

# The GCRO's Quality of Life survey: an overview

International Seminar: **Metropolitan policies and indicators of social cohesion**

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Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)







# The Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)

## Context



*GCRO helps to build the knowledge base that government, business, labour, civil society and residents all need to shape appropriate strategies that will advance a competitive, integrated, sustainable and inclusive Gauteng City-Region.*

**The GCRO is an effort to generate scholarly work to inform public sector decision-making and policy.**

- GCRO is a partnership between:
  - University of Johannesburg (UJ),
  - University of the Witwatersrand (Wits),
  - Gauteng Provincial Government, and
  - Organised local government in Gauteng

A purpose-designed vehicle for policy-oriented research.

# Constituting a 'boundary organisation':

A form of 'embedded autonomy'

- Core funding from provincial government
- In-kind support from the universities
- Located on university campus
- Guaranteed academic freedom
- Primary client is provincial government (but increasingly the metros too)
- Most outputs to be fully publicly available



# GCRO as a research partnership

Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)



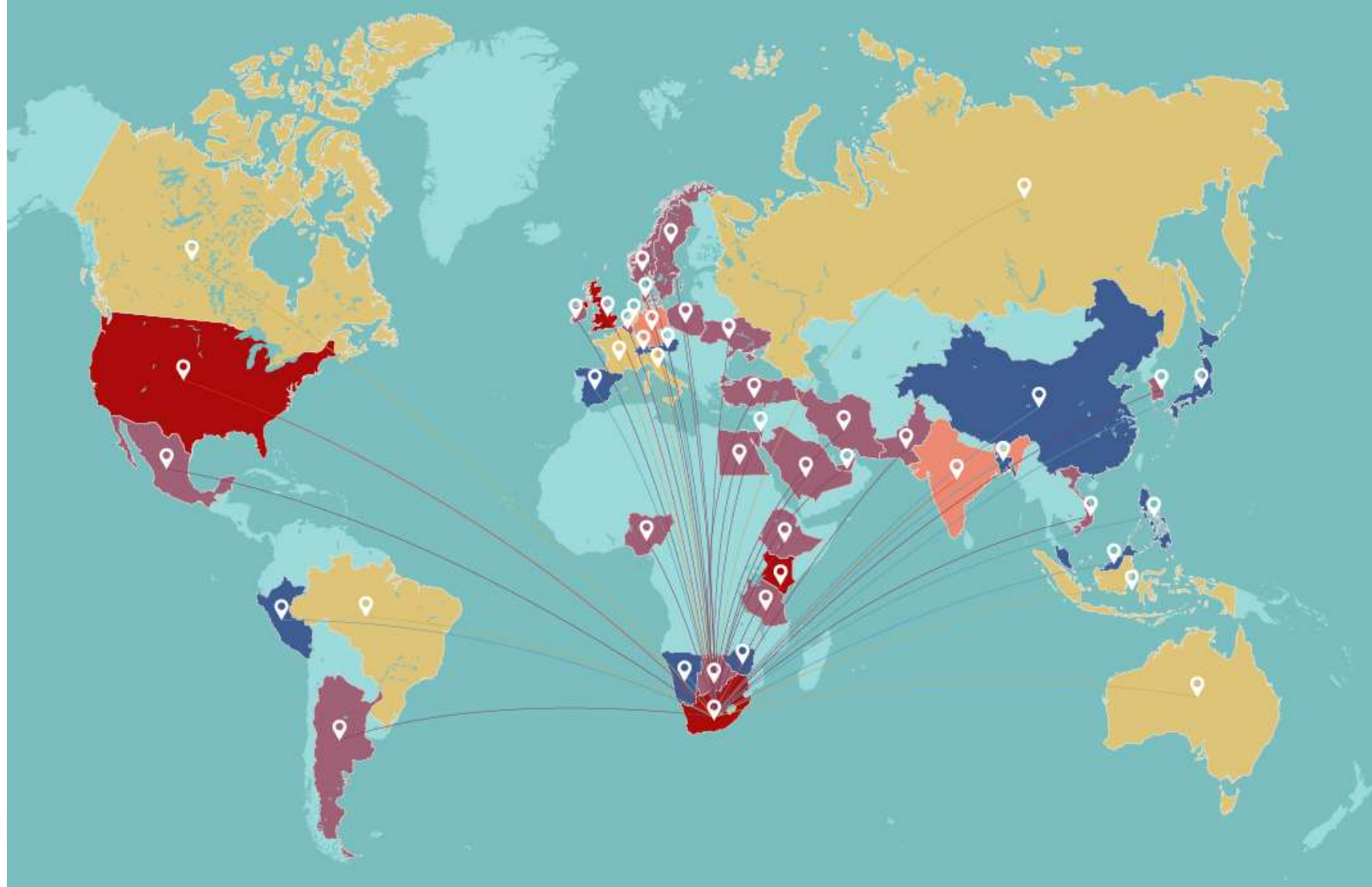
## Specific roles:

- Medium to longer-term applied research (on request or self-initiated)
- On-request policy support work
- Government – academia portal
- Academic publication
- Policy-relevant outputs
- Partnership and network building



# The reach of GCRO research

Global website visits



*“If universities are at the heart of knowledge economy, and the knowledge economy is urban, then urban researchers must pay heed to how they are increasingly implicated as political actors in, rather than purely critics of, territorial projects.”*

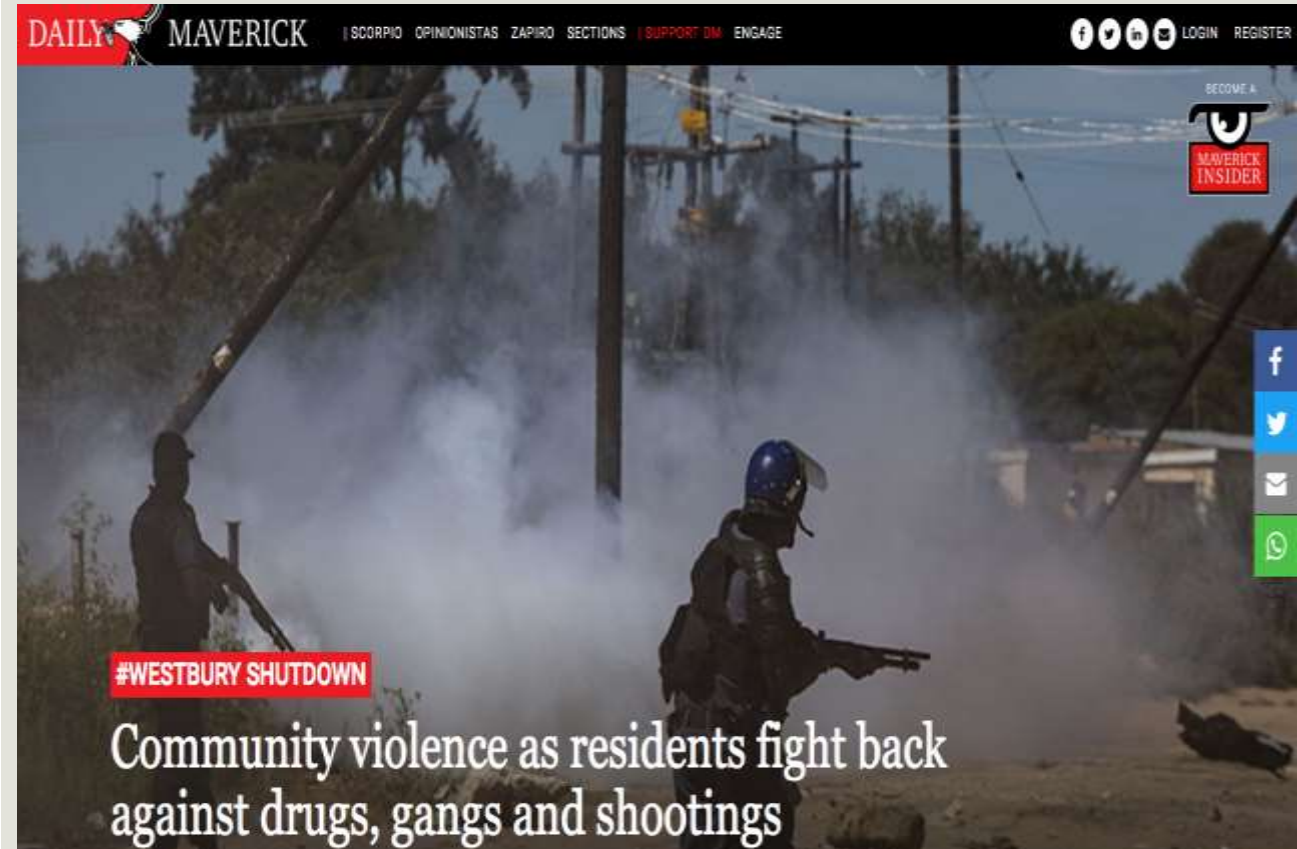
*(Perry, 2011)*

# The quandry

Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)

## Bridging the divide:

- How do we address intensely political issues without becoming positioned (and sunk) politically?
- How do we inform debates and draw (evidenced) conclusions without being seen to be “playing politics”?
- How do we play to both authorities – the scholarly and the governmental?





# The quandry

Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)

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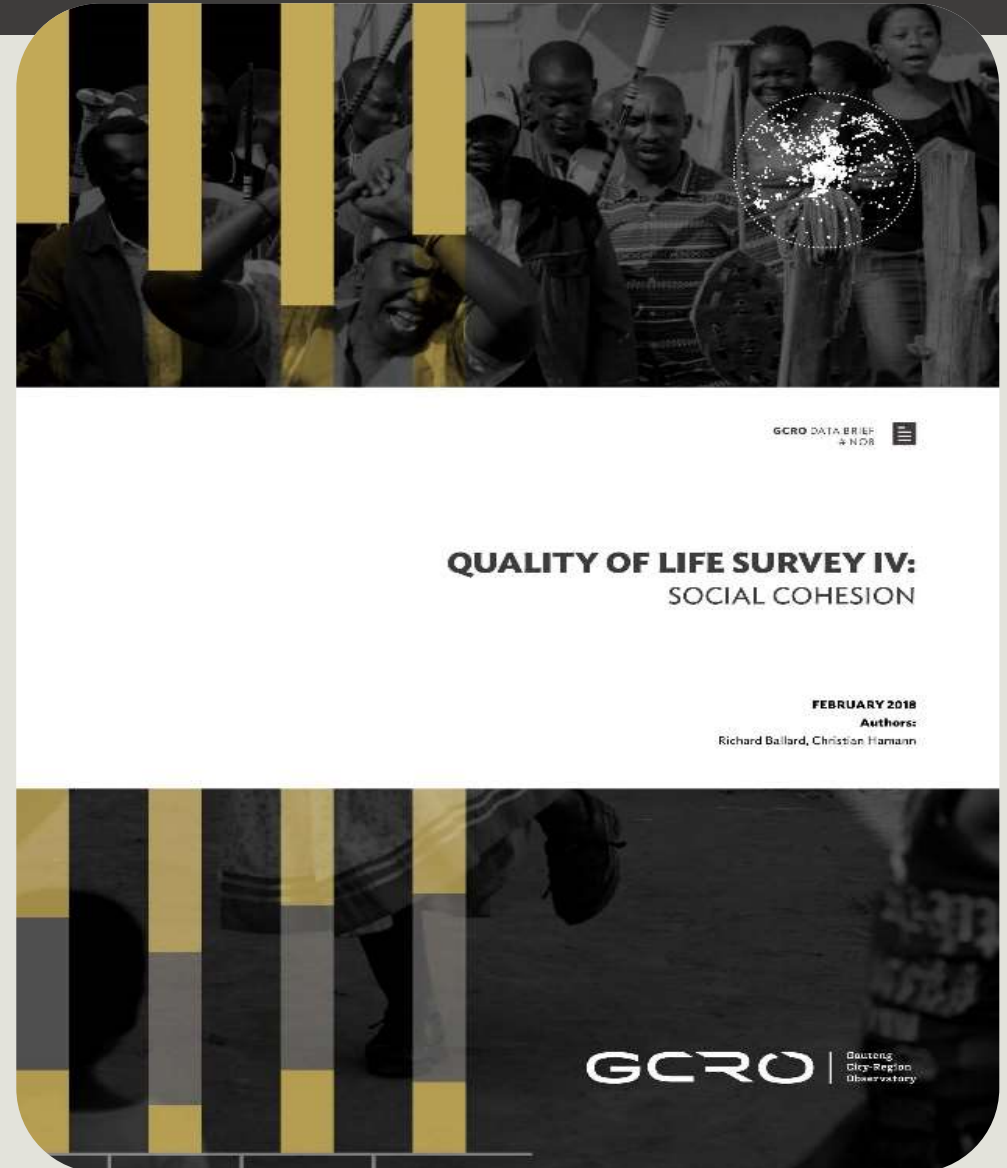
## How it has transpired

- Government research needs emergent and changing;
- GCRO has strong interpretive discretion;
- Strong political maturity in maintaining autonomy of the GCRO;
- Intuitive normative alignment between key GPG staff and GCRO;
- Negotiating trust and good faith at personal levels;
- Most outputs to be fully publicly available.

# Impact: Do we influence government?

Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)

- Many direct contributions to government frameworks;
- Influencing high-level positions on key issues;
- ‘Data-lab’ workshops with officials;
- Increasing appetite for GCRO work
- Working with government at all three tiers (local, provincial and national)



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## However:

- Uneven absorptive capacities across and within departments;
- Do we reach street-level bureaucrats?
- No linear, cause-and-effect relationship between research and policy or decision-making;
- Multiple intervening variables – endogenous and exogenous factors;
- Relatively weak institutional arrangements in government for using science advice;
- GCRO aims to ‘saturate’ the public sphere: a ‘knowledge ecology’.



# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey





# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey

What is the GCRO's Quality of Life survey?

- GCRO's Quality of Life survey (QoL) started in 2009, and runs every two years
- Measures the wellbeing of Gauteng's residents, taking a broad approach:
  - Objective measures, such as socio-economic circumstances and access to services; and
  - Subjective measures, such as psycho-social attitudes, value base, and perceptions of government and services
- QoL has developed into one of the largest social surveys in South Africa
- Provides spatially fine-grained insights into the lives of residents of the GCR
  - Data can be analysed at the provincial, municipal and ward levels
  - Particularly valuable in a context of extremely high levels of inequality, and a diverse population

# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey

Why is it valued?

Gauteng Premier David Makhura, at the QoL V launch (November 13, 2019)

“The Survey has become one of the most ***comprehensive and reliable*** instruments to measure citizens’ satisfaction and perceptions on governance, service delivery, socio-economic development and the quality of life among the people of Gauteng.

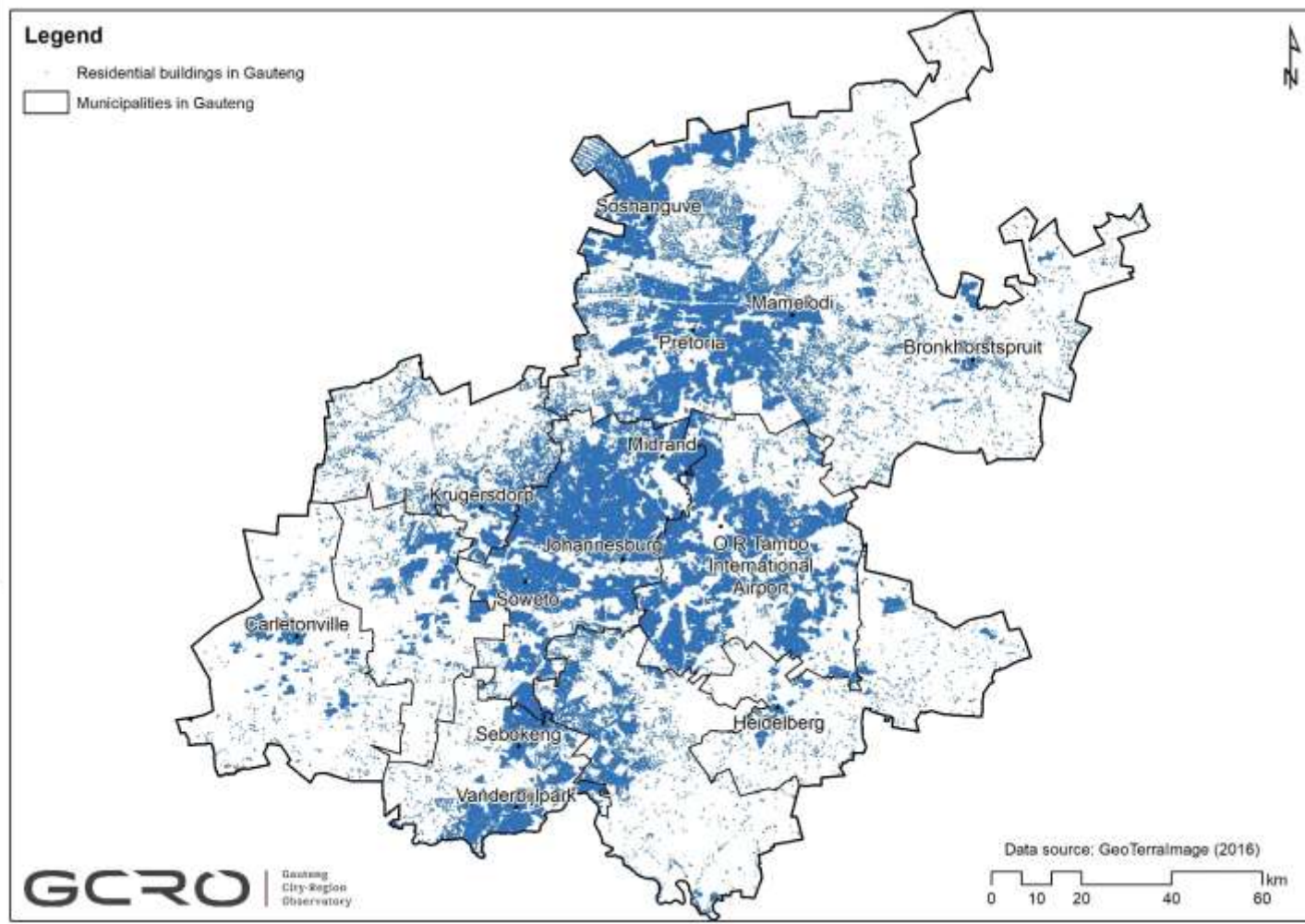
This Survey has established itself as an important barometer to measure the pulse of the citizens and their social attitudes on all issues. Accordingly, the Gauteng City Region Observatory’s Quality of Life Survey has earned pride of place as an ***indispensable tool for evidence-based governance and decision-making.***”





# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey

## Geographical scope of the survey



# QoL V 2017/18 questionnaire



## Category

- Community
- Community Services
- Demographics/ household
- Education
- Employment and business
- Finances and household resources
- Headspace, well being and quality of life
- Health
- Household services and needs

## No. of surveys (in addition to depicted)

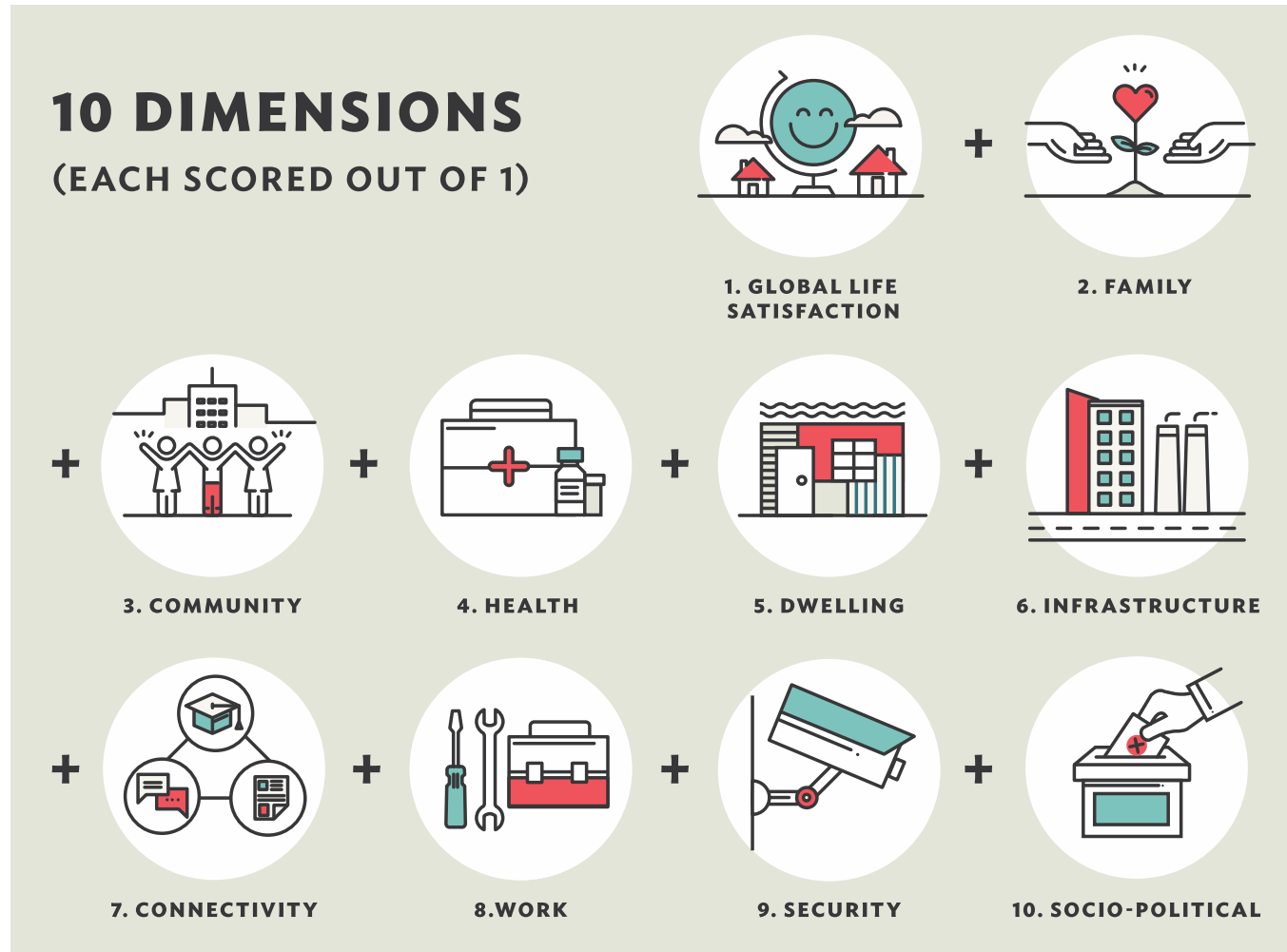
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

## Index question

- None
- Both indices
- Marginalisation index
- QoL index

# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey

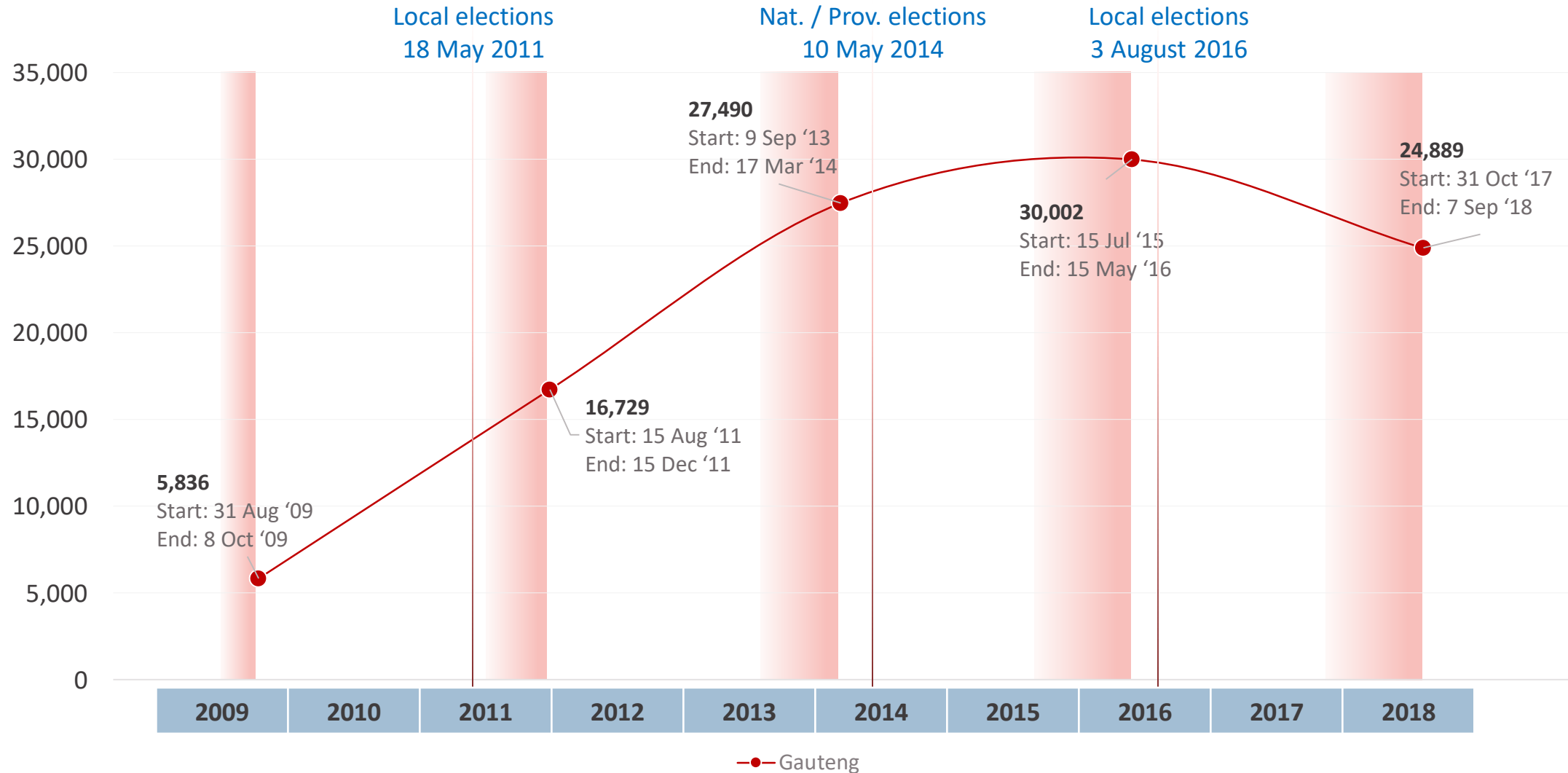
The QoL index – 58 variables





# Overview of the Quality of Life Survey

## The evolution of the survey





# More about QoL V (2017/18)

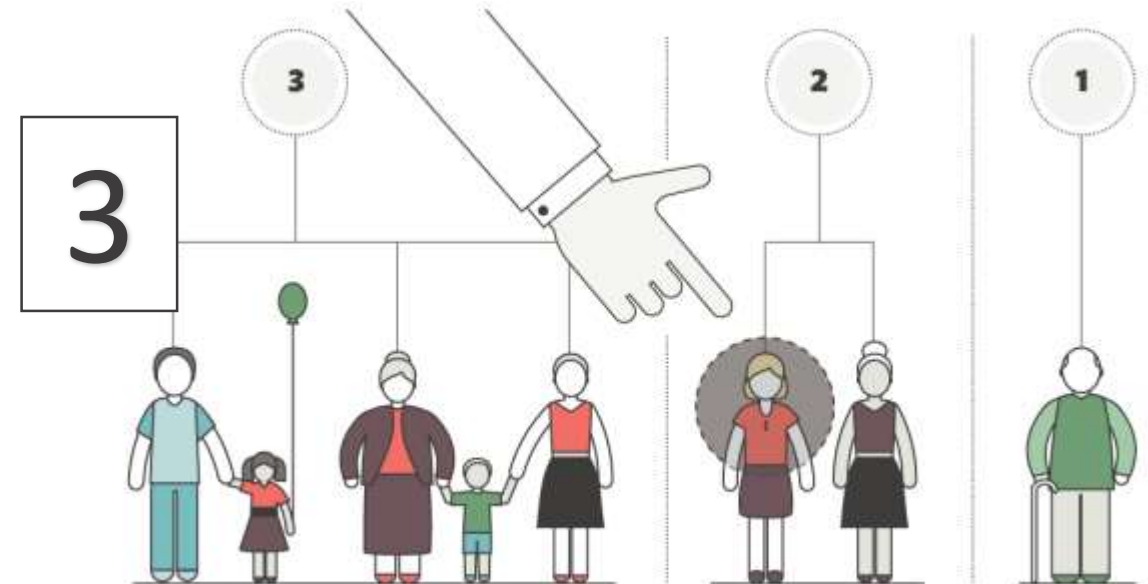
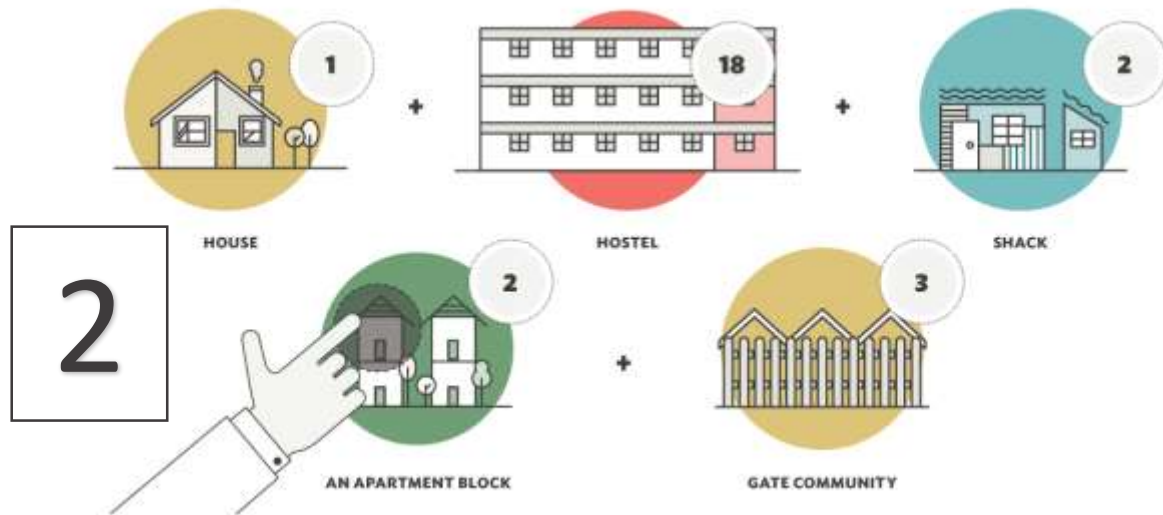
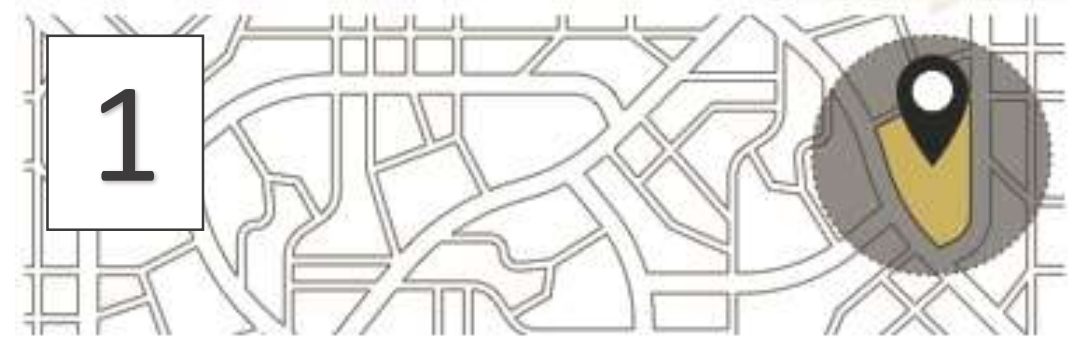




# More about QoL V (2017/18)

## Methodology

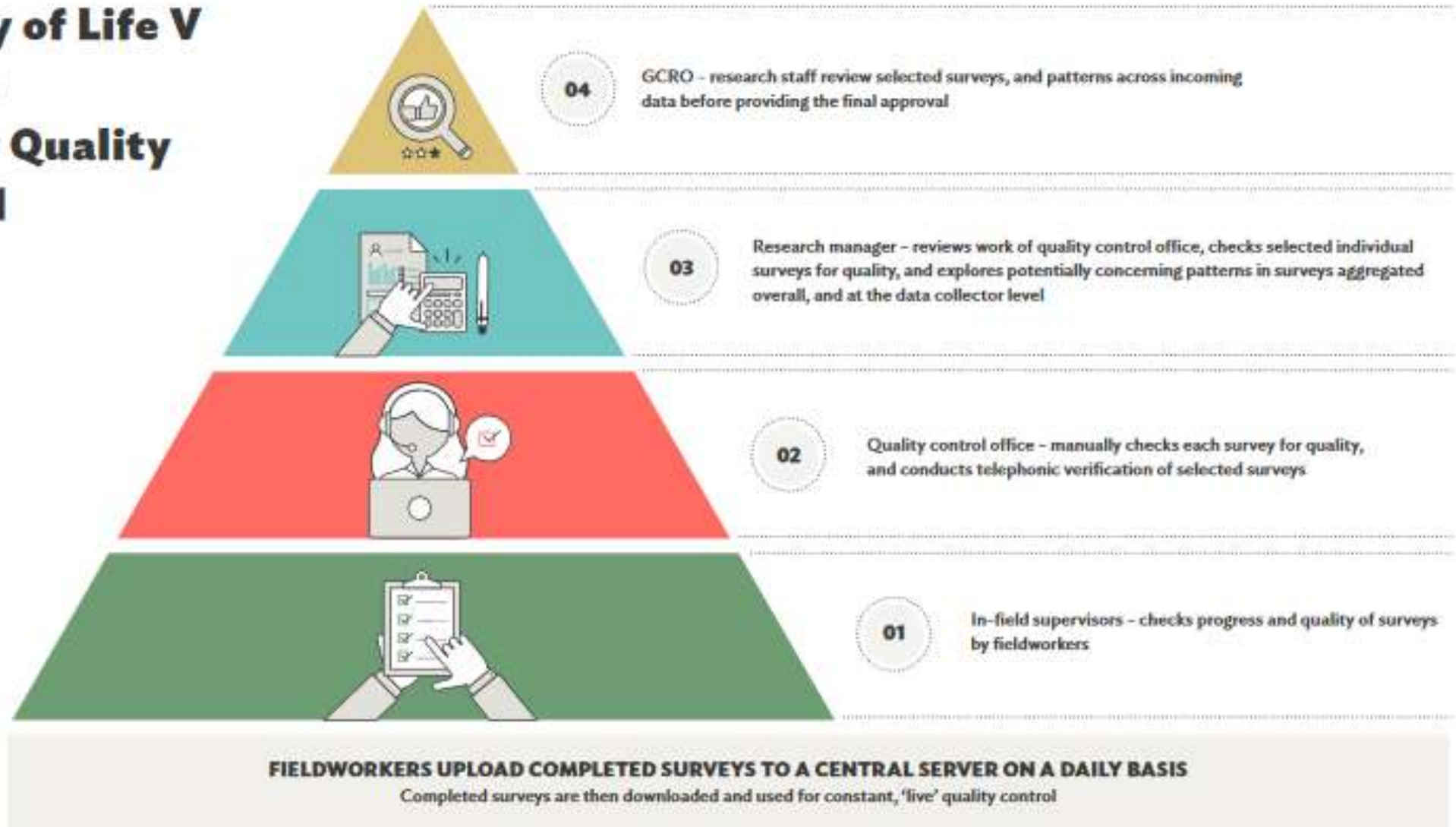
- Surveys conducted on tablets, with GPS functionality
- Sample points (fixed number per ward) randomly selected from residential buildings in GeoTerraImage's 2017 Building Based Land Use (BBLU) dataset
- Fieldworkers navigated to these 'target' sample points
- All dwellings at the site listed, and one randomly sampled
- All adults in the dwelling listed, and one randomly sampled



# More about QoL V (2017/18)

## Quality control

### Quality of Life V 2017/18 Survey Quality control



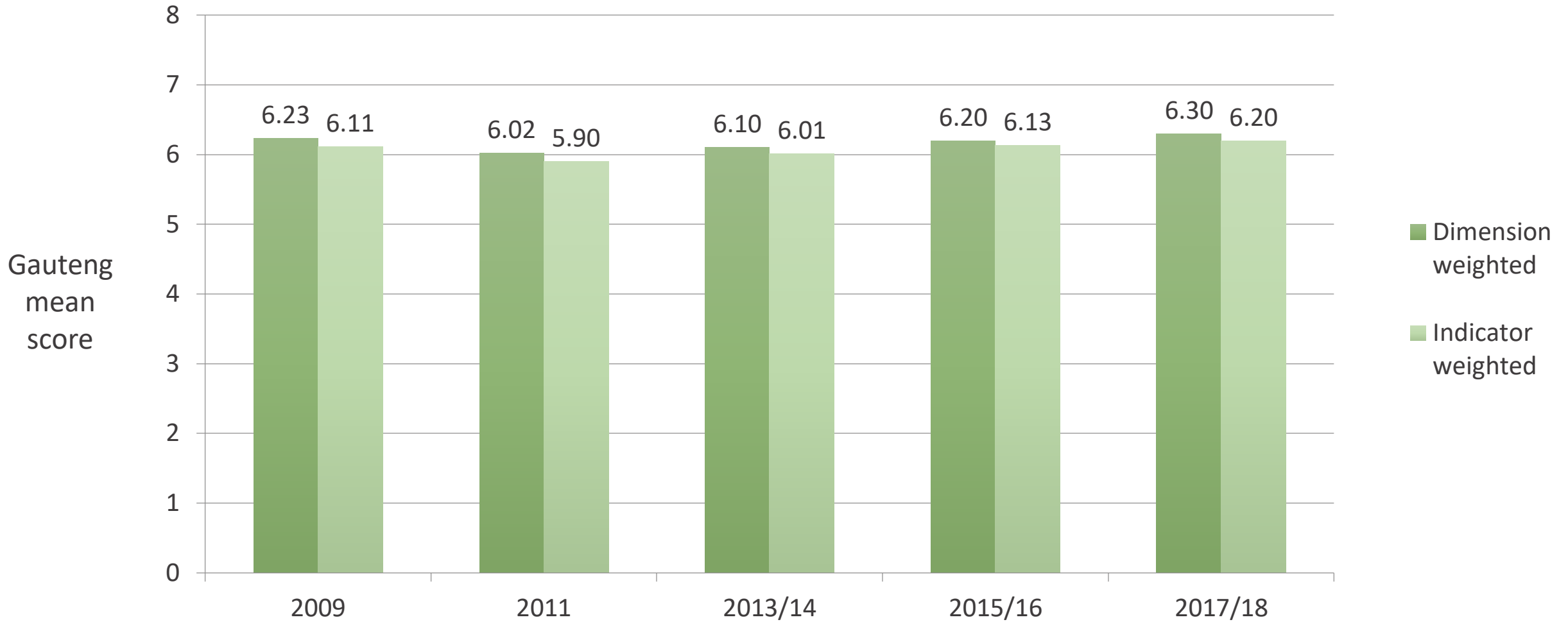


# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results



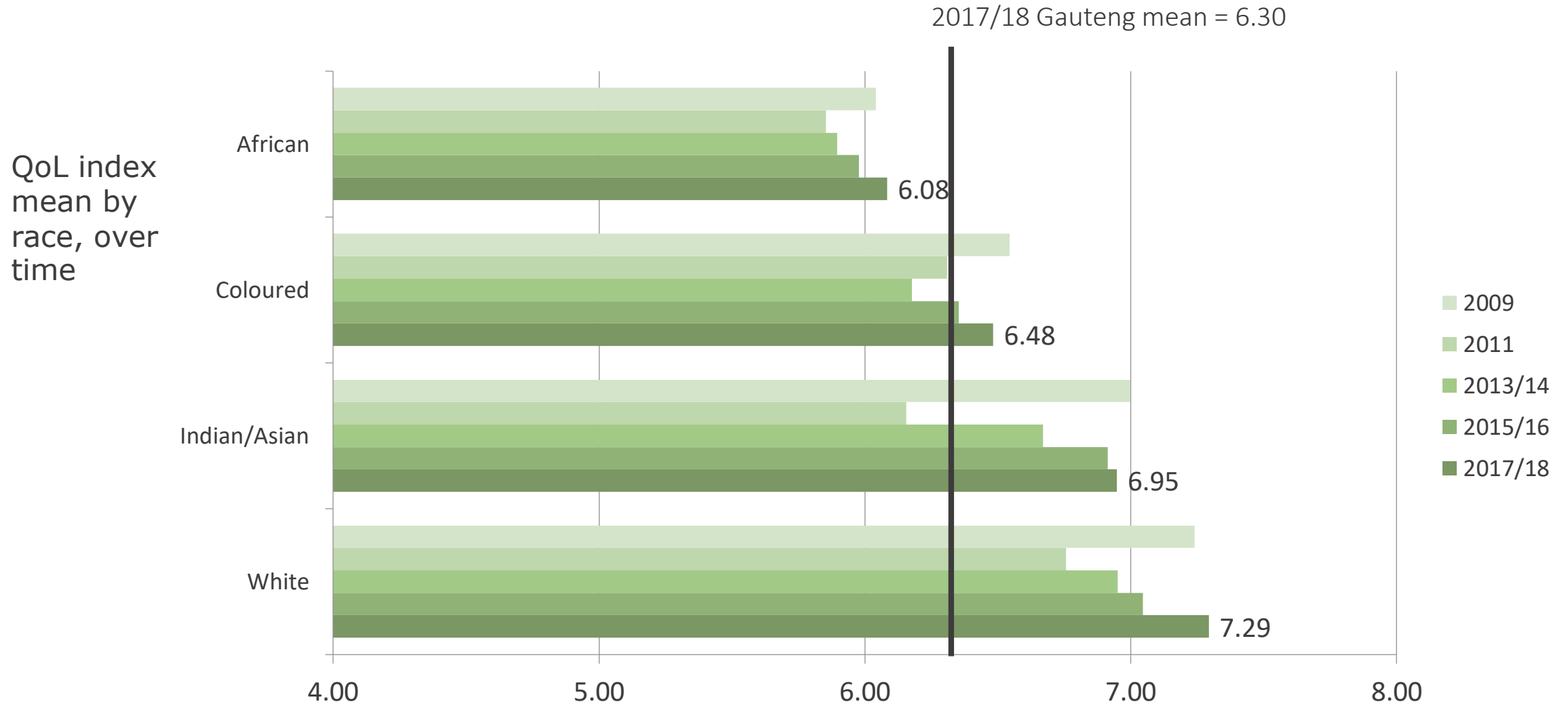
# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Overall quality of life is gradually increasing over time



# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

However, inequality by race remains a serious problem

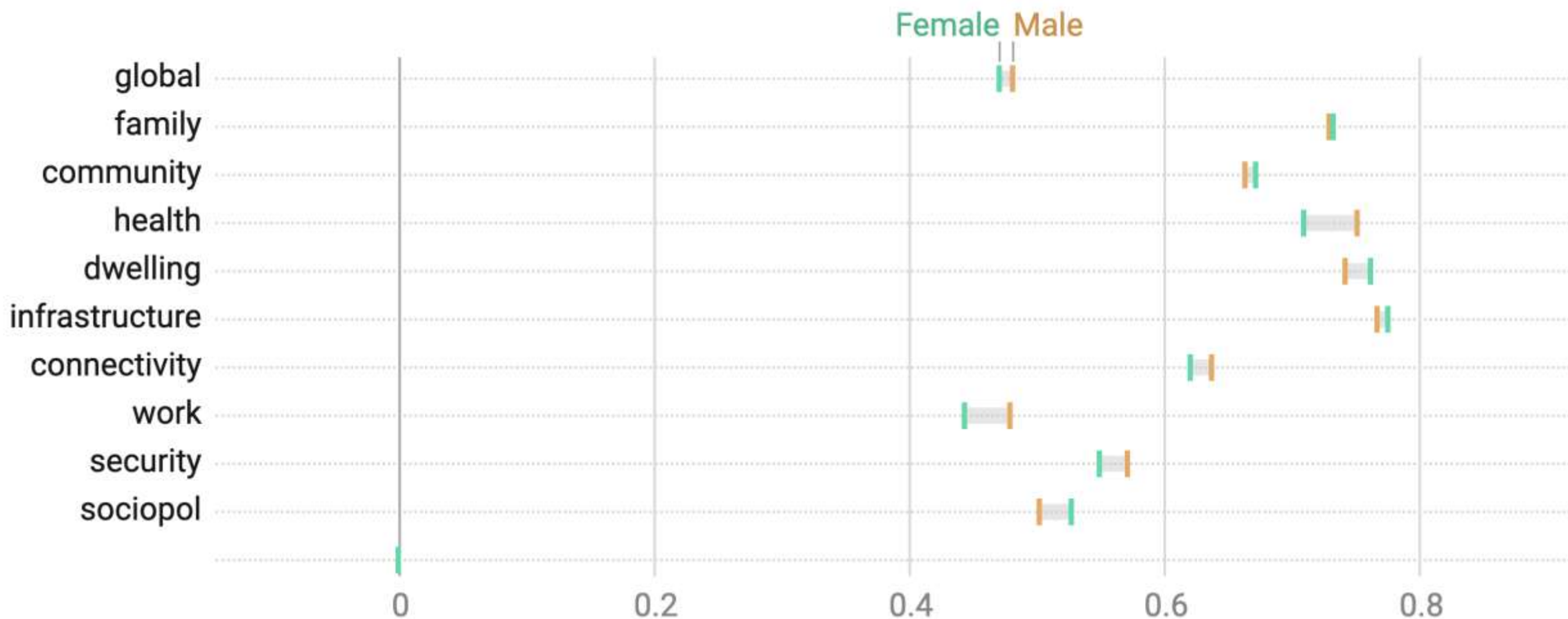




# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Dimensions of well-being vary differently by gender

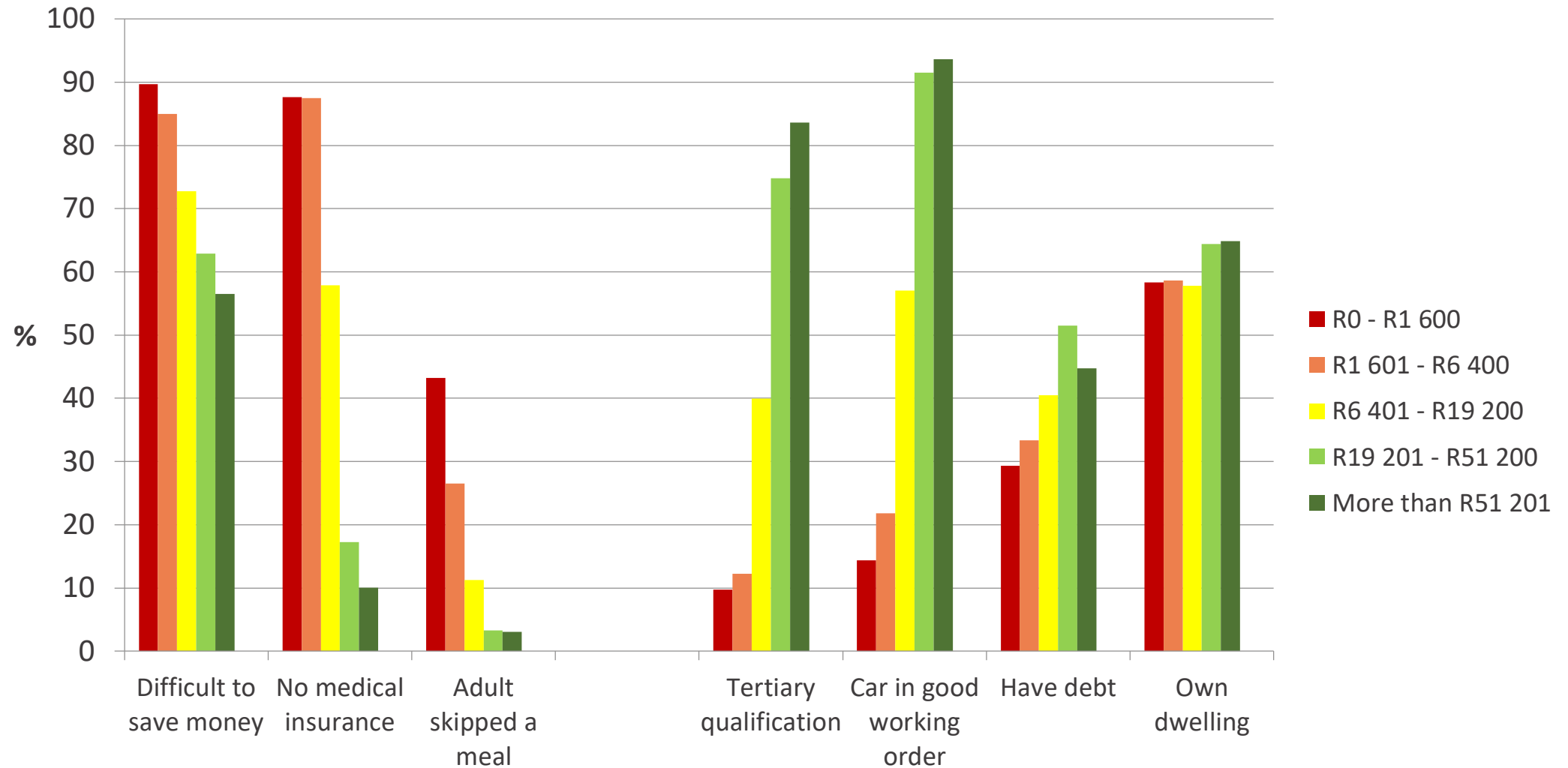
## Quality of Life index dimensions by sex





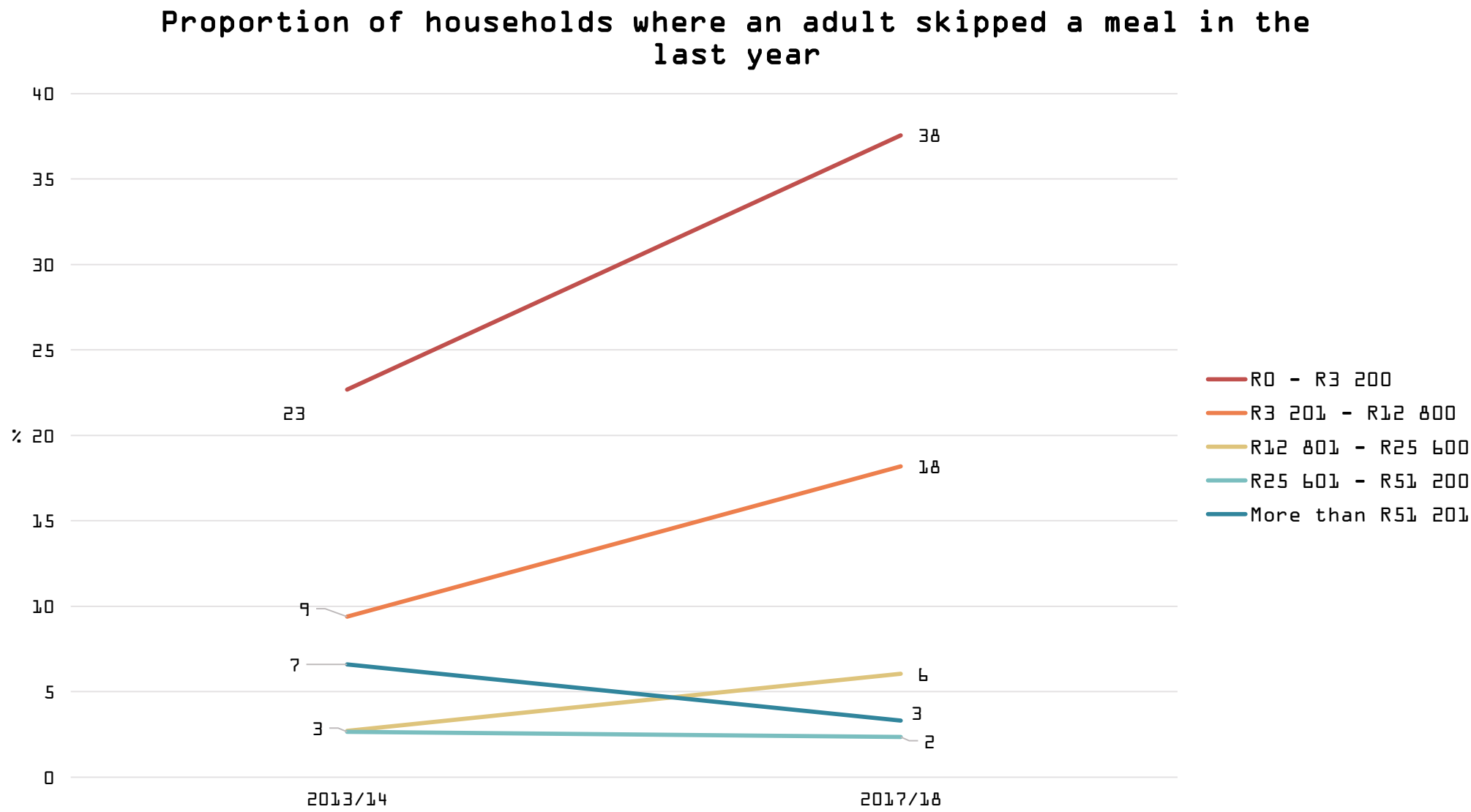
# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Material well-being varies substantially by income group

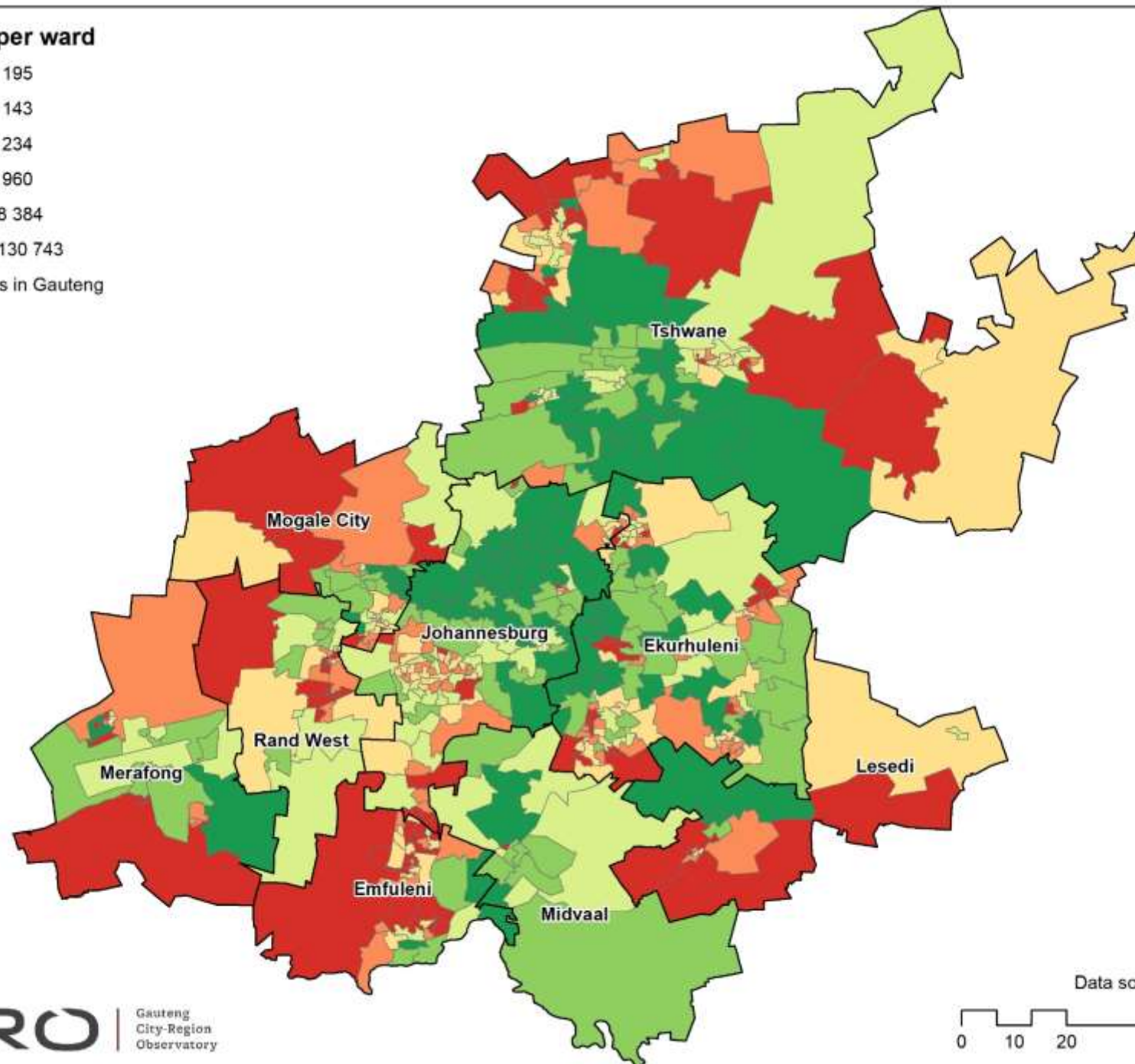
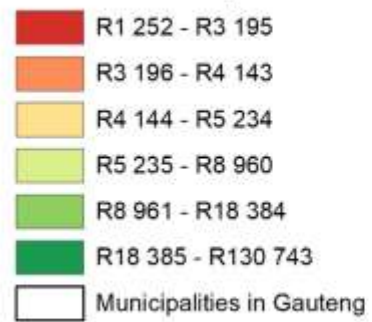


# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Hunger is increasing in poorer households



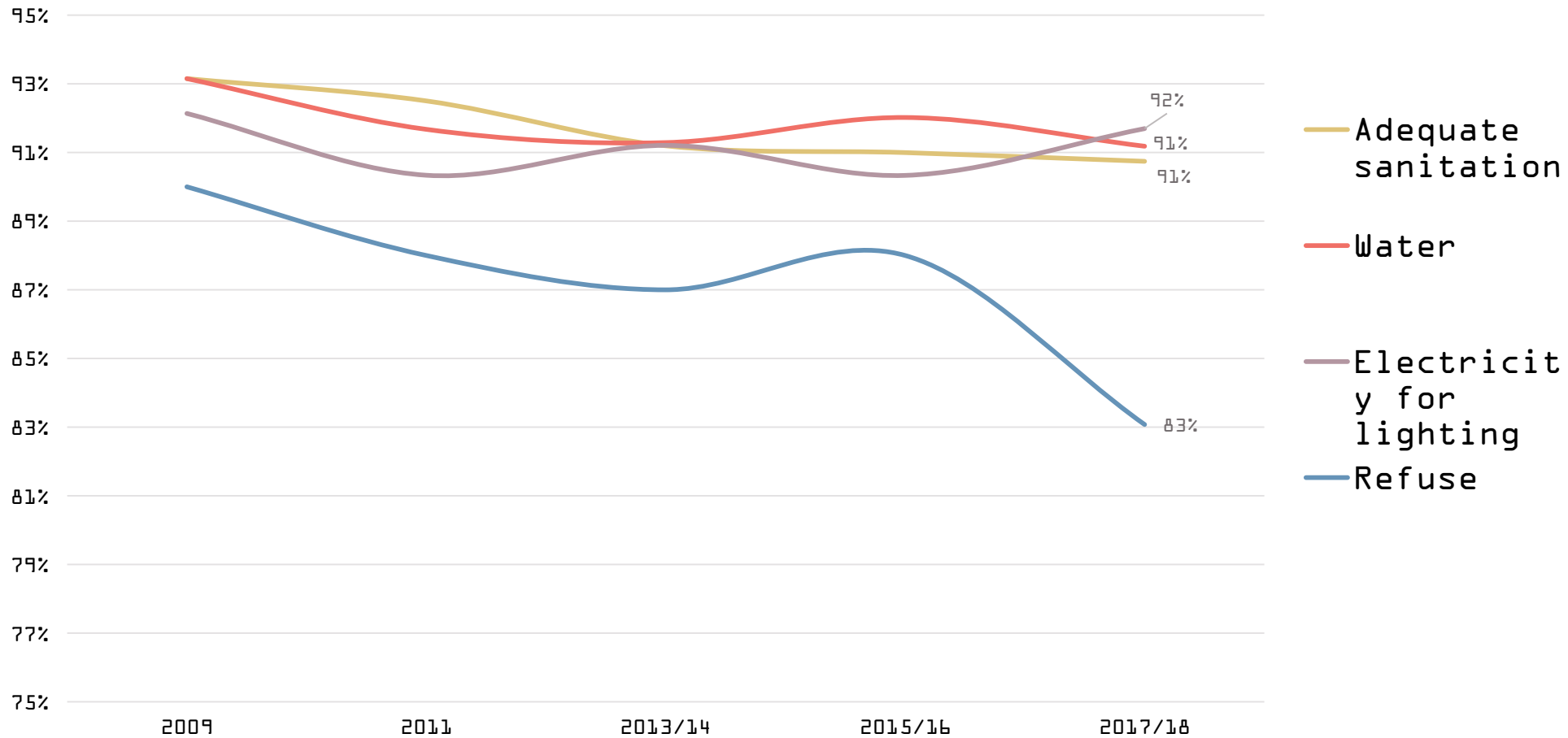
## Mean income per ward



# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Service delivery largely holding steady, despite population increases

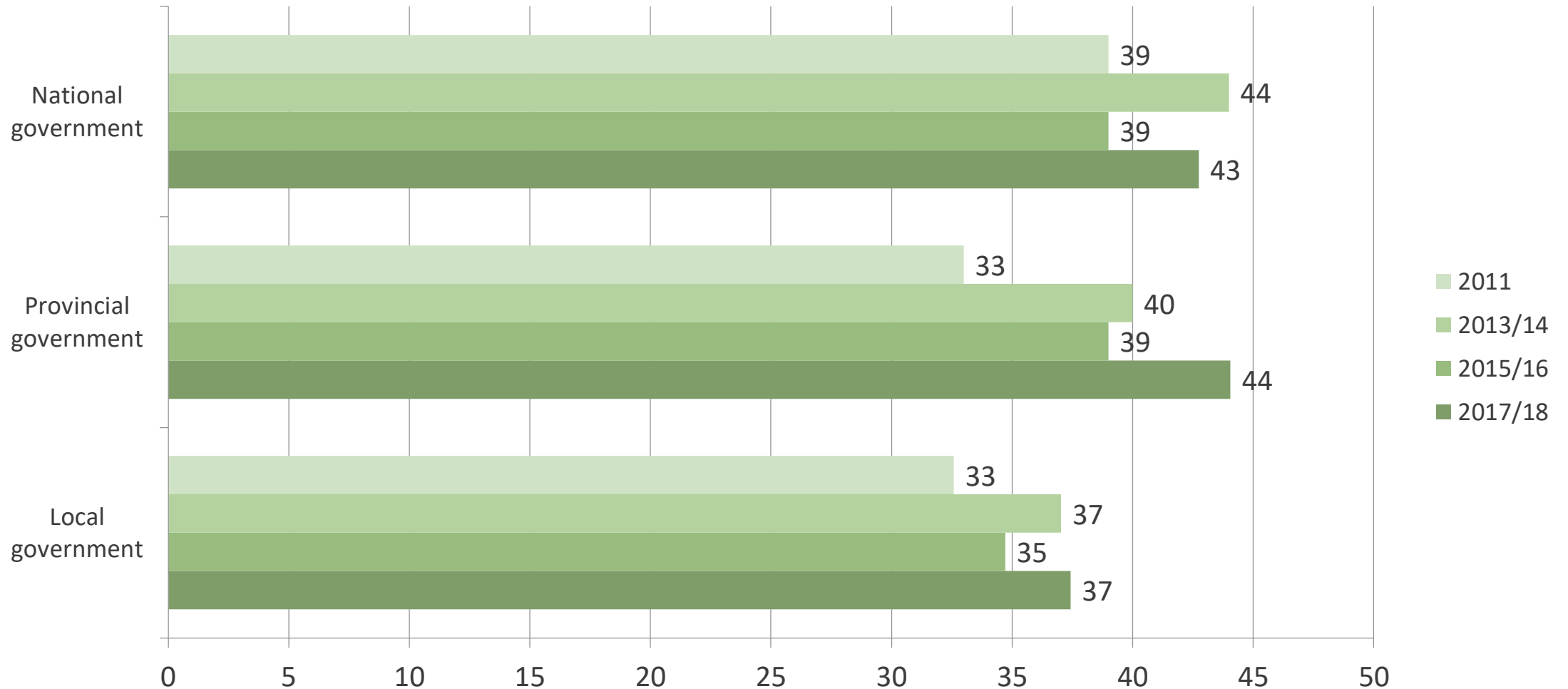
## Gauteng's access to basic services over time





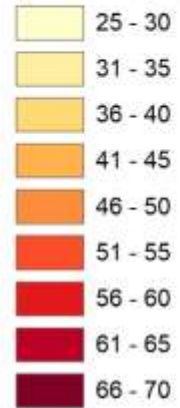
# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Satisfaction with government has increased

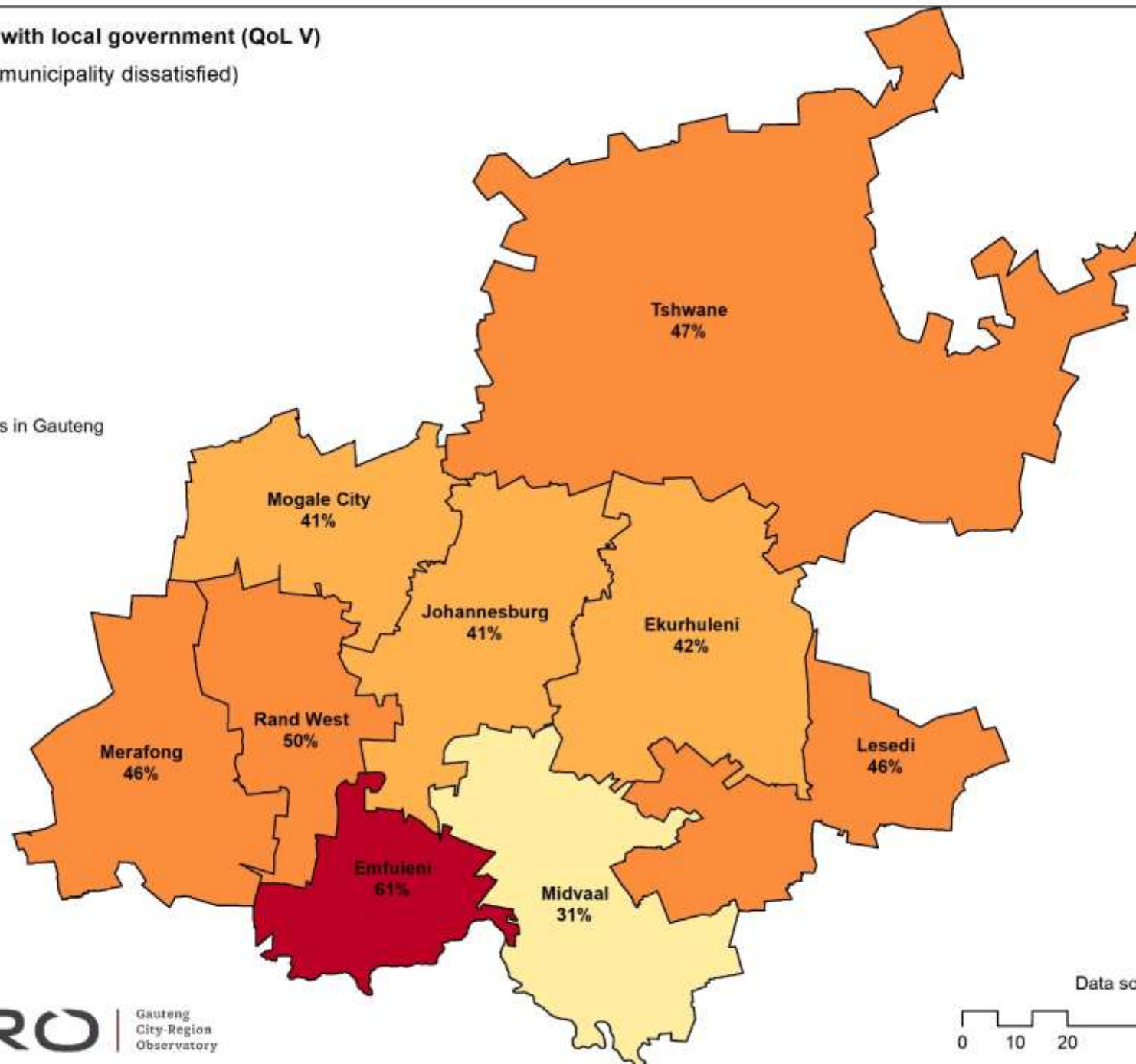


## Dissatisfaction with local government (QoL V)

(percentage per municipality dissatisfied)

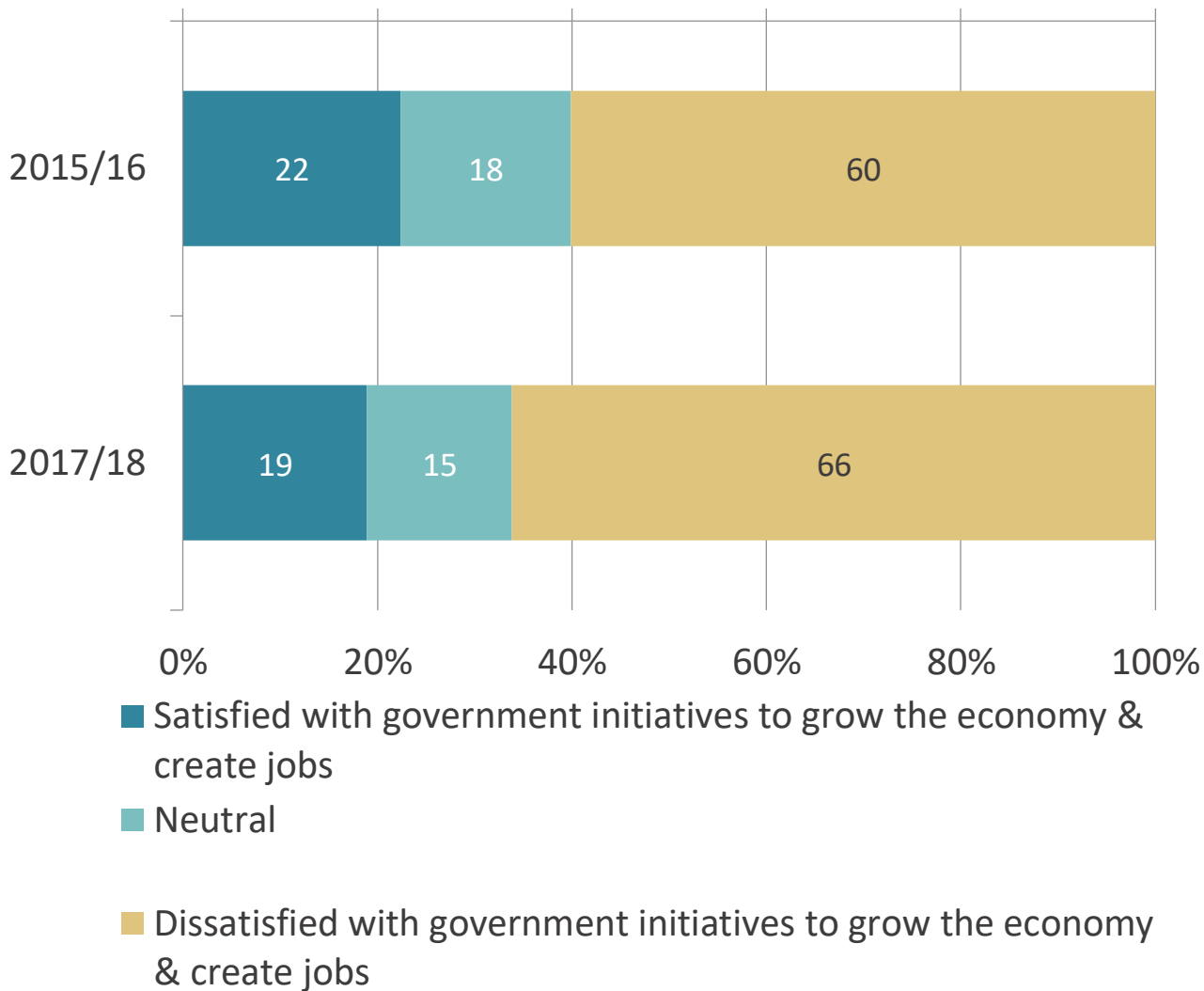
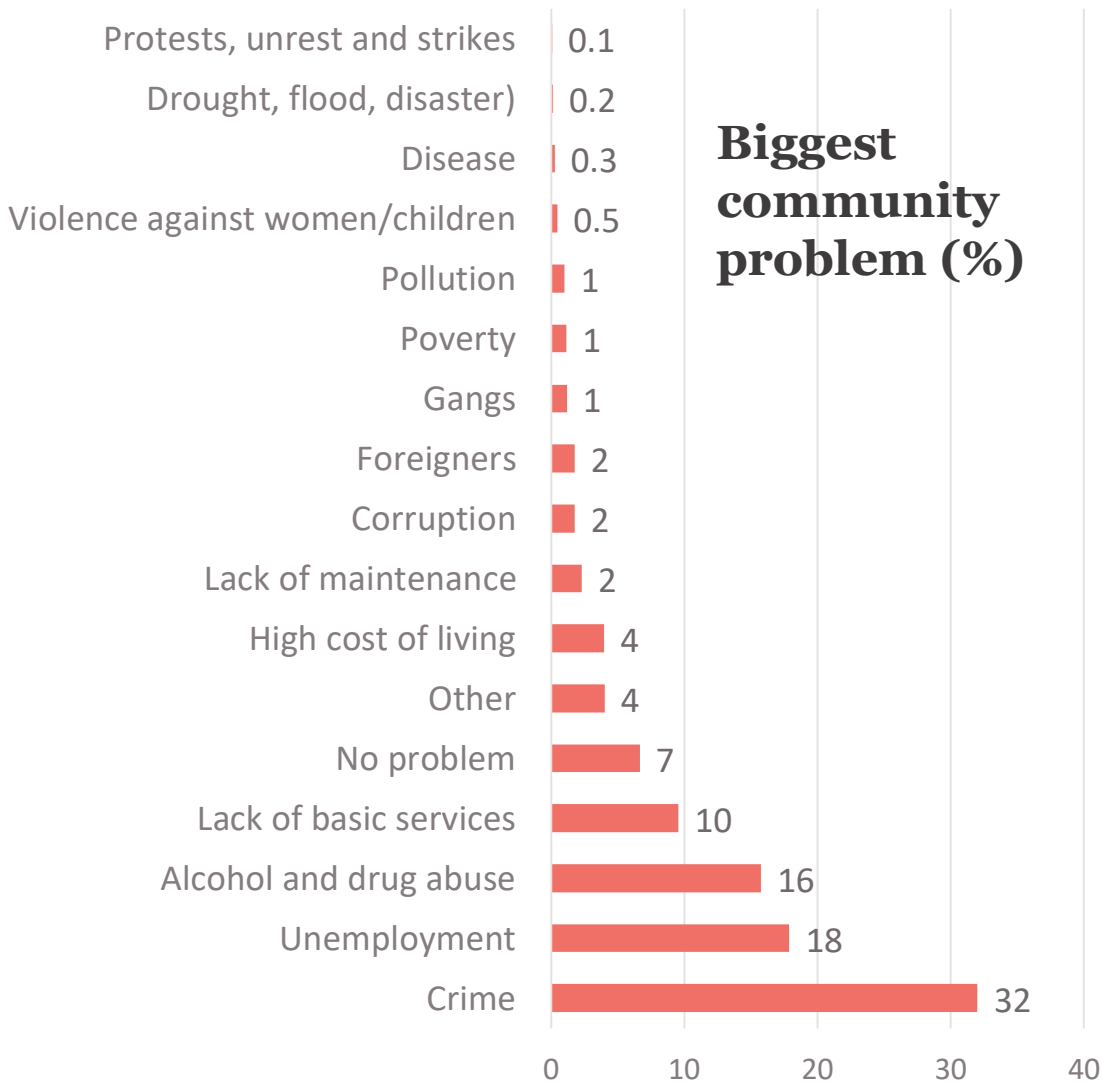


Municipalities in Gauteng



# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Economic growth and crime remain serious problems

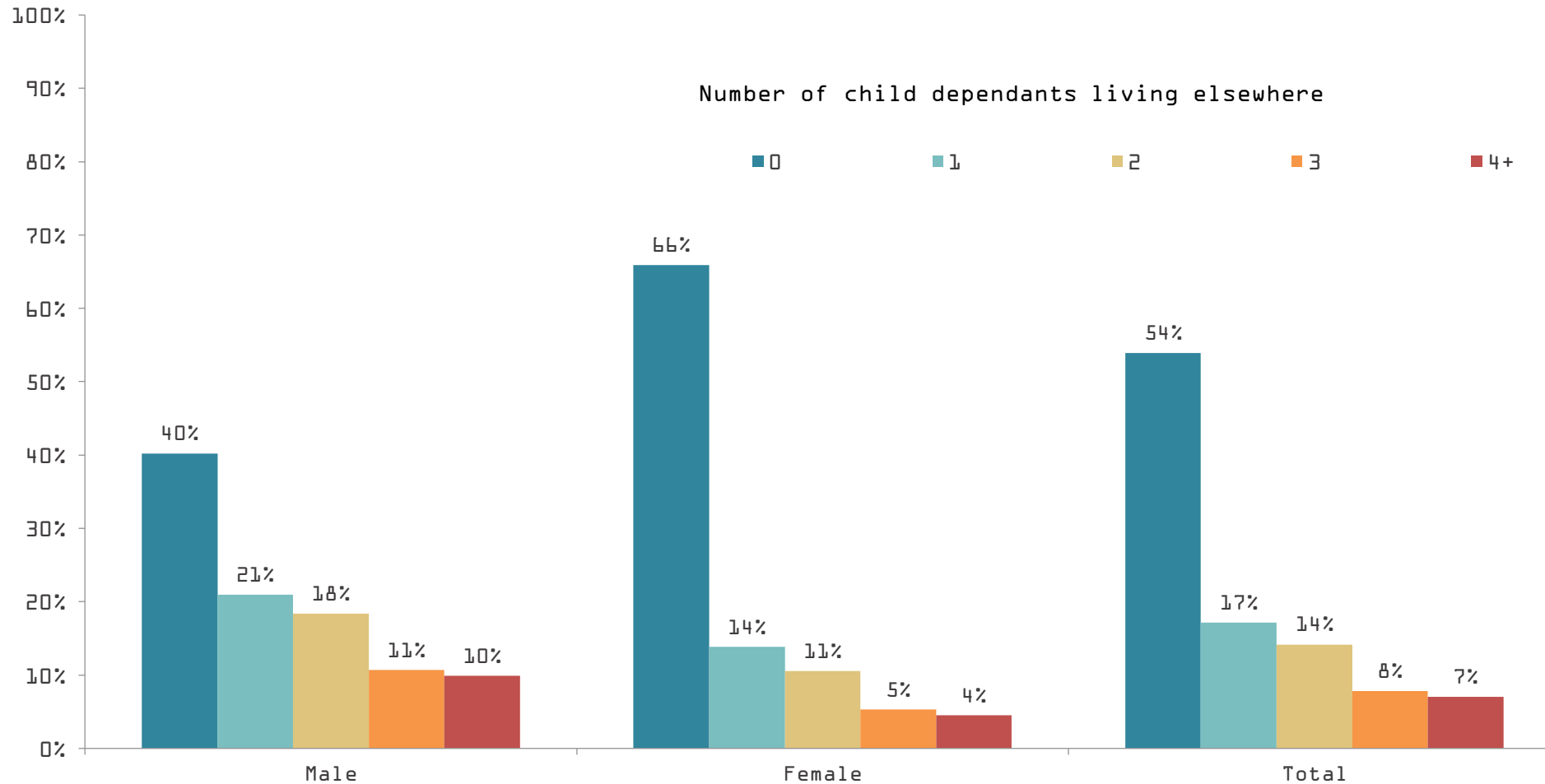




# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

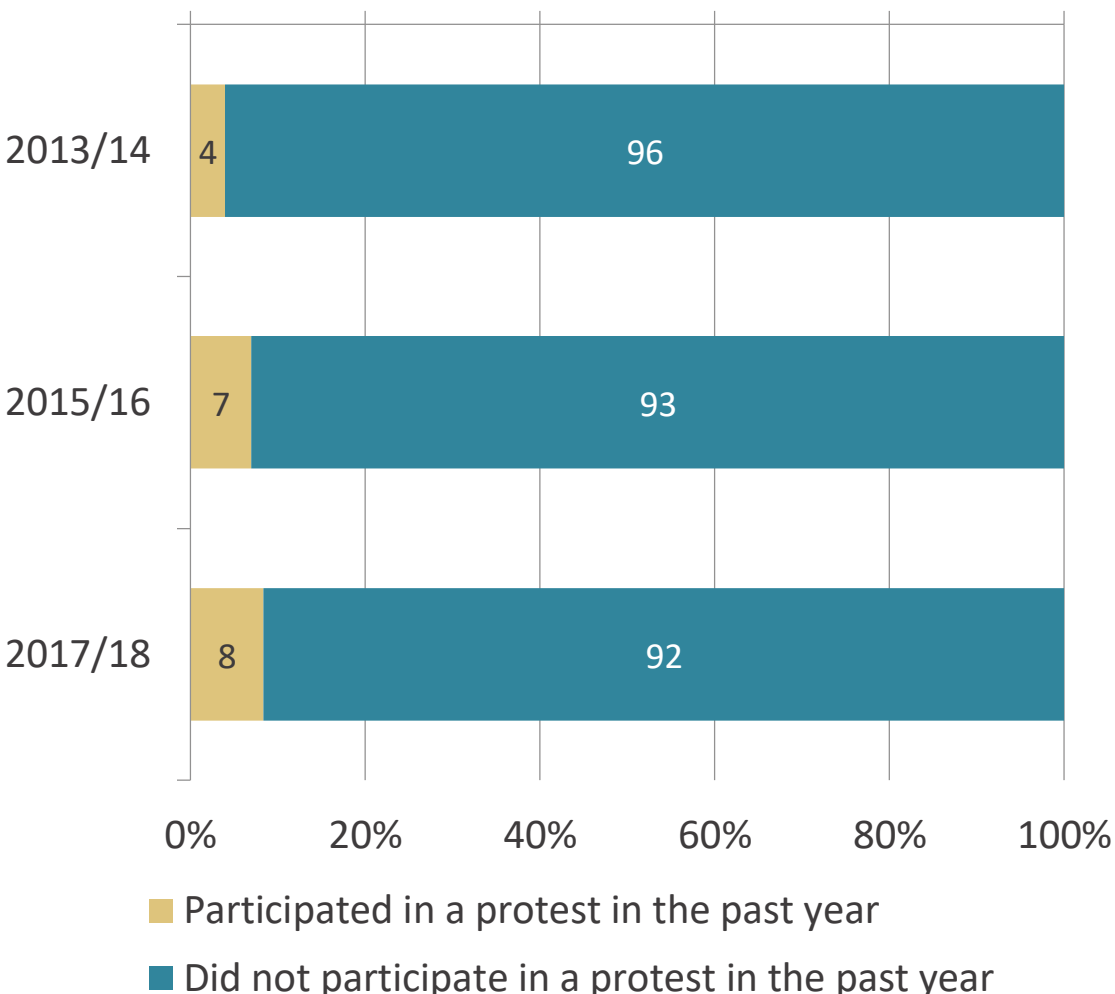
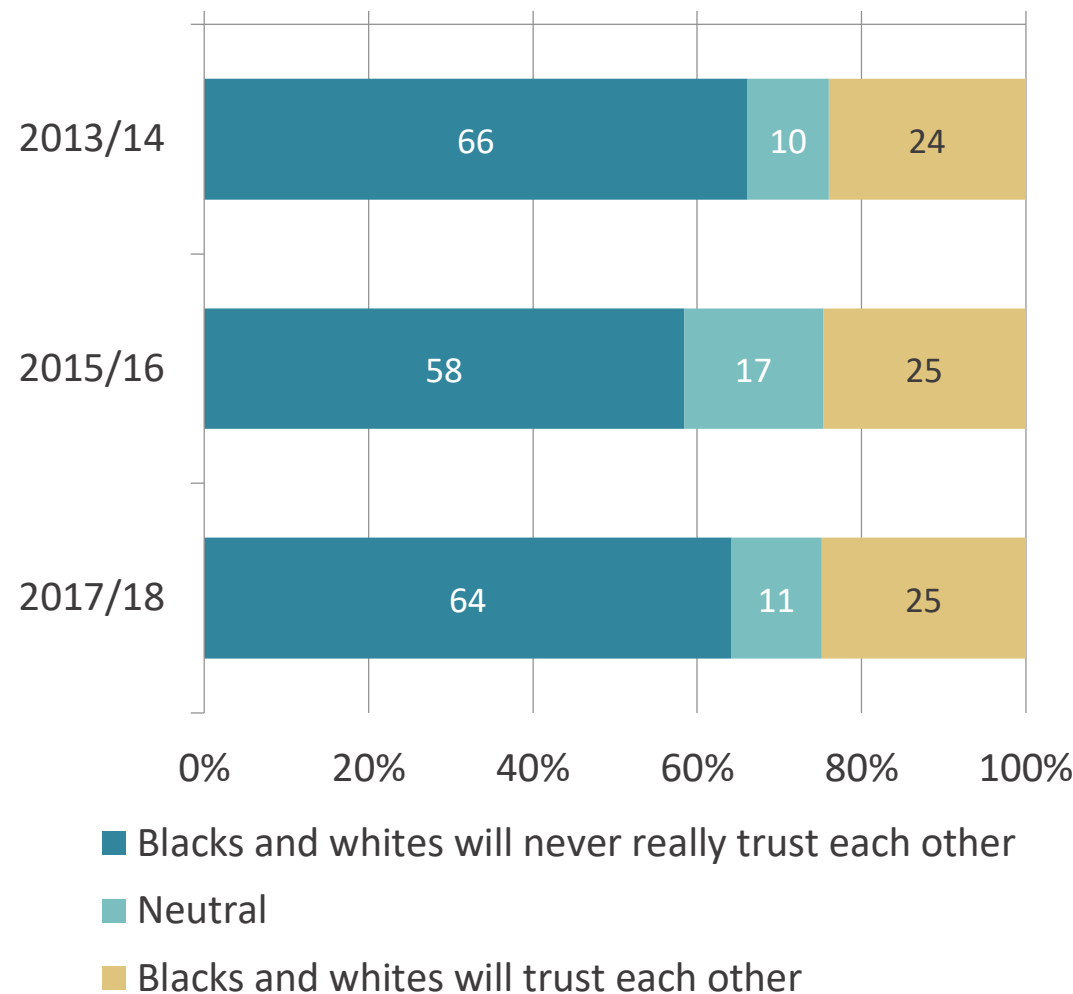
Family structures are deeply fragmented

## Respondents with child dependants living elsewhere



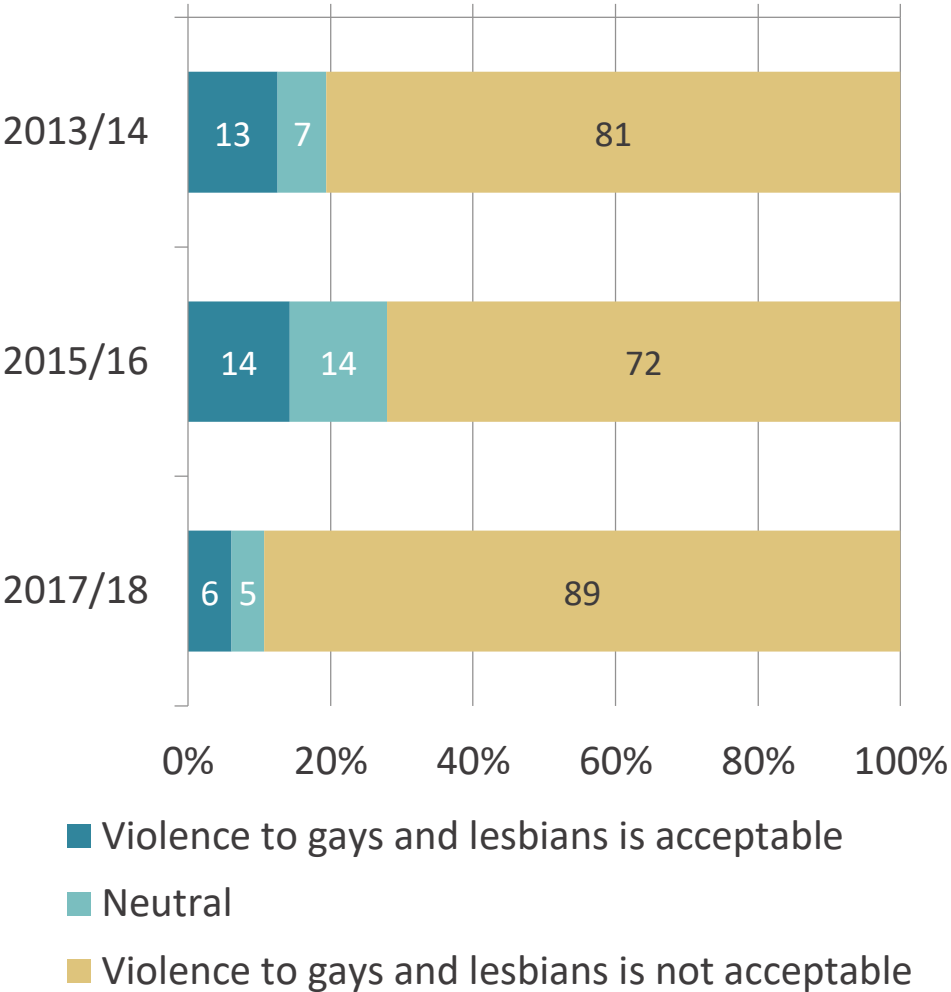
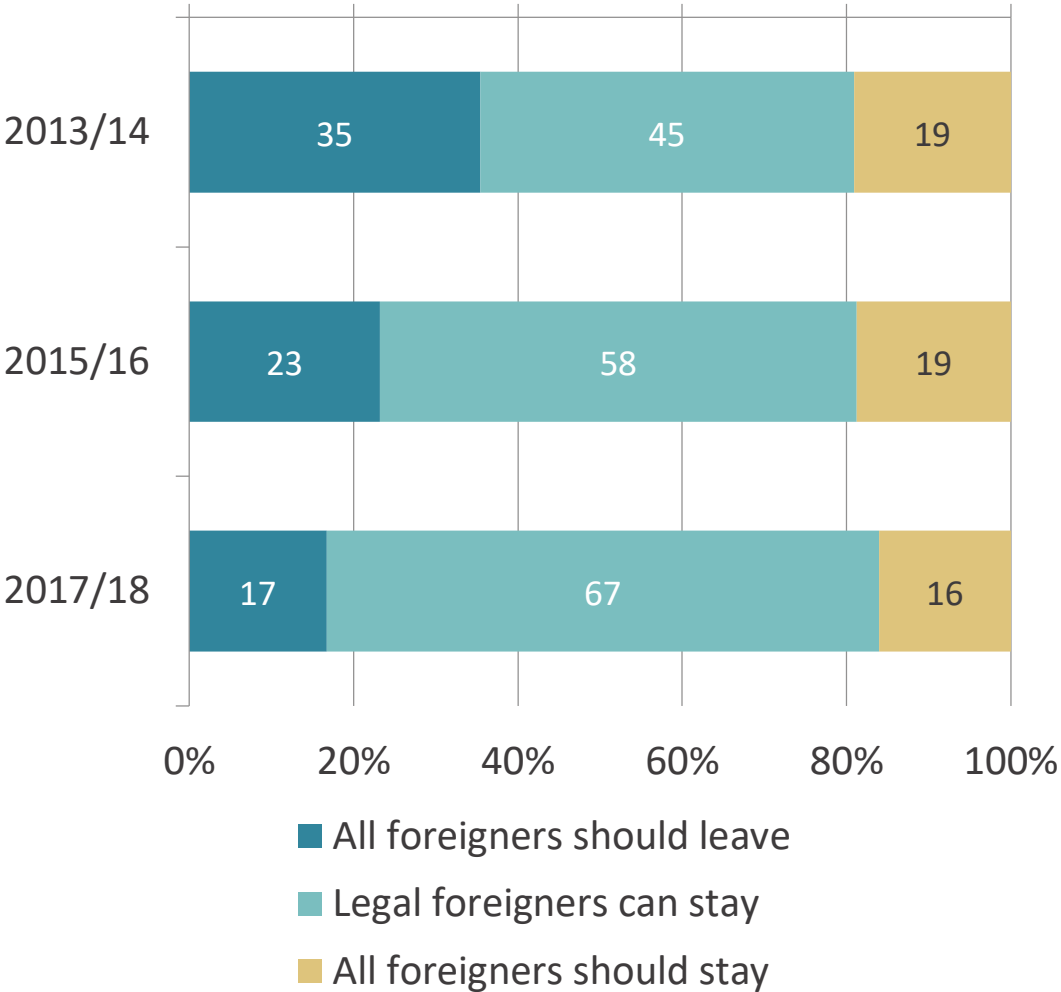
# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

Some discouraging trends in social attitudes



# QoL V (2017/18): Headline results

But also some positive trends in social attitudes





# Data use and dissemination



# Data use and dissemination

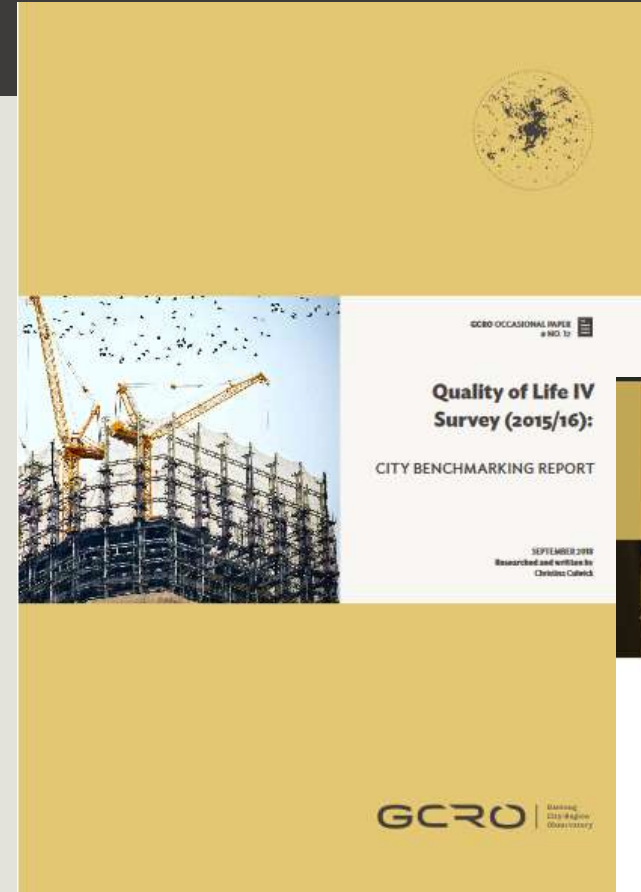
Who uses our data and results?

- **Government:**
  - Local, provincial and national government draw on our data
  - Used to identify policy priorities and assess performance
- **Academia:**
  - Researchers from around the world use our data for papers
  - Increasing use for teaching purposes in a wide range of fields
  - Extensive student use of data for research projects, theses and dissertations
- **Civil society:**
  - NGOs draw on data to understand particular issues or to explore key concerns in particular areas
  - Media draws on our data for articles and interviews on issues of public interest
  - Residents of the GCR can use survey results to better understand the area they live in
- Our data is made freely available, for any non-commercial use

# Data use and dissemination

How do we share survey results?

- Presentations
  - Various levels of government, student lectures, and academic and policy seminars and conferences
- Direct support to government, media and other interested parties
  - Recent examples include providing background data for a metropolitan project, data and analysis for a 5-year provincial government review, and assisting media with analysis and interviews
- Interactive viewers and visualisations
  - Both survey methodology and results
- Maintain an extensive mailing list (over 6000), social media presence, and media engagement
  - All outputs are shared through the mailing list and the website
- Key GCRO outputs include:
  - Maps of the month
  - Data briefs
  - Occasional papers & research reports
- Internal capacity is a constraint





GCRO  
GAUTENG'S VILLAGE  
OF 100 PEOPLE



CONTEXT



NEIGHBOURHOOD



POLITICAL VIEWS



HEADSPACE



LIFE



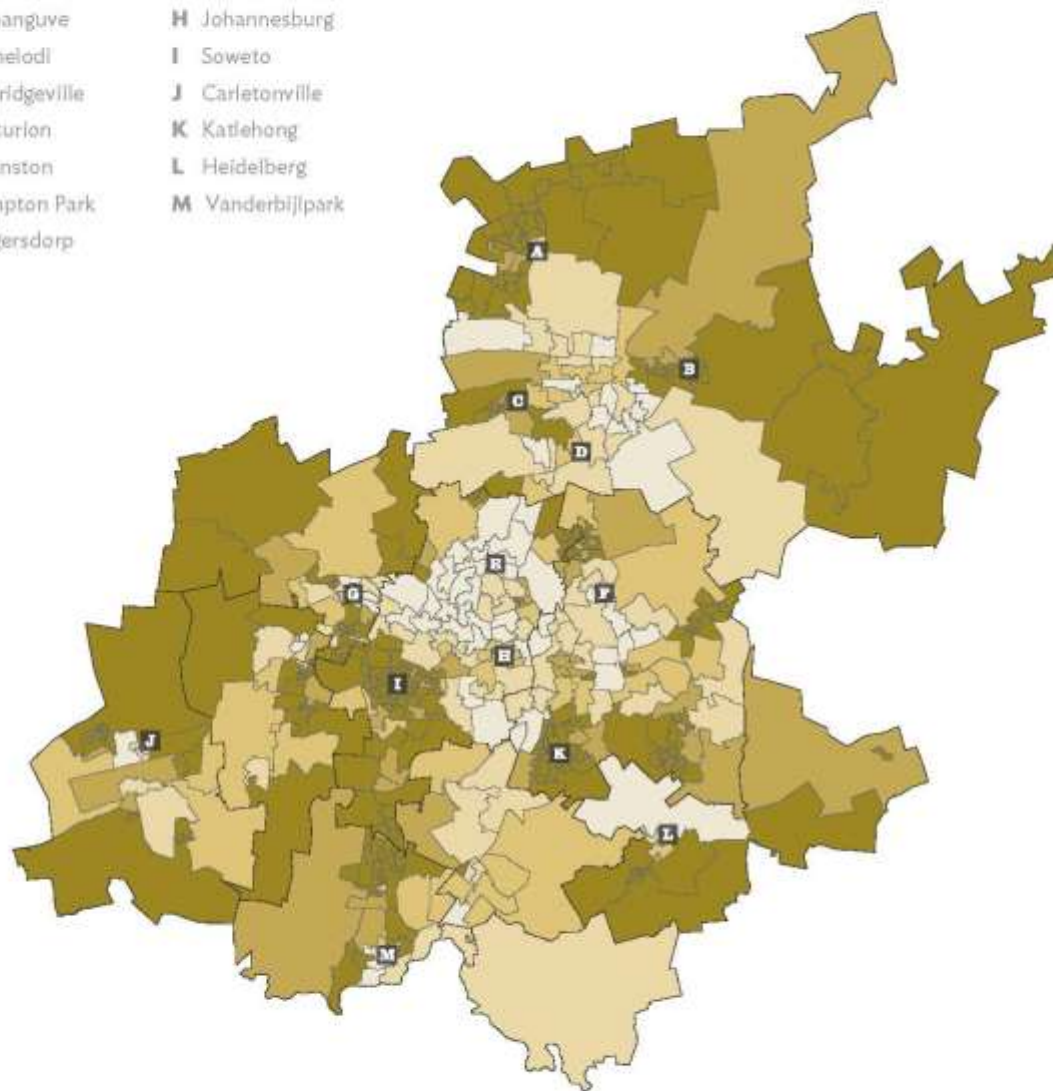
PEOPLE LIKE YOU







- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| A Soshanguve     | H Johannesburg   |
| B Mamelodi       | I Soweto         |
| C Atteridgeville | J Carletonville  |
| D Centurion      | K Katlehong      |
| E Bryanston      | L Heidelberg     |
| F Kempton Park   | M Vanderbijlpark |
| G Krugersdorp    |                  |



READ MORE



## Public services: The use of public schools



Click here to compare maps

Percentage per ward who sent their  
eldest child to a public school

- 0% - 25%
- 25.1% - 50%
- 50.1% - 75%
- 75.1% - 85%
- 85.1% - 100%
- Municipalities in Gauteng

**Author**

Christian Hamann, Dr Julia de Kadt

**Data Source**

GCRO QoL V (2017/18)

# What next?

Planning for the next ten years of QoL

- Currently completing a ten-year review process for the survey
  - Conducted a series of technical workshops with top South African experts in survey work
  - A range of stakeholder and service provider interviews
- Planning for a research report to document the history and contributions of the survey
- Preparations for QoL VI (2020) underway





# Thank You

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