



SOUTH AFRICA



HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

ELECTION INDICATORS REPORT

2021

FREE STATE



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)
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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)



Simon Mamabolo
Chief Electoral Officer
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.

Apart from a national report, nine provincial reports have been prepared to better understand sub-national variation in trends and how these compare to the national picture. This report on Free State 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 less than half 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 nationally, and this tendency remains common to most provinces. 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 in this province found the registration process easy and that our voter education campaigns were effective. Voters also had good experiences at voting stations and were generally happy with the quality of services rendered by the Commission's officials. Almost all in the province 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.

Simon Mamabolo

Chief Electoral Officer

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 and Steven L. Gordon, and also comprising Joleen Steyn-Kotze, Samela Mtyingizane, Ngqapheli Mchunu, Thobeka Zondi, Mercy Ngungu and Kombi Sausi.

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.

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



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
1. ASSESSING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN SOUTH AFRICA	9
1.1 Introducing the report series	9
1.2 Conceptual framework	10
1.3 Guide to indicators and their interpretation	13
2. PRE-ELECTION PHASE	15
2.1 Support for the political system	15
2.1.1 National Pride	15
2.1.2 Demand for democracy: Support for democratic ideals	16
2.1.3 Supply of democracy: Satisfaction with the functioning of democracy	17
2.1.4 Supply of democracy: Country going in the right direction	18
2.1.5 Supply of democracy: Evaluation of performance against democratic ideals	19
2.1.6 Satisfaction with municipal performance	20
2.2. Public trust in political and social institutions	21
2.2.1. Trust in the Electoral Commission	21
2.2.2 Trust in National Government	22
2.2.3 Trust in Provincial Government	23
2.2.4 Trust in Local Government	24
2.2.5 Trust in Parliament	25
2.2.6 Trust in Courts	26
2.2.7 Trust in Political Parties	27
2.2.8 Trust in Traditional Authorities/Leaders	28
2.2.9 Confidence in Political Leaders	29
2.2.10 Trust in Religious Institutions	30



2.3	Electoral predispositions: Psychological involvement in electoral politics	31
2.3.1	Political interest	31
2.3.2	Politics easy to understand	32
2.3.3	Belief in the power of one's vote	33
2.3.4	Views on the conduct of politicians and its effect on the meaning of voting	34
2.3.5	Duty to vote	35
2.3.6	Voting intention	36
2.3.7	Planned abstention due to administrative barriers	37
2.3.8	Voter registration patterns	38
2.3.9	Perceived ease of the registration process	39
2.3.10	Duration of registration process	40
3.	CAMPAIGN PERIOD	42
3.1	Campaign integrity	42
3.1.1	Political party tolerance during campaigning	44
3.2	Voter education	45
3.2.1	Sources of information on voting	45
3.2.2	Preferred source of information on voting	46
3.2.3	Demand for information on voting	47
3.2.4	Number of Civic and Democracy Education (CDE) events	48
3.2.5	Perceived effectiveness of voter education campaigns	49
4.	ELECTION DAY	51
4.1	Voting station evaluations	51
4.1.1	Time to get to voting station	51
4.1.2	Queuing time at voting stations	52
4.1.3	Safety and security	53

4.1.4	Accessibility of voting station to persons with disabilities/the elderly	54
4.1.5	Quality of service rendered by IEC officials	55
4.2	Voting procedure	56
4.2.1	Assessment of electoral procedures	56
4.2.2	Assessment of procedural accommodation of the elderly	57
4.2.3	Assessment of procedural accommodation of persons with disabilities	58
4.2.4	Assessment of procedural accommodation of blind and visually impaired voters	59
4.2.5	Assessing the secrecy of the vote at voting stations	60
4.2.6	Ballot paper usability and satisfaction	61
4.3	Coercion	62
4.4	Election turnout	63
4.4.1	Total votes cast, valid votes and spoilt votes in National and Provincial Elections (national vote)	63
4.4.2	Total votes cast, valid votes and spoilt votes in Local Government Elections (provincial summary, ward plus proportional representation votes)	64
4.4.3	Spoilt ballots	65
4.4.4	Turnout in National and Provincial Elections as a percentage of registered voters	66
4.4.5	Turnout in Local Government Elections as a percentage of registered voters	67
5.	POST-ELECTION	69
5.1.	Evaluation of the elections as free and fair	69
5.2	Vote count	70
6.	ELECTORAL REFORM	72
6.1.	Electoral outcomes - best possible government	72
6.2.	Electronic voting	73
6.2.1.	Perceived effectiveness of electronic voting	73
6.2.2	Concerns of possible fraud associated with electronic voting	74
	REFERENCES	75



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 has 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

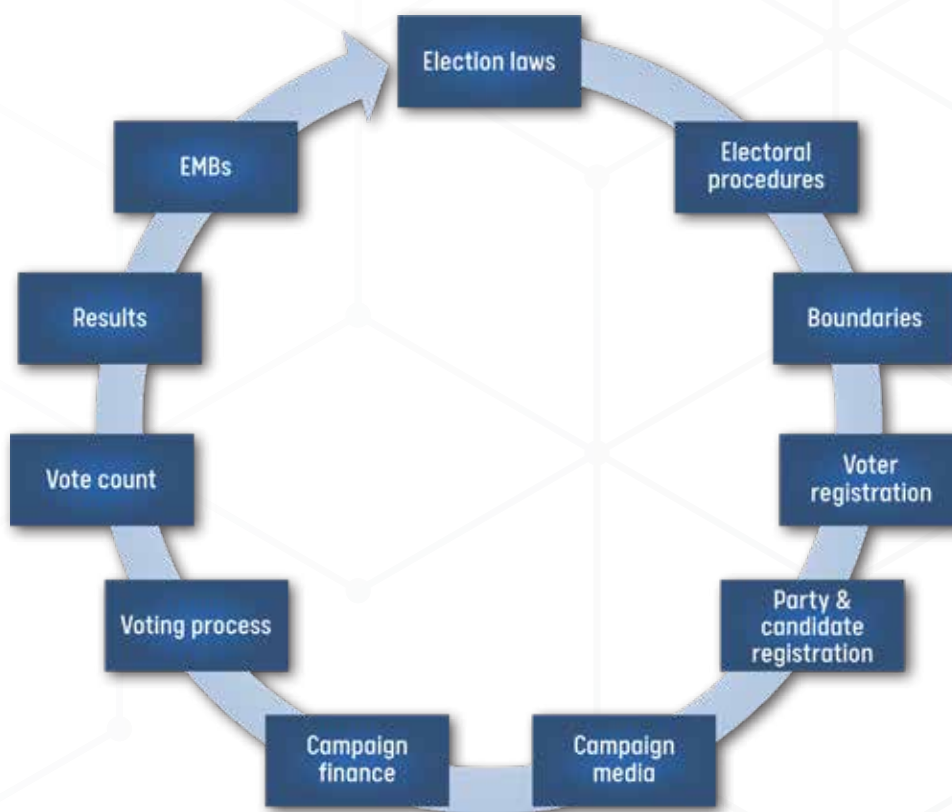
In planning this report series, we drew on three strands of the conceptual literature relating to models of political support, electoral integrity and election management. We briefly outline some of the ideas and components of these models, particularly those that had an influence on the decisions regarding 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)¹ 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

¹ 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.

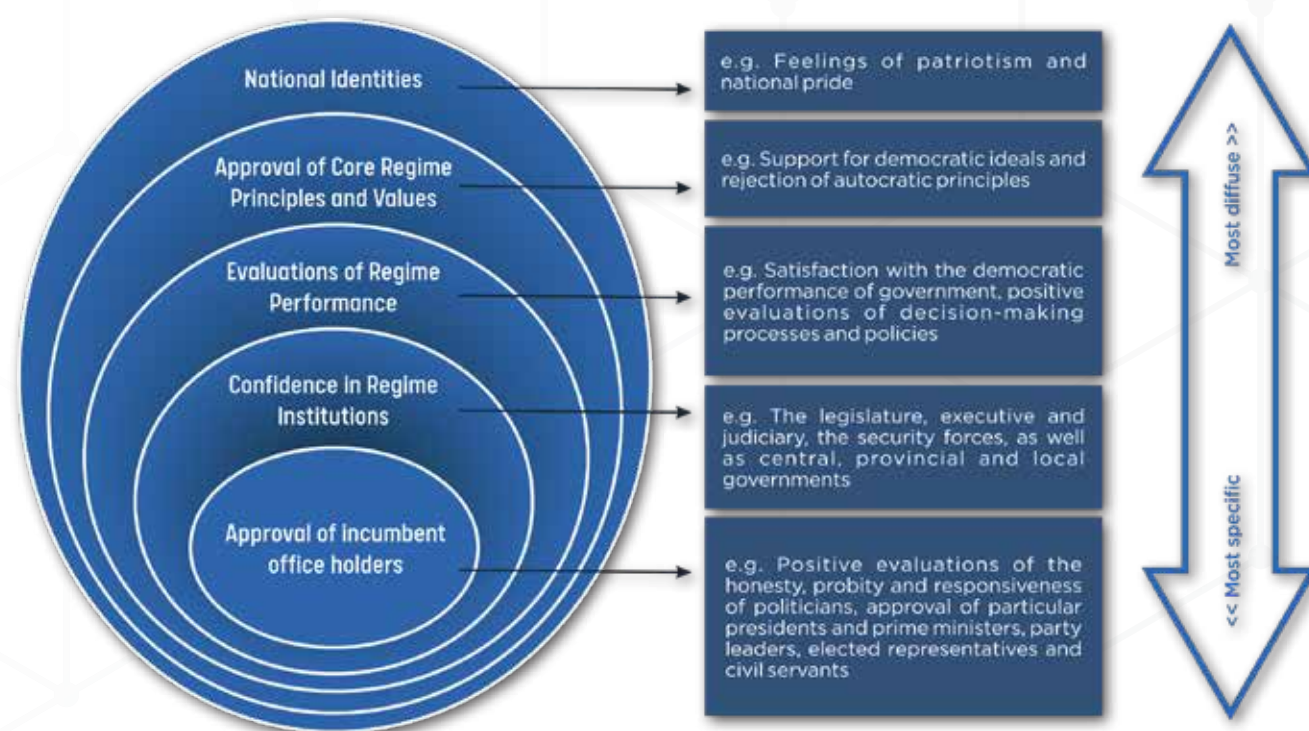
Political support

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, represents 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



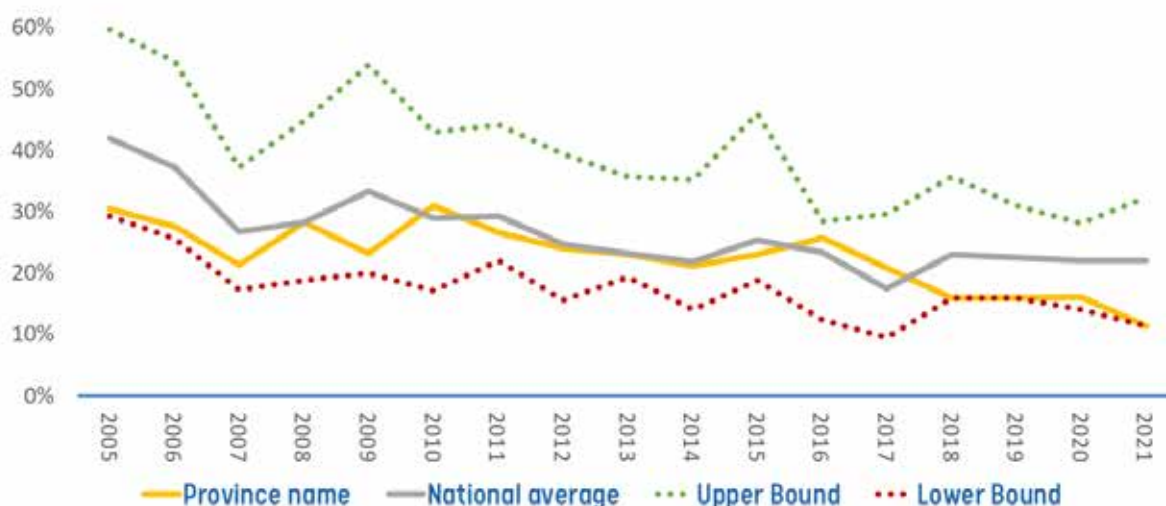
Source: Norris (2011:24) Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited

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.

Trends in province of focus compared to national trends

In the example graph below, the trend line corresponding to the province of focus in the report is highlighted in a bold yellow colour. For comparative purposes, the national average on the indicator is presented in a dark grey colour. This is important for determining whether the province fares better or worse in any given survey year than the average for the country. This allows for quick inferences to be drawn on provincial performance in this specific area of evaluation.



Determining performance in province of focus relative to other provinces

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 how the province of focus fares relative to other provinces, as well as the relative spread in provincial responses to the indicator in question. 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 provincial average, the national average, and the upper and lower bound figures. In addition, the province's rank position in each survey year is provided, with one indicating that the province has the highest value of all nine provinces, and nine the lowest relative value.

Data sources

Four principal sources have been used: the IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) series, which is representative of citizens aged 16 years and older; the IEC Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series, which is a representative sample 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 nation-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

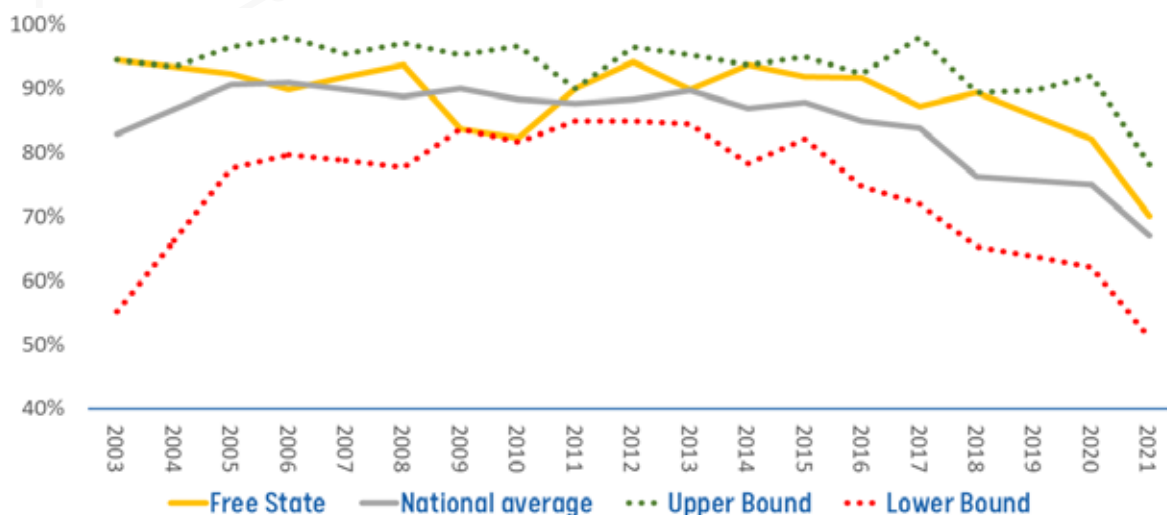
QUESTION

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

As is the case nationally, Free State residents are generally loyal to their country and exhibit relative high levels of attachment to the state. Between 2003 and 2020, more than four-fifths on average agreed that they would rather be a citizen of the country than any other nation. In 2009 and 2010 pride levels in the Free State dropped, falling from 94% in 2008 to 84% in 2009 and 82% in 2010. After that period, pride levels have remained around or above the national average, but in 2021 it fell to an all-time low of 70%. The rank position of Free State relative to other provinces has varied over time, from being the lowest in 2009 to being the highest in 2003, 2011, 2014 and 2018, and ranking third overall across the full period.

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
Free State	94	...	92	90	...	94	84	82	90	94	90	94	92	92	87	89	...	82	70	88
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	...	4	6	...	3	9	8	1	2	4	1	4	3	6	1	...	2	4	3

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

In the Free State, the importance attached to the six dimensions of democratic ideals has ranged between 5.3 and 7.6 on a zero to ten scale. Relative to other provinces, it is evident that the importance attached to all these democratic ideals has generally been lower in the Free State. The provincial ranking for Free State has mostly been in the bottom third and lower than the national average, implying a lower-than-average demand for these ideals.

DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY: Importance attached to different democratic values or ideals, 2013-2021 (mean scores based on a 0-10 importance scale)

Mean score, 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
Free State	7.6	6.7	6.8	5.8	6.5	6.4	6.6	5.3	7.1	6.6	6.3	5.6
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	9	6	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	6

Mean score, 0-10 scale	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
Free State	6.7	6.5	6.6	5.7	7.1	6.5	6.7	6.7	7.1	6.4	6.7	6.0
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	9	9	6	6	9	9	6	8	6	8	5	6

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

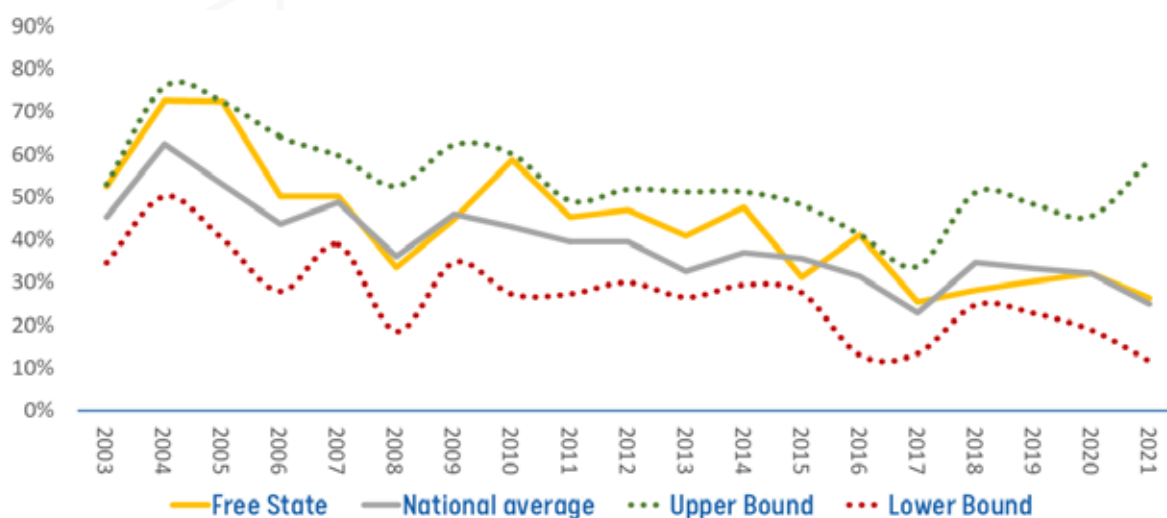
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

There has been a general decline in satisfaction with the functioning of democracy among Free State residents since 2004, largely mirroring national trends. There was a favourable upswing from 2003 in the 2004 and 2005 periods, but this development was relatively short-lived, and a sharp decline occurred between 2005 and 2008, followed again by a steep upswing in satisfaction. From 2010 onwards there was a fluctuating tendency. In 2017, satisfaction reached a low point of 25%. Although slightly higher figures were recorded in 2018 and 2020 (28% and 32% respectively), this dropped to 26% in 2021. The average satisfaction level in the province across the full 2003 to 2021 period was 44%, with evaluations of democratic performance falling below this level in 2008, 2013 and all years from 2015 to 2021. Relative to other provinces, Free State residents ranked in the top half for most years during this period and ranked third overall.

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
Free State	52	73	72	50	50	33	45	59	45	47	41	48	31	41	25	28	...	32	26	44
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	3	1	5	4	6	4	2	3	4	2	2	7	1	4	7	...	4	3	3

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

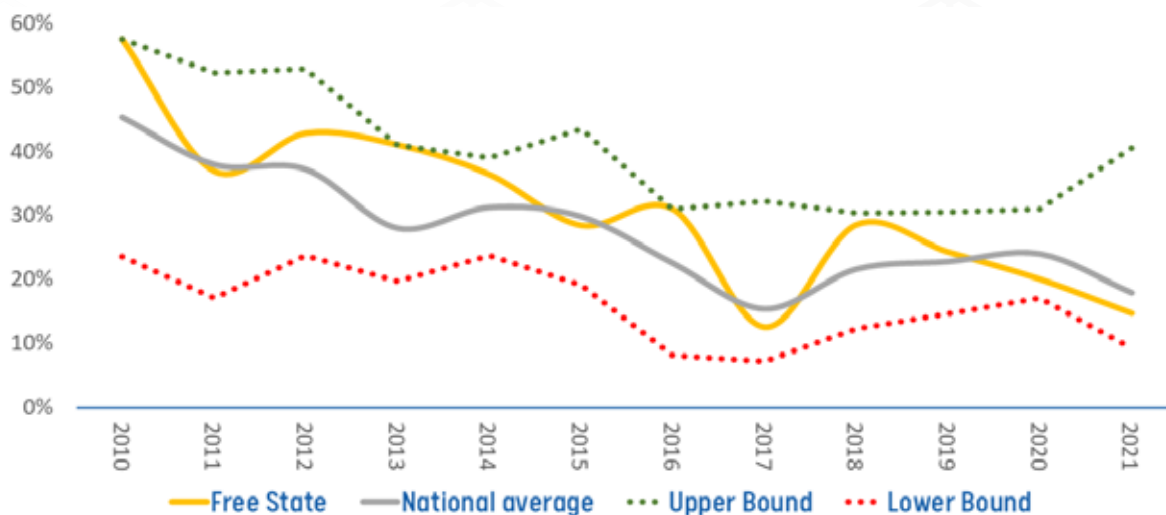
QUESTION

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, just over half (57%) of Free State adults indicated that the nation was heading in the right direction. Despite fluctuations in this outlook in recent years, there has been a sustained general downward pattern during the decade, reaching a low point of 13% by 2017, but recovering to 28% in 2018. There were specific periods, notably in 2011, 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2021 when the province fell below the national average. In 2021, only 15% believed the county was heading in the right direction, the second lowest figure observed. The average provincial ranking of the Free State across the full 2010 to 2021 period was third out of the nine provinces, but this slipped to seventh and eighth rank in 2020 and 2021, respectively. This increasing critical perspective in the Free State will need to be closely monitored.

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
Free State	57	37	43	41	36	28	31	13	28	...	20	15	31
National Avg.	45	38	37	28	31	30	23	15	22	...	24	18	28
Upper Bound	55	50	53	41	39	43	31	32	30	...	31	33	36
Lower Bound	24	17	24	20	24	19	8	7	12	...	17	8	22
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	6	4	1	2	6	1	6	3	...	7	8	3

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

2.1.5 Supply of democracy: Evaluation of democratic ideals

GOAL

Evaluation of elements of democracy. This provides a sense of the perceived effectiveness of the execution 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

In the Free State, the evaluation of the six dimensions of democracy varied, with average scores ranging between 3.9 and 7.2 on a zero to ten 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 protests'. Residents of the Free State were less convinced of 'elected listen to the public' or that there is 'electoral accountability' (parties punished during elections for poor performance). Evaluations of the supply of all six ideals have deteriorated since 2018. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State ranked mostly in the bottom half regarding all of these ideals in 2013, implying disillusionment with these aspects of democracy, but its relative ranking has subsequently improved with regards to almost all of these ideals.

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												
Free State	6.7	6.5	7.2	6.0	3.9	4.7	4.9	4.1	4.5	4.8	5.2	5.0
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	9	1	2	7	3	2	7	5	2	2	1

	Ideal 4 Participation in Protests				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												
Free State	5.2	5.4	6.5	5.5	6.1	5.6	6.4	5.8	6.0	5.6	6.7	5.7
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	9	8	1	7	7	9	3	3	8	9	2	5

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

2.1.6 Satisfaction with municipal performance

GOAL

Determine levels of satisfaction with municipal performance

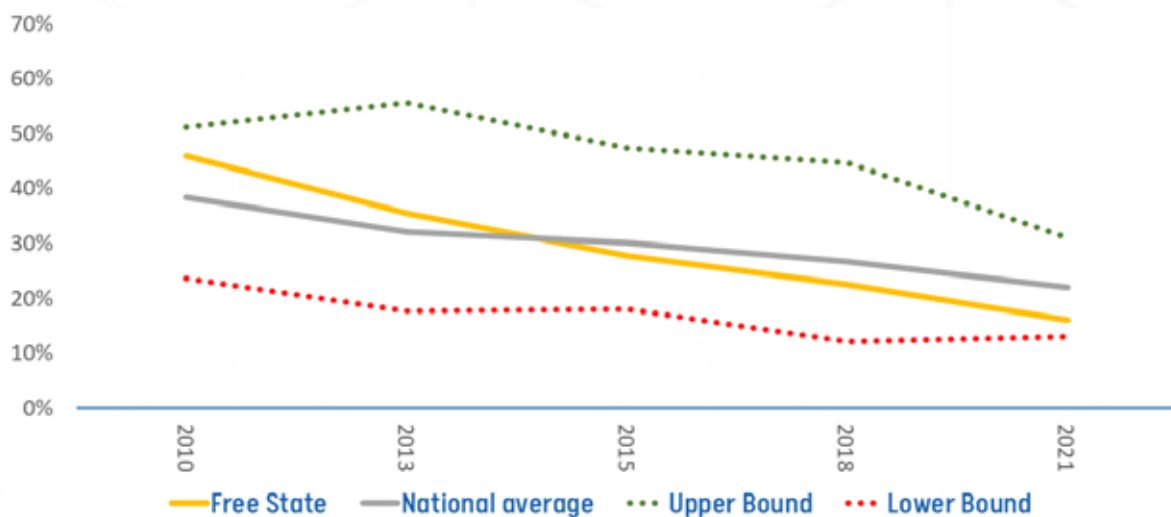
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2010 just under half (46%) of Free State residents were satisfied with municipal services. The share that was satisfied with municipal functioning fell from 46% in 2010 to 35% in 2013, after which the figures decreased further to 28% in 2015, 22% in 2018 and 16% in 2021. This pattern suggests broad-based, mounting discontent with municipal performance among Free State residents. The Free State figures approximate the South African national average. In 2021, Free State residents were more critical of municipal performance than in the previous four rounds of surveying. Compared to other provinces, the rank position of the Free State was in the top four provinces up to 2015. In 2018, the rank position dropped to sixth and in 2021 to eighth. Generally, municipal satisfaction is relatively low across all provinces, with a maximum value of 31% in 2021 and 43% across all five survey rounds. This will become a key issue in forthcoming National and Provincial, as well as Municipal Elections.

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



%	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
Free State	46	35	28	22	16	30
National Avg.	38	32	30	27	22	30
Upper Bound	51	56	47	45	31	43
Lower Bound	24	18	18	12	13	19
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	3	4	6	8	4

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

2.2. Public trust with different government and social institutions

2.2.1. Trust in the Electoral Commission

GOAL

Public confidence in the Electoral Commission

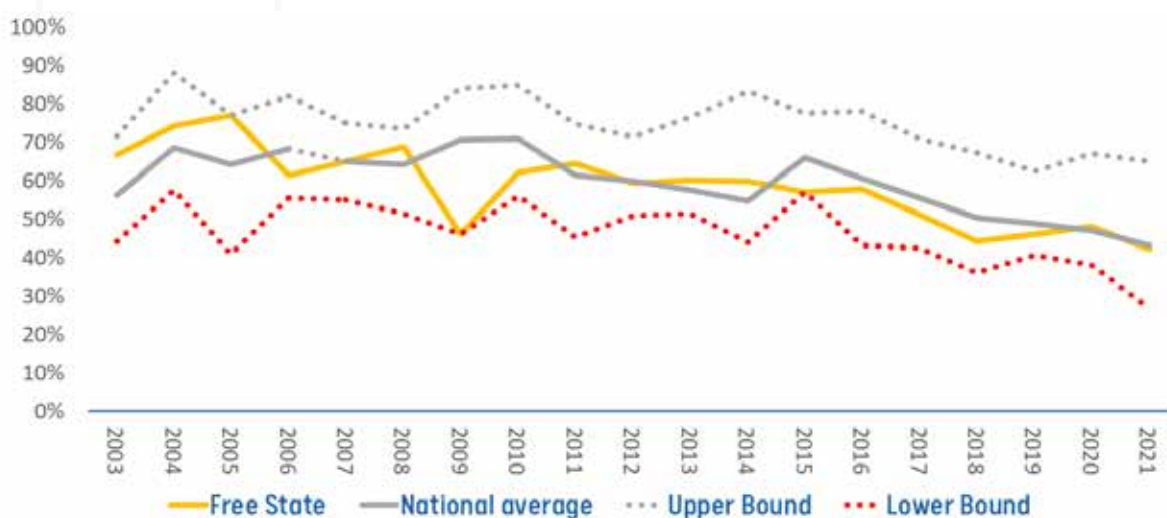
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In late 2021, two-fifths (42%) of the Free State public expressed trust in the Electoral Commission. This is the lowest recorded level of trust in the Commission in the province over the 2003 to 2021 period. After a period of relatively high trust between 2005 and 2008 (77% to 69%), a significant decline of 23% was observed in 2009 to 46%. Although trust recovered to 62% in 2010, it was followed by a gradual decrease in trust from 2011 to 2021. In many respects, the provincial pattern mirrors the national trend over time, with higher-than-average trust levels between 2003 to 2005, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2020. Compared to other provinces, the Free State ranked fifth on aggregate in terms of trust in the Commission across the full period. Trust in the Commission is influenced by general views on democracy, but, despite fluctuation, it still remains one of the most trusted political institutions in the country.

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
Free State	67	74	77	61	65	69	46	62	64	59	60	60	57	58	51	44	...	48	42	58
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	55	51	46	56	45	51	51	44	57	43	42	36	...	38	27	53
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	4	1	7	6	3	9	8	5	5	3	3	9	6	7	8	...	4	5	5

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

2.2.2 Trust in National Government

GOAL

Public confidence in National Government

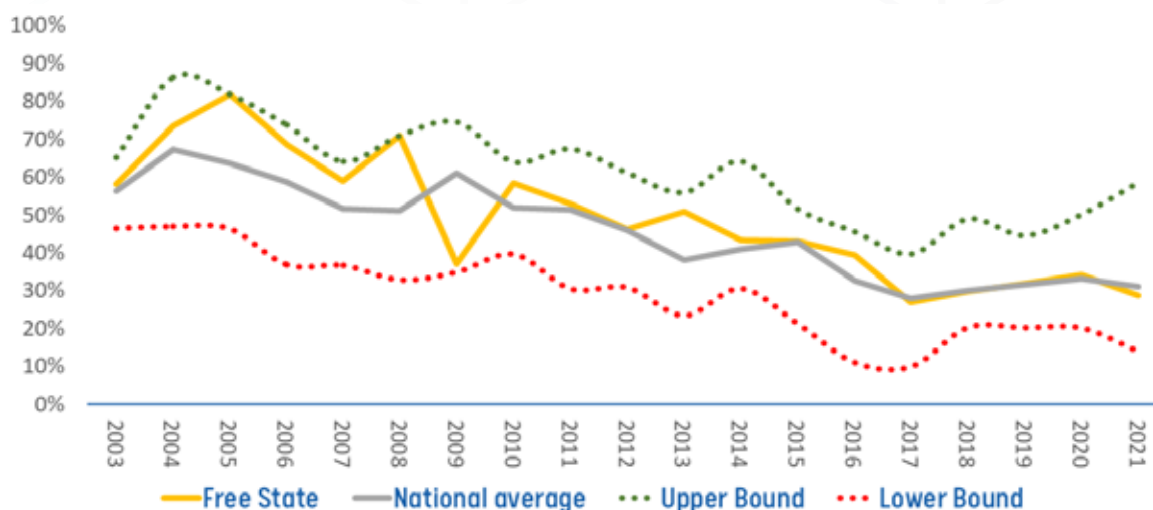
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Between 2003 and 2008, Free State residents were more trusting of national government than average. This was followed by a steep decline in trust in 2009 which was reversed in 2010. Since 2010 there has been mostly a steady weakening of trust in national government with the second lowest point reached in 2021, when only 29% of Free State residents voiced trust in National Government. This represented a decline of 53 percentage points since 2005. Despite this, the province ranked fourth on average across the 2003 to 2021 period and was placed in the top three in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2016.

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
Free State	58	73	82	68	59	71	37	58	53	46	51	43	43	39	27	30	...	34	29	49
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	4	1	4	2	1	8	4	5	4	2	5	5	3	6	6	...	5	5	4

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

2.2.3 Trust in Provincial Government

GOAL

Public confidence in provincial government

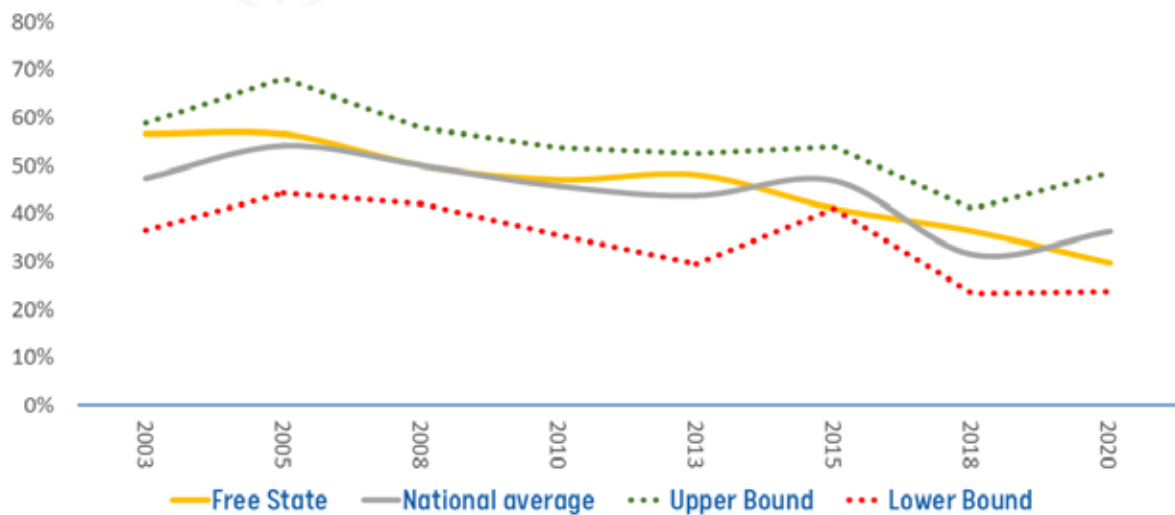
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In most SASAS rounds, Free State residents were fairly unhappy with the performance of their provincial government, averaging 46% across the 2003 to 2018 period. Confidence in this sphere of government was steady between 2003 and 2005 but after 2005 there was a drop in trust in the province. Despite these low trust scores, Free State residents were generally more or equally trusting than the national average, except for 2015 and 2020 when trust scores were lower than the national average. Compared to other provinces, Free State ranked third on aggregate in terms of trust in provincial government.

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
Free State	57	...	57	...	...	50	...	47	...	...	48	...	41	...	...	36	...	30	...	46
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	3	...	4	...	...	3	...	4	...	...	3	...	9	...	...	5	...	6	...	3

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

2.2.4 Trust in Local Government

GOAL

Public confidence in local government

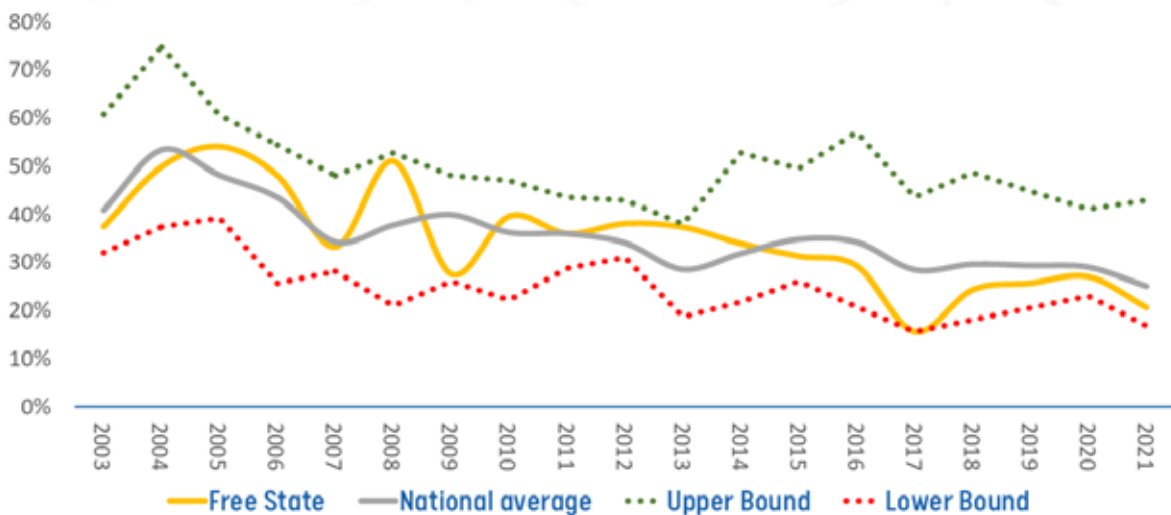
QUESTION

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 35% across the 2003 to 2018 period in the Free State. Between 2003 and 2010, trust in local government fluctuated quite dramatically, reaching an all-time high of 51% in 2008, but falling to a low of 28% just a year later. Between 2010 and 2016, these fluctuations have been more moderate, but a decline in trust is nonetheless evident. In 2017, confidence in local government reached an all-time low of 16% but recovered to 27% in 2020 and falling to 21% in 2021. Between 2003 and 2013, the results for the Free State fluctuated above and below the national average with no clear trend evident. However, from 2015 onwards, the Free State results have remained below the national average. Considering the provincial ranking, it is evident that Free State ranked fifth on average on this indicator over the full period and scoring lowest on this indicator in 2017.

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
Free State	37	50	54	48	33	51	28	40	36	38	37	34	31	29	16	24	...	27	21	35
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	6	6	2	2	4	2	8	3	6	2	2	3	6	6	9	6	...	4	6	5

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

2.2.5 Trust in Parliament

GOAL

Public confidence in parliament

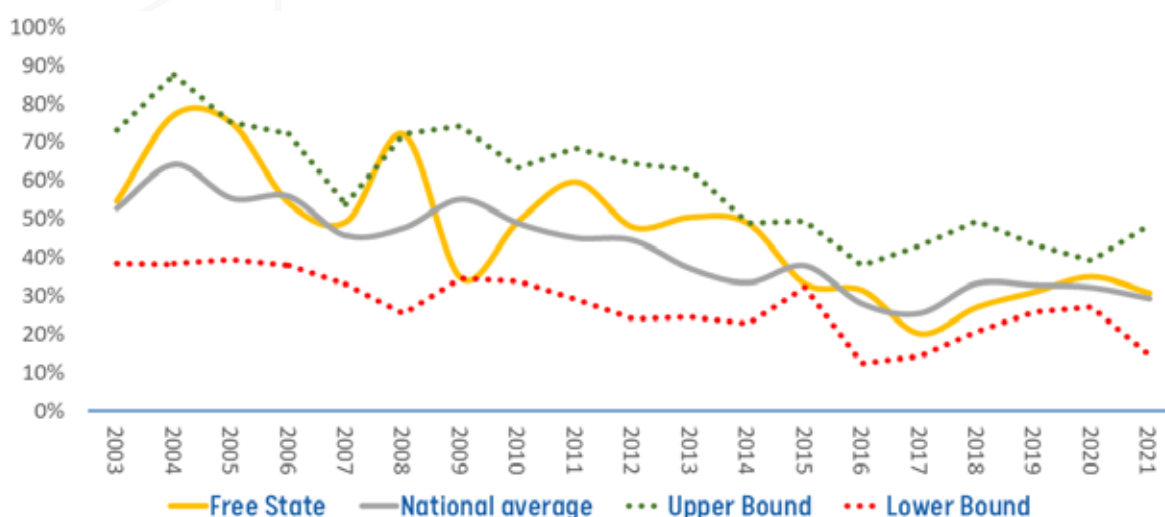
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

The data for Free State reveals that trust in parliament has varied over the 2003 to 2018 period, with particular up and downswings evident up to 2011. After an upswing in 2011, trust in this institution has mostly steadily been deteriorating. From 2008 to 2021, the level of confidence in national parliament dropped by 41 percentage points (from 72% to 31%), with a low-point of 20% in 2017. In terms of provincial differences in trust levels, the Free State was ranked fourth out of the nine provinces on average across the 2003 to 2021 period, with an average of 46% trust in parliament. Over the full period, the provincial ranking alternated. Of particular note is the change between 2008 and 2009, where the provincial ranking of trust in parliament fell from highest (number one position) to lowest (ninth position).

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
Free State	55	77	75	54	49	72	35	49	60	48	51	49	33	31	20	27	...	35	31	46
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	4	1	6	5	1	9	5	3	5	3	1	8	3	7	8	...	4	5	4

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

2.2.6 Trust in Courts

GOAL

Public confidence in the courts

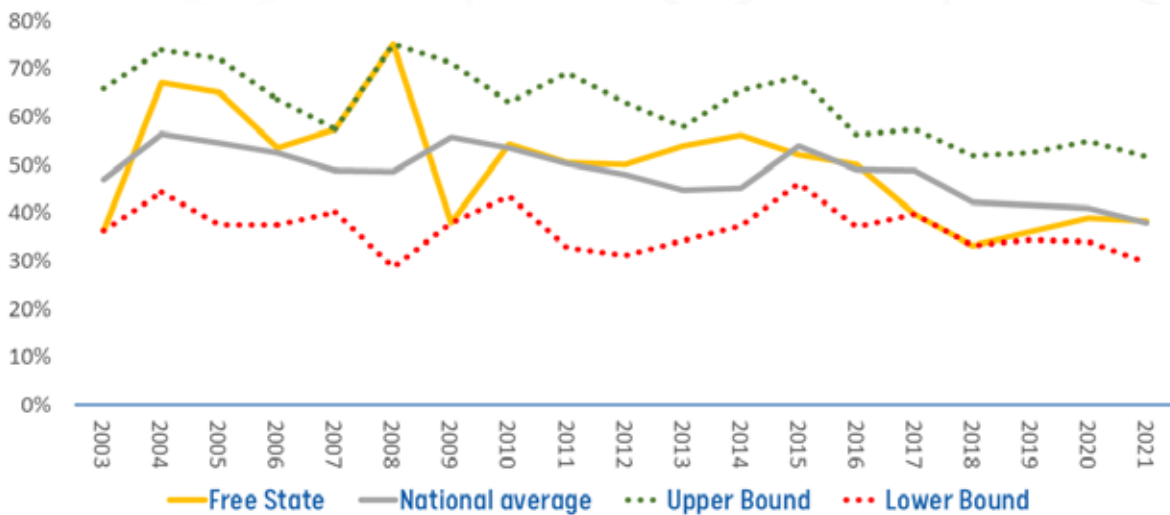
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Over the 2003 to 2010 period, trust in the courts varied substantially in the Free State. At the beginning of the period under examination, a mere 36% of Free State residents trusted the courts and the province was ranked ninth, implying the lowest trust in juridical courts. Between 2003 to 2008 there was a general increase in trust with trust levels improving by 39 percentage points (from 36% to 75%). This trend was however reversed after 2009 and trust fell by 37 percentage points to a low of 38% in 2009. In 2010 trust increased again to 54% after which it remained relatively stable up to 2016. Trust gradually declined after 2016 and reached its lowest point (33%) in 2018, after which it recovered to 38% in 2021. In 2003, 2009 and between 2017 and 2018, the Free State was ranked as the province with the lowest trust levels but featured in the top half in the remaining years. Overall, the provincial ranking of the Free State was fourth over the full period.

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
Free State	36	67	65	54	57	75	38	54	50	50	54	56	52	50	40	33	...	39	38	50
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
Rank (1-high; 9-low)	9	2	3	4	1	1	9	3	5	3	2	2	5	3	9	9	...	5	5	4

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

2.2.7 Trust in Political Parties

GOAL

Public confidence in political parties

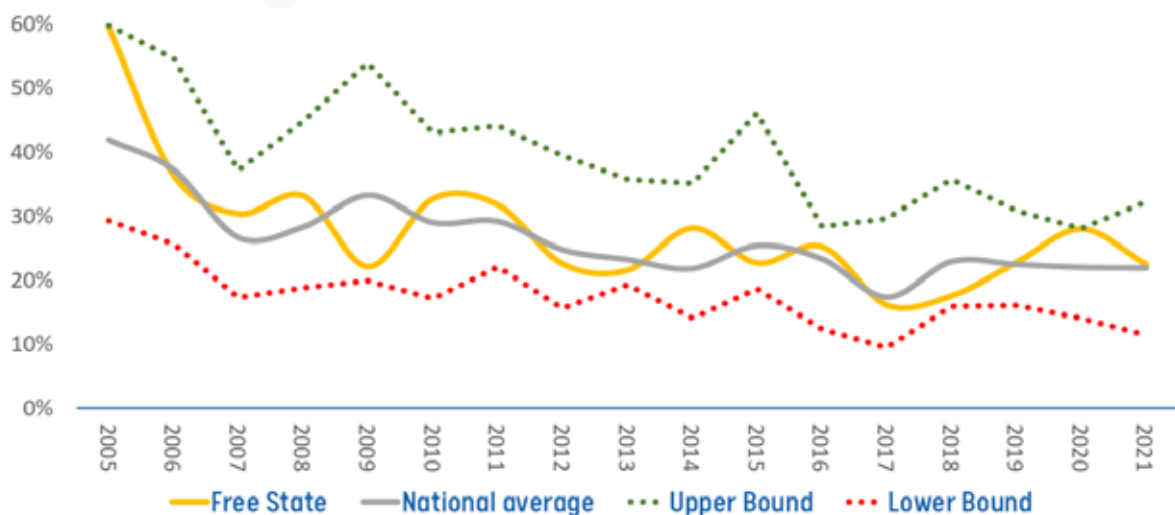
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

At the onset of the period under review in 2005, a significant proportion of Free State residents (59%) expressed trust in political parties. However, a substantial decline in trust was observed from 2005 to 2009 when trust fell by 37% to a low of 22% in 2009. Although trust recovered to 33% in 2010, a mostly gradual decrease in trust continued over the 2011 to 2018 period, resulting in an all-time low of 16% in 2017. Some recovery is noted after 2018 and in 2021 trust levels were at 23%. In many respects, the provincial pattern mirrors the national trend over time. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State on average ranked fourth and the province ranked in the top half in all years of observation apart from 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2018.

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



Data Source: South African Social Attitude Survey (SASAS) 2003-2021

%	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
Free State	59	36	30	33	22	33	32	23	22	28	23	25	16	18	...	28	23	28
National Avg.	42	37	27	28	33	29	29	25	23	22	25	23	17	23	...	22	22	26
Upper Bound	60	52	37	45	54	43	44	39	36	35	46	28	30	36	...	28	32	36
Lower Bound	29	26	17	19	20	17	22	16	19	14	13	15	9	16	...	14	11	22
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	4	3	3	7	3	4	7	5	3	7	4	6	7	...	1	5	4

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

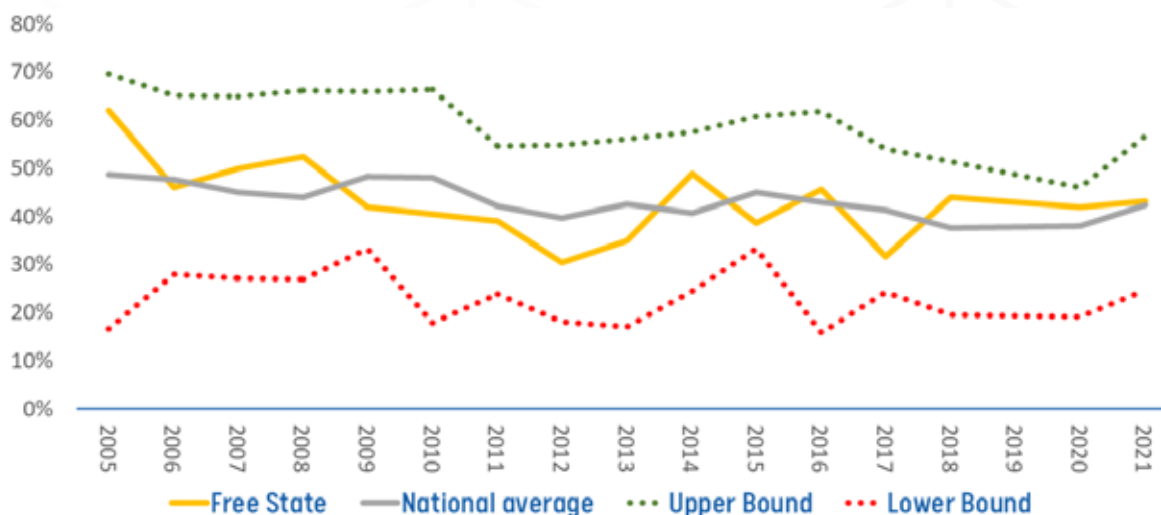
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Similar to trust in political parties, a higher-than-average proportion of Free State residents expressed trust in traditional authorities/leaders in 2005. A mostly gradual decline in trust was however noticed from 2006 to a low of 30% in 2012. Trust recovered to 49% in 2014 and a mostly gradual erosion of trust was again noticed from 2014 to 2017. Since 2018 trust has been relatively stable and in 2021 trust in traditional leaders averaged 43%. In general, the provincial pattern mirrors the national trend over time. While the province ranked fifth on average across the 2005 to 2021 period, it was placed in the top half between 2005 and 2008, bottom half from 2009 to 2013, and varied between bottom and top positions between 2014 and 2017, after which the province ranked third in terms of trusting traditional authorities or leaders in 2021.

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
Free State	62	46	50	52	42	40	39	30	35	49	39	46	32	44	...	42	43	43
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	4	2	2	7	5	6	8	6	4	7	4	7	2	...	2	3	5

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

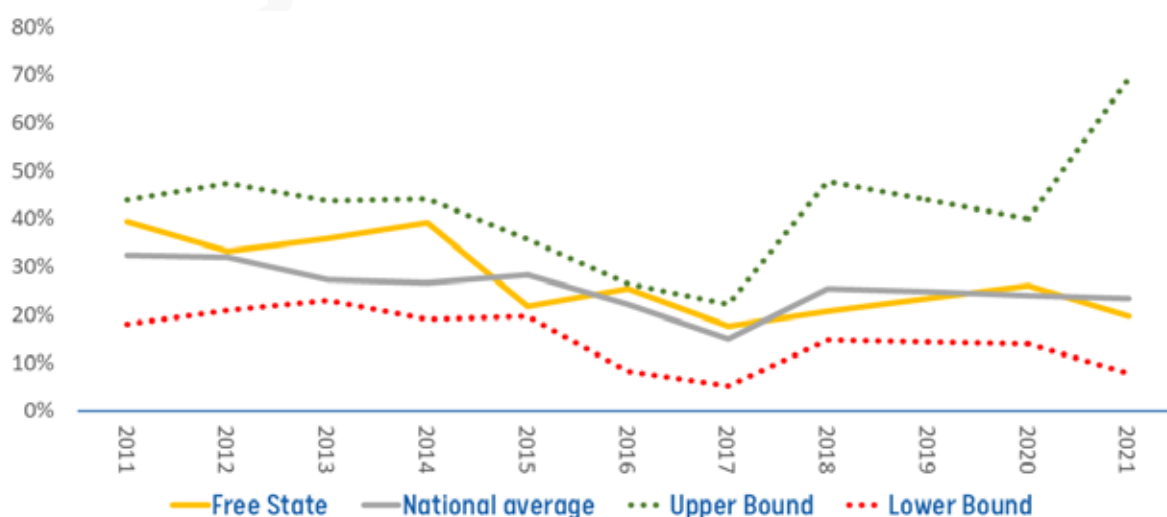
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Confidence in political leaders was fairly low at the start of the period, with 39% of the Free State population trusting political leaders in 2011. Between 2011 and 2014 trust remained relatively stable, but from 2015 trust diminished, demonstrating a general sense of increasing discontent in the political status quo observed throughout this section. This decline reached its lowest point in 2017 and the provincial population satisfied with political leaders was only 18% in that year. Trust has slightly recovered since then and trust in political leaders in the Free State was at 20% in 2021. Compared to other provinces, the Free State ranked third on aggregate with trust in political leaders, being lower than the national average in 2015, 2018 and 2021.

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
Free State	39	33	36	39	22	25	18	21	...	26	20	27
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	5	2	2	8	2	4	5	...	5	6	3

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

2.2.10 Trust in Religious Institutions

GOAL

Public confidence in religious institutions

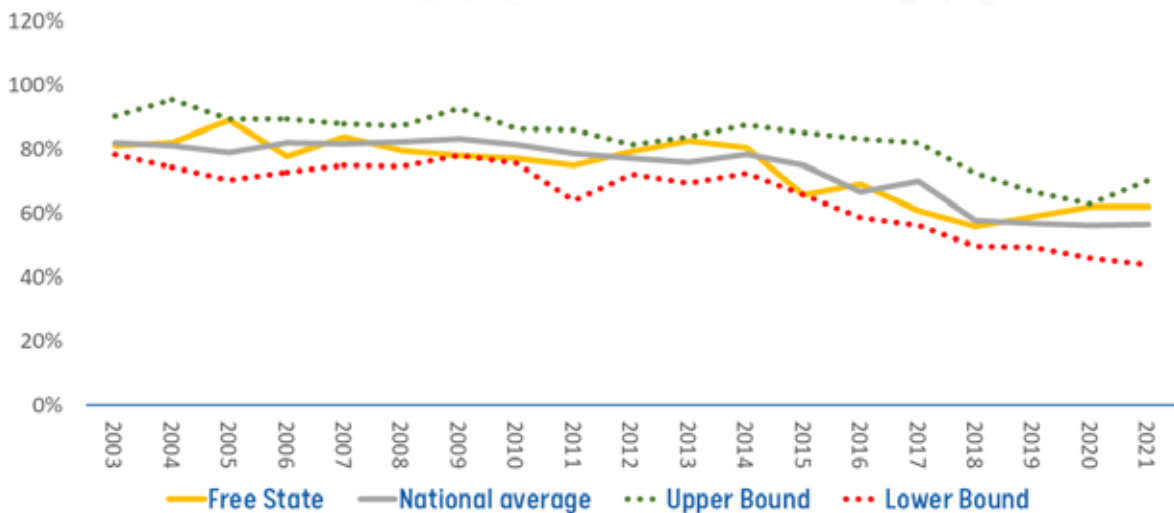
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Free State residents were fairly trusting of religious institutions for most of the period under deliberation. Between 2003 and 2014, trust in religious institutions remained on or above the 75% mark. In 2015, trust in religious institutions dropped by fourteen percentage points (from 80% in 2014 to 66% in 2015). After a short-lived recovery in 2016 to 69%, trust dropped to 62% in 2021. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State ranked fifth on average and mostly ranked in the bottom half during the period. A general observation worth mentioning is that disgruntlement with political institutions (especially since 2008) seems to have spilled over to other socio-cultural institutions and has even impacted religious institutions, which have historically been highly trusted institutions.

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
Free State	81	82	89	78	84	79	78	77	75	79	83	80	66	69	61	56	...	62	62	74
National Avg.	82	81	79	82	82	82	83	81	79	77	76	78	75	66	70	58	...	56	56	74
Upper Bound	90	93	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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	4	2	8	4	6	9	7	7	4	2	4	9	3	8	6	...	2	6	5

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 electoral politics

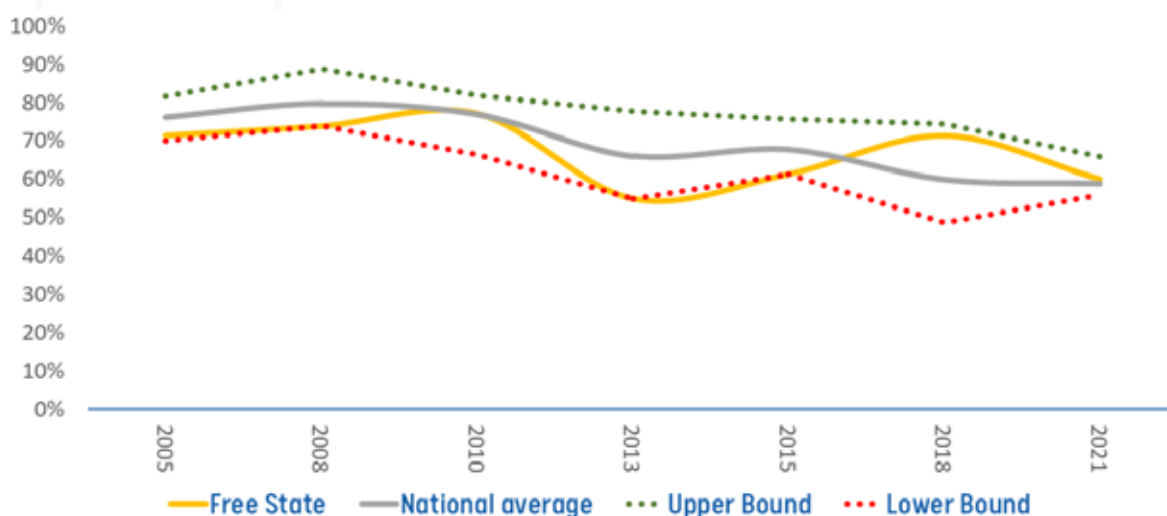
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

It is apparent that generally a significant majority of residents reported an interest in elections. Between 2005 and 2010 just under three-quarters of the voting age population expressed an interest in government elections. In 2013 there was a significant drop in interest to the extent that barely more than half of Free State residents indicated a fair level of interest in government elections. After 2013, there was a resurgence of interest. This change between 2013 and 2018 seems to imply a dramatic increase in political interest in the Free State with the gap between the Free State and national averages in 2018 eleven percentage points higher. In 2021 interest was recorded at 60%. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State on average ranked eighth over the period. Of particular note is that in 2008, 2013 and 2015 this province ranked lowest of all provinces, but moved to second place in 2018.

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



	2005	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Average
Free State	71	74	77	55	61	71	60	67
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	9	4	9	9	2	4	8

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

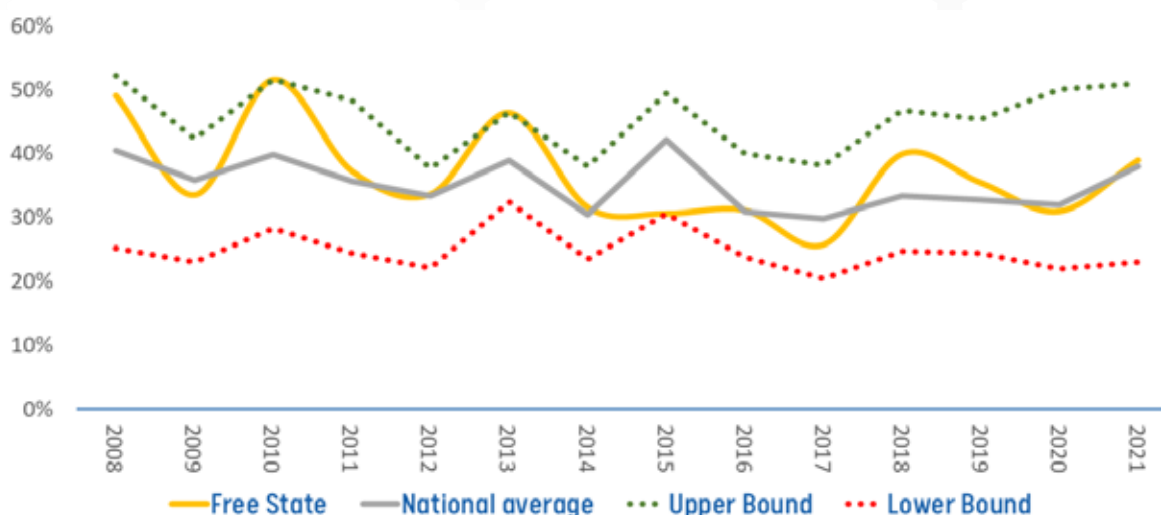
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Free State residents generally think that politics is difficult to understand. At best, only 52% indicated that politics is easy to understand. In 2021, just under two-fifths (39%) said politics is easy to understand. The provincial average over the period was 37% and the province generally scored above the national average, except for 2009, 2015, 2017 and 2020. The provincial ranking of the Free State was fourth highest on average over the full period. The Free State therefore generally finds politics difficult to understand, similar to most other provinces.

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
Free State	49	34	52	37	34	46	32	31	31	26	40	...	31	39	37
National Avg.	41	36	40	36	33	39	30	42	31	30	33	...	32	38	35
Upper Bound	52	42	52	48	38	46	38	49	40	38	47	...	50	51	40
Lower Bound	25	23	28	24	22	32	23	31	24	20	25	...	22	23	30
Rank (1-high; 9-low)	2	6	1	4	4	1	4	9	5	5	3	...	6	5	4

Data Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2008-2021

2.3.3 Belief in the power of one's vote

GOAL

Determine internal political efficacy

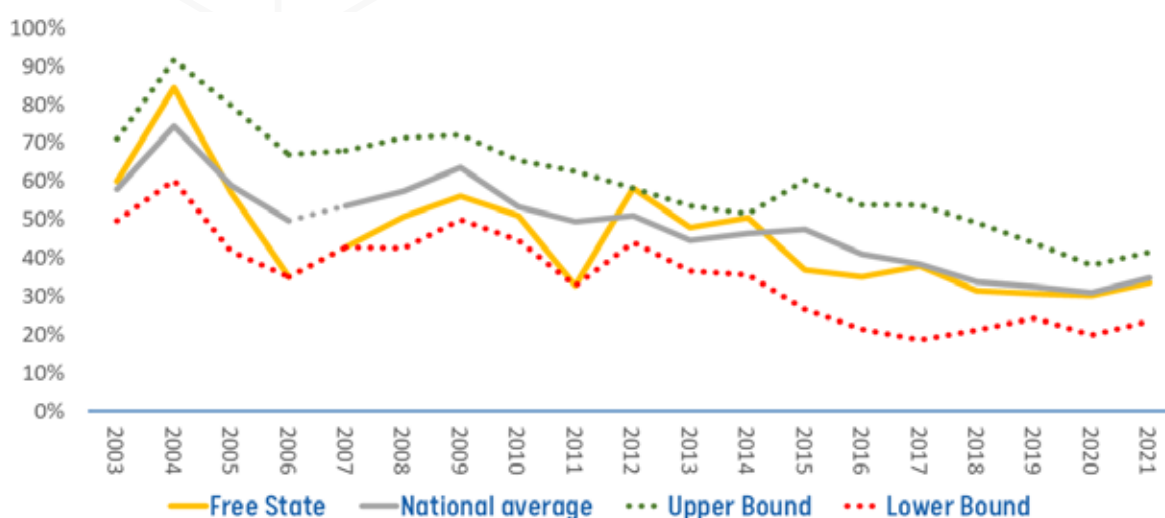
QUESTION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about voting: I vote because my vote makes a difference. (% disagree or strongly disagree)

ANALYSIS

Residents of the Free State have become sceptical about the power of their vote since 2004 to the extent that in 2021, only a third (34%) felt their vote makes a difference. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State ranked low (seventh on average) over the full period and has been ranked one of the bottom five provinces on this indicator in all years except 2003, 2004 and 2005, as well as 2012, 2013 and 2014. It is evident from the data and the graph that among Free State residents there is an increasing notion that their vote has little impact. This notion is in line with the national trend.

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
Free State	60	84	57	35	...	51	56	51	33	58	48	50	37	35	38	31	...	30	34	45
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	3	2	4	9	...	8	8	7	9	1	3	2	7	7	6	6	...	5	6	7

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

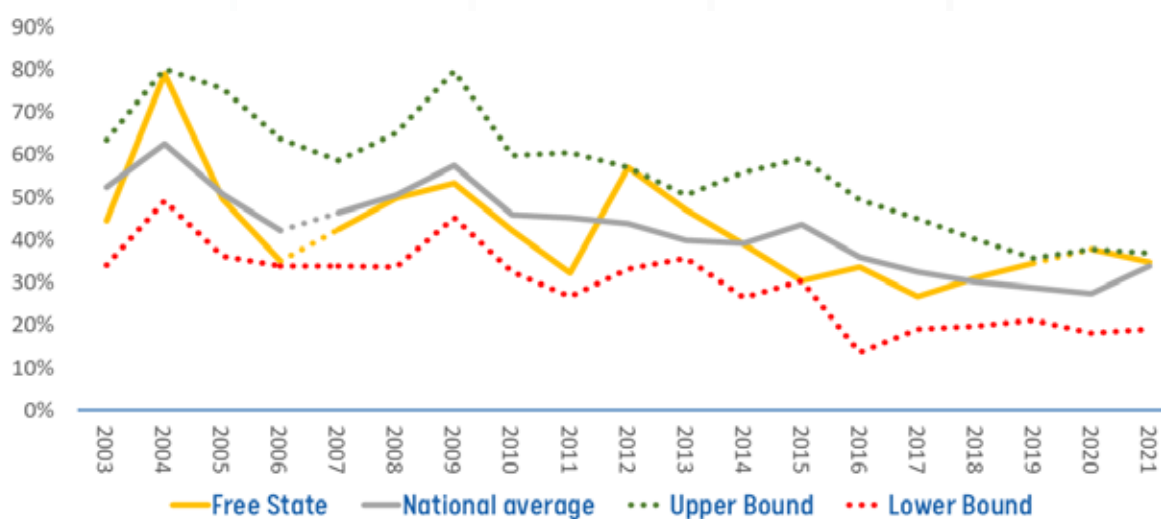
QUESTION

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 to 2021 period, only 42% 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, 45% of the adult population in the Free State expressed a sense of external efficacy. This fluctuated over the next few years, rising significantly in 2004, declining in 2005 and again in 2006, and rising again in 2008 and 2009. The 2009 to 2011 period was marked by a steady erosion in efficacy, declining from 53% in 2009 to 32% in 2011. There was a significant upswing in 2012 followed by a downswing on this indicator from 2013 to 2017. From 2018 there was some reversal on this indicator. The implication of these trends is that feelings of external political efficacy dropped 44 percentage points from 2004 to 2021. On average, the Free State ranked fifth on this indicator.

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
Free State	45	79	50	35	...	50	53	42	32	57	47	39	30	34	27	31	...	38	35	42
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	2	4	7	...	6	7	8	8	1	2	7	9	7	7	4	...	1	4	5

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

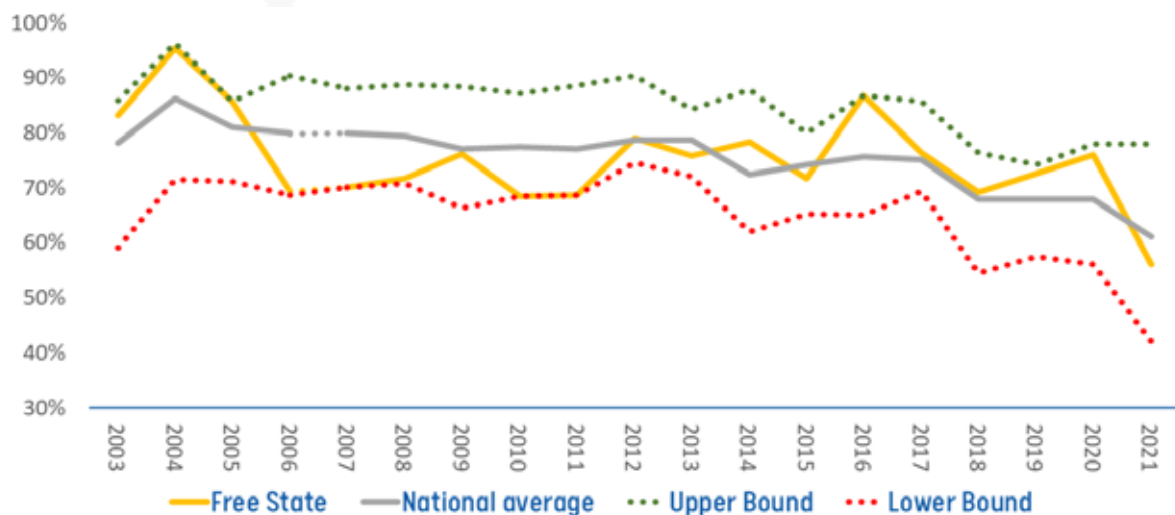
QUESTION

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 Free State public generally remains robust but declined in 2021. Free State residents were especially positive on this metric between 2003 and 2005 but from 2006 to 2011 the provincial average tended to be below the national average. In 2016 this indicator increased to 87% and remained above the national average up to 2020. In 2021 there was a discernible decline in this indicator and it reached an all-time low of 56%. On average, over the full period, the Free State ranked sixth in this indicator. This relatively low ranking is mostly due to low rankings in the 2006 to 2013 period.

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
Free State	83	95	86	69	70	72	76	68	69	79	76	78	72	87	76	69	...	76	56	75
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	88	89	88	87	89	90	84	88	80	87	86	76	...	78	78	81
Lower Bound	59	72	71	69	70	71	66	68	69	75	72	62	65	65	69	54	...	56	42	70
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	3	2	1	8	9	8	6	9	9	6	7	3	7	1	5	4	...	2	7	6

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

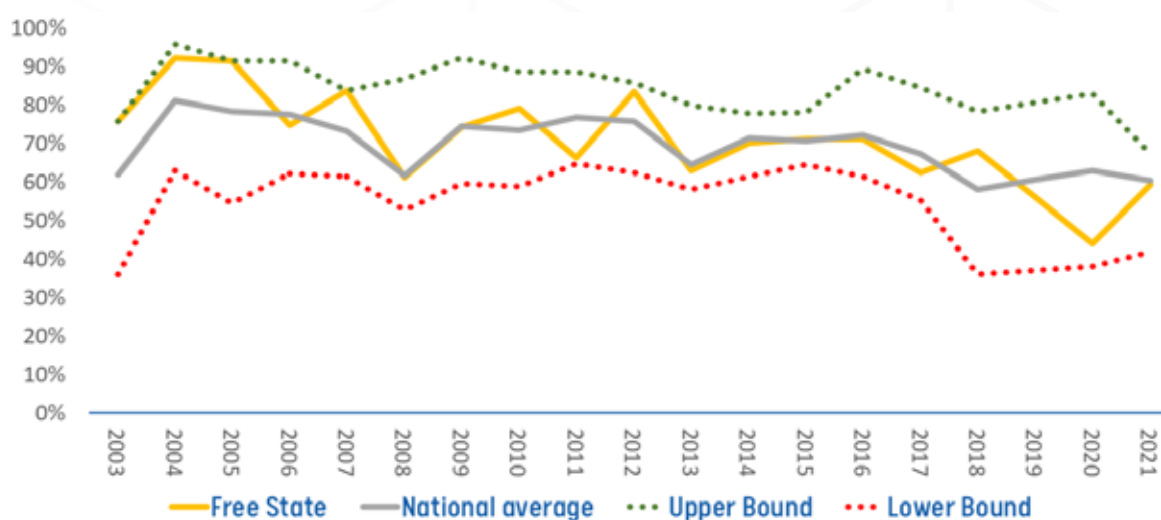
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In each round of the SASAS surveys between 2003 and 2021, respondents were asked whether they would vote if a government election was to be held tomorrow. In late 2003, 76% of the Free State public stated that they would turn out to vote if such elections were to be held. In 2020, this proportion had dropped to its lowest ever (44%), but recovered to 59% in 2021. Despite this recovery, the Free State ranked lowest of all provinces in terms of voting intention in 2021. Despite this trend, the Free State ranks fourth overall on this indicator. Free State residents therefore generally seemed committed to vote in elections, but this notion has been declining, particularly in 2021. For most of the period under review, the Free State figure was above or near the national average but has been below the national average since 2020.

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
Free State	76	92	92	75	84	61	74	79	66	84	63	70	71	71	62	68	...	44	59	71
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	89	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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	3	1	6	1	6	6	3	8	2	7	6	6	6	5	2	...	8	9	4

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

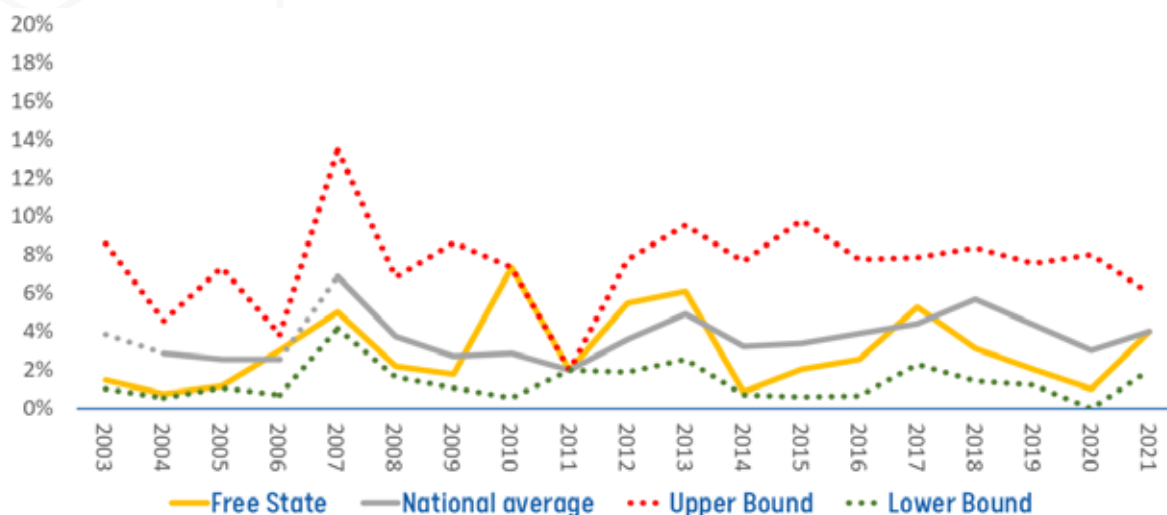
QUESTION

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 in the Free State. 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 2021, only four percent of eligible adults in the province cited administrative factors as the main reason that they would not vote if an election was to be held tomorrow. Reviewing how these results changed in the province over the 2003 to 2021 period, it was apparent that they did not have a sizable influence on voting decisions. Overall, administrative barriers are not a fundamental obstacle to participating in elections in the province. Although the share that claimed administrative barriers prevented them from voting increased in 2021, the proportion of the population who plans to abstain due to administrative barriers remains nominal in general (4%). On average the Free State is ranked as the province least likely to abstain from voting due to administrative barriers.

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
Free State	1	1	1	3	5	2	2	7	2	6	6	1	2	3	5	3	...	1	4	5
National Avg.	4	3	3	3	7	4	3	3	2	4	5	3	3	4	4	6	...	3	4	4
Upper Bound	9	5	7	4	13	7	9	7	8	8	10	8	10	8	8	8	...	8	6	5
Lower Bound	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	...	0	2	3
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	8	8	4	6	7	7	1	1	2	3	8	8	5	4	6	...	3	4	1

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

2.3.8 Voter registration patterns

GOAL

Ensure that eligible voters are registered

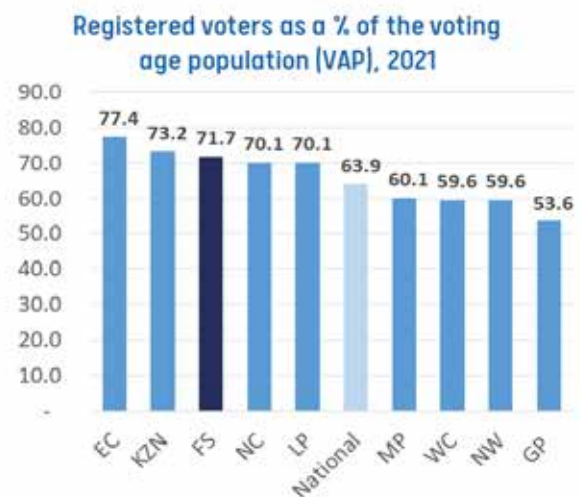
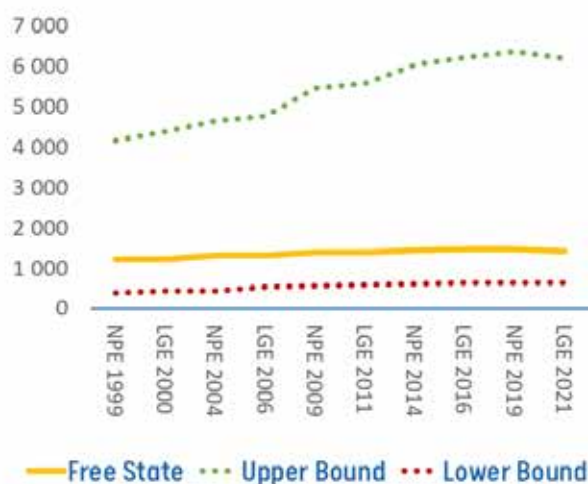
QUESTION

Number of South Africans that are registered to vote in National and Provincial Elections; percentage of voting age population that is registered

ANALYSIS

In 1999, 1.23 million eligible voters were registered to vote in the National and Provincial Elections in the Free State. Over successive elections, through sustained efforts by the Commission, an additional 200 000 voters were added to the provincial voter's roll over the two decades between 1999 and 2021. In 2021, the share of the voting age population (VAP) in the province that was registered was 71.7%, which is 7.8 percentage points higher than the national average (63.9%). The province figure is relatively high, but in coming years, voter registration drives in the province need 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
Free State	1 226	1 227	1 321	1 318	1 389	1 387	1 449	1 471	1 463	1 413	71.1
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

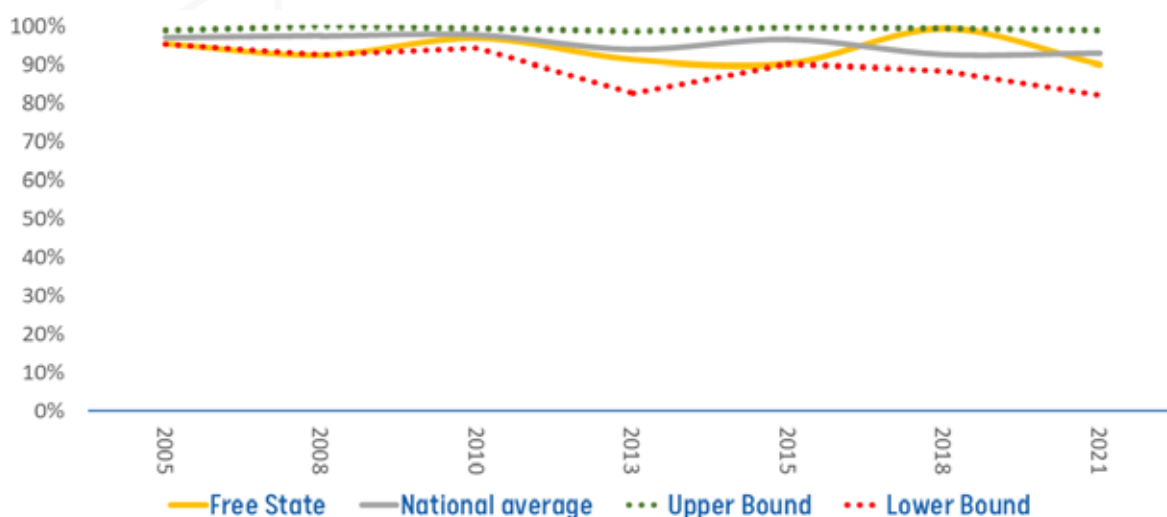
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2018 there was near universal agreement among registered voters in the Free State that the voting registration process was easy and, in 2018, the Free State ranked first with regard to the share evaluating the process as easy. However, in 2021 the evaluation was less positive, resulting in the province ranking second lowest on this indicator. On aggregate, the Free State also ranked lowest of all provinces in terms of regarding the registration process as easy. The factors that led to this change in perspective on registration in the province in 2018 bear further consideration by the Electoral Commission in determining factors to ease the registration process. Despite these lower on average ratings, it must be reiterated that the majority of voters still regard the voting process as easy.

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
Free State	95	92	97	91	90	99	90	94
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	94
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	9	6	8	9	1	8	9

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

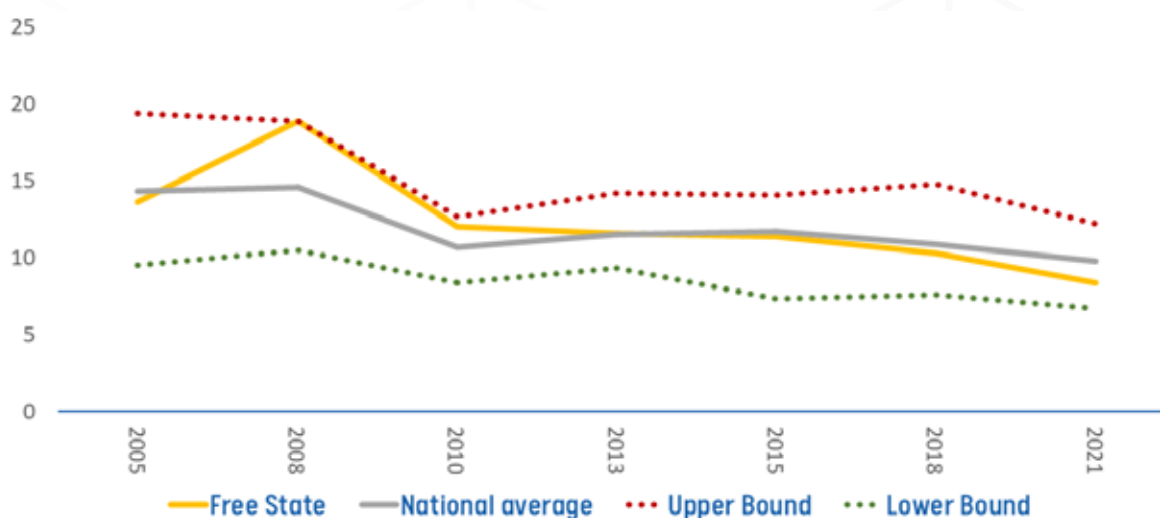
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

The average length of time to register in the Free State is quite short, averaging twelve minutes. In 2005, the mean average time recorded was 14 minutes, but increased to 19 minutes (the highest ever) in 2008. In 2010, the mean time decreased to 12 minutes and has remained in a eight to 12 minute bound since then. Apart from 2008, the discrepancy between the provincial and national averages was not large. In 2021 the mean registering time was eight minutes, below the national average. Overall, the Free State ranked fifth in terms of the time it took to register. This overall positive result is consistent with the general finding that administrative barriers do not prevent voters from participating in government elections in South Africa. Based on this evaluation and the ease of voting, it would appear that for most the registration process is fast and easy.

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
Free State	14	19	12	12	11	10	8	12
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	5	5	5	2	2	3	5

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

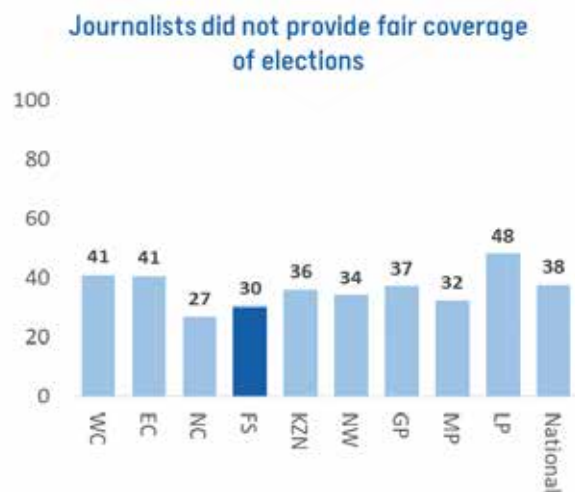
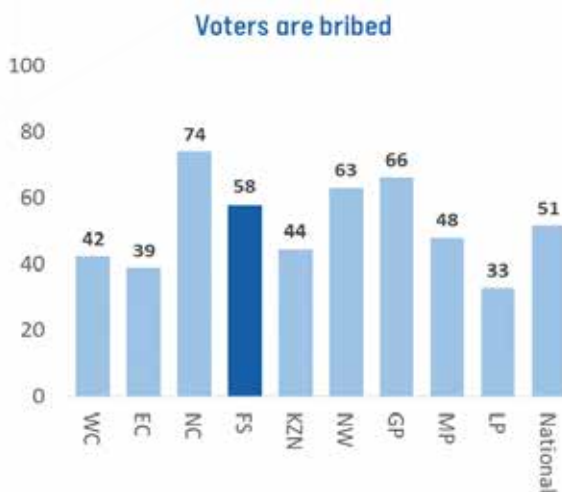
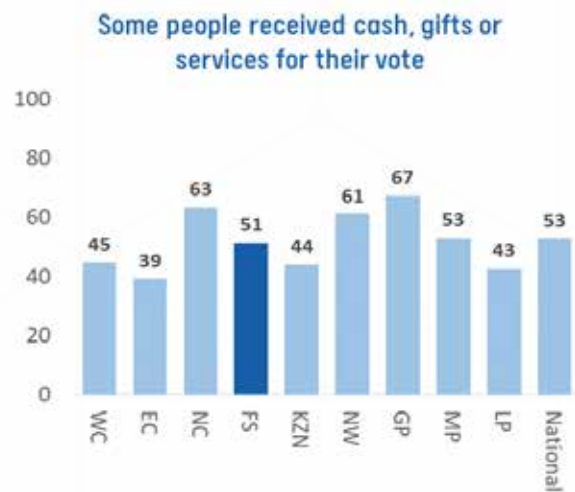
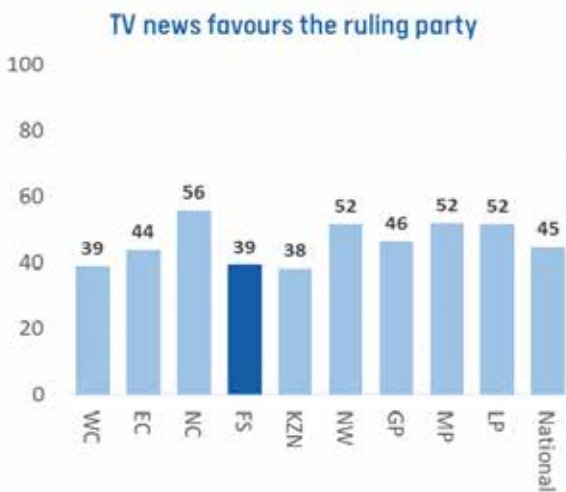
QUESTION

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 Free State displayed high levels of cynicism regarding the integrity of electoral campaigns. More than half (58%) of the provincial public felt that voters are bribed and 52% felt rich people buy elections with 51% believing that people receive cash, gifts or services in exchange for their votes. Almost two-fifths (39%) of the adult population believed that TV news favoured the ruling party and 30% stated journalists do not provide fair coverage of elections.

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



Rich people buy elections



Voters are not offered a genuine choice at the ballot box



	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
Free State	39	51	58	30	52	23
National Avg.	45	53	51	38	46	26
Upper Bound	56	67	74	48	60	39
Lower Bound	38	39	33	27	31	12
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	5	4	8	2	5

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

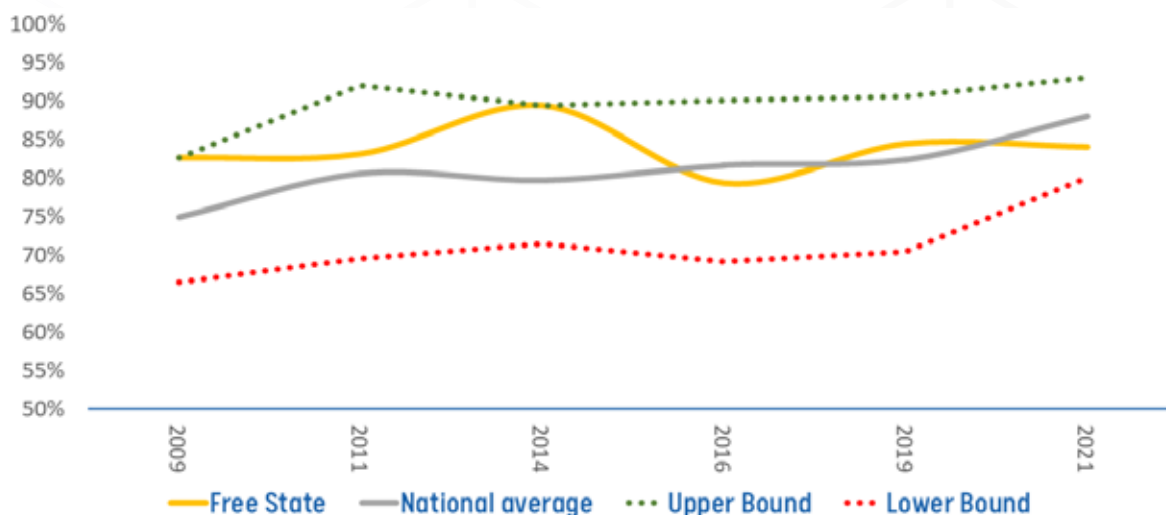
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2009, 83% of voters in the Free State indicated that political parties and independent candidates demonstrated general tolerance during the campaigning period ahead of elections. This positive assessment of party and candidate conduct is reflected in subsequent electoral contexts in 2011 and 2014, 2016, 2019 and 2021, ranging between 79% and 89% over this period, and with an average of 84% over the six elections. Voters in the province were generally more positive on this indicator than the other eight provinces between 2009 and 2014, with a rank position ranging between one and four, but the Free State slipped to sixth place in 2016, fifth place in 2019 and seventh place in 2021. On aggregate, the Free State ranked third on average over the 2009 to 2019 full period.

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
Free State	83	83	89	79	84	84	84
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	4	1	6	5	7	3

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 accessing information about voting, the pattern observed among the voting age public over the period 2008 to 2018 is broadly consistent. Broadcast media was the most popular source of information in the Free State, with 46% on average relying on television and 37% on radio. In both instances, these sources were more popular in the province relative to other media. In 2008, newspapers were popular as a source of information but has subsequently become less popular, with a mere 20% using newspapers in 2018 and 2021. In contrast, the use of social media as a source of information has been increasing.

	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Total
Television							
Free State	49%	51%	38%	20%	62%	54%	46%
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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	3	3	7	9	4	5	7
Radio							
Free State	45%	27%	37%	37%	38%	35%	37%
National average	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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	7	4	4	5	5	5
Newspapers							
Free State	37%	29%	31%	31%	20%	20%	28%
National average	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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	5	2	2	8	5	3
Posters							
Free State	30%	27%	16%	16%	5%	23%	20%
National average	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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	2	8	8	9	2	7
Informal social networks							
Free State	11%	8%	18%	18%	5%	17%	13%
National average	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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	9	4	4	8	1	4
Social media							
Free State	1%	4%	1%	6%	4%	6%	4%
National average	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%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	6	1	5	6	6	3	4

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

In 2021, when asked about a preferred channel of electoral information, 48% of the Free State public opted for television. Television was also the most popular source nationally. Radio was found to be a comparatively popular preferred channel in the province and in terms of provincial rankings, in 2021 the Free State ranked fourth in terms of preferring radio as a source of information. It seems that over time, newspapers have become less of a preferred channel of electoral information. Posters and informal social networks were preferred by 5% and 7% of people respectively in 2021 and the provincial ranking of these sources were high (second and first), indicating that these sources were popular in the Free State relative to other provinces in 2021.

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

	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	Total
Television							
Free State	51%	62%	51%	36%	55%	48%	51%
National Avg.	57%	57%	58%	58%	53%	45%	55%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	3	7	7	3	6	7
Radio							
Free State	17%	4%	13%	13%	33%	14%	15%
National Avg.	21%	15%	13%	13%	15%	11%	15%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	6	9	5	5	1	4	6
Newspapers							
Free State	11%	6%	9%	9%	2%	2%	6%
National Avg.	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	3	5	3	3	8	8	3
Posters							
Free State	8%	5%	4%	4%	0%	5%	4%
National Avg.	3%	7%	8%	8%	8%	4%	6%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	5	9	9	9	2	8
Informal social networks							
Free State	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	7%	2%
National Avg.	2%	2%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	6	8	8	8	1	8
Social media							
Free State	0%	1%	4%	10%	3%	1%	3%
National Avg.	1%	1%	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	8	4	1	2	6	4	5

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

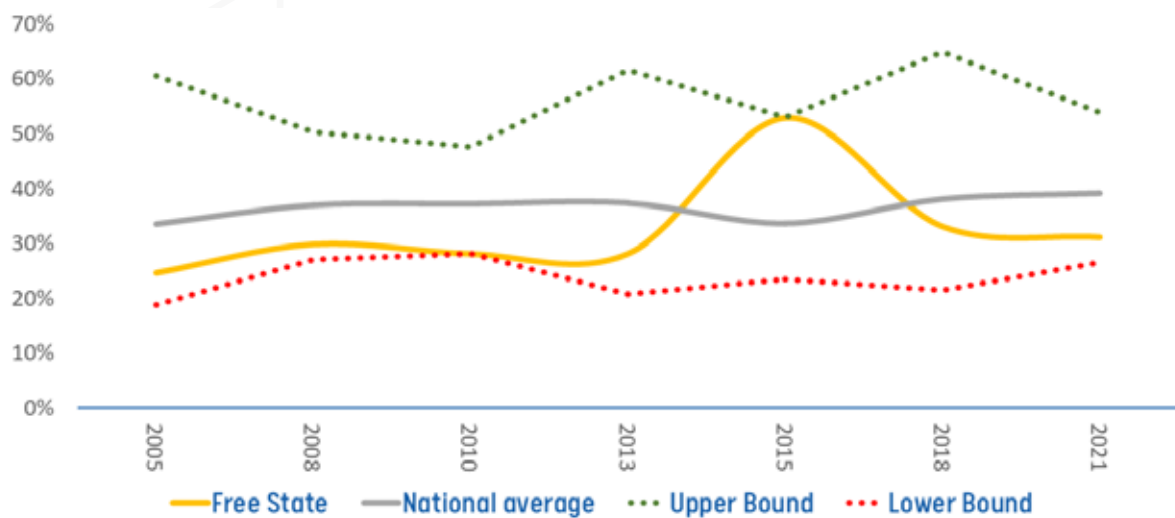
QUESTION

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 in the Free State, a quarter (25%) expressed a desire for more information on voting in 2005. This subsequently increased to 30% in 2008, after which it dropped slightly to 28% in the 2010 and 2013 survey rounds. In 2015, this figure rose dramatically to a high of 53% after which it tapered off and from 2018 the demand for information was around a third. Given the full period, it is evident that there was a growth in the demand for electoral information in 2015 relative to other years where the demand was relatively stable. Apart from 2015, the demand for information in the Free State was below the national average and the Free State was ranked seventh overall on this indicator.

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
Free State	25	30	28	28	53	33	31	33
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	7	9	8	1	7	7	7

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

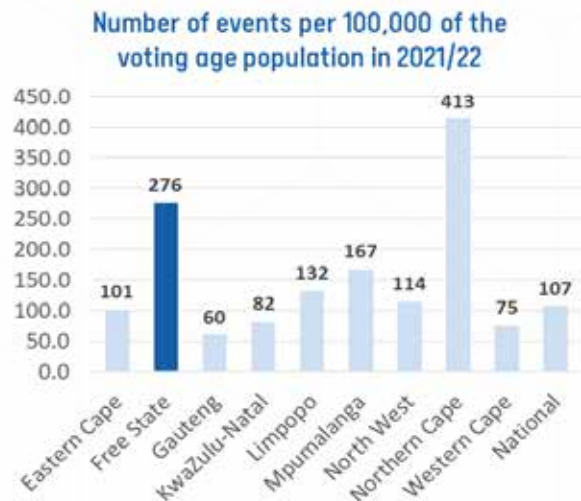
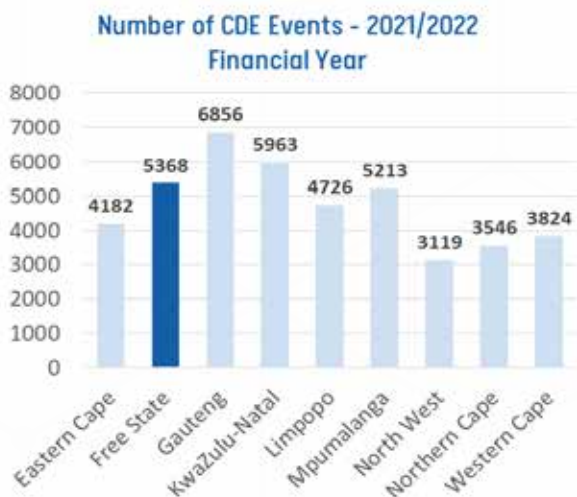
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

More than 50,000 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, while the Free State was second with 276 events 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				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
National	82 388	30 726	13 036	42 797	217.7	78.6	32.8	106.6

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

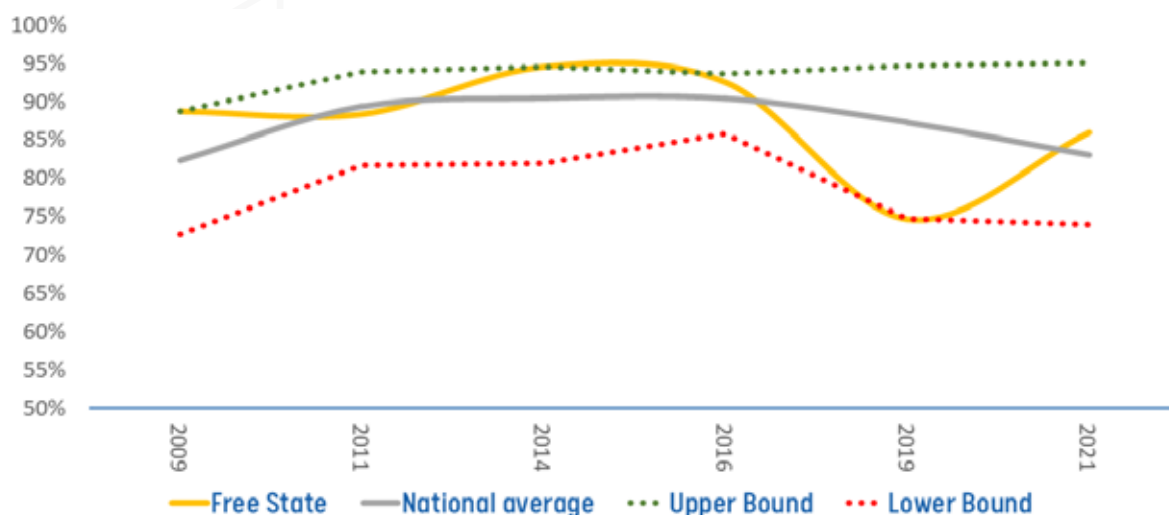
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2009, almost nine out of ten voters (89%) in the Free State believed that the Commission’s voter education campaign was effective and ranked highest on this indicator relative to other provinces. Attitudes on this indicator improved to an all-time high of 95% in 2014. A much less positive statistic was however recorded for the Free State in 2019 when only three-quarters (75%) of voters stated that the voter education campaign was effective. In this year, the provincial ranking of the Free State also dropped to last (ninth). In 2021 this negative evaluation was somewhat reversed to the extent that 86% of voters believed the education campaign to be effective.

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
Free State	89	88	95	93	75	86	87
National Avg.	82	89	91	90	87	83	87
Upper Bound	89	94	95	94	95	95	91
Lower Bound	73	82	82	86	75	74	85
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	1	6	1	4	9	5	5

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

Determine the average time taken to get to voting stations

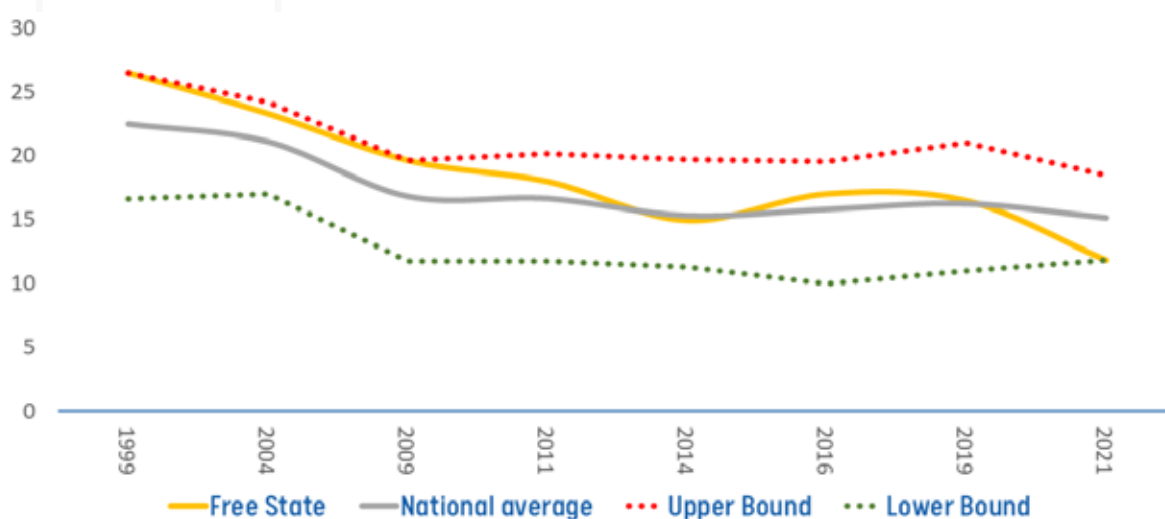
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Over the 1999 to 2021 period, the average time it took for voters in the Free State to get to their voting station was 19 minutes, one minute more than the national average of 18 minutes. The time taken to reach one's voting station in the province has remained fairly stable over time, and, with the exception of 1999, has consistently been close to the national average. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State ranked eighth overall, implying that voters in the Free State generally take longer to get to their voting station than other provinces. However, in 2021 the Free State ranked first, implying a significant improvement on this indicator.

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
Free State	27	22	23	20	18	15	17	16	12	19
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	9	5	8	9	7	6	7	7	1	8

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

4.1.2 Queuing time at voting stations

GOAL

Determine the average queuing time at voting stations

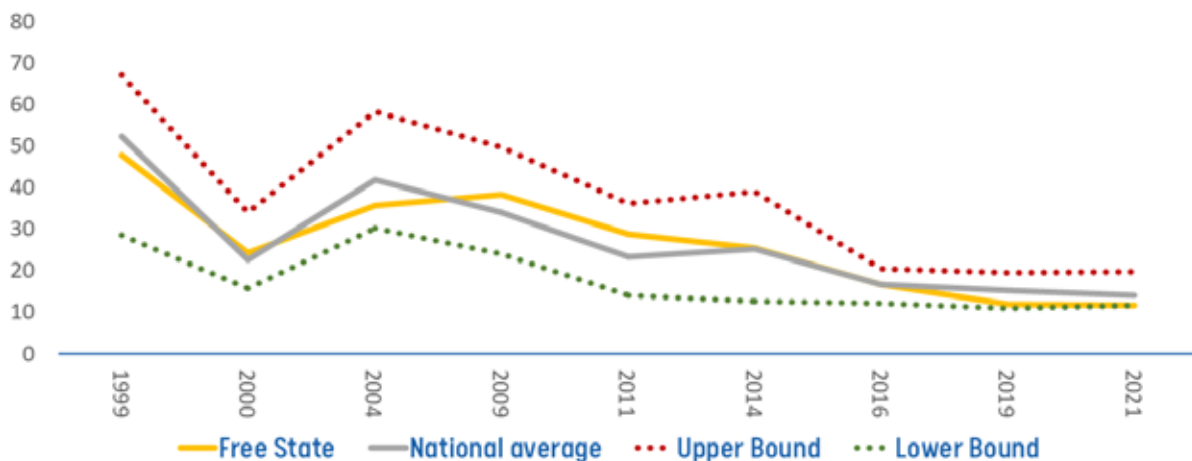
QUESTION

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 Free State was 27 minutes, which is equivalent to the national average. The average queuing time in the Free State has steadily declined since 2009, averaging around half an hour. By 2021, the mean time declined to only 12 minutes. Despite this progress, the Free State still ranks sixth on average on this indicator, although the recent trend augurs well for the Free State.

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
Free State	48	24	36	38	29	25	17	12	12	27
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	8	4	8	8	8	6	4	1	6

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

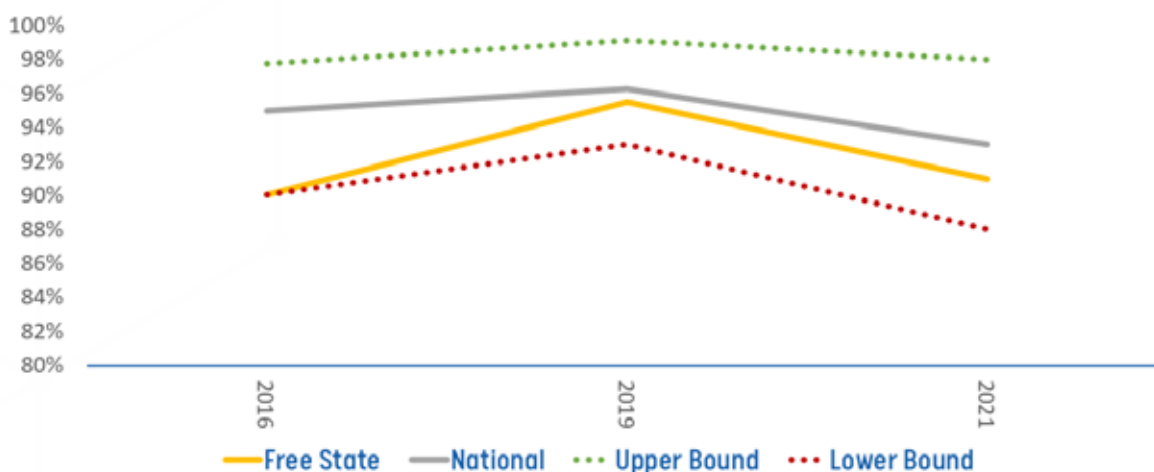
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

On average, voters appear broadly satisfied with the safety and security provided at voting stations. In 2016, 90% of voters in the Free State expressed satisfaction with the safety and security at their voting stations, increasing to 96% in 2019 and dropping to 91% in 2021. Despite this, it is important to note that, relative to other provinces, the Free State ranks low on this indicator – ninth in 2016 and eighth in 2019 and 2021, with an average of eighth overall across the three survey rounds. Therefore, despite the high level of satisfaction and the increase observed between 2016 and 2019, the comparative findings indicate that the Free State is one of the provinces where more attention could be devoted to 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
Free State	90	96	91	92
National Avg.	95	96	93	95
Upper Bound	98	99	98	98
Lower Bound	90	93	88	92
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	9	8	8	8

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

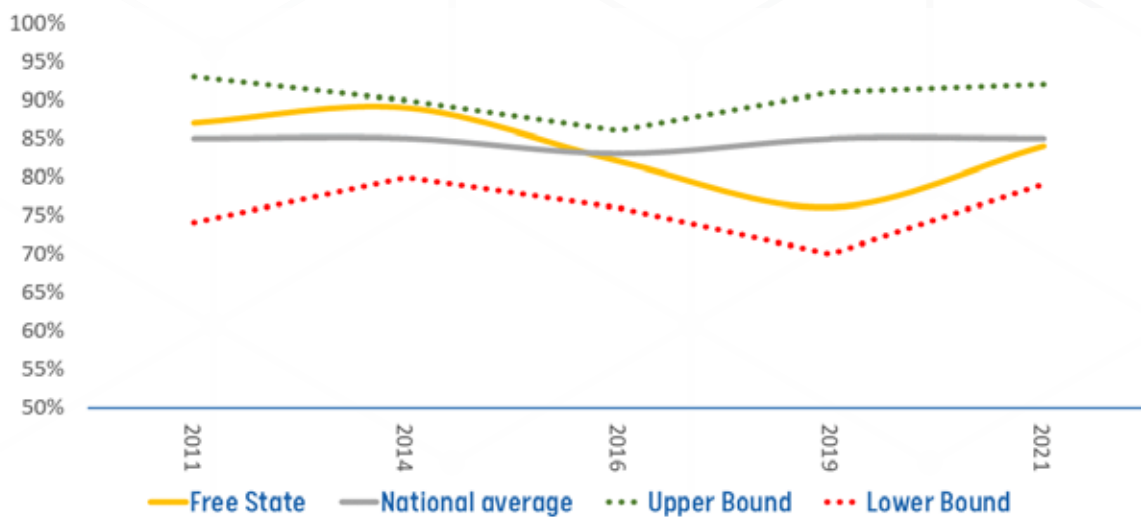
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

The proportion of Free State voters who felt that voting stations were accessible to persons with disabilities and or the elderly was high in all survey rounds. We can observe a gradually decrease in satisfaction on this issue between 2014-2019, falling from 89% at the beginning of the period to 76% at the end. There was an increase in satisfaction in 2021, 84% of voters in that round were satisfied with the accessibility provided to the disabled and elderly. Although satisfaction with accessibility was very high in the province, the Eastern Cape only ranked fifth in 2021 and seventh of the nine provinces for the 2009-2021 period. Fairly low interprovincial variations were noted on this measure for this period with the exception of 2019. In that survey round there was a 21 percentage point difference between the upper and lower bounds.

ACCESSIBILITY OF VOTING STATIONS FOR THE DISABLED/ELDERLY: Satisfaction with the quality, 2011-2021



	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
Free State	87	89	82	76	84	84
National Avg.	85	85	83	85	85	85
Upper Bound	93	90	86	91	92	89
Lower Bound	74	80	76	70	79	77
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	3	4	8	5	7

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

4.1.5 Quality of service rendered by IEC officials

GOAL

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

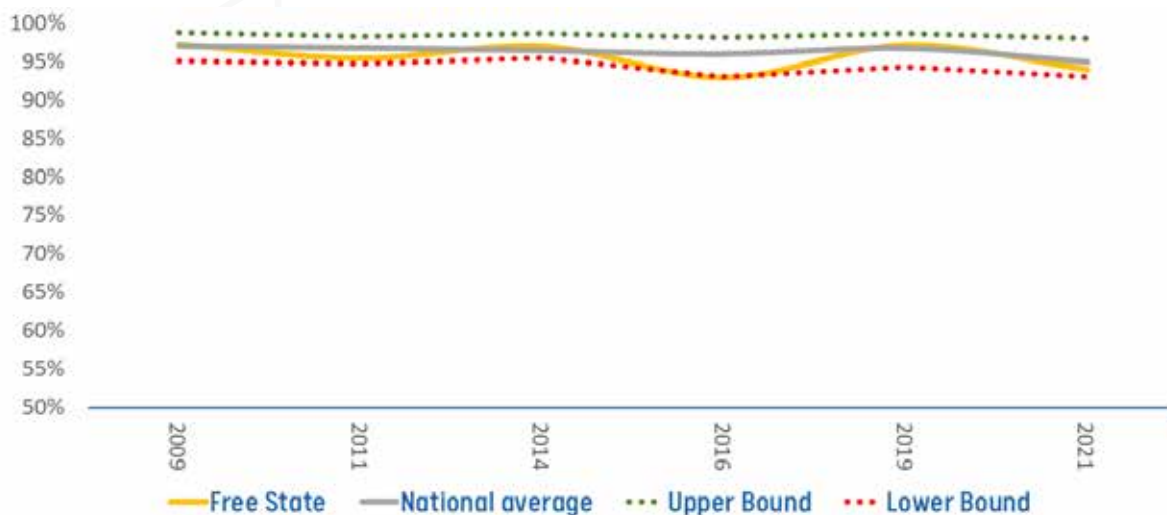
QUESTION

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 IEC to voters on Election Day in the six successive elections held between 2009 and 2021. In the Free State, satisfaction levels fluctuated in a relative narrow band between 93% and 97%, mirroring the national average. Despite this positive assessment, Free State ranked low relative to other provinces, persistently falling in the bottom five provinces. In 2016, the Free State ranked lowest on this indicator and ranked eighth on average over the full 2009 to 2021 period. This can be attributed to the high levels of satisfaction recorded across all provinces over time and the bunching of provinces, rather than a significantly poorer performance relative to other provincial contexts.

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



	2009	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
Free State	97	95	97	93	97	94	96
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	8	6	9	6	7	8

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

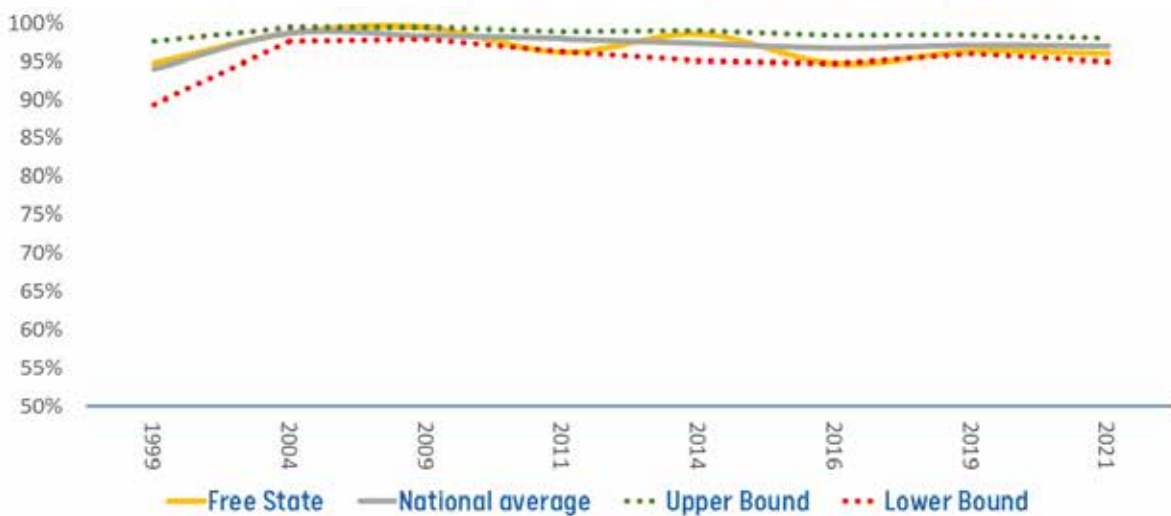
QUESTION

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 Free State between 1999 and 2021, a largely positive picture emerges. Over this period, the vast majority (97%) of voters in the province found the voting procedures inside the voting station easy to understand. We find a broadly consistent pattern of results 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%. The position of the Free State relative to other provinces has fluctuated over the last two decades, falling from highest in 2009 to lowest in 2011 and 2016. Overall, the Free State ranked eighth on this indicator over the full duration. It must, however, be cautioned that these rank differences merely reflect subtle inter-provincial variations due to the clustering of satisfaction levels among all provinces 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
Free State	95	94	99	99	96	99	95	96	96	97
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	4	6	1	9	5	9	8	6	8

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

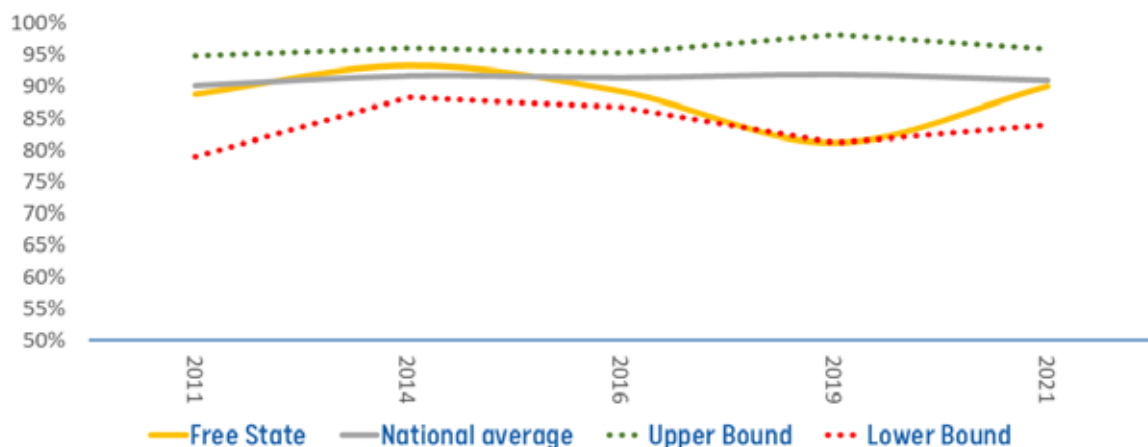
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2021, 90% of voters in Free State thought that voting stations accommodated the needs of the elderly. This represents an increase of nine percent since 2019. This suggests that the vast majority of voters are generally convinced that the procedures in place at voting stations address the needs of the elderly. Despite this positive assessment, the Free State ranked lowest overall on this indicator, which has fluctuated between fourth position (2014) and ninth position (2019). The performance of the Free State on arrangements made at voting stations for the elderly therefore needs to be carefully monitored.

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



	2011	2014	2016	2019	2021	Average
Free State	89	93	89	81	90	88
National Avg.	90	92	91	92	91	91
Upper Bound	95	96	95	98	96	94
Lower Bound	79	88	87	81	84	88
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	6	4	7	9	6	9

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

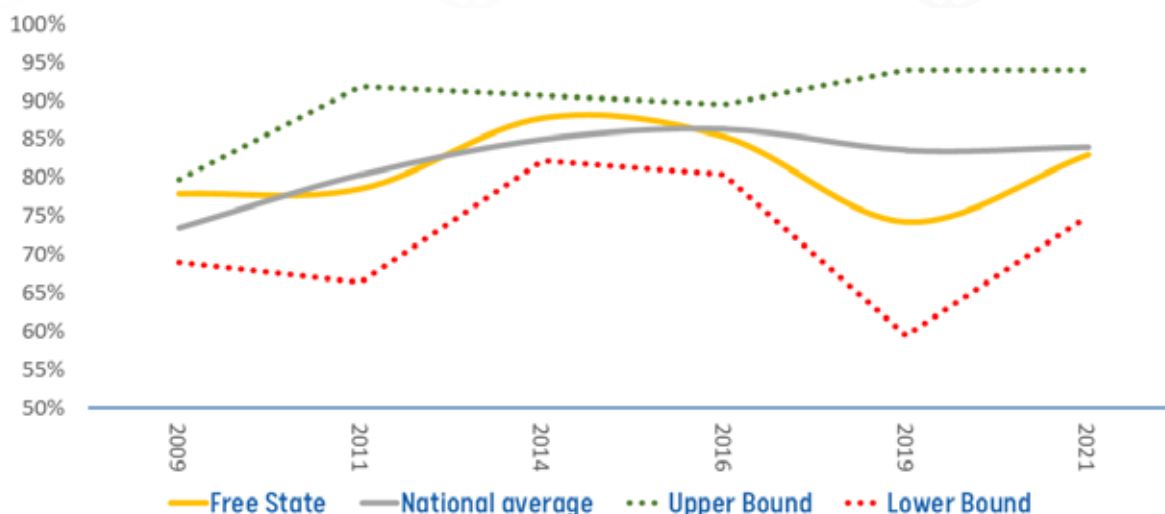
QUESTION

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 2009, 78% of voters in the Free State in general said that the voting stations accommodated the needs of persons with disabilities. These results significantly improved to a high of 88% in 2014 and dropped to 83% in 2021. Relative to other provinces, the rank position of Free State on this indicator has varied over the last decade, falling from second highest in 2009 to second lowest (eighth) in 2019. Despite this drop, on average, 81% of voters thought that procedures at the voting station considered the needs of this group over the full 2009 to 2021 period.

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
Free State	78	79	88	85	84	83	81
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	7	3	6	8	4	8

Data Source: IEC Voter Participation Survey (VPS) 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

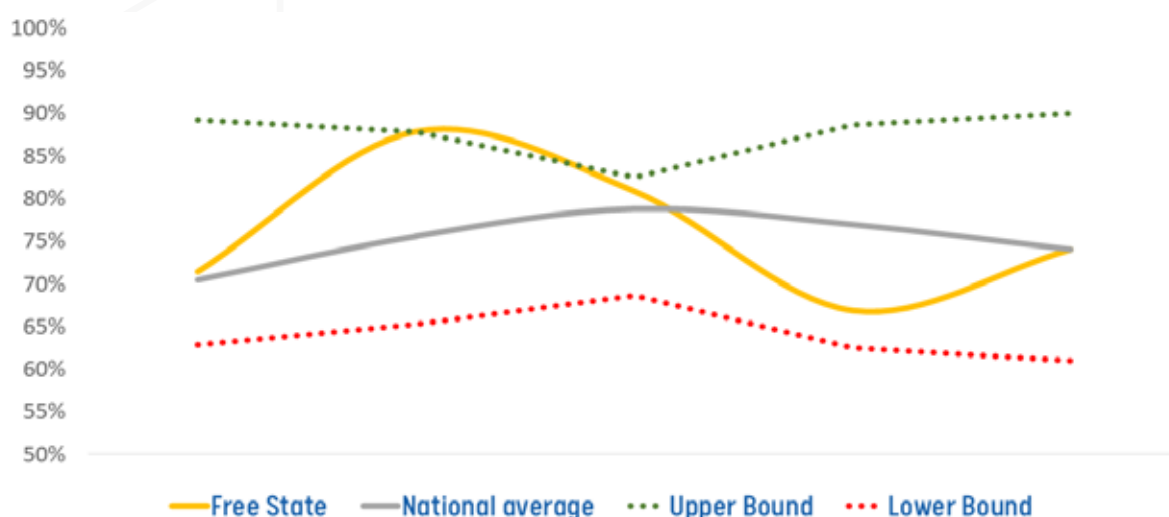
QUESTION

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 2011, 71% of voters in the Free State believed that the voting stations had put in place procedures that considered the needs of blind and visually impaired people. This proportion increased to over 80% in 2014 and 2016, implying eight out of 10 voters felt the needs of the blind and visually impaired were sufficiently accommodated at voting stations. During the first three survey rounds, the Free State ranked in the top four provinces on this indicator. In 2019 however, the proportion satisfied with this indicator dropped and only two-thirds (67%) of voters in the Free State felt voting stations considered the needs of these groups. This increased to 74% in 2021, where the Free State ranked fifth. The ranking of the Free State relative to other provinces has varied over the last decade, remaining at fifth position overall.

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
Free State	71	88	81	67	74	76
National Avg.	70	76	79	77	74	75
Upper Bound	89	88	83	89	90	83
Lower Bound	63	65	69	63	61	65
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	1	4	7	5	5

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

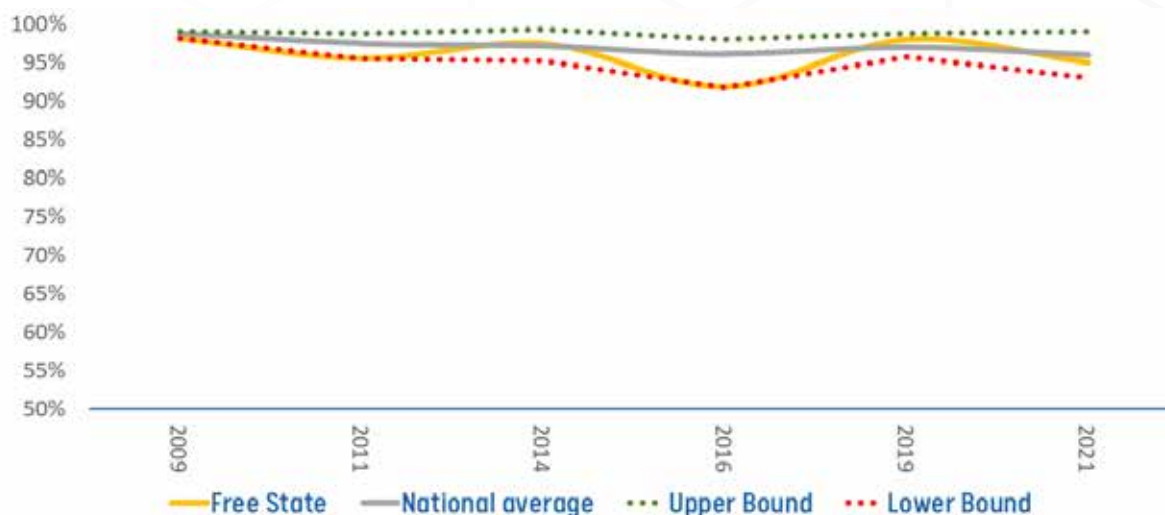
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2021, 95% of the voters in the Free State had faith in the arrangements made by voting stations to ensure the secrecy of their vote. This figure represents a minimal decrease of three percent from the 98% recorded in 2019. Considering the full period (2009 to 2021), the average share of voters in the province who were content with the secrecy of the vote was 96%. Overall, voters were therefore relatively satisfied with how the voting stations are performing in relation to ensuring the confidentiality of votes cast. However, considering the Free State in relation to other provinces over the full period, the Free State ranks ninth, thus lowest on this indicator. The rank position of the Free State has, however, fluctuated over time and has progressed from ninth position in 2016 to sixth in 2021. Notwithstanding these observed variations, the level of difference between provinces is marginal and this low rating should not be too much cause of concern at this stage.

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
Free State	98	96	97	92	98	95	96
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
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	9	9	5	9	3	6	9

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 the 2021 local government elections

QUESTION

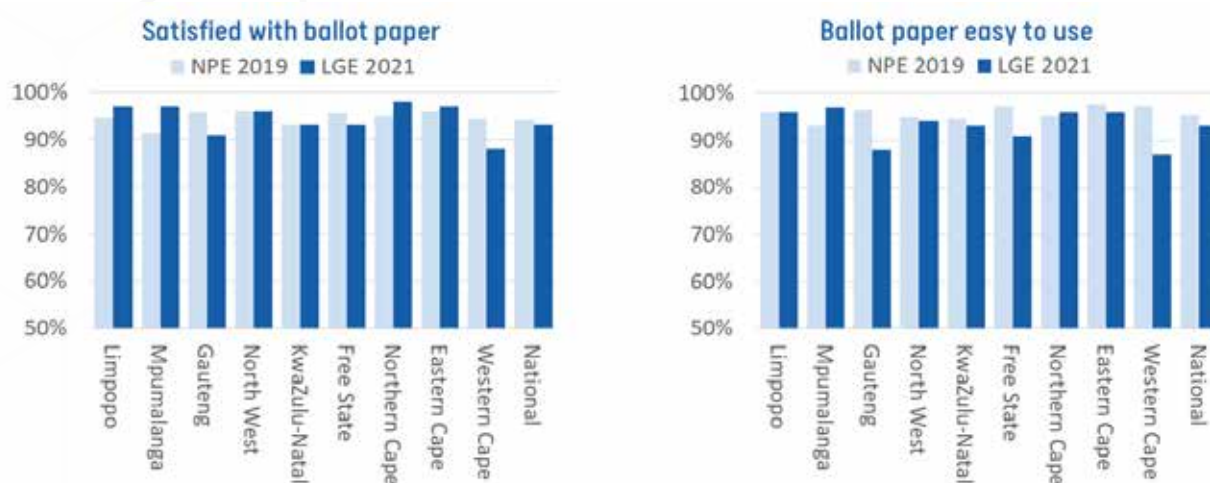
How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the ballot papers used in the 2021 local government elections? (% very satisfied / satisfied)

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

ANALYSIS

In 2021, the majority (93%) of voters in the Free State voiced satisfaction with the ballot papers used in the local government elections. This figure is similar to the national average. This demonstrates that, overall, voters were fairly pleased with the ballot paper design. A similar share (91%) of voters in the province found it easy in general to find their party of choice on the ballot paper in the 2021 elections. Despite these high figures, satisfaction with the ballot paper and the perceived ease of use have declined since the 2019 national and provincial elections. Relative to other provinces, the Free State ranked sixth on the first measure and seventh on the second measure, indicating that levels of satisfaction have been decreasing when compared to other provinces.

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
Free State	96	93	97	91
National Avg.	94	93	95	93
Upper Bound	96	98	98	97
Lower Bound	91	88	93	87
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	6	3	7

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

4.3 Coercion

GOAL

Determining experiences of political coercion at the voting station

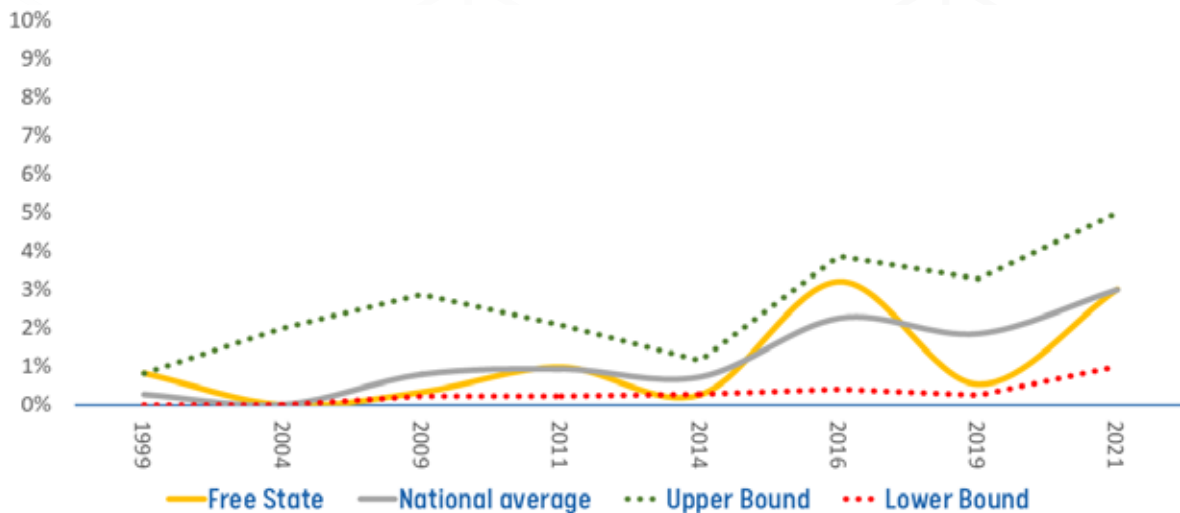
QUESTION

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 voting stations is not a common occurrence. Although it remains rare, there is evidence that there has been a slight increase in coercion at voting stations since 2014. This is especially apparent in the Free State where higher than average incidents of coercion were reported in 2016. Three percent of voters reported experiencing some form of coercion in 2016 and in 2021. Over the full period, the provincial average remained at one percent. The ranking of the Free State on this measure varied from lowest in 1999 to highest in 2014. The Free State ranks fifth overall. Political coercion at voting stations in the Free State therefore appears to be erratic and vary from election to election and should be carefully monitored.

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
Free State	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	3	1
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	0	0
Rank (1-high; 9-low)	1	4	2	6	3	9	2	7	3	5

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
1999 National Election											
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
2004 National Election											
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
2009 National Election											
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
2014 National Election											
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
2019 National Election											
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
2000 Local Government Elections										
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
2006 Local Government Elections										
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
2011 Local Government Elections										
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
2016 Local Government Elections										
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
2021 Local Government Elections										
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

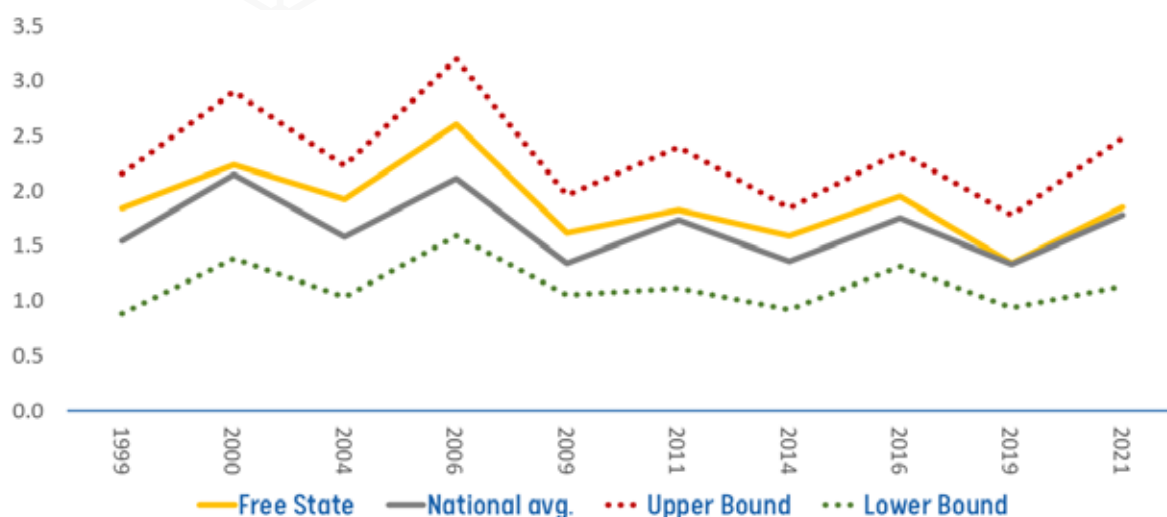
GOAL

Determining the share of total votes cast spoilt by voters

ANALYSIS

Of the total votes cast in National and Provincial Elections as well as Local Government Elections conducted between 1999 and 2021, the percentage of ballots that was spoilt in the Free State averaged 1.9% on aggregate. This ranged between 1.3% and 2.6% across the full period. With the exception of 2019, the Free State figures exceeded the national average, though the above-average level of spoiling was most apparent in 2006. In terms of provincial rank order, the Free State ranked between fifth and seventh over the 1999 to 2016 period, but encouragingly in 2019 and 2021 the spoilt ballots were not higher than the national average. Overall, the ranking of the Free State over the full period on this indicator is fifth. 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 addressed through improved ballot paper design and balloting education activities.

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
Free State	1.8	2.2	1.9	2.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.3	1.8	1.9
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	0.9	1.1
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	4	6	6	5

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

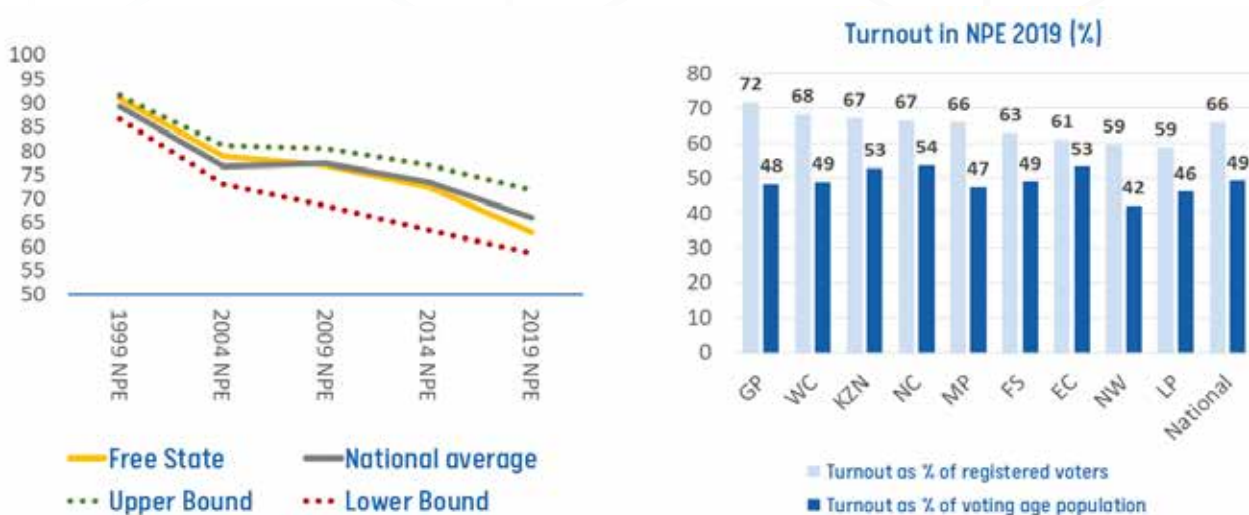
GOAL

Determining electoral turnout as a percentage of registered voters

ANALYSIS

Turnout in National and Provincial Elections in the Free State between 1999 and 2019 has progressively been decreasing. In 1999, it stood at 91%, fell to 79% in 2004, 77% in 2009, 73% in 2014 and 63% in 2019. In 2009, the Free State ranked second highest on this indicator compared to other provinces, but regressed to sixth position in 2019. Despite the fall in turnout, the Free State ranks fourth overall among the nine provinces over the five elections, and closely mirrors the national trend. 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 province was 49% of the voting age population, which is significantly lower than the 63% of registered voters that turned out.

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
Free State	91	...	79	...	77	...	73	...	63	...	76
National Avg.	89	...	77	...	77	...	73	...	66	...	77
Upper Bound	92	...	81	...	80	...	77	...	72	...	79
Lower Bound	87	...	73	...	69	...	63	...	59	...	72
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	2	...	3	...	5	...	6	...	6	...	4

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

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

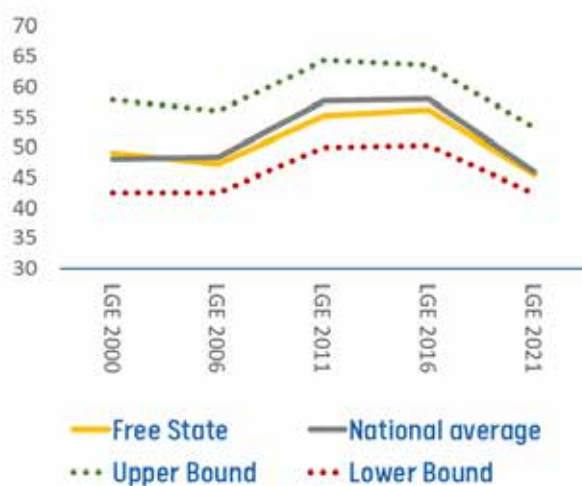
GOAL

Determining electoral turnout as a percentage of registered voters

ANALYSIS

Turnout in Local Government Elections in the Free State between 2000 and 2021 has closely been aligned to the national average. In 2000 and 2006, turnout was just under 50% and increased to 55% in 2011 and 56% in 2016. In 2021, turnout fell to 45%, the lowest recorded since 2000. On aggregate, the Free State is ranked fifth in terms of turnout. 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 2021, turnout in the province was 33% of the voting age population, which is significantly lower than the 45% of registered voters that turned out.

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
Free State	49	...	47	...	55	...	56	...	45	51
National Avg.	48	...	48	...	58	...	58	...	46	52
Upper Bound	58	...	56	...	64	...	63	...	53	58
Lower Bound	42	...	42	...	50	...	50	...	42	46
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	...	5	...	7	...	6	...	5	5

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

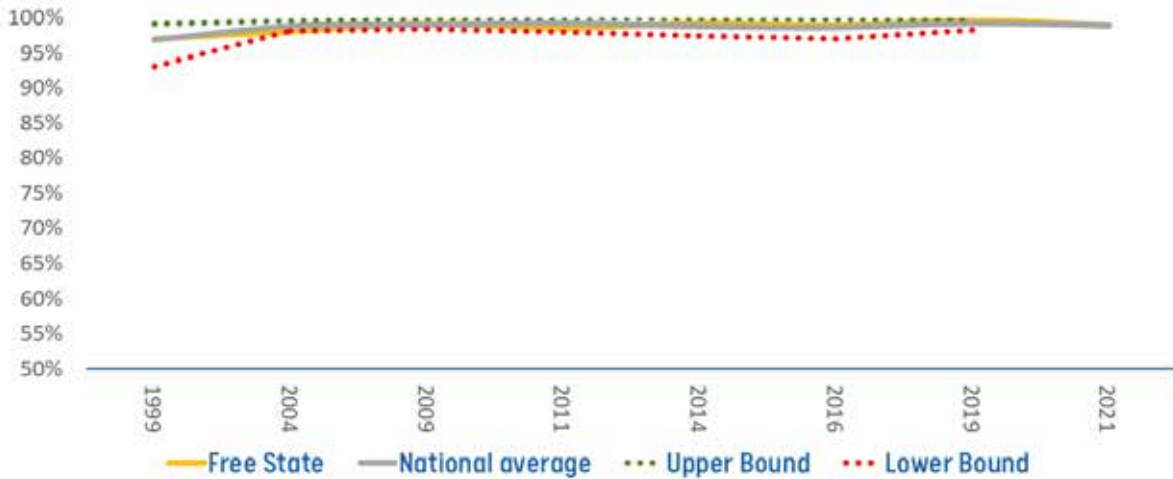
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

Looking at the 2021 elections survey results, an overwhelming majority of voters in the Free State (99%) 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 1999 to 2021 period, the share of voters in the province who thought that the voting procedures were both free and fair was 99%. It is clear that voters were satisfied with the election procedures in the context of the nine elections being considered. The rank of the Free State relative to other provinces has changed over time, being low in 2004 and 2011 but generally being in the top five in other years. Overall, the rank position of the Free State is fourth. Given that the levels of satisfaction among voters are high in all provinces, these rank differences reflect subtle percentage point changes rather than sizeable shifts in perspective.

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
Free State	97	99	98	98	99	99	99	100	99	99
National Avg.	97	96	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	98
Upper Bound	99	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99
Lower Bound	93	89	98	98	98	98	97	98	98	97
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	2	9	5	7	4	4	3	3	4

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

5.2 Vote count

GOAL

Assess confidence in the accuracy of the vote count

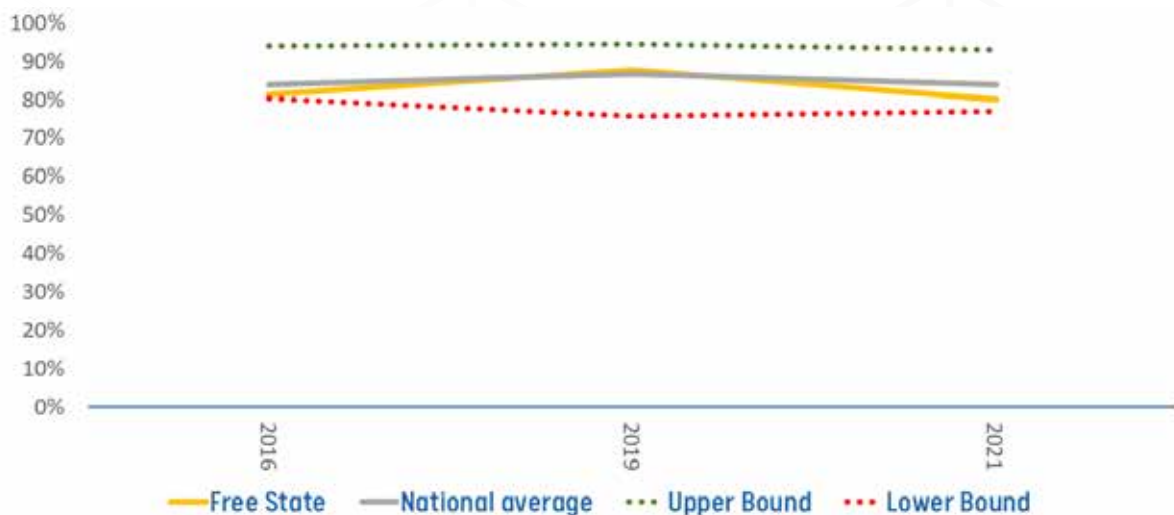
QUESTION

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 Free State (80%) believed that their vote would be accurately counted. This is an encouraging finding that shows confidence in electoral staff in performing this duty. It is, however, discerning that this percentage has dropped by eight percent since 2019 and something that should be closely monitored. Compared to the national average, the Free State figures are generally lower and on average, during the 2016 to 2021 period, the proportion of voters in the province who had confidence in the count was 83%. In comparison with other provinces, voters in the Free State ranked seventh on average on this indicator.

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
Free State	81	88	80	83
National Avg.	84	87	84	85
Upper Bound	94	94	93	91
Lower Bound	80	76	77	79
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	7	4	6	7

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



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

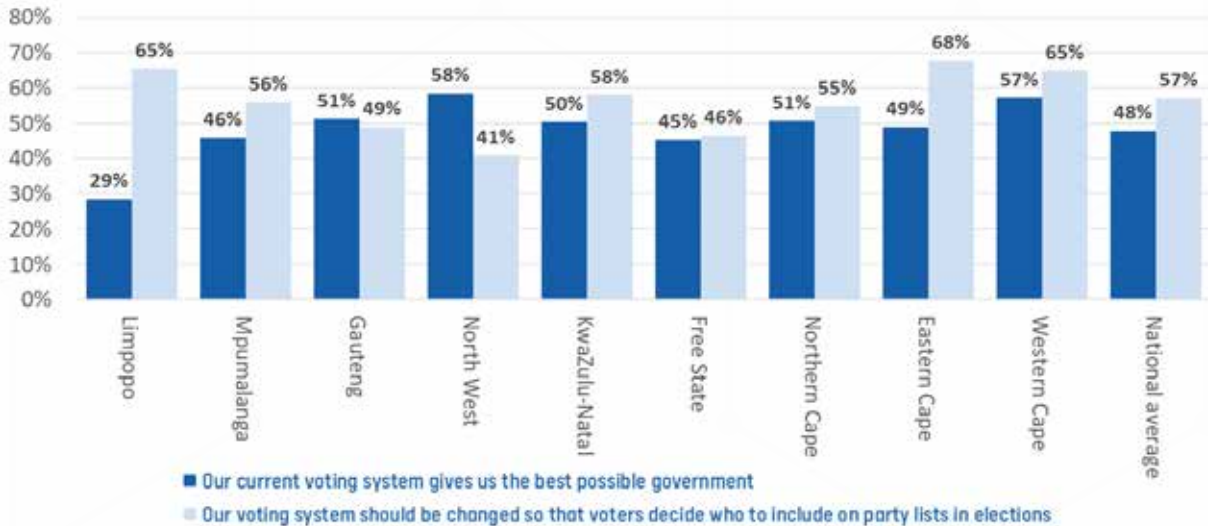
Our current voting system gives us the best possible government. (% strongly agree/ agree)

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

ANALYSIS

In 2019, citizens in the Free State were generally divided over whether the voting system delivers the best possible government. This figure did not substantively differ from the national average (48%). This demonstrated a degree of ambivalence in the province about whether the electoral system is functioning in accordance with expectations of democracy. Just under half (46%) of citizens in the Free State thought that they should have more say over who to include on party lists in elections. Relative to other provinces, the Free State was ranked fifth on the first indicator and fourth on the second indicator. This suggests some disillusionment with the current voting system and moderate levels for support for this type of reform in the country.

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 2019	Voting system should be change so voters decide on party list candidates 2019
Free State	45	46
National Avg.	48	57
Upper Bound	58	68
Lower Bound	29	41
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	5	4

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

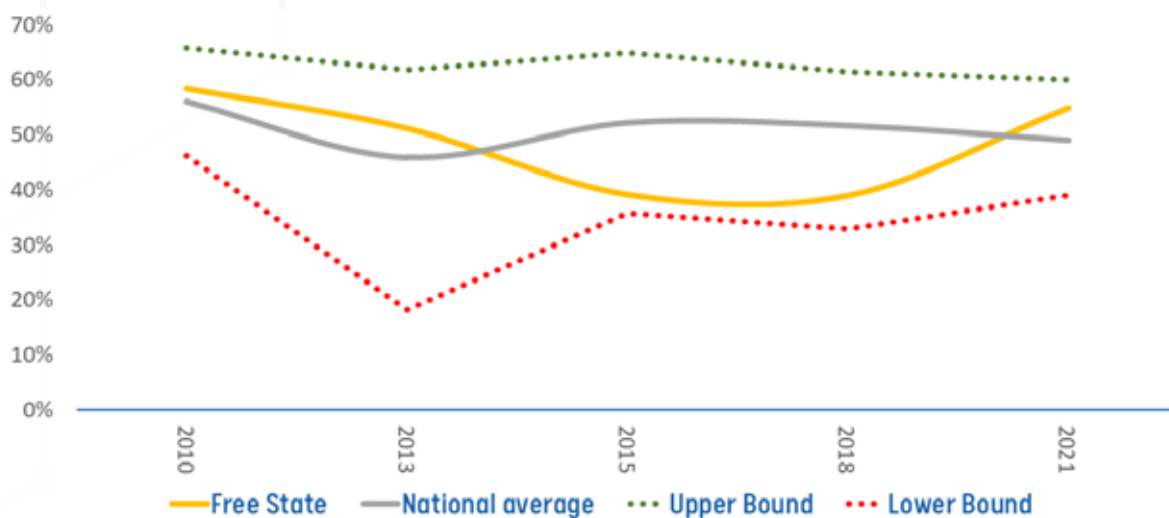
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2010, more than half (58%) of citizens in the Free State thought that electronic voting would be easier and more effective than the present system of paper ballots. Since 2010, the proportion supporting electronic voting has eroded significantly and in 2015 and 2018 less than two-fifths (39%) supported electronic voting. In 2021 a positive change in attitudes on electronic voting was recorded with more than half (55%) of Free State residents supporting electronic voting. On average across the 2010 to 2021 period, 47% of citizens in the province thought that electronic voting would make voting easier and more effective. In terms of provincial ranking, the Free State initially ranked high in 2010 and 2013 (fourth and third positions respectively) but fell to eighth position on this indicator in 2015 and 2018. In 2021 the Free State ranked second on this indicator. It is evident that citizens in the Free State were rather cynical of electronic voting between 2015 and 2018 but have become more positive about the effectiveness of electronic voting recently.

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
Free State	58	51	39	39	55	47
National Avg.	56	46	52	52	49	51
Upper Bound	66	62	65	62	60	69
Lower Bound	46	18	36	33	39	38
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	4	3	8	8	2	6

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

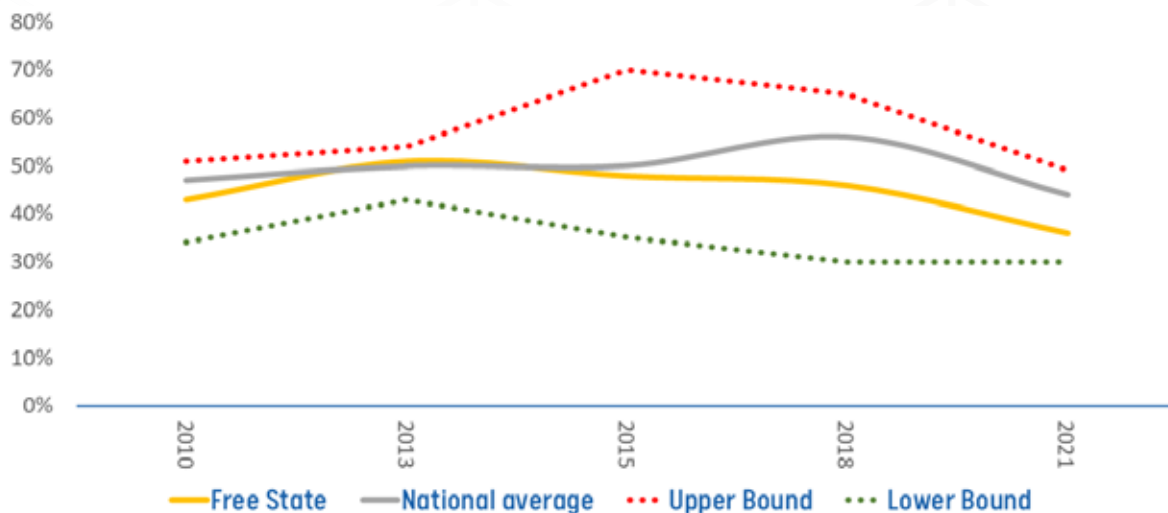
QUESTION

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

ANALYSIS

In 2021, 36% of adult citizens in the Free State believed that an electronic voting system would introduce more fraud relative to the current electoral system. Fears of voter fraud in an electronic voting system have reduced since 2013, suggesting diminishing concern about this issue. Compared with other provinces, the Free State ranked seventh overall. These findings suggest that Free State residents are rather positive about the possibility of electronic voting and on average less concerned about the possibility of fraud being introduced as a result of electronic voting than most other provinces.

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
Free State	43	51	48	46	36	47
National Avg.	47	50	50	56	44	51
Upper Bound	51	54	70	65	49	54
Lower Bound	34	43	35	30	30	37
Rank (1=high; 9=low)	6	3	5	7	7	7

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

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