

# The dynamics of democratic evaluations, electoral attitudes and behavioural intentions in Gauteng



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# A research-driven election management body (EMB)

Since the late 1990s, the **Electoral Commission** has partnered with the **Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)** to undertake a programme of electoral research.

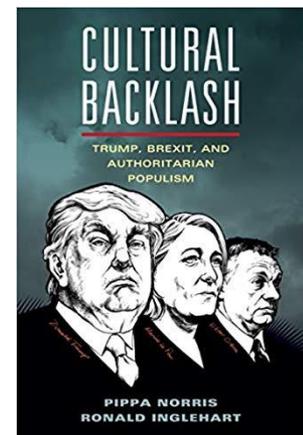
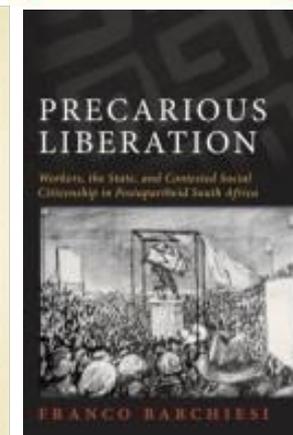
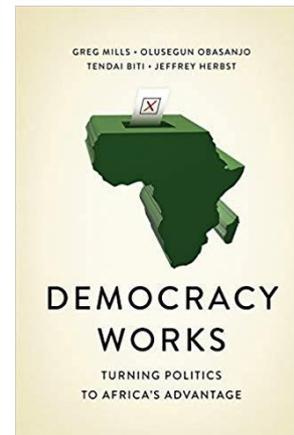
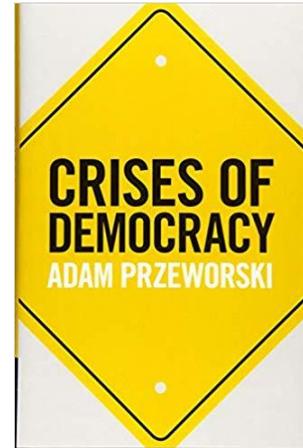
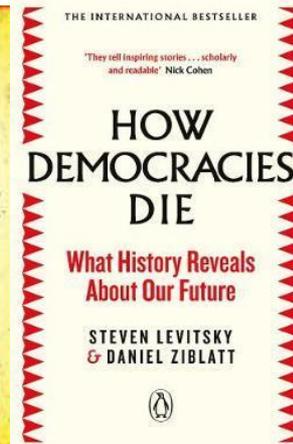
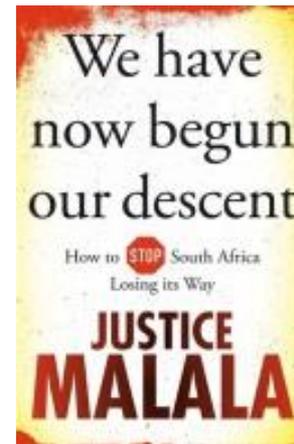
This focuses on generating survey-based as well as qualitative insight to inform operational planning and outreach.

- **The Power of the X:** Monitoring electoral predispositions through the Voter Participation Survey (VPS) series: 23,806 surveyed to date
- **The Voter's Voice:** Evaluating electoral experiences through the Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series; 118,541 surveyed to date
- Development of the **Election Indicators Report**



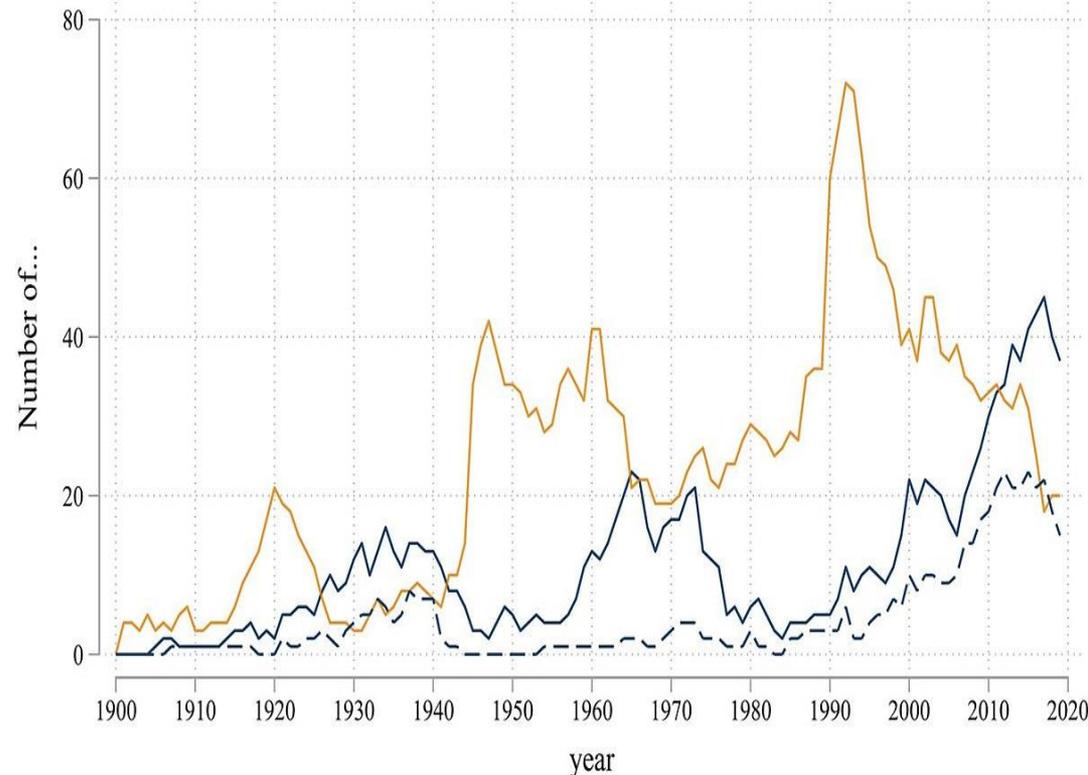
# Democratic context

- Ongoing debate about the **quality and performance of democracy**
- Mounting **public discontent** and its bearing on political legitimacy and behaviour
- **Changing electoral norms, active citizenship**



# Democratic Context (continued)

- In the past **50 years**, democracy accomplished one of its **biggest successes**.
- Huntington (1991:13) alluded that between 1974-1990, **30 countries transitioned to democracy (third wave of democracy)**.
- Between 1974-2006, **the number of democracies in the world either increased or remained steady or increased** (Diamond, 2015:141).
- **However, Since then, the world has been in a mild but protracted democratic recession, Diamond (2015:144) points out .**



- ...countries in autocratization episodes (democratic & autocratic regression)
- ...countries in democratization episodes (liberalisation & democratic deepening)
- - ...democratic countries under autocratization

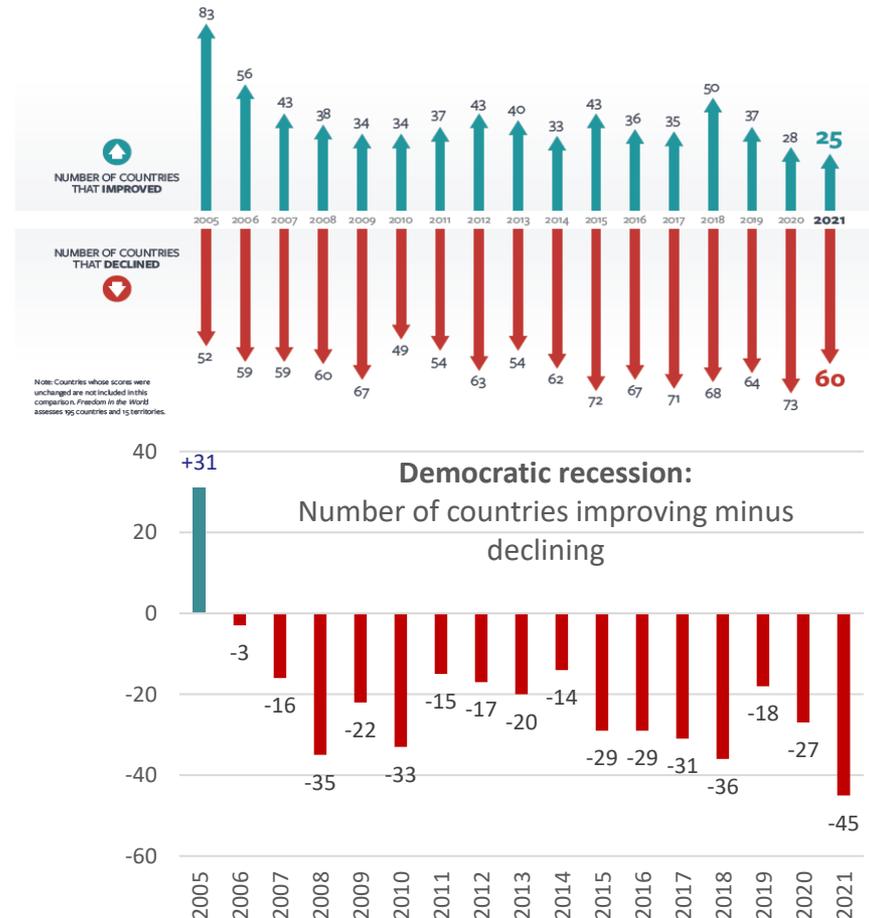
# Recent global dynamics of democracy

- **1990s/early 2000s:** optimism about future for democracy
- **Since mid-2000s:** period of global democratic recession
- Freedom House FIW: **16 consecutive years of decline**
- **Last 5-6 years:** deterioration of democratic norms and institutions; authoritarianism
- **Concern:** moving from democratic recession to gathering crisis of liberal democracy (?)

## Freedom House – Freedom in the World, 2022

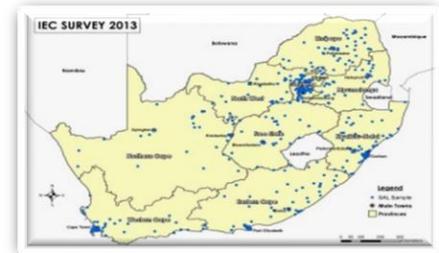
### A GROWING DEMOCRACY GAP: 16 YEARS OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

Countries with aggregate score declines in *Freedom in the World* have outnumbered those with gains every year for the past 16 years.



# Voter Participation Survey (VPS) Methodology

- **Purpose:** provide information on the views and behavioural preferences of adult South Africans in order to (i) better understand the electoral context and (ii) inform the Commission in its electoral management mandate
- Survey conducted **using HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)** research infrastructure
- **Nationally representative** of the population 16 years and older in private households across the 9 provinces
- **500 Small Area Layers (SALs)** selected using Census framework, and **3,500** addresses issued
- Collected by **face-to-face interview in the lead-up to election**
- Data **weighted** to StatsSA's **2021 mid-year population** estimates

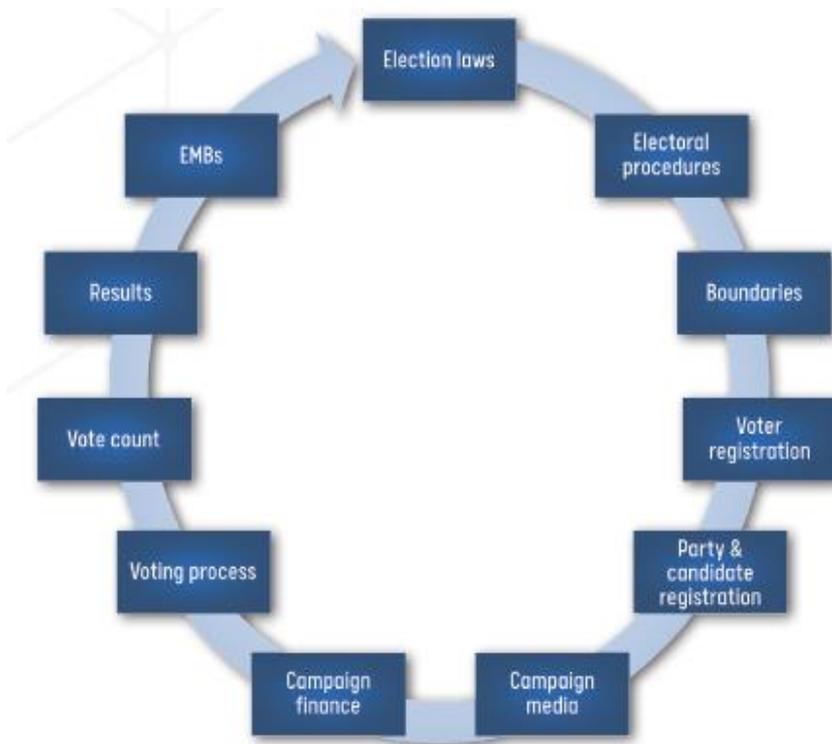


# Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series

## Methodology

- **Aims:** (i) to determine perceptions of voters regarding the freeness and fairness of the electoral process; (ii) to assess the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing elections.
- **Sample design:** included **stratification; multi-stage** procedure
  - Database of **voting stations** obtained from Electoral Commission merged with **Census Enumerator Areas**.
  - **National representative sample of 300 voting stations** selected countrywide, proportional to race, geographic type and the number of voting stations in each province.
- **At voting stations,** fieldworkers **randomly select 50 voters for interviewing during Election Day** to ensure a fair representation of voters.

# The conceptual approach



## Electoral integrity

- **Rapid growth in interest** in concept last decade
- **Assessing quality of elections over time:** evaluating different election management structures, processes
- **Use a positive, human rights framing of electoral integrity:** integrity is achieved when electoral procedures meet established norms and standards at each of the stages in the election cycle (pre-election, campaigning, election day, immediate postelection period)

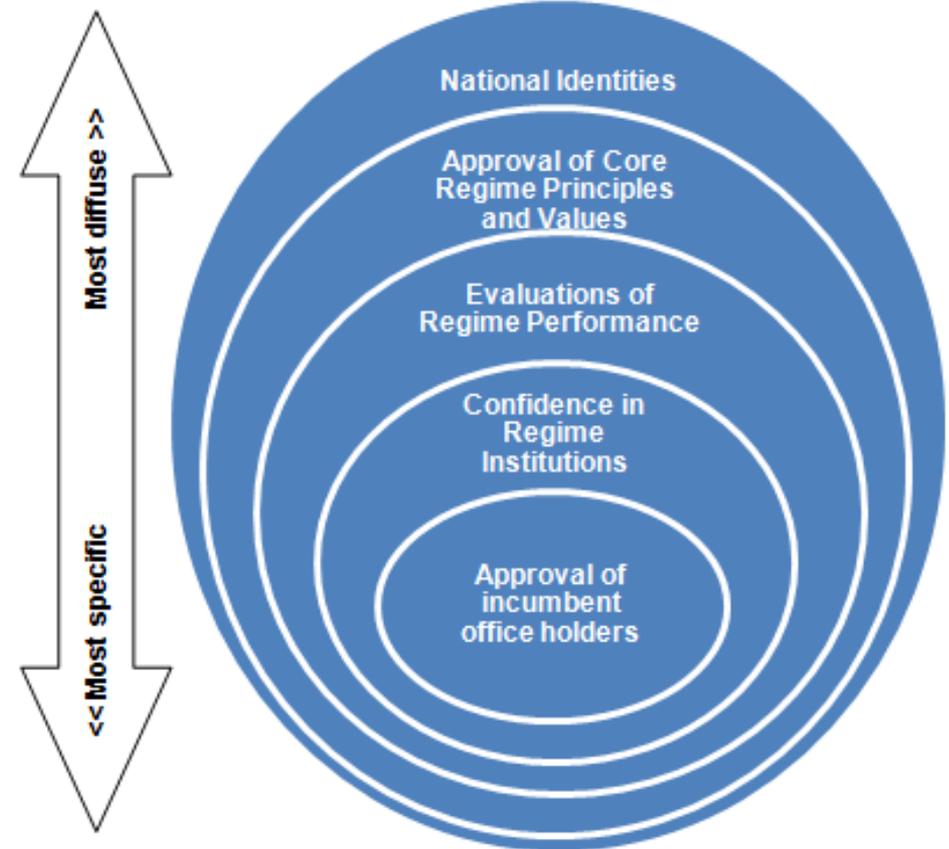
# The conceptual approach

- **Scope of analysis**

- Assess people's attachment to democratic values and principles;
- Test opinion on the performance of government and other political institutions;
- Investigate attitudes to electoral participation and other political activities;
- Examine generational and other salient subgroup differences

- The **analytical and conceptual framework of Norris (2011) on democratic support** guided the choice of indicators.

## DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT



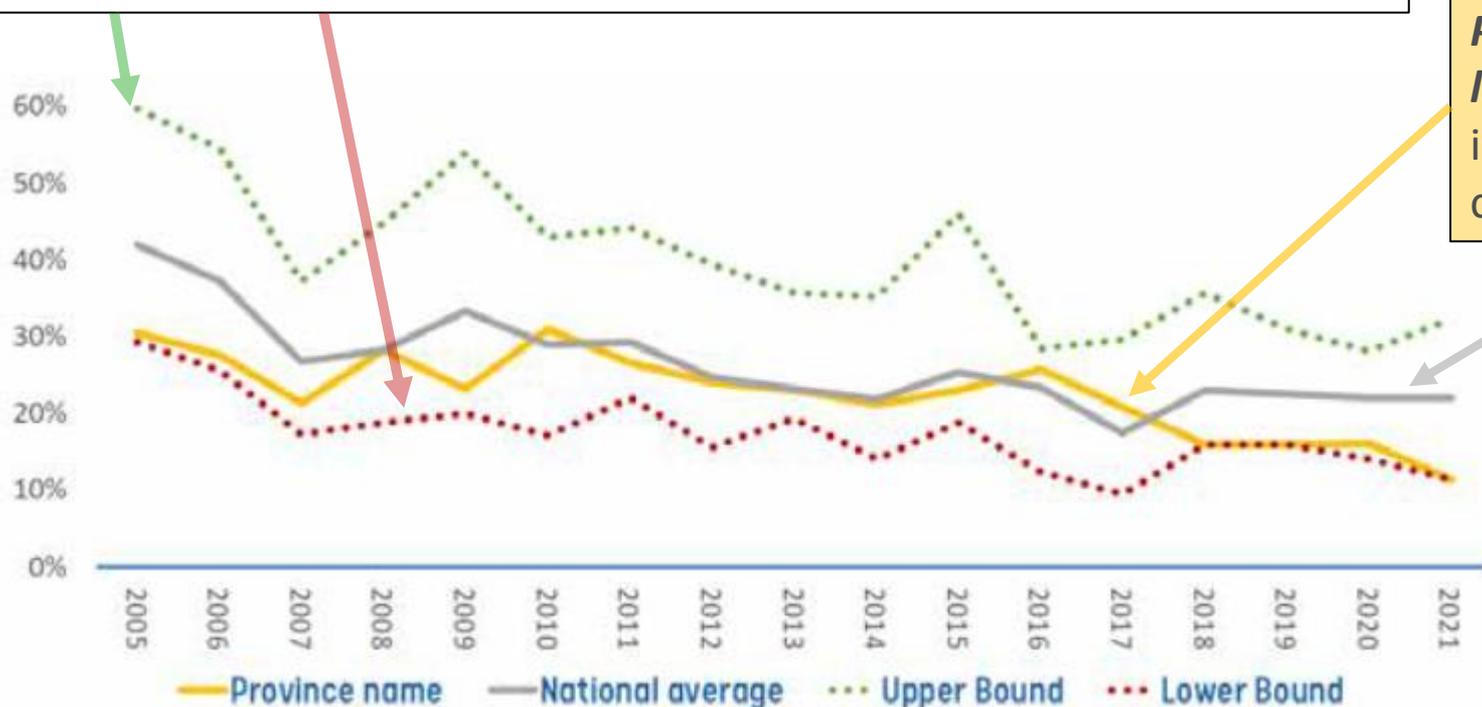
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# Guide to indicators and their interpretation

**Upper and lower bound lines (comparative performance):** The highest and lowest provincial values on the measure in the specified survey year. Values do not necessarily represent the same province over time.



**Provincial trend line** is highlighted in a bold yellow colour

**National trend line** is highlighted in a grey colour

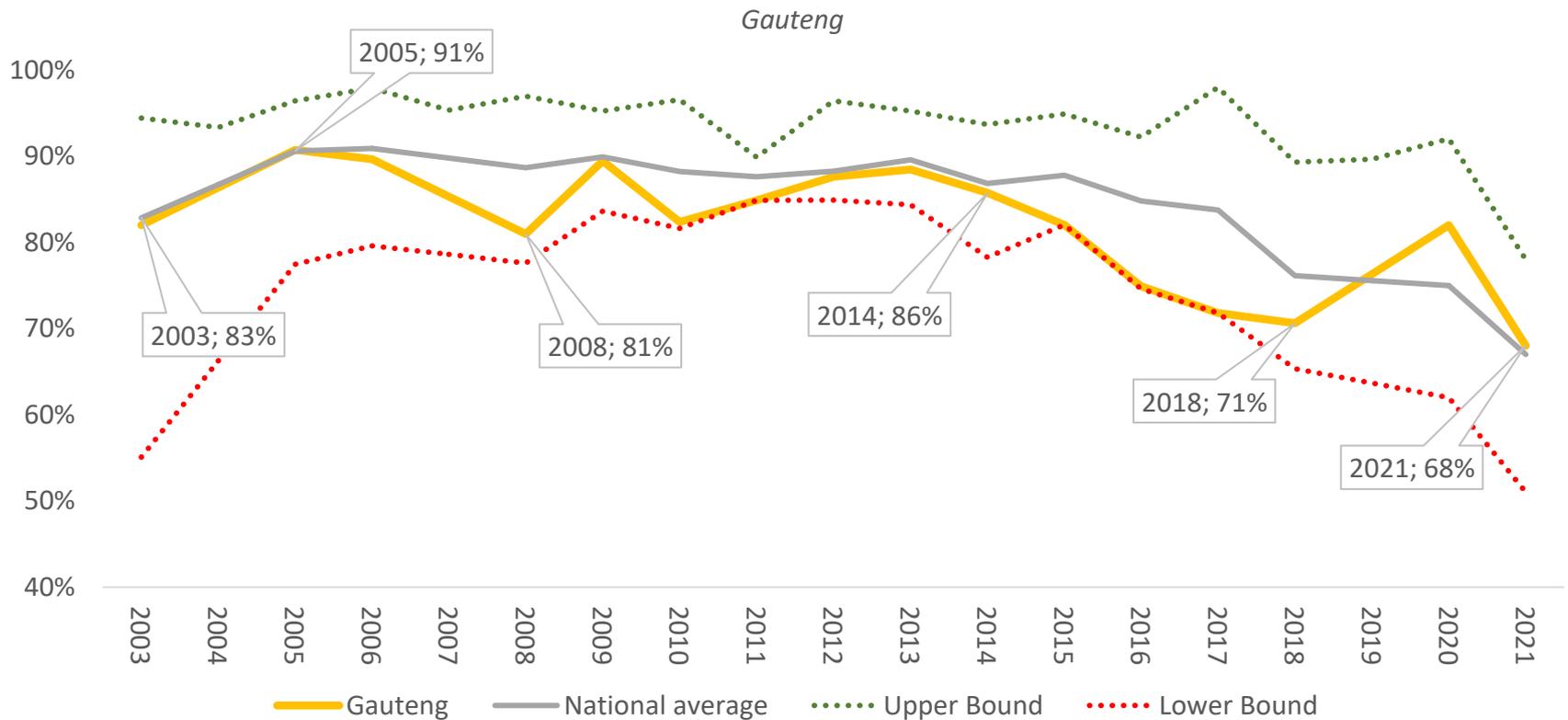


# General Evaluations of Democracy



# National Pride in Gauteng (2003-2021)

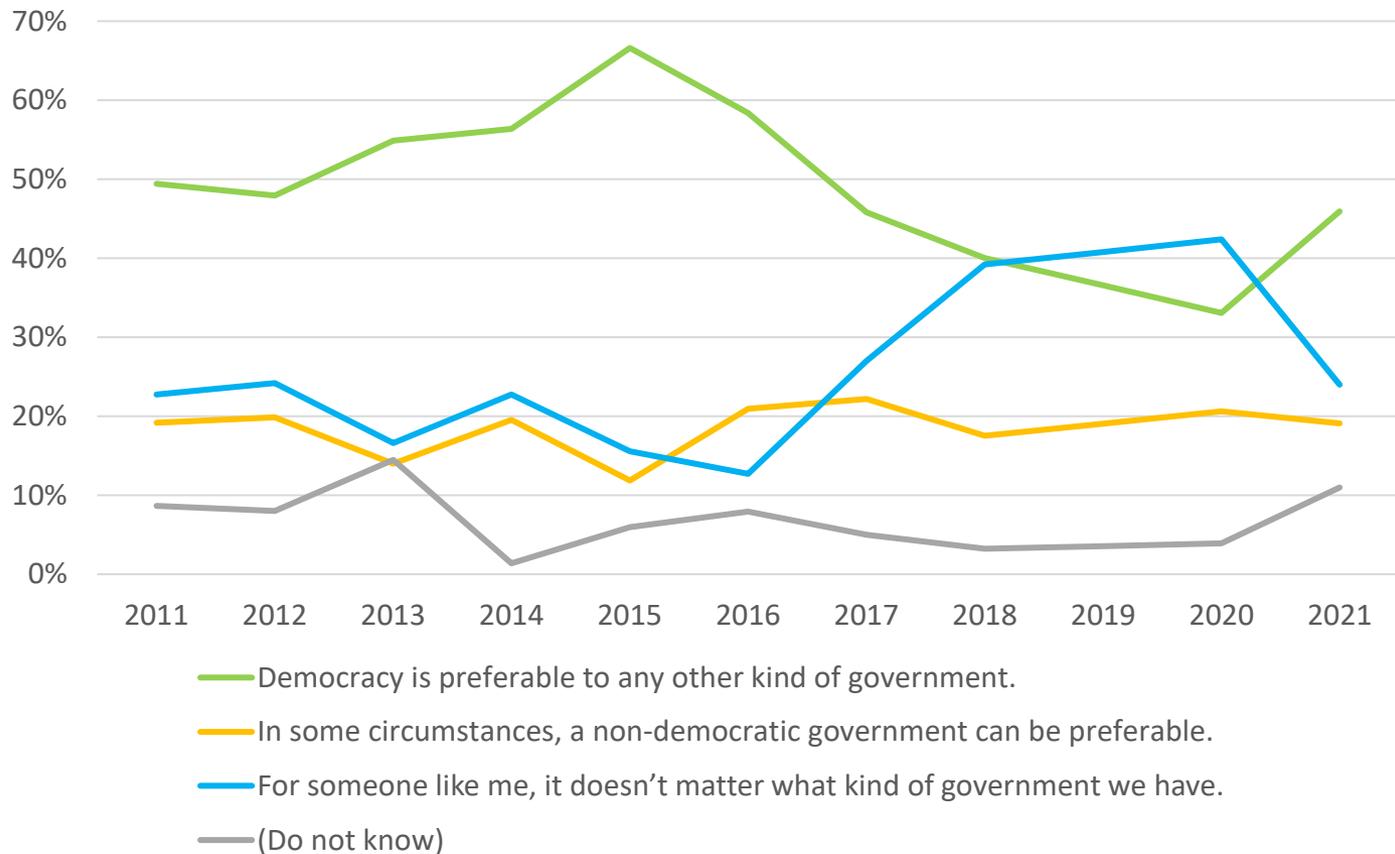
“I would rather be a citizen of South Africa than of any other country in the world”  
(% agreeing)



# Demand for democracy in Gauteng

## Support for political regime type, 2011-2021 (%)

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?

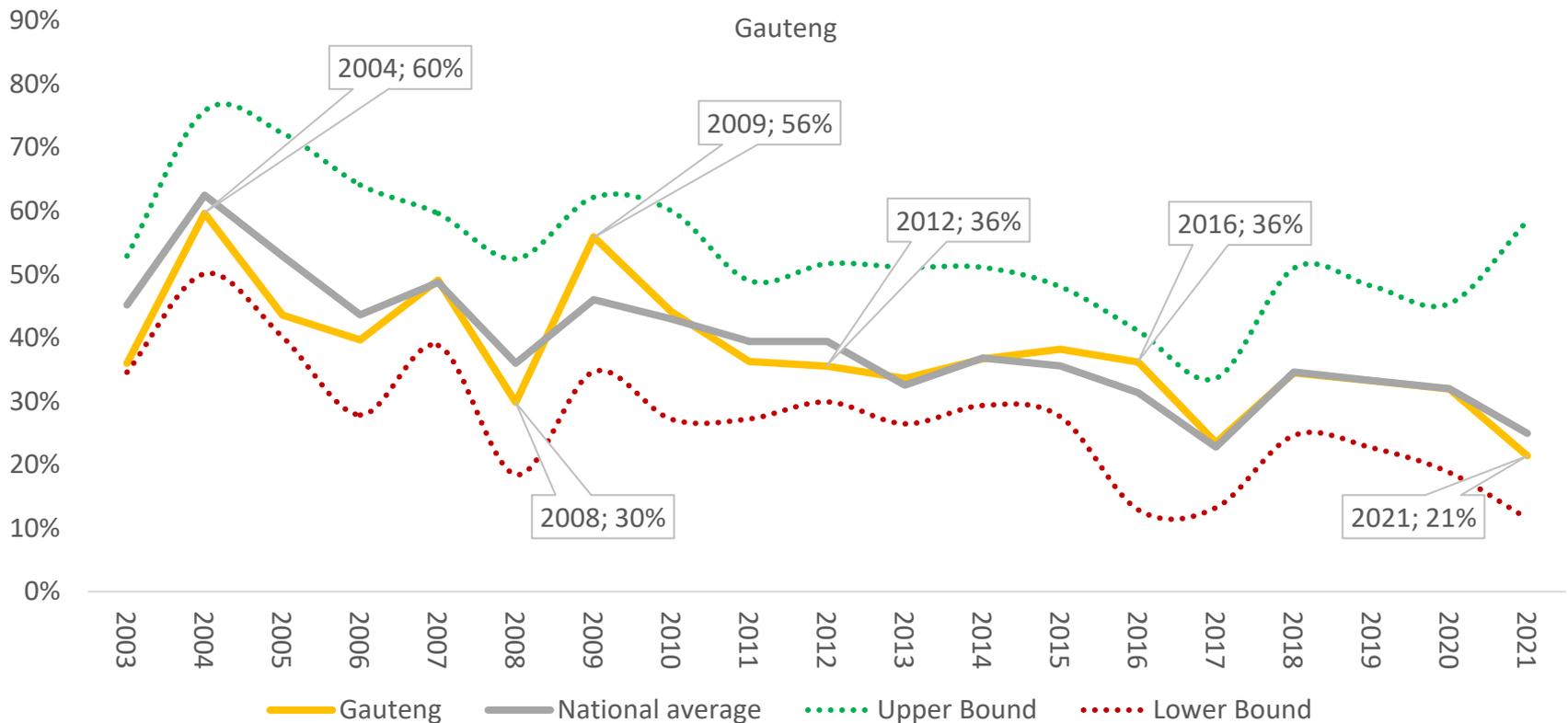


- **Popular support for democracy fluctuated** over time in GP (33-67%)
- **Fatalistic view** (type of political regime 'does not matter') common to around a quarter (24% in 2021)
- **Non-democratic regime** seen as sometimes better by 19% in 2021
- **2022 figures** appear similar to 2021

# Supply of Democracy

## Satisfaction with democracy (2003-2021)

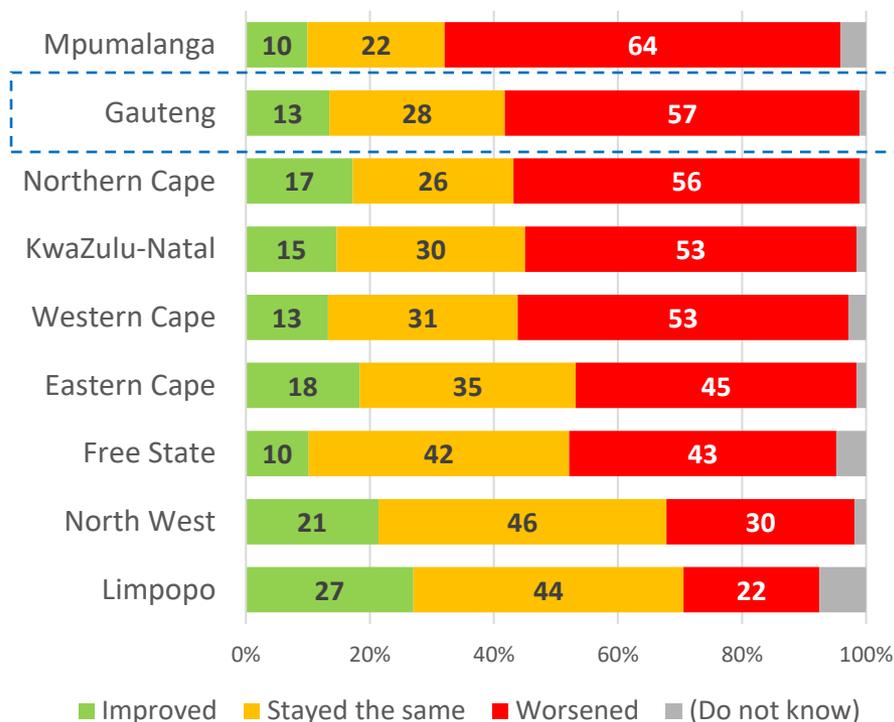
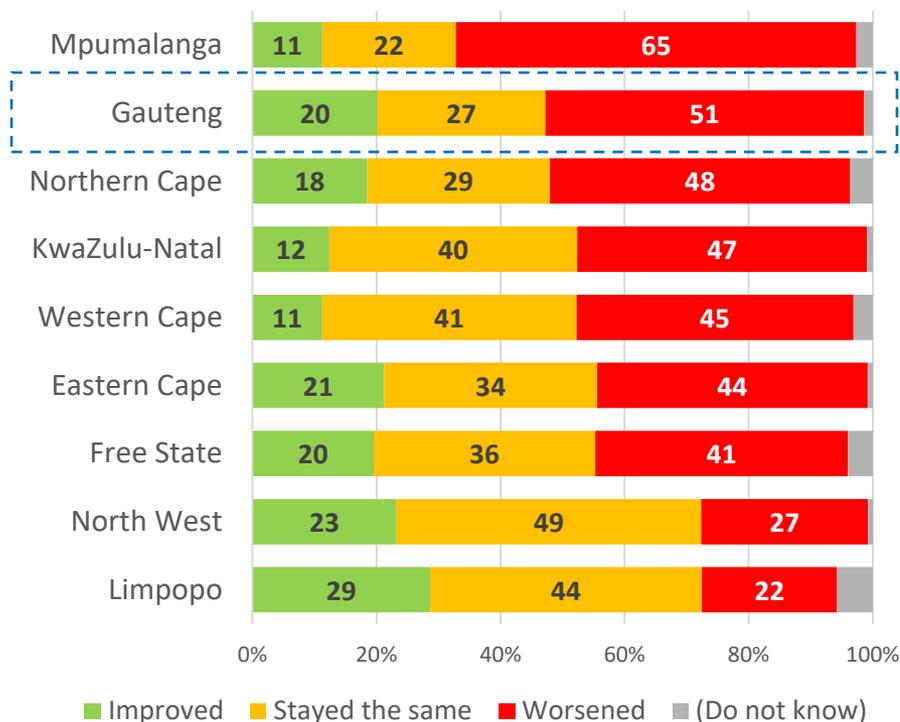
“How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy is working in South Africa?” (%)



# Change In Living Standards

Can you please tell me, in the last 5 years, has life improved, stayed the same or has it worsened for your family?

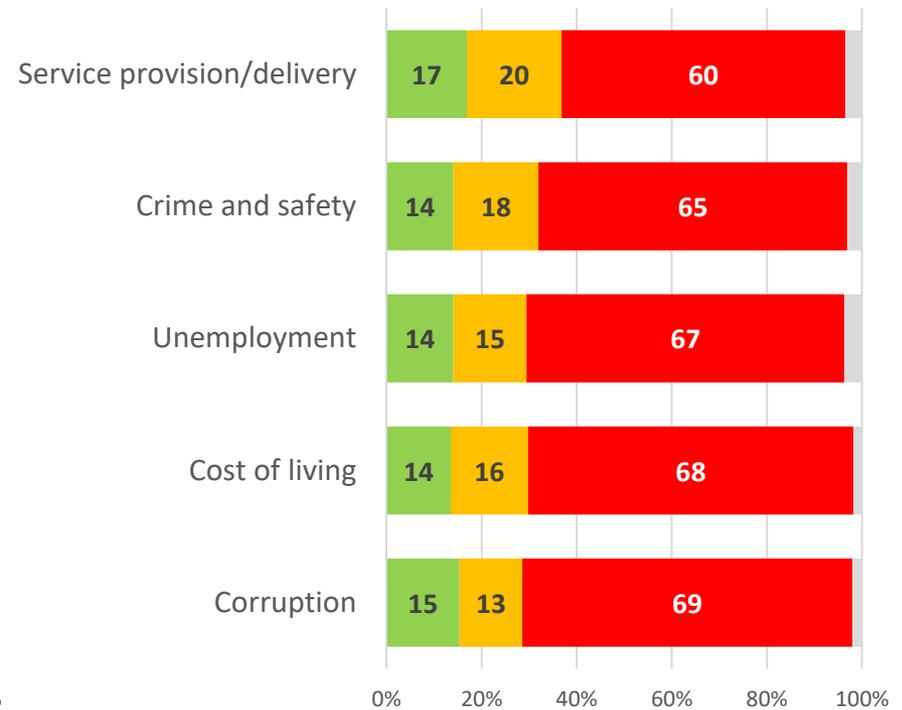
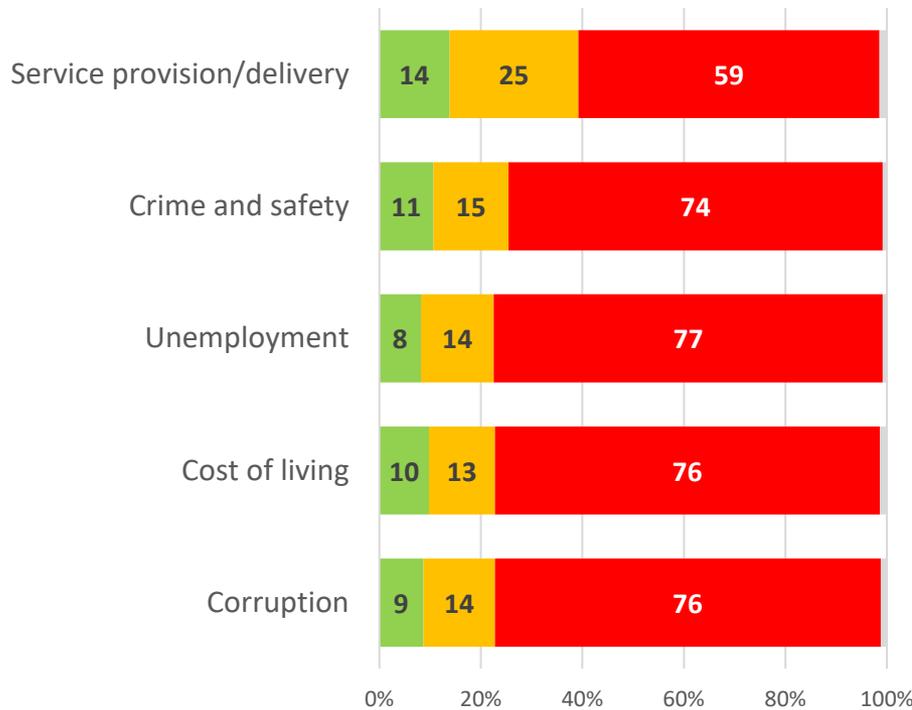
Can you please tell me, in the last 5 years, has life improved, stayed the same or has it worsened for your community?



# Retrospective and Prospective Change in Living Standards in Gauteng

Do you think the following have improved, stayed the same or gotten worse in the LAST FIVE YEARS?

Do you think the following will improve, stay the same or get worse in the NEXT FIVE YEARS?

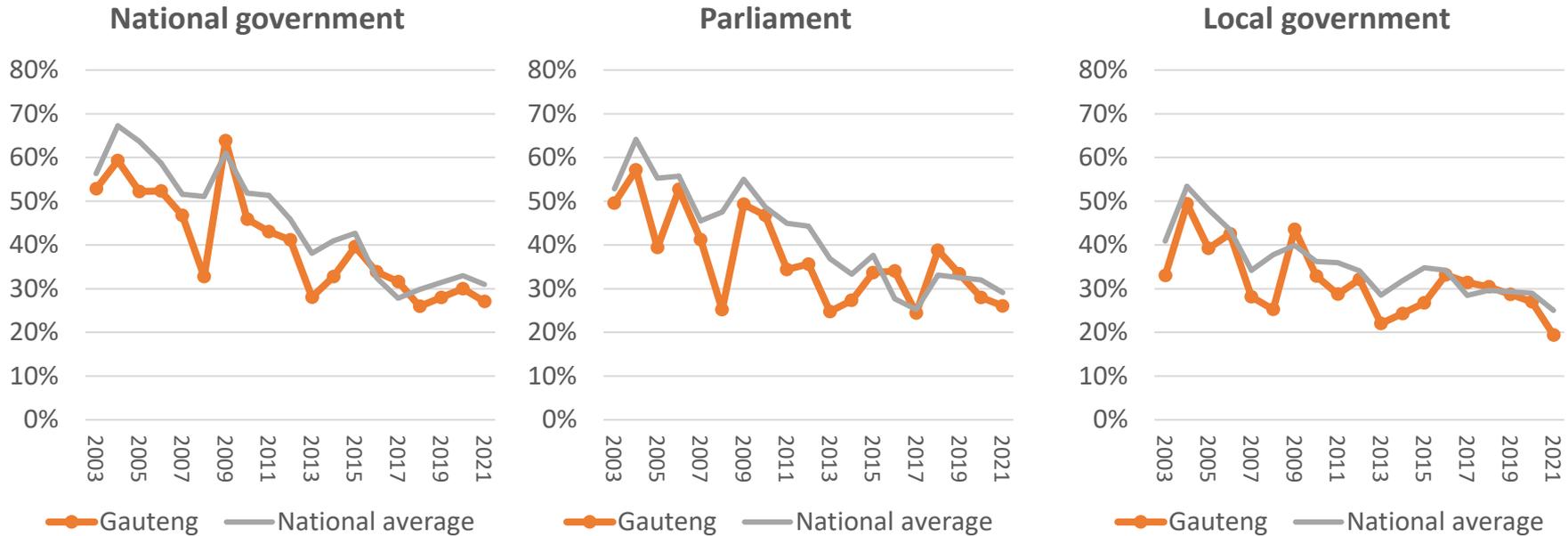


Improved Stayed the same Worsened (Do not know)

Improve Stay the same Worsen (Do not know)

# Institutional trust in Gauteng

## Confidence in core political institutions (2003-2021)

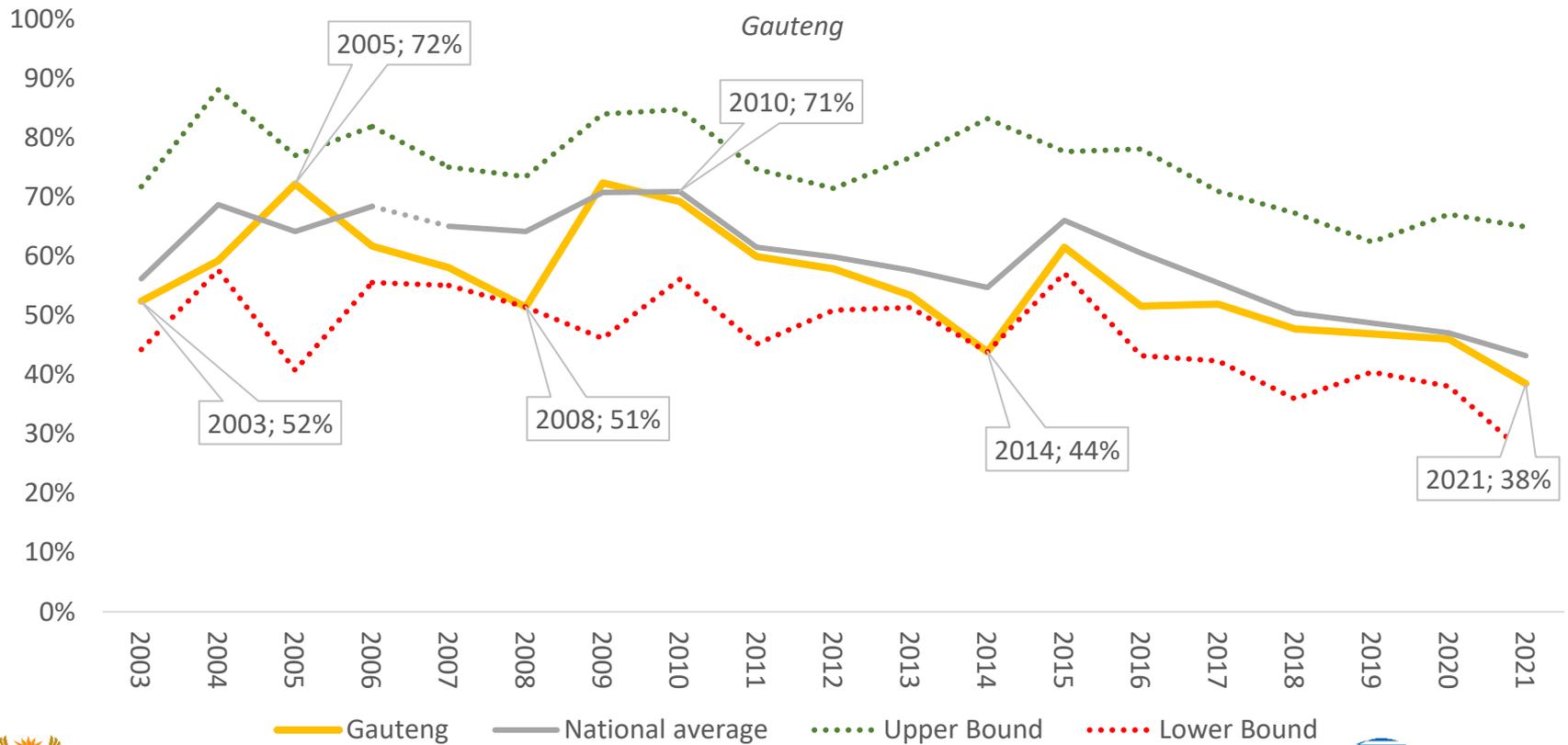


- Appreciable decline in trust in core political institutions, especially national government and Parliament
- Signs of diminishing trust date back to the mid-2000s, intensifying during the 2010s

# Trust in Electoral Commission

## Confidence in the Commission (2003-2021)

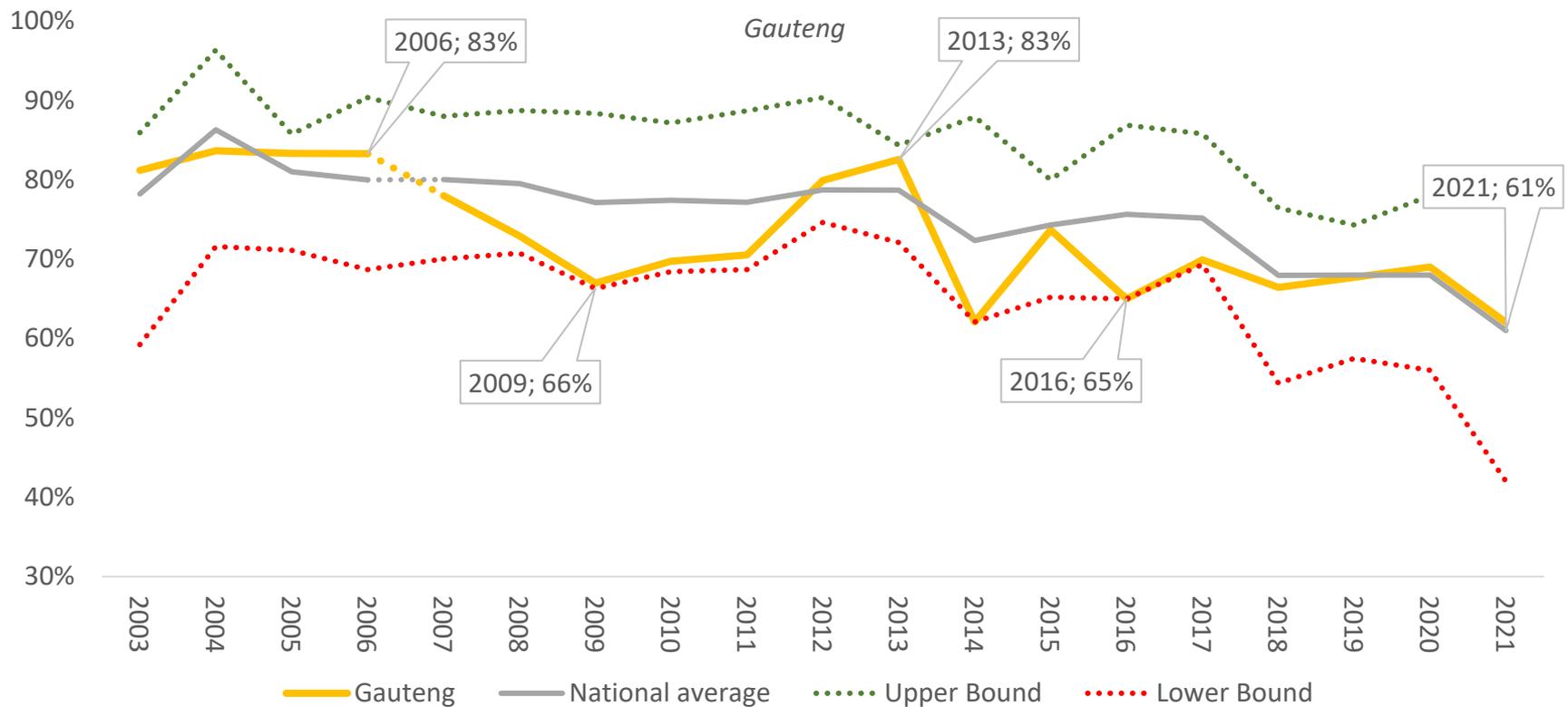
“To what extent do you trust or distrust the Electoral Commission? (% trust /strongly trust)” (%)



# Duty to Vote

*A key factor informing citizenship norms*

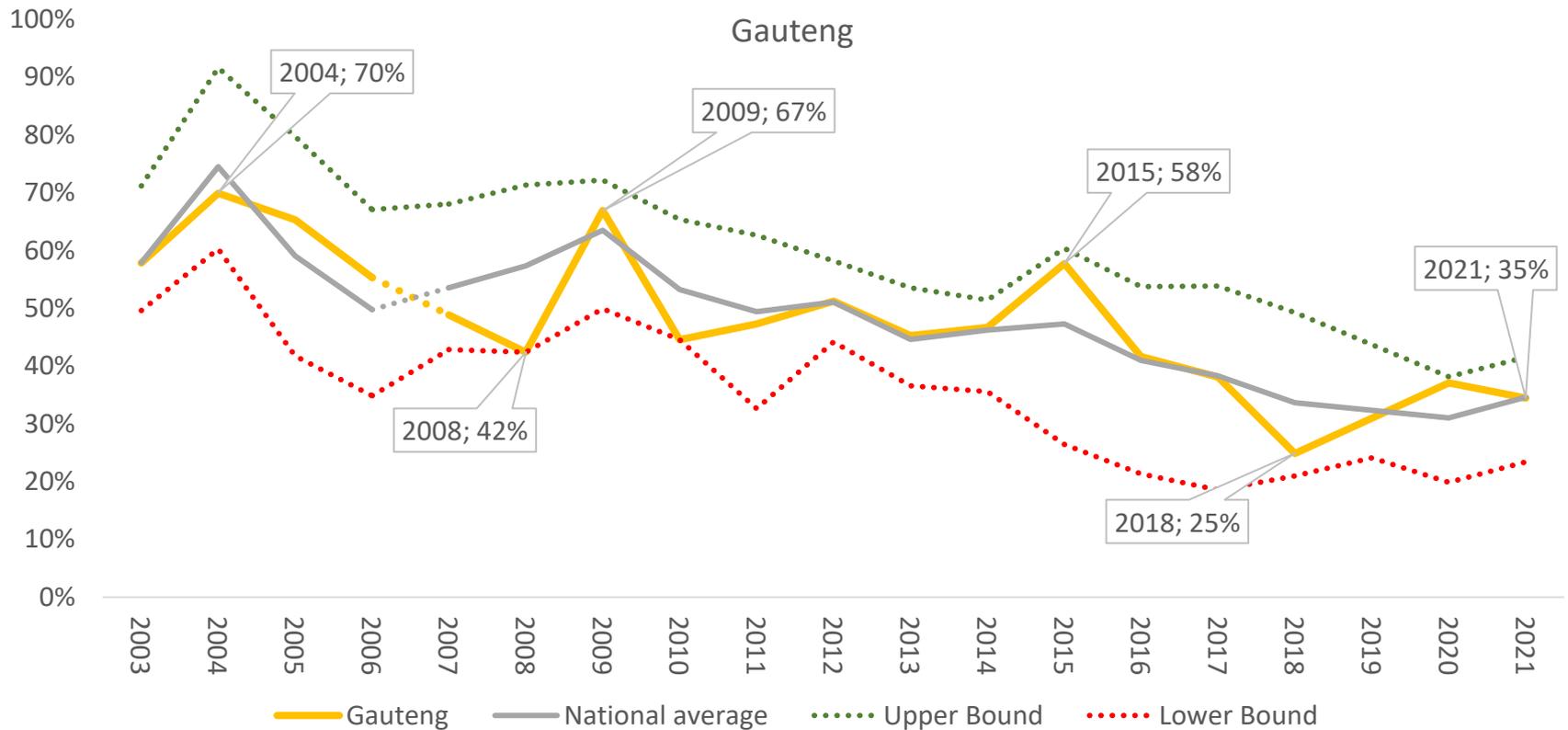
To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is the duty of all citizens to vote. (% agree or strongly agree)



# Internal political efficacy

## *Critical determinant of intention to vote*

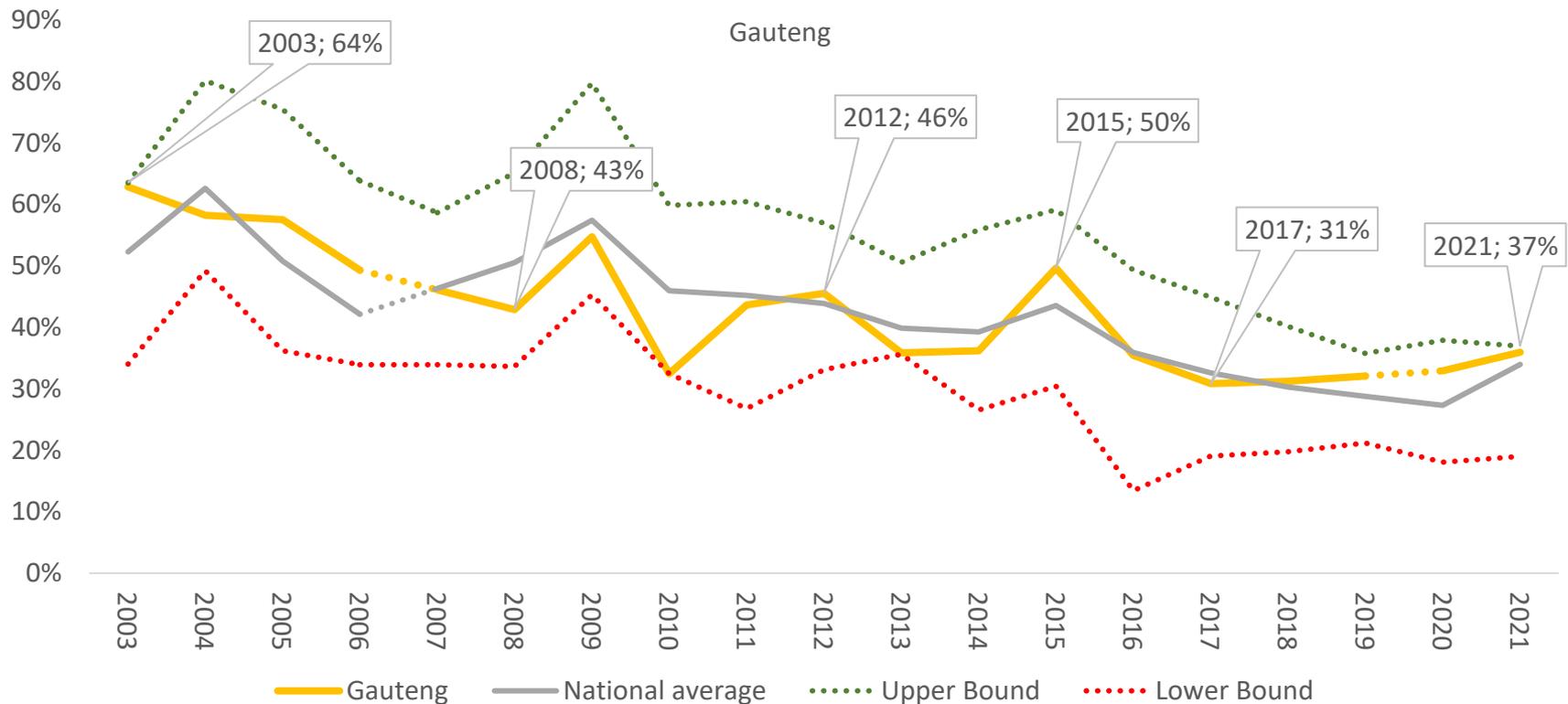
To what extent do you agree or disagree that 'whether I vote or not makes no difference' (% disagree / strongly disagree)



# External political efficacy

## *Critical determinant of intention to vote*

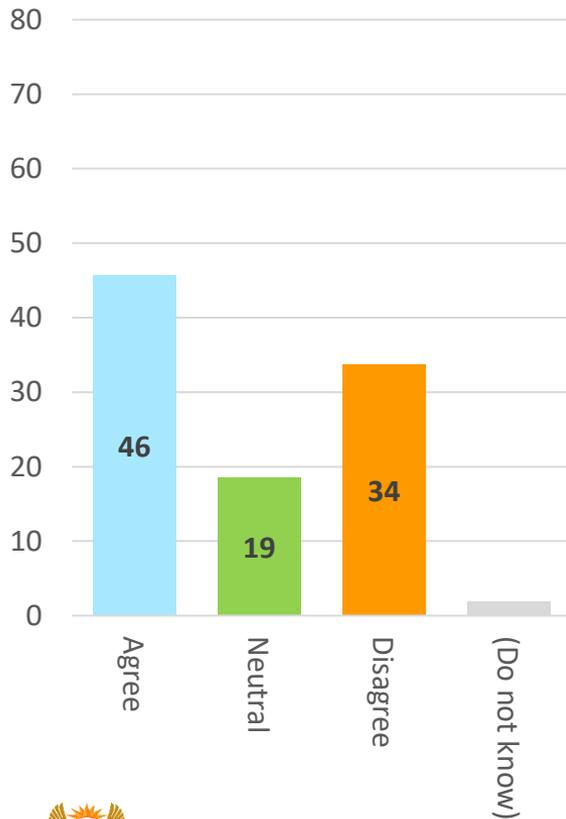
To what extent do you agree or disagree that voting is meaningless because no politician can be trusted? (% disagree or strongly disagree)



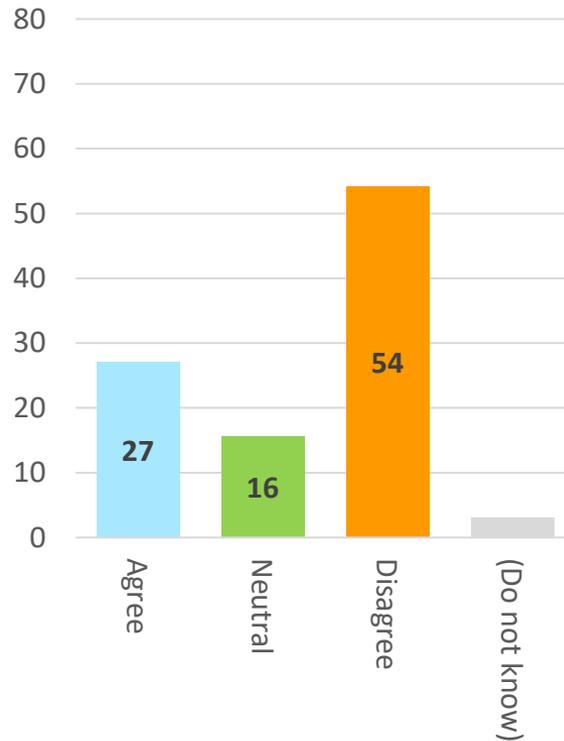
# Attitudes towards protest action

## Measuring public support for protest actions in Gauteng

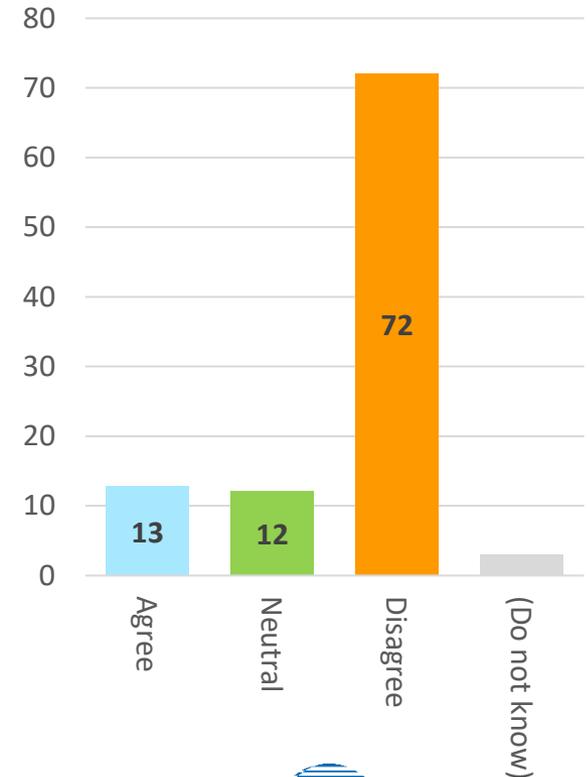
Do you agree or disagree that protesting in the street is more effective than voting?



Do you agree or disagree that it is acceptable for voters to protest outside their voting stations if they are unhappy with their municipality?



Do you agree or disagree that it is acceptable for voters to vandalise their voting stations if they are unhappy with their municipality?





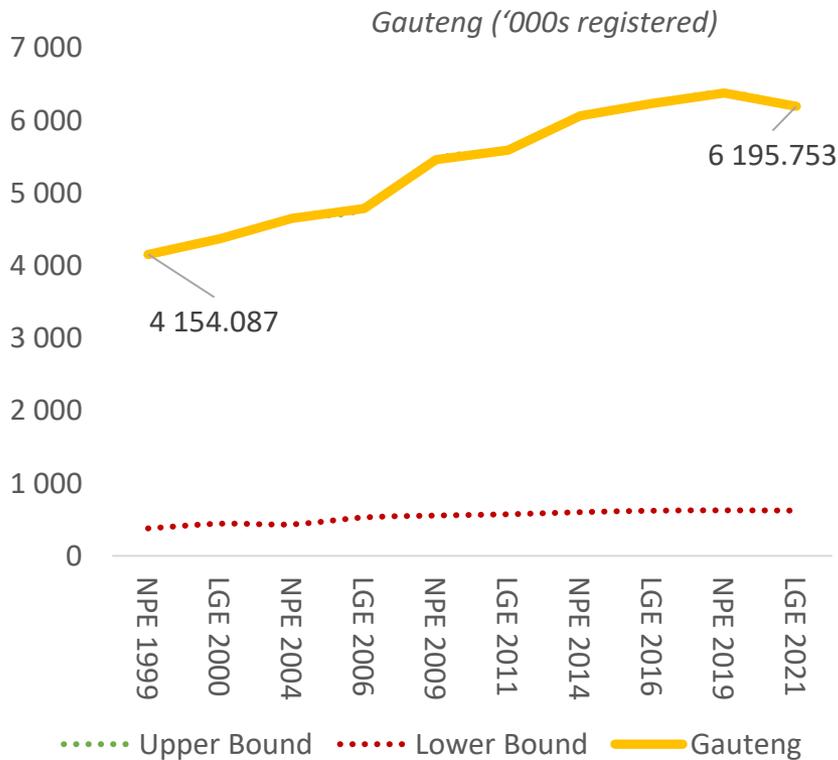
# Voter registration and turnout intentions



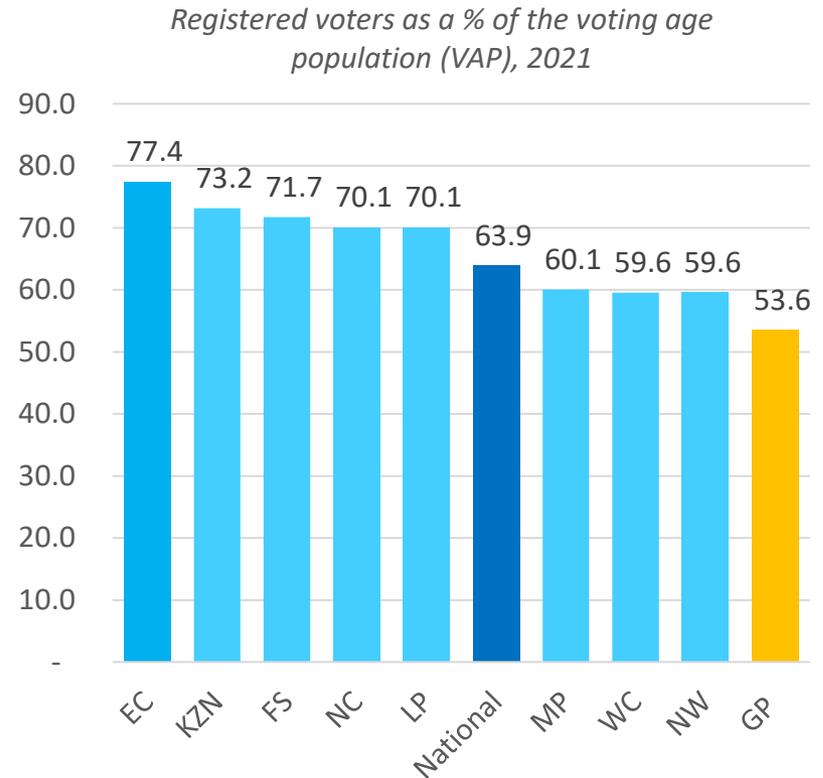
# Voter registration patterns in Gauteng

## *Number, and share, that are registered to vote*

Province has the highest number of registered voters; increasing over time...



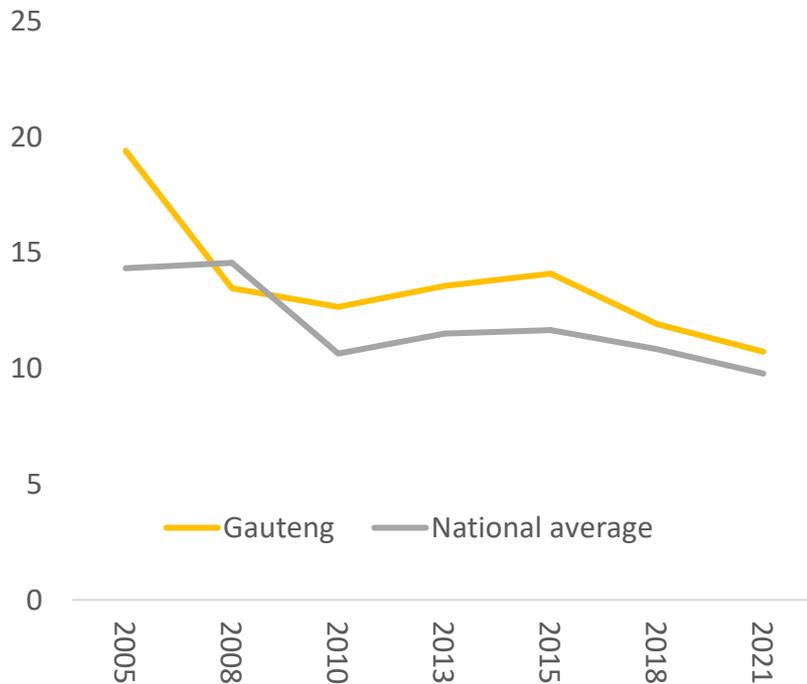
...but the province has the lowest share of voting age public that is registered



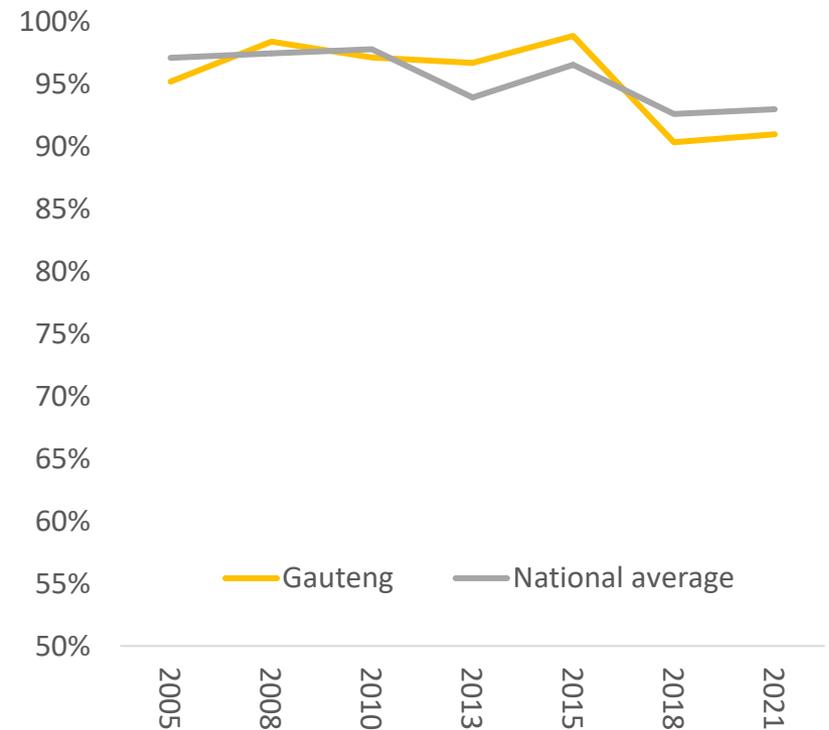
# Voter attitudes towards registration in Gauteng

## *Perceived ease of the registration process*

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



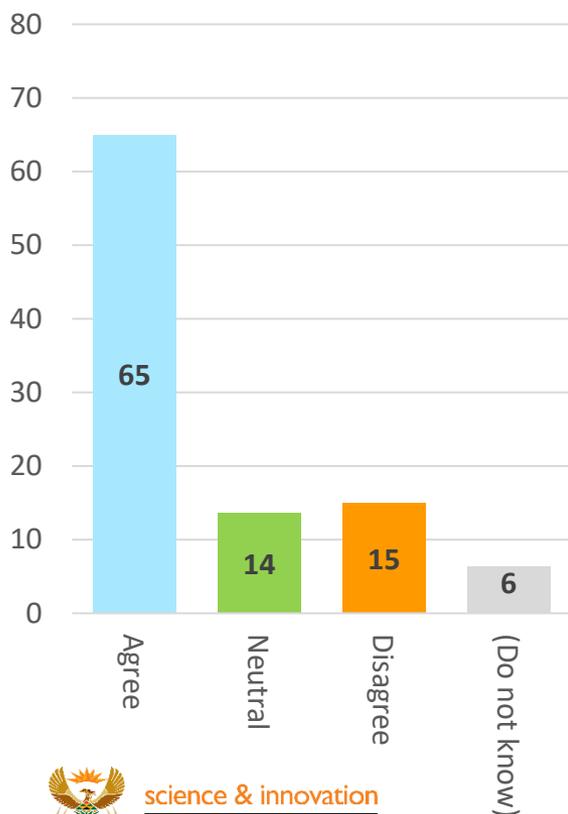
How easy or difficult did you find it to register as a voter? (% easy or very easy)



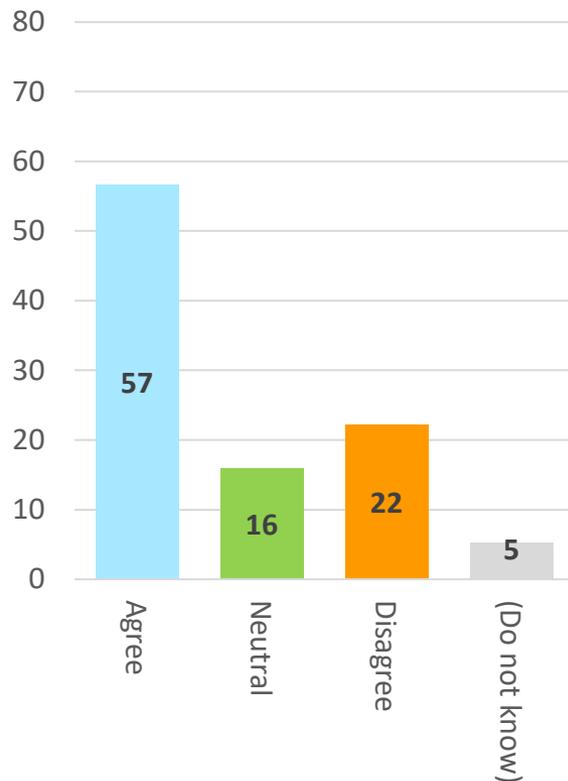
# Attitudes towards online registration

## Measuring public support for online registration in Gauteng

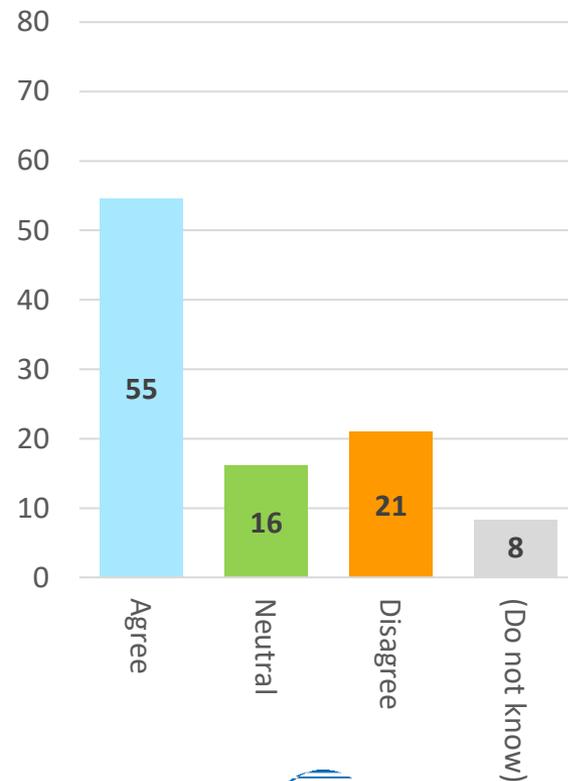
Do you agree or disagree that online registration will make voter registration easier and more effective?



Do you agree or disagree that Online voter registration should still be used after the COVID-19 pandemic?



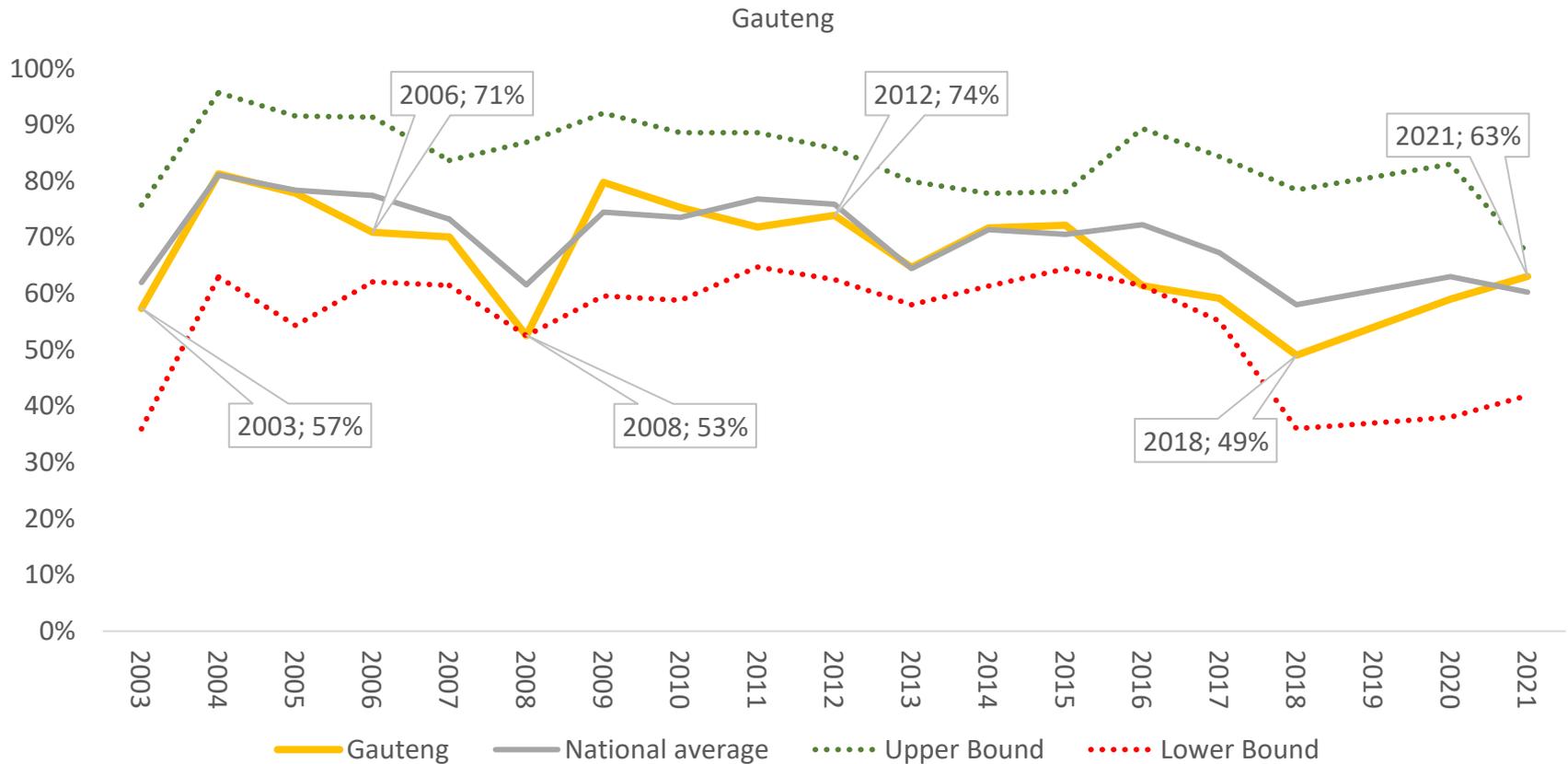
Do you agree or disagree that online registration will introduce more electoral fraud?



# Voting intention

*Evaluate the voting intention of the general population*

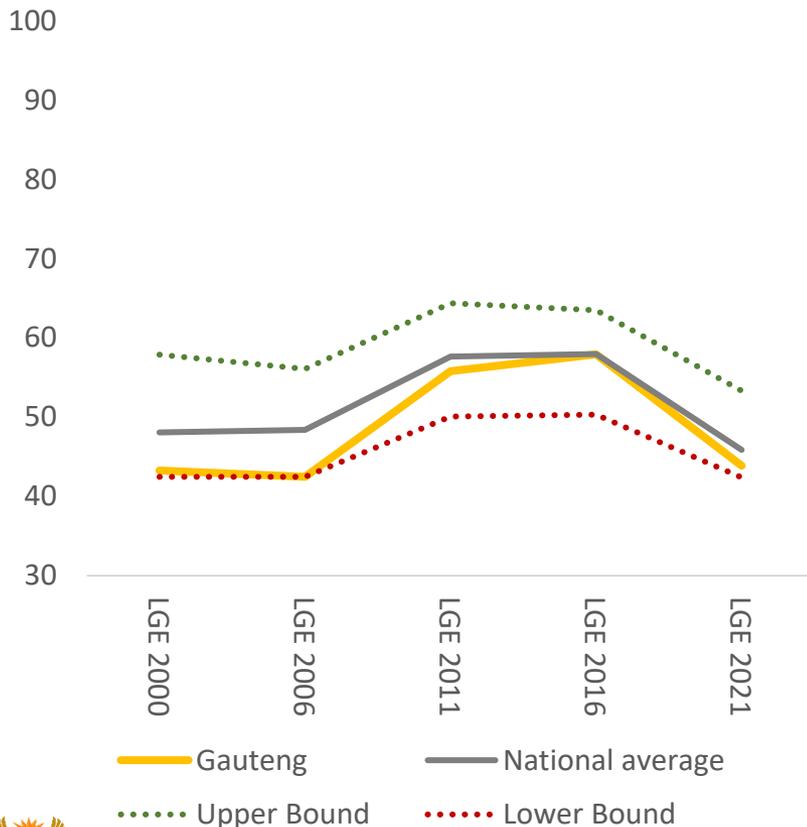
If a government election was held tomorrow, would you vote? (% who would vote)



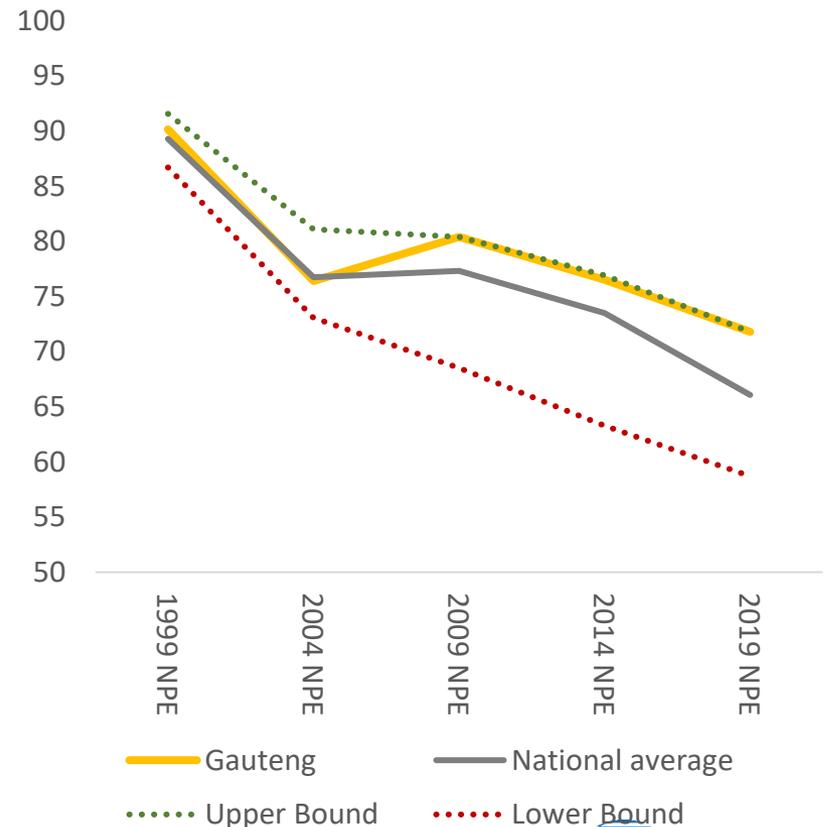
# Voter Turnout in Gauteng

## Percentage of registered voter turnout (1999-2021)

Local Government Election turnout of registered voters % (incl spoilt votes)



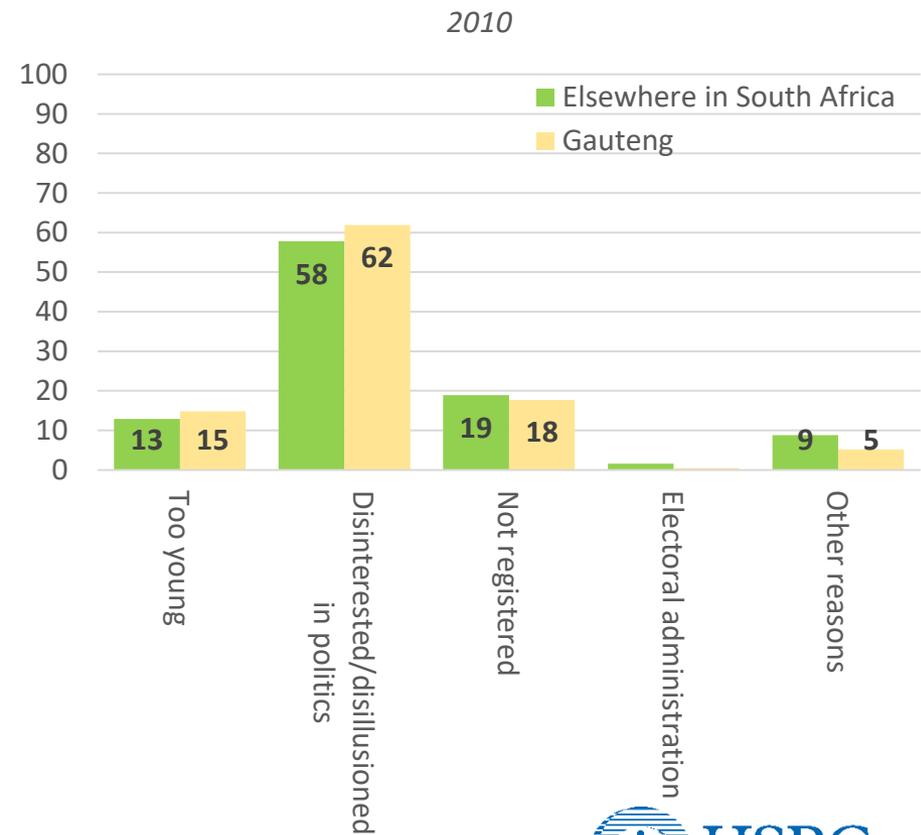
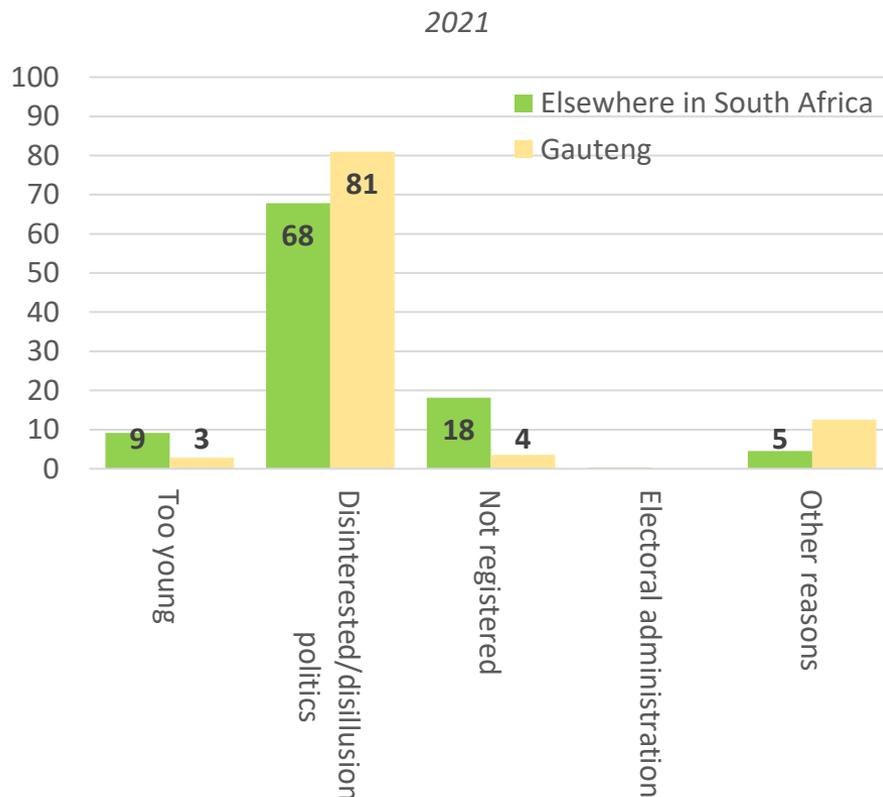
National and Provincial Election turnout of registered voters % (incl spoilt votes)



# Rationale for non-participation in Gauteng

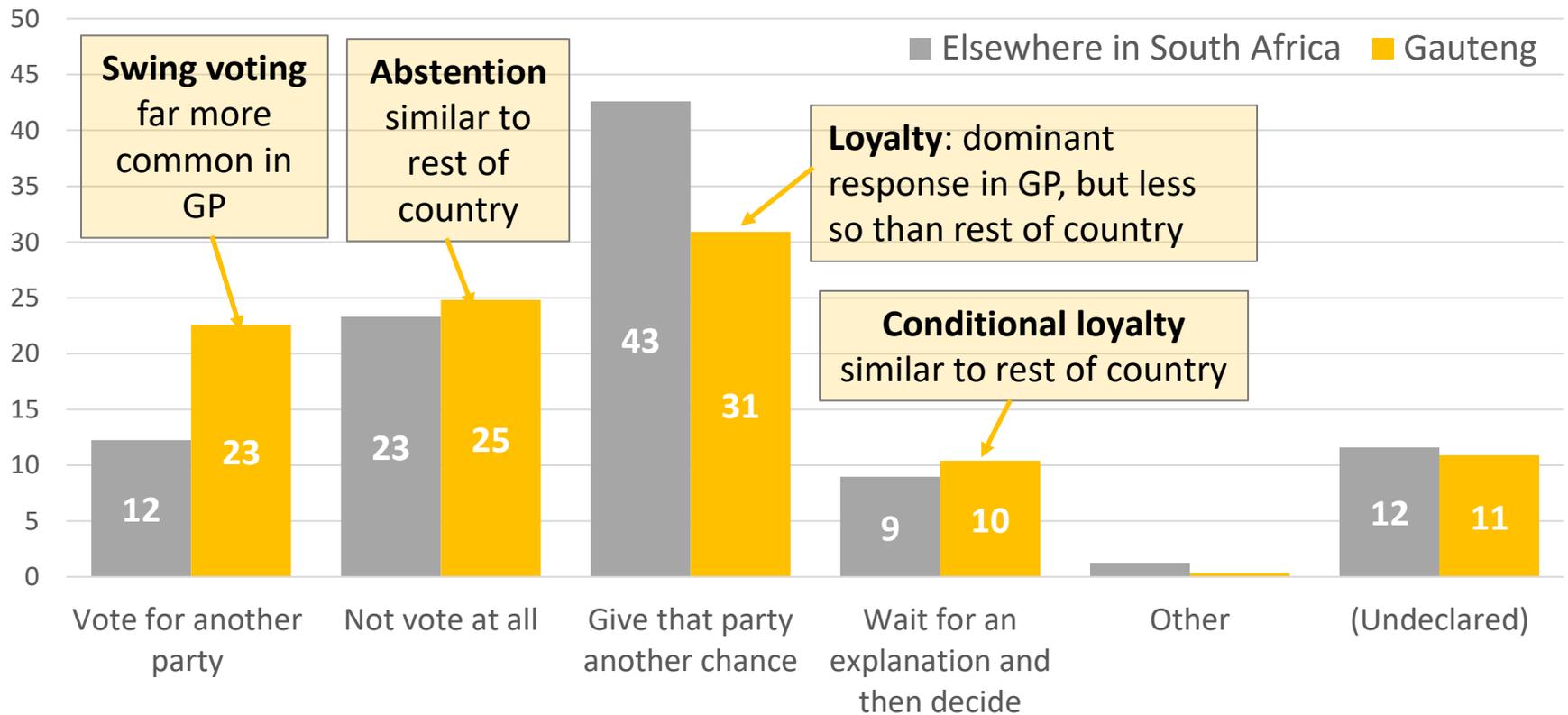
## *Reasons for not intending to vote*

What is your main reason for thinking that you would not vote if a national election were held tomorrow?



# Electoral responses to unfulfilled expectations in Gauteng, 2021

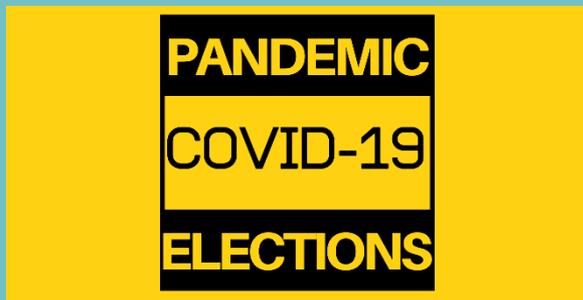
If the party you voted for did not meet your expectations, the next time there is an election would you... ?





# Results

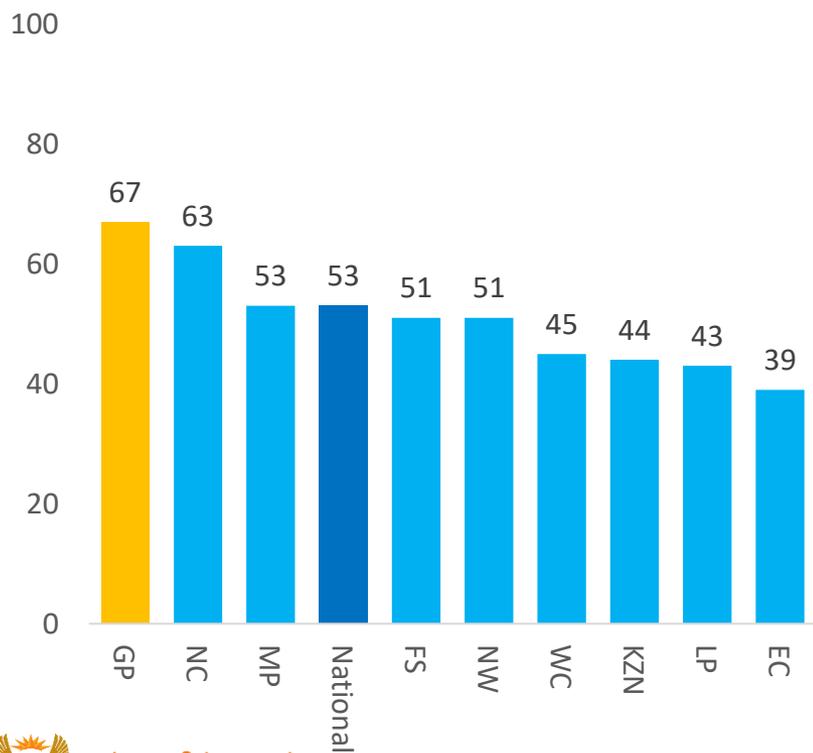
## Campaign integrity



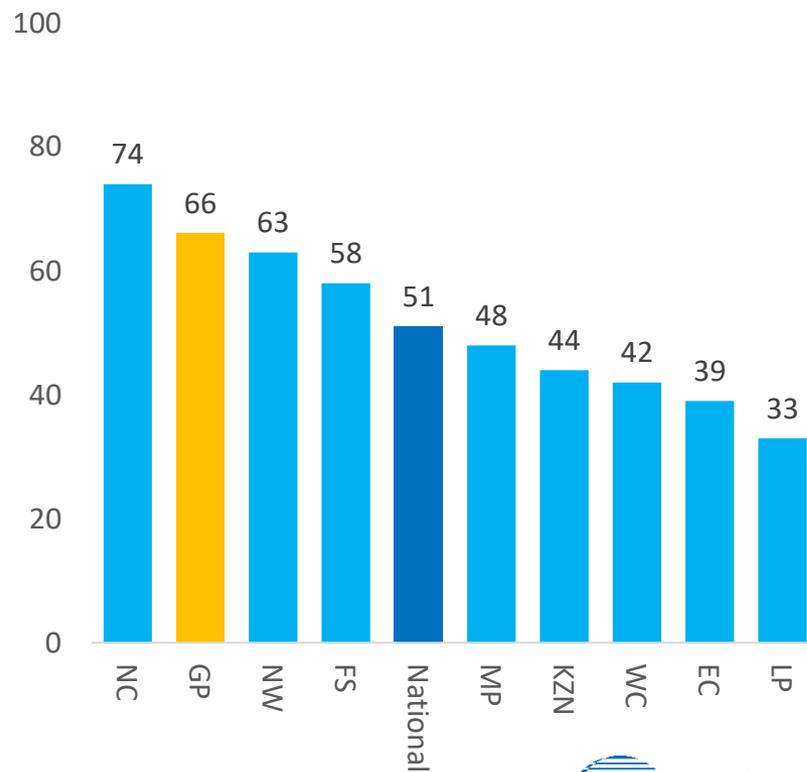
# PERCEIVED CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY:

*Determine public views on vote buying during the election campaign, 2021*

Some people received cash, gifts or services for their vote (agree/strongly agree %)



Voters are bribed (agree/strongly agree %)



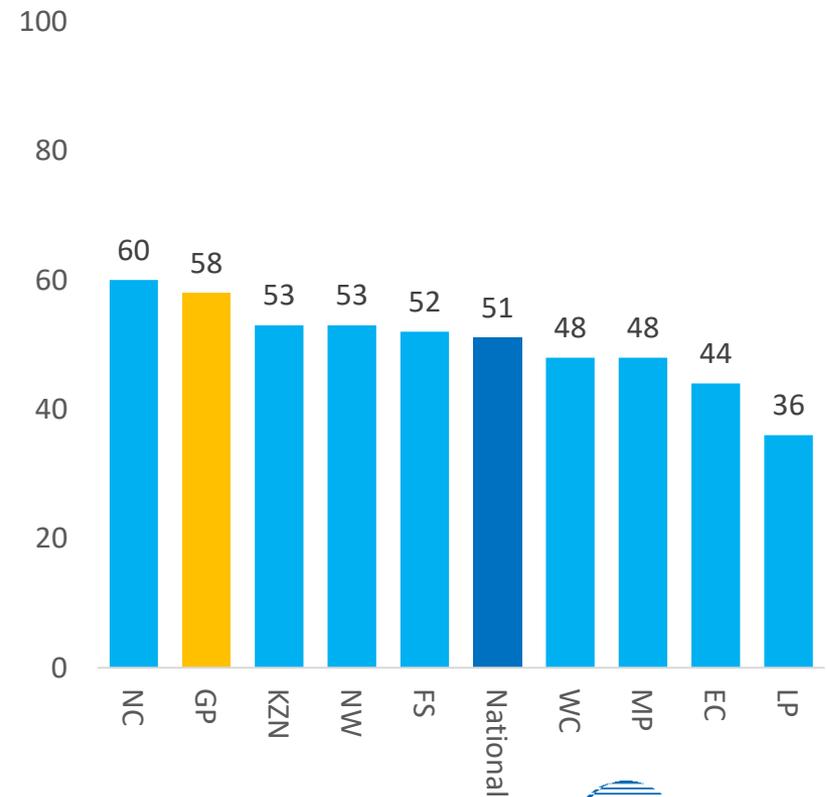
# PERCEIVED CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY:

*Determine public views on campaign fairness during the election campaign, 2021*

Rich people buy elections  
(agree/strongly agree %)



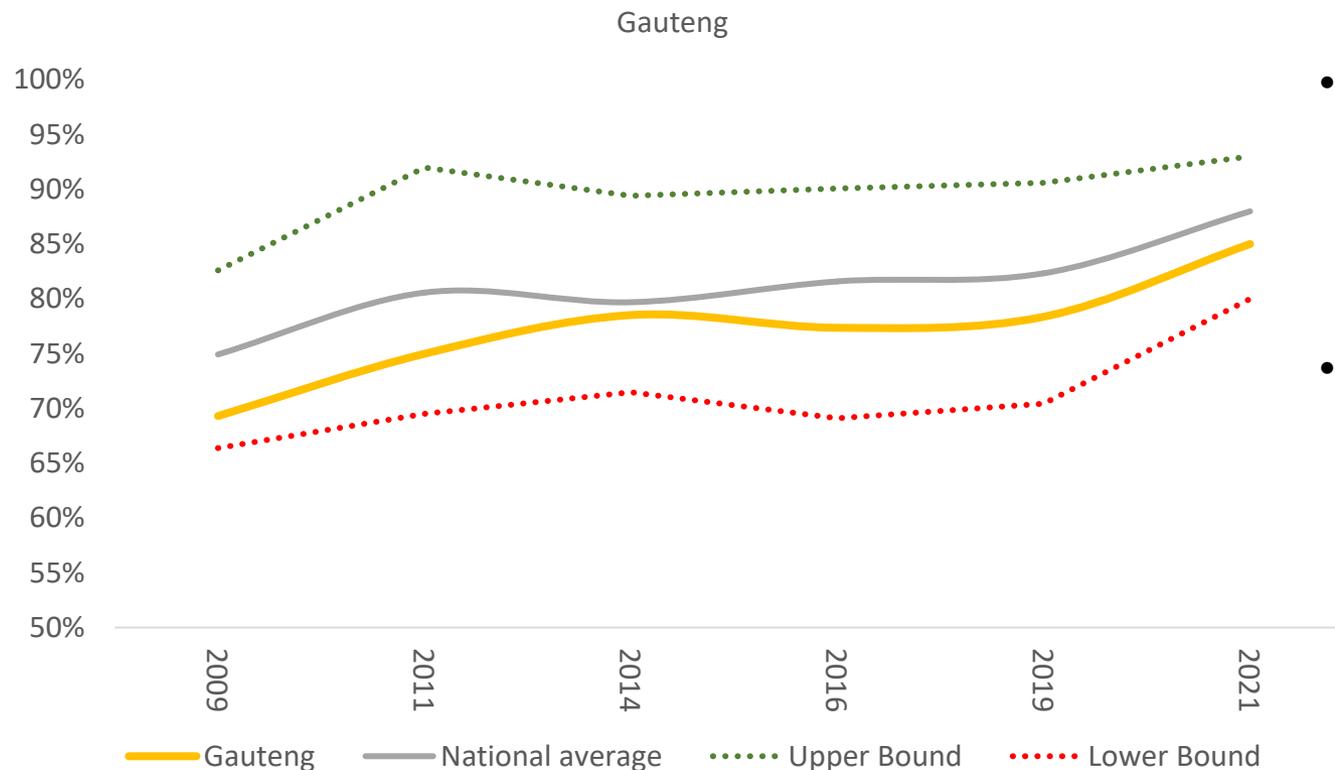
Journalists did not provide fair coverage of  
elections (agree/strongly agree %)



# Political party tolerance during campaigning

## Did *political parties and candidates* demonstrate tolerance during the campaign period?

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

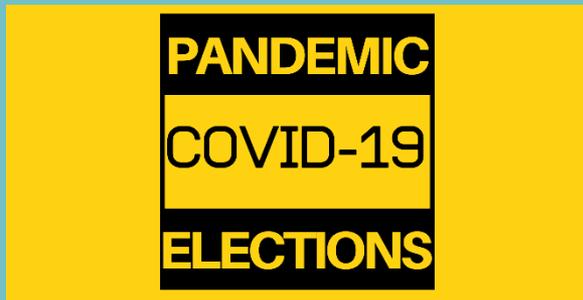


- **White voters** more likely to view party conduct as intolerant
- **Less-educated** voters less likely to view party conduct as intolerant



# Results

## Voter education



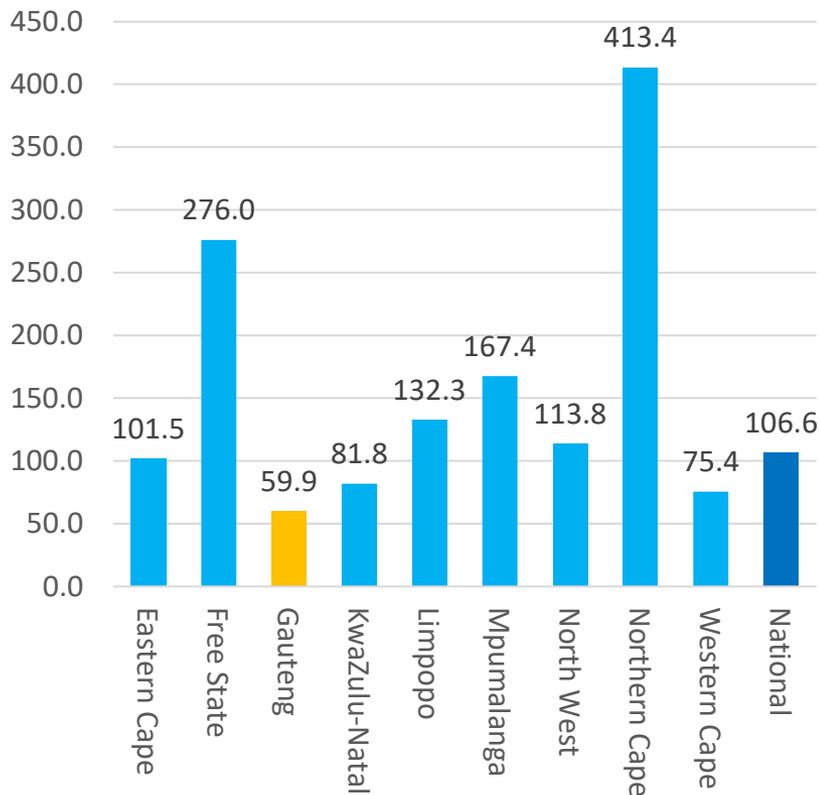
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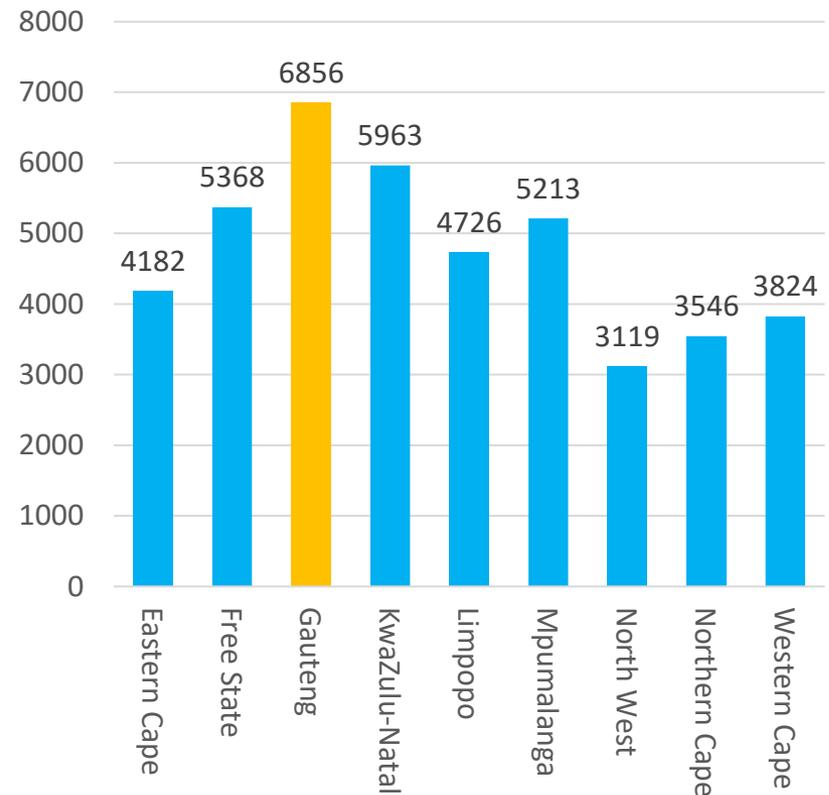


# Number of Civic and Democracy Education (CDE) events

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



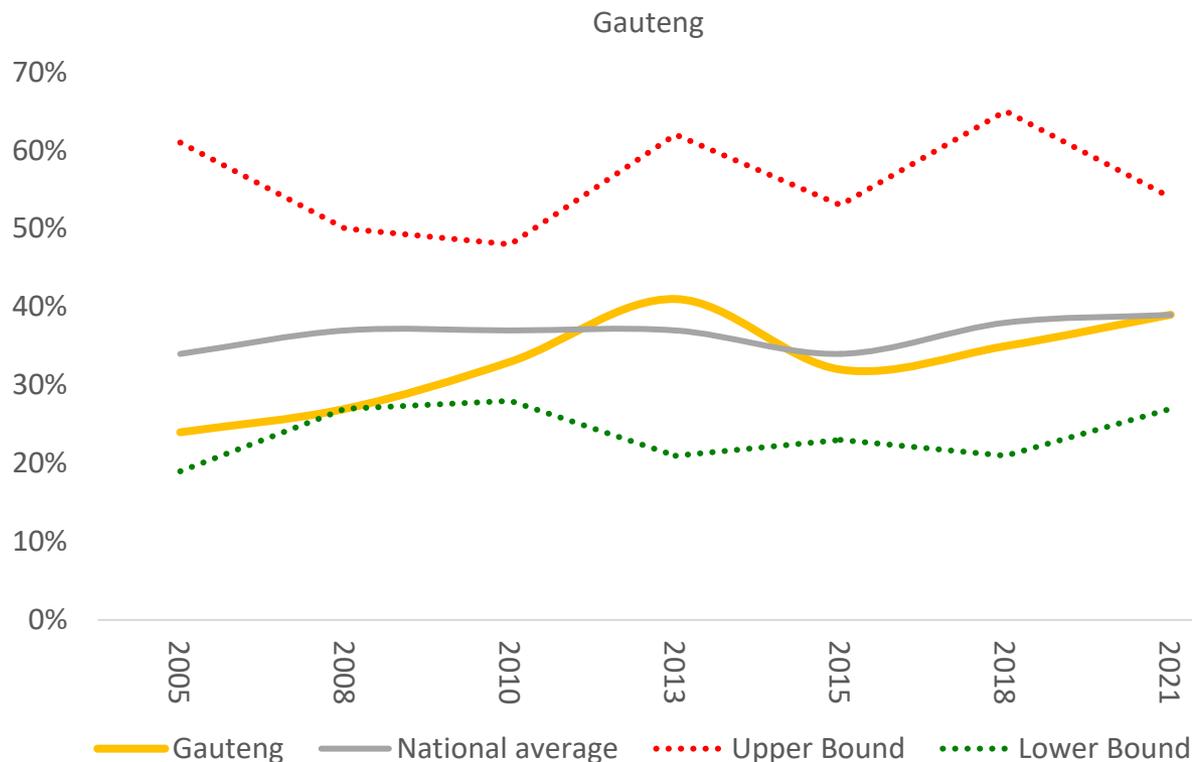
Number of CDE Events - 2021/2022 Financial Year



# Voting Information

## *The level of information that citizens have on voting*

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



- **Young voters** more likely to report having enough information.
- **Black African voters** less likely to have information than **white voters**.
- **Less-educated voters** less likely to have a lot of information about voting.

# Sources of Information on Voting

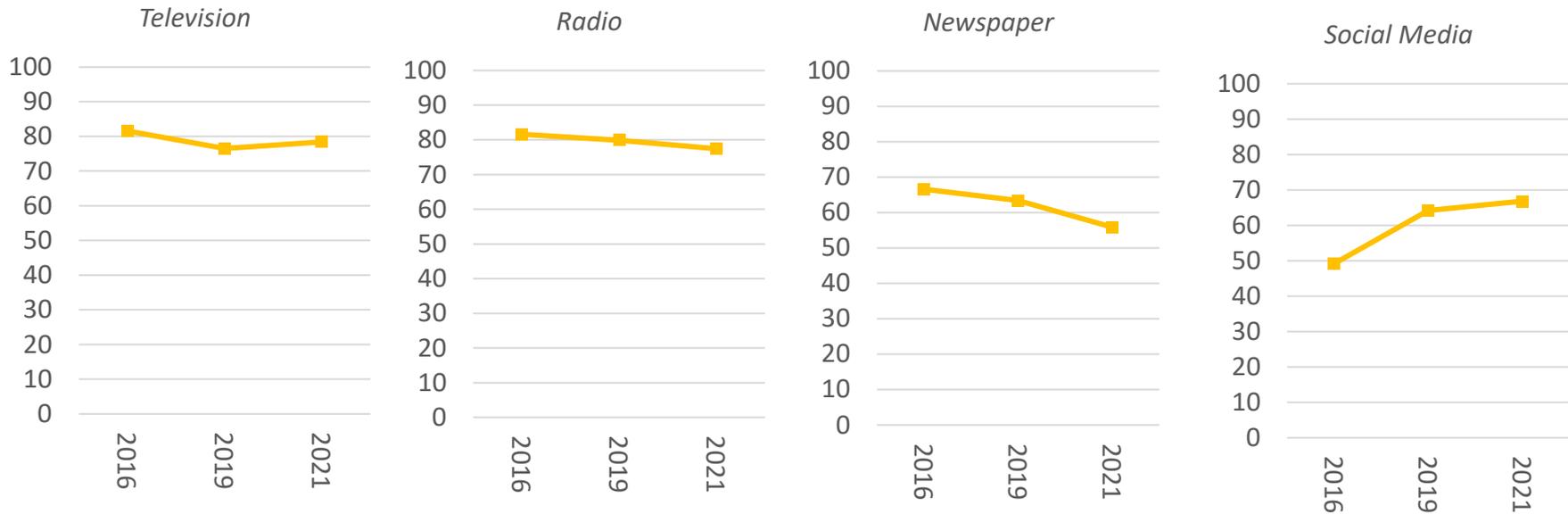
*Determine the main voting information sources used by the public*

Where do you usually get information about voting?

	2008	2010	2013	2015	2018	2021	All-year average
<b>Television</b>							
Gauteng	58%	49%	31%	62%	57%	67%	54%
National Average	47%	50%	43%	48%	57%	59%	51%
<b>Radio</b>							
Gauteng	42%	30%	15%	15%	34%	29%	27%
National average	39%	36%	30%	30%	39%	33%	35%
<b>Newspaper</b>							
Gauteng	45%	30%	14%	14%	26%	26%	26%
National average	34%	31%	24%	24%	29%	23%	27%
<b>Poster</b>							
Gauteng	17%	24%	11%	11%	19%	12%	16%
National average	19%	24%	22%	22%	22%	17%	21%
<b>Informal social networks</b>							
Gauteng	17%	12%	3%	3%	21%	11%	11%
National average	12%	15%	12%	12%	16%	8%	12%
<b>Social media</b>							
Gauteng	4%	3%	2%	7%	2%	13%	5%
National average	2%	2%	2%	6%	4%	7%	4%

# Perceived usefulness of differences of sources of voter education

Mean scores (0=not useful; 100= useful to a great extent)

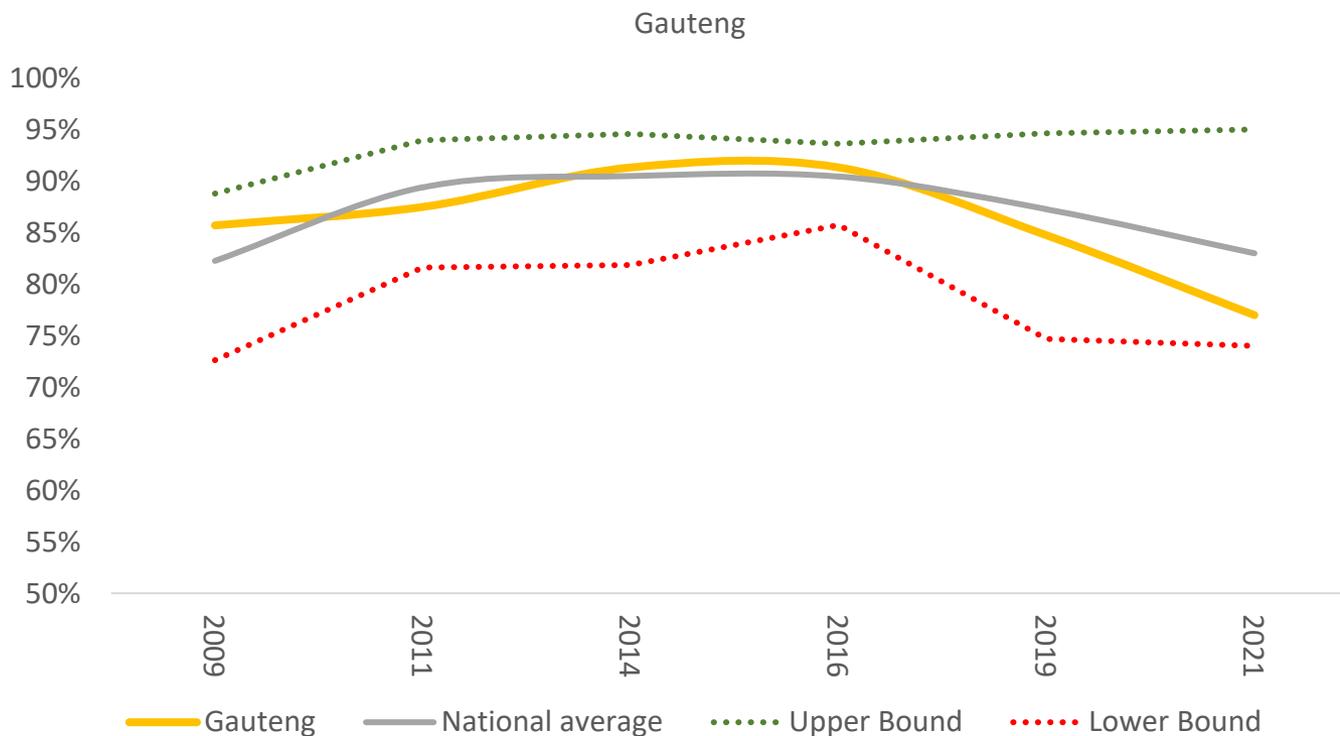


- Most of the adult public in the Gauteng said that the **traditional broadcast media** (radio, television, etc) was useful.
- Growing popularity (albeit from a low base) of **Election Commission website** in Gauteng.

# Perceived effectiveness of voter education campaigns

## *Appraising the effectiveness of voter education campaigns*

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

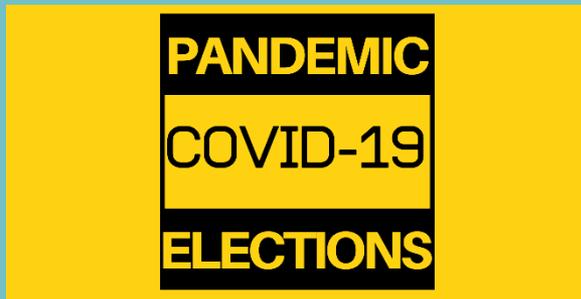


- **Young voters** are more likely to view the campaign as **effective**.
- **Coloured voters** are more likely to view the campaign as **effective**.



# Results

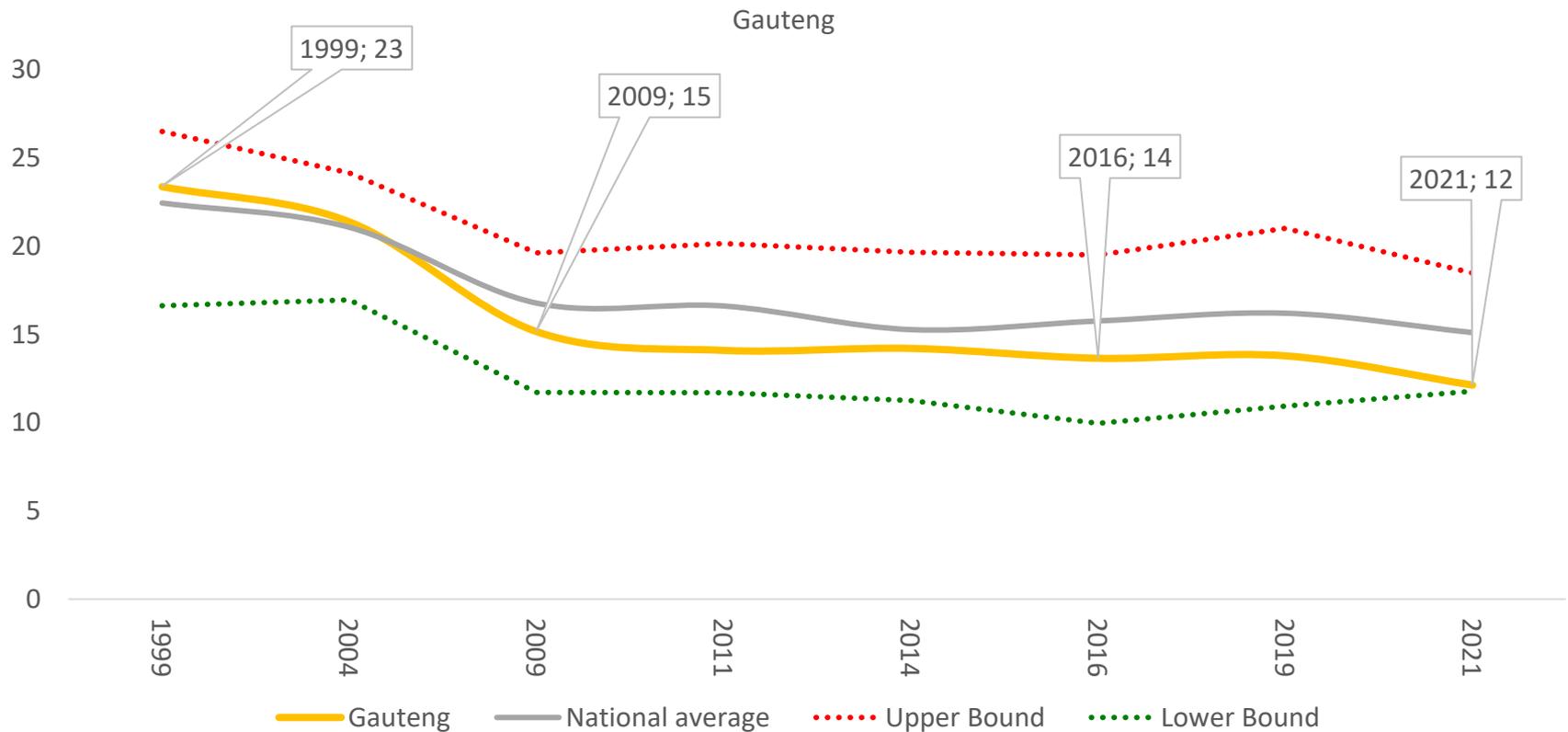
## Voting experience



# Time to get to voting station

*Determining the average time taken to get to voting stations*

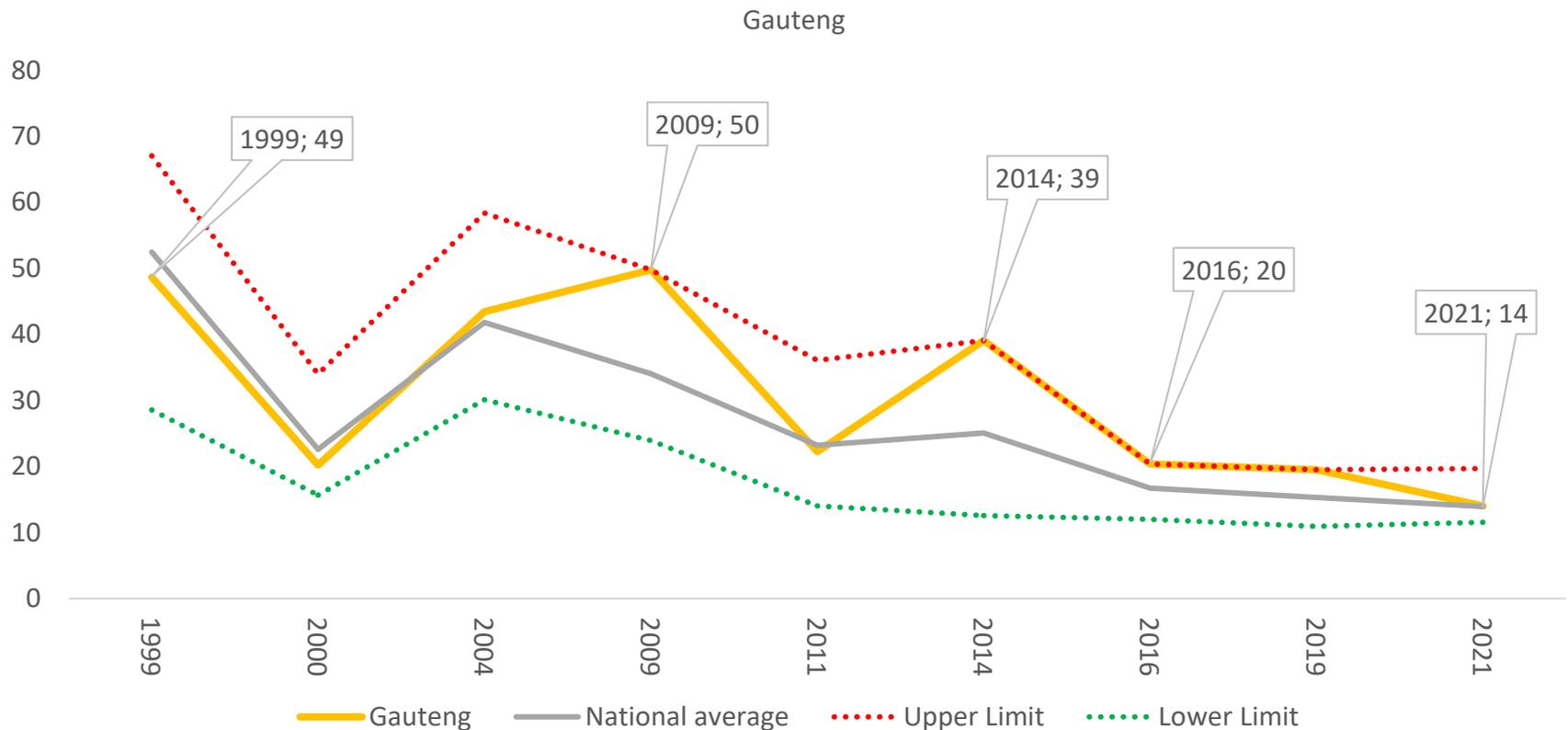
How long did it take you to get to the voting station? (average number of minutes)



# Queuing time at voting stations

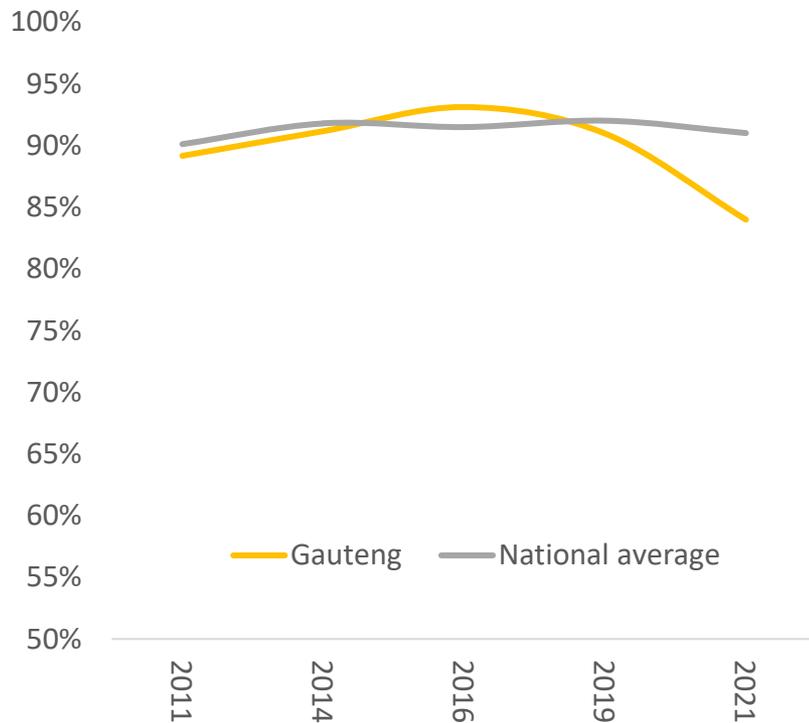
## Determining the average queuing time at voting stations

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

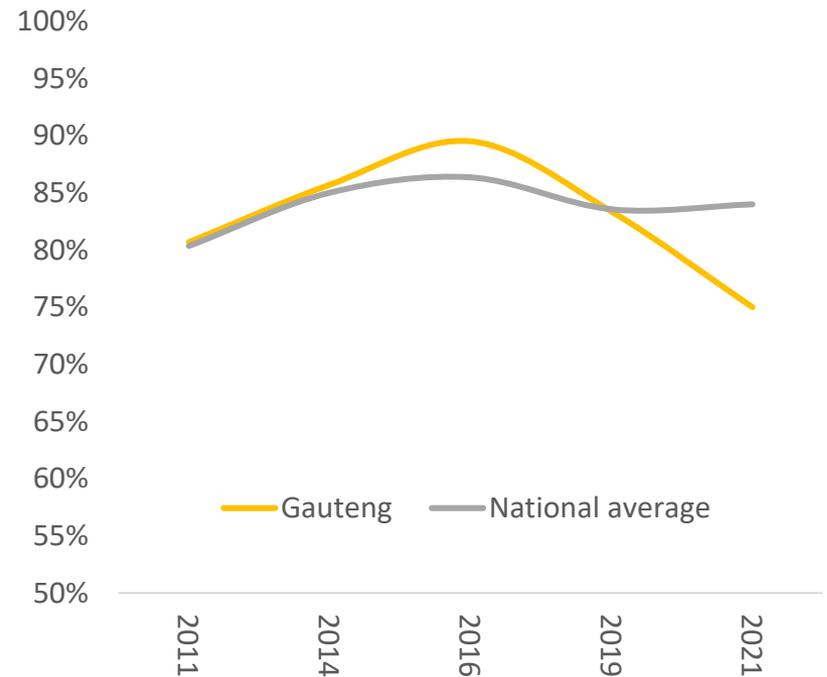


# Accessibility of Voting Stations to Voters with Special Needs in Gauteng

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

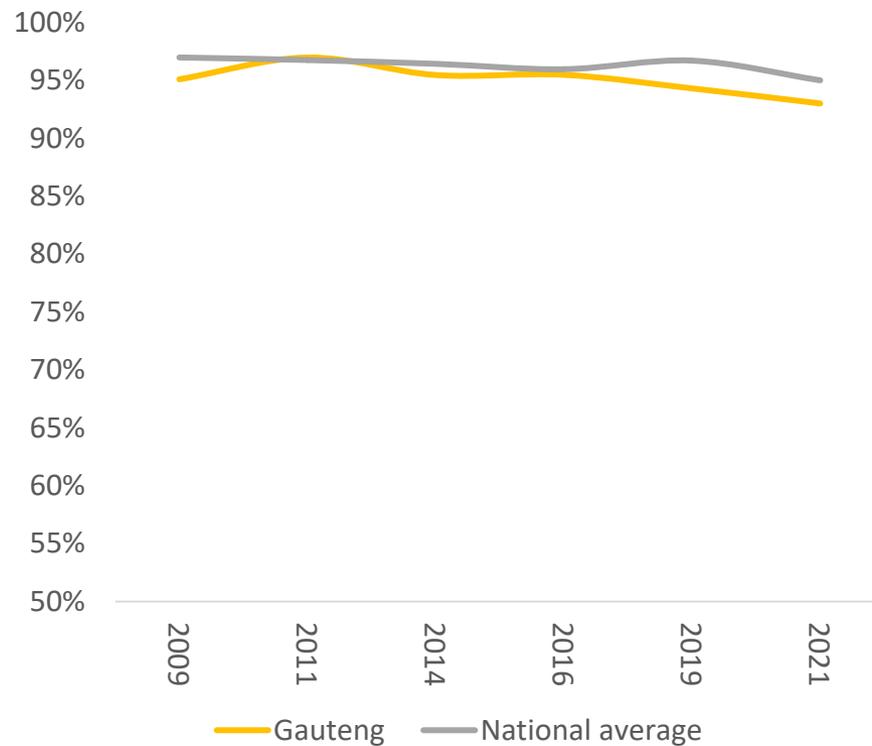


To what extent did the voting procedure at this voting station consider the needs of persons with disabilities? (% to a great/ some extent)

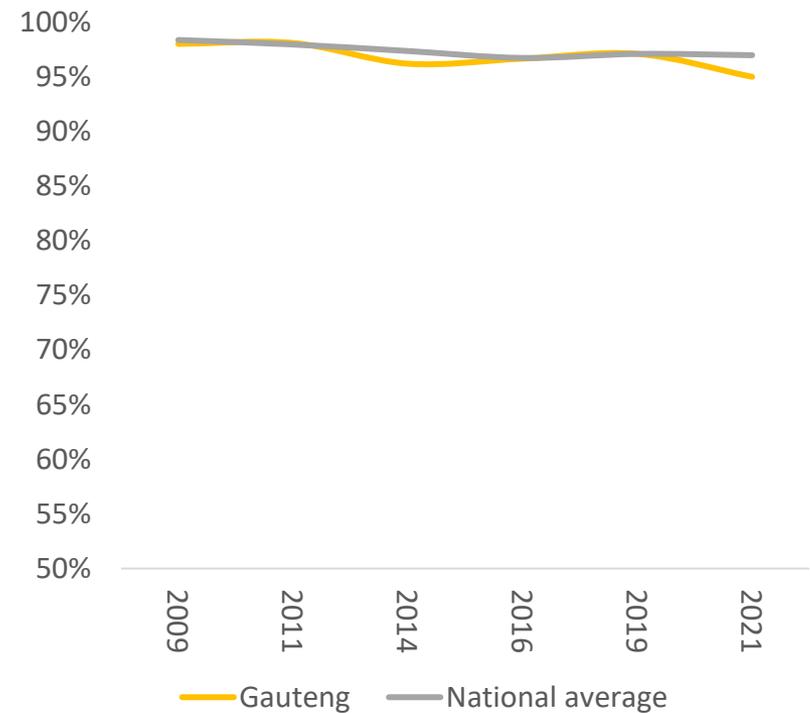


# Procedure inside voting station easy to understand in Gauteng

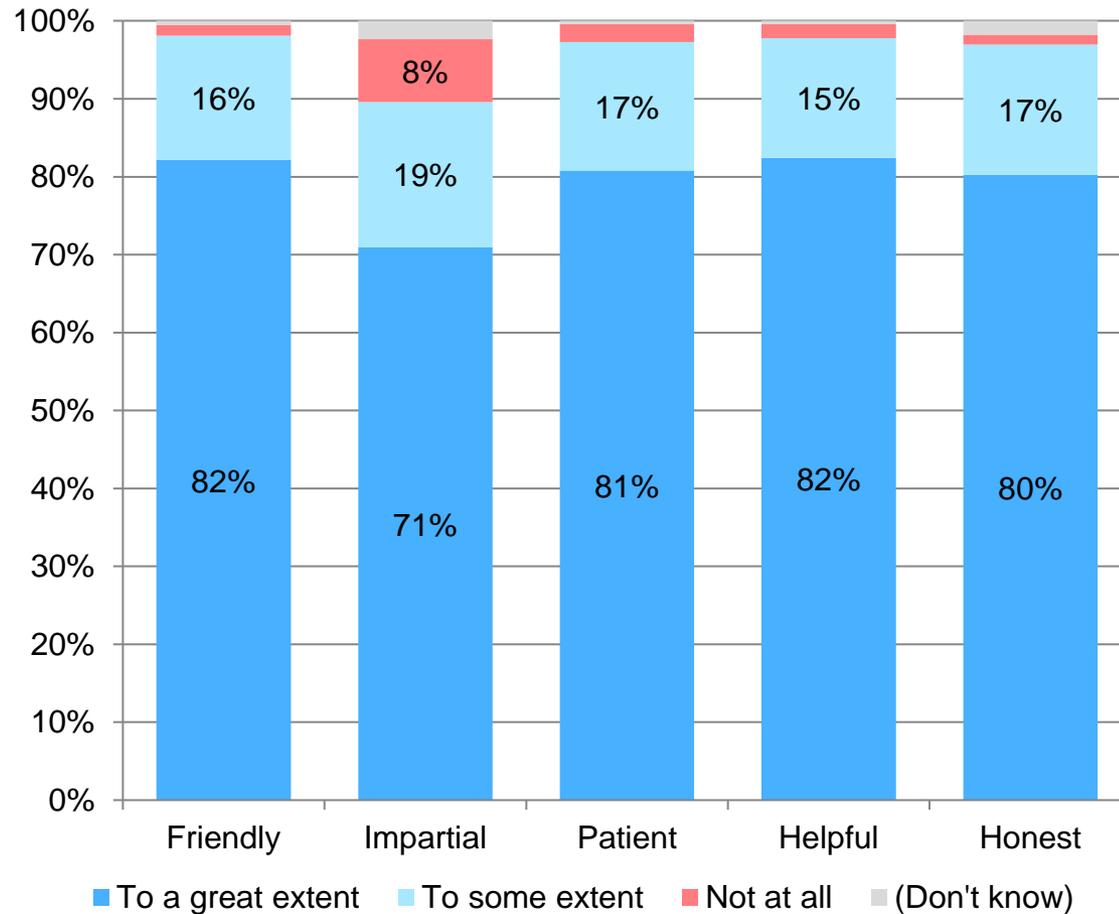
Are you satisfied with the quality of service that the IEC officials provided to voters? (% satisfied / very satisfied)



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



# Evaluation of conduct of electoral officials in Gauteng (2021)

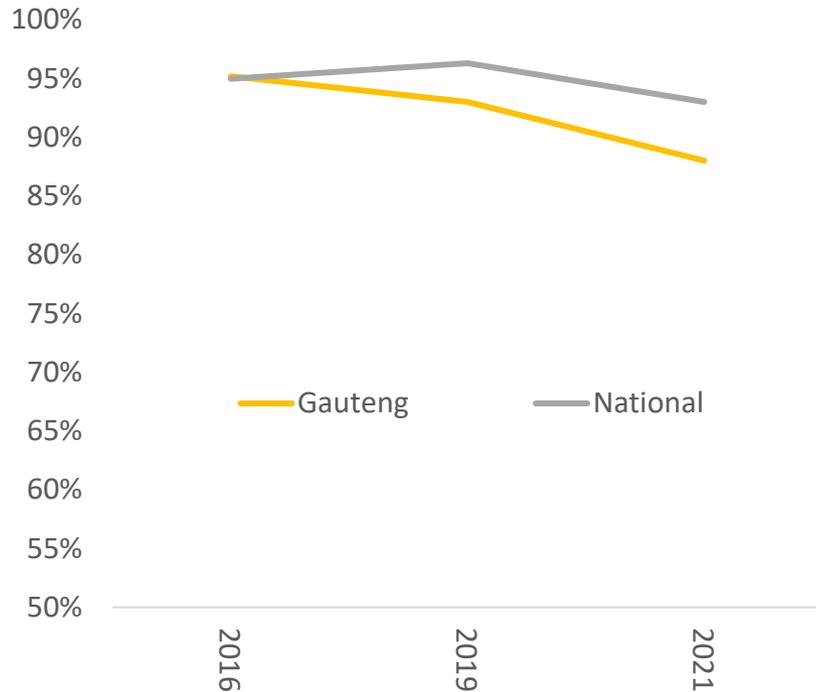


- There was **relatively little change** in most evaluations over time.
- The proportion of voters who viewed officials as **impartial** has declined since ESS 2009.
- **Better-educated citizens** are more negative about impartiality.

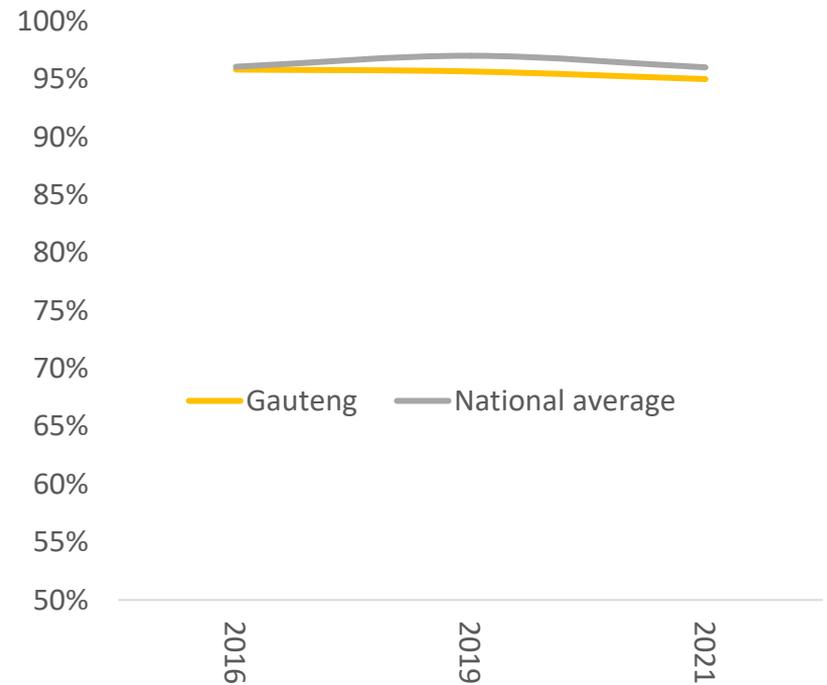
# Safety and Secrecy

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

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



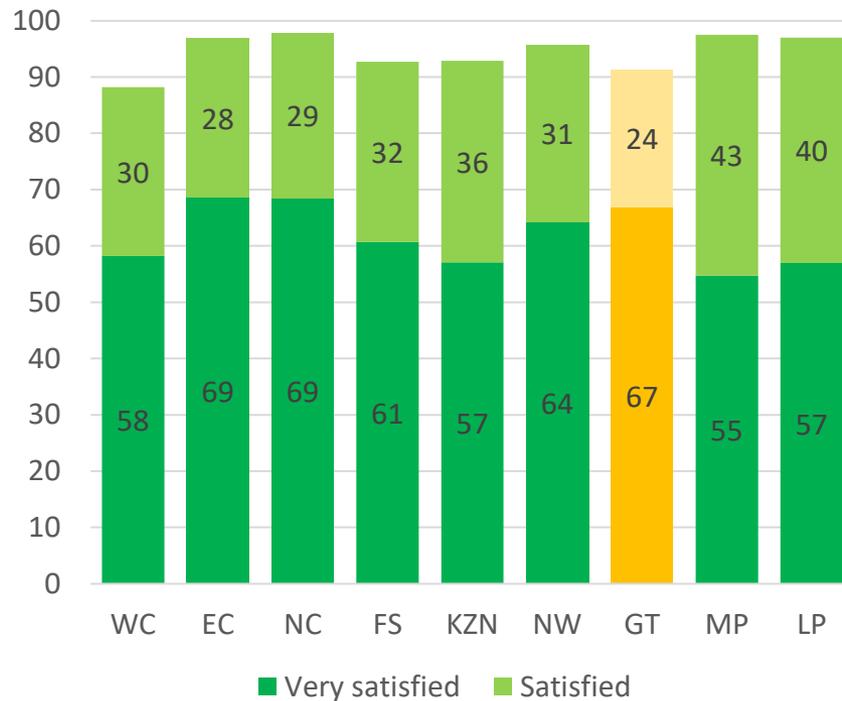
Are you satisfied that your vote in this voting station was secret? (% very satisfied/ satisfied)



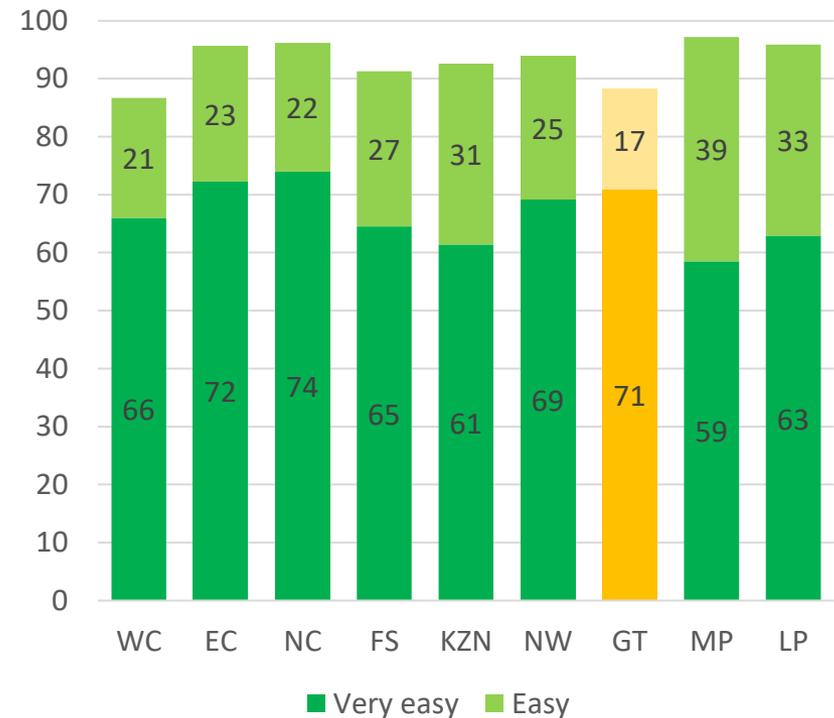
# Satisfaction and ease of use of the Ballot paper

## Gauteng in relative perspective

*Satisfaction with ballot paper  
(% satisfied, very satisfied)*

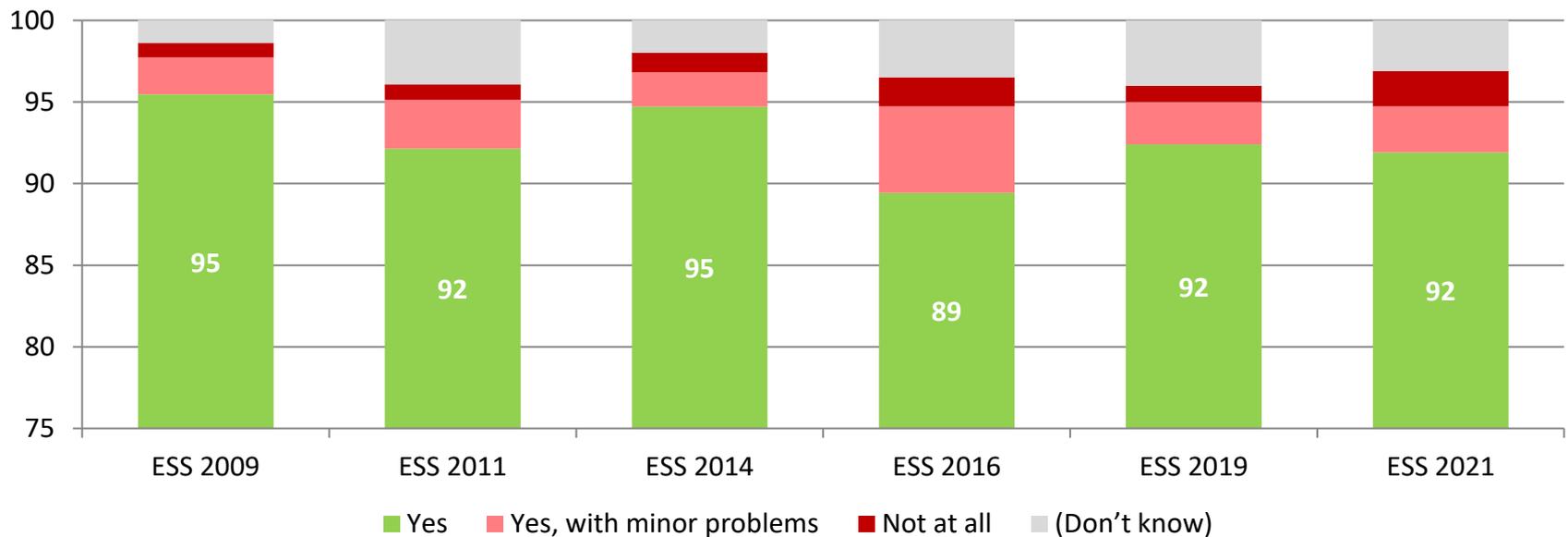


*Ease of finding party on the ballot paper  
(% easy, very easy)*



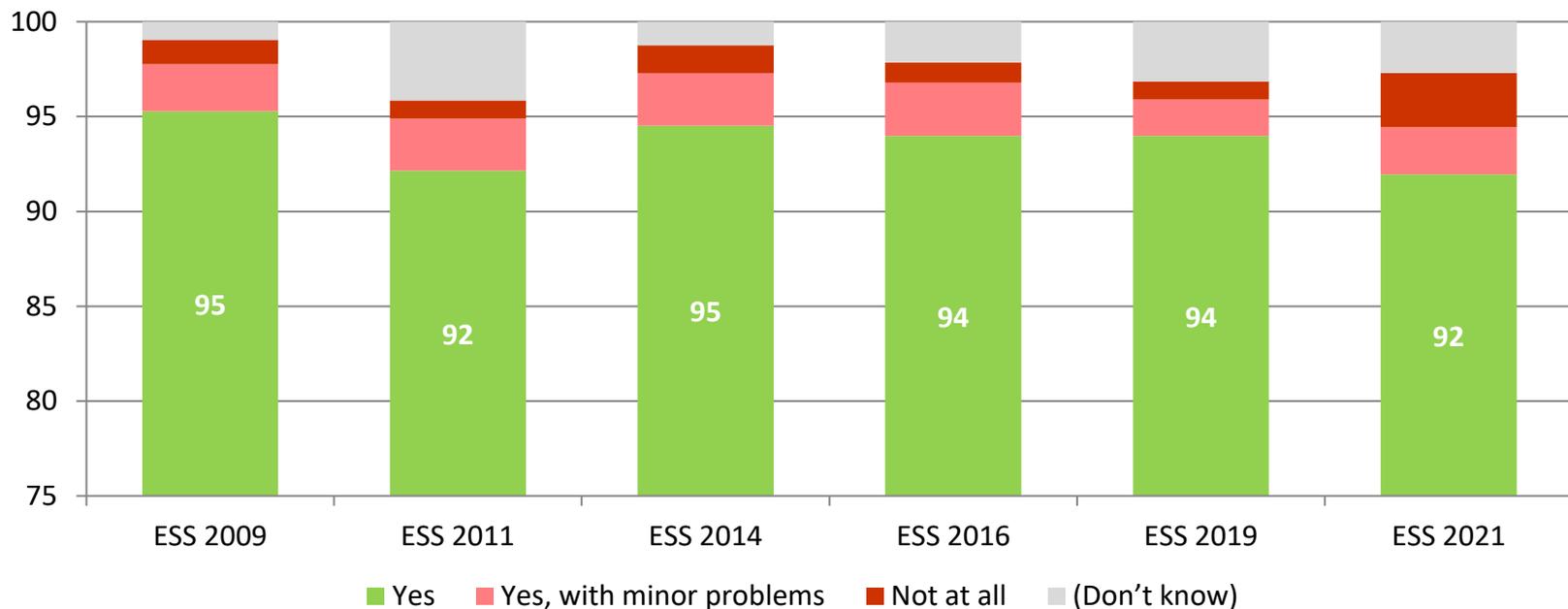
# Perceived electoral freeness in Gauteng

- An **overwhelming majority of voters** in the 2021 elections (92%) felt that the **election procedures were free**. A further 3% said they were free with minor problems, and 2% said they were not at all free.
- Resolutely positive, especially compared to the **LGE 2016** when only 89% rated the election as **completely free**.



# Perceived electoral fairness in Gauteng

- A similar share (92%) rated the election procedures as unconditionally fair in 2021, with 2% indicating that the elections were fair apart from minor problems.
- Marginally lower perceptions of electoral fairness in 2021 than 2014, 2016 and 2019.



# Conclusion

- NPE 2019 and LGE 2021 were undertaken amid **one of the harshest political moods** observed since 1994. Gauteng is no exception, although it fares better than other provinces, such as KwaZulu-Natal.
- **Electoral attitudes are beginning to change** alongside democratic evaluations
  - Fluctuating sense of the civic duty to vote, with 2021 among lowest
  - Diminishing political efficacy
- **Diminished electoral turnout**, with a majority of VAP abstaining
- **Disillusionment remains the core motivation** for non-registration and planned electoral abstention.
- **Growing polarization** between contented voters and disillusioned masses

# Conclusion

- In past elections, the survey pointed to increasingly critical evaluations of electoral democracy among the VAP.
  - This was seen as an appeal for **greater accountability**.
  - The latest results suggest that this may be spilling over in a **degree of fatalism**.
- Duty to vote was also a key factor **preventing a change in citizen norms** away from duty-bound citizenship
  - If this declines further, together with other views on democracy, it may lead to a further turn away from the ballot box

# Conclusion



- The dynamics that contributed to the **low turnout scenario** seen in the 2021 Local Government Elections will become especially crucial for the 2024 election and beyond.
- They debate needs to urgently turn to **what needs to be done to move us from the current scenario**, and restore the faith of the growing number of disaffected democrats in the country.
- This **matters particularly for South Africa's youth**, many of whom are disengaging from the politics of the ballot box and have not had a formative electoral experience.

# Conclusion

## Civic and democracy education

- **Recommendation:** Although the Electoral Commission cannot do much to change the political mood in the country, messages emphasising the importance of voting (internal efficacy), and using one's voting choice to promote electoral accountability should continue to be a focus.
  - Online registration has been favourably received, and further innovations to promote convenience for the electorate will encourage turnout
  - **Balloting education** remains a specific need, especially for first time voters
  - **Strong civic messaging** concerning duty to vote, power of the vote, and use of one's vote to ensure electoral accountability and post-election responsiveness
  - **Growing disillusionment needs to be swiftly addressed**, as VPS results suggest that **once political efficacy is lost, it is extremely difficult to recapture** and inspire a return to the ballot box



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# thank you

English  
Afrikaans  
Ndebele  
Xhosa  
Zulu  
Sepedi  
Sesotho  
Setswana  
Xitsonga  
SiSwati  
Tshivenda  
Nama

Thank you  
Dankie  
Ngiyathokoza  
Enkosi  
Ngiyabonga  
Ke a leboga  
Ke a leboha  
Ke a leboga  
Ndzi khense ngopfu  
Ngiyabonga  
Ndi a livhuwa  
Gangans

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