

Ipsos survey: Youth Day: Moderate optimism and views on the direction in which the country is going

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In public opinion surveys worldwide the youth are generally expressing more optimistic views about issues than older people, but young people in South Africa are only slightly more optimistic than older people.



In line with other developing countries, South Africa has a very young population and almost three in every ten adults in South Africa (28%) fall in the 15 to 24 age group.

However, this is not necessarily a homogenous group.

It is possible to look at the opinions of the so-called "Born Frees", thus those young people who have been born since the first democratic election in 1994. Currently, more than 3,6 million of the so-called "Born Frees" are older than 15 and they form roughly a tenth (11%) of all adults (15 years and older) in the country. A substantial proportion of this group will also be eligible to vote for the first time in 2014.

Actually, there will in total be more than 5 million "First Time Voters" in 2014 (15% of adults 15 years and older will be eligible to vote for the first time in a General Election next year).

National pride: How proud are young people to be South African?

It is clear from the table below that, although young adults (73%) are marginally more proud of being South African than older adults (71%) there is not a big difference in their views. This should be seen against the background that more than 90% of all adults in the mid-nineties were expressing their pride to be South African. National pride, like a number of other indicators, is currently under pressure and declining prior to the 2014 election.

| <i>I am proud to be a South African</i> | <i>Young adults, 15-24 years old %</i> | <i>Born Frees %</i> | <i>First Time Voters %</i> | <i>Other adults, 25 years old and older %</i> |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Strongly agree/ agree | 73 | 74 | 73 | 71 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 17 | 16 | 18 | 18 |
| Disagree/ strongly disagree | 8 | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| Don't know | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

When asked about *the direction in which the country is going*, optimism of the youth shines through, with four in every ten (40%) saying the country is going in the *right direction* - only just over a third (37%) of "older adults" (those 25 years and older) share this sentiment. In fact, more than four in every 10 (41%) of this group say the country is going in the wrong direction, an opinion shared by a third (34%) of young adults (15-24).

Although there is virtually no difference in the proportions of young adults, Born Frees and First Time Voters who think the country is going in the right direction, a smaller group of three in every ten (29%) of Born Frees feel the country is going in the wrong direction. This can possibly be attributed to more uncertainty amongst the younger Born Frees.

It is interesting to keep in mind that, in November 2004 (survey done after the national election of that year), more than seven in every ten (72%) adult South Africans were of the opinion that the country was going in the right direction, this has declined to a proportion of 56% by November 2009 (survey again done after the national election of that year) and to below half of adults (48%) by November last year (2012). The current figure is even lower.

| <i>The country is going in...</i> | <i>Young adults, 15-24 years old %</i> | <i>Born Frees %</i> | <i>First Time Voters %</i> | <i>Other adults, 25 years old and older %</i> |
|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| The right direction | 40 | 40 | 39 | 37 |
| The wrong direction | 34 | 29 | 32 | 41 |
| Undecided/ uncertain/ don't know | 26 | 31 | 29 | 22 |

The majority of South African adults feel that their *satisfaction with life* stays at the same level as a few months ago and young people are no different from older ones.

A substantial minority of about one in five of both older adults (20%) and young adults (17%) are less satisfied with life than a few months ago. Although the circumstances of people differ vastly, South Africans are all feeling the pinch of slow economic growth, rising prices of necessities and "muddling through" as far as a number of social and governance issues are concerned.

| <i>Your satisfaction with your life - has it...</i> | <i>Young adults, 15-24 years old %</i> | <i>Born Frees %</i> | <i>First Time Voters %</i> | <i>Other adults, 25 years old and older %</i> |
|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Improved | 28 | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| Stayed the same | 55 | 61 | 57 | 54 |
| Deteriorated since a few months ago | 17 | 13 | 17 | 20 |

Technical aspects

- Fieldwork was carried out from 22 April 2013 to 30 May 2013 by trained and experienced fieldworkers
- Face-to-face in-home interviews were conducted with a randomly chosen sample of 3,590 South Africans, 15 years and older, in the language chosen by the respondent
- The results were weighted and projected to the universe
- The margin of error of the study is 1,67%

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