poor performance in tackling unemployment. 68 percent of respondents say their government is bad at tackling unemployment. [Chart 15] 69 percent of women say their government is doing a bad job at tackling unemployment compared with 65 percent of men.

BRICS countries have a majority of people saying the government is not good at tackling unemployment (65 percent bad). [Chart 15]

## Strong labour laws

Global citizens continue to express exceptionally strong support for a wide range of labour laws, including the right to strike. [Chart 16a] The strongest call exists for laws that:

'Protect workers' health and safety.' (97 percent favour, of which 71 percent strongly favour).

'Establish and protect a decent minimum wage for workers also enjoy overwhelming support.' (94 percent favour, 63 percent strongly)

'Give workers the right to collective bargaining.' (89 percent favour, 45 percent strongly)

'Help to cement the right to join a union.' (89 percent favour, 43 percent strongly)

'Protect the right to strike.' (75 percent favour, 28 percent strongly)

BRICS countries give even stronger emotional support for labour laws. [Chart 16b]

Support for laws that give workers the right to collectively bargain has the strongest emotional intensity in Brazil, China and Russia.

## A social protection floor

Global citizens overwhelmingly want their government to be working on a social protection floor. [Chart 17a] Trend data from three years of polling shows consistent high levels of support for these policies.

'Affordable access to health care.' (95 percent favour, of which 72 percent strongly).

'Decent retirement incomes.' (94 percent favour, 71 percent strongly)

'Providing affordable access to education.' (95 percent favour, 69 percent strongly)

'Support for paid maternity leave.' (89 percent favour, 55 percent strongly)

'Unemployment benefits.' (87 percent favour, 47 percent strongly)

BRICS countries lend strongest emotional support for a social protection floor, including support for paid maternity leave. [Chart 17b]

## True respect for workers' rights throughout entire production chain

The idea of corporations respecting workers' rights throughout the entire production chain is well received, but citizens are sceptical on whether companies will deliver even if they were to make such a promise. A minority of just 39 percent of the respondents believe that they will. [Chart 18]

The BRICS countries are more open than other countries to the idea of corporations respecting workers' rights throughout the entire production chain.

Combining desirability with likelihood of delivering – overall the BRICS score is 51 percent, 12 percent above the global mean. These countries make an interesting alliance in the call for companies to respect workers' rights throughout the entire production chain. [Chart 18]

## Worker responses: organise true power of workers

More than two out of three respondents (63 percent) agree with the statement 'workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers'. [Chart 19]

In BRICS countries 60 percent of respondents agree 'workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers'. [Chart 19]

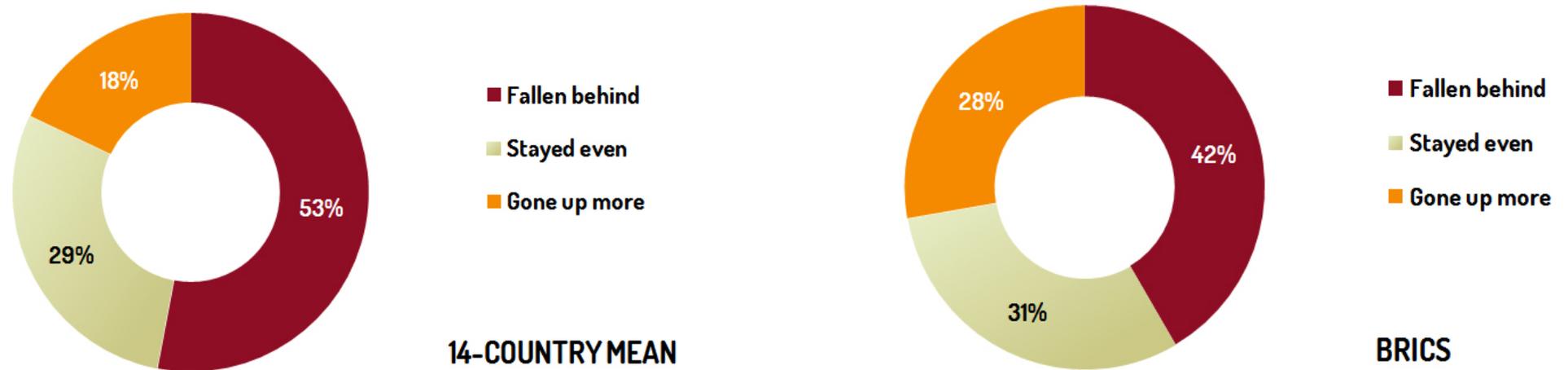
More than three in four global respondents (76 percent) find it important that unions play an active role in society. [Chart 20] 84 percent of global respondents younger than 25 say an active role by unions is important.

In BRICS countries an overwhelming 86 percent of people find it important that unions play an active role in society. [Chart 20]

If governments are concerned to tackle unemployment and inequality, ensure rights and fair wages for their citizens and tackle climate change, they will draw confidence from these views that their own people want more activist governments and they want corporate power tamed.

**Sharan Burrow, General Secretary  
International Trade Union Confederation**

Chart 1: Family income against cost of living in the last two years

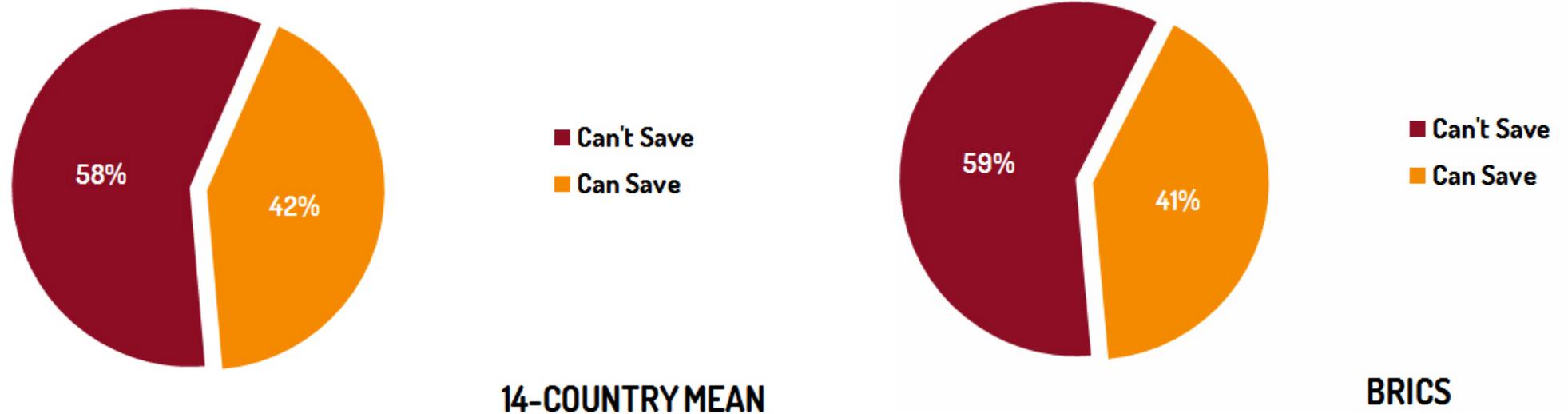


## Question

Q4 In the last two years, do you think that you and your family's household income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind, or stayed even with the cost of living.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 1 percent.*

Chart 2: Personal financial situation



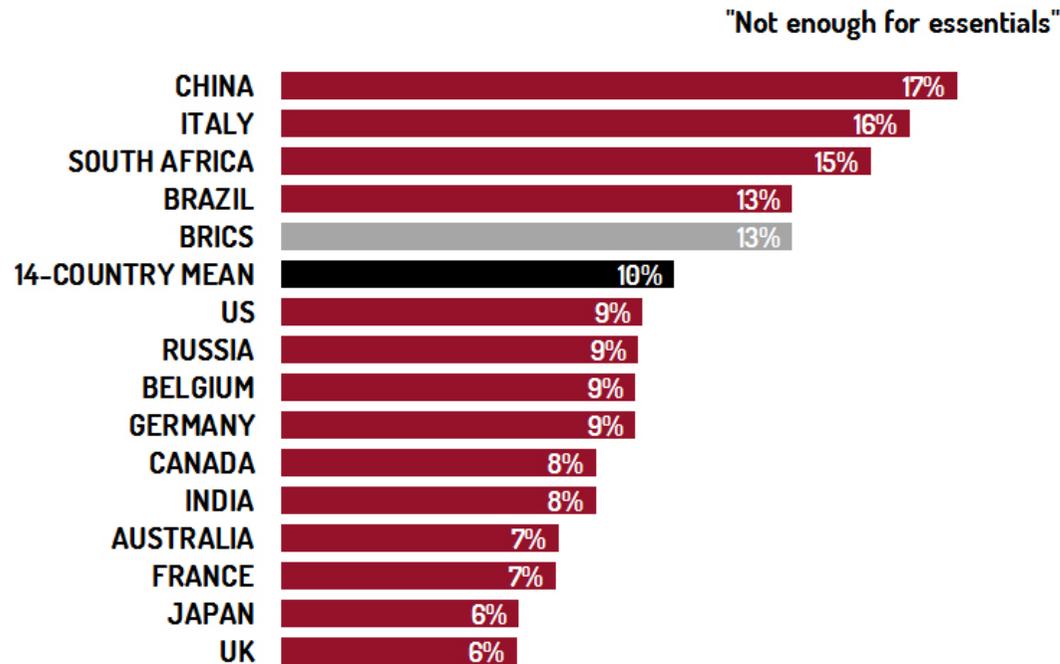
## Question

Q3 Which of the following statements best describes your financial situation?

Answers combined for “You don’t have enough for basic essentials, like housing, food and electricity and You have enough for basic essentials, but you cannot save any money” (Can’t save) and “You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a little money and You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a lot of money.” (Can save)

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 1 percent.*

Chart 3: Personal financial situation: not enough for basic essentials



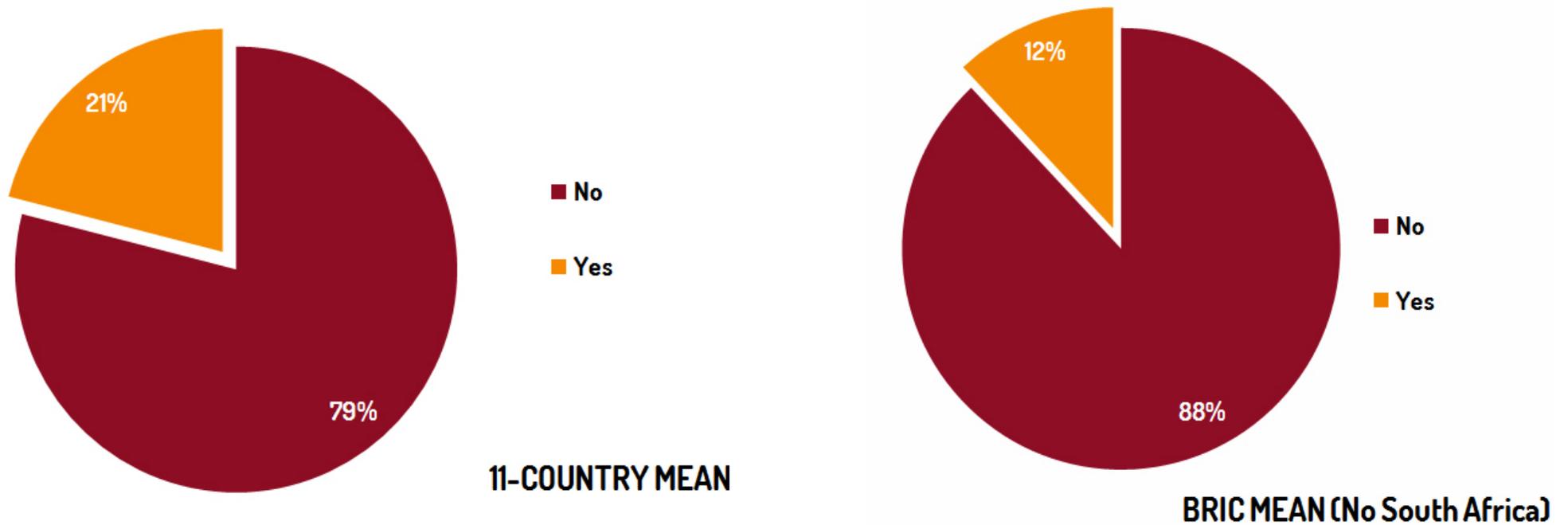
### Question

Q3 Which of the following statements best describes your financial situation?

Countries ordered from lowest to highest score 'not enough for essentials'.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS; N is about 1,000 for each individual country.*

Chart 4: Minimum wage insufficient for decent life

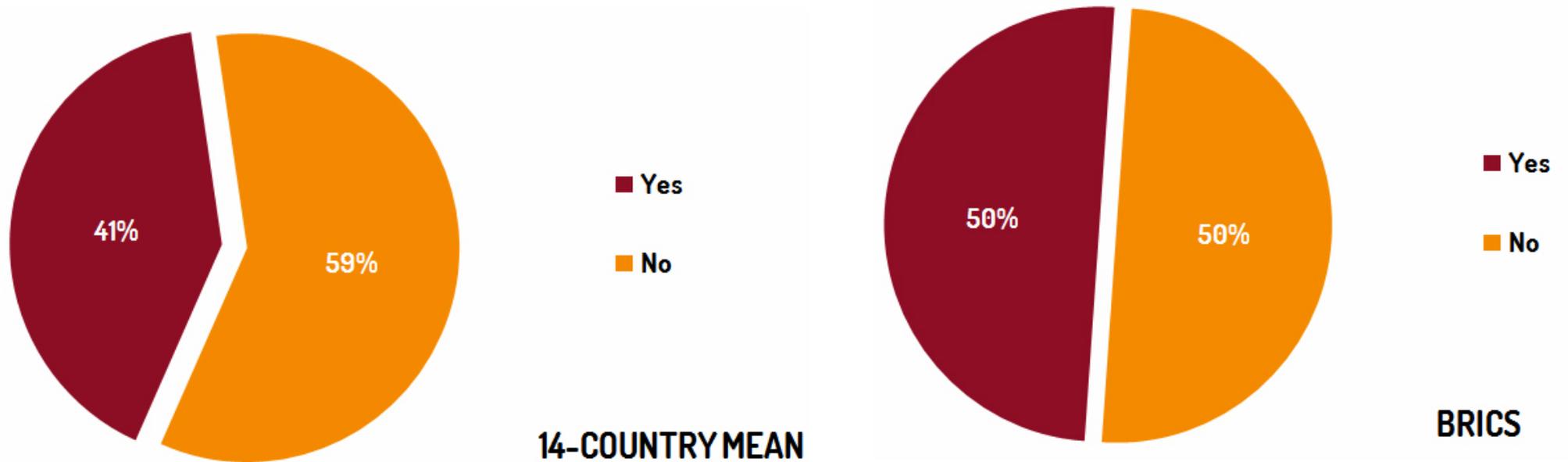


## Question

Q12 In your view are the minimum wages paid in COUNTRY NAME high enough to enable workers to live in a decent life?

*Note N=11,005 for 11 country average (Germany, South Africa and Italy not included), N=4002 for BRICS (South Africa not included); N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 3 percent.*

Chart 5: Unemployed or reduced hours in last 2 years?

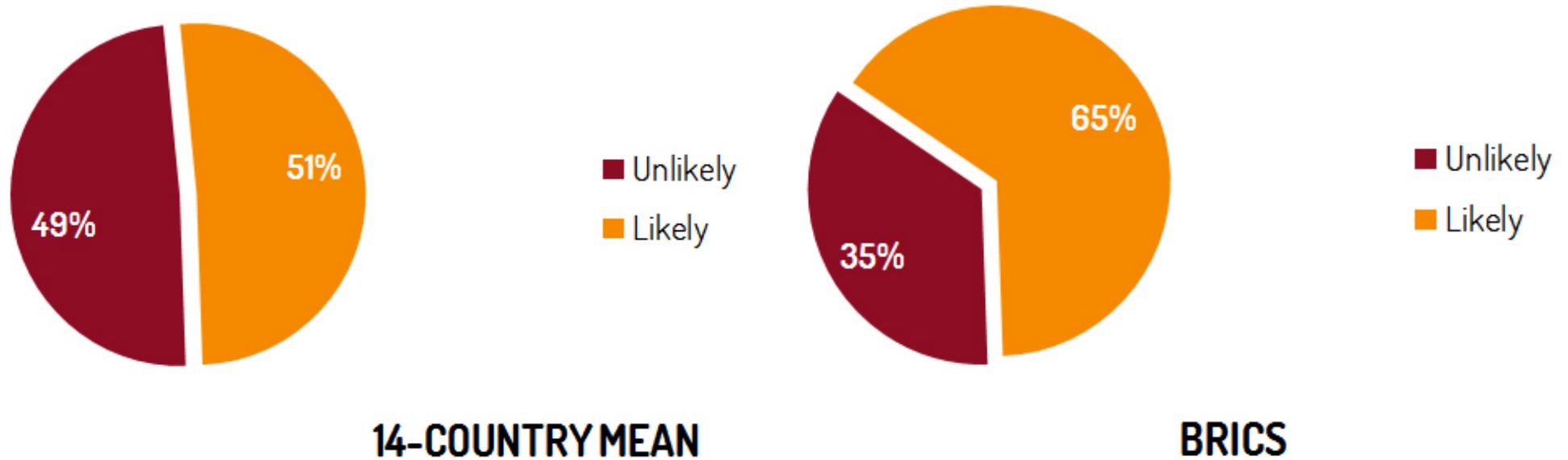


## Question

Q9 In the last two years, have you or someone in your family been unemployed, or had their working hours reduced?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS; Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 2 percent.*

Chart 6: Will next generation find a decent job?

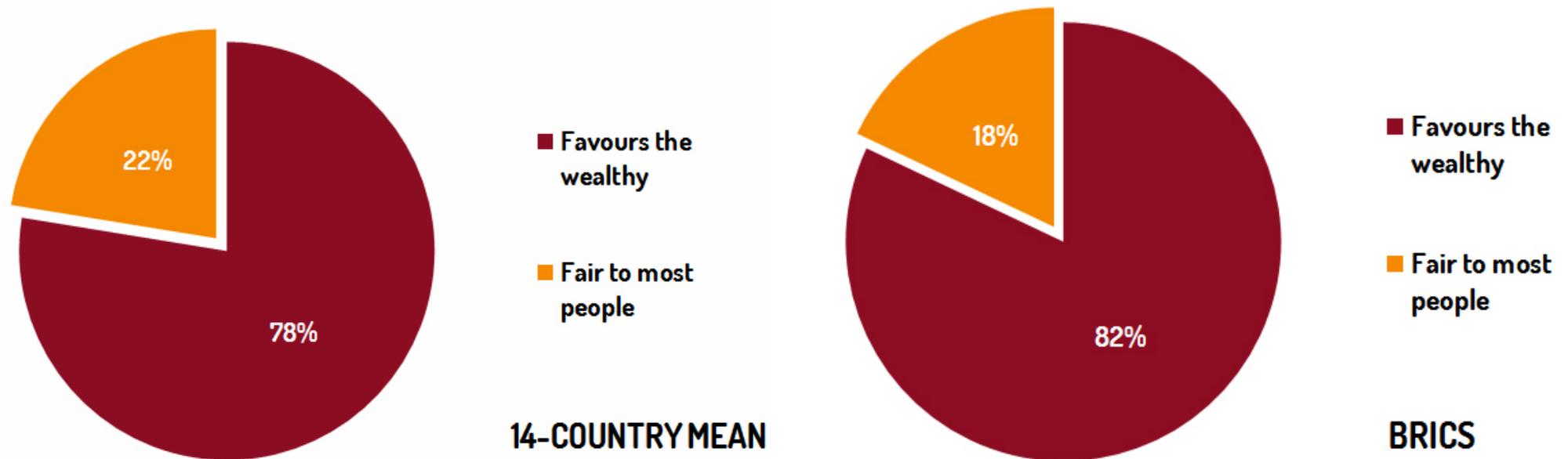


## Question

Q11 When thinking about the next generation, how likely do you think they will find a decent job?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 3 percent.*

Chart 7: Economic system favours the wealthy

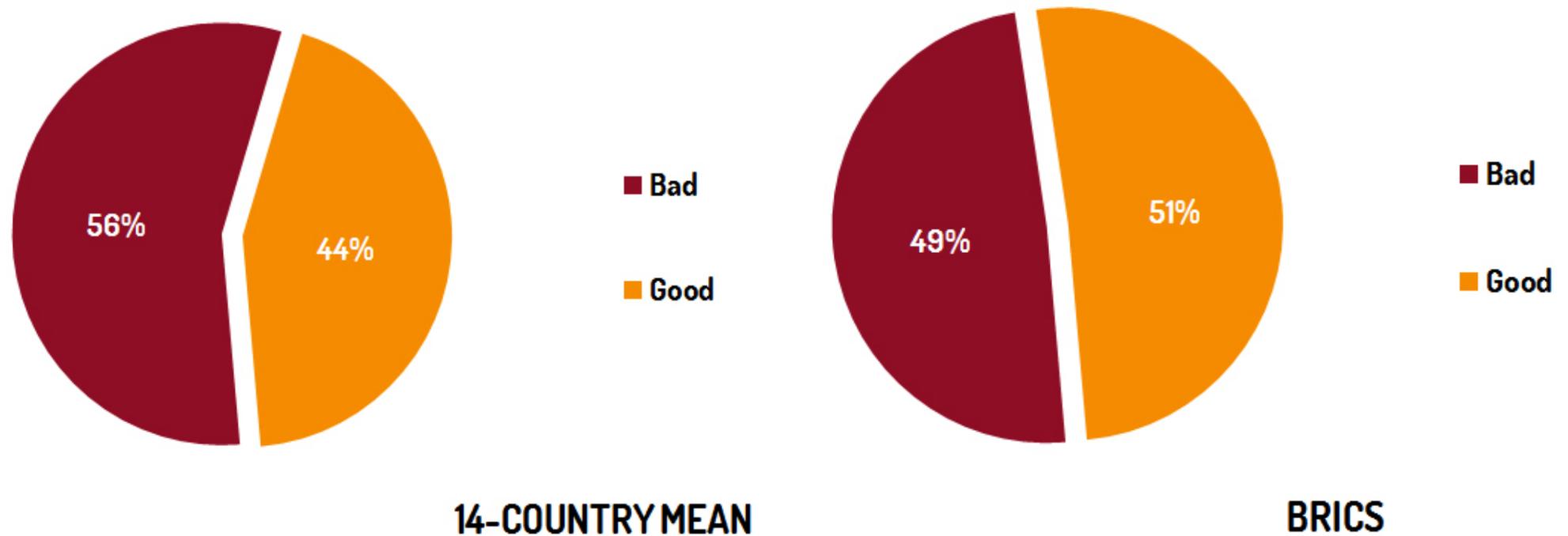


## Question

Q14. Do you think the (Nationality) economic system generally favours the wealth or is it fair to most people of (our country)?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 2 percent.*

Chart 8: Describe the economic situation of your country



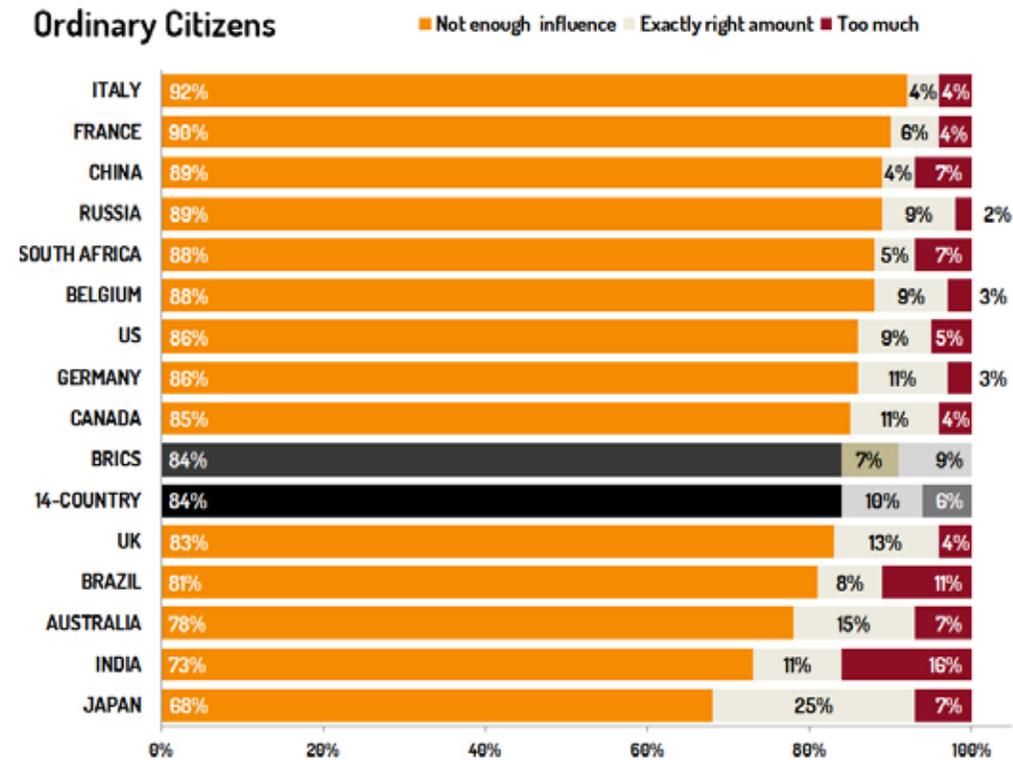
## Question

Q2 Thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (country) – is it very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad?

Note

Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 1 percent.

## Chart 9: Ordinary Citizens

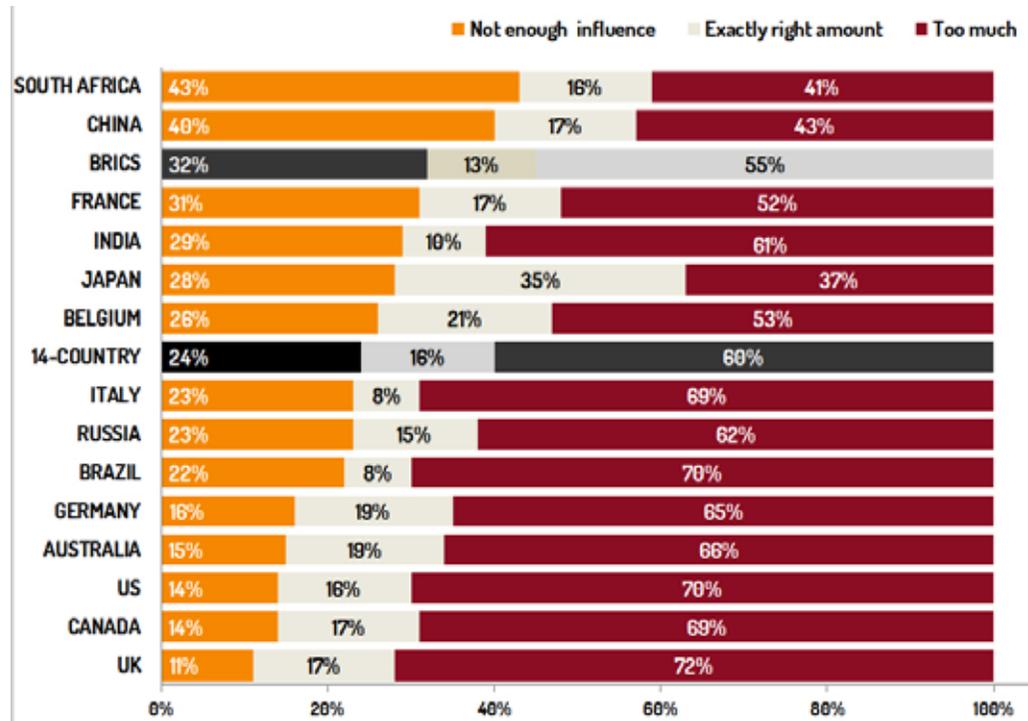


### Question

Q15 In your view, how much influence do the following people and organisations have on setting the rules for the economy.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. N is about 1000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 4 percent.*

## Chart 10: Corporate Interests



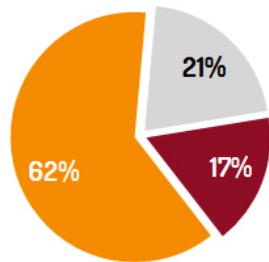
### Question

Q15 In your view, how much influence do the following people and organisations have on setting the rules for the economy.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. N is about 1000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 4 percent.*

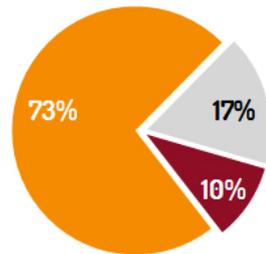
## Chart 11: Taming corporate power

### Taming corporate power



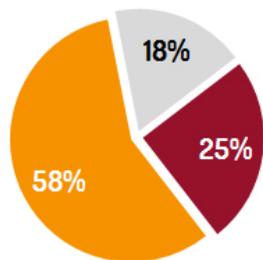
14-COUNTRY MEAN

### Keeping more of the benefits from natural resources



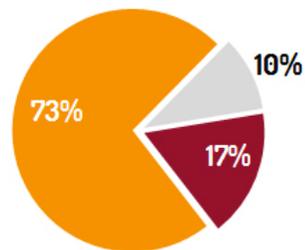
- Do more
- Same role as present
- Do less

### Taming corporate power



BRICS

### Keeping more of the benefits from natural resources

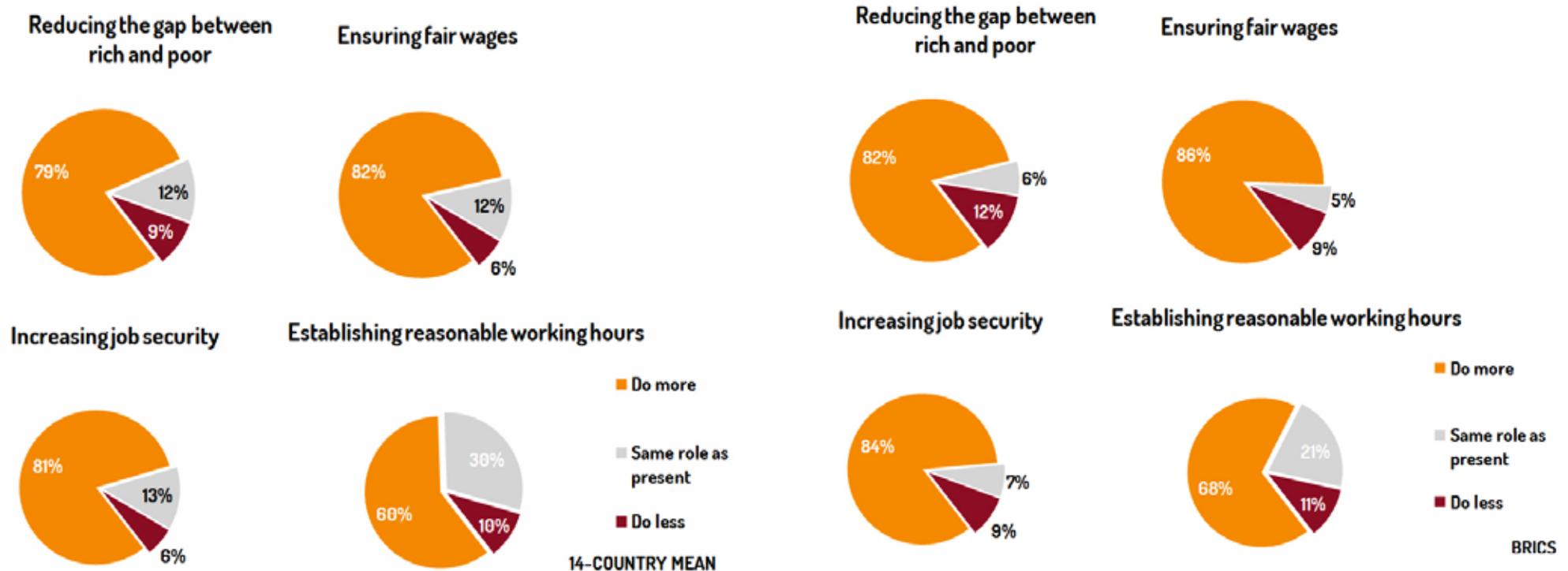


## Question

Q13 In your view should the NATIONALITY government do more or less in each of the following areas? Taming corporate power, keeping more the benefits from the (COUNTRY NAME) natural resources

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 2 percent.*

Chart 12: Jobs, wages and working conditions

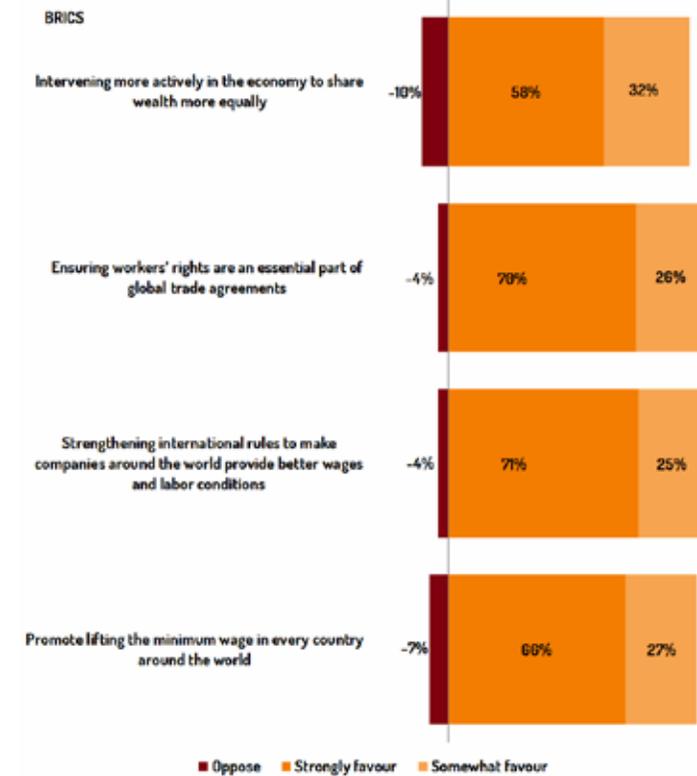
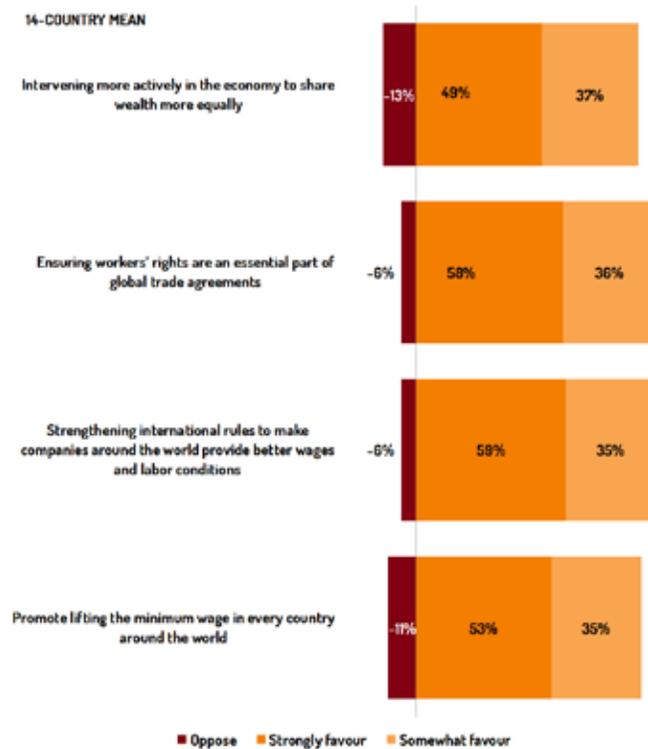


## Question

Q13 In your view should the NATIONALITY government do more or less in each of the following areas? Reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring fair wages, increasing job security, establishing reasonable working hour

Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 2 percent.

Chart 13: International action



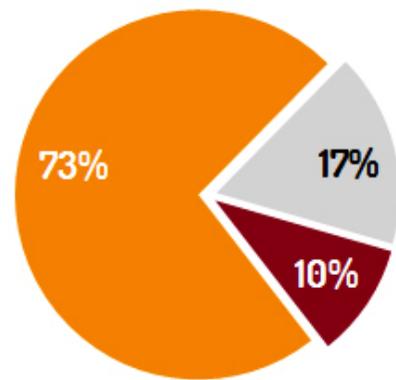
## Question

Q18 The gap between rich and poor is growing in most countries around the world. Here are some actions national governments around the world could take to solve this problem. Do you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each these actions? Promote lifting the minimum wage in every country around the world, strengthening international rules to make companies around the world provide better wages and labour conditions, ensuring workers' rights are an essential part of global trade agreements, intervening more actively in the economy to share wealth more equally

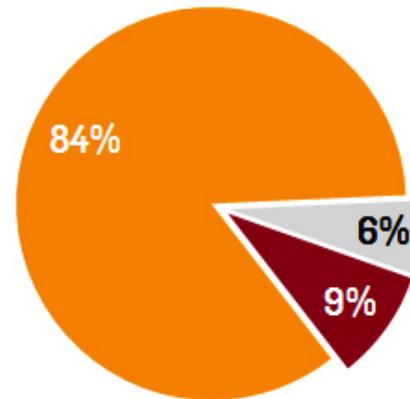
Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation largest don't know response was 2 percent.

Chart 14: Dealing with climate change

**Limiting pollution that is causing climate change**



**14-COUNTRY MEAN**



**BRICS**

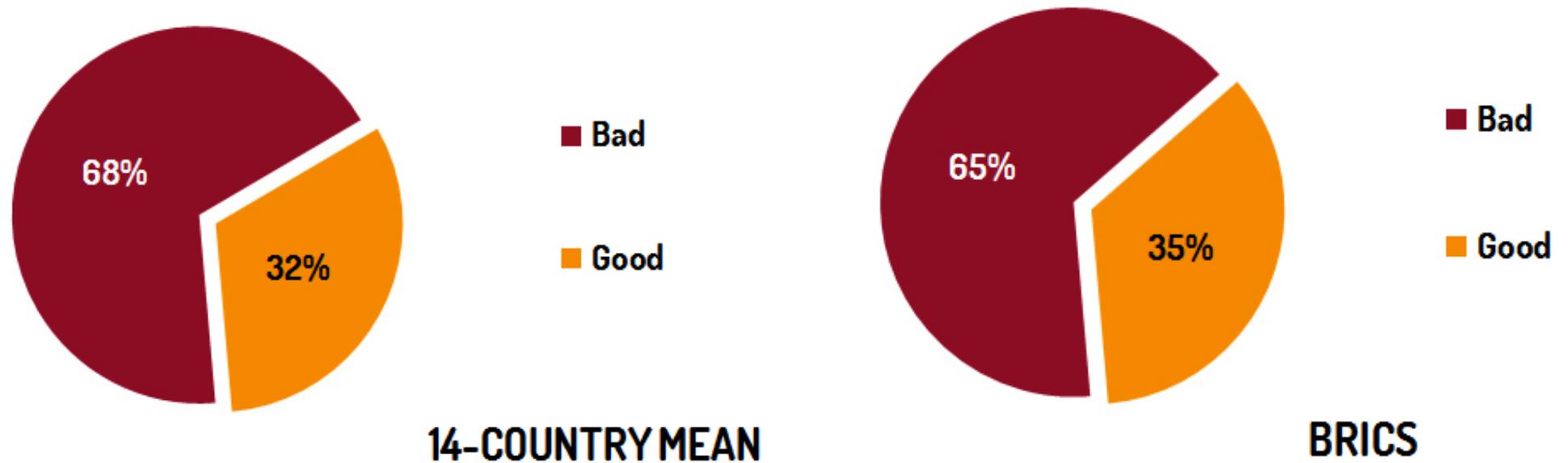
- Do more
- Same role as present
- Do less

**Question**

Q13 In your view should the NATIONALITY government do more or less in each of the following areas? Dealing with climate change

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 2 percent.*

Chart 15: Government bad at tackling unemployment

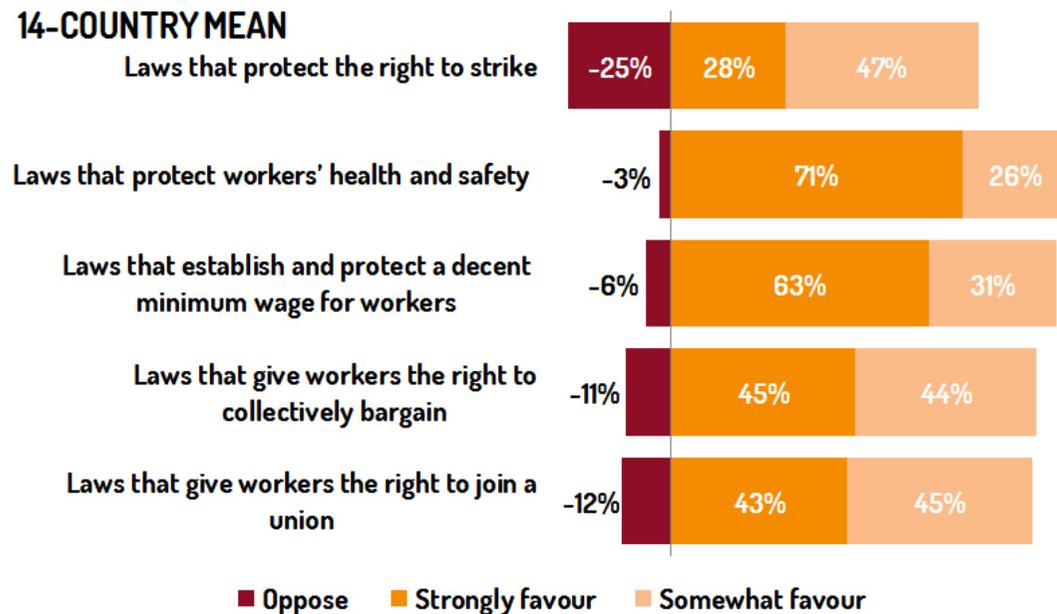


## Question

Q5 Overall, do you think your government is doing a good or a bad job at tackling unemployment?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 4 percent.*

Chart 16a: Laws that protect workers

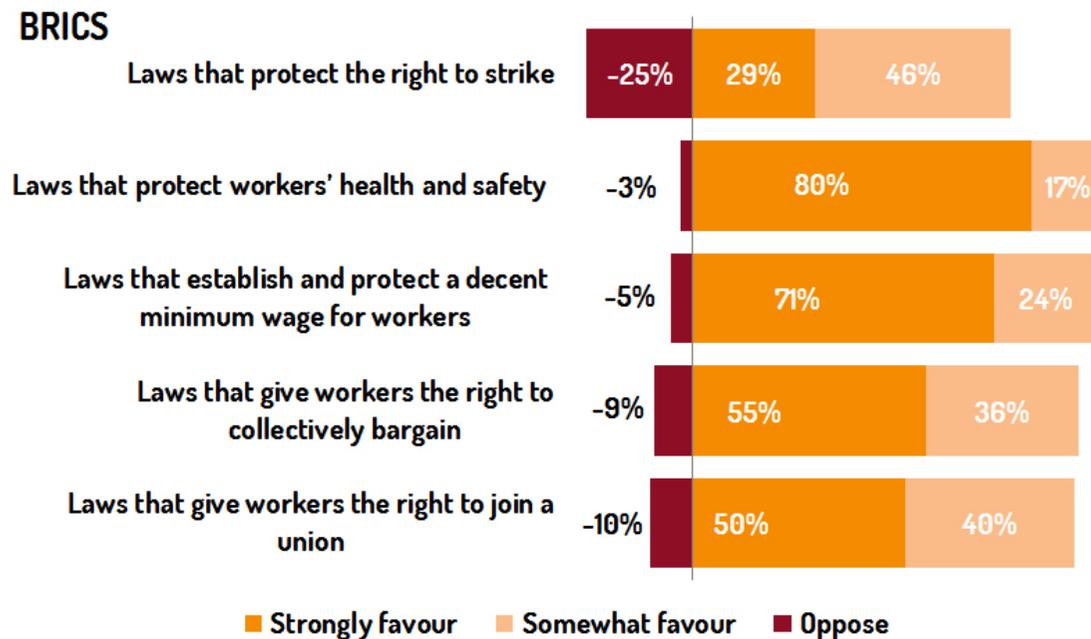


## Question

Q7 Could you please tell me if you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following laws? Laws that protect the right to strike, Laws that establish and protect a decent minimum wage for workers, Laws that give workers the right to collective bargain, so they can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions, Laws that give workers the right to join a union.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 0 percent.*

Chart 16b: Laws that protect workers

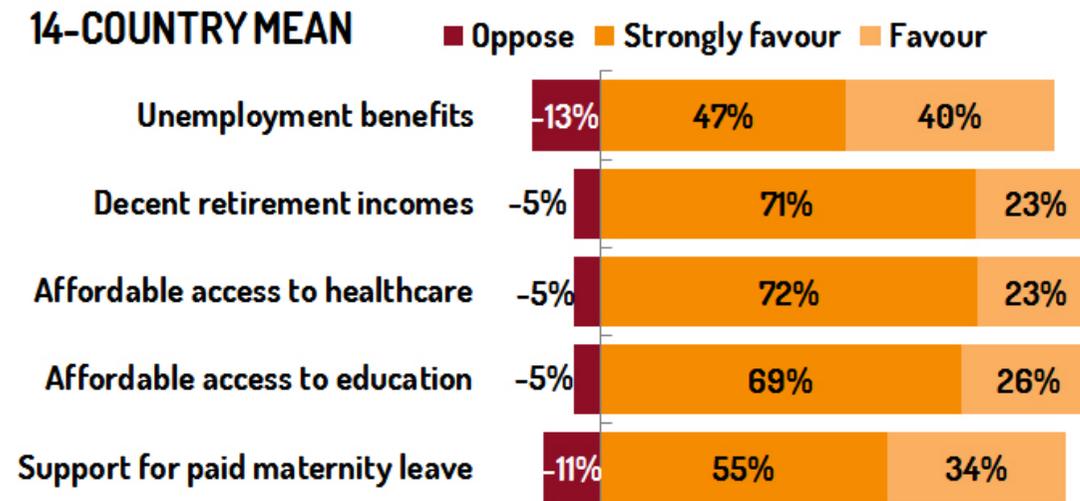


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*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 0 percent.*

Chart 17a: The system is stacked against workers

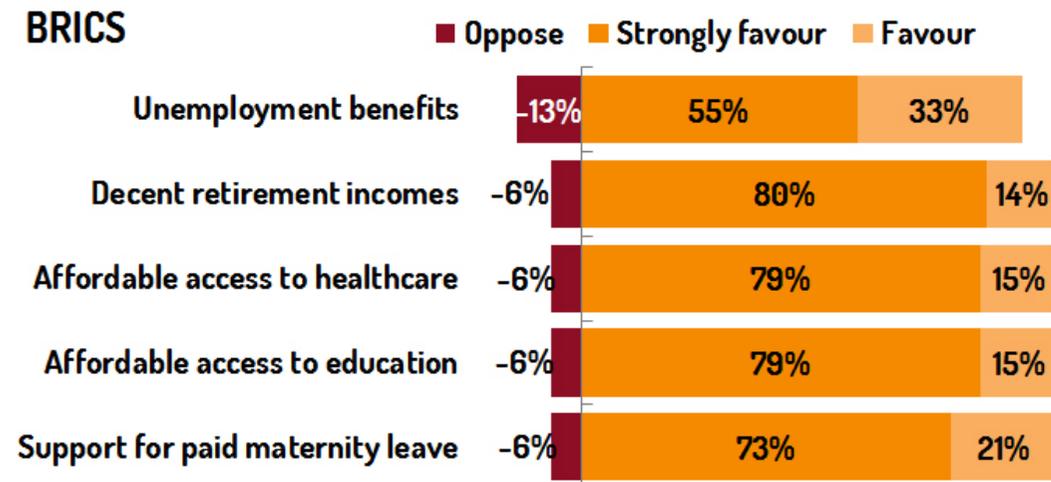


## Question

Q8 Would you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the government working on providing workers with each of the following items? Unemployment benefits, decent retirement incomes, affordable access to health care, affordable access to education, Support for paid maternity leave.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 0 percent.*

Chart 17b: The system is stacked against workers

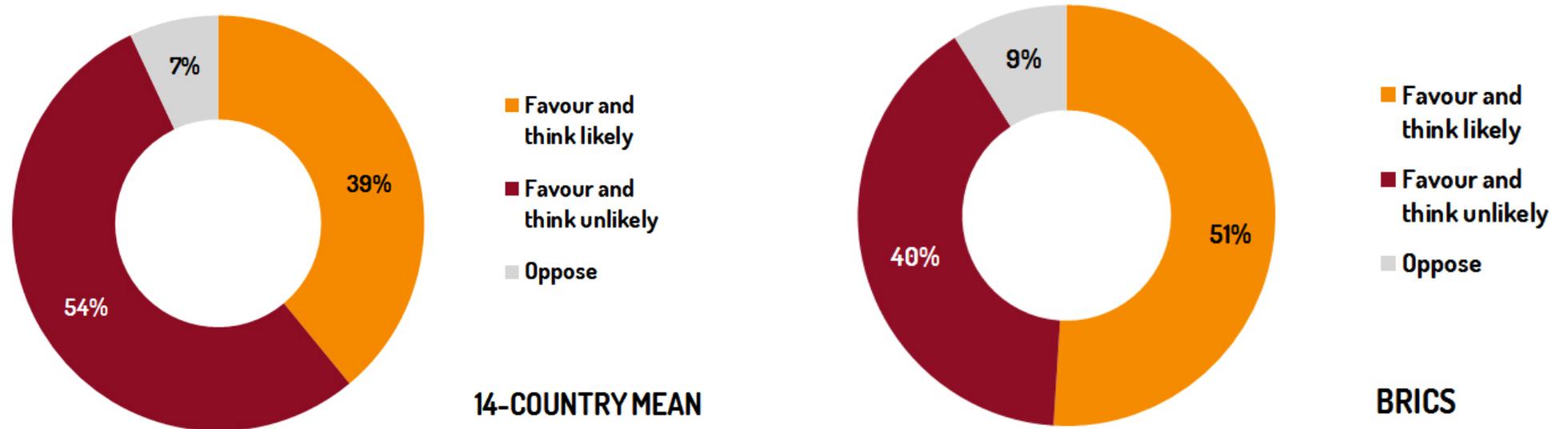


## Question

Q8 Would you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the government working on providing workers with each of the following items? Unemployment benefits, decent retirement incomes, affordable access to health care, affordable access to education, Support for paid maternity leave.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation, largest don't know response was 0 percent.*

Chart 18: Respecting workers' rights throughout the entire production chain

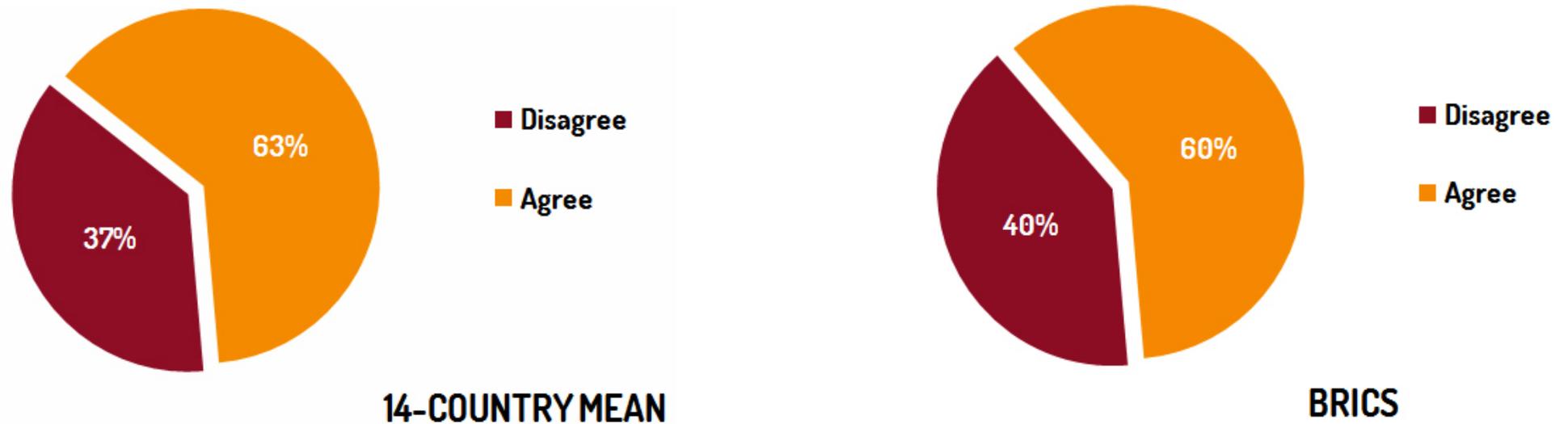


## Question

Graphs constructed from two questions: Q16 Many companies have promised that they will respect workers' rights throughout the entire production chain, no matter where their products are being produced. Do you favour or oppose this promise? And Q17 How likely is it that these companies will deliver on their promise?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation largest don't know response was 5 percent.*

Chart 19: Workplaces with unions have better wages, conditions and safety

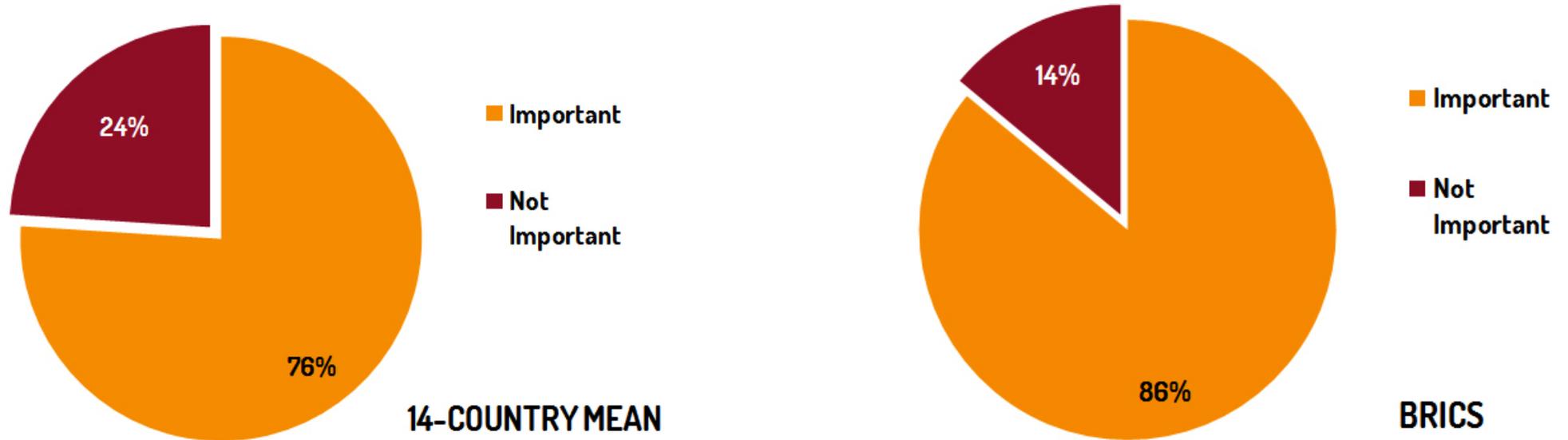


## Question

Q6 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation largest don't know response was 5 percent.*

Chart 20: Unions play active role in society



## Question

Q19 In your view, how important is it to have unions playing an active role in society?

*Note N=14,006 for 14 country average, N=5003 for BRICS. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation largest don't know response was 4 percent.*



These conclusions are based on the 2014 International Trade Union Confederation Global Poll.

This poll, commissioned by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), is the third of its kind, after the 2012 and 2013 studies.

The project covers the adult (18 years and over) populations of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In each country, approximately 1,000 respondents were interviewed, yielding a grand total of 14,006 respondents. All interviews were conducted online.

The sample in each country has been selected by quotas to reflect national proportions in terms of age, gender and region.

SPSS software and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse and present the data.

This project was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.

The findings of this study represent the opinions of more than 3.7 billion people, or, according to UN estimates, about 53 percent of the world population.

Essential Media Communications and Anker Solutions were responsible for questionnaire design, analysis and report writing.

TNS Opinion carried out the fieldwork between 8-19 January, 2014.

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EMC and Essential Research, was responsible for question design and project management.



Anker Solutions was responsible for analysis and report writing.



TNS opinion

TNS Opinion, coordinated the field work with reputable local partners in each of the countries involved.



EMC is a member of the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations.