

# ELECTION INDICATORS REPORT

# 2021

# NATIONAL



*Report Prepared for*

**Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)  
National Office**

Election House, Riverside Office Park,  
1303 Heuwel Avenue, Centurion

*By*

**Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)**

Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES)  
Research Programme





SOUTH AFRICA

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This report is the first in a developed ‘Elections Indicators Report’ series, which is the culmination of a five year project that builds on the longstanding research partnership between the Commission and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)



**Phatudi Simon Mamabolo**  
Chief Executive Office (CEO)  
Electoral Commission of South Africa

The Electoral Commission conducts research and supports researchers in the area of electoral democracy and politics. The research products or reports influence the planning and electoral projects continuously. It is therefore that from time to time, we all have a duty to pause and reflect on our work with a view to enhancing what we are doing well and changing course wherever we need to. To this effect, the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) has published an important tool to enable such reflection: The Elections Indicators Report. We believe this report will contribute to the necessary, collective effort of all in our country to deepen and grow our electoral democracy.

This report is the first in a developed ‘Elections Indicators Report’ series, which is the culmination of a five year project that builds on the longstanding research partnership between the Commission and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The Commission prides itself on being an evidence-based election management body that places a strong emphasis on high-quality research to inform its operational planning. This new series is a reflection of this commitment.

The project focuses on obtaining an understanding of the views, preferences, evaluative and behavioural

predispositions of the South African voting public on election days, the young and the old: rural and urban with gender sensitivity and spread.

The report contains key indicators which are important guidelines upon which the Commission will base its work in the fulfilment of its constitutional obligation to deliver quality, free and fair elections. The report is useful to political parties and election contestants to influence and direct their campaigns. The report is equally useful for researchers and opinion makers in the political environment.

The four main sources for this report, and for those that will follow in the series, are:

- ***The IEC Voter Participation Surveys.***
- ***The IEC Election Satisfaction Surveys.***
- ***The HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series.***
- ***The IEC statistics on voter registration and electoral results.***

This first Elections Indicators Report is produced soon after the publication of a global report by the Electoral Integrity Project on electoral democracy and electoral integrity, which strongly affirmed the work of

the Electoral Commission. According to the Electoral Integrity Global Report 2019-2021 assessment, which provides an update on the quality of elections around the world, South Africa has the 2nd highest electoral integrity in Africa. Election management is regarded as one of the best ways in which electoral integrity can be advanced, and these findings are a powerful tribute to the quality of the work done by the Commission.

The Commission is greatly encouraged by the finding, contained in this Elections Indicators Report, that the Commission continues to be one of the most trusted institutions in South Africa. However, we remain concerned at the overall decline in levels of trust. We note that, when trust in other social and political institutions diminishes, confidence in the Electoral Commission is influenced by how people feel about the performance of those they have elected to political structures and who lead government. If satisfaction with political parties and government declines, institutional trust will follow the downward trend and faith in democratic elections will be undermined.

The Commission is pleased that the focus of the Elections Indicators Report goes beyond the dynamics of the election day. Importantly, it includes a range of measures from the pre-election period that provides a sense of the pre-electoral mood, to views and experiences of registration procedures, the campaign period, and the immediate aftermath following the election day.

South Africans love and are loyal to our country, with many stating that they would rather be citizens of South Africa than of any other nation in the world. What should concern all of us is that, despite this national pride, the number of citizens unhappy with the functioning of democracy exceeds those who are satisfied with our democracy. This dissatisfaction is driven by widespread discontent with government performance. This is reflected particularly in the findings on the evaluations of the performance of local municipalities. The report shows that South Africans

are generally unhappy with, among others, the services offered by municipalities.

It is concerning that many South Africans have concerns about the effectiveness of their vote. The Elections Indicators Report shows that in 2021 only 35% of South Africans believe in the power of the vote and that the votes cast on election day makes a difference. Similarly, many South Africans voice concern about the degree to which elected representatives are responsive to their needs. However, 61% of South Africans believe in the duty to vote. The Electoral Commission pledges to continue sustained efforts to encourage all eligible voters to join the 26.2-million who are registered on the voters roll.

While we continue to identify further opportunities for improvement, we are pleased to note that voters found the registration process easy and that our voter education campaigns were effective. South Africans also had good experiences at voting stations and were generally happy with the quality of services rendered by the Commission's officials. Almost all expressed faith in the arrangements at voting stations to ensure the secrecy of their vote. The vast majority were also happy with the ballot paper used.

These are important foundations on which we will build and strive to improve.

This report contains vital information that is important, not only for the Electoral Commission, but for all in South Africa. Accordingly, the Commission invites South Africans to read the report and to use it, as we will, to guide our efforts to strengthen our democracy.

The Commission expresses its gratitude to the HRSC for an excellent body of work and to South Africans for participating in the surveys.

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**Phatudi Simon Mamabolo**

**Chief Executive Office (CEO)  
Electoral Commission of South Africa**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report represents the first in a newly developed Election Indicators Report series, which is the culmination of a two-year data curation project. It builds on a longstanding research partnership between the Electoral Commission of South Africa and the Human Sciences Research Council, focusing on understanding the views, preferences, evaluative and behavioural predispositions of the South African adult public as well as the voting public on Election Days.

This study and report were prepared by a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) team led by Benjamin Roberts, Jarè Struwig, Steven L. Gordon, and also comprising Joleen Steyn-Kotze, Samela Mtyingizane, Ngqapheli Mchunu, Thobeka Zondi, Kombi Sausi and Mercy Ngungu.

The work was carried out under the general direction of Narnia Bohler-Muller, the Divisional Executive of the HSRC's Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) Research Programme.

The team would like to acknowledge the generous support of the managing team at the Electoral Commission of South Africa. Special mention needs to be made of Shameme Manjoo and her successor, Moagisi Sibanda, as well as Dr Thabo Rapoo for their guidance, advice, support and input throughout the study. Electoral Commissioner, Dr Nomsa Masuku, is also to be thanked for her insight. The comments received from various members of the Commission's executive leadership at different stages of the research process are also gratefully acknowledged, in particular Mr Mawethu Mosery.

We would like to express our profound appreciation to the thousands of South Africans who have generously given their time to participate in the Voter Participation Survey and Election Satisfaction Survey series since the late 1990s. The opinions, preferences and experiences that were shared with our interviewing teams has made, and continues to make, and invaluable contribution to electoral planning and management in the country, as well as our understanding of the Electorate and how it is changing over time. The HSRC's provincial supervisors and data collectors were instrumental in ensuring that high quality information was collected.

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A debt of gratitude is also due to the HSRC's administrative team, consisting of Busisiwe Mamba, Koshen Govender, Deshanie Reddy and Tanya Shanker, as well as to Keneilwe Dikobe of the Commission, for all their assistance.

**Dr Benjamin Roberts and Jarè Struwig**

**South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) Coordinators  
Human Sciences Research Council**



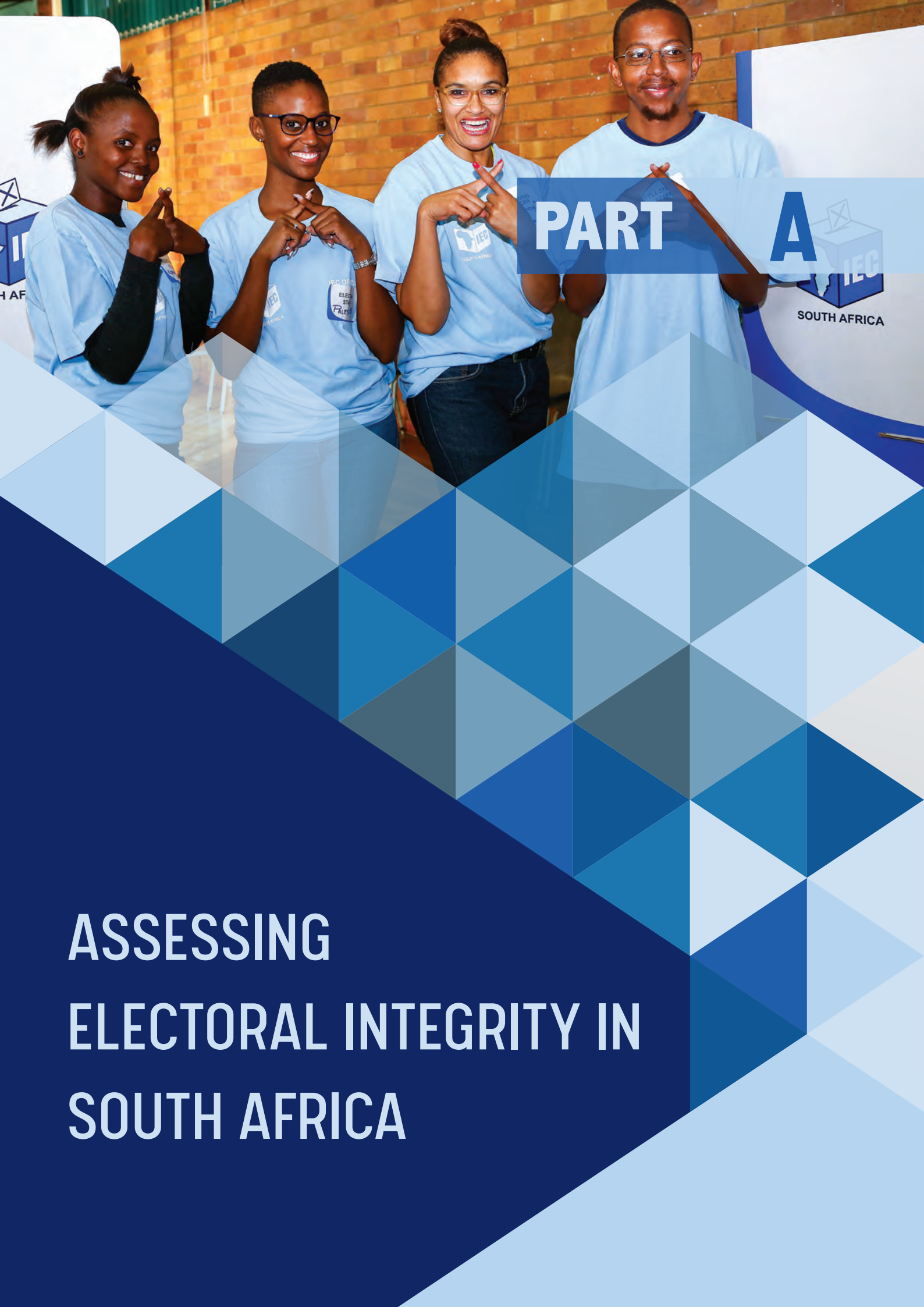
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**PART**

**A**

# ASSESSING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

# 1. ASSESSING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

## 1.1 Introducing the report series

Elections in South Africa follow a five-year cycle, with national/provincial elections held together and municipal/local government elections held two years later. The Electoral Commission of South Africa has been involved in all South African elections and have successfully managed six national/provincial elections (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019) and six municipal/local government elections (1995, 2000, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021). According to the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Electoral Commission Act (1996), the central roles of the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) are to strengthen constitutional democracy and promote democratic electoral processes in the country. An important element of this mandate is to encourage voter participation. To this end, the Commission places great focus on increasing voter registration and turnout by investing in civic education and outreach programmes to encourage citizens to register and ultimately vote.

Since the late 1990s, the Electoral Commission of South Africa has partnered with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), a statutory research institute, to undertake a programme of electoral research. This focuses on generating survey-based as well as qualitative insight to inform operational planning and outreach. In order to better understand the Electorate and maximise the reach and impact of outreach efforts, the Electoral Commission follows a specific framework of survey-based research on electoral matters. This framework of surveying includes a pre-election survey, the Voter Participation Survey (VPS), and an Election Day survey, the Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS). Both surveys are nationally representative series which have been conducted in a similar format for national and provincial, as well as municipal elections for more than a decade. Additional ad hoc research studies have been conducted, focusing on internal surveying of electoral staff on issues such as gender mainstreaming and the institutional vision, as well as research into ballot paper design, usability and spoiling.

This partnership between the Electoral Commission and the HSRC has generated datasets that relate to

the socio-political dynamics of voter turnout, voter behaviour and voter participation in South Africa. A challenge associated with these longitudinal projects is that voluminous amounts of data are generated, but are often treated as stand-alone projects and not merged to form longitudinal data series that can be used to readily identify trends and emerging patterns, as well as benchmark performance. Another challenge pertains to the risk that the technology used to analyse, manage and store data is at high risk of becoming obsolete over time, rendering existing data unusable.

In order to address these challenges, the Electoral Commission contracted the HSRC to undertake a project entitled: *Trends in Voter Participation and Election Satisfaction in South Africa: Curating, Mining and Analysing Successive Electoral Commission Surveys conducted by the HSRC*. The project entailed locating data from previous rounds of the Voter Participation Survey and Election Satisfaction Survey and analysing them in order to provide a longitudinal perspective of changing electoral attitudes, experiences and behaviour, as well as democratic values in South Africa. A secondary objective of this project is to embark on a data curation exercise in order to preserve the Electoral Commission datasets for future use. This will ensure that these datasets do not become obsolete and will also enable the Commission to grant data access to external researchers or stakeholders.

This report is the output of the first objective and the result of the tracing, combining and mining of Voter Participation Surveys (VPS) as well as Election Satisfaction Surveys (ESS) and analysing the combined datasets in order to give a longitudinal perspective of changing democratic values and behaviour in South Africa. Select indicators are presented in this volume, which represent the first in a planned statistical publication series on electoral indicators. Our hope is to produce a series that will serve as a key reference for those interested in gaining insight into emerging trends on key aspects of electoral performance and voter predispositions.

## 1.2 Conceptual framework

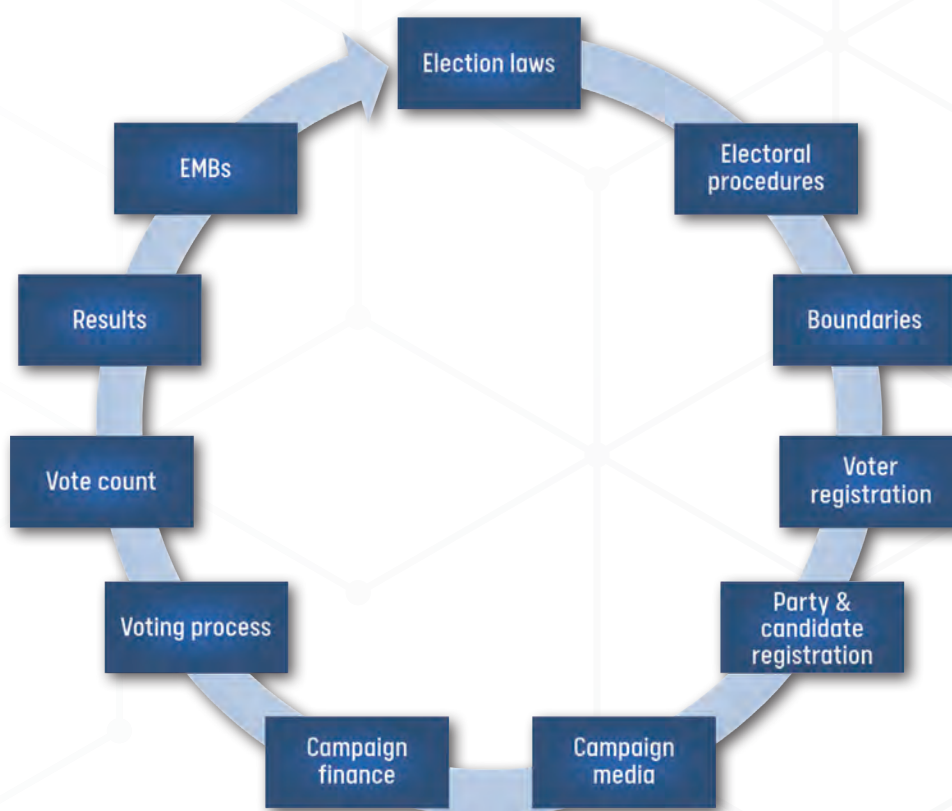
In planning this report series, we drew on three strands of the conceptual literature relating to models of political support, electoral integrity and election management. We briefly outline some of the ideas and components of these models, particularly those that had an influence on the decisions regarding the structure, content and scope of what ultimately appears in the reports.

### Electoral integrity

The last decade has witnessed a rapid growth in interest in the concept of ‘electoral integrity’, and an associated demand for policy-relevant research, evaluating different election management structures

and processes – with the aim of measuring and assessing the quality of elections over time (Norris et al., 2013). This priority has emanated, in part, from a range of challenges facing ongoing efforts to deepen and consolidate liberal democracies around the world. This includes claims of democratic ‘deficits’, ‘recession’ and ‘reversals’, a rise in authoritarian populism, instances of electoral malpractice, and declining patterns of electoral participation (LeDuc et al., 2002; Plattner, 2015; Diamond, 2015, 2020; Levitsky & Way, 2015; Foa & Mounk, 2016). This agenda is founded on a recognition that elections serve as the lifeblood of liberal democracy, by promoting policy debate, electing representatives, and determining the composition of legislatures.

**Figure 1: The electoral cycle used to guide the Electoral Integrity Project’s Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) research**



Source: Electoral Integrity Project, Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) (Norris et al. 2014)

Electoral integrity can be understood in different ways. Some have tended to conceptualise it negatively by focusing on problems experienced in specific electoral contests, such as manipulation, fraud and malpractice (Schedler, 2002, 2013; Birch, 2010, 2011). Other accounts have adopted a positive approach to understanding integrity by concentrating more on whether elections are free and fair, credible,

competitive and democratic in character (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005; Munck, 2009; Norris, 2017). The Electoral Integrity Project (EIP, established 2012)<sup>1</sup> has argued for a definitional approach that draws on a positive, human rights framing of electoral integrity, which may be understood as the degree to which any given election meets “international conventions and global norms governing the appropriate conduct

<sup>1</sup> More details on the EIP can be found at: <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com>

of elections, applying universally to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle” (Norris, 2013: 564; 2014, 2017, 2019). Accordingly, election integrity is achieved when electoral procedures meet established norms and standards at each of the different stages in the full election cycle. The latter covers the pre-election period, the campaigning phase, the election day itself, as well as the immediate post-election period.

It is this positive perspective and broader periodisation of the electoral cycle that are of significance for the present report series. The examination of election-related indicators in the South African case extends beyond measures that exclusively focus on the dynamics of election day itself. We also include a range of measures on the pre-election period in particular, to provide a sense of the pre-electoral mood, views and experiences of registration procedures, the campaign period, and the immediate aftermath of the election.

## Election management and popular confidence in the electoral process

Measuring and monitoring levels of public confidence in electoral processes are central to determining the integrity of elections. The legitimacy of the electoral process is widely considered as essential for the establishment, sustainability and consolidation of well-functioning democracies (Goodwin-Gill, 1998; Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). Research has suggested that in country contexts where the bonds of trust have eroded and citizens express doubt that elections are free and fair, the consequence may be diminishing turnout levels among voters and even public protest action as an extreme response to such discontent (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Elklit & Reynolds, 2002; Schedler, 2006; Birch, 2008).

This leads us to the salient institutional role of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) in administering elections and promoting voter education (Maphunye, 2019). The quality of elections and the way they are delivered by EMBs are thought to influence confidence in the electoral process and, by extension, processes of democratic consolidation (James et al., 2019). From an organisational perspective, election management is regarded as one of the ways in which electoral integrity can be advanced. This is based on an understanding that the institutional design features of an EMB will indelibly shape electoral performance and outcomes (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Envisaged causal linkages between EMB design, performance and outcomes**



Source: James et al. (2019), p.302

Before the turn of the century, many well-established survey infrastructures did not include indicators examining perceptions of the legitimacy and procedural fairness of elections. This has begun to change, with many comparative and national surveys starting to routinely include at least some measures to gauge popular legitimacy. In the South African case, the Electoral Commission has since its inception been concerned about the public voice and evaluations of different aspects of electoral administration. The indicators presented in the report draw from Commissioned survey research by the EMB, and touch on various aspects of public confidence in electoral

processes and assessments of preparations and performance in relation to elections in the country. While measurement tools have been developed in recent years that draw on expert opinion on electoral design, readiness and outcomes, some in conjunction with public opinion research, the focus of our report series is on the voices of the adult public and voters, more specifically on election day assessments. This does not preclude these views being compared at a later stage with expert opinion using common indicators, but for the present we limit ourselves to better understanding popular confidence in electoral processes.

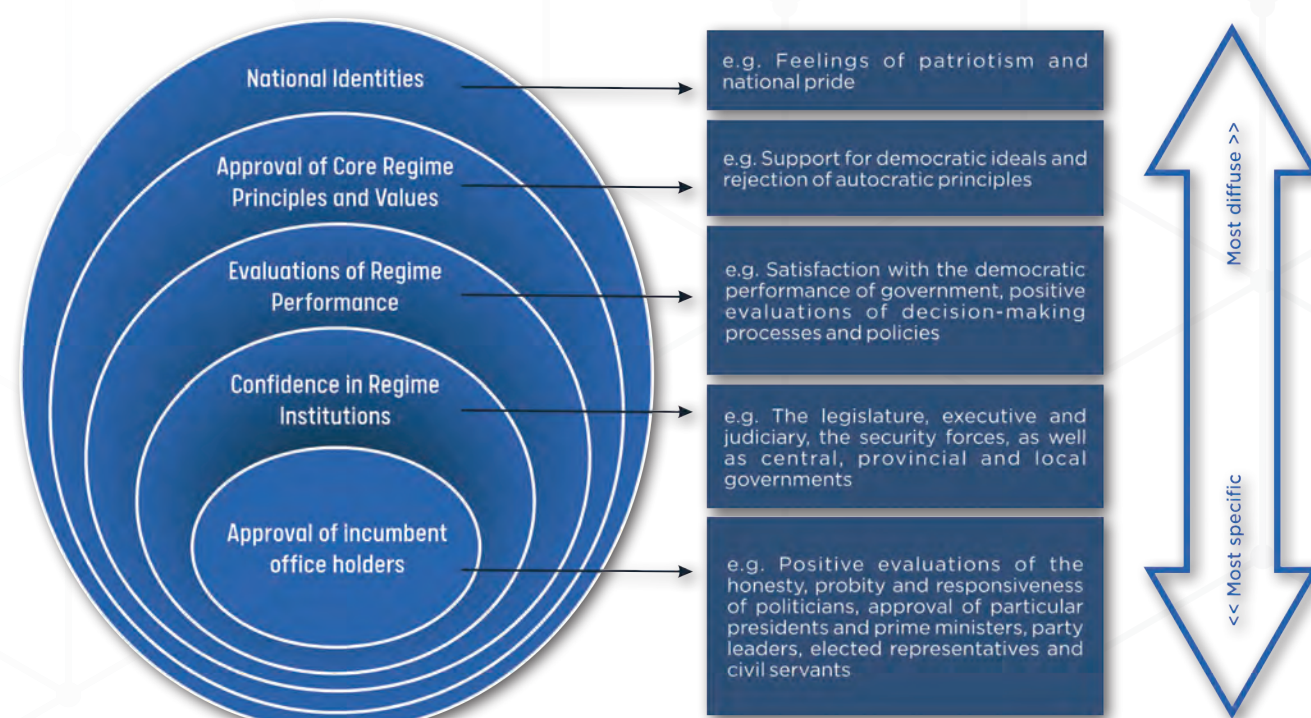
## Political support

To adequately capture political system support and general regime approval among the public, we make use of a conceptual framework developed by Norris (2011) that draws primarily on the work of David Easton (1975). Accordingly, indicators of political support are clustered into a multi-dimensional framework consisting of five components, ranging from the most generalised to the most specific. These components are: (i) national identities; (ii) approval of regime principles and values; (iii) evaluations of regime performance; (iv) confidence in regime institutions; and (v) approval of incumbent office-holders. Figure 3 depicts how these components are structured, moving from the most diffuse towards the most specific.

The first component identified by Norris, namely national identities, represent the most general set of attitudes towards belonging or attachment to the state. Common survey-based measures

and indicators for this dimension include national pride, patriotism and feelings of national identity. The second dimension of support - approval of regime principles and values - addresses support for fundamental democratic principles and values. The third dimension is evaluations of regime performance, and is conceived as the views of citizens towards the democratic performance of the government, as well as assessments of decision-making processes, policies and policy outcomes. Fourthly, confidence in regime institutions refers to trust in public sector institutions. Norris (2011) views the following as public institutions: the government legislature, the executive, the judiciary and courts, the security forces, the different tiers of government (national, provincial, local), and the civil service, in addition to political parties. The press and trade unions can also be included here. The last level of support is the approval of incumbent office-holders, which entails public attitudes towards the president, ministers, party leaders and elected representatives.

**Figure 3: Conceptual overview of indicators of political system support**



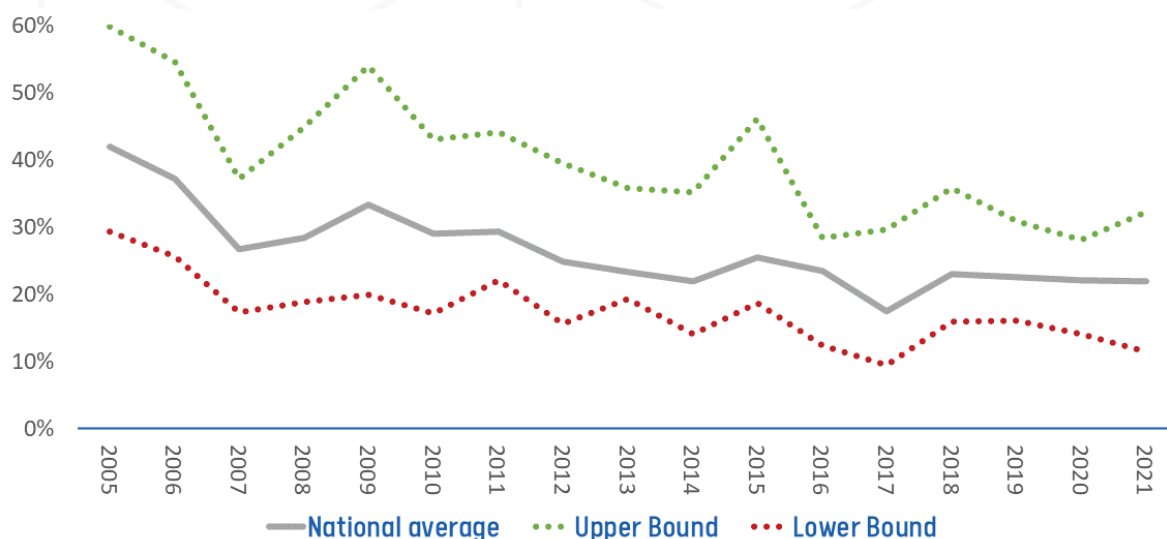
Source: Norris (2011:24) Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited

### 1.3 Guide to indicators and their interpretation

The set of electoral indicators that presented in this report have been presented using a particular visual format that requires a brief explanation.

#### Displaying national trends

In the example graph below, the trend line corresponding to the national average on the indicator is presented in a dark grey colour. The presentation in a line graph format allows for a quick inference of the general tendency on the measure on aggregate in the country over time.



#### Determining spread of provincial values relative to the national average

Displaying the trends of each of the nine provinces as well as the national average over multiple survey years on a single graph would be impractical, since many of the lines would intersect, making it difficult to interpret. However, it is crucially important that we understand the relative spread in responses to the indicator in question at a provincial level and how this compares to the national average. As such, we have inserted two additional lines in the graph, as follows:

- **Upper bound:** This is the highest provincial value on the measure in the specified survey year. Due to fluctuations in public evaluations, it should be noted that the highest value in each year will not necessarily correspond to the same province over time.
- **Lower bound:** This is the lowest provincial value on the measure in the specified survey year. Again, it is important to note that the lowest value in each year will not necessarily correspond to the same province over time, due to variations in assessment among the public over time.

#### Table of statistics

For those wanting the exact numbers associated with each data point in the graph, we have provided a table of statistics. This displays the national average, and the upper and lower bound figures.

#### Data sources

Four principal sources have been used: the IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) series, which is representative of citizens older than 15 years; the IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series, which is representative of the voting public on Election Day; the HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series, which is representative of the adult public older than 15 years; and official IEC statistics on registration and electoral results.



**PART**

**B**

**PRE-ELECTION  
PHASE**

## 2. PRE-ELECTION PHASE

### 2.1 Support for the political system

#### 2.1.1 National Pride

##### GOAL

To determine the general sense of belonging or attachment to the state. This relates to general bonds of political support, as expressed through feelings of national pride. It underpins the priority of promoting social cohesion and national identity in the country

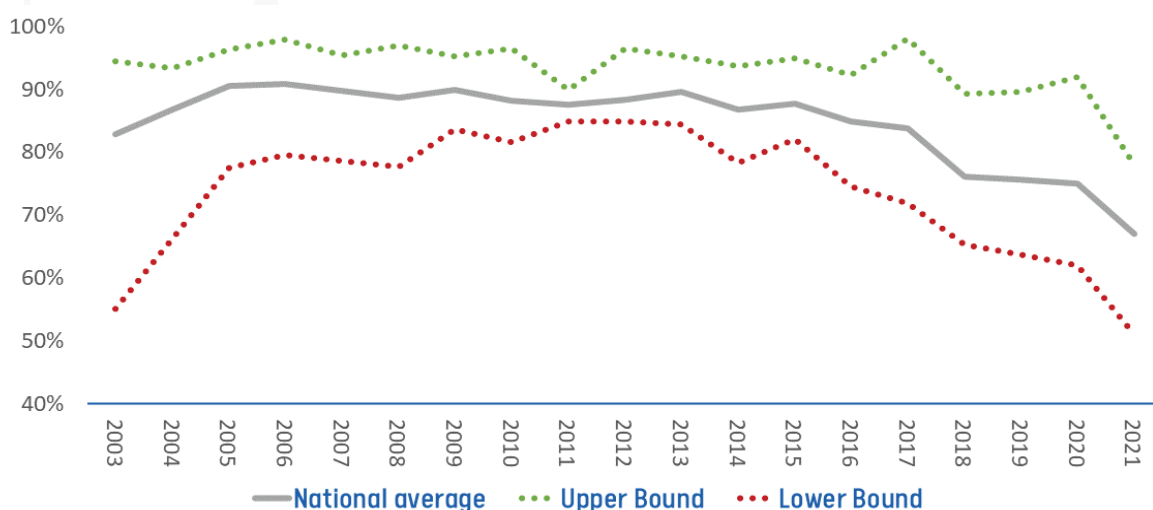
##### QUESTION

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I would rather be a citizen of South Africa than of any other country in the world?" (% agree / strongly agree)

##### ANALYSIS

South Africans are generally loyal to their country and exhibit relative attachment to the state. On average, more than four-fifths (84%) of South Africans over the 2003-2021 period agreed that they would rather be a citizen of South African than of any other country. There has however been a decline in the share agreeing with the statement in recent years, falling from 90% in 2013 to 67% in 2021. Relatively little interprovincial variation on this indicator was noted during most of the period. However, between 2017 and 2021, the level of variation in pride between provinces grew to more than 25 percentage points between the lower and upper bounds.

**NATIONAL PRIDE: "I would rather be a citizen of South Africa than of any other country in the world", 2003-2021 (% agreeing)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	83	...	91	91	...	89	90	88	88	88	90	87	88	85	84	76	...	75	67	84
Upper Bound	94	...	96	98	...	97	95	97	90	96	95	94	95	92	98	89	...	92	78	89
Lower Bound	55	...	77	80	...	78	87	82	85	85	84	78	84	75	72	65	...	62	51	76

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.1.2 Demand for democracy: Support for democratic ideals

### GOAL

Evaluation of the importance of elements of democracy. This provides a sense of the demand for democracy by examining the salience attached to democratic ideals

### QUESTION

For each of the six components of democracy, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each was important (mean score, 0-10 importance scale, where 0=not important and 10=very important)

...that elections are free and fair?

...that politicians listen to people before making decisions?

...that ruling parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job?

...that citizens are able to take part in peaceful and legal protest action to express their dissatisfaction?

...that everyone is free to express their political views openly, even if they are extreme?

...that opposition parties are free to criticise the government?

### ANALYSIS

The importance attached to the six democratic ideals has remained relatively high on a 0-10 scale. The highest rated ideal was consistently 'free and fair elections' between 2013 and 2018, followed by 'freedom of expression', with the relative order of these two items switching in 2021. Over the 2013-2021 period, a decline in the importance attached to all six ideals occurred, with the largest drop evident for 'free and fair elections', followed by the 'freedom of assembly and protest' (ideal 4) and 'politicians listen to the people' (ideal 2).

**DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY: Importance attached to different democratic values or ideals, 2003-2021, mean scores based on a 0-10 importance scale]**

Ideal 1 Free and Fair Elections					Ideal 2 Elected Listen to the Public				Ideal 3 Electoral Accountability			
Mean score, 0-10 scale	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021
National Avg.	8.2	8.1	7.2	6.7	7.4	7.5	7.0	6.4	7.4	7.4	6.9	6.4
Upper Bound	8.8	8.7	8.0	7.4	8.7	8.2	7.6	7.4	8.5	8.4	7.5	7.6
Lower Bound	7.3	6.7	5.5	5.6	6.5	5.4	4.5	5.0	6.5	5.5	5.3	5.0

Ideal 4 Participation in Protest					Ideal 5 Freedom of Expression				Ideal 6 Viable Opposition			
Mean score, 0-10 scale	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021
National Avg.	7.6	7.5	6.9	6.4	7.8	7.6	6.9	7.5	7.0	7.4	6.8	6.4
Upper Bound	8.5	8.2	7.5	7.6	8.8	8.2	7.5	8.4	7.9	8.6	7.6	7.4
Lower Bound	6.7	6.5	5.9	5.1	7.1	6.5	5.6	6.1	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.2

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2013-2021

## 2.1.3 Supply of democracy: Satisfaction with the functioning of democracy

### GOAL

Determine support for the way the country's political system is functioning

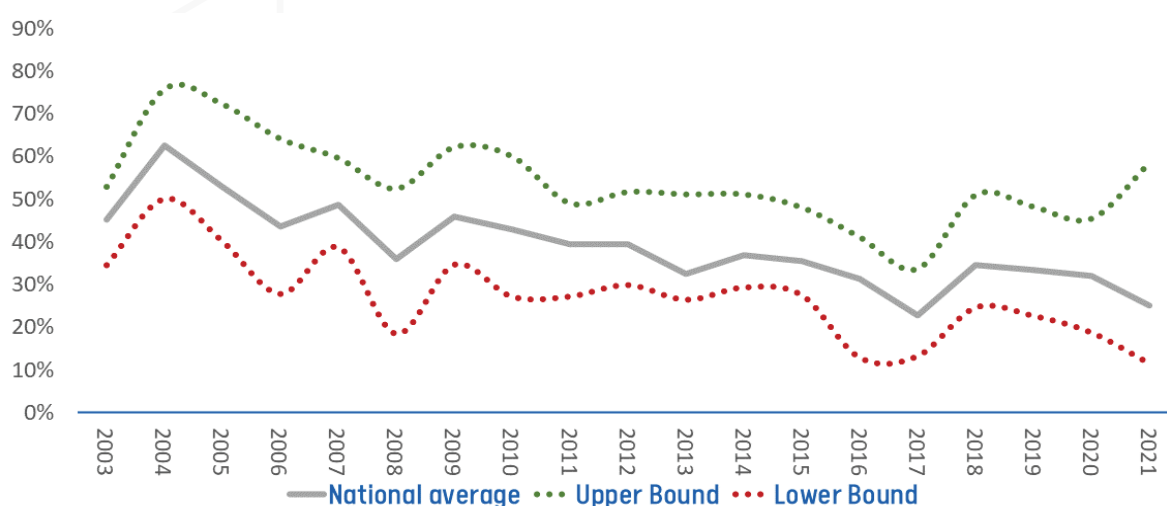
### QUESTION

How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in South Africa? (% satisfied / very satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

There has been a steady decline in satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the country since 2004. In 2008, the share indicating that they were dissatisfied with democracy exceeded the share that expressed satisfaction for the first instance since 2003. There was an improvement following the 2009 national and provincial elections, though this upswing was relatively short-lived, with a declining trend again evident in 2010, a pattern which continued through to 2017. From 2011 onwards, the share of the adult public voicing democratic dissatisfaction has exceeded the share that is satisfied, a trend that has yet to be reversed. There was a distinct recovery between 2017 and late 2018, when satisfaction rose from 23% to 35%, but a downturn is again apparent between 2019 and 2021. In 2021, there was a 47-percentage point disparity between the lower and upper bounds, indicated an unprecedented level of variation in provincial satisfaction levels

**SUPPLY OF DEMOCRACY: Satisfaction with the way democracy is working in South Africa, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	45	62	53	44	49	36	46	43	39	39	33	37	36	31	23	35	...	32	25	39
Upper Bound	53	76	72	64	60	52	62	60	49	52	51	51	48	41	34	51	...	45	58	51
Lower Bound	35	50	40	28	39	18	35	27	27	30	26	29	28	13	13	25	...	19	12	34

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.1.4 Supply of democracy: Country going in the right direction

### GOAL

Determine support for the country's current direction

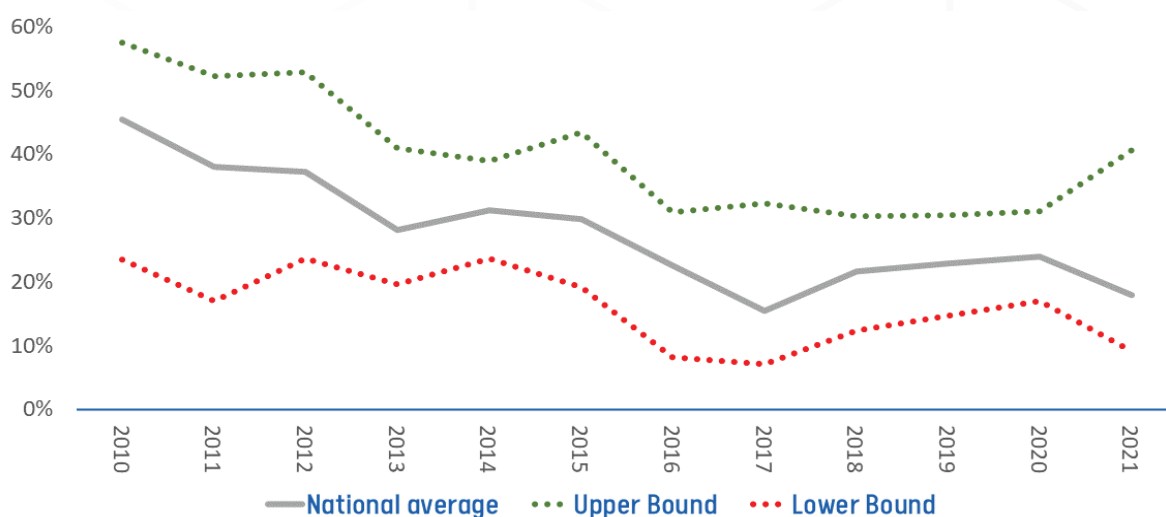
### QUESTION

Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction or going in the wrong direction? (% right direction)

### ANALYSIS

In late 2010, less than half (45%) of the adult population indicated that the nation was heading in the right direction, with a majority expressing the view that the country was heading in the wrong direction. South Africans have shown fluctuating trends in their outlook in recent years. The right/wrong direction displays a continued downward trajectory since 2010. This level of decline seemed to reach its nadir in 2017, when a mere 17% believed that the country was heading in the right direction. Higher figures were observed in 2018 and 2020 (22% and 24% respectively), though this declined to 18% in 2021. This is the second lowest figure over the 2010-2021 period. Whether this will alter in coming years is something that will need to be monitored closely. The interprovincial variation recorded on this indicator narrowed between 2017 and 2020, though it widened appreciably in 2021.

**COUNTRY GOING IN RIGHT DIRECTION: Percentage who believe the country is going in the right direction, 2010-2021 (%)**



%	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	45	38	37	28	31	30	23	15	22	...	24	18	28
Upper Bound	57	52	53	41	39	43	31	32	30	...	31	41	37
Lower Bound	24	17	24	20	24	19	8	7	12	...	17	9	22

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2010-2021

## 2.1.5 Supply of democracy: Evaluation of performance against democratic ideals

### GOAL

Evaluation of elements of democracy. This provides a sense of perceived effectiveness in relation to the progressive realisation of democratic ideals

### QUESTION

For each of the six components of democracy, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each applied to South Africa today (mean score, 0-10 applicability scale, where 0=does not apply at all; 10=applies completely)

...Elections in South Africa are free and fair.

...Politicians in South Africa listen to people before making decisions.

...Ruling parties in South Africa are punished in elections when they have done a bad job.

...Citizens in South Africa are able to take part in peaceful and legal protest action to express their dissatisfaction.

...In South Africa, everyone is free to express their political views openly, even if they are extreme.

...Opposition parties in South Africa are free to criticise the government.

### ANALYSIS

The evaluation of the six dimensions of democracy varied, with average scores ranging between 4.0 and 7.3 on a 0-10 scale. On average, 'free and fair elections', received the most favourable rating, followed by the belief that our democracy offers 'viable opposition', 'freedom of expression' and allows 'participation in protest'. Citizens were less convinced that the 'elected listen to the public' or that there is 'electoral accountability' (parties punished during elections for poor performance). Over the 2013-2021 period, evaluations of the supply of the six ideals have declined, with the biggest drop for free and fair elections'. This is a concerning trend that needs to be monitored.

#### SUPPLY OF DEMOCRACY: Evaluations of different democratic values or ideals, 2013-2021 (mean scores based on a 0-10 scale)

	Ideal 1 Free and Fair Elections				Ideal 2 Elected Listen to the Public				Ideal 3 Electoral Accountability			
	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021
Mean score, 0-10 scale												
National Avg.	7.3	7.3	6.6	5.7	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.0
Upper Bound	7.8	8.0	7.2	6.7	5.3	5.2	5.2	4.8	5.5	5.2	5.3	5.0
Lower Bound	6.2	6.5	5.1	5.1	3.4	4.1	2.8	3.2	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.5

	Ideal 4 Participation in Protest				Ideal 5 Freedom of Expression				Ideal 6 Viable Opposition			
	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021	2013	2016	2018	2021
Mean score, 0-10 scale												
National Avg.	6.1	6.4	6.0	5.8	6.2	6.6	6.1	5.7	6.3	6.8	6.5	6.1
Upper Bound	6.8	7.3	6.5	6.5	6.7	7.7	6.6	6.6	6.8	7.8	6.9	6.9
Lower Bound	5.2	5.2	4.6	4.9	5.5	5.6	5.0	5.3	5.8	5.6	5.9	4.8

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2013-2021

## 2.1.6 Satisfaction with municipal performance

### GOAL

Determine evaluation for the municipal performance

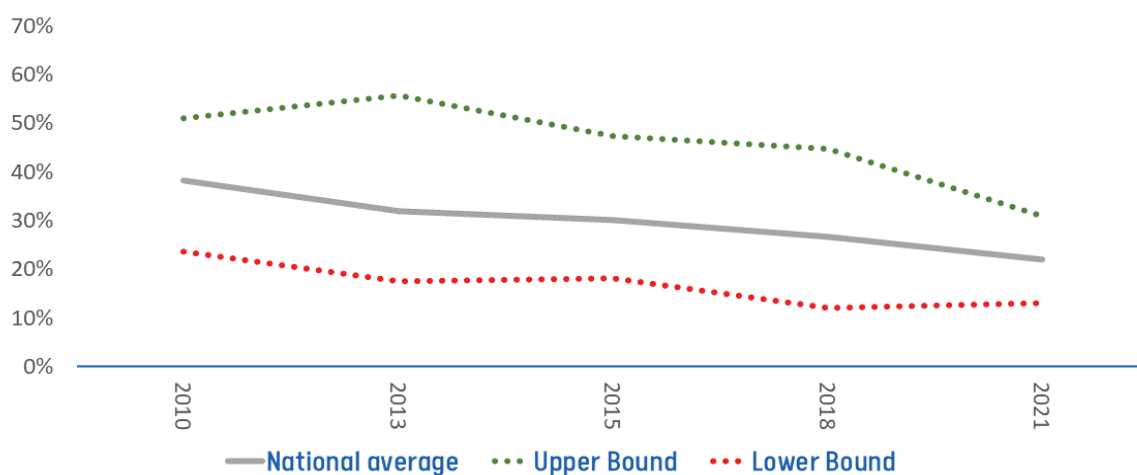
### QUESTION

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your municipality is performing its job at present? (% satisfied / very satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

In 2010, there was general discontentment with the performance of municipalities among the public. The share that was satisfied with municipal functioning was low in the survey years and averaged 30% for the 2010-2021 period. Between 2010 and 2015, there was an observable decline in the satisfaction of citizens, falling from 38% to 30%. This downward tendency continued in both 2018 and 2021, with satisfaction levels falling to 27% and 22% respectively. Municipal satisfaction is relatively low across all provinces, with a maximum value of 31% in 2021 and lowest at 13% in that survey round. The level of variance between provinces was greater in earlier survey rounds, suggesting that there is relative convergence in views on municipal performance, with generally negative evaluations increasingly common across provinces.

#### MUNICIPAL SATISFACTION: Satisfaction with the municipal performance, 2010-2021 (%)



%	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	38	...	...	32	...	30	...	...	27	...	...	22	30
Upper Bound	51	...	...	56	...	47	...	...	45	...	...	31	43
Lower Bound	24	...	...	18	...	18	...	...	12	...	...	13	19

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2010-2021

## 2.2. Public trust in political and social institutions

### 2.2.1. Trust in the Electoral Commission

#### GOAL

Public confidence in the Electoral Commission

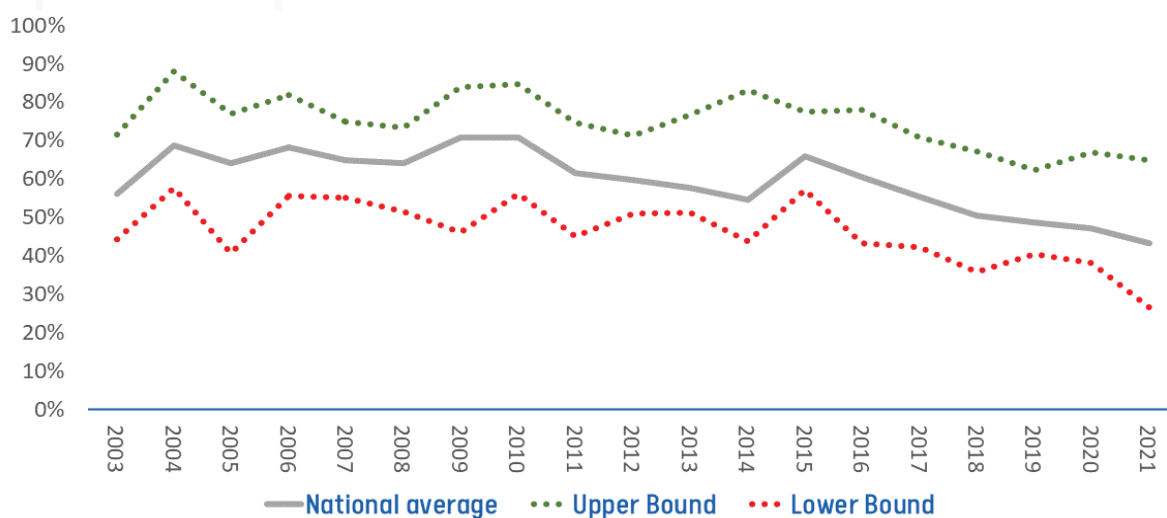
#### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust the Electoral Commission (% trust / strongly trust)

#### ANALYSIS

In late 2021, less than half (43%) of the adult public expressed trust in the Electoral Commission. This is the lowest recorded level of trust in the Commission over the 2003-2021 period. After a period of relatively high trust between 2004 and 2010 (64-71%), a significant decline was observed. Although this recovered somewhat in 2015, it was followed by another substantial drop from 2016 onwards. As with trust in other social and political institutions, trust in the Commission is influenced by general views on democratic performance. If satisfaction with democracy declines, so too does institutional trust. Despite fluctuations in trust in the Commission over time, it remains one of the most trusted political institutions in the country. Relatively large interprovincial variation in trust is observed during much of the 2003-2021 period. However, the level of variance in the 2021 round was much greater than in the preceding years, with a 38-percentage point difference between the upper and lower provincial bounds.

**CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMISSION: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust the Electoral Commission, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	56	69	64	68	65	64	71	71	61	60	58	55	66	60	55	50	...	47	43	60
Upper Bound	72	88	77	82	75	73	84	85	75	71	77	83	78	78	71	67	...	67	65	72
Lower Bound	44	58	41	55	53	51	46	56	45	51	51	44	57	45	51	36	...	38	27	54

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.2 Trust in National Government

### GOAL

Public confidence in National Government

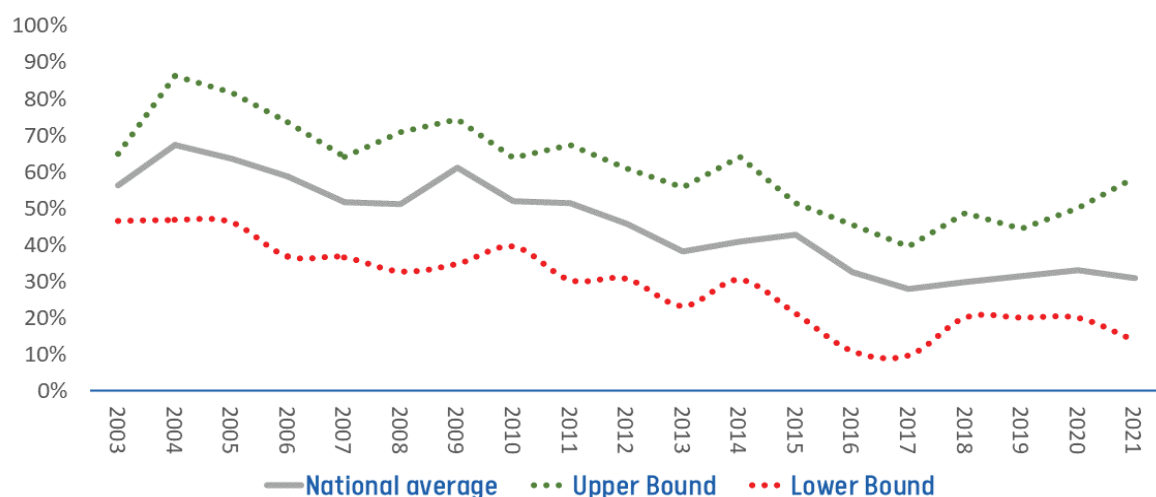
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust National Government? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

At the beginning of the period, relatively high levels of trust in the national government were noted. Between 2004 and 2008, citizens reported falling levels of public trust in the national government. There was recovery of trust in 2009 when confidence in the government grew to 61%. Between 2010 and 2014 there was moderate decline on this indicator. This was followed by a fall in trust over the period 2015-2017, with a nadir of 28% in 2017. This represented a decline of more than thirty-three percentage points since 2009. A meaningful improvement in trust was observed in 2018 and in that round 30% of the country trusted national government. During much of the period, fairly substantial interprovincial variation was recorded on this metric. The level of discrepancy between the lower and upper bounds was largest in 2004, 2008, 2009 and 2011 and 2021.

**CONFIDENCE IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust National Government, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	56	67	64	59	52	51	61	52	51	46	38	41	43	32	28	30	...	33	31	46
Upper Bound	65	86	82	74	64	71	73	64	67	61	56	64	51	45	40	49	...	50	58	56
Lower Bound	46	47	46	37	37	33	35	40	30	31	23	30	21	11	10	20	...	20	14	32

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.3 Trust in Provincial Government

### GOAL

Public confidence in provincial government

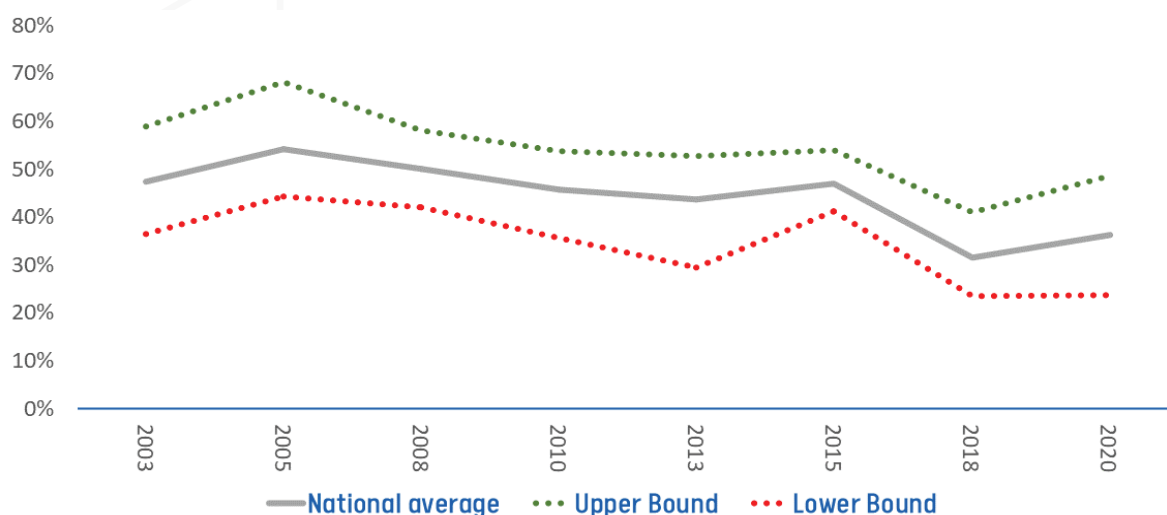
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust provincial government? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

In most SASAS rounds, citizens were fairly discontented on the performance of their provincial government, averaging 44% across the 2003-2020 period. Confidence in this sphere of government fell from 54% in 2005 to 31% in 2018 and this was the lowest point of confidence in provincial government, recovering slightly to 36% in 2020. This is consistent with the general decline in confidence in national government. Between 2015 and 2018 there was a distinct 16-percentage point drop in trust in provincial government. For most of the period under assessment, there was relatively little interprovincial variation. Provincial dissimilarities were more pronounced in the early to mid-2000s than the rest of the period, although greater provincial differences in trust in were again apparent in 2020. The overall disparity between the upper and lower bounds was only fourteen percentage points.

**CONFIDENCE IN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust provincial government, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	47	...	54	...	...	50	...	46	...	...	44	...	47	...	...	31	...	36	...	44
Upper Bound	59	...	68	...	...	58	...	54	...	...	53	...	54	...	...	41	...	49	...	51
Lower Bound	37	...	44	...	...	42	...	36	...	...	29	...	41	...	...	23	...	24	...	37

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.4 Trust in Local Government

### GOAL

Public confidence in local government

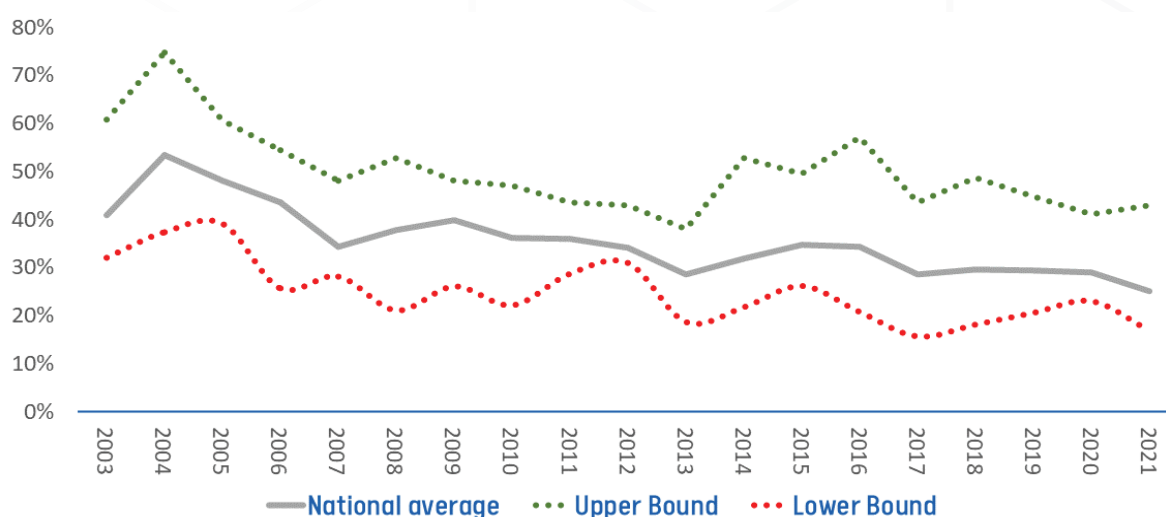
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust local government? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

Trust in local government is below that of other spheres of government, averaging 36% across the 2003-2021 period. A decline in trust in local government occurred between 2004 and 2007, with the level of confidence falling by almost 20 percentage points during this brief period. Trust rebounded in 2008 and 2009 but fell again over most of the 2011-2017 period. Only 28% of the adult population trusted local government in 2017, a fall of eight percentage points since 2011. Confidence in local government remained fairly stable between 2017 and 2020 at a low of around 30%, but there was a drop to 25% in 2021. For most of the recent survey rounds, there was a rather large level of interprovincial variation. Provincial differences were particularly distinct in 2016 when there was a thirty-six-point gap between the upper and lower bounds. This stands in contrast to the 2009-2013 period, when interprovincial variance was comparatively low.

**CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust local government, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	41	53	48	43	34	38	40	36	36	34	29	32	35	34	28	30	...	29	25	36
Upper Bound	61	75	61	55	48	53	48	47	44	43	38	53	50	57	44	49	...	41	43	44
Lower Bound	32	37	39	26	28	21	26	22	29	31	19	22	26	21	18	18	...	23	17	30

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.5 Trust in Parliament

### GOAL

Public confidence in parliament

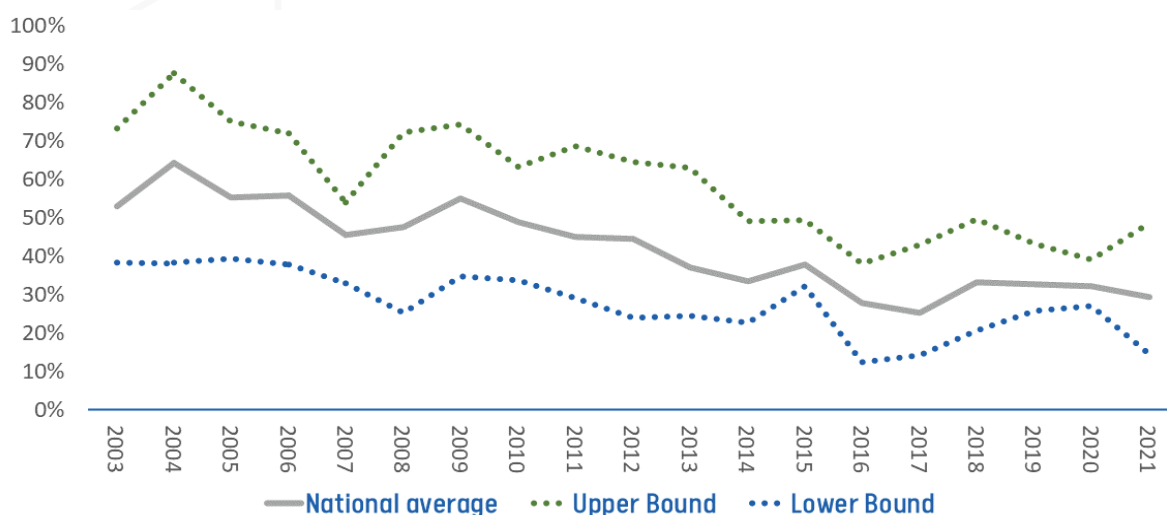
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust parliament? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

The data revealed that trust in Parliament remained fairly stable over the 2003-2006 period. There was a downswing in 2007 followed by a rebound in institutional trust by 2009. Over the next five survey rounds, the level of confidence in national parliament steadily deteriorated, falling from 55% in 2009 to 33% in 2014. Trust in parliament rallied briefly in 2015 before dropping distinctly and reached a low point of 25% in 2017. Another improvement was noted in 2018 when trust in parliament reached 33%. While the trust level remained virtually constant in 2020 (32%), it dipped to 29% in 2021. In terms of provincial differences in trust, there was a 24-percentage point disparity between the upper and lower bounds on average over the period. Provincial differences were more distinct in the 2003-2009 period than what was observed between 2010 and 2020, though the provincial differences in trust increased again in 2021.

**CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust parliament, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	53	64	55	56	46	48	55	49	45	44	37	33	38	28	25	33	...	32	29	42
Upper Bound	73	88	75	72	54	72	74	59	68	64	63	49	49	38	43	49	...	39	49	54
Lower Bound	38	38	39	38	33	39	35	34	29	24	24	23	32	12	14	21	...	27	14	30

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.6 Trust in Courts

### GOAL

Public confidence in the courts

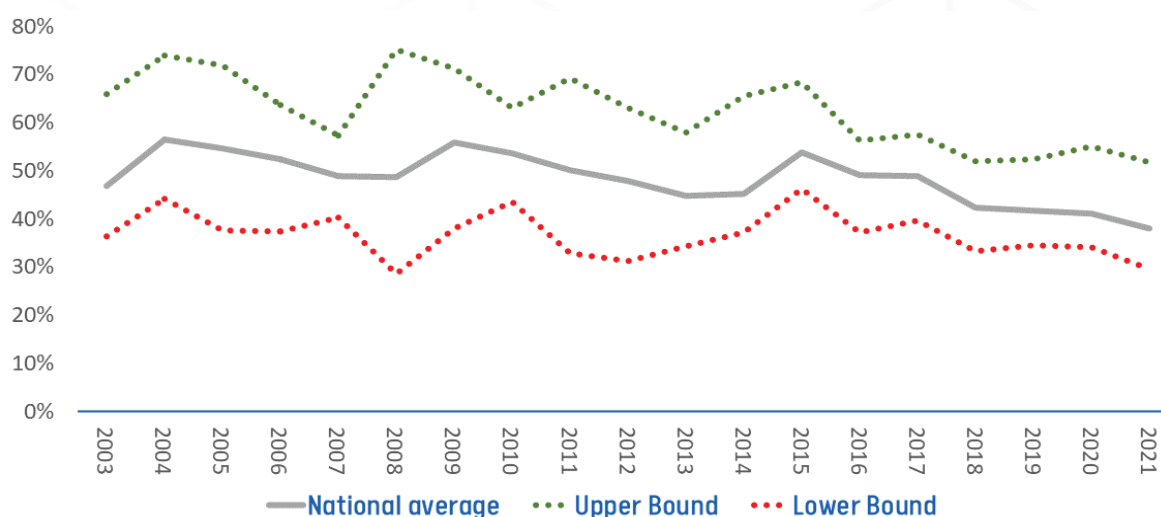
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust the courts? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

General public trust in the courts varied little over the 2003-2017 period, but there has been a notable decline in confidence since. At the beginning of the period under examination, about half of adult citizens trusted the courts. Levels of confidence remained stable from 2003 to 2015. There was a general increase in trust in 2015 but then decreased again in 2016. Trust in the court system dropped sharply between 2017 and 2018, dropping from 49% to 42%. This remained at a similar level in 2020 (41%), after which trust levels reached a low of 38% in 2021. During the 2003-2009 period, there was rather large interprovincial variation of 30-percentage points. Provincial differences in trust were somewhat smaller between 2010 and 2021, with a 23-percentage point discrepancy between the upper and lower provincial bounds on average.

**CONFIDENCE IN COURTS: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust the courts, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	47	56	55	52	49	49	56	54	50	48	45	45	54	49	49	42	...	41	38	48
Upper Bound	66	74	72	59	57	75	71	63	69	63	58	66	68	56	58	52	...	55	52	57
Lower Bound	36	44	38	37	40	29	38	47	33	31	34	37	46	37	40	33	...	34	30	43

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.2.7 Trust in Political Parties

### GOAL

Public confidence in political parties

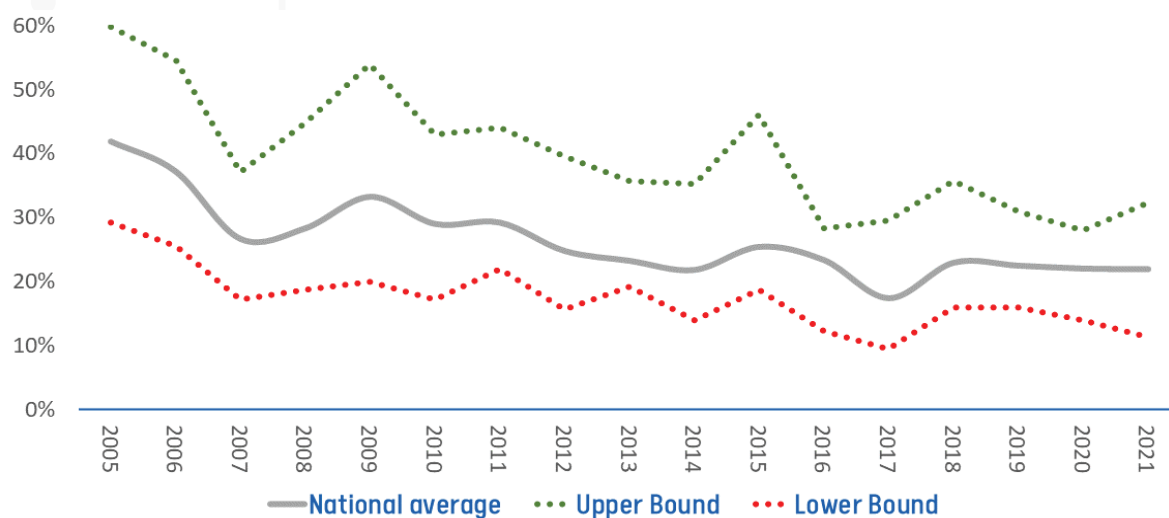
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust political parties? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

The data reveal that trust in political parties among South Africans adults has remained low, averaging 27% across the 2005-2021 period. Between 2005 and 2007, a distinct downswing in trust occurred. Confidence in political parties rallied briefly in 2009, reaching 33% in that survey round, followed by a steady and general decline in trust until 2014. The 2014 to 2016 period was stable, but a slump in trust occurred between 2016 and 2017, falling from 23% to 17%. The 2017 figure represents the first instance during the period of observation that trust fell below the 20% threshold. Citizens' confidence recovered to 23% in 2018 and remained virtually unchanged in 2020 (22%). Between 2020 and 2021, 19% expressed confidence in political parties, the second lowest figure observed. Provincial variation on this indicator averaged 15 percentage points between 2005 and 2021. Despite fluctuations, there has been a slight decline in differences in trust across provinces between 2009 and 2020. However, the 2021 figures show signs of increasing disparity between provinces.

**CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL PARTIES: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust political parties, 2005-2021 (%)**



%	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	42	37	27	28	33	29	29	25	23	22	25	23	17	23	...	22	22	27
Upper Bound	60	52	37	45	54	43	44	39	36	35	46	28	30	36	...	28	32	37
Lower Bound	29	26	17	19	20	17	22	16	19	14	13	15	9	16	...	14	11	21

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2005-2021

## 2.2.8 Trust in Traditional Authorities/Leaders

### GOAL

Public confidence in traditional authorities/leaders

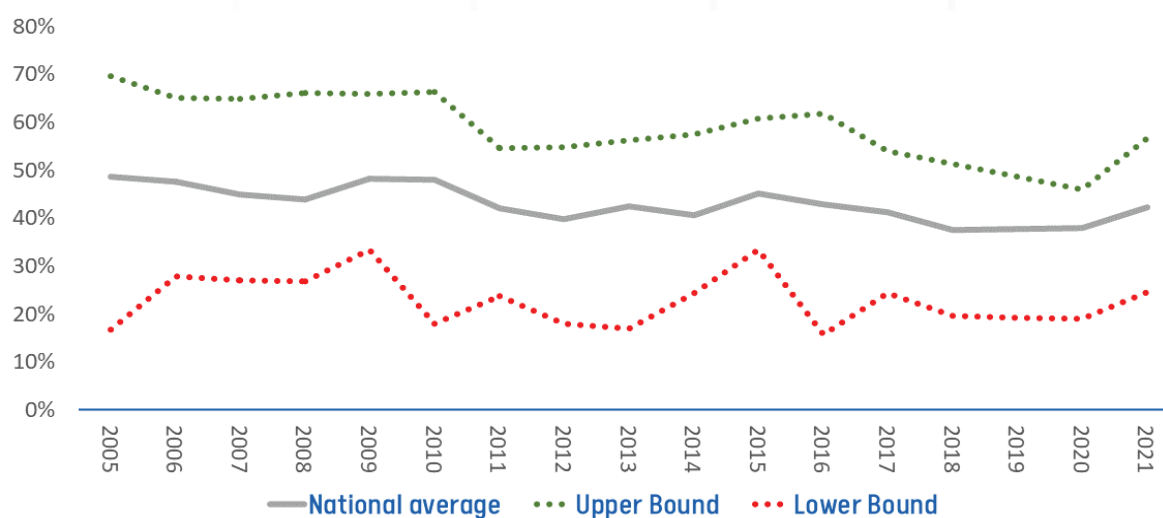
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust traditional authorities/leaders? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

Examining levels in trust in traditional authorities between 2005 and 2021, it is evident that the public remains somewhat divided in evaluation. On average over this 17-year period, 43% expressed confidence in traditional authorities/leaders. civic institution was quite stable. Relative to trust in other political institutions examined in this report, trust in traditional authorities has remained fairly stable, fluctuating in a narrow range between 38% and 49%. There was a modest decline in trust between 2015 and 2020, reducing from 45% to 38%. This was followed by a recovery to 42% in 2021. There was substantial provincial variation on this indicator during much of the 2003-2021 period, with an aggregate 27-percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds. Provincial variances were largest during the 2005-2010, when there was a 41-percentage point disparity between the highest and lowest provincial levels of trust. As one would expect, residents in the more rural provinces of the Eastern Cape and Limpopo report higher trust levels, while more urbanised provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape display lower trust levels.

**CONFIDENCE IN TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES/LEADERS: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust traditional authorities/leaders, 2005-2021 (%)**



%	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	49	48	45	44	48	48	42	40	42	41	45	43	41	38	...	38	42	43
Upper Bound	70	65	65	66	66	66	55	55	56	57	61	62	54	51	...	46	57	55
Lower Bound	17	28	28	27	33	18	24	18	17	24	33	16	24	20	...	19	25	27

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2005-2021

## 2.2.9 Confidence in Political Leaders

### GOAL

Determine support for the country's political leadership

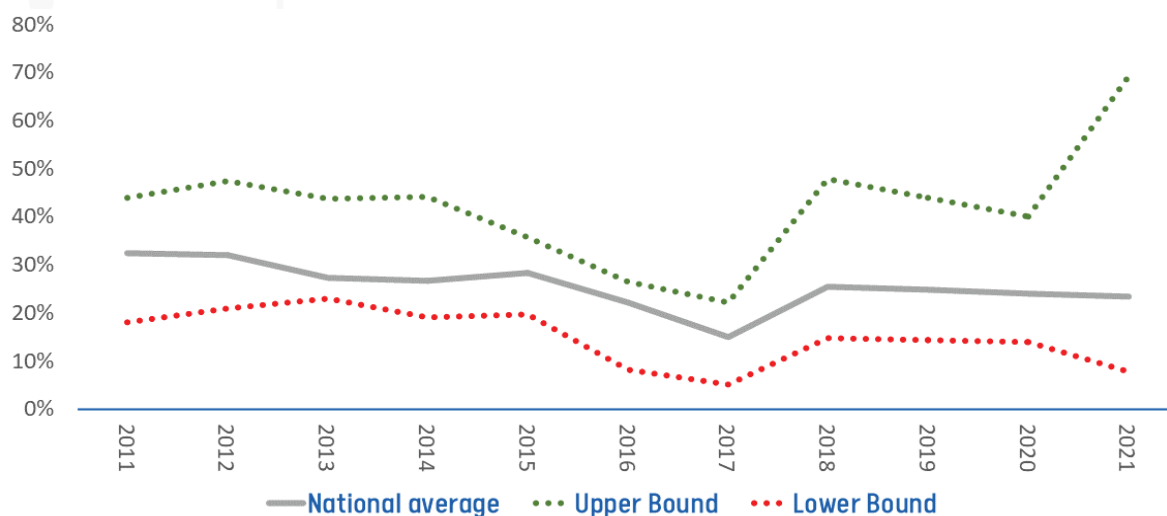
### QUESTION

How satisfied are you with the current political leaders in South Africa? (% satisfied / very satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

Examining evaluations of political leadership over the decade between 2011 and 2021, the adult public was generally critical, with 26% expressing satisfaction on average. In 2011-2012, a third voiced confidence in political leaders. Over the 2011-2017 period, we observe a further general decline in public confidence in political leadership in the country. This demonstrates a general sense of discontent in the political status quo observed throughout this report. This decline reached a low point in 2017, when only 15% expressed satisfaction. Satisfaction rebounded to 25% in 2018, with similar approval levels evident in 2020 and 2021. Across provinces, the differences in evaluation of political leadership varied by 20-percentage points on average across the 2011-2021 period. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a degree of convergence in provincial upper and lower bounds, falling from a 25-percentage point difference in 2014 to 17-percentage points in 2017. After 2017, the level of variance between provinces was much greater.

**CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL LEADERS: Proportion of the public who are satisfied or very satisfied with political leaders, 2011-2021(%)**



%	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	33	32	27	27	28	22	15	25	...	24	23	26
Upper Bound	44	47	44	44	36	26	22	48	...	40	69	39
Lower Bound	18	21	23	19	20	8	5	15	...	14	8	20

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2011-2021

## 2.2.10 Trust in Religious Institutions

### GOAL

Public confidence in religious institutions

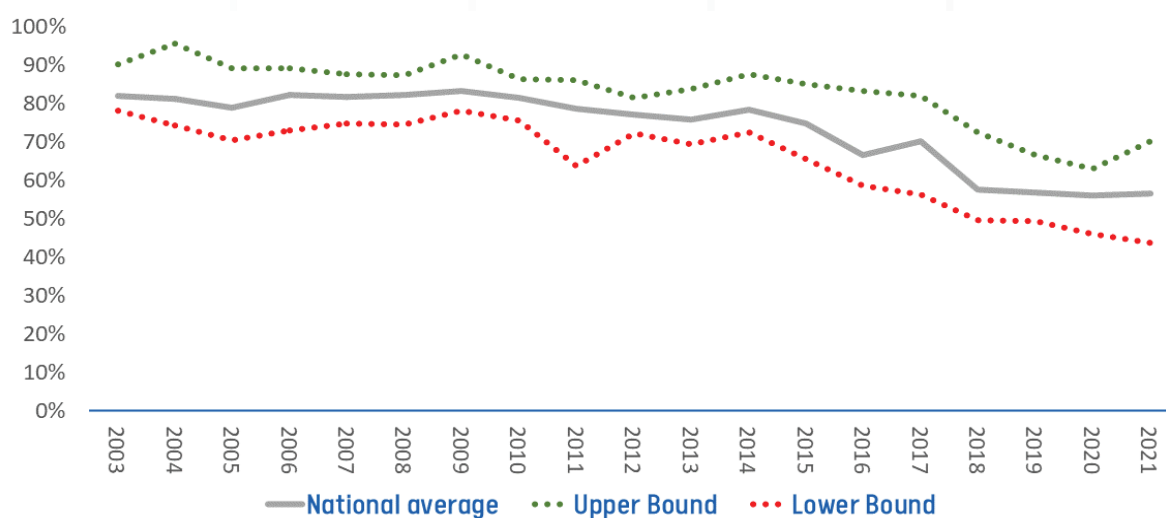
### QUESTION

To what extent do you trust or distrust religious institutions? (% trust / strongly trust)

### ANALYSIS

Religious institutions in South African typically receive the highest confidence levels of the social and political institutions examined in national surveys. Adult citizens were trusting of religious institutions for most of the period under review. The national level of trust in these institutions was relatively stable at a high level between 2003 and 2014, ranging between 78% and 83% over this period. Between 2014 and 2016, confidence dropped sharply from 78% to 66%. Although this rose again to 70% in 2017, there was a further downturn in 2018 to an unprecedented low of 58%. Confidence levels have remained at this level since, with only 56% stating that the trust religious institutions in both 2020 and 2021. A general observation worth mentioning is that disillusionment with political institutions (especially since 2008) seems to have spilled over to other socio-cultural institutions. This disillusionment has even impacted religious organisations, which is likely to have been compounded by high-profile religious scandals. Minor interprovincial variation was noted on this indicator during the bulk of the 2003-2014 period. Provincial variances became starker in the remainder of the period. In the 2021 round, there was a 27 percentage point discrepancy between the upper and lower bounds, the highest recorded over the full period.

**CONFIDENCE IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS: Proportion of the public who trust or strongly trust religious organisations, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	82	81	79	82	82	82	83	81	79	77	76	78	75	66	70	58	...	56	56	74
Upper Bound	90	96	89	89	88	87	93	86	86	81	84	87	85	83	82	72	...	63	70	78
Lower Bound	78	74	70	73	75	74	78	75	64	72	69	72	66	58	56	50	...	46	44	71

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3 Electoral predispositions: Psychological involvement in electoral politics

### 2.3.1 Political interest

#### GOAL

Determine public interest in South African politics

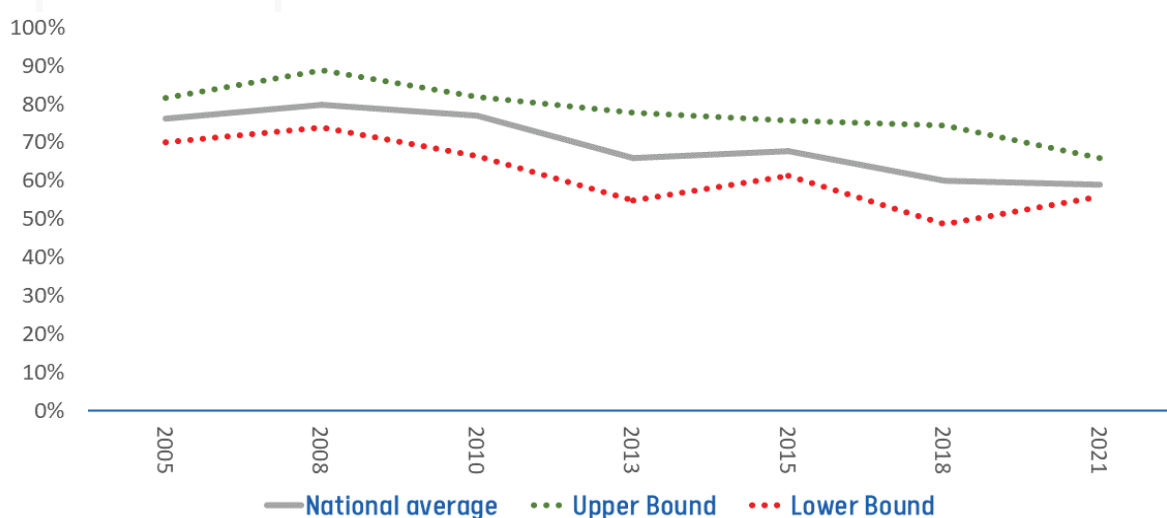
#### QUESTION

In general, how interested are you in government elections? (% very or quite interested)

#### ANALYSIS

It is apparent that a significant majority of the public reported an interest in elections. In late 2005, slightly more than three-quarters showed a fair level of interest in government elections. Interest levels were relatively stable over the 2008-2010 period. The share indicating that they were interested in government elections fell progressively from 77% in 2010 to 60% in 2018 and remained stable at 59% in 2021. This change in attitudes seems to imply a dramatic decrease in political interest during the 2010s. The gap between the provincial upper and lower provincial bounds was generally quite small in most rounds of surveying. On the other hand, the gap between the two bounds grew between 2015 and 2018, increasing from 15 to 25 percentage points. By 2021, the gap narrowed to a 10 percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds.

**POLITICAL INTEREST: Proportion of the public who was either very or quite interested in government elections, 2005-2021 (%)**



%	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	76	...	...	80	...	77	...	...	66	...	68	...	...	60	...	...	59	69
Upper Bound	82	...	...	89	...	82	...	...	78	...	76	...	...	74	...	...	66	74
Lower Bound	70	...	...	74	...	67	...	...	55	...	61	...	...	49	...	...	56	67

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS), 2005-2021

## 2.3.2 Politics easy to understand

### GOAL

Determine how easy the public finds it to understand politics in the country. This relates to the concept of **internal** political efficacy, which addresses the belief that one can understand politics and therefore participate in politics

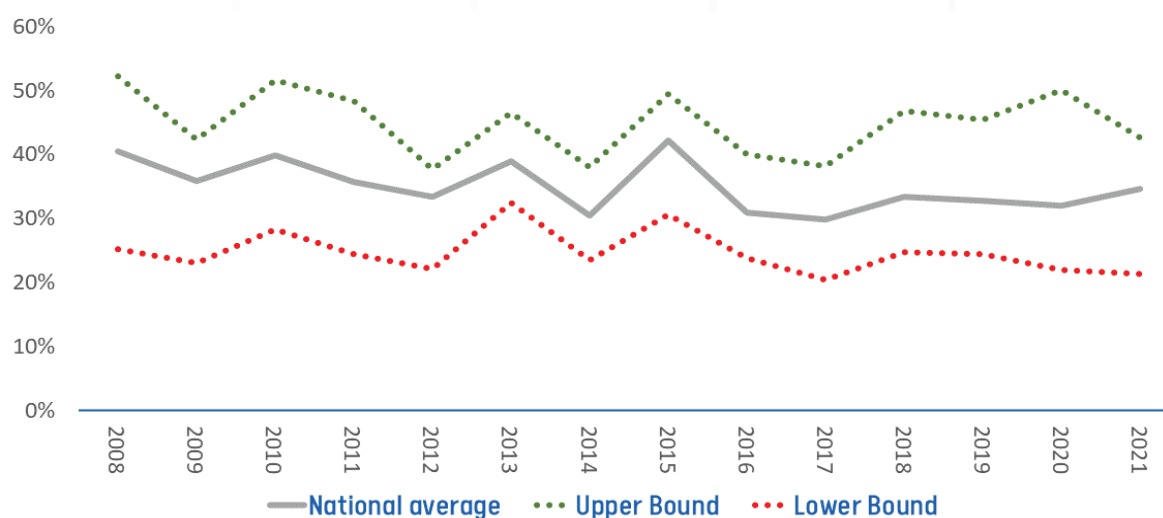
### QUESTION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about voting? "Politics is too complicated for me to understand." (% never or seldom find it too complicated)

### ANALYSIS

The South African public generally tends to think that politics is difficult to understand. From the data collected between 2008-2021, barely a third (35%) on average reported that politics is easy to understand. Except for 2013, attitudes on this measure become more negative over the 2008-2014 period, falling from 41% in 2008 to 30% in 2014. This national pattern was broadly consistent with the general decline in political interest. Efficacy levels surged in 2015 to 42% before declining again to 31% in 2016 and 30% 2017. Between 2017 and 2021, the share indicating that politics was never or seldom complicated to understand remaining at this low level, ranging between 32% and 35%. By 2021, the national average on this measure was 35%. Levels of interprovincial variance observed on this indicator averaged 23 percentage points between 2008 and 2011, narrowing to 16 percentage points between 2012 and 2017. After this, the provincial difference in political efficacy values rose back to 24 percentage points during the 2018 to 2021 period.

**INTERNAL POLITICAL EFFICACY: Proportion of the public who think that politics is relatively easy to understand, 2008-2021 (%)**



%	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	41	36	40	36	33	39	30	42	31	30	33	...	32	35	35
Upper Bound	52	42	52	48	38	46	38	49	40	38	47	...	50	43	41
Lower Bound	25	23	28	24	22	32	23	31	24	20	25	...	22	21	29

Data Source: HSRC Voter Participation Survey (VPS), 2008-2021

### 2.3.3 Belief in the power of one's vote

#### GOAL

Determine internal political efficacy

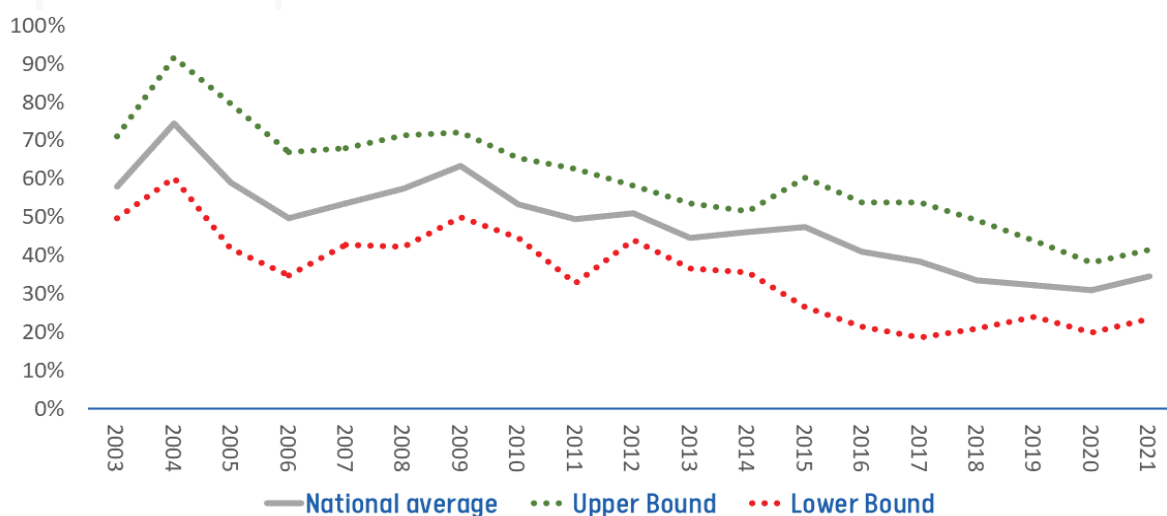
#### QUESTION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about voting? 'Whether I vote or not makes no difference' (% disagree / strongly disagree)

#### ANALYSIS

On average over the 2003-2021 period, 48% of South Africans believed that their vote made a difference. In 2003, 58% of the adult public held such a belief, rising briefly to 74% in 2004, but then returning to 59% in 2005 and declining further to 50% in 2006. There was a modest increase in internal political efficacy between 2006 and 2009, reaching 63%, but from 2010 onwards there has been a steady erosion in the belief in the power of one's vote. Between 2009 and 2013, the sense of internal political efficacy fell from 63% to 45%, stabilised briefly between 2013 and 2015, after which it fell sharply to a low of 31% by 2020. In 2021, the figure rose slightly to 35%, though this remains approximately 30 percentage points below the figure observed in 2009. If one examines the pattern of upper and lower provincial bounds over time, it is apparent that there has been a similar erosion in the power of one's vote at the provincial level too. The 2019 and 2021 elections were therefore conducted in a context of the lowest levels of internal political efficacy observed to date. It is interesting to note that these elections also recorded the lowest turnout of registered voters and the voting age public to date.

**INTERNAL POLITICAL EFFICACY: Proportion of the public who disagreed with the statement: "whether or not I vote makes no difference", 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	58	74	59	50	...	57	63	53	49	51	45	46	47	41	38	34	...	31	35	48
Upper Bound	71	92	80	67	...	71	72	65	63	58	54	51	60	54	54	49	...	38	42	58
Lower Bound	50	60	42	35	...	42	50	45	33	44	37	36	26	21	19	21	...	20	23	43

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3.4 Views on the conduct of politicians and its effect on the meaning of voting

### GOAL

Determine external political efficacy

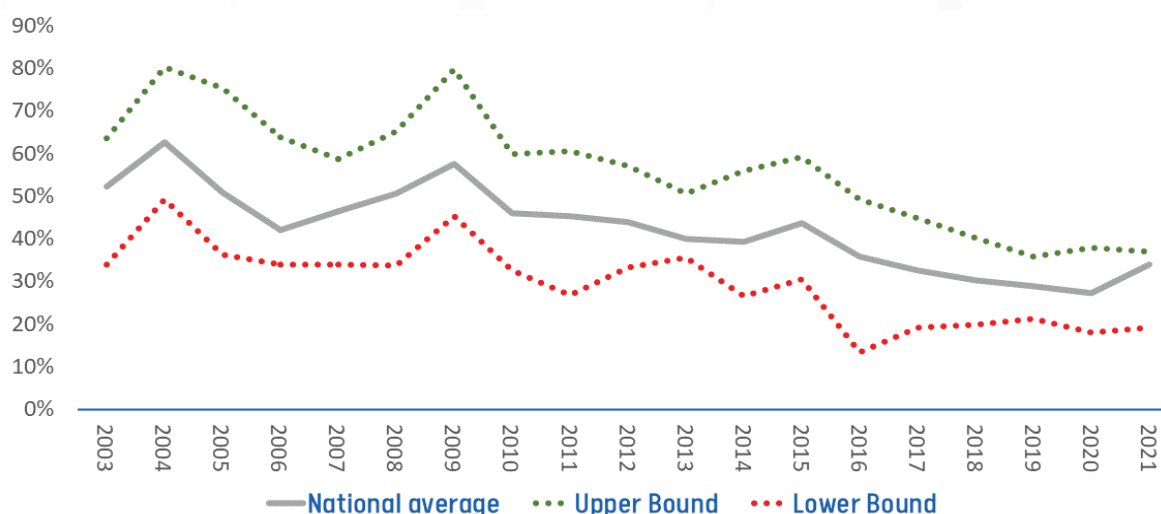
### QUESTION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about voting? 'Voting is meaningless because no politician can be trusted?' (% disagree or strongly disagree)

### ANALYSIS

External political efficacy refers to feelings of confidence or trust in the responsiveness of the political system. One of the properties of the political system that is of interest is the perceived responsiveness of political representatives to the Electorate and its bearing on the value of voting. Over the 2003-2021 period, only 43% on average displayed a sense of external political efficacy, rejecting the idea that voting had been rendered meaningless because of the conduct of politicians. In 2003, approximately half (52%) of the adult population expressed a sense of external efficacy. This fluctuated over the next few years, rising significantly in 2004, declining in 2004 through 2006, and rising again between 2006 and 2009. The 2009 to 2014 period was marked by a steady erosion in efficacy, declining from 57% in 2009 to 39% in 2014. Despite a modest upswing in 2015, there was a sustained decline between 2015 and 2020, falling from 44% to 27%. In 2021, external efficacy level rose to 34%. The implication of these trends is that feelings of external political efficacy dropped 30 percentage points between 2009 and 2020, with the 2021 improvement only partially offsetting this attitudinal change among the public. As with internal political efficacy, the upper and lower provincial bounds also show a distinct downward tendency over time, suggesting that the national pattern is mirrored at the provincial level.

**EXTERNAL POLITICAL EFFICACY: Proportion of the public who disagreed with the statement: "Voting is meaningless because no politician can be trusted", 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	52	63	51	42	...	51	57	46	45	44	40	39	44	36	33	30	...	27	34	43
Upper Bound	64	80	75	64	...	65	80	60	60	57	51	56	59	49	45	40	..	38	37	51
Lower Bound	34	49	36	34	...	34	45	32	27	33	36	27	30	13	19	20	...	18	19	39

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3.5 Duty to vote

### GOAL

Determine the public belief in the civic duty to participate in elections

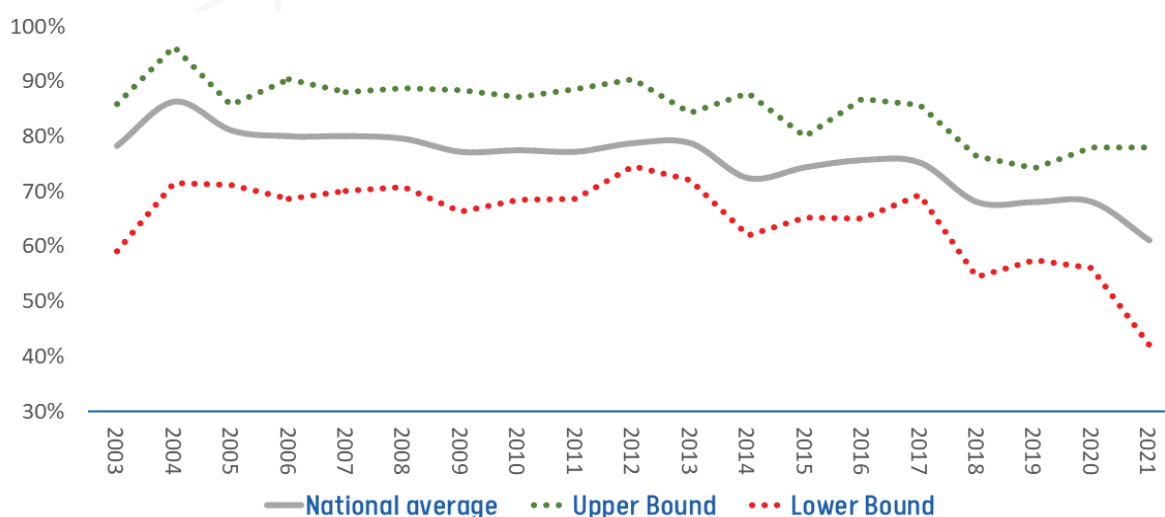
### QUESTION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about voting? 'It is the duty of all citizens to vote' (% agree or strongly agree)

### ANALYSIS

The belief in the duty to vote among the public remains robust. In most survey rounds, the adult public was more positive on this metric compared to changing views on political efficacy. Apart from 2004 (86%), there were only mild fluctuations on this measure between 2003 and 2013 ranging from 77-81%. There was a modest decline to 72% in 2014, which levelled off over the 2014 to 2017 period. There was a discernible decline in the duty to vote between 2017 and 2018, dropping from 75% to 68%. The 2020 figure remained unchanged at 68%, but between 2020 and 2021 there was another 7 percentage point drop in this measure. This is concerning and it remains to be seen whether this signals the beginning of a longer term, downward tendency.

**DUTY TO VOTE: Proportion of the public who agreed with the statement: "It is the duty of all citizens to vote", 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	78	86	81	80	80	80	77	77	77	79	79	72	74	76	75	68	...	68	61	76
Upper Bound	86	96	86	90	90	86	88	87	89	90	84	84	80	87	86	76	..	78	78	81
Lower Bound	62	76	71	69	70	71	66	68	76	75	72	62	65	65	69	54	...	56	42	70

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3.6 Voting intention

### GOAL

Evaluate the voting intention of the general population

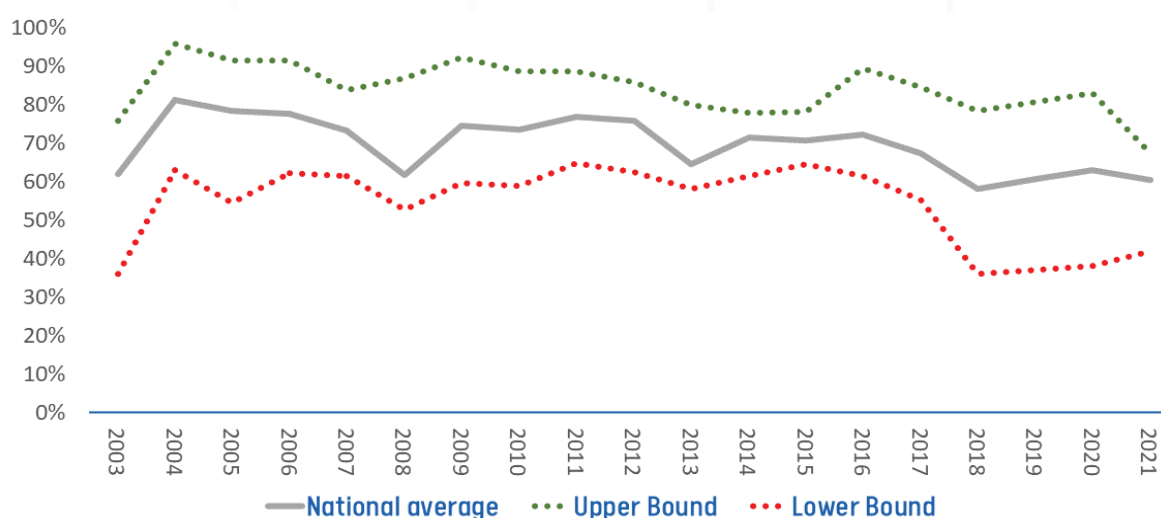
### QUESTION

If a government election was held tomorrow, would you vote? (% who would vote)

### ANALYSIS

In each round of the SASAS survey between 2003 and 2021, respondents were asked whether or not they would vote if a government election was to be held tomorrow. On average over this period, 71% reported an intention to vote. From a trend perspective, voting intention has generally varied modestly at a high-level, punctuated by short-lived downturns every few years. Examples of such slumps in voting intention are evident in 2003, 2008, and 2013. In between these years, the intention to vote ranged between 71% and 81% over the 2004 to 2016 period. The post-2016 period is somewhat distinctive, in that intention to vote fell from 72% in 2016 to 58% in 2020, after which it settled in the 60-63% range in 2020 and 2021. This is the longest below-average level of voting intention observed to date. Given the parallel declines in duty to vote and political efficacy previously outlined, there is a real risk that voting intention may continue to stagnate and decline further in coming years. During the full period, the disparity between the upper and lower provincial bounds fluctuated significantly, with larger than average provincial variation in 2003-2006, 2008-2010 and 2018-2020. In the 2018 round, there was a 42 percentage point gap between the upper and lower bounds, rising to a 45 percentage point gap in 2020. In 2021 this decreased to a 26 percentage point gap.

**VOTING INTENTION: Proportion of the public who would vote if a government election was held tomorrow, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	62	81	78	77	73	62	74	74	77	76	64	71	71	72	67	58	...	63	60	70
Upper Bound	76	96	92	91	84	87	92	89	87	86	80	78	78	89	84	78	...	83	67	79
Lower Bound	36	63	54	62	61	53	60	59	65	62	58	61	64	61	55	36	...	38	42	61

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3.7 Planned abstention due to administrative barriers

### GOAL

Examining the share planning to abstain in elections due to administrative barriers

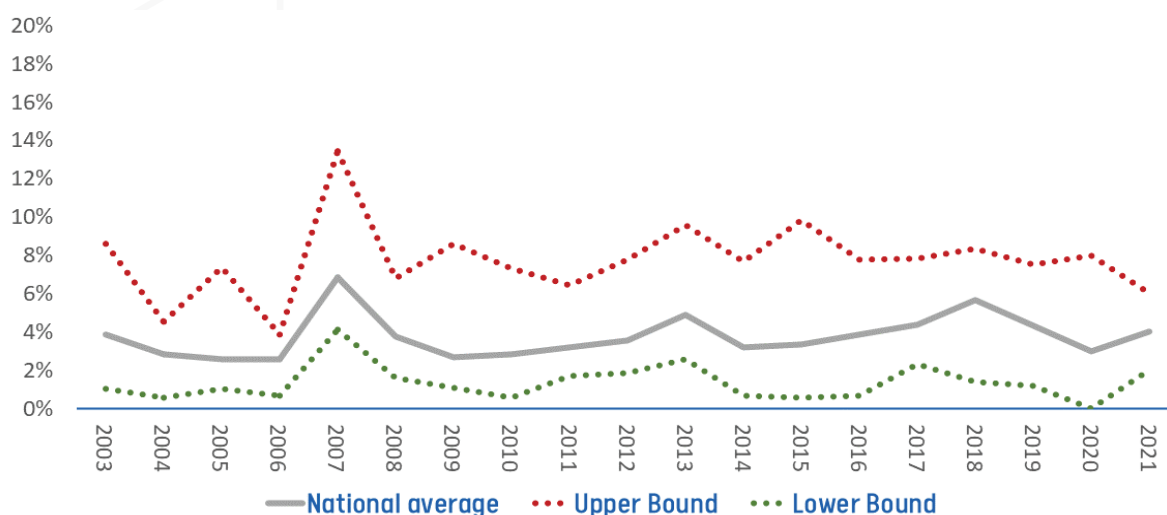
### QUESTION

What is your main reason for thinking that you would not vote if an election was held tomorrow? (% mentioning administrative barriers, averaged across voting age population)

### ANALYSIS

Planned abstention due to administrative barriers accounts for a small share of voting intentions. Administrative barriers include not being registered to vote, not being in possession of necessary documents, and the voting station being too far away from one's place of residence. In 2018, only 6% of eligible adults in the country cited administrative factors as the main reason that they would not vote if an election was held tomorrow compared to 4% in 2021. Reviewing how these results changed over the 2003-2021 period, it was apparent that they did not have a sizable influence on voting decisions. Although the share that claimed administrative barriers prevented them from voting increased in 2018, the proportion of the population who plan to abstain due to administrative barriers remains nominal in general. It appears that administrative barriers remain a relatively minor obstacle to participating in elections.

**ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS: Proportion of the public who would not vote due to administrative barriers if government elections were held tomorrow, 2003-2021 (%)**



%	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
National Avg.	4	3	3	3	7	4	3	3	...	4	5	3	3	4	4	6	...	3	4	4
Upper Bound	9	5	7	4	13	7	9	7	...	8	10	8	10	8	8	8	...	8	6	5
Lower Bound	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	...	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	...	0	2	3

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2003-2021

## 2.3.8 Voter registration patterns

### GOAL

Ensure that eligible voters are registered

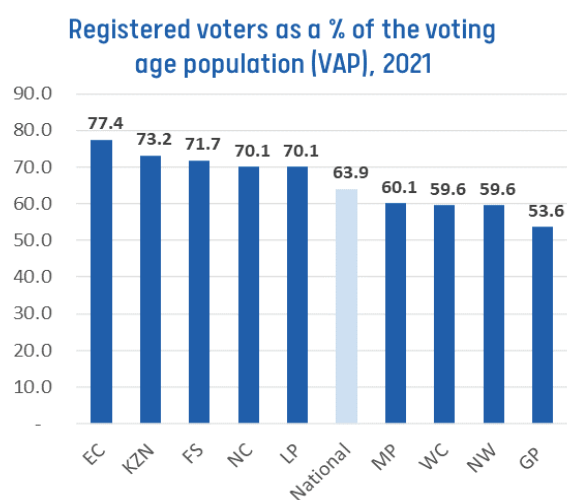
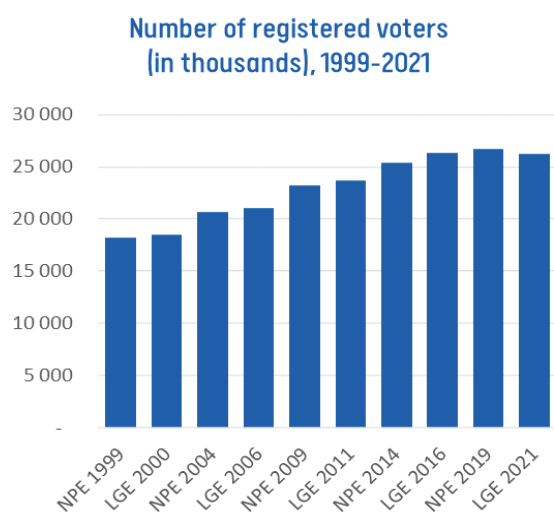
### QUESTION

Number of South Africans that are registered to vote in elections; percentage of voting age population that is registered

### ANALYSIS

In 1999, 18.1 million eligible voters were registered to vote in the national and provincial elections. Over successive elections, through sustained efforts by the Commission, an additional 8.5 million voters were added to the provincial voter's roll between 1999 and 2019. There was a modest decline to 26.2 million eligible voters in 2021, the first instance this has occurred over successive elections. In 2019, the share of the voting age population (VAP) in the country that was registered was 74.6%, and the corresponding figure for 2021 was 63.9%. In 2021, there was a significant degree of interprovincial variance in the proportion of registered voters as share of the VAP. The lowest recorded percentage of the VAP registered in that year was observed in Gauteng (53.6%), with North West, Western Cape and Mpumalanga also below the national average. The highest registration rates were recorded in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. In coming years, voter registration drives in the country will need to continue trying to reduce the share that remains unregistered, while also ensuring that young, first-time voters are encouraged to register.

**REGISTRATION PATTERNS: Number of registered voters, 1999-2021 (in thousands), and percentage of the voting age population that was registered in 2021**



	1999	2000	2004	2006	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	2021 as a % of voting age population
National Avg.	18 173	18 478	20 675	21 055	23 182	23 654	25 383	26 333	26 750	26 205	63.9
Upper Bound	4 154	4 373	4 651	4 786	5 462	5 593	6 064	6 235	6 381	6 196	77.4
Lower Bound	377	443	434	529	555	572	601	621	626	623	53.6

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official registration statistics, 1999-2021

## 2.3.9 Perceived ease of the registration process

### GOAL

Ease of registration

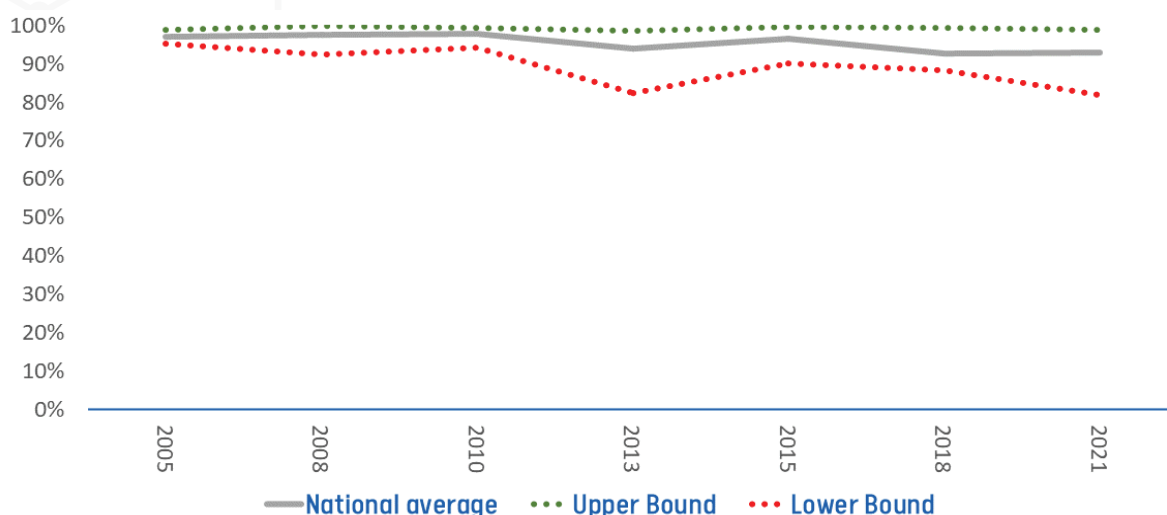
### QUESTION

How easy or difficult did you find it to register as a voter? (% easy or very easy)

### ANALYSIS

During successive Voter Participation Surveys conducted over the 2005-2021 period, there was near universal agreement among registered voters in the country that the voting registration process was easy. On average across all seven survey rounds, 96% characterised the process in this way. In 2005-2010, the figure averaged 97-98%, dipped slightly to 94% in 2013, and returned to 97% in 2015. In both 2018 and 2021, 93% of registered citizens nationally thought it was easy to register as a voter. This represents a marginal decline in the proportion reporting that the process was easy at the national level. The level of relative decline is somewhat greater in some provinces than in others. For instance, 2013 was marked by a short-lived downturn in the perceived ease of registering in KwaZulu Natal, while 2018 and 2021 witnessed a similar sharp decline in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Despite these fluctuations, the view that the registration process was straightforward was widespread, and commonly observed across provinces.

**EASE OF REGISTRATION: Perceived ease of the registration process, 2005-2021 (% finding it 'easy' or 'very easy')**



	2005	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
National Avg.	97	97	98	94	97	93	93	96
Upper Bound	99	100	99	99	100	99	99	97
Lower Bound	95	92	94	82	90	88	82	89

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2005-2021

## 2.3.10 Duration of registration process

### GOAL

Determine the time taken to register as a voter

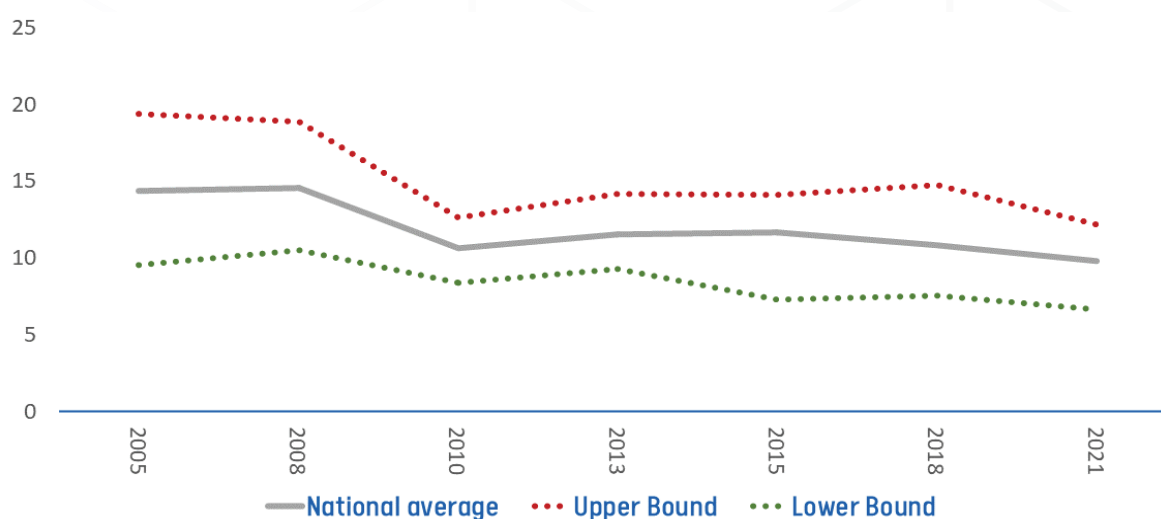
### QUESTION

How many minutes did it take you to register to vote? (average number of minutes)

### ANALYSIS

The average length of time to register in South Africa was quite short, averaging 14 minutes in 2005. Since then, the mean time has declined, and was only 10 minutes in 2021. This result was consistent with the general finding that administrative barriers do not prevent voters from participating in government elections in South Africa. Based on this evaluation of the ease of voting, it appears that for most the registration process was fast and easy. In most Voter Participation Survey rounds, the discrepancy between the upper and lower provincial bounds was not large. The average difference between the two was just 4 minutes on average across all survey rounds. In 2018, by comparison, the difference between the upper and lower bounds was 7 minutes and in 2021 the gap between the upper and lower bounds was 5 minutes.

**TIME TAKEN TO REGISTER: Average number of minutes that it took citizens to register to vote, 2005-2021**



	2005	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
National Avg.	14	15	11	11	12	11	10	12
Upper Bound	19	19	13	14	14	15	12	14
Lower Bound	10	10	8	9	7	8	7	10

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2005-2021



**PART**

**C**

**CAMPAIGN  
PERIOD**

## 3. CAMPAIGN PERIOD

### 3.1. Campaign integrity

#### GOAL

Determine public views on the integrity of aspects of the election campaign period

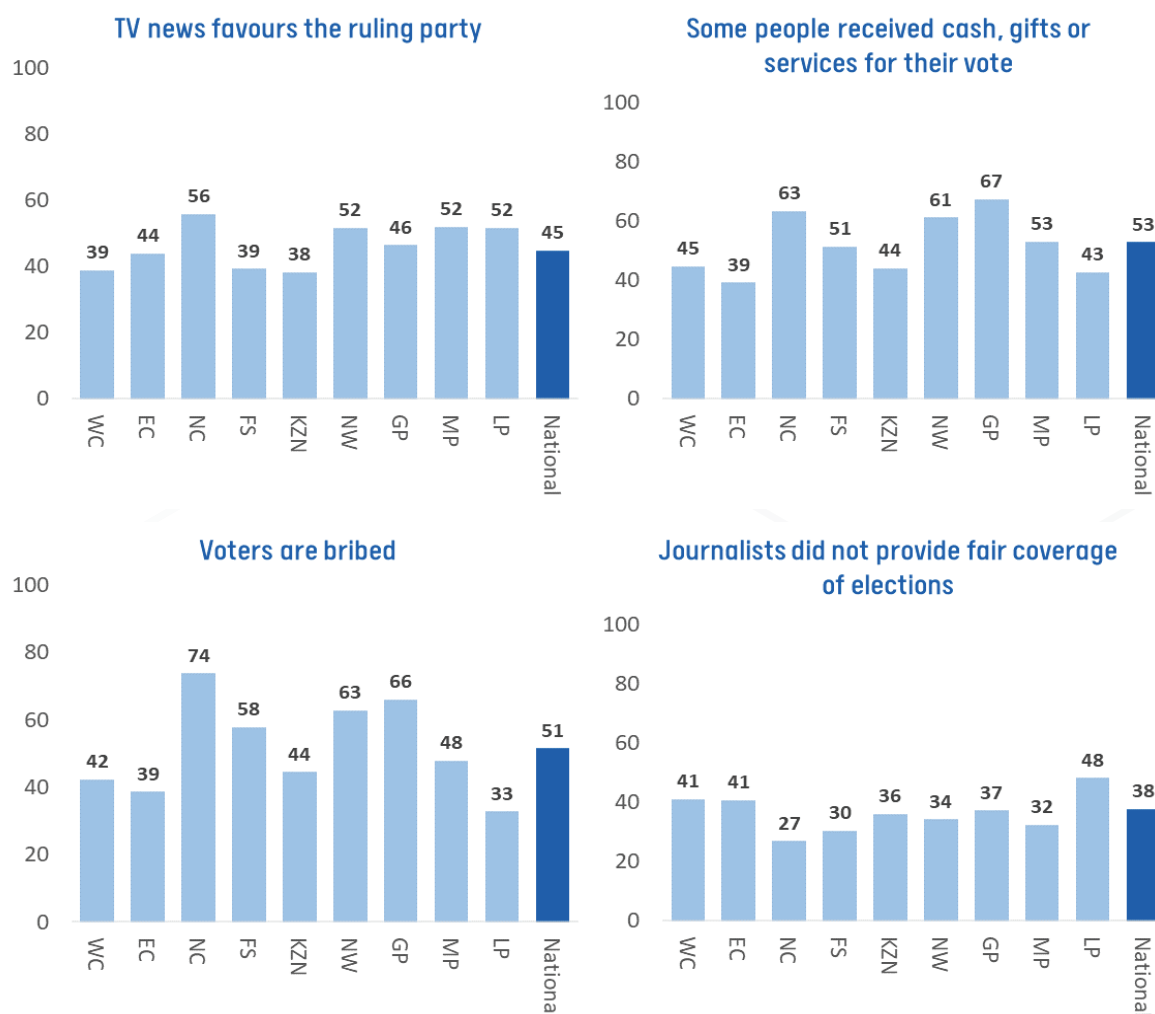
#### QUESTION

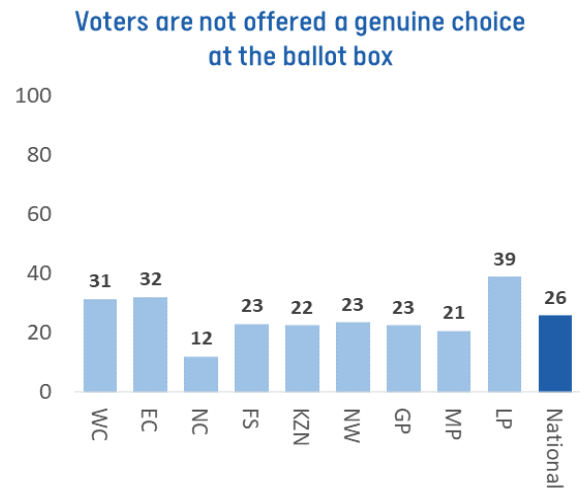
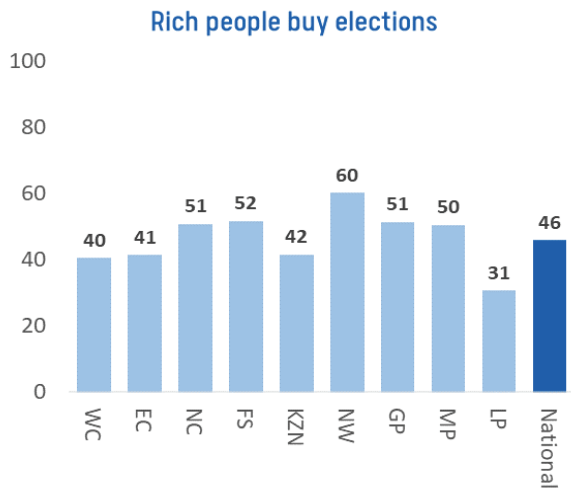
In your view, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections? (i) TV news favours the ruling party; (ii) some people received cash, gifts or services in exchange for their vote; (iii) voters are bribed; (iv) journalists did not provide fair coverage of elections; (v) rich people buy elections; (v) voters are not offered a genuine choice at the ballot box. (% very/fairly often)

#### ANALYSIS

In 2021, people in the country displayed a fairly high level of scepticism with regard to the integrity of the electoral campaigning period. More than two-fifths of the adult population (45%) believed that TV news favoured the ruling party, while 38% thought that journalists did not provide fair coverage of elections. Corruption concerns were also evident, with 53% of the adult public saying people were receiving cash, gifts or services in exchange for their vote, 51% stating that voters were being bribed, and 46% believing that wealthy elites were influencing elections. A quarter (26%) of citizens in the country felt that voters are not being offered a genuine choice at the ballot box.

**CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY: Percentage saying different electoral occurrences happen very or fairly often in the country, 2021 (%)**





	TV news favours the ruling party	Some people received cash, gifts or services for their vote	Voters are bribed	Journalists did not provide fair coverage	Rich people buy elections	Voters are not offered a genuine choice
National Avg.	45	53	51	38	46	26
Upper Bound	56	67	74	48	60	39
Lower Bound	38	39	33	27	31	12

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2021



### 3.1.1 Political party tolerance during campaigning

#### GOAL

Establish whether the voting public felt that political parties and candidates demonstrated tolerance during the campaign period

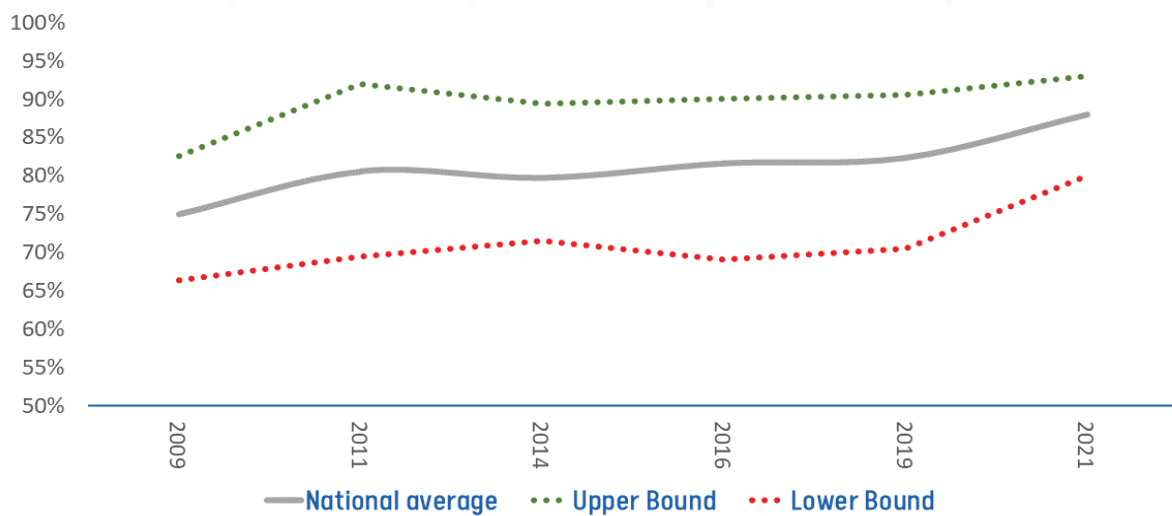
#### QUESTION

Do you think that political parties/independent candidates were tolerant of one another during campaigns for these elections? (% very / somewhat tolerant)

#### ANALYSIS

Political tolerance between contesting political parties and their supporters represents a fundamental component of electoral and indeed liberal democracy and is instrumental in ensuring free and fair elections. Almost nine in ten (88%) of voters believed that political parties were very tolerant of one another during the 2021 Local Government Election campaigns. This finding was consistent with the views expressed by voters in 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2019, when 80-82% regarded the party campaigning period as tolerant in character. The 2021 rating is slightly more positive in assessment than the preceding survey years. The disparity between the upper and lower provincial bounds varied appreciably during the last ten years. Between the upper and lower bounds there was about a 13 percentage point disparity in the 2021 round. This spread in provincial values is slightly lower than over the 2009-2019 period, when the variation ranged between 17 and 22 percentage points. This implies that there was a slightly higher degree of consensus in tolerance ratings in 2021.

**POLITICAL PARTY TOLERANCE: Percentage of voters that believed political parties / independent candidates displayed tolerance during the campaigning period, 2009-2021 (% tolerant)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	75	81	80	82	82	88	81
Upper Bound	83	92	89	90	91	93	86
Lower Bound	66	70	71	69	70	80	77

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (VPS) 2009-2021

## 3.2 Voter education

### 3.2.1 Sources of information on voting

#### GOAL

Determine the main voting information sources used by the public

#### QUESTION

Where do you usually get information about voting? (Multiple response – percentage mentioning each information source)

#### ANALYSIS

In terms of accessing information about voting, the pattern over the 2008-2021 period was broadly consistent. Broadcast media was the most popular source of information in the country, with television the most popular source in 2021 (59%), followed by radio (33%) and newspapers (23%). Between 2013 and 2021, there has been growing reliance on television for voting information. Posters were mentioned by slightly under a fifth in 2021 (17%), while informal social networks were only mentioned by 8% of the public. Despite their popularity in contemporary times, social media was mentioned as an information source by 7% of the public in 2021, though this does represent a small increase from 4% in 2018. These social media findings match those observed in previous survey rounds. This suggests that this source has not become appreciably more popular over the period under consideration, but the 2021 change may signal that this might become increasingly popular in future survey rounds. There was quite a large level of interprovincial variation on voting information sources in 2021. Particularly large provincial differences are evident for television, posters and radio. This points to the continued need for a diversified approach to voter education in the country.

**VOTING INFORMATION SOURCES: Percentage of voting age public that used different information sources about voting, 2008-2021 (% mentioning each source)**

	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
<b>Television</b>							
National Avg.	47%	50%	43%	48%	57%	59%	51%
Upper Bound	58%	68%	57%	62%	68%	74%	58%
Lower Bound	36%	37%	31%	20%	34%	43%	40%
<b>Radio</b>							
National Avg.	39%	36%	30%	30%	39%	33%	35%
Upper Bound	45%	50%	52%	52%	62%	46%	44%
Lower Bound	27%	23%	15%	15%	14%	24%	27%
<b>Newspaper</b>							
National Avg.	34%	31%	24%	24%	29%	23%	27%
Upper Bound	45%	51%	36%	36%	42%	27%	38%
Lower Bound	19%	10%	14%	14%	11%	13%	17%
<b>Poster</b>							
National Avg.	19%	24%	22%	22%	22%	17%	21%
Upper Bound	30%	37%	33%	33%	36%	46%	30%
Lower Bound	8%	10%	11%	11%	5%	8%	16%
<b>Informal social networks</b>							
National Avg.	12%	15%	12%	12%	16%	8%	12%
Upper Bound	19%	24%	24%	24%	35%	17%	20%
Lower Bound	4%	8%	3%	3%	5%	3%	10%
<b>Social media</b>							
National Avg.	2%	2%	2%	6%	4%	7%	4%
Upper Bound	4%	4%	4%	13%	7%	13%	5%
Lower Bound	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2008-2021

## 3.2.2 Preferred source of information on voting

### GOAL

Determine the preferred sources of information on voting

### QUESTION

What would be your preferred channel to get information on voting? (Single response)

### ANALYSIS

When asked about their preferred source of voting information, a large proportion of citizens in the country nominated television (55% in 2021). If the results of the VPS 2021 are compared with data in previous survey rounds, it is evident that television was consistently the most popular source mentioned over the 2008-2021 period, ranging between 53% and 60%. Radio was found to be a comparatively less popular preferred channel in the country. Preference for this source has remained fairly level since 2010, in the 13-15% range. Taking the 2008-2021 period as a whole, posters and newspapers were mentioned by 6% respectively. The proportion who mentioned informal social networks was just 3% in the most recent VPS 2021 round. Social media was mentioned by a small share of the public, but it has progressively become more favoured over time, rising from 1% in 2008 to 8% in 2021. Conventional media sources remain the dominant preference for now.

#### PREFERRED INFORMATION SOURCE: Most preferred source of information on voting among the voting age public, 2008-2021 (%)

	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
<b>Television</b>							
National Avg.	57%	57%	58%	60%	53%	55%	57%
Upper Bound	77%	69%	69%	69%	62%	69%	60%
Lower Bound	26%	42%	43%	36%	38%	37%	46%
<b>Radio</b>							
National Avg.	21%	15%	13%	12%	15%	14%	15%
Upper Bound	53%	32%	21%	24%	33%	24%	20%
Lower Bound	4%	4%	7%	4%	6%	7%	10%
<b>Newspaper</b>							
National Avg.	8%	7%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%
Upper Bound	11%	11%	11%	10%	12%	15%	10%
Lower Bound	3%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%	4%
<b>Poster</b>							
National Avg.	3%	7%	8%	5%	8%	5%	6%
Upper Bound	8%	15%	11%	13%	11%	10%	8%
Lower Bound	0%	3%	4%	0%	0%	2%	4%
<b>Informal social networks</b>							
National Avg.	2%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%
Upper Bound	5%	4%	15%	14%	25%	8%	10%
Lower Bound	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%
<b>Social media</b>							
National Avg.	1%	1%	2%	4%	5%	8%	3%
Upper Bound	2%	2%	4%	10%	15%	13%	6%
Lower Bound	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2008-2021

### 3.2.3 Demand for information on voting

#### GOAL

Establish demand for more information on voting

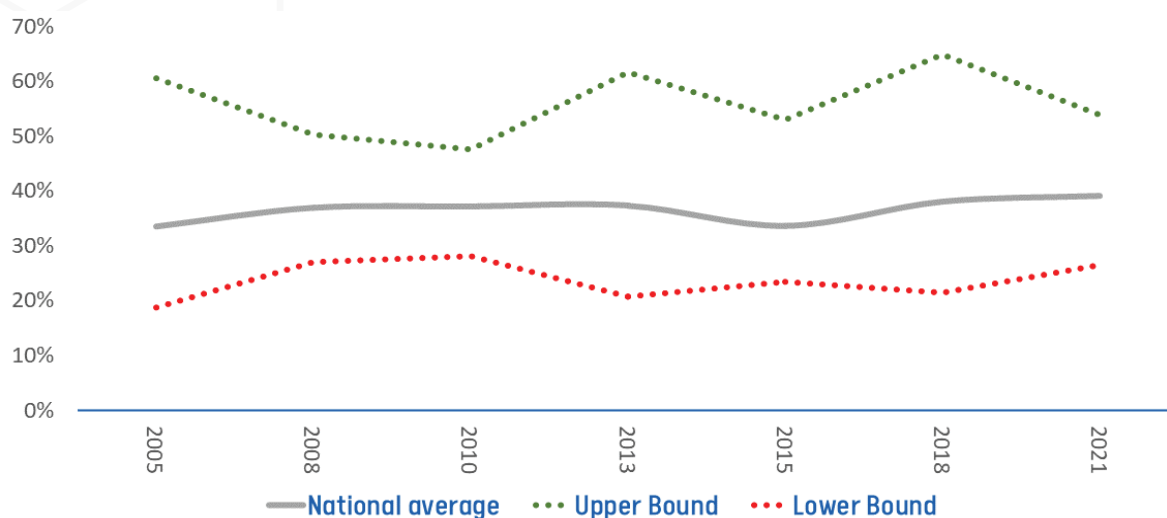
#### QUESTION

Do you think you have too little or too much information on how to vote? (% Too little / far too little information)

#### ANALYSIS

Among the voting age public, 34% expressed a desire for more information on voting in 2005, increasing somewhat to 37% in 2008. After this, the level of demand for information was quite stable, apart from a slight dip in 2015, ranging between 37% and 39%. This suggests that demand for electoral information has remained relatively constant in the last few years, averaging at close to two-fifths of the public. In coming years, the Commission will need to focus its civic and democracy education (CDE) efforts by responding to this demand for electoral information in the country. The discrepancy in most VPS rounds between the upper and lower provincial bounds was quite sizeable. The disparity between the two was small in 2010 at twenty percentage points. In 2018 the difference between the upper and lower bounds was 44 percentage points, the largest spread in demand recorded to date. This discrepancy however decreased somewhat to 27 percentage points in 2021.

**DEMAND FOR VOTING INFORMATION: Reported demand for more information on voting, 2005-2021 (% stating that they receive 'too little' or 'far too little' voting information)**



	2005	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
National Avg.	34	37	37	37	34	38	39	37
Upper Bound	61	50	48	62	53	65	54	51
Lower Bound	19	27	28	21	23	21	27	31

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2005-2021

### 3.2.4 Number of Civic and Democracy Education (CDE) events

#### GOAL

To determine the number of CDE events per 100,000 of the voting age population

#### QUESTION

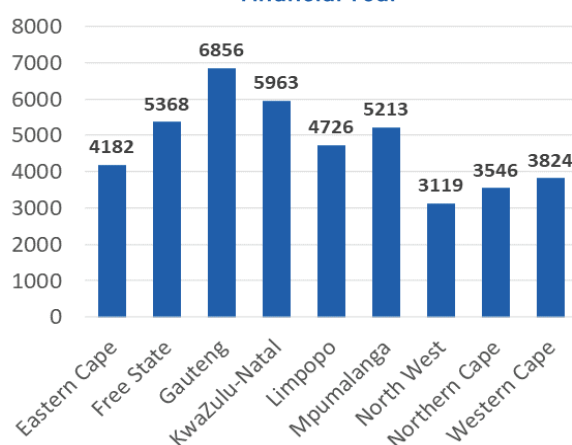
How many CDE events were offered in each province in 2021/2022?

#### ANALYSIS

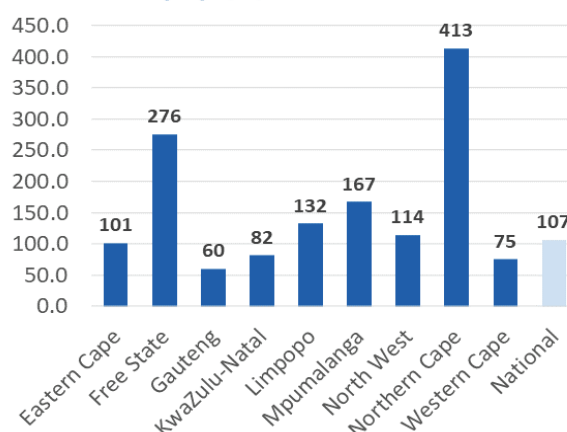
More than 40,000 civic and democracy education (CDE) events were held during the 2021/2022 financial year. In comparing the reach of these events across the country, it is advisable to consider the size of the voting age population (VAP) per province. Nationally, 107 events per 100,000 of the VAP were recorded in the 2021/2022 financial year. Of all the provinces, the Northern Cape had the highest number of events at 413 per 100,000 VAP. Due to economies of scale, the ratio is more likely to be higher in smaller provinces, but the population size of a province is a variable that needs to be considered when planning CDE events. More specifically, consideration should be given to retaining the number of events in a less densely populated provinces (such as Mpumalanga) and increase them in more densely populated areas (like KwaZulu Natal). This will ensure that reach and impact are achieved more uniformly across provinces.

**NUMBER OF CDE EVENTS:** Absolute number of CDE events, and number of events per 100,000 of the voting age population for the 2021/2022 year

Number of CDE Events - 2021/2022  
Financial Year



Number of events per 100,000 of the  
voting age population in 2021/22



	Number of CDE events				Number of events per 100,000 of the voting age population (VAP)			
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Eastern Cape	11022	4175	1132	4182	280.5	101.2	27.2	101.5
Free State	5768	2262	1497	5368	297.7	118.7	76.9	276.0
Gauteng	11272	5774	2714	6856	107.4	52.8	24.2	59.9
KwaZulu Natal	15275	4108	2218	5963	212.5	57.6	30.7	81.8
Limpopo	9179	3719	2068	4726	263.2	101.2	58.1	132.3
Mpumalanga	9232	2336	294	5213	323.0	78.4	9.6	167.4
North West	6114	3000	1716	3119	769.3	113.6	63.3	113.8
Northern Cape	6142	2343	1022	3546	240.8	280.5	119.7	413.4
Western Cape	8383	3009	375	3824	182.1	62.0	7.5	75.4
<b>National</b>	<b>82 388</b>	<b>30 726</b>	<b>13 036</b>	<b>42 797</b>	<b>217.7</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>106.6</b>

Data Source: IEC official statistics, 2018/19 to 2021/22 financial years

### 3.2.5 Perceived effectiveness of voter education campaigns

#### GOAL

Appraising the effectiveness of voter education campaigns

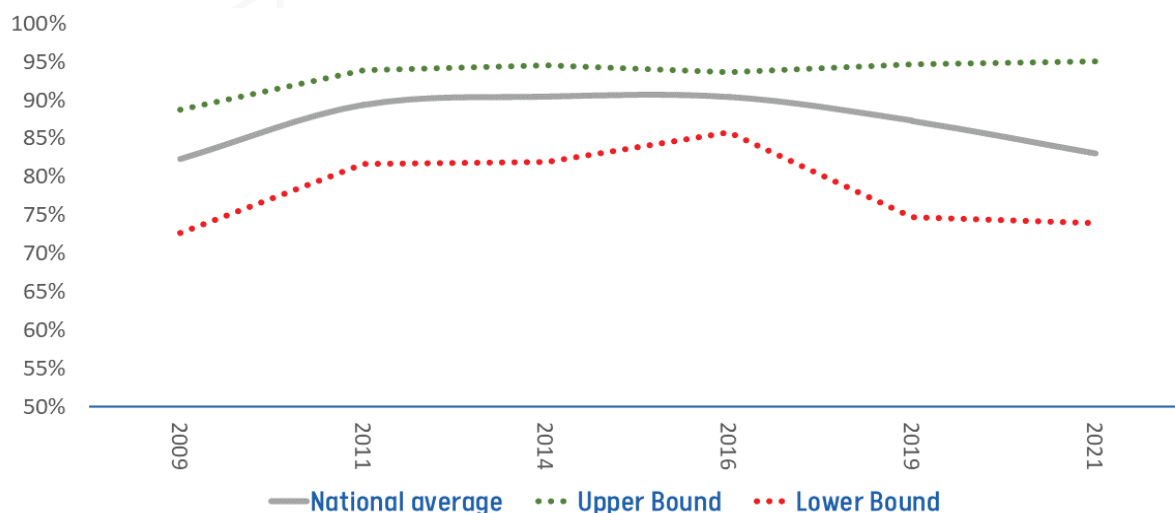
#### QUESTION

How effective was the IEC's voter education campaign for these elections? (% very effective / somewhat effective)

#### ANALYSIS

More than four-fifths (82%) of voters believed that the Commission's voter education campaigns were effective in 2009. Attitudes on this indicator improved in 2011, reaching 89% and we observed growing levels of improvement on this indicator. Some interprovincial variations were noted, especially in 2019 when the disparity between the upper and lower bounds was twenty percentage points. The disproportion between the two was much smaller in previous survey rounds and was, for instance, eight percentage points in 2016. Although there were minor differences over this period, these variances were so small that it shouldn't be concerning to the Electoral Commission. These patterns remained consistent for the 2021 election period.

**CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS: Percentage of voters who thought that the IEC's voter education campaign for elections was effective, 2009-2021 (% effective)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	82	89	91	90	87	83	88
Upper Bound	89	94	95	94	95	95	90
Lower Bound	73	82	82	86	75	74	87

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2021



**PART**

**D**

**ELECTION DAY**

## 4. ELECTION DAY

### 4.1 Voting station evaluations

#### 4.1.1 Time to get to voting station

##### GOAL

Determining the average time taken to get to voting stations

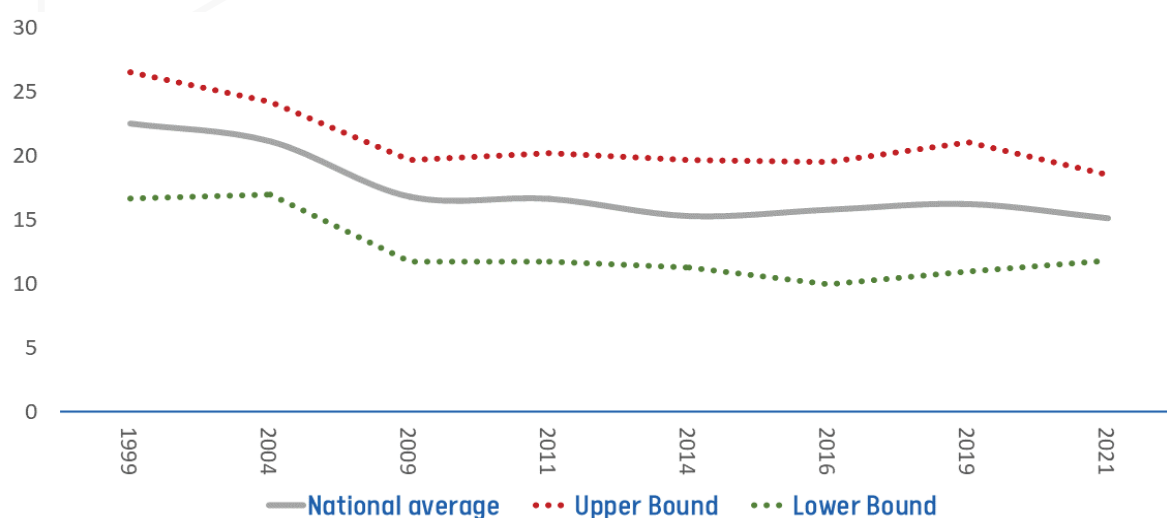
##### QUESTION

How long did it take you to get to the voting station? (average number of minutes)

##### ANALYSIS

Over the 1999-2021 period, the average time it took for voters to get to their voting station was 18 minutes. There was an improvement over time on this indicator, with the mean number of minutes falling from 22 in 1999 to 15 minutes in 2021. The time taken to reach one's voting station in the country has remained fairly stable between 2014 and 2021, ranging between 15 and 16 minutes on average. There disparity between the upper and lower provincial bounds across the different survey rounds under discussion varied in a narrow range between 7 and 10 minutes. This implies that voters in some provinces (e.g., KwaZulu Natal) take a little longer on average to get to their voting stations than other provinces (e.g., Eastern Cape), through these differences are not especially large.

**TIME TO GET TO THE VOTING STATION: Average number of minutes that it took citizens to get to the voting station, 1999-2021**



	1999	2000	2004	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	22	21	21	17	17	15	16	16	15	18
Upper Bound	27	24	24	20	20	20	20	21	18	21
Lower Bound	17	16	17	12	12	11	10	11	12	15

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 1999-2021

## 4.1.2 Queuing time at voting stations

### GOAL

Determining the average queuing time at voting stations

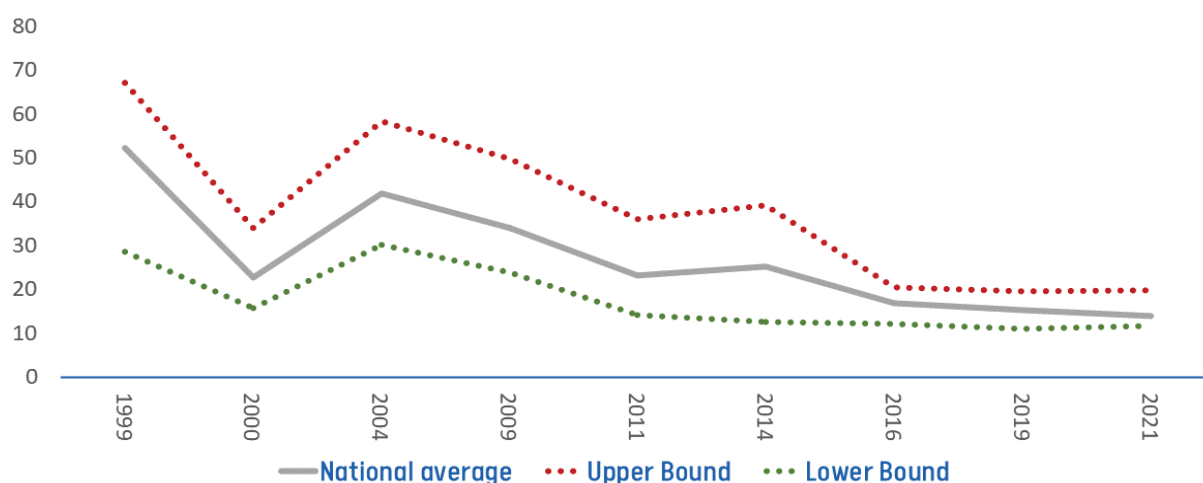
### QUESTION

How long did you queue before voting? (average number of minutes)

### ANALYSIS

Between 1999 and 2021, the average length of time voters spent queuing in the country was 27 minutes. The average queuing time for voters has steadily improved since 1999. By 2019, the mean time declined to only 16 minutes, and fell further to 14 minutes in 2021. The latter was the lowest observed average queuing time recorded over the full period. These improvements are likely to mainly reflect gains in the efficiency of electoral operations, although declining turnout figures in the 2019 and 2021 elections might be beginning to play a role too, with fewer voters turning out to cast their vote. Considerable interprovincial variation was observed on this measure during much of the 1999-2019 period. There was a 27 percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds during the 1999-2014 period. This discrepancy was much smaller in the 2016-2021 period (8 percentage point difference), suggesting that interprovincial variation fell in the more recent survey rounds.

**TIME TAKEN TO QUEUE: Average number of minutes that it took citizens to queue, 1999-2021**



	1999	2000	2004	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	52	23	42	34	23	25	17	15	14	27
Upper Bound	67	34	58	50	36	39	20	19	20	31
Lower Bound	29	16	30	24	14	13	12	11	12	19

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 1999-2021

### 4.1.3 Safety and security

#### GOAL

Determine the perceived effectiveness of safety and security measures at voting stations

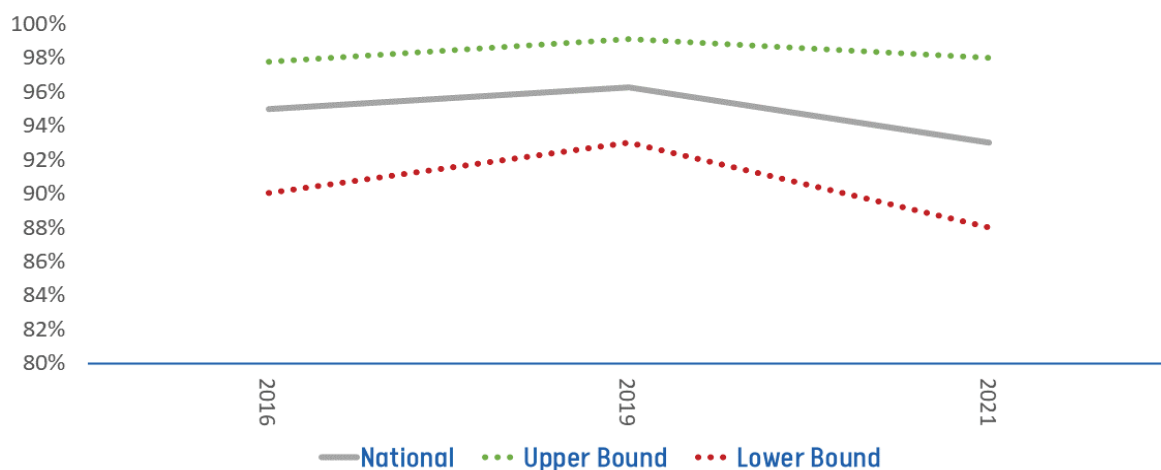
#### QUESTION

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the safety and security provided at the voting station? (% satisfied / very satisfied)

#### ANALYSIS

On average, South African voters appear broadly satisfied with the safety and security provided at voting stations. In 2016, 95% of voters in the country expressed satisfaction with the safety and security at their voting stations. A similar positive appraisal was provided in 2019 (96%), followed by a slight decline to 93% in 2021. There was relatively little variation in satisfaction scores between provinces in these three rounds of observation, with the difference between the upper and lower provincial bounds falling within 6-10 percentage points. Although high satisfaction levels were evident across all provinces, voters in the Free State were found to consistently score the safety and security measures of the Election Commission at a level below the national average, while there are signs of progressive decline in Gauteng. Overall, the comparative findings indicate that the Election Commission is performing adequately on the issue of safety and security.

**SAFETY AND SECURITY AT VOTING STATION: Satisfaction with the safety and security at the voting station, 2016-2021 (%)**



	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	95	96	93	95
Upper Bound	98	99	98	98
Lower Bound	90	93	88	92

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2016-2021

#### 4.1.4 Accessibility of voting station to persons with disabilities/the elderly

##### GOAL

Determine accessibility of voter stations to persons with disabilities and/or the elderly

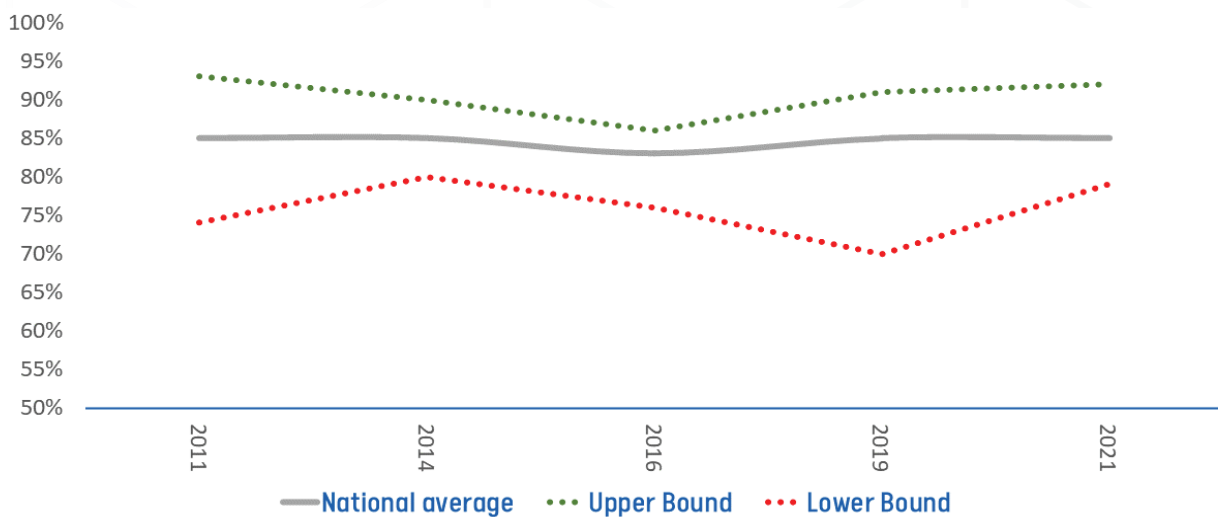
##### QUESTION

How easily accessible was the voting station to persons with disabilities or the elderly? (% accessible / very accessible)

##### ANALYSIS

Almost nine-tenths (85%) of voters felt that voting stations were accessible to persons with disabilities and / or the elderly in 2011. The proportion of voters that were satisfied with these voting station provisions somewhat decreased in subsequent rounds. But it remained above the 80% threshold for the remainder of the period, with the 2021 figure standing at 85%. Fairly considerable interprovincial variation was noted on this measure. At the beginning of the period there was a 19 percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds. The level of variance in past rounds was much smaller in latter rounds. In the 2021 round there only a 13 percentage point difference. Considering the period as a whole, Western Cape voters scored highest on this indicator and Mpumalanga voters the lowest.

**ACCESSIBILITY OF VOTING STATIONS FOR THE DISABLED/ELDERLY: Percentage who believed that the voting station was accessible to persons with disabilities or the elderly, 2009-2021 (% accessible)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	...	85	85	83	85	85	85
Upper Bound	...	93	90	86	91	92	89
Lower Bound	...	74	80	76	70	79	77

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2021

## 4.1.5 Quality of service rendered by IEC officials

### GOAL

Determine the perceived quality of service rendered by IEC officials at voting stations

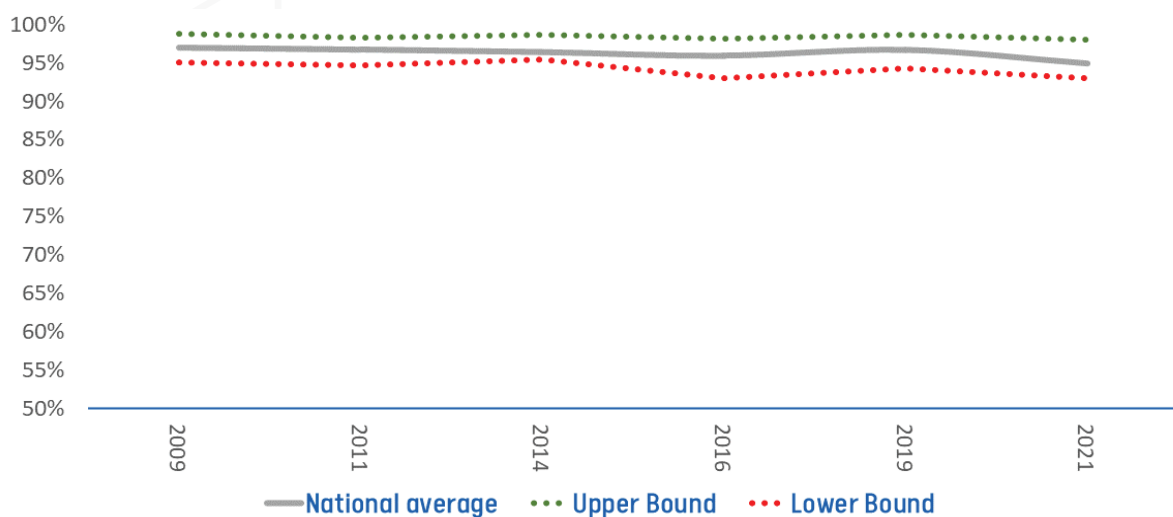
### QUESTION

Are you satisfied with the quality of service that the IEC officials provided to voters? (% satisfied / very satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

Among voters, almost universal satisfaction was recorded regarding the quality of services provided by the Electoral Commission to voters on Election Day in six successive elections held between 2009 and 2021. Among the general voter population, satisfaction levels fluctuated in a very narrow band between 95% and 97%. There has only been nominal variation in evaluation between provinces in terms of the share contented with the service rendered by electoral officials at voting stations. On aggregate, only a 3 to 5 percentage point deviation was detected between the upper and lower bounds in any given year during the 2009-2021 period. This is largely a reflection of the high satisfaction levels recorded across all provinces over time.

**QUALITY OF IEC SERVICE: Satisfaction with quality of service rendered by IEC officials, 2009-2021 (%)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	97	97	96	96	97	95	96
Upper Bound	99	98	99	98	99	98	98
Lower Bound	95	95	95	93	94	93	95

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2021

## 4.2 Voting procedure

### 4.2.1 Assessment of electoral procedures

#### GOAL

Assessing how the voting procedure was perceived

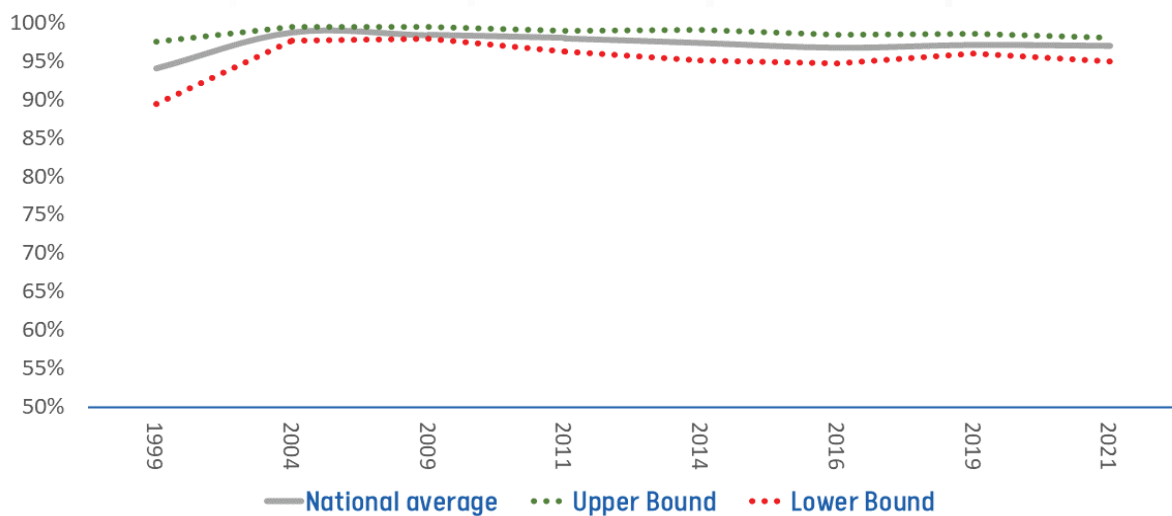
#### QUESTION

Was the voting procedure inside the voting station easy or difficult to understand?  
(% easy / very easy to understand)

#### ANALYSIS

When examining public opinion on the user experience of voting procedures in the country between 1999 and 2021, a largely positive picture emerges. Over this period, the vast majority (97%) of voters found the voting procedures inside the voting station easy to understand. A broadly consistent pattern of results is evident across national and provincial as well as local government elections, with the share indicating that the voting procedures were “easy” ranging between 94% and 99%. There have only been modest interprovincial variations on this measure over time. These differences nonetheless reflect subtle inter-provincial variations due to the clustering of satisfaction levels at an extremely high level.

**ELECTORAL PROCEDURAL ASSESSMENT: Proportion of voters who believed that the voting procedure inside the voting station was easy to understand, 1999-2021 (% easy / very easy to understand)**



	1999	2000	2004	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	94	94	99	98	98	97	97	97	97	97
Upper Bound	98	98	99	99	99	99	98	99	98	98
Lower Bound	89	92	98	98	96	95	95	96	95	96

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 1999-2021

## 4.2.2 Assessment of procedural accommodation of the elderly

### GOAL

Assessing whether the voting procedure accommodated the elderly

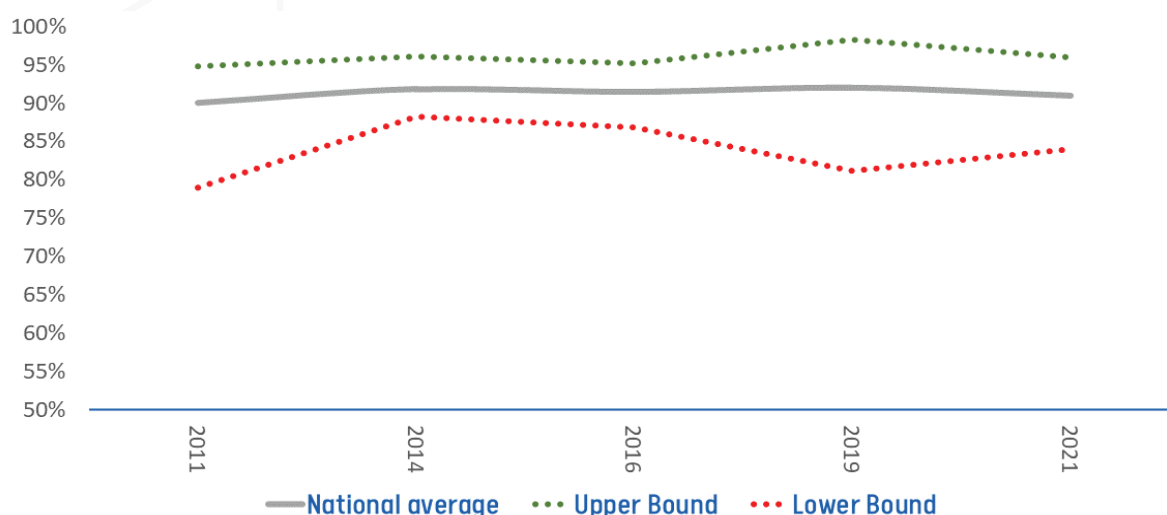
### QUESTION

To what extent did the voting procedure at this voting station consider the needs of the elderly? (% to a great / some extent)

### ANALYSIS

In 2011, 90% of voters thought that voting stations accommodated the needs of the elderly. Satisfaction levels have remained equally positive in assessment in subsequent survey rounds, ranging between 90% and 92%. In 2021, 91% of voters said that the needs of the elderly were effectively considered. On aggregate over the 2011-2021 period, 91% of voters felt that the voting procedures considered the needs of this group. This suggests that voters were suitably convinced that the procedures in place at voting stations addressed the needs of the elderly. There has only been modest variation between provinces in the share believing that the needs of the elderly had been accommodated. This largely a reflection of negligible differences in evaluation between provinces.

**ELDERLY PROCEDURAL ACCOMMODATION: Percentage of voters who thought that the voting procedures at the voting station considered the needs of the elderly, 2011-2021 (% to a great/ some extent)**



	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	90	92	91	92	91	91
Upper Bound	95	96	95	98	96	94
Lower Bound	79	88	87	81	84	88

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2011-2021

## 4.2.3 Assessment of procedural accommodation of persons with disabilities

### GOAL

Assessing whether the voting procedure accommodated the needs of persons with disabilities

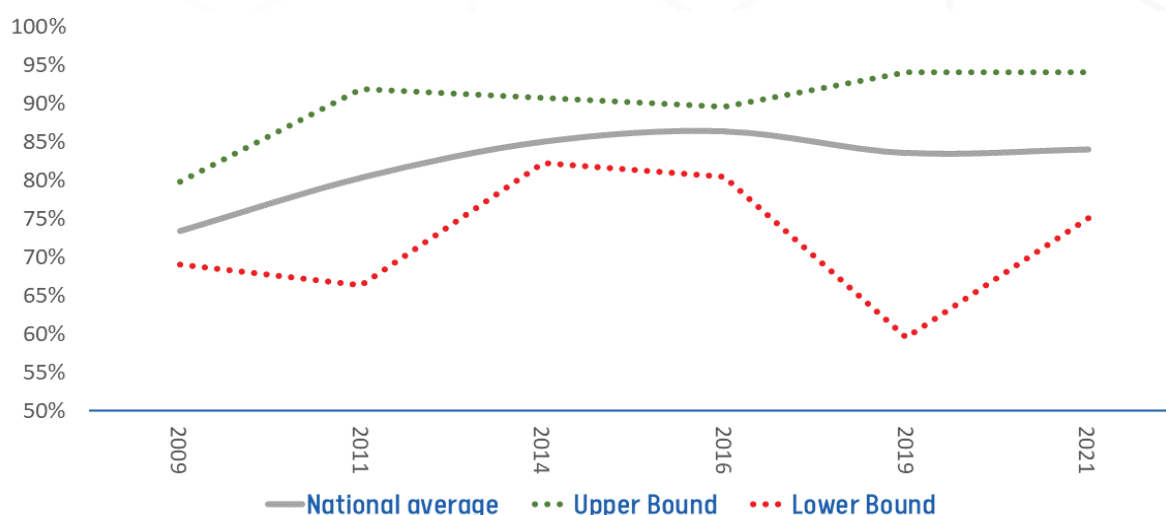
### QUESTION

To what extent did the voting procedure at this voting station consider the needs of persons with disabilities? (% to a great / some extent)

### ANALYSIS

In both 2019 and 2021, 84% of voters said that the voting stations accommodated the needs of persons with disabilities. Over the 2009-2014 period, attitudes on this indicator improved, rising from 73% in 2009 to 85% in 2014. The corresponding figures over the 2014-2021 period varied narrowly between 84% and 86%. Considering the full 2009-2021 period as a whole, 82% of voters on average thought that procedures at the voting station considered the needs of persons with disabilities. Levels of interprovincial variation on this metric have tended to fluctuate significantly over time, with larger than average percentage point difference between the lower and upper bounds in 2009-2011 and again in 2019-2021. This variation is informed mainly by sharp downward swings in certain provinces in select years, for instance Mpumalanga in 2011 and 2019, and a progressive decline in others in recent years (e.g., Gauteng)

**PROCEDURAL ACCOMMODATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Percentage of voters who thought that the voting procedure at the voting station considered the needs of persons with disabilities, 2009-2021 (% to a great/ some extent)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	73	80	85	86	84	84	82
Upper Bound	80	92	91	90	94	94	85
Lower Bound	69	66	82	80	59	75	76

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2021

## 4.2.4 Assessment of procedural accommodation of blind and visually impaired voters

### GOAL

Assessing whether the voting procedure accommodated the needs of visually impaired voters

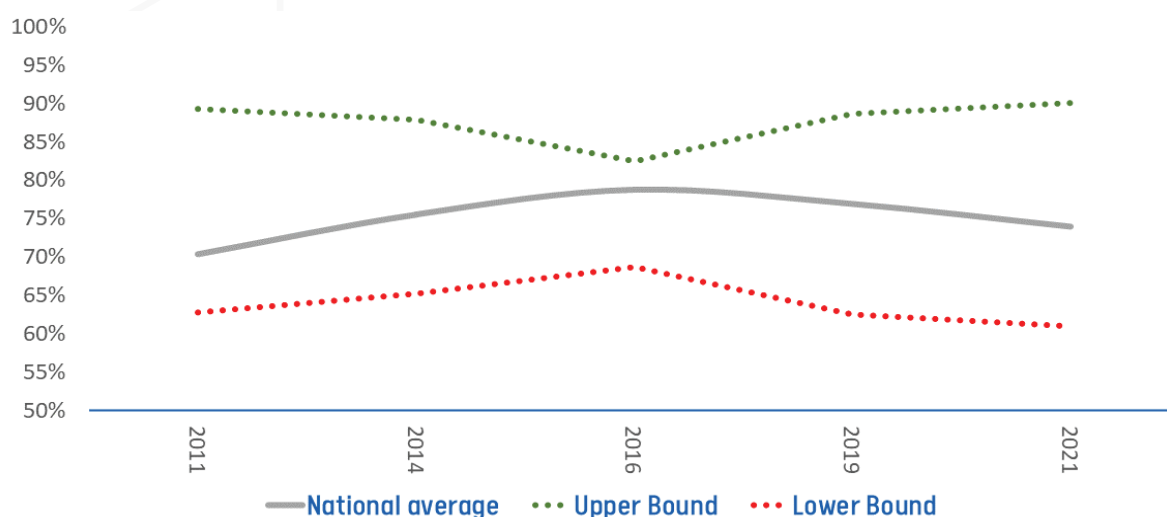
### QUESTION

To what extent did the voting procedure at this voting station consider the needs of the partially sighted or blind? (% to a great / some extent)

### ANALYSIS

In the 2021 local government elections, 74% of voters believed that the voting stations had put in place procedures that considered the needs of blind and visually impaired people. This figure was slightly below what was recorded in the survey rounds conducted between 2014 and 2019 but remained above the 2011 figure of 70%. By and large, voters were relatively satisfied with how voting stations are performing in relation to this issue. Except for 2016, levels of interprovincial variation on this measure have tended to be quite large in nature, fluctuating between 23 and 29 percentage points. Harsher evaluations than average on this measure were particularly evident in the Western Cape, while Gauteng voters have displaying increasingly less positive appraisals over the 2016-2021 period.

**PROCEDURAL ACCOMMODATION OF BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED VOTERS: Percentage of voters who thought that the voting procedures at the voting station considered the needs of partially sighted or blind voters, 2011-2021 (% to a great/ some extent)**



	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	70	76	79	77	74	75
Upper Bound	89	88	83	89	90	83
Lower Bound	63	65	69	63	61	65

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2011-2021

## 4.2.5 Assessing the secrecy of the vote at voting stations

### GOAL

Assessing whether voters were satisfied that the voting station procedures ensured the secrecy of their vote

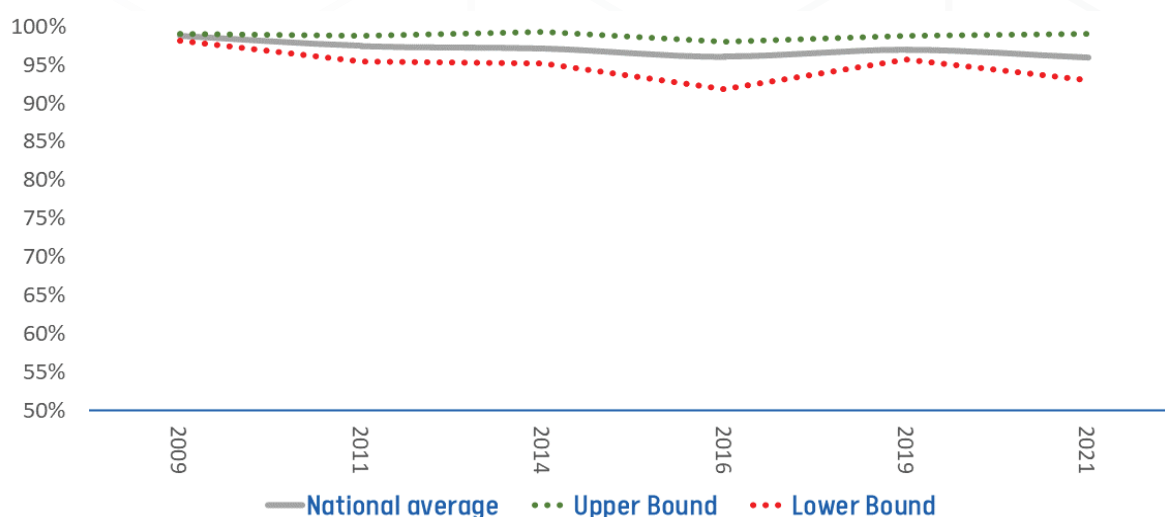
### QUESTION

Are you satisfied that your vote in this voting station was secret? (% very satisfied/satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

In 2021, 96% of voters had faith in the arrangements made by voting stations to ensure the secrecy of their vote. This finding is comparable to previous survey rounds, and only nominal differences were observed in the country over the 2009-2021 period. The average share of the voter population who was content with the secrecy of the vote during the period 2009-2021 was 97%. Overall, voters were therefore relatively satisfied with how the voting stations were performing in relation to ensuring the confidentiality of votes cast. Levels of interprovincial variation on this measure fluctuated within a very narrow range (92 to 99%). The level of difference between provinces is marginal, and the associated changes in rank position should not be a cause for concern.

**SATISFIED WITH SECRECY OF VOTE: Percentage of voters who were satisfied with the measures to ensure the secrecy of their vote at their voting station, 2009-2021 (%)**



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	99	97	97	96	97	96	97
Upper Bound	99	99	99	98	99	99	98
Lower Bound	98	96	95	92	96	93	96

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2021

## 4.2.6. Ballot paper usability and satisfaction

### GOAL

Overall satisfaction with ballot papers used in elections

### QUESTION

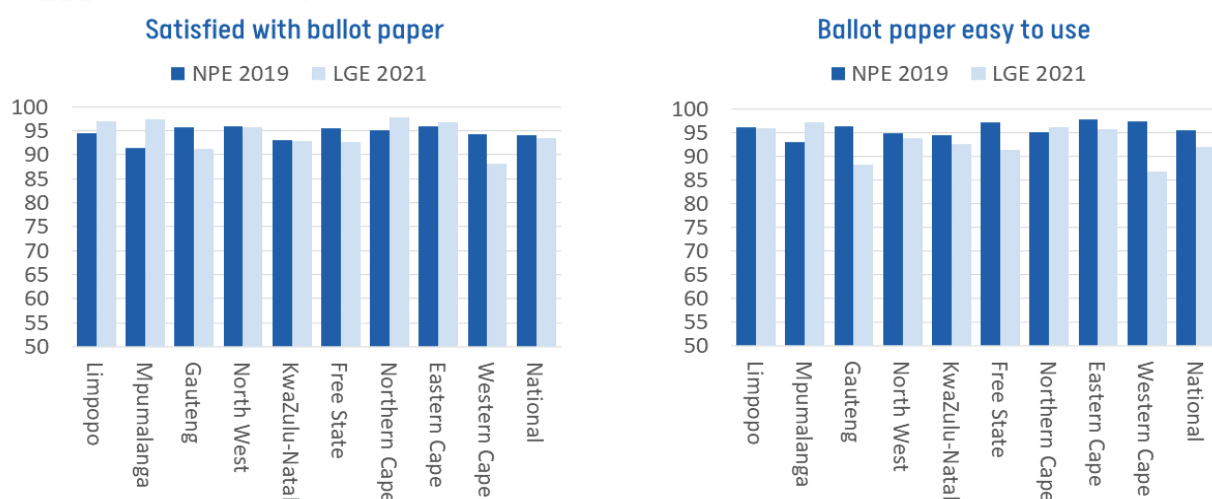
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the ballot papers used in this election? (% very satisfied / satisfied)

How easy or difficult was it to find your party of choice on the ballot papers? (% very satisfied / satisfied)

### ANALYSIS

In 2021, an overwhelming majority of voters (92%) voiced satisfaction with the ballot papers used in the local government elections. This outcome demonstrates that, overall, voters were fairly pleased with the ballot papers' design. Reinforcing this message, 93% of voters in the country found it easy in general to find their party of choice on the ballot paper in the 2021 elections. The change in both ballot paper evaluations between 2019 and 2021 is minor on aggregate. Only small percentage point differences were observed between the upper and lower bounds, which implies a low level of interprovincial variation. In other words, the level of difference between provinces is minor and not a source of concern. There has nonetheless been a distinct decline in ballot paper satisfaction and usability in the Western Cape and Gauteng between 2019 and 2021 relative to other provinces. While still very positive, it will be important to monitor this in future elections to ensure that it does not become a distinct trend.

**BALLOT PAPER SATISFACTION: Percentage of voters who were satisfied with the overall design of ballot papers and their usability, 2019-2021 (%)**



	Overall satisfaction with ballot paper		Ballot paper usability	
	2019	2021	2019	2021
National Avg.	94	93	95	92
Upper Bound	96	98	98	97
Lower Bound	94	97	96	87

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2019-2021

## 4.3 Coercion

### GOAL

Determining experiences of political coercion at the voting station

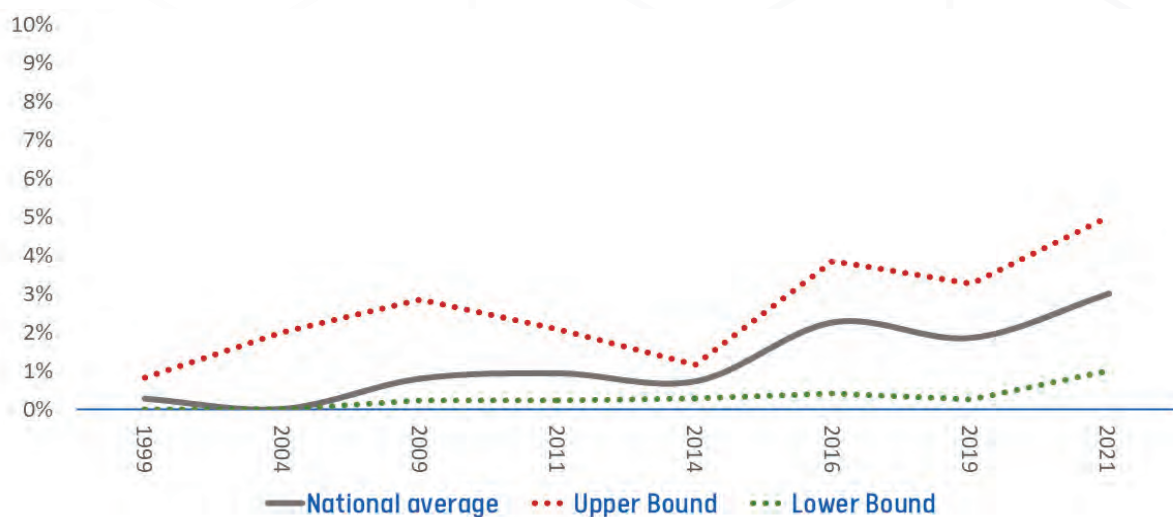
### QUESTION

Did anyone try to force you to vote for a certain political party or independent candidate at the voting station (while outside or inside)?

### ANALYSIS

Overall, it is evident that political coercion at the voting station is not a common occurrence. Although it remains rare, there is evidence that there has been a slight increase in reported coercion at voting stations since 2016. In both 2016 and 2019, 2% of voters reported experiencing political coercion, increasing to 3% in 2021. On the whole, only a two percentage point divergence was recorded between the upper and lower provincial bounds, implying a low level of interprovincial variation in reported coercion. Judged against previous survey rounds, the disparity between the upper and lower bounds was quite large in 2016, 2019 and 2021. This is influenced by increases in reported coercion among voters in KwaZulu Natal and North West in particular. While the shares reporting this experience remain nominal, the 2021 data demonstrates that may need to be an issue for the Electoral Commission to monitor in future elections.

**POLITICAL COERCION: Proportion of voters who said that they had experienced political coercion at the voting station (outside or inside), 1999-2021 (% experienced)**



	1999	2000	2004	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	1
Upper Bound	1	4	2	3	2	1	4	3	5	2
Lower Bound	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 1999-2021

## 4.4 Election turnout

### 4.4.1. Total votes cast, valid votes and spoilt votes in National and Provincial Elections (national vote)

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	MP	NC	LP	NW	WC	Out of country	Total
<b>1999 National Election</b>											
Total votes cast	2 222 394	1 115 326	3 744 958	3 011 732	1 157 229	335 177	1 691 609	1 333 858	1 616 179	...	16 228 462
Valid votes	2 188 184	1 094 776	3 704 449	2 958 963	1 132 517	327 950	1 660 849	1 307 532	1 601 922	...	15 977 142
Spoilt votes	34 210	20 550	40 509	52 769	24 712	7 227	30 760	26 326	14 257	...	251 320
% spoilt	1,5	1,8	1,1	1,8	2,1	2,2	1,8	2,0	0,9	...	1,5
<b>2004 National Election</b>											
Total votes cast	2 310 226	1 042 120	3 553 098	2 807 885	1 157 963	329 707	1 686 757	1 353 963	1 621 839	...	15 863 558
Valid votes	2 277 391	1 022 044	3 504 363	2 765 203	1 134 092	323 201	1 657 596	1 323 761	1 605 020	...	15 612 671
Spoilt votes	32 835	20 076	48 735	42 682	23 871	6 506	29 161	30 202	16 819	...	250 887
% spoilt	1,4	1,9	1,4	1,5	2,1	2,0	1,7	2,2	1,0	...	1,6
<b>2009 National Election</b>											
Total votes cast	2 344 098	1 069 127	4 391 699	3 574 326	1 363 836	421 490	1 570 592	1 135 701	2 049 097	...	17 919 966
Valid votes	2 309 643	1 051 858	4 345 613	3 527 234	1 343 253	414 502	1 547 636	1 113 411	2 027 579	...	17 680 729
Spoilt votes	34 455	17 269	46 086	47 092	20 583	6 988	22 956	22 290	21 518	...	239 237
% spoilt	1,5	1,6	1,0	1,3	1,5	1,7	1,5	2,0	1,1	...	1,3
<b>2014 National Election</b>											
Total votes cast	2 278 555	1 051 027	4 638 981	3 935 771	1 408 269	443 714	1 543 986	1 147 786	2 188 236	18 446	18 654 771
Valid votes	2 243 497	1 034 337	4 592 219	3 874 833	1 385 407	436 065	1 523 169	1 126 691	2 168 147	18 132	18 402 497
Spoilt votes	35 058	16 690	46 762	60 938	22 862	7 649	20 817	21 095	20 089	314	252 274
% spoilt	1,5	1,6	1,0	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,3	1,8	0,9	1,7	1,4
<b>2019 National Election</b>											
Total votes cast	2 052 818	919 549	4 580 285	3 715 985	1 290 908	417 248	1 530 837	1 012 250	2 133 062	19 909	17 672 851
Valid votes	2 020 527	907 212	4 537 402	3 652 577	1 271 979	410 842	1 510 568	994 220	2 112 170	19 882	17 437 379
Spoilt votes	32 291	12 337	42 883	63 408	18 929	6 406	20 269	18 030	20 892	27	235 472
% spoilt	1,6	1,3	0,9	1,7	1,5	1,5	1,3	1,8	1,0	0,1	1,3

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official election results, national and provincial elections 1999-2019

#### 4.4.2 Total votes cast, valid votes and spoilt votes in Local Government Elections (provincial summary, ward plus proportional representation votes)

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	MP	NC	LP	NW	WC	Total
<b>2000 Local Government Elections</b>										
Total votes cast	2 782 038	1 203 821	3 779 947	3 258 711	1 260 857	507 471	1 475 846	1 125 276	2 240 990	17 634 957
Valid votes	2 713 773	1 176 898	3 710 595	3 188 189	1 224 228	493 674	1 444 308	1 094 270	2 209 911	17 255 846
Spoilt votes	68 265	26 923	69 352	70 522	36 629	13 797	31 538	31 006	31 079	379 111
% spoilt	2,5	2,2	1,8	2,2	2,9	2,7	2,1	2,8	1,4	2,1
<b>2006 Local Government Elections</b>										
Total votes cast	3 237 836	1 245 605	4 035 819	3 945 826	1 432 103	558 645	1 920 089	1 419 621	2 352 316	20 147 860
Valid votes	3 159 626	1 213 162	3 971 580	3 867 456	1 393 452	545 594	1 883 661	1 374 183	2 313 646	19 722 360
Spoilt votes	78 210	32 443	64 239	78 370	38 651	13 051	36 428	45 438	38 670	425 500
% spoilt	2,4	2,6	1,6	2,0	2,7	2,3	1,9	3,2	1,6	2,1
<b>2011 Local Government Elections</b>										
Total votes cast	3 600 649	1 528 612	6 214 394	5 707 689	1 914 850	724 878	2 337 728	1 677 863	3 475 194	27 181 857
Valid votes	3 517 267	1 500 732	6 127 020	5 607 192	1 880 599	711 431	2 293 052	1 637 592	3 436 613	26 711 498
Spoilt votes	83 382	27 880	87 374	100 497	34 251	13 447	44 676	40 271	38 581	470 359
% spoilt	2,3	1,8	1,4	1,8	1,8	1,9	1,9	2,4	1,1	1,7
<b>2016 Local Government Elections</b>										
Total votes cast	3 748 448	1 649 073	7 196 467	6 622 974	2 149 917	758 390	2 565 627	1 823 458	3 881 005	30 395 359
Valid votes	3 667 247	1 616 890	7 095 642	6 487 321	2 114 364	746 162	2 525 600	1 780 478	3 829 967	29 863 671
Spoilt votes	81 201	32 183	100 825	135 653	35 553	12 228	40 027	42 980	51 038	531 688
% spoilt	2,2	2,0	1,4	2,0	1,7	1,6	1,6	2,4	1,3	1,7
<b>2021 Local Government Elections</b>										
Total votes cast	3 017 803	1 278 484	5 385 382	5 224 937	1 615 109	663 326	2 288 999	1 404 152	3 015 332	23 893 524
Valid votes	2 951 848	1 254 836	5 311 565	5 118 308	1 583 282	650 123	2 247 577	1 369 308	2 981 077	23 467 924
Spoilt votes	65 955	23 648	73 817	106 629	31 827	13 203	41 422	34 844	34 255	425 600
% spoilt	2,2	1,8	1,4	2,0	2,0	2,0	1,8	2,5	1,1	1,8

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official election results, local government elections 2000-2021

### 4.4.3 Spoilt ballots

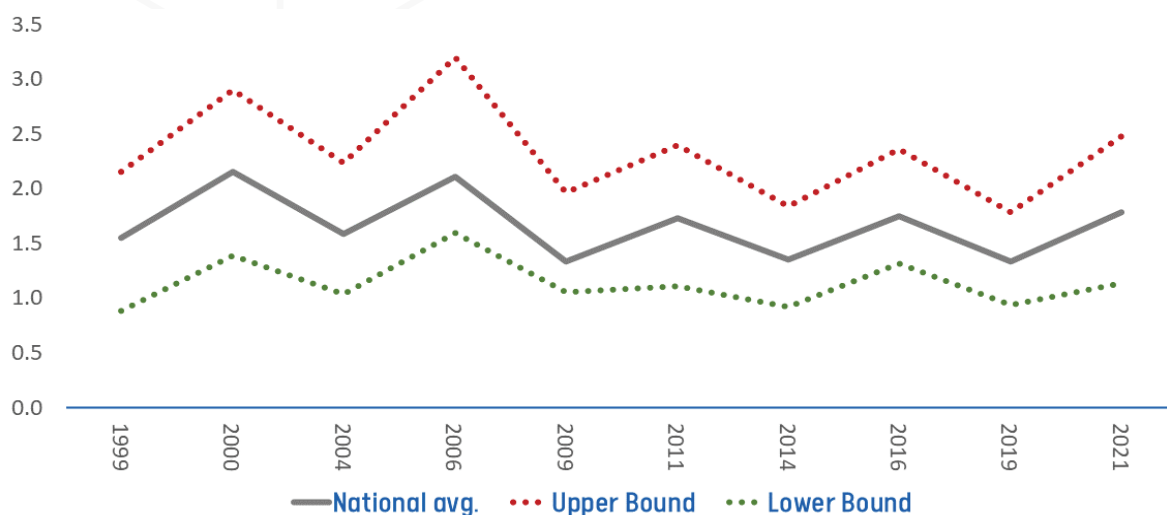
#### GOAL

Determining the share of total votes cast that were spoilt by voters

#### ANALYSIS

Of the total votes cast in national and provincial elections and local government elections conducted between 1999 and 2021, the percentage of ballots that were spoilt in the country averaged 1.7% on aggregate. This ranged between 1.3% and 2.1% across the full period. Spoiling may reflect unintentional error in filling in ballot papers on Election Day, as well as a form of deliberate electoral protest. Understanding the character of spoiling will be important in future in ensuring that unintentional spoiling is addressing through improved ballot paper design and balloting education activities. On average over the full period, only a 1.2 percentage point difference was observed between the upper and lower provincial bounds.

**SPOILT BALLOTS: Percentage of total votes cast that were spoilt by voters on Election Day in National and Provincial Elections and Local Government Elections, 1999-2021 (%)**



	1999	2000	2004	2006	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	1.5	2.1	1.6	2.1	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.7
Upper Bound	2.2	2.9	2.2	3.2	2.0	2.4	1.8	2.4	1.8	2.5	2.3
Lower Bound	0.9	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.1

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official election results, 1999-2021

## 4.4.4 Turnout in National and Provincial Elections as a percentage of registered voters

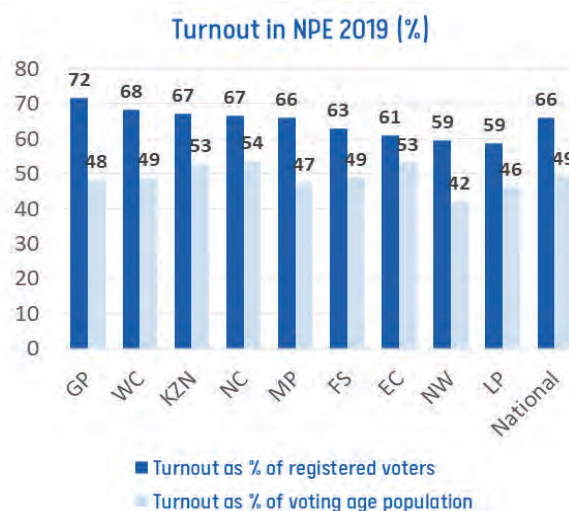
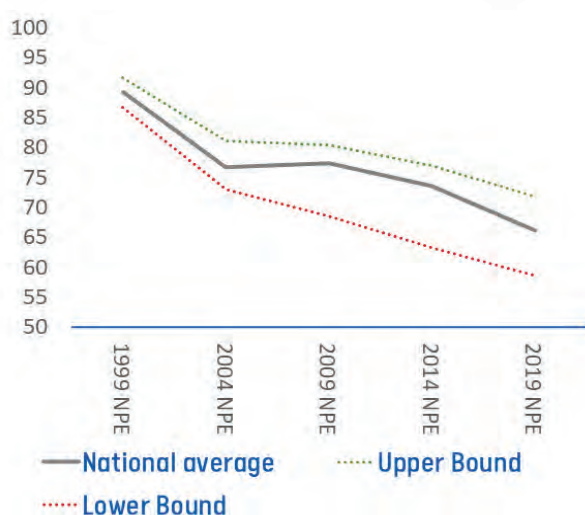
### GOAL

Determining electoral turnout as a percentage of registered voters

### ANALYSIS

Turnout in national and provincial elections between 1999 and 2019 in South Africa has fluctuated over time. In 1999, it stood at 89%, but fell to 77% in 2004. Although it remained stable in 2009, there was a modest decline to 73% in 2014 and a substantial decline to 66% in 2019. The recent fall in turnout was unevenly distributed between provinces, with a 13 percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds in 2019. This grew from a five percentage point difference in 1999, to 13 percentage points in 2019. Another factor to consider is that these turnout statistics are expressed as a percentage of registered voters. The figures are lower if one looks at turnout as a percentage of the voting age population (VAP). For instance, in 2019, turnout in the country was 49% of the voting age public, which is significantly lower than the 66% of registered voters that turned out. Turnout in 2019 as a percentage of VAP was lowest in the North West (42%) and highest (54%) in the Northern Cape.

### ELECTORAL TURNOUT: Percentage of registered voters that turned out to cast their vote on Election Day in National and Provincial Elections, 1999-2019 (%)



	1999	2000	2004	2006	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	89	...	77	...	77	...	73	...	66	...	77
Upper Bound	92	...	81	...	80	...	77	...	72	...	79
Lower Bound	87	...	73	...	69	...	63	...	59	...	72

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official election results, 1999-2021

#### 4.4.5 Turnout in Local Government Elections as a percentage of registered voters

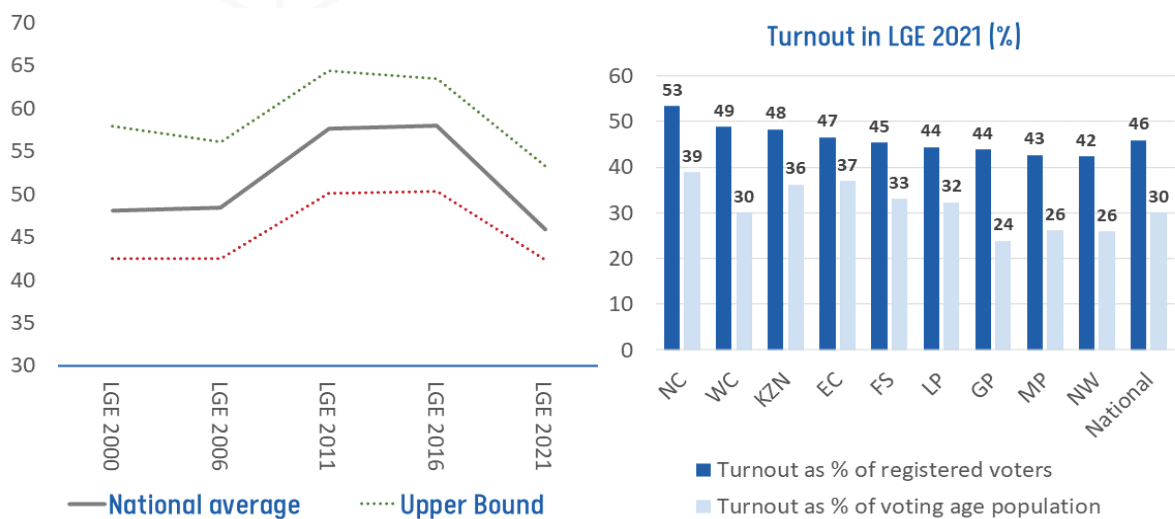
##### GOAL

Determining electoral turnout as a percentage of registered voters

##### ANALYSIS

In 2000 and 2006, turnout of registered voters in local government elections in South Africa was slightly below the 50% mark (48% in both elections). This was followed by a rise to 58% in 2011. It remained stable at 58% in the 2016 Local Government Election. Despite this, the turnout of registered voters fell to 46% in the 2021 Election, representing the lowest turnout witnessed over the 2000-2021 period. Another factor to consider is that these turnout statistics are expressed as a percentage of registered voters. The figures are lower if one looks at turnout as a percentage of the voting age population (VAP). For example, in 2021, turnout in the country was 30% of the voting age population, which is significantly lower than the 46% of registered voters that turned out. At a provincial level, turnout in 2021 as a percentage of VAP ranged between a low of 24% in Gauteng to a high of 39% in the Northern Cape.

**ELECTORAL TURNOUT: Percentage of registered voters that turned out to cast their vote on Election Day in Local Government Elections, 2000-2021 (%)**



	2000	2004	2006	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	48	...	48	...	58	...	58	...	46	52
Upper Bound	58	...	56	...	64	...	63	...	53	58
Lower Bound	42	...	42	...	50	...	50	...	42	46

Data Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) official election results, 2000-2021



**PART**

**E**

**POST-ELECTION**

## 5. POST-ELECTION

### 5.1. Evaluation of the elections as free and fair

#### GOAL

Determine the extent to which voters rate the elections as free and fair

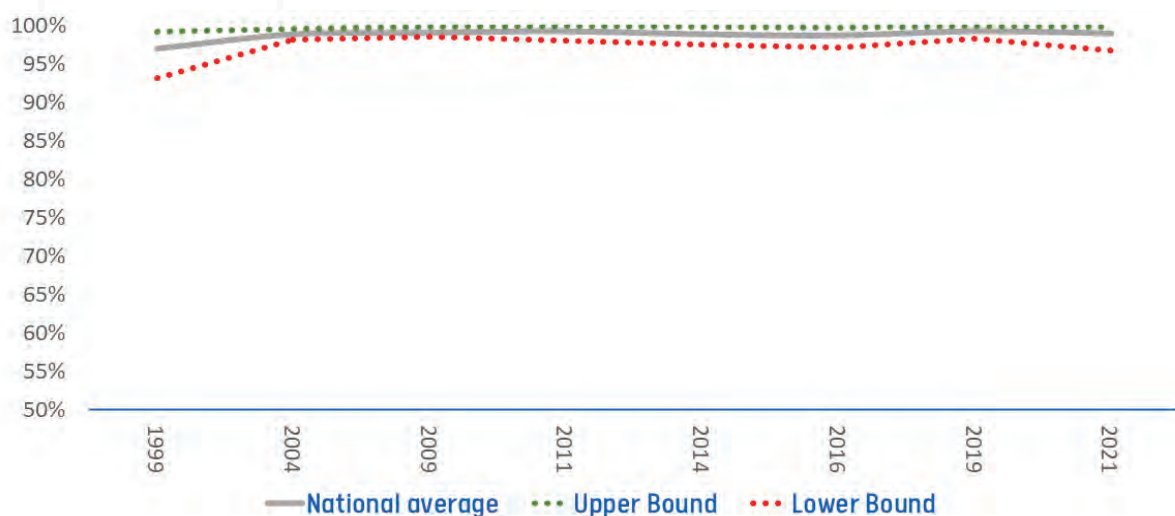
#### QUESTION

Do you think that the election procedures were free and fair? (% yes)

#### ANALYSIS

Looking at the 2021 elections survey results, almost all voters felt that the election procedures were free and fair. This was a resolutely positive result and is consistent with previous survey rounds. On average over the full 2004-2021 period, the share of voters in the country who thought that the voting procedures were both free and fair was 99%. Voters were satisfied with the election procedures in the context of the nine elections being considered. Given that the levels of satisfaction among voters is at a high level in all provinces, provincial differences reflect subtle percentage point changes rather than sizeable shifts in perspective. Only a two percentage point gap was observed between the upper and lower bounds.

**PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION FREENESS AND FAIRNESS: Proportion of voters who thought that the voting procedures were free and fair, 1999-2021 (% yes)**



	1999	2000	2004	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	97	96	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	96
Upper Bound	99	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99
Lower Bound	93	89	98	98	98	98	97	98	98	97

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 1999-2021

## 5.2 Vote count

### GOAL

Assess confidence in the accuracy of the vote count

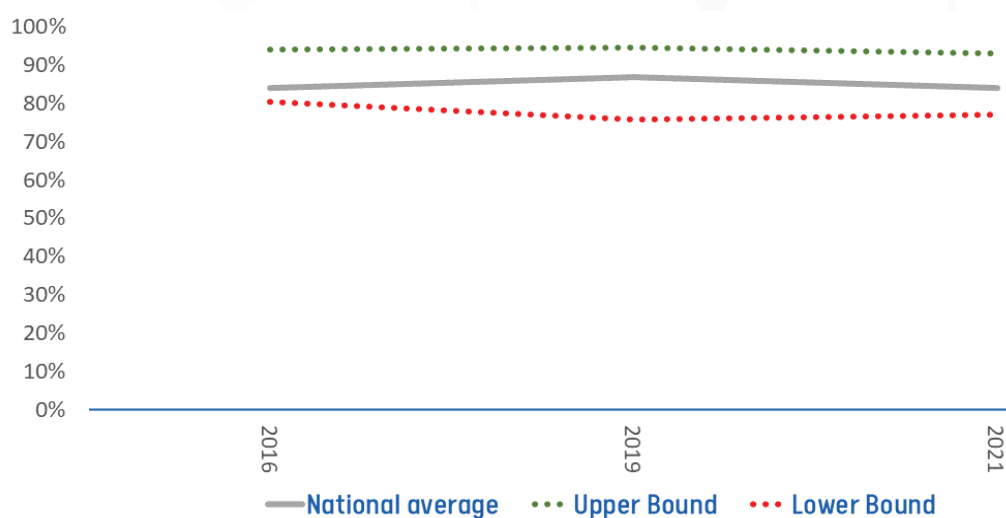
### QUESTION

How confident are you that your vote will be accurately counted? (% completely confident / very confident)

### ANALYSIS

In the 2021 local government elections, an overwhelming majority of voters in the country (84%) believed that their vote would be accurately counted. This is an encouraging finding that speaks to confidence in electoral staff in performing this duty and is consistent with the 2016 survey results. However, we do note a slight drop of 3 percentage points when comparing the 2019 national and provincial election view to 2021. During the 2016-2021 period, the average proportion of voters in the voter population who had confidence in the count was 85%. An examination of provincial variation in assessments in these three elections shows that the difference between the upper and lower bounds ranged between 14 and 18 percentage points. Despite these differences, confidence in the vote counting remains at a consistent high level, though the decline in Gauteng and the Western Cape (78% and 77% confident respectively in 2021) needs to be monitored.

**CONFIDENCE IN THE ACCURACY OF THE VOTE COUNT: Proportion of voters who thought that the vote would be accurately counted, 2016-2021 (%)**



	2016	2019	2021	Average
National Avg.	84	87	84	85
Upper Bound	94	94	93	91
Lower Bound	80	76	77	79

Data Source: IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2016-2021

The background of the cover features a photograph of individuals at a polling station. One person is holding a handheld electronic device, likely for voter registration or verification. Another person's hand is visible near some papers on a table. The scene is partially obscured by a large, stylized geometric overlay composed of various shades of blue triangles. The text 'PART F' is prominently displayed in white on a dark blue rectangular background within the upper right portion of the image.

# PART F

## ELECTORAL REFORM

## 6. ELECTORAL REFORM

### 6.1. Electoral outcomes - best possible government

#### GOAL

Overall satisfaction with the electoral system and support for electoral reform

#### QUESTION

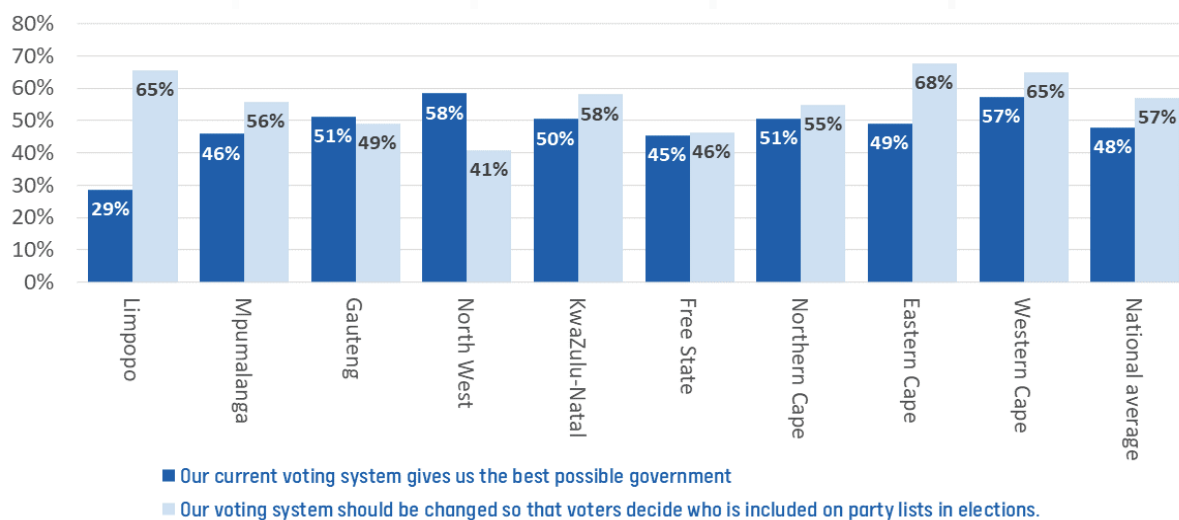
Our current voting system gives us the best possible government. (% strongly agree/ agree)

Our voting system should be changed so that voters decide who to include on party lists in elections. (% strongly agree/ agree)

#### ANALYSIS

In 2018, the adult public were generally divided over whether the voting system delivers the best possible government, with only 48% offering a favourable response. This demonstrated a degree of ambivalence about whether the electoral system is functioning in accordance with expectations of democracy. Furthermore, more than half (57%) of citizens thought that they should have more say over who is included on party lists in elections. Significant provincial variation was observed on these indicators compared. This suggests moderate (if lukewarm) support for this type of reform, and perhaps reflects a demand for greater levels of accountability.

**SATISFACTION WITH THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM: Percentage of citizens who agree that the voting system provides the best possible government, and believe that the system should be reformed to allow greater voter influence on party list candidates, 2018 (%)**



	Current electoral system provides the best possible government 2018	Voting system should be change so voters decide on party list candidates 2018
National Avg.	48	57
Upper Bound	58	68
Lower Bound	29	41

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2018

## 6.2. Electronic voting

### 6.2.1. Perceived effectiveness of electronic voting

#### GOAL

Evaluation of the perceived effectiveness of electronic voting

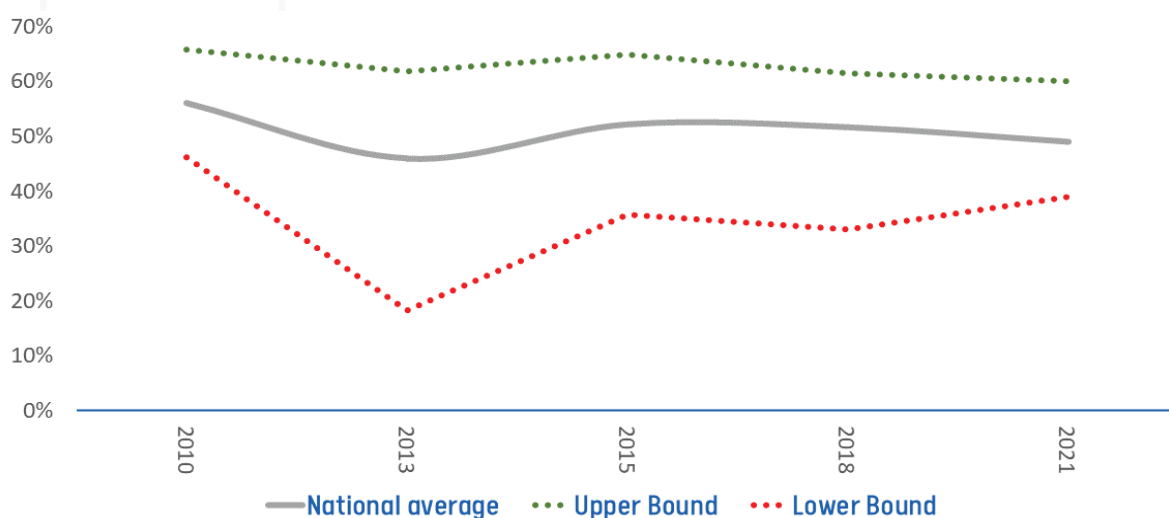
#### QUESTION

Electronic voting will make voting easier and more effective. (% strongly agree/agree)

#### ANALYSIS

In 2018, 56% of citizens in South Africa thought that electronic voting would be easier and more effective than the present system of paper ballots. Of interest is that this number declined to 49% in 2021, indicating a seven percentage point drop for an electronic voting preference. This suggests that the public in the country remained fairly divided on the issue of electronic voting. On average across the 2010-2021 period, 51% of citizens thought that electronic voting would make voting easier and more effective. A fair degree of interprovincial variation was observed on this indicator. There was a 21 percentage point disparity between the upper and lower bounds during 2010-2021 period. It is evident that some citizens would be quite sceptical if the Electoral Commission decided to introduce an electronic voting system, while others would openly welcome it.

**EASE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ELECTRONIC VOTING: Proportion of adult citizens who thought that electronic voting would make the system more efficient, 2010-2021 (% agreeing)**



	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
National Avg.	56	46	52	52	49	51
Upper Bound	66	62	65	62	60	59
Lower Bound	46	18	36	33	39	38

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2010-2021

## 6.2.2 Concerns of possible fraud associated with electronic voting

### GOAL

Assess concern over possible fraud associated with electronic voting

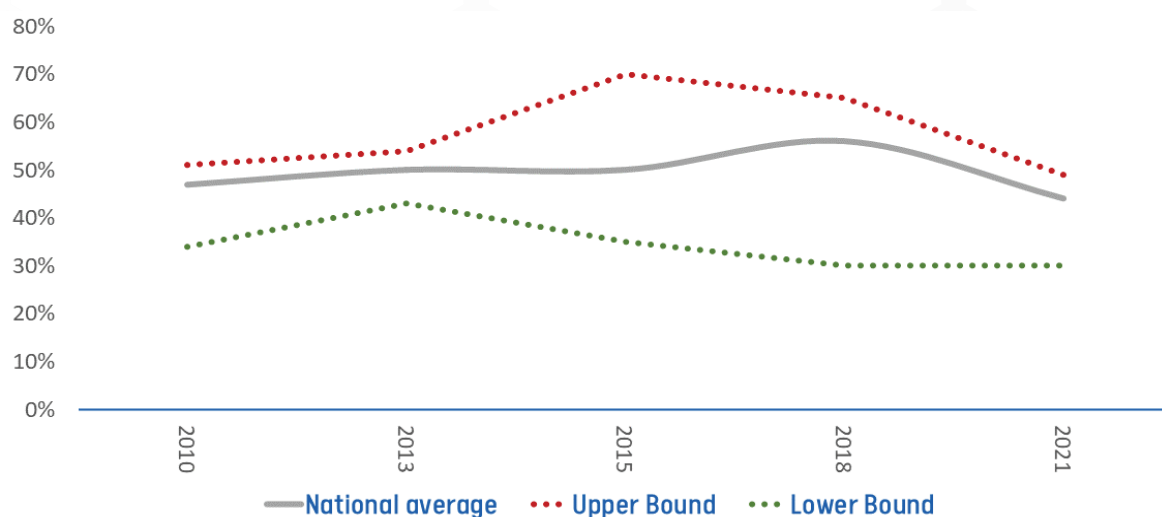
### QUESTION

Electronic voting will introduce more electoral fraud. (% strongly agree/ agree)

### ANALYSIS

Many adult citizens believed that an electronic voting system would introduce more fraud relative to the current electoral system. This indicates that the public is quite concerned about potential negative consequences associated with electronic voting. Fears of voter fraud in an electronic voting system intensified between 2010 and 2018, suggesting mounting concern about this issue. In the 2010 survey round, 47% of citizens in the country expressed this concern over e-voting, increasing across each election, to a high of 56% in 2018. However, in 2021 only 44 % of the population held this belief, point to a significant but lower level of concern.

**ELECTRONIC VOTING AND CONCERN OVER FRAUD: Share of adult citizens who believe that electronic voting would introduce more fraud into the election system, 2010-2021 (% agreeing)**



	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
National Avg.	47	50	50	56	44	51
Upper Bound	51	54	70	65	49	54
Lower Bound	34	43	35	30	30	37

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 2010-2021

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