Confronting the "Triple Challenge"

Findings on poverty, inequality and unemployment from Afrobarometer Surveys in South Africa

19 February 2015
At a glance

- **National Priorities**: South Africans consistently identified unemployment (44%), crime/security (12%), and poverty (8%) as the most important problems facing the country between 2000 and 2011.

- **Government Performance**: approval ratings have been consistently low on government measures to alleviate poverty, inequality and unemployment, and have roughly followed the national economic trajectory.

- **Regional Results**: despite national challenges, South Africa is highly regarded in the region—particularly by countries with strong historical and economic ties (namely, Lesotho and Namibia).
What is Afrobarometer?

- An African-led, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- National Partners in each country conduct the survey. The South Africa survey has been conducted in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, and 2011. Round 6 is scheduled to take place in the first half of 2015.
Where the IJR team currently works

[Map showing countries in Southern Africa: Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Mauritius]
Trends in poverty, inequality & unemployment measures over time

National Results | 2000-2011
Key findings

- Unemployment, crime, and poverty were consistently cited as the top three national problems that government should address between 2000 and 2011.

- In 2011, the majority of respondents were optimistic about government’s ability to address unemployment (63%) and poverty (57%) by 2016. Opinion was split on the government’s ability to address crime/security.

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?
Respondents were asked: Taking the problem that you mentioned first, how likely do you think it is that government will solve this problem within the next five years?

- **Unemployment**
  - Not at all/Not very: 34%
  - Somewhat Likely/Very Likely: 63%
  - Don’t know: 3%

- **Crime and Security**
  - Not at all/Not very: 2%
  - Somewhat Likely/Very Likely: 49%
  - Don’t know: 2%

- **Poverty/Destitution**
  - Not at all/Not very: 3%
  - Somewhat Likely/Very Likely: 57%
  - Don’t know: 40%
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven’t you heard enough to say? (Fairly well/Very well)
Poverty, inequality and unemployment measures in perspective

Regional Results | 2014
Key findings

- In 2011, higher proportions of South Africans chose unemployment and crime/security as national priorities than the regional average.

- South Africans gave the government lower ratings on addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality than the regional average.

- Despite its challenges, South Africa is highly regarded as a developmental role model in the region – particularly in countries with which it has strong economic ties.
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven’t you heard enough to say? (Fairly well/Very well)

- Improving the living standards of the poor: 37% (Average), 33% (South Africa)
- Creating jobs: 27% (Average), 13% (South Africa)
- Narrowing income gaps: 25% (Average), 22% (South Africa)

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Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?
## Best Model for Development (%)

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**Respondents were asked:**

In your opinion, which of the following countries, if any, would be the best model for the future development of our country?
## Country with the Most Influence (%)

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Respondents were asked: Which of the following do you think has the most influence on [Country], or haven’t you heard enough to say?
Regional Perceptions of South Africa | 2014

Respondents were asked:
In your opinion, which of the following countries, if any, would be the best model for the future development of our country?
Which of the following do you think has the most influence on [Country], or haven’t you heard enough to say?

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Thank you