

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation  
Cape Town, South Africa  
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## News release

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### South Africans increasingly discontent with the country's democracy

Less than half of South Africans currently believe that the country is “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems” (48%) or are satisfied with its implementation (47%), according to the most recent Afrobarometer survey.

Both measures have declined significantly since the last survey in 2011, by 19 percentage points for perceived extent of democracy and 12 points for public satisfaction with democracy. Disaggregation of these results by key demographic factors shows that race continues to be a leading source of differences in citizen attitudes towards democracy.

As the annual State of the Nation Address approaches, these results suggest that increasing dissatisfaction with South Africa's current leadership has spilled over into waning support for democracy itself.

For more information, see Afrobarometer [Dispatch No. 71](#), available at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

#### Key findings

- Less than half (47%) of respondents say the country is a “full democracy” or “a democracy, but with minor problems,” a 19–percentage-point decrease since 2011.
- Public satisfaction with the country's democracy has also declined significantly since 2011, from 60% to 48%.
- Further analysis indicates significant differences in opinion by urban/rural location, and race. Urban residents are significantly more critical of the country's democracy than respondents from rural areas, as are citizens from minority race groups.

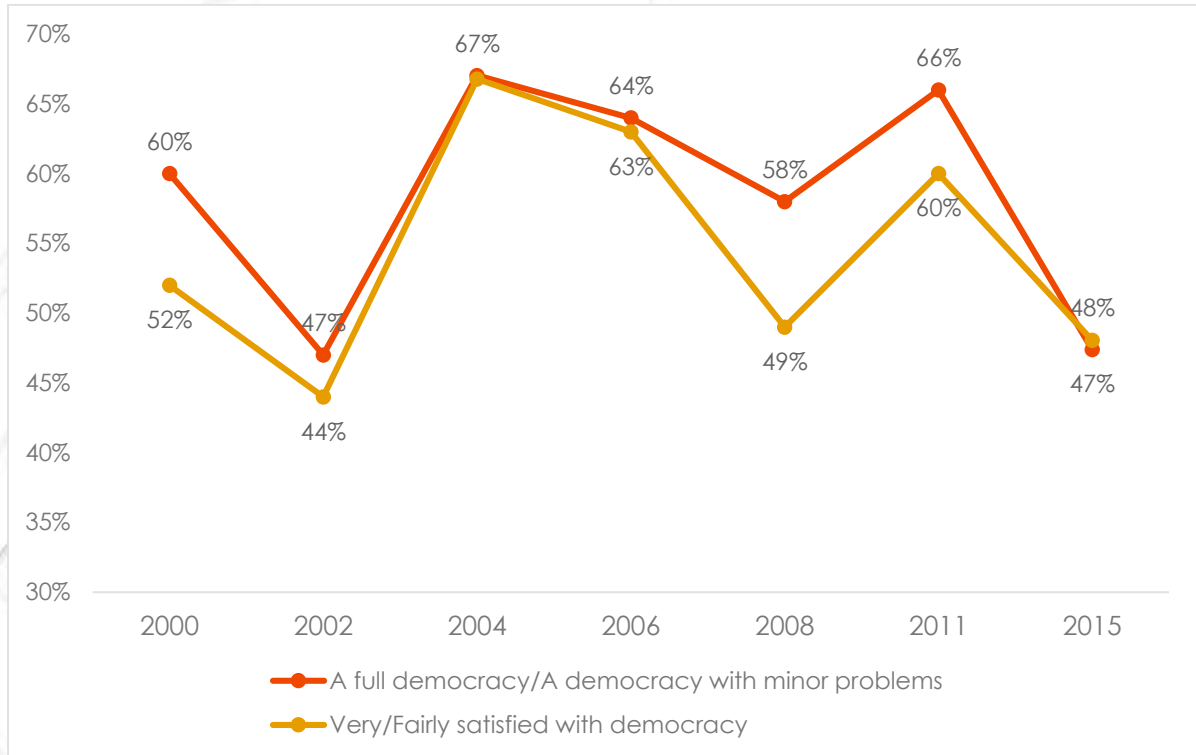
#### Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. After five rounds of surveys between 1999 and 2013, results of Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being published. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200 or 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) and Plus 94 Research, interviewed 2,400 adult South Africans in August and September 2015. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2011.

**Charts**

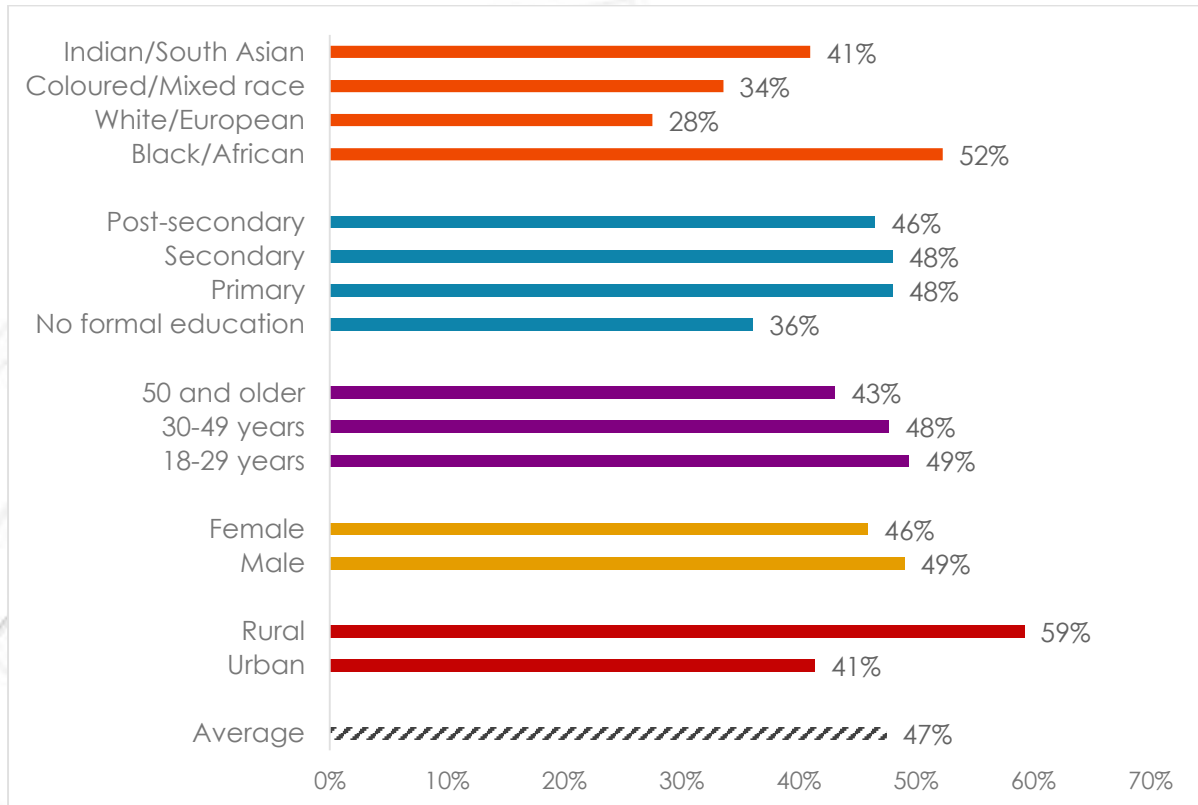
**Figure 1: Evaluations of South Africa's democracy | 2000-2015**



Respondents were asked:

- In your opinion, how much of a democracy is South Africa today?
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa?

**Figure 2: Extent of democracy** | by social attributes | South Africa | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, how much of a democracy is South Africa today?  
 (% "a full democracy" or "a democracy, but with minor problems")

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