



Press Release



Inspire Engage Create
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For immediate release

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Optimism drops dramatically to new low

TNS Research Surveys, South Africa's leading marketing and social insights company, has conducted a series of surveys since 2004 that ascertain how positive people feel about South Africa and its future. These surveys are conducted amongst a sample of 2 000 SA adults from the seven major metropolitan areas of South Africa, interviewing them face-to-face in their homes, with a margin of error of under 2.5%. The latest reading was taken in June 2008.

For metro areas, optimism has reached a new record low

The percentage of metro adults agreeing with the statement "I feel positive about South Africa and its future" has generally fallen in the mid 60s to lower 70s. However, the June 2008 reading shows a drop to a new low of 49% after an end-of-2006 reading of 64% and February reading of 60% - then a new low. The yearly averages until now have been very consistent:

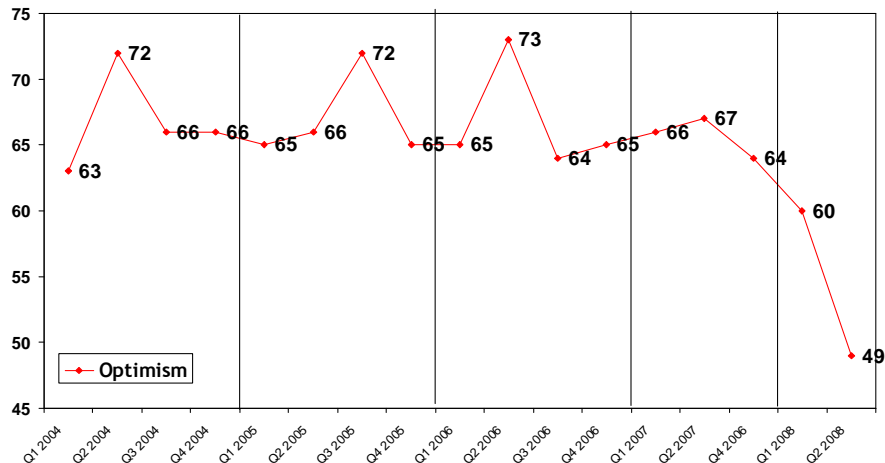
- 2004 - 66%
- 2005 - 67%
- 2006 - 67%
- 2007 - 66%

The graph below shows that changes to the measure are generally about four points: the drop this quarter of 11 points is a dramatic departure from its previous behaviour.



Optimism 2004 - 2008: Metro adults

% agreeing with the statement "I feel positive about South Africa and its future"

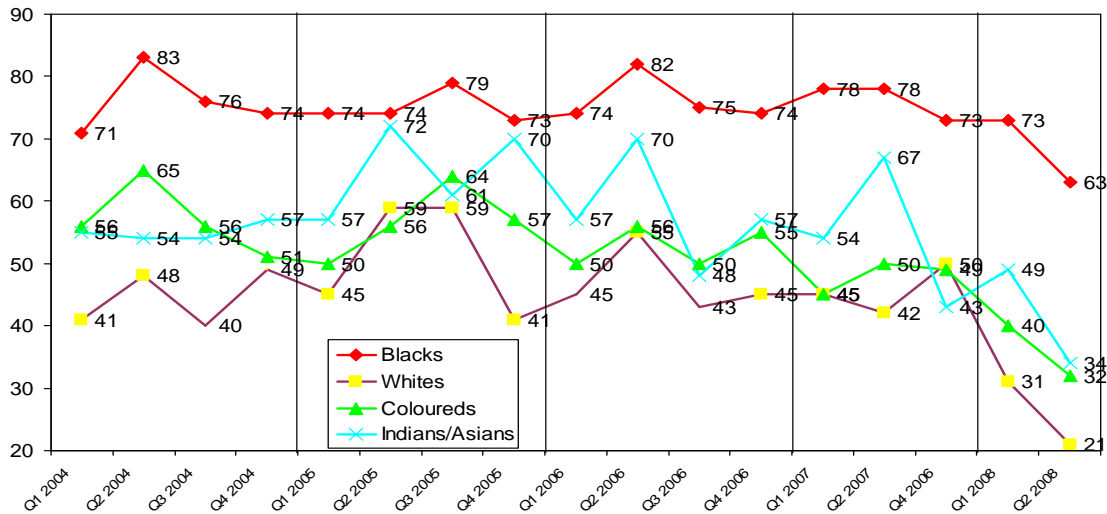


Who is showing the biggest drop? It is across the board

Analysis by race group shows that, whilst blacks are generally the most positive, this quarter their figure also shows its largest drop since 2004, from 73% to 63%. However, whilst whites have generally have figures around the mid-40s (except for 2005 when, for a time, they rose to 59%), the February reading showed a dramatic drop to 31%, this further declining to 21% in June. The figures for coloureds have been trending downwards slowly since 2005 but now sit at 32%, also a new all time low. The Indian/Asian figures are more erratic, also showing a slow decline since 2005, reaching a new low of 34% now.



Optimism 2004 - 2008: Metro adults - by race



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Where are people the most and least positive?

Analysis by area shows that, in June 2008, optimism was highest in Johannesburg and Bloemfontein areas (69% and 63% respectively) and lowest in Cape Town (35%), with the Eastern Cape showing the largest drop.

- Gauteng - 54% (63% in February)
 - Johannesburg and environs - 55% (62% in February)
 - Johannesburg excluding Soweto - 69% (61% in February) (highest)
 - Soweto - 53% (64% in February)
 - East Rand - 46% (58% in February)
 - West Rand - 51% (63% in February)
 - Vaal Triangle and South Rand - 57% (74% in February)
 - Pretoria - 50% (67% in February)
- Cape Town - 35% (49% in February) (lowest)
- Durban - 51% (55% in February)
- Eastern Cape - 43% (66% in February)
 - Port Elizabeth - 43% (64% in February)
 - East London - 44% (69% in February)
- Bloemfontein - 63% (65% in February)

Change
-9
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-17
-14
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-23
-21
-25
-2

Younger people (those aged 18 to 24 years) are more positive (57%) than those aged 50 to 59 (44% are positive) and those aged 60 years and older (34%). There are no gender differences. Interestingly, unemployed people are more optimistic (58%) than others (47%). **MORE...**

Our take-out

For a number of years, optimism levels have shown remarkable robustness. However, for two successive readings, new lows have been reached, the June drop being the largest movement recorded for the measure. Falls have occurred across all demographics.

This is against a background of increasing concern about the economy, very high food and fuel price increases (with protest actions occurring around the country), increasing interest rates, the xenophobic violence and the volatile situation in Zimbabwe, and the constant background concern of power shortages and the spectre of climate change. Confidence in President Mbeki continues to decline with 46% of people having no confidence in both Mr Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. In addition, there is the ongoing suspension of the Police Commissioner, Jackie Selebi, and the Judge Hlope vs the Constitutional Court issue.

There has never been a greater need for visible, unified and decisive leadership - but, after the ANC conference in Polokwane and the uncertainty arising as a result, and with the ANC NEC apparently issuing what amounts to directives to President Mbeki, this seems to be an elusive goal. Hence, it falls to leaders in other parts of the socio-political spectrum to step forward to avoid a spiraling descent into pessimism.

So what IS the good news? Some stories to reflect on...

- Nelson Mandela's 90th, for one. A shining beacon of leadership and reconciliation. We know that.
- We beat England in the last cricket test.
- There seems to be a ray of hope in Zimbabwe, at last.
- The Renault-Nissan Alliance is investing R1 billion in a new manufacturing project in South Africa that will create approximately 300 jobs.
- A firm in Benoni has received another huge order for military vehicles for the US.
- One person in seven in the metro areas made some sort of contribution to the foreigners affected by the recent violence - contribution in the form of money, clothing, food, accommodation or other items. That's not bad. And this ranged from 10% of people at the poorest end of the income scale to 24% at the upper end. That's even better.
- Despite our increasing pessimism about the World Cup, 45% of metro dwellers feel we WILL make it. Of course we will.
- Poverty IS slowly declining.
- And we can all do something as individuals - we can choose to be optimistic or we can choose to be pessimistic. It is a deliberate choice. Surround yourself with optimistic people and shun the negative. Make a difference to someone else.

Technical note

The studies were conducted amongst a sample of 2 000 adults (1260 blacks, 385 whites, 240 coloureds and 115 Indians/Asians) in the seven major metropolitan areas: they have a margin of error of under 2.5% for the results found for the total sample. The studies were conducted by TNS Research Surveys (Pty) Ltd as part of their ongoing research into current social and political issues and were funded by TNS Research Surveys. For more details, please contact Neil Higgs on 011-778-7500 or 082-376-6312. www.tnsresearchsurveys.co.za

About TNS

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TNS delivers innovative thinking and excellent service across a network of 80 countries. Working in partnership with clients, TNS provides high-quality information, analysis and insight that improves understanding of consumer behaviour.

TNS is the world's leading provider of customised services, combining sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of Product Development & Innovation, Brand & Communications, Stakeholder Management, Retail & Shopper and Customer Intelligence. TNS is a major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and audience measurement services.

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