



POVERTY AND INEQUALITY:
DIAGNOSIS | PROGNOSIS | RESPONSES



22-23 SEPTEMBER 2016
INDABA HOTEL, CONFERENCE CENTRE
JOHANNESBURG

Benjamin Roberts, Jare Struwig and Steven Gordon

Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery (DGSD)
Research Programme, HSRC

What Drives Participation in Political Gatherings in South Africa?

An Analysis of Public Political
Behaviour

Civic Participation

- Without **public involvement** in the democratic process, democracy itself lacks its legitimacy.
 - Public participation in politics is the **defining facet** of citizenship in democracy.
- Too much **academic focus** in South Africa on **election participation**, ignoring other forms of **civic participation**.
- Non-electoral methods of **political action** are **very important** as they can **inflate** citizens' influence on politicians.
- Non-electoral methods of **civic participation** can be defined **in terms of a number of** different actions
 - **Examples**: public demonstrations, participating in ward committees or community meetings.

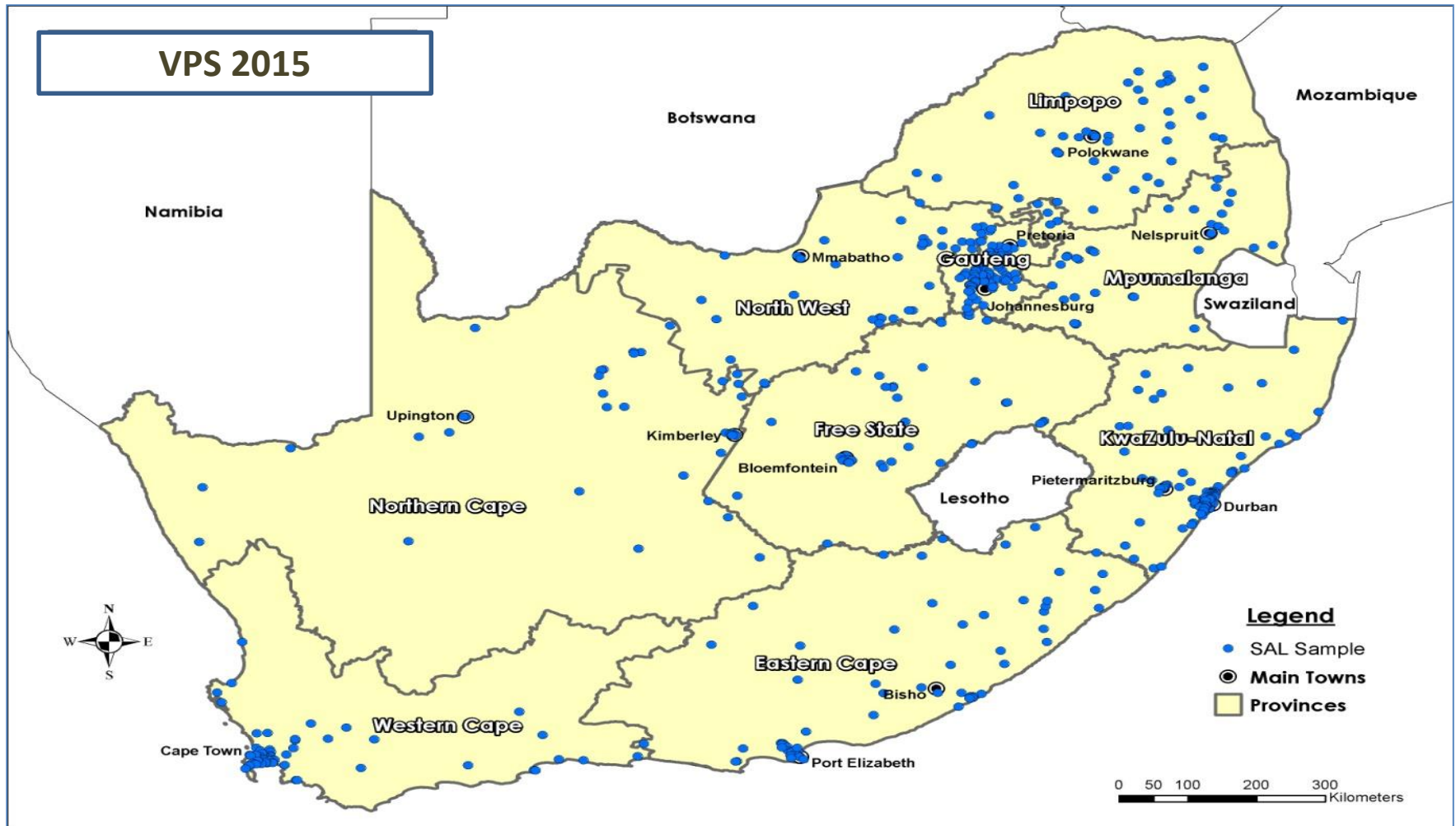


Quantitative Methodology

- Survey conducted by **Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)**
- Nationally representative of the population 16 years and older living in private households in the 9 provinces
 - **Primary sampling units:** 500 census enumerator areas (EAs), stratified by province, geography type and majority population group
 - **Secondary sampling units:** 7 household visiting points randomly selected per EA
 - One respondent 16+ years randomly selected per household
- In **2015** the **realised** sample size was **2,976**
- Responses to the **survey voluntary and confidential**, collected by **face-to-face interview**
- Data collection: **November-December**



Enumerator areas (EAs)



A graphical representation of 500 selected Enumeration Areas.

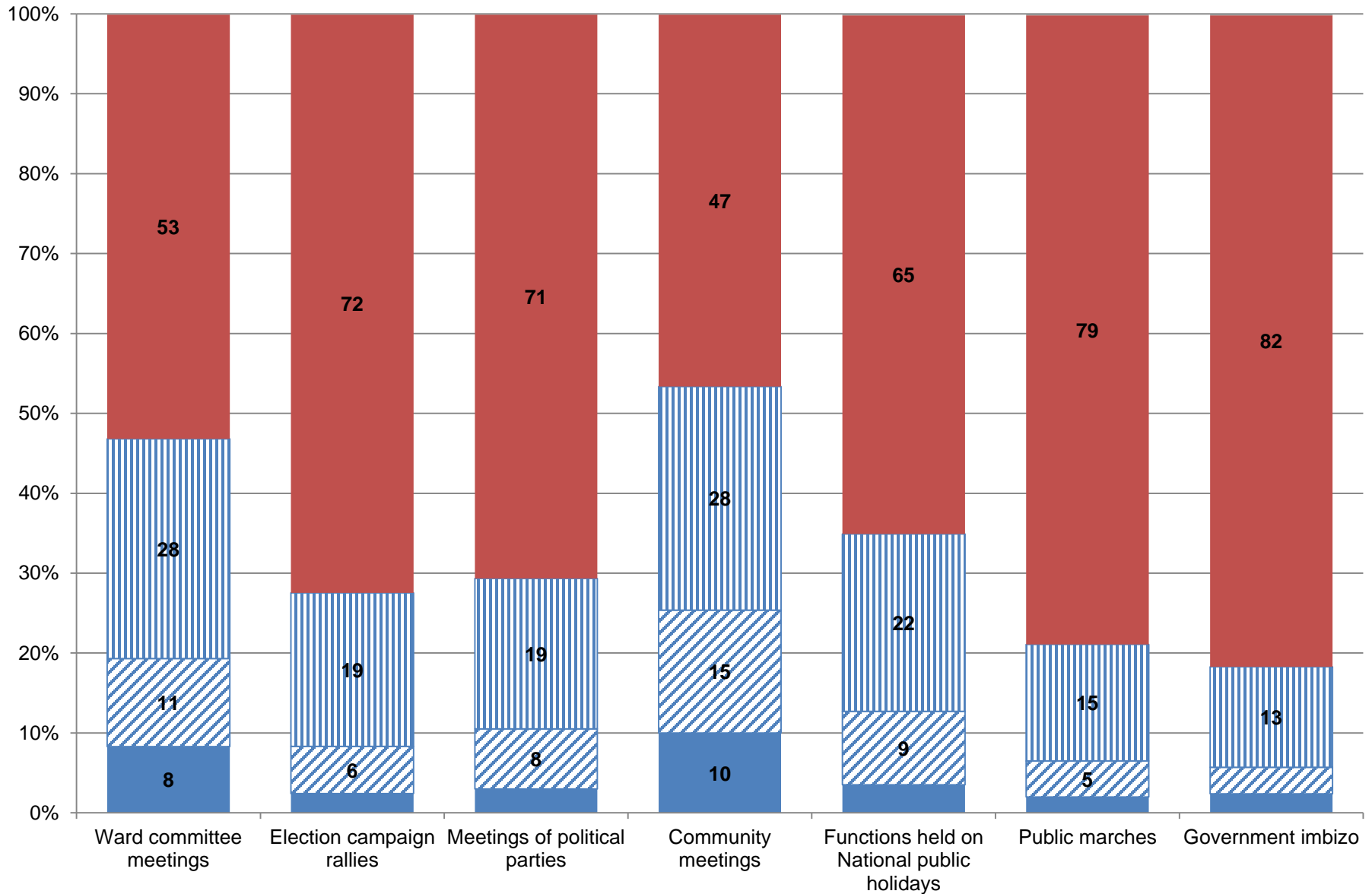
Asking about Civic Participation

- Existing research on **non-electoral political participation** in South Africa tends to prioritise **protest action** and tends to **ignore** other spaces where **citizens can voice** their opinion.
- In order to **understanding** civic participation, **respondents in the survey** were asked how often they participate in the following political activities:
 - Ward committee meetings
 - Election campaign rallies
 - Meetings of political parties
 - Community meetings
 - Functions held on National public holidays
 - Public marches
 - Government imbizo



How often, if ever, do you attend any of the following?

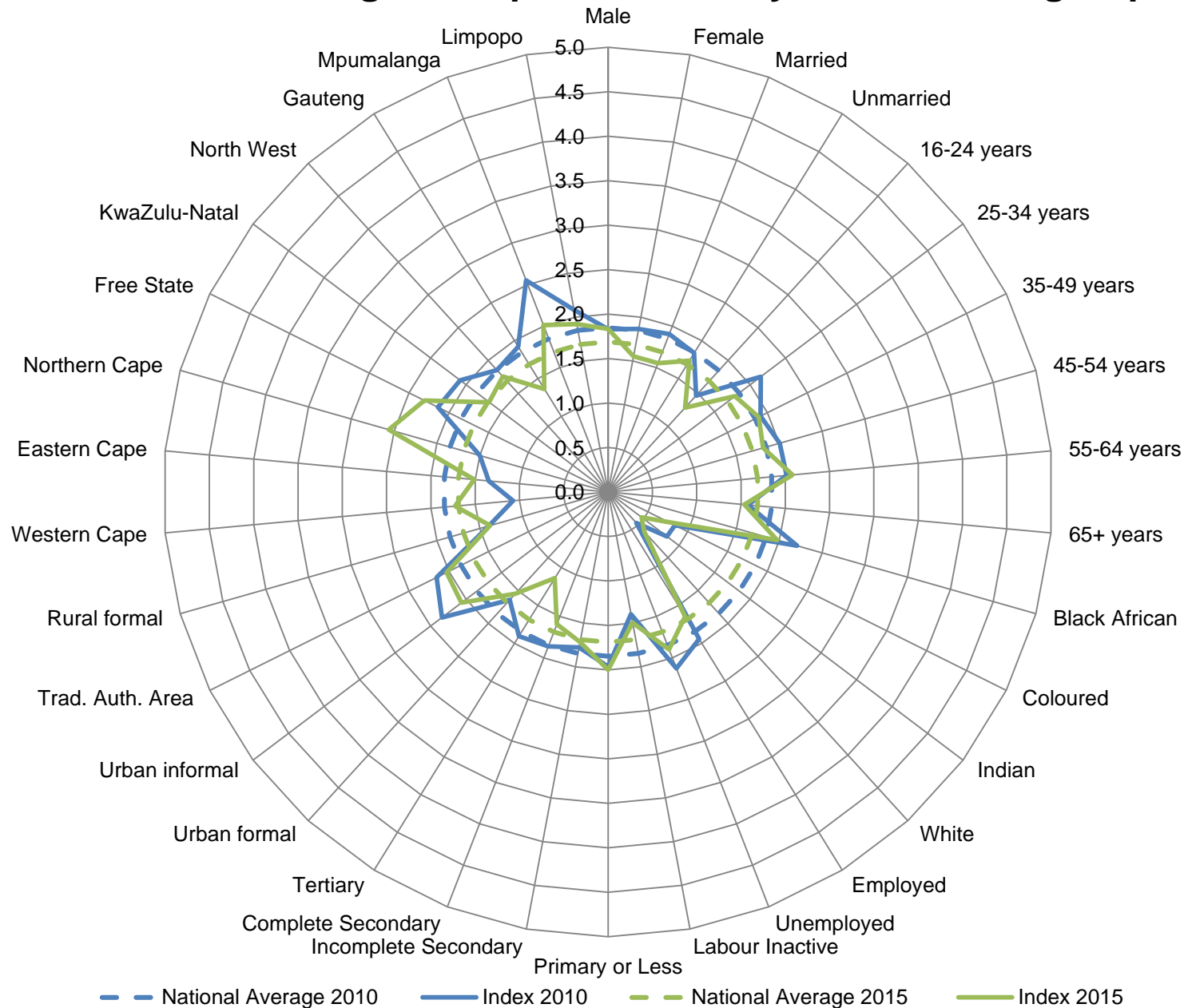
■ Very often ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Never ■ (Do not know)



| Types of Conventional Non-Electoral Participation | Obs. | Item-Test Correlation | Item-Rest Correlation | Average Interitem Covariance | Alpha |
|---|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Ward committee meetings | 2941 | 0.78 | 0.67 | 0.27 | 0.85 |
| Election campaign rallies | 2936 | 0.80 | 0.73 | 0.30 | 0.85 |
| Meetings of political parties | 2930 | 0.81 | 0.74 | 0.29 | 0.84 |
| Community meetings | 2922 | 0.74 | 0.61 | 0.28 | 0.86 |
| Functions held on National public holidays | 2932 | 0.71 | 0.61 | 0.31 | 0.86 |
| Public marches | 2932 | 0.72 | 0.64 | 0.32 | 0.86 |
| Government imbizo | 2932 | 0.75 | 0.67 | 0.32 | 0.85 |
| Test Scale | | | | 0.30 | 0.87 |

To better comprehend the distribution of conventional political activity in **South African society**, an index of political activity –known as the 0-10 **Political Gathering Participation Index** was created.

Political Gathering Participation Index by Selected Subgroups



Linear Regression Analysis

Predicting Determinants on the
Political Gathering Participation Index

| | Coef. | Std. Err. | Sig. | Beta |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------|--------|
| Female (ref. male) | -0.088 | 0.031 | ** | -0.079 |
| Age | 0.006 | 0.002 | ** | 0.173 |
| Marital Status (ref. Married) | 0.018 | 0.042 | | 0.015 |
| Population group (ref. Black African) | | | | |
| Coloured | -0.364 | 0.048 | *** | -0.194 |
| Indian | -0.330 | 0.053 | *** | -0.096 |
| White | -0.422 | 0.048 | *** | -0.226 |
| Geographic Type (ref. Urban formal) | | | | |
| Urban informal | -0.028 | 0.079 | | -0.013 |
| Trad. Auth. Area | 0.019 | 0.048 | | 0.014 |
| Rural formal | -0.167 | 0.088 | | -0.056 |
| Living Standard Measurement | -0.034 | 0.012 | ** | -0.115 |
| Educational Attainment | 0.007 | 0.007 | | 0.042 |
| Employment (ref. employed) | | | | |
| Unemployed | -0.007 | 0.042 | | -0.006 |
| Pensioner | -0.167 | 0.082 | | -0.089 |
| Student | -0.161 | 0.050 | ** | -0.097 |
| Labour Inactive | 0.055 | 0.066 | | 0.031 |
| Obs. | 2642 | | | |
| R-squared | 0.165 | | | |
| Root MSE | 0.513 | | | |



*** p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05

The regressions controls for province of residence

Batho Pele Index

- Benjamin Roberts and David Hemson developed a set of **nine attitudinal statements** was developed in order to provide **public assessment** of the degree to municipalities are honouring the Batho Pele (**“People First”**) principles.
 - The statements were **crafted** to reflect on the **quality of delivery** at the municipal level.
- Attitudes towards the **performance of municipalities** against the Batho Pele principles were included initially in the **2007 round** of SASAS.
- Responses to these questions were combined to produce the **Batho Pele Index** ranged 0-100.
 - The Index score was **39** in 2015.



Political Interest

- Political interest is a **good measure** of how much political **information** and **knowledge** an individual possesses.
- Measures of **political interest** can be used to identify the probability of individuals to **engage** in **traditional political** activity but in **non-electoral politics** as well.
 - A number of studies in the **United States and Western Europe** have tested this association but limited testing has been conducted in **Southern Africa**
- Used four questions to measure political interest, two items on interest in **local government elections**, one item **discussing politics** and a general item on how interested an individual was **personally interested** in politics.
- Responses to these questions were combined to produce a **Political Interest Index** ranged 0-10



Political News Consumption

- In order for citizens to engage in rational civic actions, citizens require at least a basic level of civic and political knowledge.
 - One way to achieve civic knowledge is through conventional media platforms like radio, newspapers and television .
- In the VPS 2015, respondents were asked, when they were looking to get political news or information, to indicate the extent to which they on average:
 - read the political content of a newspaper,
 - watch political news on television
 - listen to political news on the radio
- Responses to these questions were combined to produce a **News Consumption Index** ranged 0-10



| | Coef. | Std. Err. | Sig. | Beta |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------|--------|
| Female (ref. male) | -0.050 | 0.028 | | -0.041 |
| Age | 0.003 | 0.001 | * | 0.091 |
| Population group (ref. Black African) | | | | |
| Coloured | -0.211 | 0.040 | *** | -0.115 |
| Indian | -0.152 | 0.041 | ** | -0.047 |
| White | -0.287 | 0.040 | *** | -0.164 |
| Living Standard Measurement | -0.032 | 0.010 | ** | -0.112 |
| Interpersonal Trust | 0.050 | 0.033 | *** | 0.062 |
| Political Organ. (ref. Active Member) | | | | |
| Inactive Member | -0.362 | 0.068 | *** | -0.266 |
| Non-Member | -0.617 | 0.065 | *** | -0.510 |
| Political Interest Index | 0.031 | 0.005 | *** | 0.144 |
| News Consumption Index | 0.036 | 0.005 | *** | -0.203 |
| Batho Pele Index | -0.047 | 0.017 | ** | -0.097 |
| Obs. | 2601 | | | |
| R-squared | 0.416 | | | |
| Root MSE | 0.429 | | | |

*** p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05

The regressions controls for province of residence, geographic type, labour market status, years of completed education and marital status



Discussion

- Consistent with **existing theory**, our political **cognitive awareness indicators** account for the bulk of the variance explained by our models.
 - What drives indicators of political **cognitive awareness** in South Africa?
- The effects of **education and economic status** are found to be contrary to **theoretical expectations** on political participation.
- Dissatisfaction with **municipal functioning** linked to political gathering –no **culture** of contentment.
- The observed difference between **race groups** may reflect differing **culture traditions** on collective forms of political participation.
 - The philosophy of *Ubuntu* promotes a communal politics
- Need to update **existing theories** of non-electoral political behaviour to **take account** of these observed **contradictory** possibilities.



Voting Intention

- Unlike participation in non-electoral civic politics, the **following index variables** have no influence on voting intention:
 - Political News Consumption Index
 - Batho Pele Index
- The **following socio-demographic characteristics** influences participation in non-electoral civic politics but not voting intention:
 - Economic status
 - Population group
- The **Political Interest Index** has a positive statistically **significant correlation** with non-electoral civic participation and voting intention
- In summarisation the **determinants** of participation in non-electoral civic politics are **very different** from those of voting intention





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

**Changing lives of
ordinary people
through human and
social sciences**