

Brand South Africa  
Research Note

*South Africa: A Brand of  
Optimists?*

*Findings from Brand SA's  
Domestic Perceptions  
Research*

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## Introduction

During March 2015 Brand SA received results from one of its flagship domestic research projects - the Domestic Perceptions Research.

Through this national survey Brand SA keeps its finger on the pulse of the nation, particularly focusing on perceptions of the country, and its future outlook.

In order to properly manage the nation brand, and to effectively communicate on and position the brand domestically and internationally, Brand SA has to understand the mind sets, perceptions of, and perspectives of South Africans on the nation, and the brand.

This research note will not communicate on all the findings of the domestic perceptions research. Other research notes focusing on a range of findings from the survey will cover related issues. This note, however, will focus on one of the possible questions that emerge from the research which is - Is South Africa a brand of optimists?

## Research design

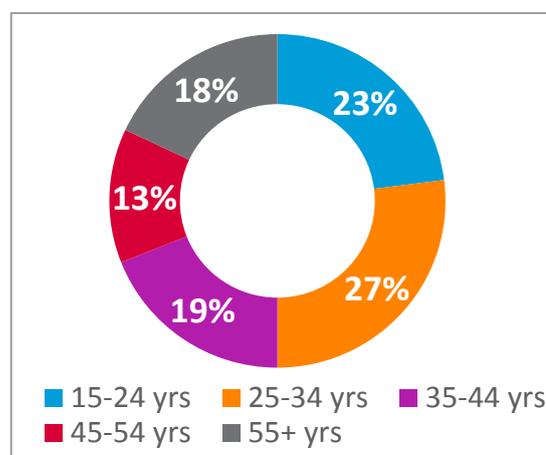
The sample of the survey, conducted by AC Nielsen, is 2 524 male and female respondents aged 15+ who were interviewed via face-to-face, door-to-door interviews in the homes of respondents, using a structured (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) CAPI questionnaire.

The sample is nationally representative across age, race, gender, income, community size and region.

Fieldwork was conducted from 17 November to 12 December 2014 when interviews were conducted in all metros and cities and a representative sample of towns and villages.

## A young dynamic population

The sample for this national survey is drawn based on the latest AMPS data. As the figure below indicates, a full 50% of the total sample is aged between 15 and 34.

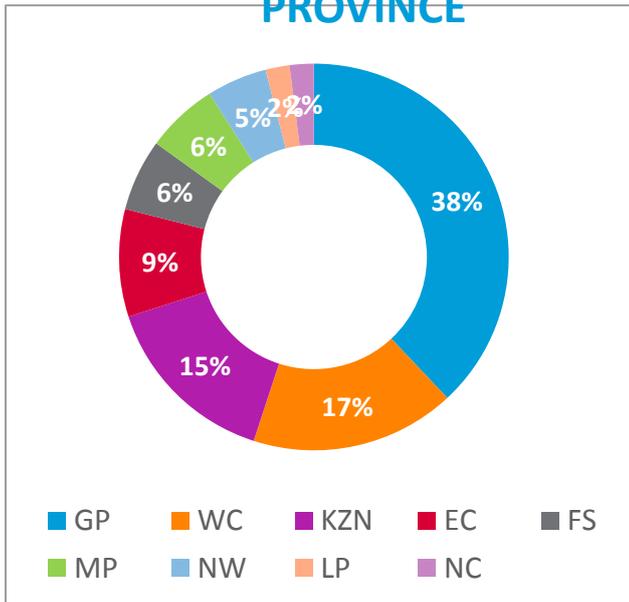


This means that South Africa is predominantly a young nation, with the implication that from an economic, demographic, and social point of view that the country has major potential for growth, innovation and development.

In terms of the geographical distribution of the sample (also based on AMPS data) it is clear that the vast majority of South Africans live in Gauteng, the Western Cape, and Kwazulu-Natal provinces.

Fig. 2 below provides a breakdown of the population distribution.

## PROVINCE



### Future expectations

While South Africa may have a very young and dynamic population, one of the questions Brand SA asked of respondents is to indicate what living standards they expect their children to maintain, compared to their current standard of living.

The response to this question indicates that South Africans on the whole have a positive outlook on the future. Figure 3 below shows that citizens are on the

whole extremely optimistic about the outlook for future generations.

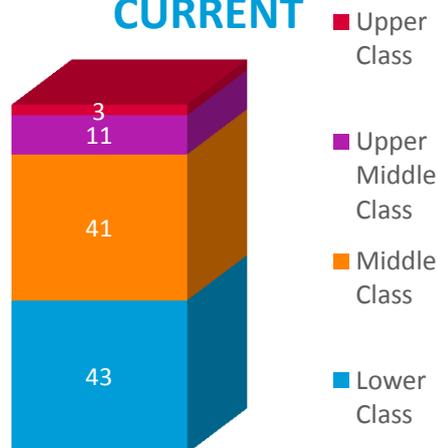
While 43% of respondents indicate that they are currently in the lower LSMs, it is clear that a full 25% of the respondents see their children move to higher LSMs. This can be interpreted as a sign, partly of hope for the future, but also that South Africans are aspirational.

From a nation brand reputation point of view it is also interesting to note that while South Africans are by and large optimistic about the future, that their commitment to the country is strong.

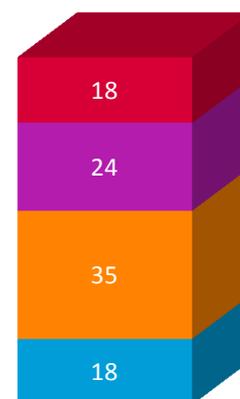
In terms of future intentions, 74% of respondents indicate that they will 'continue to live & work in SA regardless of social, economic and political situations'. Only 1% of respondents indicated that they are planning to leave the country with no intention of returning.

This means that South Africans are optimistic about the prospects of future generations, and that the vast majority of the country intends to continue living in, and to contribute to the country of their birth.

## CURRENT



## FUTURE GENERATIONS



### Biggest improvements in the last ten years

The survey asked respondents to indicate, on a list of thirteen indicators, in which areas the country has made the most progress in the past ten years.

Although this may be surprising to some commentators, the top five improvements noted include:

1. Education;
2. Religious tolerance;
3. Public transport;
4. Housing; and
5. Medical treatment/hospitals.

In terms of areas respondents expect to see the most improvement in the next ten years, the top five are:

1. Education;
2. Public transport;
3. Religious tolerance;
4. Medical treatment/hospitals; and
5. Racial tolerance.

### Attributes of the nation

From the survey data it is evident that South Africans perceive themselves as doers. 86% of respondents indicated that 'citizens should stand up for what they believe in, not wait for others to take action.'

This is of interest for Brand SA in terms of the Play Your Part programme which is anchored in the principle of Active Citizenship.

Innovation in all spheres of human activity (and not only technology) remains a key driver of social development and advancement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For this reason it is interesting to note that 81% of respondents agree that South Africa is an innovative country,

while 80% believe South Africa is capable of achieving greatness. This finding furthermore indicates an optimistic outlook on the potential of the nation brand.

Other attributes where respondents show a high level of agreement include:

- 79% indicate the country embraces the spirit of Ubuntu;
- 79% indicate they believe SA is a competitive nation;
- And in keeping with the comment earlier that South Africans are aspirational, **76% of respondents believe that this is a country where it is possible for your dreams to come true.**

### National Pride

While South Africa's public discourse may often be characterised by intense debates that may make it seem as if there are irreconcilable differences, it is nevertheless clear that South Africans on the whole are extremely proud of the country and its achievements.

From the data Brand SA derives a Pride Index with an over-all score of 80/100. This means that South Africans are proud of the country and its achievements.

From a reputational point of view, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they will recommend South Africa as an investment destination, a place to travel to/visit, a place to work in, and a place to study in.

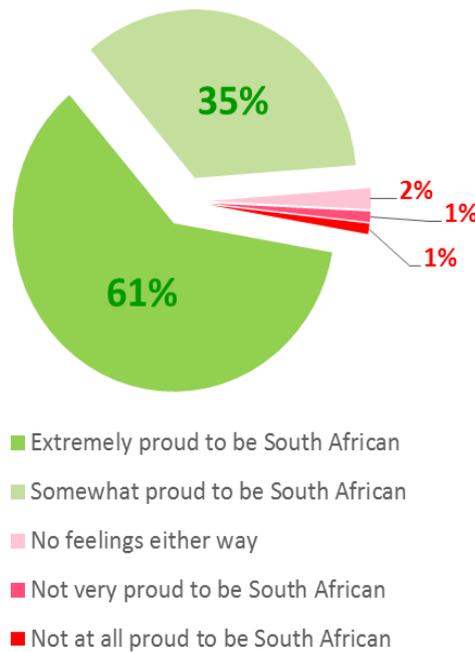
The responses are positive with more than 80% of respondents indicating that they will recommend South Africa for each of the activities:

- To invest in = 81%
- To travel to = 86%
- To work in = 82%

- To study in = 82%.

### Factors driving and detracting from pride

The figure below indicates that 61% of respondents are extremely proud to be South African, with 35% being somewhat proud.



The top factors that drive pride include the landscape, cultural diversity, the people in general, achievements of democracy, and our national sports teams. While on the opposite end of the spectrum, the five factors that detract from pride are outlined in the figure below.

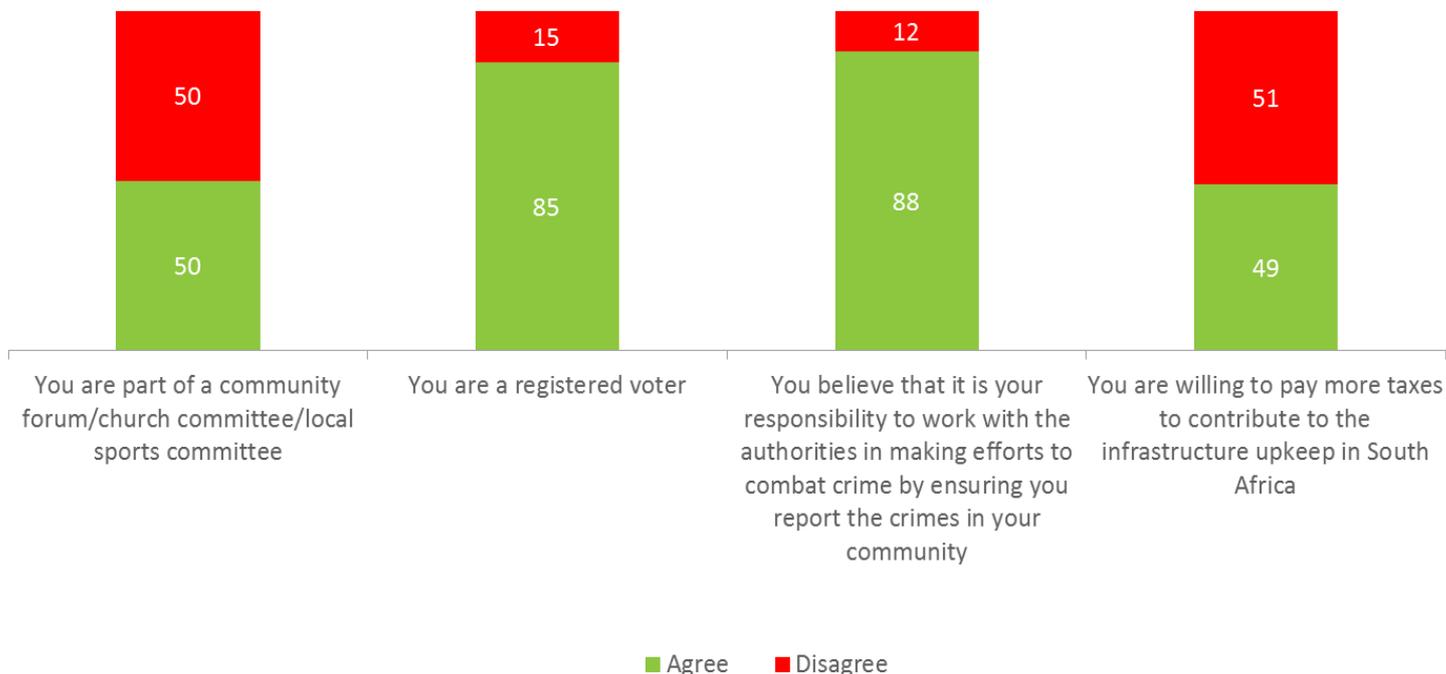
TOP 5 - FACTORS DRIVING PRIDE		%
1	The beautiful landscape	56
2	The cultural diversity	49
3	The people in general	49
4	Achievements of our democracy	41

## TOP 5 - FACTORS DETRACTING FROM PRIDE %

1 Corruption	27
2 Too much crime	26
3 Lack of job opportunities	17
4 Country is in a downward spiral	15

A relatively small percentage of the respondents noted a lack of job opportunities, and corruption as issues that impact negatively on pride. This calls for constant vigilance by all South Africans to drive the job creation agenda, while resisting the temptation of corruption.

In keeping with the profile of a young population with a positive outlook on the future, Brand SA also measures the extent to which respondents are already actively involved in community life. Respondents were asked whether they are involved in community forums, church or other local committees. To this 50% of respondents agreed. More significant is that 85% of respondents indicate that they are registered voters. When it comes to crime, a high 88% of respondents indicated that it is their responsibility as residents and citizens to work with authorities in making efforts to combat crime.



## Concluding thoughts

As indicated above this research note does not reflect on all the findings from the survey. The data presented here mainly indicates that South Africans see the future of the country positively through their expectations for future generations. This, combined with the fact that the country's demographic profile is predominantly youthful (under 34 years), means that South Africa has a dynamic, young and aspirational society that can drive innovation and development.

While there is a strong sense of national pride, the key concerns, which also impact on pride to some extent, pertain to crime, corruption, and a lack of job opportunities. These factors are well recognised as key social challenges the country has to work to overcome.

This being said, it is also interesting to note that 56% of respondents to the survey indicate that citizens should focus on solutions, rather than only the problems confronting the country. And as indicated earlier, South Africans are also willing to take action, rather than waiting for someone else. This is an important element of the work Brand SA does, while Active Citizenship is of course also a key principle of the National Development Plan. Without an active and involved citizenry the high-level developmental objectives of the society, as set by government through its programmes of action, can never be achieved.

As a relatively young and evolving democracy South Africa continues to confront historical challenges and legacy issues. In the process of developing this society it is important to focus on solutions, and to find new and inspiring ways of engaging with problems/challenges.

Brand South Africa's Research Notes and Research Reports communicate findings from Brand South Africa research and related panel discussions. The Research Notes and Reports are intended to elicit comments, contribute to debate, and inform stakeholders about trends and issues that impact on South Africa's reputation and overall competitiveness.

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